

**RE-CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE LUKAN OIKOS:
A SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC APPROACH**

by

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DEDICATION

to

GOD

May this effort be in the service of his Kingdom

and

to my

Kutum

My late parents (Govindasamy and Muniamma), in-laws (Ram and Gairamma Reddy), grandparents on both sides (the Chetty and Vengetas families), aunts and uncles (especially C. M Sonny & Kamla, Billy Reddy), cousins (especially Nicholas, Lynette, Raymond and Cynthia - with whom I literally grew up), brothers-in-law (Krish, Christé, Samuel and Sagie), sisters in law (Dolly, Elizabeth, Nicolette, and Zulpha), siblings (Roy, Sheila, Christie, Vincent, Tricia), nieces and nephews (Terrence - a very special nephew, Annaleah, Lyndon, Chantal, Candice, Garand, Lerissa, Jadon, Angelique, Sebastian, Carl, Dyron, Aaliyah, Zachariah, Stephen, Genevieve, Celeste, Estelle and Eugene), my spouse, Patricia, and my children (Crispin Joash and Bernard Jeremy).

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Summary

The thesis of this study is that the concept of the church as *oikos*, as found in Luke-Acts provides principles to inspire the church to meet some present challenges. The concepts of church and family in the Gospel of Luke and in the Acts of the Apostles were examined. It was found that the first church community was constituted on the pattern of the extended family in the Greco-Roman world of the first century. This allowed for the development of a rich culture of interpersonal relationships. It was within this environment that the love taught and exemplified by Jesus found its first concrete expression. In family churches, comprising of between 50-100 members, care was taken of individuals in a holistic sense. This was especially important in a society that existed long before the invention of social services, pensions, hospitals and care for the aged. This example set by the first church had far-reaching political consequences. In the fourth century it was this kind of church structure that was taken as a model for the whole of the Roman Empire.

This study reflects a distinctive choice regarding methodology in the application of a unique combination of both the contextual and social-scientific methods. A danger of contextual methodology is to concentrate on the present context at the expense of the context of the text. A deliberate attempt is made to avoid this by an inclusive approach of both contexts.

The second part of the combination in the methodology of this thesis is the application of the social-scientific approach to the Biblical text and to our present context. This method is used as an extension of the contextual method, in order to avoid possible

distortions caused by the latter. This pursuit does not seek to operate at the exclusion of other accepted approaches to the Biblical text, namely those of the literary, linguistic and historical, but functions eclectically whilst highlighting the rewards of the social-scientific methodology. The term 'social-scientific' is used in this study to broadly embrace the sociological approaches to the study of the New Testament text and to our present context.

In addition to uncovering the social context of the Biblical text, this study is equally eager to understand the 'now' of one's own *Sitz im Leben*. Therefore, current social-scientific insights together with those from family sociology are utilised to balance the methodological framework.

In short, a social-scientific understanding of the concept of *oikos* will assist in analysing the context of the Biblical text. A social-scientific analysis of the present context will facilitate a re-contextualisation of the church as *oikos* in the new South Africa.

Chapter one outlines the methodology. A social-scientific study of the concept of *oikos* in Luke-Acts is engaged in chapter two. Chapter three commences with a sociological perspective of the family. This includes a contextual analysis of families in South Africa. The next chapter (chapter four) explores ministry perspectives to ascertain how the local church can function as *oikos*. Chapter five proposes a model for the ministry of the church while chapter six contextualises the church as *oikos*. A final concluding chapter summarises and synthesises the research.

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CHAPTER ONE

METHODOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study reflects a distinctive choice regarding methodology in the application of a unique combination of both the contextual and social-scientific methods. A danger of contextual methodology is to concentrate on the present context at the expense of the context of the text. A deliberate attempt is made to avoid this by an inclusive approach of both contexts.

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1.2 THE LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL HERMENEUTICS

It is through the process of interpretation, or hermeneutics that meaning is appropriated to the Bible. This pursuit for the meaning of Scripture is not only influenced by our personality, but also by social dynamics. These may entail, *inter alia*, thought and communication patterns, cognitive processes, ways of learning, values

and ideals of our families, and our larger social units. Our specific context has a large bearing on the resultant meaning of Scripture.

The most common approach to interpretation of the Bible is what was known as the 'simplistic approach,' according to Rene Padilla (1986:297). Here, emphasis is placed on personal application as found in popular preaching and devotional material. The presupposition is that the situation of the reader resembles the setting in the original text. The process of interpretation centres around establishing this correspondence and a direct application is made. This approach can easily lead to distortion of the meaning of the text. The fanciful interpretations of Origen and Augustine, in particular, display the shortcomings of this approach to interpretation.

The question to be posed to this approach is whether the appropriation of the Biblical message is possible without distorting the meaning of the text. In contrast to the simplistic method, the 'scientific' approach utilises the tools of literary, linguistic, historical and cultural studies. This has been the approach of the preponderance of Biblical scholars.

1.3 DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL SOCIAL ANALYSIS

The last three decades have evidenced a special interest in the social aspects of the first-century Mediterranean world of the New Testament. Two orientations are clearly identified. The one concentrates on social description, while the other on social-scientific interpretation of the Biblical text. A survey of these pursuits would advance our present study.

Unlike the earlier attempts of social description whose goal was historical relevance, contends Harris (1984:102-103), this new approach by Biblical scholars employed the concepts and methods of sociology to explore the social powers that gave rise to the Biblical documents (Van Staden & Van, Aarde 1991:56). This has led to a plethora of exploratory work that is known as the sociology of the New Testament. Scholars have employed different approaches, methods and models to uncover the social background of the New Testament (cf Smith 1975:19-21; Scroggs 1980:167-171; Best 1983:187-190; Edwards 1983:431-444; Harrington 1988:77-85).

In the deluge of emerging publications, ambiguity surrounds the use of the terms 'social', 'sociological', 'social description', and 'social-scientific' (cf Elliott 1981:3; Malina 1982:241; Osiek 1984:4-6). The social-scientific approach operates on a different level from that of social description. Best differentiates two distinct levels of application of social-scientific categories to the New Testament, namely that of description and explanation (see also Gager 1979:175), and states:

For a truly sociological approach, however, one must move to the second level, that of explanation. Here the tools and techniques of modern sociological study are used, not merely to describe but also to probe the inner dynamics of the early Christian movement, regarded not as a unique event but as an example of patterns of behaviour which may be widely observed and objectively studied (1983:185).

Gager (1982) reserves the description 'sociological' or 'social-scientific' for the approach that, according to Smith, incorporates 'an analysis of Christianity as a social world, as the creation of a world of meaning which provided a plausibility structure for those who chose to inhabit it' (Smith 1975:19-20; cf Domeris 1988:379). Gager further contends that this approach can be properly characterized as sociological or social scientific, since the academic disciplines of sociology, anthropology and psychology, have contributed explanatory theories and hypotheses (1982:258).

1.3.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

According to Gager, then, one could use the terms 'sociological,' or 'social-scientific' interchangeably, but the meaning of the terms sociological, social-scientific and social differs. This has been adequately highlighted by Gager (1979:175), Gottwald (1982:143), Schutz (1982:1) and Osiek (1984:4). 'Social description' accumulates relevant data for the historical understanding of the background of the New Testament texts (Harris 1984:105). As the occasion warrants, this information is fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle (Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:58). No consideration is given to the structure of the text or the ideological point of view of the narrator or any other literary or *redaktionsgeschichtliche* concepts. The texts serve as basic sociological informants of social data on a wide range of subjects (Domeris 1988:370-381).

The term 'sociological approach or analysis,' on the other hand, signifies the use of social-scientific methods of analysis that relate to the discipline of sociology. According to Van Staden & Van Aarde (1991:59) its goal should be:

An exposition of the meaning of the narrative discourse as autonomous object d'art. It may utilise the results of the former method, while always striving to comprehend and explain the data.

This analysis attempts to unearth what lies buried within the text.

The social-scientific method remains as one of the most productive of the 'social' methodologies that have emerged. The works of Gerd Theissen, John G Gager, Wayne A Meeks, Bruce J Malina, John H Elliott, and Norman R Petersen have contributed immensely to the social-scientific study of the New Testament.

1.3.2 GERD THEISSEN

Theissen uses the sociological method known as functional analysis in his early work entitled *Sociology of early Palestinian Christianity* (1978). Analyses of the texts for roles, factors and functions in accordance with sociological insights into social dynamics are conducted (cf Theissen 1978:4). He searches the texts for details of sociological interest. His goal is to sketch the Jesus movement in terms of its origin, composition, conduct and influence. This is a purely descriptive and comparative study. It is no different from the Form-critical School's pursuit of the *Sitz im Leben*, except for the application of a scientifically constructed verifiable sociological model.

Theissen differentiates between an analysis of roles, which investigates typical patterns of behaviour, an analysis of factors, which investigates the way in which this behaviour is determined by society, and an analysis of function, which investigates the effects of a group on society (1978:1). He regards the economic, ecological, political and cultural factors as inseparable in their reciprocal interaction. In another essay in methodology, Theissen (1982:176-177) shares his conviction that the sociological approach is only concerned with interpersonal behaviour with reference to especially those characteristics, which transcend the personal:

A sociological question is less concerned with what is individual but focuses on what is typical, recurrent, and

general. Second, is it less concerned with the singular condition of a specific situation than with structural relationships that apply to several situations (Theissen 1982:177).

He uses the method of the form-critical analysis of texts to accomplish the sociological task (Theissen 1982:177). A process of inference obtains the sociological information. In the conclusion to his discussion of methodology, Theissen remarks:

It is not necessary to emphasise that the prospect of achieving an approximate comprehension of the matter to be investigated, by means of adequate statements about it. *The comprehension* [italics mine] ... depends on the plurality, and methodological independence of various procedures for drawing inferences (1982:195).

Van Staden & Van Aarde (1991:61-62) outline three different methods that may be distinguished (cf Theissen 1978:3; 1982:177; see also Osiek 1984:43) namely, constructive conclusions, analytic methods and comparative methods.

Constructive conclusions are drawn from an evaluation of pre-scientific statements, which give either prosopographic (personal or individual) information about the background, status and roles of individuals (Scroggs 1980:174), or sociographic (group or social) information about the programme, organisation and pattern of behaviour of groups, institutions, organisations and other large communities. According to Theissen (1982:177-178) there are very few sociographic statements about early Christian groups while prosopographic statements about individuals are more numerous. In accordance with social-scientific methods of handling empirical data, such statements are to be assessed in terms of reliability, validity and representativeness.

Analytic methods afford an indirect approach to sociological information. Such methods are used, in the absence of explicit data to draw inferences from statements about (recurrent) historical events (cf Theissen 1978:3; 1982:181-182), about conflicts between groups or over ethical and legal norms (cf Theissen 1978:3; 1982:182-286), and from religious symbols like literary forms and poetic modes of expression, e.g. parables and structural homologues (cf Theissen 1978:3; 1982:187-191).

Comparative methods are geared towards establishing what is typical for early Christianity. This can be done in one of two ways: either by analysing the differences brought forward by a comparison between early Christianity and the surrounding culture, or by analysing the analogies between not only the said groups, but also between Christianity and any 'comparable movements, groups, or phenomena of whatever era' (Theissen 1982:192). According to Theissen (1982:192), therefore, it is possible to compare early Christianity to 'all messianic-chiliastic movements, where again and again we find comparable characteristics...' Theissen (1982:194) admits that 'the disadvantage of any such procedure relying on analogies is its relative lack of precision', but still thinks it is worthy of investigation. This admission challenges Theissen's position about the reliability, validity and representativeness of the social-scientific assessment of empirical data.

Thiessen's work has to be commended for 'blazing new trails'. However, there is a lack of reference to social-scientific theory or conceptual models in most of Thiessen's work (cf Gager 1979:75; Schutz 1982:15; Osiek 1984:45; Edwards 1983:435; Elliott 1986:11), which makes it difficult to evaluate his approach. It is recognised, however, that Theissen has a wide knowledge of social-scientific theory, and is able to use aspects that are relevant. According to Schutz (1982:16) Theissen is concerned about 'a general critical theory of religion that will also be responsive to the historian's perception of religious data'. His choice for the functionalist approach assigns to him an intermediate position between phenomenological analysis on the one hand, (which differentiates religion from normal reality and therefore makes it inaccessible to sociological analysis) and reductionist analysis on the other hand (which assigns to all religious phenomena some non-religious origin). Thiessen's approach therefore exposes itself to the criticism of being reductionist (cf Schutz 1982:16). Malina (1982:237) views reductionism as the process of subsuming one model into another. A discussion of the functionalist approach will be helpful here.

1.3.3 FUNCTIONALISM

The methodological basis of 'functionalism,' as a sociological approach, begins with the assumption that the ideal condition for a group or society is to be in equilibrium (cf Elliott 1985:332). A

state of equilibrium is conducive to the proper and efficient functioning of the collective parts of society. Functionalism distinguishes between 'manifest' and 'latent' functions, or, in Thiessen's terms, 'subjective intention' and 'objective function' (cf Schutz 1982:17). According to this theory, a religious phenomenon's subjective intention (what it is meant to do) is not, necessarily, the same as its objective function (what it does). Theissen limits his functionalist analysis to those aspects that serve basic social needs in a specific frame of reference (society). Those needs are twofold: the production of order (that is the integration of the members of that society), and the control and overcoming of conflict through change (cf Theissen 1978:2). Schutz states:

These polar opposites are not regarded as mutually exclusive virtues (or vices), as if viewed from an ideological presumption of what the social frame should be like. Instead, they are regarded as two ends of a continuum along which all social organisms seek an accommodation or balance of forces (1982:17).

Integration-conflict marked the ends of this axis. Theissen adds another axis marked by the ends creative-restrictive functions of religion. This results in a framework of theoretical perspectives on religion on which to locate most of the classical theories, and whereby the centrality of the functionalist approach can be underscored (Schutz 1982:18). For the different aspects compounded into this model Theissen is dependent upon Durkheim, Marx, Berger & Luckmann, and Weber (cf Gager 1979:175). According to Theissen:

Religion can be a social cement and an impulse towards renewal: it can intimidate people and force them to conform, or can help them to act independently. In primitive Christianity the innovative function of religion appears most clearly (1978:2).

It would seem that Thiessen leans more toward social history than towards sociological theory in his works (Schutz 1982:20; cf Harris 1984:107). It is also clear, though that Theissen is not bound to one method. He has pleaded for the use of any method if it proves to have heuristic value (Theissen 1978:4-5; 1982:195).

1.3.4 JOHN G GAGER

Gager (1975) employed the social sciences in an investigation into the social setting of the early church. This was the first attempt in North America (cf Edward 1983:432). In this work *Kingdom and community: The social world of early Christianity*, he sets out to

give an extensive account of the social world in which early Christianity had its origins (cf Tidball 1983:26).

Some scholars (cf Harris 1984:107) see Gager as 'more intentionally sociological than Theissen', although Edwards (1983:435) has the opposite view: 'The work of Gerd Theissen... shows considerably deeper immersion in sociological method'. Gager does use a variety of sociological and anthropological models, such as conflict theory, the interpretation of symbols, sociology of knowledge and, especially, the theory of cognitive dissonance (cf Gager 1975).

1.3.4.1 COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Gager's research reflects a comparative approach (cf Harris 1984:108). He studied early Christianity by comparing it with millenarian movements (cf Gager 1975). Gager reasserted the validity of such a comparison several years later:

I remain convinced that the most important insights into the fundamental character of early Christianity are to be derived from anthropological and sociological studies of popular and millenarian religious movements which have nothing to do with the time or region of the New Testament (Gager 1982: 261).

According to Osiek (1984:39), Gager attempts '...to understand the dynamics of Jesus' ministry and the early years of the church as a movement of dramatic expectation'. The validity of drawing such analogies between early Christianity and (modern) millenarian movements (like the cargo cults) is accepted by some (e.g. Osiek 1984:40) and disputed by others (cf Edwards 1983:434; Malina 1986d: 55; Tidball 1983:37-40).

Gager uses the psychological theory of cognitive dissonance to explain the fact that early Christianity, unlike other millenarian movements, endured and even grew. This theory was proposed by Festinger (1957) to describe the state brought about in individuals by 'discrepancies between action and cognition' (Sargent & Williamson 1966:225). For example, a smoker who knows that smoking causes cancer but continues the habit demonstrates an inconsistency between his behaviour and his knowledge. The smoker is engaging in counter-attitudinal behaviour and thereby becomes prone to cognitive dissonance.

Other definitions of the concept of 'cognitive dissonance' are explained as:

Psychological tension having motivational characteristics' which' occurs when a person has two cognitions which are somehow discrepant with each other (Sargent & Williamson 1966:225).

The crucial and necessary condition for the production of dissonance is that psychologically two elements are inconsistent in the sense that the opposite of one follows from the other (Freedman, Sears & Carlsmith 1978:428). Papineau (1978:168) speaks of 'attitudinal inconsistency'. According to Papineau (1978:169), this is experienced when two or more conflicting desires are involved. The need to reduce attitudinal inconsistency leads to the adoption of certain beliefs. Papineau regards such beliefs as ideological. The common notion of an 'ideological' belief is one which is 'propagated in order to defend actions or policies which are in the interest of a certain group, by presenting those actions or policies as having results which are accepted as being in the general good' (Papineau 1978:169).

The *Apartheid* policy of the former Nationalist government provides an excellent example. Johannes A Loubser (1987) lucidly details this in a chapter in *The Apartheid Bible, A Critical Review of Racial Theology in South Africa*. He lists nine characteristics, which are generally ascribed to ideologies (1987:122-124):

1. An ideology simplifies reality.
2. An ideology legitimises a certain status quo.
3. An ideology develops as a result of moral pressure from outside.
4. An ideology utilises an uncritical worldview.
5. An ideology operates with myths.
6. Ideologies are self-explanatory.
7. Ideologies mainly function subconsciously.
8. Ideologies are embedded in institutions.
9. An ideology is also absolutistic.

Gerald J Pillay (1985:324) in a chapter entitled *Theology or 'Christian' Ideology* summed up *Apartheid* as 'a powerful ideology that has absolutised ethnicity'.

The assumption of the theory of cognitive dissonance is that there is within individuals a tendency towards cognitive consistency. Inconsistency, or dissonance, therefore has to be reduced. The greater the dissonance, the more pressure there is to reduce it (Freedman, Sears & Carlsmith 1978:430). Dissonance therefore becomes

a drive (Sargent & Williamson 1966:225; cf also Freedman, Sears & Carlsmith 1978:430). Festinger, as quoted in Sargent & Williamson 1966:225), formulated the following basic hypotheses for this theory:

The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and to achieve consonance. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information that would likely increase the dissonance. The presence of dissonance gives rise to pressures to eliminate the dissonance. The strength of the pressures to reduce the dissonance is a function of the magnitude of the dissonance (1957:18).

An acute level of dissonance is generated when a person puts a great amount of energy into a decision and, the expectations about its effects are dashed (cf Freedman, Sears and Carlsmith 1978:434). The dissonance aroused by unfulfilled expectations can be reduced in various ways (cf Freedman, Sears and Carlsmith 1978:435), one of which is to confirm the correctness of the original belief, while conceding that the unfulfilled expectations were incorrect. This reaction was perceived by Festinger, Bricken & Schachter (1956) in their study of a group who predicted the end of the world while they expected to be saved by a spaceship. Instead of giving up their belief and returning to normal life, which action would not have reduced the dissonance caused by the energy expended in their planning, they decided that the day had been postponed but nevertheless that the end of the world was coming soon. They also changed their style dramatically, instead of being reserved and avoiding publicity; they suddenly started recruiting new members. This gain in the number of members would reduce their dissonance by showing that their original beliefs were correct, because more and more people were accepting them (cf Freedman, Sears & Carlsmith 1978:435).

Gager (1975:20-40; cf also Gottwald 1982:145) employed the psychological theory of cognitive dissonance to explain why an apocalyptic-prophetic group 'whose theory (myth) ceases to fit the observable facts' (Edwards 1983:434) may either cease to exist, or may 'intensify its fervour and translate its energy into an expanded missionary movement' (Osiek 1984:41-42). Gager viewed both Jesus' crucifixion and the delay of the Parousia as examples of 'disconfirmation', causing a sense of cognitive dissonance, which resulted in 'the intellectual response of reassessment and

reinterpretation ... and the social response of proselytism or mission activity...' (Osiek 1984:42). Scroggs (1980:173) also lists the conditions that are required if proselytizing is to occur following disconfirmation.

In summary then, there are three major ways to reduce dissonance. Firstly, by reducing the importance of the dissonant elements, secondly, by adding consonant elements, and thirdly by changing one of the dissonant elements so that it becomes consistent with the others (Freedman, Sears and Carlsmith 1978:430).

Smith (1978:123) has raised one of the most serious challenges against Gager's *Kingdom and Community* (1975). This challenge centres on what he called 'the imprecision of Gager's aims'. Any social world in its concrete expression as a community must according to Smith (1978:124), exist in some place at a certain time. It cannot remain in the abstract. Using the terms 'world-construction' and 'world-maintenance' as defined within the sociology of knowledge by Berger & Luckmann (1967), Gager displays a processual understanding of social world. Yet he fails to achieve concreteness, to arrive at that world he believes the early Christians to be creating (Smith 1978:125). This gives rise to the title of Smith's review article: *Too much kingdom, too little community*, a play on Gager's own title (cf Smith 1978:123). Smith (1978:125) alleges that Gager adopts 'an all too easy functionalism' when being at all sociological, and claims that he is not really concerned with social construction, the analysis of symbolic worlds or asking social questions (Smith 1978:129). Smith's verdict (1978:124) that '... this book must be judged a noble failure ... is perhaps a bit too harsh.

Another criticism of Gager's approach has to do with his assumption that early Christianity can be interpreted by comparisons with the millenarian movements (cf Best 1983:189), or that the survival of Christianity, despite its unfulfilled beliefs, hopes and expectations, can be explained by the concept of cognitive dissonance. Malina regards this attempt by Gager '...to employ a model from contemporary U.S. experience, such as Festinger's cognitive dissonance model, to directly explain something in the Mediterranean world, and the first century Mediterranean at that, seems highly suspect' (Malina 1986d: 38; see also Malina 1982:240).

Furthermore, the theory of cognitive dissonance cannot explain convincingly the confirming propensities of Jesus' resurrection (Osiek 1984:42-43; cf Tracy 1978:133). In direct contrast to Gager's ascription of the survival of the early Christian groups to their overcoming their sense of cognitive dissonance, Malina (1986d: 39) contends that:

Rather than any attempt to solve the cognitive dissonance resulting from the disconfirmation of its belief system, ... it was the dissonance itself along with the normative inconsistencies typical of early Christian movement groups that best accounts for the survival and growth of these groups. In the social setting of earliest Christianity, normative inconsistency was the rule. If early Christianity is accepted as a counter-culture movement, according to the Lukan portrayal in Acts, the picture becomes even clearer.

Gager seems to have fewer followers than critics but nonetheless his major work, *Kingdom and Community*, should be commended for its pioneering spirit, at the very least.

1.3.5 WAYNE A MEEKS

Wayne A Meeks published an article *The man from heaven in Johannine sectarianism*, in 1972, well before Theissen and Gager. In this social-scientific study of the New Testament in which he utilised concepts and theories from the sociology of knowledge to explain the creation of the motif of the Johannine descending / ascending redeemer (1972:41). Meeks asserted that the Gospel of John was designed to be unintelligible to outsiders in providing 'a symbolic universe which gave religious legitimacy, a theodicy, to the group's actual isolation from the larger society' (1972:70). Its origin derived from the social context of the Johannine community. This idea of 'insiders' was criticised by Berger (1977:230). Even at that early stage Meeks had shown 'the immense possibilities in this approach' (Scroggs 1980:176).

Meeks called his major work 'a social description or social history of Pauline Christianity' (1983:2). He saw his task as having a double aim:

... to the limit that the sources and our abilities permit, we must try to discern the texture of life in particular times and particular places. After that, the task of the social historian of early Christianity is to describe the life of the ordinary Christian within that environment - not just the ideas or the self-understanding of the leaders and writers (1983:2).

From these comments, the difficulty of finding precise terminology for this new approach becomes more apparent. This task, as outlined by Meeks, goes beyond a mere social description. Meeks has demonstrated a deep insight into the complexities surrounding the social interpretation of historical texts.

In writing social history, then, we cannot afford to ignore the theories that guide social scientists. But which of the competing schools of sociology or anthropology or social psychology shall we heed? ...There is no comprehensive theory of social movements so commanding that we would be prudent to commit our method to its care ... Christianity, even at the earliest moment we can get any clear picture of it, was already a complex movement taking form within several complex societies. What social theory is adequate to grasp the whole? (Meeks 1983:5).

Meeks defines his approach as 'interpretive description,' and views his application of social science as 'eclectic', and his use of theory to be 'piecemeal as needed, when it fits' (1983:6). He, however, speaks about a 'family of perspectives shared by a growing number of social scientists and historians of religion' to which he also subscribes (1983:6). In this approach 'society is viewed as a process, in which personal identity and social forms are mutually and continuously created by interactions that occur by means of symbols' (1983:6). Meeks (1983:7) calls his approach that of a 'moderate functionalist' thus hoping to avoid being reductionist.

Elliott expresses surprise in his thorough review of Meeks's *The first urban Christian*, that Meeks does not explain his theoretical presuppositions. He says (cf also Gottwald 1982:144; Tiryakian 1985:1139; Rohrbaugh 1987:117-118 notes 24,25,27,30) 'Meeks, it would appear, would like to have it both ways - the safety of theory-free social description and the occasional dalliance with sociological research '.

Elliott further shares his observation that:

Meeks ... is reluctant to explicate his sociological theory and models and to spell out more adequately the implications of his moderate functionalist perspective on the Pauline social world. Consequently, it is often unclear how his 'piecemeal theory' informs and shapes his conclusions and how these conclusions are to be evaluated (1985:332-334).

Despite these criticism Meeks' work has been generally received positively and described by Elliott as 'the best single volume on the

Pauline social world' (1985:333) to date. According to Harris, he also reflects a 'balanced use of historical-critical and sociological-anthropological methods and theories' (1984:110).

1.3.6 BRUCE J MALINA

Malina, in contrast to Theissen, Gager and Meeks, has always been at pains to explicate both theory and model. He has made social-scientific theory and models accessible by writing concisely (cf Malina 1982:229-242; 1983:119-133 for short introductions to his work; cf 1986a, especially pages 1-27, for a comprehensive explication and application of practical models for Biblical interpretation).

Malina provides some interesting insights on the use of models.

... human beings generate models in order to understand their experiences. No model that we know of is useful for every conceivable purpose. There is no model to help understand all models, just as there is no language that one could learn to be able understand all languages. The use of models is like the use of tools; in this sense, models are question-specific or area-specific constructs. The appropriate model depends on the type of information one seeks to generate and comprehend (1982:237).

A 'social system', according to Malina (1982:232), is a model intrinsic to any human group. Its function is to provide 'categories of human experience and behaviour that serve to help understand, control, and predict the flow of human interaction'. Therefore, any effort to understand and interpret human behaviour is based on some model of how the system works, and this is true whether it is acknowledged (explicit models) or not (implicit models) (cf Carney 1975:5; Malina 1982:232; Elliott 1986:6).

Social sciences use sociological, anthropological, political, economic, educational, religious, cross-cultural and psychological models to examine typical and recurrent human interaction (Malina 1982:232). A challenge emerges when social systems, such as early Christian groups that cannot be available for observation, are to be interpreted. These groups are presented to us as part of the content of literary texts, whose main character is not simply descriptive, but ideological. According to Van Staden & Van Aarde (1991:71-72) the author would employ only such information, possibly of interest to the social sciences, as would be instrumental to his ideological

point of view and purpose. In addition, the information would be in the guise of a way of expression peculiar to the author, and therefore incidental. This warrants, according to Van Staden & Van Aarde (1991:72), another set of models in addition to those used to interpret the functioning of human social systems, and that would be models 'of the nature and function of language (linguistics)' (cf Malina 1982:232).

The historical issue is another factor that has to be considered. The societies we wish to study are ancient, historical societies. According to Malina (1982:233) they are not present to be observed and compared with other societies but are contained in texts (units of meaning) from the past. The 'distance' of those societies from our own makes the meanings foreign. History, as a model for the interpretation of such alien meaning, 'seeks to explain events in terms of the distinctiveness of agents and agencies, in terms of particularities and differences'. The other social sciences rooted in the present, study the past for generalities, commonalities, samenesses' (Malina 1982:233). The challenge is that 'in order to ferret our distinctiveness all the commonalities of the area under study have to be known and articulated' (Malina 1982:233). Therefore, social science models have to be also combined with historical and linguistic models to interpret ancient Biblical texts.

Malina (1982:233) identifies 'three main types of social science models that one might use to understand social interaction', namely the structural functionalist model, the conflict model, and the symbolic model. Elliott (1986:7), however, prefers to designate these and other styles of theorising as 'theoretical perspectives' rather than 'models'.

The structural functional model presupposes that society is in equilibrium, and 'is a relatively persistent, stable, well-integrated structure of elements' (Malina 1982:234; see also Malina 1986:40,43-44). All the elements in society function towards the maintenance of society as a whole, integrated system. Gradual or adaptive change may occur over time, but non-adaptive change is regarded as deviance. This model is helpful in identifying typical structures and patterns of behaviour within a society. Malina

(1982:234) cites Gottwald (1979), Malina (1981a) and Wilson (1980) as examples of structural functionalist approaches to Biblical texts.

Conflict theory presents another model of interpretation. This theory is also known as the coercion, power or interest model (Malina 1982:234; 1986d: 42-44). This model presumes that society and the elements of society are constantly changing unless some force intervenes to prohibit the change. Malina (1982:235) states:

From this perspective and in terms of this sort of model, a good way to understand Biblical texts is to find out what elements or factors interfere with the normal process of change ... Social change, deviance, is normal.

Gager's Kingdom and community (1975) offers another example of the conflict model.

The symbolic character of human interaction is the third main type of social science perspective. Unlike the structural functionalist and conflict models, the symbolic model does not presuppose 'that a social system is a group of interacting persons whose interactions are structured and oriented around common purposes' (Malina 1982:235). According to this approach, a social system is regarded as

... a system of symbols that is, meanings, values and feelings about the meanings and values that are attached to and embodied by persons, things, and events (Malina 1982:235).

This model is founded on the idea that individual and collective human behaviour is organised around the symbolic meanings and expectations attached to objects that are socially valued (Malina 1982:236). Biblical interpreters could use this model to establish what roles; symbols, gestures and definitions of situations are expressed or implied in the texts. Some examples of the symbolic approach can be found in Malina (1981b) and Pilch (1981) (cf Malina 1982:236). Malina (1986b), Pilch (1988) and Neyrey (1988) supply examples of how these different perspectives have been applied to the same text.

According to Malina (1982:241; 1983:129-131), there are five minimal features that should characterise a good social science model for Biblical interpretation:

- (1) it should be a cross-cultural model, accounting for the interpreter as well as those interpreted in some comparative perspective;

- (2) it should be of a sufficient level of abstraction to allow for the surfacing of similarities that facilitates comparison;
- (3) the model should be able to fit a larger sociolinguistic frame for interpreting texts;
- (4) it should derive from experiences that match what we know of the time and place conditioned Biblical world as closely as possible;
- (5) the meanings it generates should be irrelevant but understandable to us and our twentieth century United States society or any other current society [*italics mine*];
- (6) the application of the model should be acceptable to social scientists (Malina 1982:241).

Although Malina works largely from the perspective of cultural anthropology, he also uses different interpretive models. Cultural anthropology, according to Gottwald (1982:145), is 'essentially structural-functional in character'. Gottwald (1982:155, note 14) cites Malina (1981b) as an example of a structural-functionalist. Malina (1982:236) himself, however, cites the same work as an example of the symbolic approach. In the words of Neyrey (1986a: 107), Malina in his recent major work (1986a), succeeded in developing 'a single macro-model for the investigation of the New Testament, viz., the cross-cultural model of British anthropologist Mary Douglas' (Neyrey 1986a: 107). The advantage of cross-cultural models, according to Malina (1982:238-239; see Malina 1989 for a model of different time perceptions) is that it requires the interpreter to account for, his/her own social location, and serves as a deterrent against ethnocentric interpretation.

Ethnocentricity refers to the inclination to interpret the properties and/or behaviour of any 'alien' individual and/or group in terms of the norms, values and characteristics of one's own group. The concept 'ethnocentrism,' introduced by William G Sumner, refers to a

... view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it (1940:13).

The values of their own group, as the in-group,

... are equated with abstract universal standards of morality and the practices of the in-group are exalted as better or more 'natural' than those of any out-group (Noel 1971:33).

Catton (1964:130) views the essence of ethnocentrism thus:

'Ethnocentrism makes us see out-group behaviour as deviation from in-group mores rather than as adherence to outgroup mores'.

Malina's contribution also lies in isolating four distinct social institutions or structures that are basic in any society, namely, kinship, economic, politics, and religion (1986b: 152-153). Generally, one of these institutions maintains primacy over the others in societal arrangements:

In Christendom in the past, and the Islamic republics in the present, kinship, economics, and politics are embedded together in religion, i.e., the norms of kinship, economics, and politics are determined by the religious institution: representatives of the religious institution rule their societies in one way or another (Malina 1986b: 153).

Malina cites other examples where kinship, economics or politics maintained primacy and the other institutions were the embedded ones (1986b: 153-154). This sensitises the interpreter to the fact that the society being studied was configured radically different to ours. Extreme care should be taken to avoid ethnocentrism.

1.3.7 JOHN H ELLIOTT

John H. Elliott concentrates on the sociological interpretation of one single New Testament writing (1981:7; see also Edwards 1983:442). According to Elliott (1989:1-12), Fernando Belo was the first scholar to perform a social-scientific analysis of a single New Testament work, namely the Gospel of Mark, in 1975. Elliott, in his major work, (1981:1) states that the goal of his 'sociological exegesis' is to complement and improve

... the prevailing method of Biblical interpretation through more rigorous attention to the social dimension of the Biblical text and to the sociological dimension of the exegetical task.

He defines 'sociological exegesis' as

- the analysis, interpretation, and synthesis (correlation) of
- (1) the literary, sociological and theological features and dimensions of the text (1 Peter) and
 - (2) this text's relation to and impact upon its narrower and wider social contexts (Elliott 1981:8).

Elliott emphasises the importance of the text, as the text itself is the only witness to its specific situation. So it all comes back to literary analysis or what is more exactly called rhetorical analysis, searching for what Elliott calls the 'strategy' of the writer, and through that finding the situation ... in which this particular strategy makes sense (1981:10).

Elliott's reference to the term 'strategy' deserves attention. He defines the term as the deliberate intention of a document to have a specific social effect on its intended hearers or readers (1981:10). This pragmatic dimension of the text includes aspects such as its goals, means, and intended function (1987:2). Clues to the strategy of the text can be found in its description, emphasis, and evaluation of selected features; the way it 'proscribes or criticises and/or prescribes or praises' certain actions, roles, institutions, attitudes, beliefs, et cetera, or 'explains, justifies, and legitimates' these (1987:2). The 'strategy' relates to the situation of the text. Situation, according to Elliott

... involves various levels and phases. The *macrosocial level* of a text concerns the macrosocial context of the text, the total social system in which the text is produced. The *microsocial level* of a text concerns the more specific social conditions and features of its specific sender(s) and receiver(s). The situation of a text can be viewed

- (a) *synchronically* (with attention to social patterns of behaviour, institutions, structures, processes and their relations at a given point or period in time), or
- (b) *diachronically* (with attention to how these social features and arrangements change over the course of time) (1987:1).

The correlation of the strategy and the situation of a text parallel the integration of a literary and a social-scientific analysis of the text. The strategy of a text is pursued by literary methods while the situation of a text is sought by social-scientific methods.

Elliot displays an incisive grasp of the theory and concepts of the social sciences, in addition to a responsible way of perceiving and handling the texts.

1.3.8 NORMAN R PETERSEN

Norman R. Petersen also engaged in a social-scientific investigation of a single New Testament document, namely Paul's letter to Philemon (1985). His approach is an integration of three key-fields, two of them taken from the social-sciences (sociology and anthropology) and the other from literary theory (narratology) into 'the traditional philological base of the historical critical method' (Petersen 1985:ix, cf Hays 1987:173, Osiek 1987:39; Darr 1988:118, and Wimbush 1988:121 for an assessment of Petersen's accomplishment of his goal). Petersen (1985:ix) himself calls it a 'method'. Literary theory refers to the concepts of point of view, narrative world (as opposed to contextual world), plot and closure, which are associated with

narrative analysis. Social anthropology refers to the concepts of institution and social interaction, which are associated with scientific analysis. Sociology of knowledge refers to the concept of symbolic universe, which is associated with an analysis of belief systems (Petersen 1985:IX).

Petersen (1985:171) contends that the sociology of knowledge, as elucidated by Berger & Luckman (1967), provides the theoretical framework to interpret the work of both field and armchair anthropologists. Van Staden (1988:340-345) has made a survey of the sociology of knowledge and its key concepts. He recognises its usefulness for the interpretation of Biblical texts (see Scroggs 1980:175; De Villiers 1984:66; Lategan 1984:10 for further favourable evaluations). These concepts include role, resocialisation, legitimation, universe-maintenance, social institutions, and symbolic universe.

A major premise of the sociology of knowledge is that all thought is inextricably linked to its delineation by the contemporary historical situation and locality (Klaus Berger 1977:240). Berger & Luckmann (1967:4) therefore view the central challenge of the sociology of knowledge as establishing 'the existential determination (*Seinsgebundenheit*) of thought as such'. This is a general problem that surfaces when specific factors such as the historical, psychological, biological, economical or sociological, are seen as determinative of human thought (Berger & Luckmann 1967:5). The idea that humankind creates social reality, and that humankind in turn is shaped by that reality, has led to the seemingly paradoxical statement of the sociology of knowledge that society is a product of humankind (Berger & Luckmann 1967:1,3,15), and humankind is a product of society (Berger 1973:13-14). The observation, that humankind and society reciprocally define each other, is crucial for the exegesis of the New Testament. This highlights the fact that time is a capturing device, both for the historically encapsulated society that we study through its literary products, and for the 'encapsulated' society into which we find ourselves absorbed. In essence this means that whilst the relationship between humankind and society has some universal traits, it also differs substantially between one time and place and another. Malina (1982:241) emphasises this point when he states the meanings generated by a social-scientific model for the

time and place conditioned Biblical world should be irrelevant but understandable to us in twenty-first century society.

Other definitions of the sociology of knowledge are taken from Gould & Kolb's, *A dictionary of the social-sciences* (1964:679). They describe the general significance of the sociology of knowledge thus:

The proper theme of our study is to observe how and in what form intellectual life at a given historical moment is related to the existing social and political forces (Mannheim 1952:237-260).

Sociology of knowledge is the analysis of the functional interrelations of social processes and structures on the one hand and the patterns of intellectual life, including the modes of knowing, on the other (Becker & Dahlke 1941:310).

The sociology of knowledge ... is concerned with the way in which systems of thought ... are conditioned by other social facts (Sprott 1954:141).

This leads us, of necessity, to an ecological perspective of humankind and society within a sociology of knowledge.

Petersen's work (1985) clearly demonstrates that the social-scientific part of his interpretive model is based on his literary insight. The most important literary element, for Petersen, is the concept of the referential history, or the narrative world of a narrative discourse. Petersen, following Eco (1979), understands this as the world as it is represented in the text, and that world represents the referential functions of messages as explicated by Roman Jakobson (Petersen 1985:33; 1978:9-48). In defining the concept, Petersen (1985:33) states: 'the world of a narrative is a literary construction, and the events which take place in that world have a narrative quality'. Elsewhere he also says: 'The narrative world is that reality which a narrator bestows upon his actors and upon their actions...' (Petersen 1985:7). This literary-theoretical statement provides the link between the literary and social-scientific attempts.

According to Petersen (1985:ix)

... 'worlds' are human constructions, whether they are constructions of societies or of narrators, and ... narrative worlds are comprised of the same kinds of social facts - symbolic forms and social arrangements - so-called real worlds.

In this way, the literary concept of narrative worlds becomes accessible to social science analysis.

The interface in Petersen's approach, between the literary concept of the narrative world as a constructed world, and the sociology of knowledge's presentation of social reality as a constructed reality, is predictable. Petersen (1985:17-22) argues consistently from the premise that narrative worlds and social reality are somehow akin in terms of construction and operation. Both these kinds of 'worlds' are analysed in terms of two social-scientific categories, namely social arrangement and symbolic form, which constitute what are known as social facts (Petersen 1985:38). Petersen gives the following definitions of these two categories (1985:39, note 49 acknowledges his indebtedness to the work of Berger & Luckmann, 1967, for the use of these categories):

'Social arrangements' have to do with the social structures underlying the social relations comprised by the actions of the actors ... 'Symbolic forms', on the other hand, have to do with the overarching cognitive systems, the system of knowledge, belief and value, that define these actors' identities and motivate their actions.

Social arrangements focus on the social institutions one encounters in everyday life, institutions within the fields of economics, politics, religion and kinship. It has to do with the social relations enacted by the actors who represent these institutions. All these elements make up the fabric of what is known as the social universe (Petersen 1985:27-28) or institutional order. The institutional processes need to be integrated into a comprehensive meaningful system. The symbolic universe does this, which is an all-embracing frame of reference that provides an integrative meaning for a society that consists of segmented institutions and diverse subjective experiences (cf Van Staden 1988:349, summarising Berger & Luckmann). Petersen (1985:57) defines a symbolic universe as a body of traditional knowledge accessed through language and symbol, a system of meanings that creates a 'world'. It shapes and legitimates social institutions (Darr 1988:120). The social universe, according to Petersen (1985:27-28), is inhabited by both believers and non-believers, while God and Christ are absent from the social universe but present in the symbolic universe. They are present in the social universe only as objects of knowledge. Therefore, Petersen

makes a distinction between theology and symbolic universe as representing two different kinds of knowledge. He states:

Theology ... is ... a kind of knowledge that is the product of systematic reflection upon a symbolic universe and indeed of reflection that serves to maintain that universe when it is in some kind of jeopardy, as for example from the threats of doubt, of disagreement, or of symbolic universes. Theology is ... a kind of knowledge that is produced to defend and maintain the knowledge comprising a symbolic universe, and for this reason we can speak of a symbolic universe as a primary (pre-reflective) form of knowledge and theology as a secondary (reflective) form that is dependent on it (Petersen 1985:29-30).

The second chapter of Petersen's *Rediscovering Paul*, according to Hays (1987:173), carefully examines the social structures and arrangements in the narrative world, and is the core of Petersen's work. It makes great strides in our understanding of Paul. Hays, however, is critical of Petersen's distinction between 'symbolic universe' and 'theology'. He describes Petersen's survey of Paul's symbolic universe as 'looking very much like a summary of Pauline theology under the unifying themes of kinship and master-slave relations' (1987:174). He is sceptical whether the social-anthropological categories allow Petersen to adequately display the narrative structure of Paul's 'symbolic universe'.

Petersen employs social anthropology, a subfield of the social science 'anthropology' to study these institutions and the social relations of the narrative. He makes a deliberative choice in using social anthropology, because it achieves more than sociology could. It accounts for the category of symbolic forms and its relation to social arrangements (cf Petersen 1985:18). The relationship between the worlds explored by anthropologists and the narrative worlds consists mainly in both being 'closed systems' (see Petersen 1985:40). This means that

... when and as such worlds are experienced, they comprise an internally ordered whole which is the ultimate object of interest, for it is the frame of reference in which the parts make sense (Petersen 1985:20).

The reader of a narrative and the anthropologist are also alike inasmuch as they are both 'pàrticipant observers in other worlds' (Petersen 1985:20).

The three fields namely narrative criticism, sociology of knowledge, and social anthropology, according to the exposition by Petersen, are

compatible enough for them to be incorporated into a model with which to study the narrative world of a New Testament narrative discourse (cf Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:81). The primary factor promoting compatibility is the fact that all three of these fields apply to the study of 'worlds': narrative worlds, social worlds and symbolic universes. Yet Darr noted another link between the literary and social aspects of Petersen's work:

Conspicuously absent from the field of view afforded by Petersen's literary lens is the element of characterisation. This is hardly coincidental, for it is precisely at this point that the literary and the social are merged ... That is, he treats the characters of Paul's story solely in sociological terms (1988:120).

The sociology of knowledge enjoys a relative independence within the discipline of sociology by formulating its own epistemology to explain the origin and persistence of everyday social reality. Concurrently, the sociology of knowledge's understanding of social reality, as advocated by Berger and Luckmann, bears a close resemblance to structural functionalism (cf Turner 1982: 19-116), one of the main perspectives on the functioning of society.

1.3.9 CRITIQUE OF METHOD

Many criticisms can be levelled against the validity of this new school of research, and they will be summarised briefly here.

1.3.9.1 MISUSE OF THE MODELS

It is easy to read historical situations in the light of modern theories without asking whether or not these current models actually fit the ancient data. Many sociological researchers are doing the same with Israel or the church. Gager, for instance, has been accused of ignoring aspects of early Christianity that did not fit his millenarian model. Scholars often choose only those groups that fit the model they wish to impose on the data and then select those aspects from Israel or the church, which fit their theory. They then studiously omit aspects in both the external model and the Biblical material that are not parallel. Best labels this 'the problem of personal bias' and calls for 'a fundamental stock-taking by those who want to employ' later models to demonstrate Biblical theories (1983:189).

In many cases, sociology is an ideological tool for proving a thesis

rather than an instrument for studying a movement. Gottwald (1979) is often accused of forcing his liberation theory upon the data. He theorises that egalitarianism rather than monotheism was primary in Israel's 'socio-economic revolution' against the Canaanites. Yahweh was the symbol of the revolution, not the reason for it. Therefore, the conquest of Canaan was socio-economic rather than religious at the core. As Long states,

The model for contemporary analysis is an ancient revolutionary society of which religious expression was but a part. Biblical theology seems to have become a kind of liberation socio-theology (1982:255).

In a more negative vein, Yamauchi says,

Despite his massive erudition, Gottwald reads into the OT his ideological biases in his imaginative reconstruction that disregards both the Biblical and the archaeological data (1984:183).

1.3.9.2 REVISIONISM

This approach tends to take the Biblical data more seriously than previous schools. However, many work with the results of the historical-critical method and assume the validity of those conclusions. This is the case with Gottwald. Theissen discusses the problem of history for sociological research (1982:175-79). The historian is 'entirely dependent on chance sources which have survived' (1982:175), and none of those documents are framed as sociographic statements. All too often theological assertions are treated as social statements. The problem of verifying the reliability of hypotheses is immense. How does one test a case that is built on such obscure evidence? It is advisable to treat the Biblical text seriously as a historical record in its own right.

1.3.9.3 TENDENCY TO GENERALISE

Theissen lumps together Jesus and the apostles as 'wandering charismatics' and gives little place to differences between them (1978). Social forces that shaped their contributions replace the creative genius of Jesus and Paul. This makes little sense, for true genius (Galileo, Shakespeare, Newton, and Einstein) transcends the society in which they appear. By failing to take account of individual contributions and by overstating the place of social pressures, one's results are usually skewed. Best decries the 'tendency in sociological theory to regularise the data in favour of interpretive theories' in light of 'the extraordinary diversity of

social structures' in the church (1983:192). Caution should be exercised against forcing unity upon diversity.

1.3.9.4 THE PAUCITY OF THE DATA

Modern sociological conclusions are not made without extensive data collected over long periods. In comparison, the Biblical data is sparse indeed and that which we have is not couched in sociological language. It is erroneous to read theological statements as sociological evidence, and we must exercise great caution in trying to do so. For instance, Elliott argues that 'stranger' and 'alien' (in 1 Pet 1:1, 17; 2:1) are used as technical terms for the dispossessed rather than as theological metaphors for the Christian as an 'alien' in the world (1981:24-48). He is correct exegetically and for all the sociological depth of the book, it flounders at this crucial point.

Malina responds that the task of modern study is predictive and so needs a large database (1982:238). Since the use of the social sciences in Scripture 'is oriented toward efficient causality' (reproducing the past), the amount of evidence needed is not so great. However, this is disputable because modern sociology is descriptive as well as predictive. Scroggs says that 'the researcher must work with the utmost caution and strictness, with adequate guard against over-enthusiasm' (1983:340).

1.3.9.5 TENDENCY TO DEBUNK THE SYSTEM

Sociologists claim that theirs is an objective or value-neutral discipline, but this is in reality not so. Yamauchi points to Peter Berger as especially stressing this aspect (1984:181,189-90). Yet, it is inherent in such an empirical system as sociology to place religious phenomena in the end within the human sphere. The spiritual experience surrounding Israel and the church is read as the product of internal factors (such as societal) rather than external (such as supernatural). As Berger himself states in *The Sacred Canopy* (1975:180), 'Sociological theory must, by its own logic, view religion as a human projection'.

1.3.9.6 REDUCTIONISM

The tendency to explain all given aspects based on societal factors is reductionist. Many scholars argue that modern approaches have sur-

mounted this obstacle. Malina (1982:237) claims that the use of models to explain sets of data is not reductionist, but he does not quite explain how to avoid subsuming broad aspects of Israel and the church under general models, whether or not the data actually fits. The more sophisticated scholars do avoid this error to a large extent. However, it is quite common to falter here. For instance, Edwards (1983:444) critiques Elliott (1981) for his assumption that all the inhabitants of Asia Minor can be assigned the status of resident alien or that Asia Minor was primarily a rural area. Elliott has overly simplified the evidence and overstated his case. As one general observation on the more complex situation behind 1 Peter, Elliott provides very useful material. However, on the broader plane he has failed to prove his hypothesis. Even Theissen, although he avoids reductionism in his study of Corinth (1982), falls into this trap in his study of the disciples (1978). Theissen has artificially elevated the class of 'wandering charismatic' missionaries and given the settled leaders of churches (such as Philip, Timothy, Titus) a secondary and subsidiary role. As Richter says, 'Theissen never really gets beyond marshalling the relevant data. He fails to offer any adequate models that begin to explain the data satisfactorily' (1984:80).

1.3.9.7 THEORETICAL DISARRAY

There are a tremendous number of sociological theories, some more valid than others, but the practitioners often fail to recognise the difficulties in applying them to Biblical material. As Yamauchi points out, this is generally true of the whole field of academic sociology (1984:179-80). He quotes Gareth Steadman Jones (from *British Journal of Sociology* 27 (1976): 300):

The vague and shifting character of its object, the inconstancy of its definitions, the non-cumulative character of much of its knowledge, its proneness to passing theoretical fashions and the triteness of some of its 'laws' suggest that its theoretical foundations are contestable and insecure.

This very lack of correlation between specific data and general theory or model is the problem at the level of application to Biblical material. Practitioners are guilty of the abstraction fallacy, which tries to capture the dynamic of the ancient situations in abstract modern concepts that often remove the life and breath from the original situations. Scroggs suggests two ways of overcoming this tendency:

- (1) understand the methods completely and be clear of the extent to which they apply to the data;
- (2) be aware of the theoretical presuppositions when explicating the ancient situation (1983:339).

One could add a third: allow the data to control and alter the models as the situation warrants.

1.3.9.8 DETERMINISM

Since the social sciences centre upon human behaviour, the possibility of divine activity is almost ruled out by definition. To be sure, the Biblical practitioners are very aware of this tendency and take care to leave room for the noumenal as well as the phenomenal realms. However, since the entire task involves searching out the societal factors behind the text, the divine element is still too often neglected. In the study of Paul as a charismatic leader, for instance, the social phenomenon is highlighted and the Biblical emphasis upon divine commissioning at times seems replaced by the needs of the community (see Holmberg). Moreover, society gains absolute control of all human behaviour, as every contingency is explained by these societal factors. This overstatement of the influence of society is deterministic, since events in Scripture that are attributed to God are placed under the aegis of society.

1.3.9.9 TENDENCY TO DISJUNCTIVE THEORIES

To support a certain theory, writers often make an 'either-or' out of a 'both-and' situation. This is true of the attempts to argue that the early church centred upon the lower class (Gager, Theissen) or on the upper class (Judge, Malherbe). Gager himself points out that there were some converts from both sides, but he argues that the focus of the church was upon the disadvantaged (1982:262). Meeks proves that the strata of society reached, was mixed and ambiguous, ranging from Caesar's household (Phil 4:22) and the proconsul Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7), to slaves and the disenfranchised (1983:51-73). Meeks concludes that Paul's congregations represented 'a fair cross-section of urban society' (1983:73). However, there is doubt surrounding Meeks's further distinction between urban and rural society. Although Elliott overstates his thesis, he shows that the locus of 1 Peter and the first missionary journey of Paul were quite rural in its make-up.

1.3.9.10 SUMMARY

There are two major conclusions to be drawn from this survey. A clear differentiation should be maintained between approaches concentrating on constructing a social history of the text, and approaches that wish to analyse the text by means of the methods and models developed in the social sciences. Secondly, both in the case of descriptive studies and in the case of explanatory or interpretive studies (cf Elliott 1981:6-7), one should be cautious of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Van Staden & Van Aarde (1991:82) explain this fallacy as the illegitimate application of the presumed meaning of a term in antiquity to present-day problems. Social-scientific studies could reflect the same fallacy, as they make no distinction between the narrative world and the contextual world of a text or between the situation and the strategy of a text.

It has also become evident that scholars allocate differing levels of importance to the composition of the narrative text. For Theissen, the meanings conferred on the material by a creative author were completely ignored. Meeks and Malina paid more attention to the text, but it was Elliott and Petersen who proposed that the text should be treated in literary as well as in social-scientific terms.

The term 'literary-sociological criticism' pays attention to a fuller understanding of the original context to explore the productive societal powers that gave rise to the Biblical documents (Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:56). The earlier-mentioned 'scientific' approach limits the hermeneutical task to defining the original meaning of the text, leaving to others its present application. It also presumes that interpreters can achieve objectivity. This is impossible because contemporary interpreters come to the text with presuppositions that colour their interpretation. However, like the simplistic approach, it does not include a social-scientific analysis of the contemporary society that could better inform the interpretative process. Furthermore, the Bible can only be properly understood as it is read with participatory involvement (cf the 'engaged hermeneutics' of Van Aarde 1994: 575-596) and allowed to speak into one's context.

How can the chasm between the past and the present be bridged? The concept of contextualisation from liberation theology offers some interesting insights to our current pursuit. This thesis advocates

the innovative combination of the social-scientific method with contextual hermeneutics.

1.4 THE BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY OF CONTEXTUAL HERMENEUTICS

1.4.1 THE BACKGROUND OF CONTEXTUAL HERMENEUTICS

In a much-quoted passage, Gustavo Gutierrez elaborates on the methodological innovation of liberation theology.

It is for all of these reasons that the theology of liberation offers us not so much a new theme for reflection as a new way to do theology. Theology as critical reflection on historical praxis is a liberating theology, a theology of the liberating transformation of the history of human kind and therefore that part of it - gathered in *ekklesia* - which openly confesses Christ. This is a theology that does not stop reflecting on the world, but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is transformed. It is a theology which opens itself to the Kingdom of God in the protest against trampled human dignity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love, and in the building of a new, just and fraternal society - to the gift of the Kingdom of God (1973:15).

For liberation theologians, critical reflection or an incisive analysis of one's historical context is the basic starting point for transformation. Therefore, the theologian becomes inextricably linked to the transforming process of liberation from oppression of any kind. 'Praxis,' a key term in liberation theologies, according to Gutierrez, denotes 'transforming action, not simply any kind of action, but rather a historical transformation of nature and society' (see Torres & Eagleton, 1976, for the proceedings of the Detroit 1975 Conference). Another way of viewing praxis is a spiral process of action and theory, which leads in successive stages to revised action in the light of revised theory, and to, revised theory in the light of revised action (cf Chetty 1988:254-266).

Such insight through praxis leads to an even more engaged way of going about the theological task. The epistemological opening, that is, the unblocking of understanding and the opening of new and wider horizons, is not accidental. It is not only to be credited to the theologians, but to struggling people among whom they move. Leonardo Boff, a young Brazilian Franciscan educated under some of Europe's leading theologians and in universities as prestigious as Louvain and Oxford, confirms this point. He reflects on the difference between a European professor of theology who excels in scholarship even in

theory and practice, and the liberation theologian in Latin America who did not so much choose to be one as was chosen to be by people and their circumstances. Referring to his Latin American colleagues, he writes:

Many who have given life to the theology of liberation became theologians as advisors to action groups or as priests immersed in the pastorate. Even among the most 'professional,' they have undertaken interests other than those strictly theological, such as sociology, politics and philosophy. They have served institutions whose main objective is not theological research as such, but rather contact with reality in order to change it: universities, social action centres, communication media, peasant groups, etc. (1976:190-191).

This was clearly a situation where the context of the people and their needs determined the method and form of Christian service.

One of the implications Boff draws, of major importance to liberation theology, is that in European theology the 'following of Jesus' is usually relegated to spiritual theology so that it has minimum bearing on a relevant Christology. By contrast, Latin American theology arrives at it by attempting to follow Jesus as the only way to know Him. Boff's celebrated volume *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for Our Time* (1978) illustrates a pivotal distinction for the praxis of faith. There is a qualitative difference between a Christology conceived in scholarly privacy and one hammered out, in no less scholarly fashion, with those who in the struggle against oppression, encounter Jesus as the liberator who allows them 'to fight to regain their captive freedom' (1978:295).

This general 'scholarly' approach of 'academic theologians' to the study of theology devoid of any analysis of the interpreter's context was also experienced in North America. This 'theological myopia' constrained James Cone to write his *Black Theology and Black Power* following the black insurrection in Detroit in the summer of 1967. He found no help from traditional theology in making connections between that event and the gospel of Jesus Christ. 'The education of White theologians,' he says,

... did not prepare them to deal with Watts, Detroit and Newark. What was needed was a new way of looking at theology that must emerge out of the dialectic of Black history and culture. Instinctively, I went to the Scriptures as the primary source for this new approach and asked, 'What has the Biblical message to do with the Black power revolution?' (1975:6).

In his book *God of the Oppressed*, what he had earlier arrived at 'instinctively,' he now confirms, with the empirical research of sociologists, the pivotal role of social perceptions.

... not only the questions which theologians ask but the answers given in their discourse about the gospel are limited by their social perceptions and thus largely a reflection of the material conditions of a given society (1975:43).

What factors prompted this 'new way of doing' or methodology of theology? Gutierrez shared at a meeting on the theology of Latin America in El Escorial, Spain in 1972 that as he engaged himself in traditional pastoral work among the poor of Lima, he discovered three things about poverty. Firstly, it was something to be fought against. Secondly, poverty was an imposed structure, not an accident and thirdly, the poor were a social class, not just a group of deprived individuals. It then became clear to him that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action. 'So it was,' concluded Gutierrez, at the aforementioned meeting in Spain in 1972, 'that I discovered the nature of political action, its rationality, its radicality and its all-encompassing character' (cf Gustavo Gutierrez 1973:3-19).

The merit of the methodology of Liberation Theology derives from its incisive 'all-encompassing socio-historical' analysis of 'social perceptions' and the 'material conditions of a given society'. The depth of such analyses would influence the efficacy of any subsequent response. Sheila Collins, a feminist theologian, told the story at the 1975 Detroit Conference of how she and other women eventually learnt that their seemingly innocuous 'consciousness raising' sessions were an exercise in a structural analysis of their oppression (Torres & Eagleton 1976:365). Out of that experience came her provocative theological work, *A Different Heaven and Earth* (1976).

When Cone, Collins, the Latin Americans and other liberation theologians maintain that the questions and answers of theology are influenced by the social perceptions of the theologian's position in the material conditions of a given society, they do not exclude themselves. Quite the opposite is evident. They acknowledge their biases and partisanship. What they object to is that there seems to be no similar admission by the 'academic' or 'dominant' theologians.

H. Richard Niebuhr, years before liberation theology made its appearance, had already observed that

... theological opinions have their roots in the relationship of religious life to the cultural and political conditions prevailing in any group of Christians (1957:16).

For liberation theology, this is no small matter. It asserts that classical European and North American theology, by failing to admit their strong ties with the 'establishment' ends up legitimising it. Moreover, it relegates issues of economics and politics, and of race and sex, to the field of ethics or to the sphere of 'non-theological factors,' even though they impinge overwhelmingly on the faith of believers and disastrously on the life of the oppressed. As Beatriz Couch, as cited in Torres & Eagleton (1976: 307), the Argentinean theologian puts it:

We are all present one way or another in this historical moment and we either contribute to the liberation of the oppressed of the world or we contribute to exploitation and injustice.

Liberation theology therefore contends that there is no neutrality, much less in the case of any Christian theology that purports to find its primary clues in the Bible. The 'business of the Biblical God,' as Medellin puts it, is

... to liberate all men (and women) from the slavery which sin has subjected them: hunger, misery, oppression, and ignorance, in a word, that injustice and hatred which have their origin in human selfishness (Gutierrez 1973:35).

The embracing scope of this liberation rescues it from provincialism and gives it ongoing relevance.

The theological method of Liberation Theology centres on a critical reflection on praxis, a 'second moment' which follows the actual behaviour of Christians and others in the struggle for liberation, or more accurately, which arises from the theologian's own participation in that struggle. Juan Luis Segundo has written one of the clearest methodologies of Latin American theology, in *The Liberation of Theology* (1975). In this work, he attempts to analyse not so much the content of Latin American theology as its methodological approach and its connection with liberation."

Segundo, like most liberation theologians, cannot conceive of a Christian theology whose primary, fundamental or normative point of reference is not the Bible. He comes to this issue with a solid

experience of trying to make sense to the laity of the relation between the Bible, Christian faith, church, and the modern world. Five volumes, all translated into English, are the fruit of that endeavour.

The name for the method, which Segundo calls pretentious, is the hermeneutic circle, which

... is the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal. 'Hermeneutic' means 'having to do with interpretation'. And the circular nature of this interpretation stems from the fact that each new reality obliges us to interpret the Word of God afresh, to change reality accordingly, and then to go back and re-interpret the Word of God again, ... (1975:8).

The hermeneutical circle requires two preconditions: questions so crucial that they force us to reconsider issues of life, death, society, politics and the world in general; and the assumption that such questions are capable of changing our customary interpretation of the Scriptures. According to Segundo, these two preconditions involve four decisive criteria or levels:

1. The openness to apply an ideological suspicion (unconfirmed belief) to our way of experiencing reality.
2. The application of that suspicion to our whole ideological superstructure (reasons justifying religion, philosophy, society, economics, racial, and sexual relations, etc.) and to theology, in particular.
3. A new way of experiencing theological reality that leads to exegetical suspicion, i.e., Bible interpretation which has not taken into account significant facts.
4. A new hermeneutics is pressed into service to interpret Scripture with the new elements at our disposal. (1975:9)

The unique and radical methodology of the Latin Americans has been highlighted. No arena of society is above scrutiny and analysis. There are 'no holy cows' anymore. A survey of the contributions from North America will be helpful here.

James Cone must rank as one of the few liberation theologians whose work fulfils the criteria of the hermeneutical circle. Every hermeneutic entails a partisanship, as mentioned earlier, whether conscious or unconscious. Cone's is no exception, but as a liberation theologian, in contrast to 'academic' theologians, he is quite open about taking sides in language that seems even to Segundo a bit demagogic and shocking. It is helpful to follow Segundo's analysis of

Cone's *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1972) to obtain a more detailed understanding of the four levels of the hermeneutical circle (Segundo 1975).

The first criterion of ideological suspicion is established in terms of the oppressed (black) experience and longing for freedom. According to Cone, black theology is not accountable to non-black critics but only to the black community. The universality of accountability, here renounced, observes Segundo, is recovered at the deepest level of the human condition, i.e., what is revealed in an oppressive community. Segundo sees Cone standing in the radical theological tradition of the prophets and Jesus in their involvement with the suffering and oppressed people.

The second level or criterion of the hermeneutic circle is a call for a theory that will unmask the reality of political and economic oppression and its implications for theology. Cone's analysis is not Marxist in content, but it clearly resembles in structure Marx's ideological analysis of the exploitation of the proletariat, something Segundo attributes to Marx's influence on Western culture. Cone sees American 'white' theology as giving sanction to the genocide of the American Indians and the enslavement of the Blacks. At work in mainline (white) theology is an ideology claiming to be colour blind but one that permits theology to leave the cause of oppression unmentioned. That explains why American theology, according to Cone, deals with sin in the abstract, debating it only in relation to 'universal man'. If it mentions oppression at all it rationalises the whole white way of life with a single stroke by arguing that 'we are all oppressed' (1972:22).

Cone arrives at the third level with a new experience of theology and with the resolve to place it in the service of the black community:

Thus, the new direction to be taken by Scriptural interpretation will be dictated by the uncovering of the mechanisms of ideology and by the will to root them out of theology (1972:29)

For Cone, therefore, black theology must detoxify itself from the corruption of white theology and build a theology on sources and norms appropriate to the black community. He begins by listing the experience, history and culture of black people. He is fully aware that this approach, by not beginning with the Scripture, is risky.

The substance of the Christian message might be lost. To begin with Scripture, however, is no less risky, for 'then one cannot avoid literalism and the consequent justification of oppression'. Christian slave-masters resorted to Paul's injunction, 'Slaves, obey your master,' and the Old Testament 'curse of Ham'. The same kind of literalism is used to encourage black non-violence as if the violent oppressor had the right to define what a Christian response is. The answer to the double risk is, in Cone's words,

... that whatever Black theology says about liberation must be said in the light of the Black community's experience of Jesus Christ (1972:30).

Cone's fourth level of the hermeneutical circle is a new interpretation of Scripture based on new and decisive questions. His hermeneutic may be summarised in this statement:

If I read the New Testament correctly, the resurrection of Christ means that He is also present today in the midst of all societies effecting His liberation of the oppressed. He is not confined to the first century, and thus our talk of Him in the past is important only insofar as it leads to an encounter with Him now. As a Black theologian, I want to know what God's revelation means right now as the Black community participates in the struggle for liberation (1972:24).

Cone, in his *A Black Theology of Liberation*, also identifies critical aspects of any genuine liberation theology. Among these, according to Segundo, are

1. that God takes the side of the oppressed in order to be for all;
2. that orthodoxy does not possess the truth unless it finds it in orthopraxis (what the Bible calls 'doing the truth') and
3. that partiality is justified because we find, and designate as the word of God that part of divine revelation which today, in the light of our concrete historical situation, is most useful for the liberation to which God summons us... (1975:32-33).

In summary then, Cone's contribution involves the ideological suspicion being established in terms of

- the oppressed (black) experience and longing for freedom,
- a call for a theory which will unmask the reality of political and economic oppression and its implications for theology,
- a new experience of theology and with the resolve to place it in the service of the black community and
- a new interpretation of Scripture based on new and decisive questions.

One can understand Cone's resolve to place this new experience in theology at the service of the black community, as this was his immediate context. With a change in context, this new experience of theology should be made to serve its own unique context.

Liberation theology's focus on involvement within the concrete context coupled with a critical analysis that challenges both the interpretation of Scripture and subsequent involvement has been one of the important catalysts for the emergence of contextual hermeneutics.

1.4.2 THE METHODOLOGY OF CONTEXTUAL HERMENEUTICS

The contextual approach recognises both the role of the ancient world in influencing the original text (encoding) and the role of today's world in conditioning the manner in which the contemporary readers are likely to 'hear' and understand the text (decoding).

The Word of God emanated from a specific context, namely that of the Eastern Mediterranean world (Malina 1993). This Word can only be understood as it 'becomes flesh' (*sarx egeneto*) in a particular context. According to Rene Padilla the challenge of hermeneutics is

... to transpose the message from its original context into the context of present-day readers to produce the same kind of impact on their lives as it did on the original hearers or readers (1986:298).

Furthermore, the interpretative process is not a simple one-way process. For whenever interpreters approach a particular Biblical text, this can be done only from their own perspective. This gives rise to a complex, dynamic, interactive, two-way interpretative process depicted as a 'hermeneutical circle' in which interpreters and text are mutually engaged. The dynamic interplay will be seen more clearly if we first examine the four elements of the circle, as set out by Padilla (1986:300): the interpreter's historical situation; the interpreter's world-and-life view; Scripture, and theology.

Interpreters do not live in a vacuum. They live in concrete situations, in a particular society. From their society, they derive not only their language but also patterns of thought and conduct,

methods of learning, emotional reactions, values, interests, goals and presuppositions. Thus, the hermeneutical pursuit warrants an understanding of the concrete situation as much as an understanding of Scripture. No assimilation of the Biblical message is possible unless the interpreters are familiar with the frame of reference within which the message is to become meaningful. There is, therefore, a place for sociology, anthropology, and social psychology, from the social sciences, which can enable interpreters to define more precisely the horizons of their context, even as linguistics, literature, history, culture and sociology can help them in their study of the text and its original context.

Interpreters tend to approach Scripture from their particular perspectives. They have their own world-and-life view, their own way of apprehending reality. Western theology generally has been unaware of the extent to which it is affected by the materialistic, mechanistic and individualistic world-and-life view. It is only natural, for instance, that those who accept the modern 'scientific' view, which assumes a closed universe where everything can be explained on the basis of natural causes, will have difficulty taking the Bible at face value whenever it points to a spirit-world or to miracles.

Western theology, therefore, greatly needs the corrective provided by Scripture in its emphasis on a personal Creator who acts purposefully in and through history, on creation as totally dependent upon God; on humankind as the 'image of God' (*imago dei*) affected by sin and redemption. Such elements are the substance of the Biblical world-and-life view apart from which there can be no proper understanding either of reality or of Scripture. It may well be that what prevents Westerners from entering into the 'strange world of the Bible' is not its obsolete world-and-life view but their own secularistic and unwarranted assumption with regard to the powers of reason.

Johannes A Loubser's analysis of the theology of *Apartheid* as 'a contextual theology gone wrong,' offers interesting new insights on the methodology of contextual theology (1996: 321-337). This study represents a further development of the author's views as set out in his book, *A Critical Review of Racial Theology in South Africa - The Apartheid Bible*, (1987). In this paper, Loubser analyses the mutual

interaction between white *Apartheid* theology and socio-political developments in South Africa. This, he contends, provides an example of the intricate relationship between theological reflection and social reality. After a historical profile of *Apartheid* theology, the 'contextual' nature of this theology is discussed and compared with more recent theological models (1996: 321-337).

One of the views expressed in Loubser's book, *The Apartheid Bible*, viz. 'that *Apartheid* theology exhibited some remarkable similarities to contemporary contextual theologies,' elicited some sharp responses. Stiaan Van der Merwe whilst acknowledging that *Apartheid* theology was in effect a covert contextual theology in comparison to other explicitly stated contextual theologies challenged that it operated within 'a completely different paradigm'. He argues that *Apartheid* theology was 'a hybrid form of the traditional theological paradigm' of the (white) Dutch Reformed Church (1988:19). Charles Villa-Vicencio charged that a comparison of *Apartheid* with contextual theologies missed the point that

... a central tenet of liberation theology, distinguishing it from *Apartheid* theology, is its insistence that the only social or political grouping with which the church is obliged to establish a working alliance is the poor and oppressed of successive generations without regard to race or national identity (1988:20).

In response to these assertions, Loubser insists that

... the ethnic bias and obsolete paradigms underlying *Apartheid* theology are, of course, indisputable. But then, how should one evaluate the remarkable methodological parallels between both forms of contemporary theology? (1996:322).

Leonardo Boff's theology/christology of liberation, as described by Wachege (1992:31) reveals five general characteristics of contextual theologies:

Orthopraxis receives more emphasis than orthodoxy; anthropology is emphasised over ecclesiology; utopian elements have primacy over factual; critical elements have primacy over dogma; social elements have primacy over personal (as cited by Loubser 1996:334).

Apartheid theology shows stark similarities to these characteristics. Loubser states that:

Though *Apartheid* theologians attempted to project an orthodox 'Calvinism,' it was the practice of *Apartheid* (not praxis in the technical sense) that dominated their hermeneutics. In general, we can say that practical aspects overruled orthodoxy.

Ecclesiology was almost absent, while priority was given to anthropological and social elements. In correspondence with *Apartheid* as a utopian construct, *Apartheid* theology also had utopian designs. However, this theology was not a pro-active Biblical application, but rather a theological rationalisation of a political agenda that received its impetus from outside moral pressure (1996:334).

Contextual hermeneutics, according to Padilla, is a two-way interpretative process in which the Biblical text/context and the context of the interpreter are engaged (1986:300f). This was not largely the hermeneutical method of *Apartheid* theology, but the 'periodical reworking of documents,' reveals some interaction between the Biblical and the present contexts. Loubser is quick to add that 'this does not diminish the fact that the basic hidden agenda, that of the preservation of white power/ self-determination, remained the *cantus firmus* throughout' (1996:334).

Schüssler-Fiorenza propounds that in later developments of contextual theology there was a tendency to move beyond a hermeneutic-contextual historical paradigm to a self-reflective critical theology of liberation, which reflects the hidden political agenda of its own, and oppressing systems in the service of an emancipatory praxis (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1986:380-381).

This aspect finds no parallel in *Apartheid* theology but its emphasis on experience offers a close correspondence. Loubser asserts that

Apartheid theologians, though denying it, followed the same methodology as suggested by S Fiorenza and Maimela by allocating authority for their interpretation in an extra-Biblical experience (1996:335).

Schüssler-Fiorenza adduces 'the experience of the God's liberating presence in today's struggles to end patriarchal relationships of domination' (1992:791). Maimela begins with 'a grounding of black theology in the experience of being freed from white racialism' (1993:66). In spite of their differing aims, Loubser affirms that

'*Apartheid* theology also represents a theology that is also grounded in experience, viz. the experience that racial integration leads to disaster' (1996:335).

Loubser's application of ideological criticism to the use of the concept of experience in *Apartheid* and contextual theologies results in a political subtext coming into focus. Contextual theology opts to

be subjective in its endeavour to execute a political program; it is the praxis that matters (Maimela 1993:54f); the praxis (translated by Loubser as political program) becomes the ultimate criterion (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1986:381). 'In this regard contextual theologies are much more honest than *Apartheid* theology with its hidden agenda,' concedes Loubser. He, however challenges,

...from a methodological point of view it is insufficient to argue that any social agenda should be the criterion for good or bad theology, e.g. to argue that because *Apartheid* is bad, *Apartheid* theology must be evil or because black liberation is necessary, black theology is good theology. The problem with a hermeneutics of suspicion is that it can never be suspicious enough (1996:335).

The major difference between the methodology of contextual theologies and *Apartheid* theology has to do with the new historical consciousness that all knowledge is a relative, human, product. 'This one respect' declares Loubser (1996:336),

... in which all contemporary contextual theologies agree is based on an awareness of the sociology of knowledge that underscores the interrelation between theory and praxis, and encourages self-reflection about the socio-political basis of religious symbols and their praxis (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1992).

Apartheid theology was carried out in a naïveté to the vested material interests involved. The entrenchment of white economic privileges was not consciously deliberated upon and moreover covered up by a paternalistic benevolence toward other (presumably 'challenged') ethnic groups. Loubser continues that

... whilst diversity was preached, but total segregation was meant; Afrikaner national identity was defended while white racial chauvinism was the real subtext; orthodoxy was projected as cover-up for a praxis of *Apartheid* (1996:336).

This inherent contrast between *Apartheid* theology and contextual theologies is best exemplified by its use of the Bible. *Apartheid* theology consciously proposed to be a Biblical theology, drawing on Biblical proof-texts and Biblical principles. Loubser notes the following on the use of Scripture in the development of *Apartheid* theology:

First, an ethnic hermeneutic is employed. As a result, a nationalistic meaning is read into this Bible where a normal reader would not expect to find it. Second, from that which the Bible treats as incidental facts, moral norms are derived. Third, that which the Bible teaches about individuals is directly applied to nations in the typical vein of romantic nationalisms. Fourth, the communion of the believers is relativised with regard to the nation. And fifth, the unity of

believers from different nations is therefore demoted to an 'invisible' unity (1996:330).

Loubser compares its methodology to that of the earlier stages of black theology (cf Maimela's criticism of James Cone's methodology, Maimela 1993:62f). Both used Scripture in their initial stages in a retrospective manner like the 'grand narrative' employed by *Apartheid* theology of God's creation through separation (Gen. 11) (Loubser 1996:336). The 'authoritative text' in the theology of *Apartheid* was not the Bible, but 'the ideologies and realities of *Apartheid*' (Van der Merwe, 1988:20).

Liberation theology also possessed such a 'grand narrative,' in the exodus and the theme of the poor in the Bible. In liberation theology 'the poor' had become equivalent to 'the believer'. Both *Apartheid* and liberation theology displayed a radical development in that naive scriptural 'proofs' were replaced by advanced hermeneutical procedures. In both cases the Bible was seen 'as a normative archetype of Christian faith and community' rather than 'a formative root model' (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1992:790).

To Loubser the question of the authority of the Bible and the nature of revelation, remain open questions. This is particularly so of the manner in which human experience or social analysis functions.

In answering the question: Was *Apartheid* theology a contextual theology gone haywire? Loubser concludes that

... in the strict sense of the word, the answer must be that it was not even a contextual theology. It was rather a theological development due to an absence of an adequate contextual awareness. Both the historical context of the Biblical text and that of the readers were violated in the process (1996:337).

Hermeneutics has to do with a dialogue between Scripture and the contemporary context. Both the context of Scripture and our present context merit equally incisive analyses. The purpose of hermeneutics is to transpose the Biblical message from its original context into a particular contemporary situation. Its basic assumption is that the God who spoke in the past and whose Word was recorded in the Bible continues to speak today to all humankind in Scripture because of the unchanged human condition. The Bible must be read 'like any other book' although the illumination of the Spirit is indispensable in the

interpretative process. This means that the interpreters have to take seriously that they face an ancient text with its own unique horizons. Their task is to let the text speak, whether they agree with it or not, and this demands that they understand what the text meant in its original situation.

The effort to let Scripture speak without imposing on it a ready-made interpretation is a hermeneutical task binding upon all interpreters, whatever their context. Unless objectivity is set as a goal, the whole interpretative process is condemned to failure from the start. Objectivity, however, must not be confused with neutrality. To read the Bible 'like any other book' is not only to take seriously the contextual aspects of Scripture but also to read it from the perspective of faith. Since the Bible was written that God might speak in and through it, it follows that the Bible should be read with an attitude of openness to God's Word, with a view to conscientious response. The understanding and appropriation of the Biblical message are two aspects of an indivisible whole, the comprehension of the Word of God.

Theology cannot be reduced to the repetition of doctrinal formulations borrowed from other latitudes. To be valid and appropriate, it must reflect the merging of the horizons of the present context and the horizons of the text (Thiselton 1980:10-17). It will be relevant to the extent that it is expressed in symbols and thought forms, which are part of the society to which it is addressed, and to the extent that it responds to the questions and concerns which are raised in that context. Theology will be faithful to be the Word of God to the extent that it is based on Scripture and demonstrates the Spirit-given power to accomplish God's purpose. The same Spirit who inspired Scripture in the past is active today to make it God's personal Word in a concrete situation.

This pursuit of a merging of horizons is also evident in Scriptures. Daniel von Allmen has suggested that the pages of the New Testament, in particular, bear witness to this process, as the early Christians, dispersed by persecution from Palestine,

... undertook the work of evangelism and tackled the Greeks on their own ground. It was they who, on the one hand, began to adapt into Greek the tradition that gave birth to the Gospels, and who, on the other hand, preached the good news for the first time in Greek (1975: 126).

They did not consciously set out to 'do theology' but simply to faithfully translate the gospel into other religious contexts. Greek-speaking Christian poets then gave expression to the faith received not in a systematically worked theology but by 'singing' the work that God had done for them. According to Von Allmen, this is the origin of a number of hymns quoted by the New Testament writers, particularly the one in Philippians 2:6-11. These theologians ensured that this new way of expressing the faith corresponded to apostolic doctrine (1975:135).

In other words, the driving force in the contextualisation of the gospel in apostolic times was the primitive church's obedience to God's call to mission. What is needed today, says Von Allmen,

... is missionaries like the Hellenists, who 'did not set out with a theological intention', and poets like the authors of the hymns quoted in the New Testament, who 'were not deliberately looking for an original expression of their faith,' and theologians like Paul, who did not set out to 'do theology' (1975:142).

Neither the proclamation of the gospel nor the worship of God is possible without 'theology,' however unsystematic and implicit it may be. In other words, the Hellenistic missionaries and poets were also theologians, proclaimers and singers of a living theology through which they expressed the Word of God in a new context. With this qualification, Von Allmen's conclusion stands: the way in which Christianity was communicated in the first century sets the pattern for producing contextualised theology today (1975:143).

The aim of the interpretive process is the transformation of the people of God within their concrete situation. Now a change in the context of the interpreters brings about a change in their comprehension of Scripture, while a change in their comprehension of Scripture in turn reverberates in their situation. Thus, the contextual approach to the interpretation of Scripture involves a dialogue between the present context and the context of Scripture. This is a dialogue in which the interpreters approach Scripture within a particular perspective (their world-and-life view) and approach their context with a particular comprehension of the Word of God (their theology).

In short, analysing the societal context and listening to the questions raised within it begins the hermeneutical process. Then, Scripture is referred to while asking, 'What does God say through Scripture regarding this particular problem?' The way the question is formulated will depend, of course, on the world-and-life view, that is, the situation. Lack of a good understanding of the deep issues involved will be reflected in adequate or misdirected questions, and this will hinder the understanding of the relevance of the Biblical message to that situation. Scripture does not readily answer questions, which are not posed to it. Asking the wrong or peripheral questions will result in a theology focused on questions no one is asking, while the issues that urgently need Biblical direction are ignored.

On the other hand, the more insightful our understanding of the critical issues in our context, as will be shown in chapter three, the more meaningful will be the questions which we address to Scripture. This makes possible new readings of Scripture in which the implications of its message for our situation will be more fully uncovered.

As the answers of Scripture become known, the initial questions that arose in the situation may have to be reformulated to reflect the Biblical perspective more adequately. The context of theology, therefore, includes not only answers to specific questions raised by the situation but also questions, which the text itself poses to the context.

The deeper our comprehension of the Biblical text, the richer will be our understanding of the meaning of Christian obedience in that particular context. This will be the main objective of chapter two in establishing a Biblical basis for our study. A special attempt will be made to explore the concept of *oikos*. For the sake of our present discussion, a provisional working definition of *oikos* as 'family' or 'household' will be employed. Chapter two will delve into this concept more fully. The Biblical text, approached from a more congenial world-and-life view, and addressed with insightful questions, will be found to speak more poignantly into our situation. Our theology, in turn, will be more relevant and responsive to the critical issues.

1.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE

1.5.1 METHODOLOGY

This study reflects a distinctive choice regarding methodology in the application of a unique combination of both the contextual and social-scientific methods. A danger of contextual methodology is to concentrate on the present context at the expense of the context of the text. The second part of the methodology of this thesis is the application of the social-scientific approach to the Biblical text and to our present context. The term 'social-scientific' is used in this study to broadly embrace the sociological approaches to the study of the New Testament text and to our present context.

In addition to uncovering the social context of the Biblical text, this study is equally eager to understand the 'now' of one's own *Sitz im Leben*. Therefore, current social-scientific insights together with those from family sociology are utilised to balance the methodological framework. In short, a social-scientific understanding of the concept of *oikos* will assist in analysing the context of the Biblical text. A social-scientific analysis of the present context will facilitate a re-contextualisation of the church as *oikos* in the new South Africa.

1.5.2 BIBLICAL SOCIAL ANALYSES

The emergence of the social-scientific analysis of the Bible has not evidenced a linear development. The one scholar concentrates on social description, while the other on social-scientific interpretation of the Biblical text. Unlike the earlier attempts of social description whose goal was historical relevance, contends Harris (1984:102-103), this new approach by Biblical scholars employed the concepts and methods of sociology to explore the social powers that gave rise to the Biblical documents (Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:56). Scholars have employed different approaches, methods and models to uncover the social background of the New Testament (cf Smith 1975:19-21; Scroggs 1980:167-171; Best 1983:187-190; Edwards 1983:431-444; Harrington 1988:77-85).

The social-scientific approach operates on a different level from that of social description. Gager (1982) reserves the description 'sociological' or 'social-scientific' for the approach that,

according to Smith, incorporates 'an analysis of Christianity as a social world, as the creation of a world of meaning which provided a plausibility structure for those who chose to inhabit it' (Smith 1975:19-20; cf Domeris 1988:379). Gager further contends that this approach can be properly characterized as sociological or social scientific, since the academic disciplines of sociology, anthropology and psychology, have contributed explanatory theories and hypotheses (1982:258). According to Gager, then, one could use the terms 'sociological', or 'social-scientific' interchangeably, but the meaning of the terms sociological, social-scientific and social differs. The texts serve as basic sociological informants of social data on a wide range of subjects (Domeris 1988:370-381).

The term 'sociological approach or analysis,' on the other hand, signifies the use of social-scientific methods of analysis that relate to the discipline of sociology. The works of Gerd Theissen, John G Gager, Wayne A Meeks, Bruce J Malina, John H Elliott, and Norman R Petersen warrant a summary here.

1.5.2.1 THEISSEN

Theissen uses the sociological method known as functional analysis in his early work entitled *Sociology of early Palestinian Christianity* (1978). Analyses of the texts for roles, factors and functions in accordance with sociological insights into social dynamics are conducted (cf Theissen 1978:4). A process of inference obtains the sociological information. Van Staden & Van Aarde (1991:61-62) outline three different methods that may be distinguished (cf Theissen 1978:3; 1982:177; see also Osiek 1984:43) namely, constructive conclusions, analytic methods and comparative methods. It is recognised that Theissen has a wide knowledge of social-scientific theory, and is able to use aspects that are relevant. Thiessen's approach has exposed itself to the criticism of being reductionist (cf Schutz 1982:16). Malina (1982:237) views reductionism as the process of subsuming one model into another.

Theissen limits his functionalist analysis to those aspects that serve basic social needs in a specific frame of reference (society). For the different aspects compounded into this model Theissen is dependent upon Durkheim, Marx, Berger & Luckmann, and Weber (cf Gager 1979:175). It would seem that Thiessen leans more toward social

history than towards sociological theory in his works (Schutz 1982:20; cf Harris 1984:107).

1.5.2.2 GAGER

Gager (1975) employed the social sciences in an investigation into the social setting of the early church. Some scholars (cf Harris 1984:107) see Gager as 'more intentionally sociological than Theissen', although Edwards (1983:435) has the opposite view: 'the work of Gerd Theissen... shows considerably deeper immersion in sociological method'. Gager does use a variety of sociological and anthropological models, such as conflict theory, the interpretation of symbols, sociology of knowledge and, especially, the theory of cognitive dissonance (cf Gager 1975).

Gager's research reflects a comparative approach (cf Harris 1984:108). He studied early Christianity by comparing it with millenarian movements (cf Gager 1975). Smith (1978:125) alleges that Gager adopts 'an all too easy functionalism' when being at all sociological, and claims that he is not really concerned with social construction, the analysis of symbolic worlds or asking social questions (Smith 1978:129). Furthermore, the theory of cognitive dissonance cannot explain convincingly the confirming propensities of Jesus' resurrection (Osiek 1984:42-43; cf Tracy 1978:133).

1.5.2.3 MEEKS

Meeks calls his major work 'a social description or social history of Pauline Christianity' (1983:2). This task, as outlined by Meeks, goes beyond a mere social description. Meeks demonstrates a deep insight into the complexities surrounding the social interpretation of historical texts. He contends, '... in writing social history, then, we cannot afford to ignore the theories that guide social scientists. But which of the competing schools of sociology or anthropology or social psychology shall we heed? ...What social theory is adequate to grasp the whole? (Meeks 1983:5). Elliott further shares his observation that Meeks '... is reluctant to explicate his sociological theory and models and to spell out more adequately the implications of his moderate functionalist perspective on the Pauline social world' (1985:332-334).

1.5.2.4 MALINA

Malina, in contrast to Theissen, Gager and Meeks, has always been at pains to explicate both theory and model. He has made social-scientific theory and models accessible by writing concisely (Malina 1982:229-242; 1983:119-133 and 1986a: 1-27).

A 'social system', according to Malina (1982:232), is a model intrinsic to any human group. Social sciences use sociological, anthropological, political, economic, educational, religious, cross-cultural and psychological models to examine typical and recurrent human interaction (Malina 1982:232). The societies we wish to study are ancient, historical societies. The other social sciences rooted in the present, study the past for generalities, commonalities, samenesses' (Malina 1982:233). Malina (1982:233) identifies 'three main types of social science models that one might use to understand social interaction', namely the structural functionalist model, the conflict model, and the symbolic model. All the elements in society function towards the maintenance of society as a whole, integrated system. Malina (1982:234) cites Gottwald (1979), Malina (1981a) and Wilson (1980) as examples of structural functionalist approaches to Biblical texts.

Conflict theory presents another model of interpretation. This theory is also known as the coercion, power or interest model (Malina 1982:234; 1986d: 42-44). This model presumes that society and the elements of society are constantly changing unless some force intervenes to prohibit the change. Malina (1982:235) states:

From this perspective and in terms of this sort of model, a good way to understand Biblical texts is to find out what elements or factors interfere with the normal process of change ... Social change, deviance, is normal.

The symbolic character of human interaction is the third main type of social science perspective. Unlike the structural functionalist and conflict models, the symbolic model does not presuppose 'that a social system is a group of interacting persons whose interactions are structured and oriented around common purposes' (Malina 1982:235). Malina's contribution also lies in isolating four distinct social institutions or structures that are basic in any society, namely, kinship, economic, politics, and religion (1986b: 152-153).

1.5.2.5 ELLIOTT

According to Elliott (1981:1) the goal of his 'sociological exegesis' is to complement and improve '... the prevailing method of Biblical interpretation through more rigorous attention to the social dimension of the Biblical text and to the sociological dimension of the exegetical task. He defines 'sociological exegesis' as the analysis, interpretation, and synthesis (correlation) of (1) the literary, sociological and theological features and dimensions of the text (1 Peter) and (2) this text's relation to and impact upon its narrower and wider social contexts (Elliott 1981:8).

The 'strategy' relates to the situation of the text, which involves both the *macrosocial* and *microsocial* levels. The situation of a text can be viewed *diachronically* (with attention to how these social features and arrangements *change over the course of time*) (Elliott 1987:1).

The correlation of the strategy and the situation of a text parallel the integration of a literary and a social-scientific analysis of the text. The strategy of a text is pursued by literary methods while the situation of a text is sought by social-scientific methods.

1.5.2.6 PETERSEN

Norman R. Petersen also engaged in a social-scientific investigation of a single New Testament document, namely Paul's letter to Philemon (1985). Literary theory refers to the concepts of point of view, narrative world (as opposed to contextual world), plot and closure, which are associated with narrative analysis. Social anthropology refers to the concepts of institution and social interaction, which are associated with scientific analysis. Sociology of knowledge refers to the concept of symbolic universe, which is associated with an analysis of belief systems (Petersen 1985:IX).

Petersen's work (1985) clearly demonstrates that the social-scientific part of his interpretive model is based on his literary insight. In defining the concept, Petersen (1985:33) states: 'the world of a narrative is a literary construction, and the events which take place in that world have a narrative quality'. This literary-theoretical statement provides the link between the literary and social-scientific attempts.

According to Petersen (1985:ix)

'worlds' are human constructions, whether they are constructions of societies or of narrators, and ... narrative worlds are comprised of the same kinds of social facts - symbolic forms and social arrangements - so-called real worlds.

In this way, the literary concept of narrative worlds becomes accessible to social science analysis.

The interface in Petersen's approach, between the literary concept of the narrative world as a constructed world, and the sociology of knowledge's presentation of social reality as a constructed reality, is predictable. Petersen (1985:17-22) argues consistently from the premise that narrative worlds and social reality are somehow akin in terms of construction and operation. Both these kinds of 'worlds' are analysed in terms of two social-scientific categories, namely social arrangement and symbolic form, which constitute what are known as social facts (Petersen 1985:38). Social arrangements focus on the social institutions one encounters in everyday life, institutions within the fields of economics, politics, religion and kinship. It shapes and legitimates social institutions (Darr 1988:120). The social universe, according to Petersen (1985:27-28), is inhabited by both believers and non-believers, while God and Christ are absent from the social universe but present in the symbolic universe. They are present in the social universe only as objects of knowledge. Therefore, Petersen makes a distinction between theology and symbolic universe as representing two different kinds of knowledge. The second chapter of Petersen's *Rediscovering Paul*, according to Hays (1987:173), carefully examines the social structures and arrangements in the narrative world, and is the core of Petersen's work. Petersen employs social anthropology, a subfield of the social science 'anthropology' to study these institutions and the social relations of the narrative. It accounts for the category of symbolic forms and its relation to social arrangements (cf Petersen 1985:18).

The three fields namely narrative criticism, sociology of knowledge, and social anthropology, according to the exposition by Petersen, are compatible enough for them to be incorporated into a model with which to study the narrative world of a New Testament narrative discourse (cf Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:81).

In short, then, a clear differentiation should be maintained between approaches concentrating on constructing a social history of the text, and approaches that wish to analyse the text by means of the methods and models developed in the social sciences. Social-scientific studies could reflect the same fallacy, as they make no distinction between the narrative world and the contextual world of a text or between the situation and the strategy of a text.

Meeks and Malina paid more attention to the text, but it was Elliott and Petersen who proposed that the text should be treated in literary as well as in social-scientific terms.

The term 'literary-sociological criticism' pays attention to a fuller understanding of the original context to explore the productive societal powers that gave rise to the Biblical documents (Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:56). The concept of contextualisation from liberation theology offers some interesting insights to our current pursuit. This thesis advocates the innovative combination of the social-scientific method with contextual hermeneutics.

1.5.3 THE BACKGROUND OF CONTEXTUAL HERMENEUTICS

In a much-quoted passage, Gustavo Gutierrez elaborates on the methodological innovation of liberation theology.

...Theology as critical reflection on historical praxis is a liberating theology, a theology of the liberating transformation of the history of human kind and therefore that part of it - gathered in *ekklesia* - which openly confesses Christ...(1975:15)

For liberation theologians, critical reflection or an incisive analysis of one's historical context is the basic starting point for transformation. This general 'scholarly' approach of 'academic theologians' to the study of theology devoid of any analysis of the interpreter's context was also experienced in North America. What factors prompted this 'new way of doing' or methodology of theology? When Cone, Collins, the Latin Americans and other liberation theologians maintain that the questions and answers of theology are influenced by the social perceptions of the theologian's position in the material conditions of a given society, they do not exclude themselves.

For liberation theology, this is no small matter. Liberation theology therefore contends that there is no neutrality, much less in the case of any Christian theology that purports to find its primary clues in the Bible.

Juan Luis Segundo has written one of the clearest methodologies of Latin American theology, in *The Liberation of Theology* (1975). In this work, he attempts to analyse not so much the content of Latin American theology as its methodological approach and its connection with liberation. Segundo, like most liberation theologians, cannot conceive of a Christian theology whose primary, fundamental or normative point of reference is not the Bible. No arena of society is above scrutiny and analysis. It is helpful to follow Segundo's analysis of Cone's *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1972) to obtain a more detailed understanding of the four levels of the hermeneutical circle (Segundo 1975).

According to Cone, black theology is not accountable to non-black critics but only to the black community. At work in mainline (white) theology is an ideology claiming to be colour blind but one that permits theology to leave the cause of oppression unmentioned. For Cone, therefore, black theology must detoxify itself from the corruption of white theology and build a theology on sources and norms appropriate to the black community. He asserts that '... that whatever Black theology says about liberation must be said in the light of the Black community's experience of Jesus Christ' (1972:30).

One can understand Cone's resolve to place this new experience in theology at the service of the black community, as this was his immediate context. With a change in context, this new experience of theology should be made to serve its own unique context.

Liberation theology's focus on involvement within the concrete context coupled with a critical analysis that challenges both the interpretation of Scripture and subsequent involvement has been one of the important catalysts for the emergence of contextual hermeneutics.

1.5.4 THE METHODOLOGY OF CONTEXTUAL HERMENEUTICS

The Word of God emanated from a specific context, namely that of the Eastern Mediterranean world (Malina 1993). For whenever interpreters approach a particular Biblical text, this can be done only from their own perspective. The dynamic interplay will be seen more clearly if we first examine the four elements of the circle, as set out by Padilla (1986:300): the interpreter's historical situation; the interpreter's world-and-life view; Scripture, and theology.

There is, therefore, a place for sociology, anthropology, and social psychology, from the social sciences, which can enable interpreters to define more precisely the horizons of their context, even as linguistics, literature, history, culture and sociology can help them in their study of the text and its original context.

Interpreters tend to approach Scripture from their particular perspectives. Johannes A Loubser's analysis of the theology of *Apartheid* as 'a contextual theology gone wrong' offers interesting new insights on the methodology of contextual theology (1996: 321-337). This, he contends, provides an example of the intricate relationship between theological reflection and social reality. After a historical profile of *Apartheid* theology, the 'contextual' nature of this theology is discussed and compared with more recent theological models (1996: 321-337). One of the views expressed in Loubser's book, *The Apartheid Bible*, viz. 'that *Apartheid* theology exhibited some remarkable similarities to contemporary contextual theologies,' elicited some sharp responses. Leonardo Boff's theology/christology of liberation, as described by Wachege (1992:31) reveals five general characteristics of contextual theologies. *Apartheid* theology shows stark similarities to these characteristics.

Contextual hermeneutics, according to Padilla, is a two-way interpretative process in which the Biblical text/context and the context of the interpreter are engaged (1986:300f). Maimela begins with 'a grounding of black theology in the experience of being freed from white racialism' (1993:66). Loubser affirms that '*Apartheid* theology also represents a theology that is also grounded in experience, viz. the experience that racial integration leads to disaster' (1996:335).

The major difference between the methodology of contextual theologies and *Apartheid* theology has to do with the new historical consciousness that all knowledge is a relative, human, product. *Apartheid* theology was carried out in a naiveté to the vested material interests involved.

This inherent contrast between *Apartheid* theology and contextual theologies is best exemplified by its use of the Bible. *Apartheid* theology consciously proposed to be a Biblical theology, drawing on Biblical proof-texts and Biblical principles. Loubser compares its methodology to that of the earlier stages of black theology (cf Maimela's criticism of James Cone's methodology, Maimela 1993:62f). Both used Scripture in their initial stages in a retrospective manner like the 'grand narrative' employed by *Apartheid* theology of God's creation through separation (Gen. 11) (Loubser 1996:336). The 'authoritative text' in the theology of *Apartheid* was not the Bible, but 'the ideologies and realities of *Apartheid*' (Van der Merwe, 1988:20).

In liberation theology 'the poor' had become equivalent to 'the believer'. In answering the question: Was *Apartheid* theology a contextual theology gone haywire? Loubser concludes 'Both the historical context of the Biblical text and that of the readers were violated in the process' (1996:337).

Both the context of Scripture and our present context merit equally incisive analyses. The purpose of hermeneutics is to transpose the Biblical message from its original context into a particular contemporary situation. The context of theology, therefore, includes not only answers to specific questions raised by the situation but also questions, which the text itself poses to the context. Our theology, in turn, will be more relevant and responsive to the critical issues.

1.5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON CHAPTER ONE

A few concluding remarks on chapter one may be appropriate here. A clear differentiation should be maintained between approaches concentrating on constructing a social history of the text, and approaches that wish to analyse the text by means of the methods and models developed in the social sciences. Social-scientific studies

could reflect the same fallacy, as they make no distinction between the narrative world and the contextual world of a text or between the situation and the strategy of a text.

Meeks and Malina paid more attention to the text, but it was Elliott and Petersen who proposed that the text should be treated in literary as well as in social-scientific terms.

The concept of contextualisation from liberation theology offers some interesting insights to our current pursuit. This thesis advocates the innovative combination of the social-scientific method with contextual hermeneutics. It then focused on the combination of the contextual hermeneutic and the sociological or social-scientific approach. The contextual methodology has cogently demonstrated the necessity of an analysis of the both the context of the Bible and the present context. A social-scientific approach goes equally deep and warrants social-scientific analyses of both the context of Scripture and the contemporary situation.

In short, then, chapter one focuses on methodology, and treats the limitation of a simplistic identification of current social and individual context with the historical, and then proceeds to overview contributions by scholars in the field of social-scientific criticism and the background and methodology of 'Contextual Hermeneutics'. It concludes by providing a more articulate model of contextual hermeneutics in a social-science perspective.

Chapter two will establish a Biblical basis to this study, by exploring a social-scientific analysis of the concept of the Lukan *oikos*.

CHAPTER TWO

A SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF THE LUKAN *OIKOS*

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In summary, then, chapter one firstly explored a spectrum of perspectives and strategies of the social-scientific approach and the contextual methodology. It then advocated a unique combination of the contextual hermeneutic with the social-scientific approach. This constitutes the methodological framework that will be employed in this thesis.

This pursuit does not seek to operate at the exclusion of other accepted approaches namely those of the literal, linguistic and historical. It functions eclectically whilst highlighting the contextual and social-scientific methodologies. This chapter will establish a Biblical basis to this study, by engaging in a social-scientific analysis of the concept of the Lukan *oikos*.

2.2. THE LUKAN *OIKOS*: A SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC STUDY

In chapter one we noted that John H Elliott was one of few scholars who displayed an incisive grasp of both the theory and concepts of the social sciences. His method of 'sociological exegesis' was stated as the:

... analysis, interpretation, and correlation of the literary, sociological and theological features ... and dimensions of the text upon its narrower and wider social contexts (1981:8).

Elliott also emphasised the importance of the text as the only witness to its specific situation. So it all comes back to literary analysis or rhetorical analysis, searching for the 'strategy' of the writer, which relates to the situation of the text. Situation, according to Elliott, involves various levels and phases. The *macrosocial level of a text* concerns the macrosocial context of the text. The *microsocial level of a text* concerns the more specific social conditions and features of its specific sender(s) and receiver(s). The situation of a text can be viewed (a) *synchronically* (with attention to social patterns of behaviour, institutions, structures, processes and their relations at a given point or period in time, or (b) *diachronically* (with attention to how these social features and arrangements change over the course of time) (1987:1).

The correlation of Elliott's strategy and the situation of a text parallel the integration of a literary and a social-scientific analysis of the text. The strategy of a text is pursued by literary methods while the situation of a text is sought by social-scientific methods.

Elliott's approach is one of those that are best suited to the methodology of this thesis. His inclusion of the literary approach, in particular is helpful in this study. The omission of contextual hermeneutics (within Elliott's framework) affords the opportunity for an original contribution in the unique manner of combining contextual hermeneutics with the social-scientific method in this thesis. For these reasons his work, together with that of Malina, will be used extensively in this chapter.

Malina, as was also noted in chapter one, in contrast to Theissen, Gager and Meeks, has always been at pains to explicate both theory and model. He has made social-scientific theory and models accessible by writing concisely on this field. Malina (1982:233) identified 'three main types of social science models that might be used to understand social interaction', namely the structural functionalist model, the conflict model, and the symbolic model.

Malina's contribution also isolates four distinct social institutions or structures that are basic in any society, namely, kinship, economics, politics, and religion (1986b: 152-153). Malina cited other examples where kinship, economics or politics maintained primacy and the other institutions were the embedded ones (1986b: 153-154). This sensitised the interpreter to the fact that the society being studied was configured radically different from ours. Extreme care should be taken to avoid ethnocentric anachronism. Malina's meticulous scholarship has also encouraged using his model in the latter section of this chapter.

John H. Elliot introduced an innovative social-scientific approach to I Peter, published as *A home for the homeless* in 1981. He viewed this letter as a refugee document, not reflective of a cosmological distinction of heaven and earth but of a socio-political differentiation between the Graeco-Roman world and the Christian community. The Christians were a persecuted minority, a sort of 'band

on the run'. Elliot cited two cognates of *oikos* from I Peter, namely, 1:17 and 2:11. Through a study of ancient citizen lists, he established that the expression *paroikos* refers to the category of resident aliens. While Christians lived in this world they were resident aliens or permanent strangers. They will remain so because they are the *oikos* of God (I Peter 2:5; 4:7).

This dominant theme of Christians as the 'house of God' serves as a counterpart to those identifying themselves by their worship at a synagogue or temple. In Elliott's earlier study, *A home for the homeless* he observed that:

In Luke-Acts the Household is prominently contrasted to the temple, the bankrupt seat of Jewish power and piety, and to the city, the area of 'Caesar's network' and locus of social control ... For the Christians [of Luke-Acts] the *oikos* constitutes not simply an additional form of social identity and religious allegiance alongside others such as the temple, the synagogue, or the city. The Christian *oikos* is rather a decisive alternative according to Luke. Membership in the former involves constant conflict with and critique of the latter (1981:193-194).

We shall concentrate on the Luke-Acts manuscript to ascertain what the concept of *oikos* meant sociologically within the time frame of the early church. There is general consensus that Luke-Acts, more than any other writing of the New Testament, supplies relatively reliable detail on the persons, groups, institutions, places, dates and events of the early church. Luke relates the *euangelion* in terms of the two basic institutions of Judaism and early Christianity, namely, the Jerusalem Temple and the private household. The Lukan references to these institutions outnumber those of any other New Testament writing. Despite this thrust of Luke's work being generally acknowledged (Baltzer 1965; Weinert 1981, 1982; Cassidy and Scharper 1983; Richard 1983; Koenig 1985; Esler 1987), sparse attention has been given to the intentional juxtapositions between Temple and Household and its sociological implications.

It should be noted that Luke would certainly not have spoken of 'schematised wholes' or institutions, but rather of related parts. A place of prayer and sacrifice, priests, rulers, law, lawyers and purity observance would be contrasted to homes, family members, servants, friends, meals, hospitality and domestic life. Luke, a first-century historian, tells his story from a 'native's' point of

view or what is termed in anthropology the 'emic' perspective. On the other hand, from a social-scientific point of view, or 'etic' perspective, Luke sketches features of two major institutions of first-century Palestinian society. Institutions are social associations or processes that are organised in terms of roles, relationships, and responsibilities, and achieve stability over time. Therefore Elliott propounds that:

... as institutions in the formal sociological sense the Temple and the household portray not simply different spaces for worship or residence, but two opposing systems of social life (1991:89).

A study of the Lukan contrast between Temple and Household in the parable of the pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk 18:9-14) uncovers interesting new perspectives. This parable was aimed as an accusation of those persuaded of their piety and loathe of others (18:9). Elliott isolates three contrasts that are drawn between the actors and their actions, the content of their prayer, and locale (1991:91). These actors epitomise both those at the heart and at the fringe of Jewish society. The pharisee, confident of his approval of God and his piety over others like the tax collector, implores God in prayer (vv 11-12). In stark distinction, the self-disparaging tax collector prostrates himself as a sinner fully on God's mercy (v 13). The anticlimax of the story (v 14) involves not only a contrast in Jesus' verdict between the tax collector who was justified by God and the pharisee who was not, but a shift in locale. This tax collector went down to his house (*oikos*) 'justified rather than the other' (v 14a). Having commenced in the Temple, the 'Holy Place', as the locale the story concludes with the *oikos* as the locus of the justified tax collector.

At a glimpse, this contrast in locales appears to be of minor importance. But the framing device of composition (cf Chetty 1986:75; 81-84 with regard to Mark 4) evident in the Temple of verse 10 and *oikos* of verse 14, however, gives grounds for hesitation. Henry Mottu (1974:199) maintains that these descriptions of the 'where' of human living point to two different loci and thus to a spatial contradiction between 'temple' and 'house'. For Mottu, Temple and *oikos* denote divergent social spaces and conflicting forms of social life. One, an estranged form of collective, institutional life, and the other, an inventive form of integrative group life. He goes on to observe that:

As long as the two antagonists look at the temple as their locus of reference, they stay in an alienated organisation of space that makes human reality inhuman. The *skopos* (goal) of the story seems to me to be located in an invitation to change the rules of the common spatial game, to transform collectives into groups and to give a 'house' to displaced persons. No conversion, no morals, no opposition of two 'characters' is the *skopos*; but a shift of space, a structural change, a transformation of where people live is what we are invited to accomplish. The opposition between the pharisee and the tax collector is only the secondary aspect of the dominant contradiction that is the spatial contradiction between temple and house, collective and group, alienated and human space (Mottu 1974:201-202).

The distinction between Temple and Household in Luke 18:9-14 is also demonstrated by the structural features of Luke-Acts. It is with scenes in the Temple that the first half of the Lukan two-volume work begins and ends. Starting with the story of Zechariah's priestly service in the Temple and the angelic announcement of his son's birth (1:5-23), the Gospel closes with the disciples' departure from Bethany and the parting of the risen Lord and their return to Jerusalem where they were 'continually in the Temple blessing God' (24:50-53). Temple scenes thus frame the narrative for the first half of Luke-Acts whereas scenes in the Household frame the second half of the narrative. Commencing with the gathering of the faithful in the house with the upper room (Ac 1:12-14), following the Lord's ascension (1:1-11), Acts concludes enigmatically with Paul's house confinement in Rome and his unhindered proclamation of the gospel (28:30-31).

Another patterned demonstration of this contrast is apparent in the early narrative of the Acts. This is evident in the pattern of alternating scenes.

House (<i>oikos</i>)	Temple (<i>naos</i>)
1:13-2:45	
	3:1-4:22
4:23-5:11	
	5:12-40
6:1-7	
	6:8-8:3
8:4ff	

In the first eight chapters, the scene shifts with frequency between the *oikos* where the believers assemble, pray, receive the Spirit, break bread and generously share all things in common and the Temple. The latter being the centre of political and religious control, a place for seeking alms, and the scene of conflict (e.g. arrest and imprisonment, critique of Temple rulers, mob violence, beating and death). This design of oscillating scenes distinguishes two separate communities with their forms of social and economic organisation. The one represents Temple rule and the other, a new community of witnesses to the resurrected Christ based in the Household.

The Temple is the locale of conflict in the early chapters of Acts. A situation of alms seeking and healing at the Temple (3:1-4:22) provides an opportunity for discerning between those who take and those who give life, those who killed the 'Author of life' (3:15) and those who heal in his name (3:16). Temple authorities (priests, temple captain, and sadducees, 4:1; rulers, elders, scribes, high priests and family 4:5-6, 5:17; Sanhedrin, 4:5-6, 15; 5:21, 27; 6:12-15) in their jealousy (5:17), opposition to the apostles' teaching (4:2; 5:18, 27-28; 6:57), and their actions of arrest, imprisonment, beating, and killing (4:3; 5:18, 40; 6:57-58), defend Temple interests by seeking to suppress the community which gives health (3:1-10; 5:16), celebrates the covenant of Abraham given through God's resurrected servant to 'all the families of the earth' (3:25-26), praises God (4:24-30), and is filled with the Spirit (4:8; 5:21; 7:55).

In the case of Stephen, charged with speaking 'words against this holy place and the law' (6:13-14), death is the result of Stephen's verdict on the Temple as the house of Solomon but not the dwelling place of God and on its officers as the murderers of the Righteous One (7:46-58). In the only other set of references to the Jerusalem Temple in Acts, Paul's Temple visit, the plot against his life (21:26-36) and Paul's defences (in chs 22-26), the Temple is portrayed as the scene of assassination plots, conflict over purity, and political collusion between the Temple authorities, Herodians, and Romans. After Stephen's death, the persecution of the Jerusalem church, and its dispersion (8:1b ff), it is the Household, on the other hand which becomes the basis of the church's life and the focus of its mission.

According to Elliott 'throughout Luke-Acts a transition thus becomes apparent in regard to Temple and Household'. In Luke, the Jerusalem Temple marks the structural frame (chs 1-2, 24:52-53) and the focus (9:51 'he set his face to go to Jerusalem'; cf 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28) of Jesus' life journey, with Household visits and instruction (7:1-10, 36-50; 8:40-56; 10:38-42; 12:13-53; 13:18-30; 14:1-24; 16:1-17:10; 18:18-34; 19:1-10) frequently providing the positive contrast to the negative climax of confrontation and death in Jerusalem. In Acts, the Household becomes prominent as the focus of the Christian movement gradually shifts from Jerusalem and the Temple to the Households of the Diaspora. At first the Christian community gathers both at the Temple and in homes (2:43-47; 5:42). But the attempt at coexistence fails. Agents of the Temple become the 'hunters', and followers of Jesus, 'the hunted'. The episode of Stephen's speech and stoning, in connection with remarks concerning the Temple forms a turning point between the earliest phase of the church's connection with the Temple (chs 1-8:1a) and its mission to the Households of the Diaspora (8:1b-28: 31). In the remainder of Luke's account, the Temple plays no positive role. Together with the synagogue the Temple figures as a locale of Jewish-Christian conflict over purity. Whereas the early church concentrates on the *oikos* as the means of recruitment, the locus of its assembly, worship and mutual support, and the basis for the social portrayal of its *evangelion*' (Elliott 1991:94).

The juxtaposition of scenes in Acts 1-8 and the inclusive framework of Luke (Temple) compared with its counterpart in Acts (household) suggest an intentional contrast of locales, groups, and institutions commencing with the Temple and concluding with the household. These larger patterns of contrast in the Lukan narrative seem compatible with the contrast drawn between Temple and *oikos* in Luke 18:9-14. The Temple and the household are bases of conflicting groups of actors with divergent interests. From start to close of the Lukan narrative, it is the household, which gradually replaces the Temple as the domain of God's saving presence. The Temple, at first the locale of salvation and symbol of Israel's holy union with God, is unmasked as a power opposed to God's people. 'The household,' says Elliott:

... on the other hand, once the gathering place of the marginalised, emerges as the institution where God's spirit is truly active and where familial relations, shared resources, and

communal values concretise the vision of a salvation available to all the families of the earth (1991:95).

In Luke-Acts, three Greek expressions are used to designate the Jerusalem Temple: *naos* (temple), *oikos tou theou* (house of God), and *to hiepon* (the holy place).

Naos occurs four times in Luke, thrice identifying the scene of Zechariah's priestly activity (1:9, 21, 22), and once in a reference to the rending of the Temple curtain at Jesus' death (23:45; cf Mt. 27:51; Mk 15:38). In Acts the term designates pagan 'temples' (17:24) or miniature silver replicas of the Artemis temple of Ephesus (19:24).

Oikos tou theou as a second term for the Jerusalem Temple appears four times in Luke and once in Acts, all in contexts of reprimand. In conflict with the pharisees over the Sabbath rest, Jesus defends his disciples plucking and eating grain with an appeal to David's entering the house of God and eating the bread of the Presence, a privilege reserved only to priests (Lk. 6:4). In reproach of the lawyer (and pharisees) for burdening people with the law but not aiding their entrance into the Kingdom (11:45-52) and for consenting with the murderous deeds of their fathers, Jesus refers to the shed blood of the Prophets including that of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the 'sanctuary' (RSV) *oikos*, (11:51). In (13:35) Jesus' word of judgement, 'Behold, your house (*oikos*) is forsaken', is ambiguous, referring either to the Temple in particular or to Jerusalem (cf 13:34; Weinert 1982) though both are interchangeable as symbols of a condemned Israel. Finally, Jesus condemns the Temple merchants with the words: 'It is written, my house (*oikos*) shall be a house (*oikos*) of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers' (19:45-46). In Acts, Stephen, affirming that God 'does not dwell in houses made with hands' (Isaiah 66:1-2), contests God's dwelling in the house (*oikos*) built by Solomon (7:47-50).

To hieron is used fourteen times in Luke and twenty-four times in Acts (more than in the rest of the New Testament writings combined). It is the predominant Lukan term for designating the Jerusalem Temple, including its precincts and courts, as 'the sanctuary' or 'holy place'. For Judaism, the Temple as Israel's central holy place

represented the chief visible symbol of its identity as God's holy people. The holiness of its space, its personnel, priests (*hiereis*) 'holy officials'; chief priests (*archiereis*); Levites, its sacrifices, and of the laws of holiness it enforced symbolised a holy people's union with the Holy One of Israel. This link between the holy place and the holy people and their demarcation from all that was unholy was derived from the Torah and maintained in a system of holiness, which embraced all aspects of Jewish life. Where Temple and Torah are involved in Luke's narrative, therefore, crucial issues regarding norms of holy behaviour and social interaction and the boundaries of God's holy people are at risk (Elliott 1991:96).

The Temple as a holy place, in Luke, is the scene of Jesus' presentation, Mary's purification (in accord with Torah), Simeon's and Anna's blessing of the child, and, years later, of Jesus' discussion with teachers after the occasion of a Passover pilgrimage. Initially, the Temple is the place where Jesus' faithfulness to the Law, his role as agent of divine salvation, redemption and mercy, and his wisdom are maintained. With the commencement of his public ministry, however, the Temple scenes in Luke-Acts take on a more foreboding tone. In Luke's redaction of the temptation account, it is Jesus' confrontation with the devil at the Temple, which forms the climax of the episode (4:9-13; cf Mt 4:5-7). In the parable of the pharisee and the tax collector, the holy place as a scene of estrangement between the holy pharisee and the unholy tax collector is contrasted to the *oikos* of the justified sinner. Upon his arrival in Jerusalem, it is the holy place and the holy city, which form the object of Jesus' fervent censure. Thereafter, the Temple counts as the arena of Jesus' conflict with the Temple (chief priests; sadducees) and related authorities, namely chief priests, scribes, elders (Sanhedrin) and their conspiracy with the Roman governor against him.

The disciples worship or teach in the Temple both at the outset of Acts and at the conclusion of Luke. But the holy place persists as an arena of conflict. For both Jesus and Paul the holy place and the holy city remain the locale of hostility and political connivance.

Such a review of specific Temple references also uncovers elements of the semantic field associated with Temple in Luke-Acts. This wider

semantic field is a set of terms related to a specific area of cultural life (Nida 1975:22). In this case the social domain of the Jerusalem Temple provides a broader picture of the features associated with the Temple in the Lukan narrative. Sacrifice, prayer, praise, revelation, hope of salvation, tithing and legal observance are all activities associated with the Temple. But so is priestly political power, economic disparities, scribal arrogance, exploitation of the poor, conflict of Jesus and his followers with Temple authority, their critique of the Temple establishment, death plots and unjust executions. 'The Temple and Jerusalem, the Holy Place and the Holy City', according to Elliott:

... constitute for Luke the dominating public centre of Jewish society and that web of social relations within which the Jesus movement was born but with which it also came into irremediable conflict. The Holy Place and the holiness ideology it embodies eventually emerge in Luke-Acts as an entire system at odds with the will of God and the realisation of salvation (1991:97).

All the interrelated groups of the Temple network, in Luke-Acts are portrayed as playing key roles in the antagonism to Jesus and his followers: chief priests and minor clergy, scribes, elders, Sanhedrin, sadducees and pharisees. At the apex of the Temple hierarchy were the chief priests (*archiereis*). Associated with the caducean faction, and under the Roman governor, this priestly nobility exemplified the power of the Temple over all aspects of Jewish political, economic, social and cultural life. With the scribes and elders (the aristocracy), they also formed the Sanhedrin, the 'Supreme Court' of the Jews. In Luke-Acts, as in the other Gospels, it is these rulers, Judaism's unified political, economic, legal, social and religious power, which play the ultimate role in the conflict. The Temple police exercise the constraining power of the holy place. The chief priests, together with the scribes and elders and in collaboration with Rome, connive with an agent of Satan (Judas Iscariot) to kill Jesus and silence his following.

Although not cultic officials but rather official interpreters of the Mosaic Law (Torah), the scribes, formed another arm of the Temple apparatus described by Luke. They held a key position in the Sanhedrin and, like the pharisees, represented the link between Temple authority and Torah observance. In Luke's account, it is these scribal Temple and Torah authorities that symbolised the inequality of the Temple as an economic institution. Like the pharisees

condemned by Jesus as 'lovers of money' and 'extortionists', and the Temple merchants accused of making the house of God, and prayer, 'a den of thieves', the scribes are upbraided in the Temple itself for seeking public honour in the synagogues while they secretly 'devour widows' houses'. Jesus' exposure of their intrigue (cf also 20:1-26) strikes at the economic, as well as, religious corruption of Temple politics and condemns a system organised not for prayer, justice and mercy but for self-aggrandisement and abuse. So, in Luke-Acts, it becomes evident that the scribes also play a major role in the plot against Jesus and the early church.

Ordinary priests and Levites represent, with the lay faction of the pharisees, a key aspect of the Temple system in Luke-Acts. This relates to the basic idea of the Temple as the 'holy place' where holy, priestly personnel served, purification was executed in accordance with Torah, and all matters regarding the 'holiness' viz., cleanness of the Jewish people were controlled. The pharisees, enforcing Temple purity regulations still more rigorously, had extended the norms of Temple and priestly holiness to every Jewish home. In Luke-Acts this purity system controlled by the Temple establishment becomes a major point of controversy. To grasp fully the implications of this conflict over purity, it becomes necessary to see how Judaism's-purity system functioned from a social-scientific point of view.

Malina (1981:122-152) and Neyrey (1986b: 91-128: cf Neusner 1973) have shown that the Temple purity system controlled the social identity, social classifications, and social boundaries of the Jewish people. Israel's land and places (*Mishnah Kelim* 1.6-9), classes of persons (*Tosephta Megillah* 2.7), holy times (*Mishnah Moed*), and unholy physical 'uncleanness' (*Mishnah Kelim* 1.3) were all classified according to degrees of purity or impurity. This system established the social stratification of the Jewish community (Jeremias 1969:271-358), the norms of public and private behaviour, and the lines of demarcation between Israelites and all beyond the margins of God's people (i.e. physical or social deviants, Samaritans, and Gentiles).

This arrangement of society along purity lines called for careful avoidance of contact with all that was judged impure (sinners, lepers, blind, lame, menstruants, corpses, tax collectors,

Samaritans, Gentiles) and proper respect for holy places (Temple, synagogue), holy persons (Temple personnel), acts of purification (hand-washing before meals) and holy times (Sabbath, festivals). According to this system of economic and social stratification legitimated by purity classifications, the rich were ranked above the poor, the clergy above the laity, urban dwellers (e.g. in Jerusalem) above the rural peasantry (e.g. in distant Galilee), men above women, married above unmarried, healthy above the ill, and conformists above perverts (cf Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:99).

According to the other Evangelists, as well as to Luke, it was this system of purity with its exclusivity and injustice, which Jesus challenged (cf Borg 1984). It was this challenge, in its social and political implications that eventually led to conflict, social division and death.

The picture Luke paints of Jesus' attitude toward purity laws is an intricate one. Jesus, his family and his followers respected the holiness of the Temple as a house of prayer, and the holiness of the synagogue as a place of learning. However, the ministry of Jesus and his movement is also marked by a disregard of the purity norms concerning persons, behaviour, times and places.

Jesus and his followers regularly associated with the physically unclean lepers, cripples, menstruants, the blind, the sick, a eunuch, the demon possessed, the dead, 'sinners', tax collectors, Samaritans, and Gentiles. They also disregarded the purity lines drawn around holy behaviour by eating food with common people and unclean persons; by neglecting cleansing rituals; by disregarding dietary regulations; by touching unclean bodies, corpses, lepers, menstruants, and the tears, hair and lips of a sinful woman. Holy times are also violated in the lack of strict Sabbath observance and fasting days. Holy places and personnel are criticised and disrespected by critical remarks against the Temple, the chief priests, scribes, elders, sadducees and pharisees. Critical remarks are made against the holy city of Jerusalem. Disregard for the limits of the Holy Land and the Holy People of Judaism is displayed. Jesus' commission of his followers is to leave the land 'for the ends of the world' and 'to preach to all nations' (Gentiles).

Therefore, according to Van Staden & Van Aarde (1991:101) the charge of defilement levelled against Jesus and his followers becomes a global one. Jesus is accused of 'perverting the nation' (Lk 23:2,14) Stephen is charged with speaking 'blasphemous words against Moses and God, ... this Holy Place and the law ... claiming that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us' (Ac 6:11-14). And Paul is denounced as 'teaching men everywhere against people and the law and this place' and by, bringing Greeks into the Temple, 'defiling this Holy Place' (Ac 21:28).

The Temple gradually emerges, in the Lukan narrative, as an institution whose leaders and interests stood opposed to the mission of Jesus. Together with the Torah and the purity system, the Temple, for Luke, was a holy place that had lost its power to make holy. Temple officials were guided by their self-interests in preserving the *status quo* and disdain is shown to those of low degree. For all those outside the boundaries of Israel, the physical limits of the holy place and the social restrictions of its purity system effectively prohibited the access of all to sanctification, health, and salvation. Within the borders of Israel delimited by the purity system, the economic power from the taxes, tithes, sacrifices and offerings was used to advance the powerful, at the expense of the powerless. Priests and Levites protected their purity rather than extended mercy. Scribes devoured widow's houses. Pharisees neglected justice and mercy, chief priests and the Sanhedrin conspired to condemn the critics and eradicate the agents of change. The call to repentance was met with the plot to remove. Efforts to redefine the purity that God requires and the behavioural norms and social identity of God's holy people were denounced as plots to pervert the nation. Death plots countered reform programs, critique by condemnation. Therefore Elliott asserts that

... the presence of the Spirit was shifted from the Temple in Jerusalem to the households of the Diaspora. In contrast to the Temple, the household emerged as the venue of sanctity and divine salvation (1991:102).

This consideration of all the related aspects of the Temple as a comprehensive social institution, its political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions and its accompanying purity ideology has provided a fuller picture of the Temple system. Failure to take into

account this data can lead only to unbalanced deductions. Elliott regards Weinert's contention (1981) that 'Luke avoids any polemic against the Temple' as wide off the mark (1991:102). Weinert isolates references to the Temple, from those concerning Temple authorities (see Cassidy and Scharper 1983 and Tannehill 1986:169-199) and their unjust programs. He also understates Jesus and Stephen's critique of the Holy Place, and ignores the negative implications of the Temple's purity system altogether.

This survey has revealed key issues for Luke over which the Jesus movement and the Temple establishment clashed. This analysis has also highlighted salient features of a political institution, the Temple, with which another form of institution based on kinship, namely the household, can instructively be measured.

In contrast to a society led by a temple administration intent on the elimination of Temple critics and purity violators according to Luke, stands a community in solidarity with Jesus and the righteous victims of Temple injustice. This community is organised around the Household and characterised by an ethos of mercy, justice and universality.

In Luke-Acts the 'house' (*oikia*) and 'household' (*oikos*), encompassing family and kin, personnel and property, play a dominant role. A personal scrutiny of the text of Luke-Acts revealed the following statistics: the term *oikia* appears twenty-five times in Luke and twelve times in Acts; *oikos* another thirty-four times in Luke and twenty-five times in Acts. These references to domestic residences and communities are joined by numerous related terms of the *oik*-root referring to household managers and management (*oikodemos*, *oikodomein*, *oikonomein*, *oikonomia*, *oikonomos*) and household servant (*oiketeis*), as well as to further aspects of habitation (*katoikein*, *katoikia*, *metoikizein*, *panoikei*, *paroikein*, *paroikos*, *perioikein*, *perioikos*). The range of this terminology alone already gives a strong impression of the importance which domestic conditions and relations play in Luke's sociology of the gospel.

Luke-Acts, more than any other writing of the New Testament, elucidates the role, which households played in the geographical spread of the early church, the form of organisation it assumed, and the social relations it fostered. It is the features of domestic life

which illustrate aspects of Christian values and social relations rooted in the institution of kinship, that is, loyalty, solidarity, trust, mutuality of obligations, generosity, and sharing (cf Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:103).

In summary, houses, homes and households, first of all, provide in Luke-Acts the setting for a wide range of events in the life of Jesus and his followers. They include the proclamation of the gospel, the experience of forgiveness of sins, salvation and the presence of the Spirit, teaching, healing, prophecy, revelations and visions, recognition of the resurrected Christ, redefining the family of Jesus, hospitality, lodging, provision of meals and dining sociality, worship, prayer, praise, fasting, Passover-meal, baptism, Lord's Supper, sharing property and distribution of goods to the needy.

Households do not only function as the terrain for the communication of the *euangelion* in Luke-Acts. Households also served, according to Luke, as the basic social organisation of house churches, through which the gospel made its advance from Palestine to Rome. The church spread from *oikos* to *oikos* (Ac 20:20), from the Households of Galilee, Jerusalem and Jericho to those of Damascus, Joppa, Caesarea, Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Troas, Corinth and Rome. The hospitality, fellowship and mutual support typical of these house-church communities united itinerant prophets and residential believers in a co-operative effort, which for Luke, was essential to the success of the church's missionary enterprise (Koenig 1985:85-123).

Theissen (1982), Meeks (1983), Tidball (1983), Peterson (1985), Malina (1993) and others have uncovered interesting information about the sociological aspects of these house-churches. According to Loubser:

... they formed close-knit communities around the households of the prominent and wealthier members. These houses could accommodate from 50 to 100 people, all belonging to the extended family. Here, visiting evangelists were accommodated and regular meetings *such as fellowship-meals and baptisms* (Italics mine) were held (1994:64).

From the evidence gathered by Domeris (1993:85-100), Luke seems to be familiar with this type of setting. Luke's gospel reflects an interest in household matters (e.g. the parables of the lost coin,

the prodigal son and the unjust steward (*oikonomos*) 15:8-16:9). Loubser contends that only against this backdrop of the house-churches, do certain occurrences (e.g. Eutychus falling from the window in Acts 20:7-12) fit into place. The church modelled on Acts 2-6 also served as the pattern for the churches founded by the apostles. Paul's practice of making households function as a base for further Christian missions also fit into this pattern (e.g. Lydia in Acts 16:15 and Titius Justus in Acts 18:7-8).

Loubser adds that:

... in a hostile and merciless world, these churches provided security and a sense of community not found elsewhere. Therefore, in contrast to the present day experience, the ultimate form of punishment was expulsion from such a church community ... House churches played a critical strategic role in the expansion of the gospel of salvation. On the one hand they gave members of the fledgling movement a breathing space in a hostile environment while on the other hand, they embodied the messianic lifestyle, witnessing to an alternative social order where the traditional roles of society were reversed (1994:64).

In his paper Loubser ends with the recovery of the ideological perspective of the implied author of Luke-Acts that he summarises as follows:

... God's offer of salvation and real peace to the world required the evangelisation of the Roman Empire that is seen as inclusive of the whole world. In this endeavour the role of the house churches is of critical strategic importance, both for the internal consolidation of Christianity and its external witness to a messianic-lifestyle. This placed a special burden on Christian members of the Roman elite to open their households to the church and to care for the poor' (1994:64).

This latter assertion apart from confirming the thoroughgoing presence and decisive role of house-churches confirms the benevolent role of wealthy Christians. The author of Luke-Acts therefore should not be seen as only writing to Theophilus, this pseudonymous high ranking, Greek-speaking government official to present an ordered account of the origin and development of Christianity. He was actively soliciting support from affluent believers, like Theophilus to open up their dwellings for the establishment of more house-churches.

In addition to households serving according to Luke, as the basic social organisation of house-churches, scenes of domestic life also play a major role in the Lukan presentation of the teaching of Jesus. Of the thirty-one parables, which Luke relates, eighteen involve

aspects of domestic activity and Household management (*oikonomia*). Familial relations, domestic crises and responsibilities of Household management illuminate features of the kingdom of God. Children of the Household are contrasted to Temple and Torah authorities to exemplify humility, dependence on God, and discipleship (Kodell 1987). To hear the words of Jesus and do them is compared by Luke, as by Matthew, to building one's house on a solid foundation.

Oikos also serves as the symbol of social life for illustrating features of the kingdom of God. The institution of kinship and family based on blood relationship (consanguinity) and affinity provides a model for a community of fictive kin united by the bonds of mercy, faith and filial obedience. The boundaries of this symbolical family or Household of God are expanded to include the 'pariah' Samaritans, and Gentiles (Elliott 1991:105). In this kingdom/Household, God is experienced as a merciful, generous and forgiving 'Father'. Jesus is recognised as a 'Son of God'. Believers who hear and do Jesus' words in contrast to the children of Jerusalem form his new family and become the true 'children' of the heavenly Father, 'brothers and sisters', one with another. In this kingdom/*oikos* Jesus is the generous Lord and 'Householder' (*oikodespotes*) and the meals of which he speaks, over which he presides, and at which he serves, are signs of the inclusiveness, fellowship, status reversal, reciprocal service, and joy, typical of life in the kingdom/*oikos* of God. Those who share in the fellowship of this Household are those who hear the Householder's words and do them. 'Household stewards' and 'servants' are responsible for the things entrusted to them'. Their master's humble service in the *oikos* is the model for their own. In the *oikos* of God they are united with their Lord and one another in new bonds of kinship and friendship. As Jesus was 'the friend of tax-collectors and sinners' the friendship of his followers likewise, as Acts makes clear also knew no social boundaries.

Showing mercy (*eleeos*) performing merciful acts (*eleein*) of loving-kindness is for Luke, actions especially typical of the kingdom/*oikos* of God. The Lukan gospel begins with rejoicing over the divine mercy linked with Jesus and manifested to lowly women, Mary and Elizabeth as emissaries of Israel. Mercy, moreover, is exercised in the healing of sinners and the unclean: lepers, a blind man, one near death, and a lame man. Works of mercy, beyond alms, involve deeds of loving

kindness: hospitality, the rearing of orphans, assistance at weddings, redemption of prisoners, care for the sick, burial of the dead, comfort of mourners, actions noted by Luke as typical of Jesus and his community. This mercy shows no limits set by purity regulations but is available to all who do the father's will. To love one's enemies, do good, and lend with no expectation of return is to be a child of the Most High. As God the Father is merciful, so are his children to imitate him.

In Luke-Acts the Household plays a foremost role in the mission of Jesus. These households of believers are the vehicles for the spread of the gospel from Galilee to Rome. Economically and socially, they constituted independent self-subsistent communities organised on the basis of kinship and Household management. Politically, they played no part in Palestine's power structure except as the supplier of its economic resources and the object of its policies. Here among the Households of the holy and the unholy, the wealthy and the poor, Jews and Gentiles of high and low degree, the *euangelion* of wholeness made its advance. Household organisation was determined by the structure of the family and regulated by the codes of family life and kinship relations. These domestic structures, supplied Jesus with both the models and metaphors for illustrating life in the kingdom of God. Biological kinship served as the model for relations with God as Father and fellow believers as brothers and sisters. Qualities of both the honourable human father and the divine parent, generosity, mercy, hospitality, loyalty, friendship, were those qualities to be modelled by the family (Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:106).

In Luke-Acts the Household serves as both a historical reality and a metaphor. The church that grows through Household conversions becomes at the same time a worldwide Household of faith. The contrast to the Temple as historical institution and erstwhile sacred symbol is clear: political institution versus kinship institution; centralisation of power and coercion versus dispersion of the powerless Households and familial commitment; economic exploitation versus material sharing; stratification by purity versus integration through kinship and fictive kinship bonds; exclusion and alienation based on purity lines versus inclusion based on mercy and faith. The former for Luke is the object of critique, rejection, conflict and

death. The latter is one of praise, repentance, concord and divinely conferred life. Thus, in Luke's account, declares Elliott,

... the Spirit of God and its sanctifying power moves from Temple to Household, from the chief symbol of Jewish national identity to the principal symbol of a community united with a heavenly Father. In Luke-Acts the Household emerges as the predominant sphere and symbol of the reception of the gospel, Christian identity, and solidarity in the Spirit (1991:107).

From this examination, largely following Elliott's analysis of the two major institutions in Luke-Acts, the Temple and the Household, the evidence confirms that throughout Luke-Acts, as in Luke 18:9-14 in particular, Temple and *oikos* represent distinctly different and contrasted types of social institutions with conflicting sets of structures, interests, values, beliefs and behaviours (1991:90).

Recent studies by Halvor Moxnes and Bruce Malina describe another useful social-scientific model for our current pursuit. The significance of institutions and groups in Luke-Acts and their function in the narrative, Moxnes (1987,1988) notes, can best be determined by examining them in relation to the social relations typical of the society within which Luke functions. Underlying the economic and social modes of interaction and conflict described in Luke-Acts, he demonstrates that they were broader contrasting patterns of relations based on ancient systems of either reciprocity or redistribution. Reciprocal (direct person-to-person give-and-take) forms of interaction were characteristic of the Household and local village life in first century Palestine. Also the centralised accumulation of agricultural surplus and redistribution were typical of the general Temple-based economy.

These contrasting modes of social exchange, according to Moxnes, played a key role in shaping social dimensions of the conflict between the Jesus movement and the Temple establishment. Before considering this role in more detail however, let us first examine the analytical model and its operative terms, as more extensively defined by Malina.

In his study, *Christian origins and cultural anthropology*, Bruce Malina (1986:98-111) proposed a scheme for studying varied forms of social relations and interactions characteristic of the societies and groups described in the Biblical writings. This design correlated the

research of social and economic anthropologists on primitive and peasant societies analogous to those of the Biblical period (Sahlins 1965, 1972; Carney 1975:137-234; Sack 1986:52-91).

Malina notes that forms of social relations (including economic exchanges) in pre-industrial societies fall along a spectrum marked by types of reciprocity at one pole to types of redistribution or centrality at the other. Reciprocal relations, involving personal, back-and-forth exchanges of goods and services are typical of small-scale societies, tribal organisations, village and household life. At this level of direct personal and local interaction food, clothing, shelter, hospitality and other basic necessities of social life are either shared freely according to generosity or need (generalised reciprocity). These may also be exchanged symmetrically according to the interests of both parties (balanced reciprocity) or obtained with no concern for the other's self-interest (negative reciprocity). The types of reciprocity will vary according to prevailing social conditions, the proximity (personal and geographical) of the agents, and the purpose, mode, place and time of the interactions. Households, kin and fictive kin groups practice generalised reciprocity among themselves, illustrating the closeness of social bonds and the concern for freely-given mutual support. Balanced and negative forms of exchange are typical where social ties and trust between groups are weaker and interactions are more infrequent (1986c: 98-111).

Forms of redistribution are characteristic of large-scale societies with central storehouse economies such as the temple-based societies of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Palestine and Rome (Carney 1975:172-175). While these political economies include shared forms of exchange on local levels, their distinguishing feature is the pooling of goods and services in a central storehouse, generally linked to a temple, and their centralised political control and redistribution by a powerful temple hierarchy. In this form of social organisation the management of the entire co-operative is of foremost concern and redistribution occurs according to the interests of those in power. Malina declares,

Centricity with its pooling and redistribution generates the perception of social unity... replicates the social structure with its rank order, and presupposes centralised organisation of social order and social action (1986c: 110).

Economic and social relations are stratified to favour the elite. In place of the consensus and commitment usual of kinship-based reciprocal relations, submission and allegiance are marshalled through political, legal and military power, enforcement of social stratification and boundaries, and control of the cultural (including religious) tradition (Sack 1986:61,68, 71 and Scott 1977).

This model contrasts divergent forms of social organisation characteristic of pre-industrial societies including those of Jesus and Luke's time. In particular it clarifies differences in the ways that small-scale kinship-based groups and large-scale, national populations with a centralised political base were socially organised to manage the exchange of goods and services and all forms of social interchange. This model is useful in three important ways. First it provides a scheme for considering differing forms of social organisation predominant in the Mediterranean world of the first century and known to Luke and his audience. This was a world replete with rival systems of redistribution (Palestine local monarchies, Rome) and reciprocity (families, villages, urban settings). Secondly, the divergent feature of redistribution and reciprocity arrangements provide categories for analysing Luke's description and assessment of economic-social conditions. This in turn will help clarify implications of the choice of Temple and Household as contrasting foci of the Lukan narrative. Finally, the match between the social arrangements of Luke's world and the emphasis of his composition will allow us to assess the persuasive power of Luke's representation of Temple and Household.

The social arrangements peculiar to Luke's world reverberate in his two-volume work. When this model of social relations is used as a lens through which to study the social data of Luke-Acts, it becomes explicit that in his contrast of Temple and Household, Luke is describing two types of social organisation known to his audience. In the language of our model, the one is a centralised, politically controlled redistributive system, with the Jerusalem Temple as its hub, and the other; a movement organised around Households and kin or fictive-kin, which is united by bonds of reciprocity.

The Jerusalem Temple as the base of first century Palestine's redistribution economy and the destabilising impact of the management of this system, in all areas of Palestinian life, has been described by Oakman (1986:37-91) and Belo (1975:60-86) and others. This system, controlled by a coalition of large landholders (chief-priestly families, lay elders, Herodians) in co-operation with Rome's imperialist policy, through a burden of tribute, Temple taxes and offerings, tithes and other debts was altering ancient land-holding patterns and eroding traditional forms of social relations. A growing percentage of the peasant population, unable to meet the demands of Rome and the Temple, was being forced to sell its lands and its family members into slavery. Impoverishment of the masses, imprisonment, destitution and social unrest was on the rise. The gap between the landed 'haves' and the landless 'have nots' was growing. Village patterns of collaborate labour and reciprocal social relations were being destroyed, and the poor and the powerless, once protected by the norms of Torah (cf the role of the rural prophet Amos in this regard), were now the objects of abuse and abdication.

This Temple system had grown morally bankrupt. The Temple, once a house of prayer had become a den of thieves (Lk. 19:46). The custodians of Temple law, purity and power, immersed with status and class distinctions had imposed heavy burdens, ignored the needy, neglected justice, and the love of God, were full of extortion and wickedness and devoured widow's houses. Their interpretation of the Torah and the cultural tradition was onerous and self-serving. Their response to criticism was violent and murderous. The entire system and its chief symbol, the Temple, because it had failed in the distribution of material resources, justice, mercy and peace, were destined by God for annihilation.

In distinction to this system of the Temple, the system of household churches was an organisation of communal life marked by the reciprocities of kinship, friendship and domestic relations. As our model makes clear, the features of domestic life, which Luke had emphasised, are relations of generalised reciprocity. Within the Christian network of Households and the community of 'brothers and sisters in the faith', social relations were intimate, inclusive and governed by the reciprocity common to family and friends. In this private sphere social life was self-contained and economically

self-supporting. Resources were shared directly according to availability and need. No hierarchy set standards for social differentiation because in the brotherhood and sisterhood of the faithful, all was holy. All persons were equally servants to each other. Humility, rather than elitism, inclusivity rather than exclusivity, consensus rather than constraint, personal commitment rather than allegiance was the rule, as characteristic of reciprocal relations. The private space of house and home was the scene where hospitality, generosity, friendship, deeds of mercy, acts of mutual aid, familial love and fraternal support, bonds of intimacy and solidarity flourished. Here the honourable person was the generous one who had given all away (and so was wealthy beyond measure in social prestige and honour before God). Here, also, in relations marked by reciprocity, giving and forgiving were never once-for-all but on-going activities that bound partners in an open-ended association.

These divergences in the structures, norms and values of Temple and Household clarify why the Household served as the image for the kingdom. The ethos of the kingdom according to Luke is shaped by the logic of generalised reciprocity typical of the Household and the obligations of kin and fictive kinship. Given the economic and social splits within the missionary communities addressed in Luke-Acts (Karris 1985; Esler 1987:164-200), it was precisely this ethos of sharing which was essential for the continued viability, solidarity and growth of the early church.

The reciprocities of the household are especially evident in Luke's stress on giving/forgiving/lending without expectation of return, other than a future heavenly reward. This benevolence (mercy/alms) is intended especially for 'the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind', those lost and lowly ones, social deviant and ethnic outsiders (Samaritans, Gentiles) to whom the Gospel of Jesus was specifically directed. Such deeds of mercy and justice/righteousness (Karris 1985:23-78) are distinguished as the true purity, which unites benefactors with both beneficiaries and their benefactor, God and Lord. Thus mercy rather than cultic purity is the essential bond between the people of God and their heavenly Father (cf Borg 1984:73-195). This kindness, exemplified by the centurion at Capernaum, the good Samaritan, Zacchaeus, Barnabas, and Cornelius,

typifies the mutual sharing of the Christian community and it embodies the generosity of its divine Benefactor (Danker 1987,1988) thereby establishing its honour in a benefaction-conscious society (Danker 1982).

Distributing without expectation of return, hospitality and the sharing of food and shelter, care for the ill, generous support and redemption of those in debt are all actions typical of kinship groups and the Household. In Luke-Acts this pattern of domestic relations, serves as the definitive model for the character of the Christian community. This form of community organised around the roles, relationships and responsibilities of the Household stands in stark conflict to the Temple.

Luke's portrait of Temple and Household would have been persuasive to his contemporary audience because it conformed to contemporary social and economic life. Although by the time of Luke's writing the Jerusalem Temple lay in ruins for decades or more, his audience was well accustomed with the two opposing types of social organisation. This audience could hardly miss the ramifications of Luke's contrast between a Holy place that had become an exploitative den of thieves and a widespread community of brothers and sisters who in faith and deeds of loving-kindness shared all things in common.

In summary, Temple and Household and the contrasting realities that they embody assume significance in Luke-Acts both structurally and thematically. The Temple frames and provides the central fix for the first segment of Luke's narrative. Household marks the chief focus of the second part of the narrative. In the structure of Luke-Acts this shift in focus encompasses a major plot device pervading the entire narrative. At the same time, this change in venue from Temple to Household sketches for Luke the historical and geographical movement of the gospel from its commencement in the Holy Land, the Holy City and the Holy Place to its dispersal through the Households of the Diaspora 'from Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria to the end of the earth' (Ac. 1:8).

Temple and Household are also tied with the basic Lukan thematic emphases. The social and economic system centred in Temple, Torah and purity, where redistribution had failed, served Luke as a foil with

which to contrast the social and economic relations of the Household in the sphere of justice, mercy and *koinonia*. Over against a system incapable of mediating the inclusive salvation envisioned by the prophets, Luke contrasts the domestic associations of the movement initiated by Jesus. Here the gospel of a universal salvation is socially incarnated in a community of 'brother and sisters' where repentance, faith, forgiveness, generosity, mercy and justice, familial loyalty and friendship unite the faithful with a God of mercy.

The distinctively Lukan christological, soteriological and ecclesiological themes are unfolded by Household scenarios and domestic imagery: Jesus Christ as exalted Servant and Benefactor; salvation for the lost and the lowly, women and outcasts, Gentiles and sinners; repentance and forgiveness; almsgiving and mercy; hospitality and table-fellowship. The Household functions as Luke's prime metaphor for depicting social life in the kingdom of God.

Promise and fulfilment as themes and Christianity's continuity with Israel, likewise, are linked with Temple and Household. For Luke the hope of Israel's salvation initially linked with the temple is finally achieved in the reciprocities of the *oikos*. The role of the Temple has been superseded and there is no reason for regret over its annihilation. Jesus' critique, however, is specific not general. It is not directed against the Jews, at large, but against a bankrupt political system of Temple-Torah-purity in particular. In his economy of salvation, the new Household, not the Temple, constitutes the dwelling place of the Spirit. This constitutes Christianity's enduring bond with the house of Abraham in whose posterity 'all the families of the earth will be blessed'.

The ongoing conflict of Temple-based and Household-based communities also typifies historically, geographically, socially and ideologically, Luke's view of the split between the worlds and allegiances of Judaism and Christianity. According to Elliott, it is the latter, Luke maintains, which alone constitutes the fulfilment of the prophetic hopes and the divine promise of a universal salvation offered by a God of mercy who in Jesus Christ has made all things clean and all persons, children of one universal family (1991:117).

Therefore we can conclude that the 'dominant contradiction' between alienated and human space which H Mottu (1974:195-213) saw expressed in the Temple/oikos contrast of Luke 18:9-14 is part of a larger Lukan pattern in which the Temple and the Household point to paradoxical definitions of social and religious life. The comparative model of social relations revealed that this contradiction involves not simply differing locales but differing structures of economic and social organisation, opposing forms of social relations, alternative sets of values and loyalties, and contrasting symbols of social and religious identity. By identifying the salient areas of contrast between these two institutions, the model explicates features of Temple and Household that are implicit in the Luke-Acts.

In Luke's theological vocabulary, the Temple was a house of prayer and hope twisted into a den of thieves, a symbol of a holiness ethic opposed to the inclusive holiness of God. In contrast, the Household was the realm of the children of God, the prime metaphor of life in the kingdom. In social-scientific terms, the Temple, its authorities, its law, and its purity ideology epitomised, from Luke's perspective, an exclusivist, exploitative, and alienating system. It failed to inhibit a reforming movement seeking justice for the powerless, intent on extending borders to include all, seeking a place of belonging, acceptance, and nurture. This movement, which was shaped by the reciprocities of kinship and friendship, united by a sense of common brotherhood/sisterhood, incorporated 'all the families of the earth' in its worldwide mission.

Therefore our investigation of the main Lukan material pertaining to the institutions of Temple and Household did not include only explicit terminological references to Temple and Household but also their semantic fields and social domains, that is, all the connected groups, roles, structures, and patterns of behaviour, norms, values and cultural symbols together with economic political and ideological features which comprise their respective institutional character. Such an inclusive body of data provides a comprehensive basis for relating and analysing the distinctive features of each institution and the implications of their contrast in Luke-Acts.

2.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO

In Luke-Acts the Household is prominently contrasted to the temple, according to Elliott (1981: 193-194) the 'bankrupt seat of Jewish power and piety, and to the city, the area of 'Caesar's network' and locus of social control... For the Christians [of Luke-Acts] the *oikos* constitutes not simply an additional form of social identity and religious allegiance alongside others such as the temple, the synagogue, or the city. The Christian *oikos* is rather a decisive alternative according to Luke.

Luke relates the *euangelion* in terms of the two basic institutions of Judaism and early Christianity, namely, the Jerusalem Temple and the private household. Elliott propounds that '... as institutions in the formal sociological sense the Temple and the household portray not simply different spaces for worship or residence, but two opposing systems of social life' (1991:89).

A study of the Lukan contrast between Temple and Household in the parable of the pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk 18:9-14) uncovers interesting new perspectives. For Henry Mottu (1974: 201-202), Temple and *oikos* denote divergent social spaces and conflicting forms of social life. The distinction between Temple and Household in Luke 18:9-14 is also demonstrated by the structural features of Luke-Acts. Temple scenes thus frame the narrative for the first half of Luke-Acts whereas scenes in the Household frame the second half of the narrative. The Temple is the locale of conflict in the early chapters of Acts. In the only other set of references to the Jerusalem Temple in Acts, Paul's Temple visit, the plot against his life (21:26-36) and Paul's defences (in chapters 22-26), the Temple is portrayed as the scene of assassination plots, conflict over purity, and political collusion between the Temple authorities, Herodians, and Romans.

According to Elliott (1991:94) 'throughout Luke-Acts a transition thus becomes apparent in regard to Temple and Household'. In Acts, the Household becomes prominent as the focus of the Christian movement gradually shifts from Jerusalem and the Temple to the Households of the Diaspora. At first the Christian community gathers both at the Temple and in homes (2:43-47; 5:42). Agents of the Temple become the 'hunters', and followers of Jesus, 'the hunted'. In the

remainder of Luke's account, the Temple plays no positive role. Together with the synagogue the Temple figures as a locale of Jewish-Christian conflict over purity. The juxtaposition of scenes in Acts 1-8 and the inclusive framework of Luke (Temple) compared with its counterpart in Acts (household) suggest an intentional contrast of locales, groups, and institutions commencing with the Temple and concluding with the household. These larger patterns of contrast in the Lukan narrative seem compatible with the contrast drawn between Temple and *oikos* in Luke 18:9-14. The Temple and the household are bases of conflicting groups of actors with divergent interests. From start to close of the Lukan narrative, it is the household, which gradually replaces the Temple as the domain of God's saving presence. The Temple, at first the locale of salvation and symbol of Israel's holy union with God, is unmasked as a power opposed to God's people. 'The household,' says Elliott:

... on the other hand, once the gathering place of the marginalised, emerges as the institution where God's spirit is truly active and where familial relations, shared resources, and communal values concretise the vision of a salvation available to all the families of the earth (1991:95).

In Luke-Acts, three Greek expressions are used to designate the Jerusalem Temple: *naos* (temple), *oikos tou theou* (house of God), and *to hiepon* (the holy place).

Oikos tou theou as a second term for the Jerusalem Temple appears four times in Luke and once in Acts, all in contexts of reprimand. Finally, Jesus condemns the Temple merchants with the words: 'It is written, my house (*oikos*) shall be a house (*oikos*) of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers' (19:45-46). For Judaism, the Temple as Israel's central holy place represented the chief visible symbol of its identity as God's holy people. Where Temple and Torah are involved in Luke's narrative, therefore, crucial issues regarding norms of holy behaviour and social interaction and the boundaries of God's holy people are at risk (Elliott 1991:96).

With the commencement of his public ministry, however, the Temple scenes in Luke-Acts take on a more foreboding tone. In Luke's redaction of the temptation account, it is Jesus' confrontation with the devil at the Temple, which forms the climax of the episode (4:9-13; cf Mt 4:5-7). Thereafter, the Temple counts as the arena of Jesus' conflict with the Temple (chief priests; sadducees) and

related authorities, namely chief priests, scribes, elders (Sanhedrin) and their conspiracy with the Roman governor against him. The disciples worship or teach in the Temple both at the outset of Acts and at the conclusion of Luke. For both Jesus and Paul the holy place and the holy city remain the locale of hostility and political connivance.

Such a review of specific Temple references also uncovers elements of the semantic field associated with Temple in Luke-Acts. 'The Temple and Jerusalem, the Holy Place and the Holy City', according to Elliott:

... constitute for Luke the dominating public centre of Jewish society and that web of social relations within which the Jesus movement was born but with which it also came into irremediable conflict (1991: 97).

At the apex of the Temple hierarchy were the chief priests (archiereis). Associated with this faction, and under the Roman governor, this priestly nobility exemplified the power of the Temple over all aspects of Jewish political, economic, social and cultural life. In Luke-Acts, as in the other Gospels, it is these rulers, Judaism's unified political, economic, legal, social and religious power, which play the ultimate role in the conflict. The Temple police exercise the constraining power of the holy place. In Luke's account, it is these scribal Temple and Torah authorities that symbolised the inequality of the Temple as an economic institution. Ordinary priests and Levites represent, with the lay faction of the pharisees, a key aspect of the Temple system in Luke-Acts. The pharisees, enforcing Temple purity regulations still more rigorously, had extended the norms of Temple and priestly holiness to every Jewish home. In Luke-Acts this purity system controlled by the Temple establishment becomes a major point of controversy. Malina (1981:122-152) and Neyrey (1986b: 91-128: cf Neusner 1973) have shown that the Temple purity system controlled the social identity, social classifications, and social boundaries of the Jewish people. This arrangement of society along purity lines called for careful avoidance of contact with all that was judged impure (sinners, lepers, blind, lame, menstruants, corpses, tax collectors, Samaritans, Gentiles) and proper respect for holy places (Temple, synagogue), holy persons (Temple personnel), acts of purification (hand-washing before meals) and holy times (Sabbath, festivals). It

was this challenge, in its social and political implications that eventually led to conflict, social division and death.

The picture Luke paints of Jesus' attitude toward purity laws is an intricate one. Jesus, his family and his followers respected the holiness of the Temple as a house of prayer, and the holiness of the synagogue as a place of learning. Holy places and personnel are criticised and disrespected by critical remarks against the Temple, the chief priests, scribes, elders, sadducees and pharisees. The Temple gradually emerges, in the Lukan narrative, as an institution whose leaders and interests stood opposed to the mission of Jesus. Together with the Torah and the purity system, the Temple, for Luke, was a holy place that had lost its power to make holy. Efforts to redefine the purity that God requires and the behavioural norms and social identity of God's holy people were denounced as plots to pervert the nation. Therefore Elliott asserts that

... the presence of the Spirit was shifted from the Temple in Jerusalem to the households of the Diaspora. In contrast to the Temple, the household emerged as the venue of sanctity and divine salvation (1991:102).

This consideration of all the related aspects of the Temple as a comprehensive social institution, its political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions and its accompanying purity ideology has provided a fuller picture of the Temple system. Weinert isolates references to the Temple, from those concerning Temple authorities (see Cassidy and Scharper 1983 and Tannehill 1986:169-199) and their unjust programs. He also understates Jesus and Stephen's critique of the Holy Place, and ignores the negative implications of the Temple's purity system altogether.

This survey has revealed key issues for Luke over which the Jesus movement and the Temple establishment clashed. In contrast to a society led by the temple administration intent on the elimination of Temple critics and purity violators according to Luke, stands a community in solidarity with Jesus and the righteous victims of Temple injustice. In Luke-Acts the 'house' (*oikia*) and 'household' (*oikos*), encompassing family and kin, personnel and property, play a dominant role. Households also served, according to Luke, as the basic social organisation of house churches, through which the gospel made its advance from Palestine to Rome. In addition to households

serving according to Luke, as the basic social organisation of house-churches, scenes of domestic life also play a major role in the Lukan presentation of the teaching of Jesus. Familial relations, domestic crises and responsibilities of Household management illuminate features of the kingdom of God. Children of the Household are contrasted to Temple and Torah authorities to exemplify humility, dependence on God, and discipleship (Kodell 1987). *Oikos* also serves as the symbol of social life for illustrating features of the kingdom of God. Showing mercy (*eleeos*) performing merciful acts (*eleein*) of loving-kindness is for Luke, actions especially typical of the kingdom/*oikos* of God. In Luke-Acts the Household plays a foremost role in the mission of Jesus. In Luke-Acts the Household serves as both a historical reality and a metaphor. The former for Luke is the object of critique, rejection, conflict and death. Thus in Luke's account, declares Elliott,

... the Spirit of God and its sanctifying power moves from Temple to Household, from the chief symbol of Jewish national identity to the principal symbol of a community united with a heavenly Father (1991: 107).

Moxnes (1987,1988) broadens this pursuit by contrasting the Household and local village life in first century Palestine as one of redistribution or centrality. Commenting on the critical role of the household in contrast to the Temple Malina declares,

Centricity with its pooling and redistribution generates the perception of social unity... replicates the social structure with its rank order, and presupposes centralised organisation of social order and social action (1986c: 110).

Economic and social relations are stratified to favour the elite. This model contrasts divergent forms of social organisation characteristic of pre-industrial societies including those of Jesus and Luke's time. Secondly, the divergent feature of redistribution and reciprocity arrangements provide categories for analysing Luke's description and assessment of economic-social conditions. Finally, the match between the social arrangements of Luke's world and the emphasis of his composition will allow us to assess the persuasive power of Luke's representation of Temple and Household.

The social arrangements peculiar to Luke's world reverberate in his two-volume work. When this model of social relations is used as a lens through which to study the social data of Luke-Acts, it becomes explicit that in his contrast of Temple and Household, Luke is

describing two types of social organisation known to his audience. This Temple system had grown morally bankrupt. The Temple, once a house of prayer had become a den of thieves (Lk. 19:46). In distinction to this system of the Temple, the system of household churches was an organisation of communal life marked by the reciprocities of kinship, friendship and domestic relations. As our model makes clear, the features of domestic life, which Luke had emphasised, are relations of generalised reciprocity. This form of community organised around the roles, relationships and responsibilities of the Household stands in stark conflict to the Temple. Luke's portrait of Temple and Household would have been persuasive to his contemporary audience because it conformed to contemporary social and economic life. Although by the time of Luke's writing the Jerusalem Temple lay in ruins for decades or more, his audience was well accustomed with the two opposing types of social organisation.

In summary, Temple and Household and the contrasting realities that they embody assume significance in Luke-Acts both structurally and thematically. The Temple frames and provides the central fix for the first segment of Luke's narrative. Temple and Household are also tied with the basic Lukan thematic emphases. The social and economic system centred in Temple, Torah and purity, where redistribution had failed, served Luke as a foil with which to contrast the social and economic relations of the Household in the sphere of justice, mercy and *koinonia*. The Household functions as Luke's prime metaphor for depicting social life in the kingdom of God.

Promise and fulfilment as themes and Christianity's continuity with Israel, likewise, are linked with Temple and Household. For Luke the hope of Israel's salvation initially linked with the temple is finally achieved in the reciprocities of the *oikos*. In his economy of salvation, the new Household, not the Temple, constitutes the dwelling place of the Spirit. The comparative model of social relations revealed that this contradiction involves not simply differing locales but differing structures of economic and social organisation, opposing forms of social relations, alternative sets of values and loyalties, and contrasting symbols of social and religious identity. By identifying the salient areas of contrast between these

two institutions, the model explicates features of Temple and Household that are implicit in the Luke-Acts.

In Luke's theological vocabulary, the Temple was a house of prayer and hope twisted into a den of thieves, a symbol of a holiness ethic opposed to the inclusive holiness of God. In social-scientific terms, the Temple, its authorities, its law, and its purity ideology epitomised, from Luke's perspective, an exclusivist, exploitative, and alienating system. By combining an analysis of the Lukan Temple/Household contrast with aspects of previous exegetical research and filtering this data through the lens of a social-scientific model of alternate types of ancient social relations, it has been clearly demonstrated how this contrast coheres with dominant Lukan themes, and how it advances Luke's conception of the gospel and depiction of Christian community, and why it made compelling sense in Luke's social context.

2.3.1 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON CHAPTER TWO

In short, then, chapter two comprises by especially drawing on the work of Elliott, a social-scientific exegesis of the *oikos* concept in Luke-Acts. It was offset against the rival social system of the temple as a distinct and opposing system of social life. In the process, it uncovered contrasting social values, orientations, attitudes, motivations and practices as well as perceptions of God's holy articulation with human life forms, and human institutions, spaces and times. It was this contrast, or even conflict, which resulted in the shift of the presence of the Spirit from the Jerusalem Temple to the Jesus movement and finally to the Diaspora households. Different from the administrative focus in the temple, the latter were characterised by hospitality, fellowship and mutual support, providing a sense of security and community. This new social system was crucial for the expansion of the gospel of salvation because it was characterised by open households and care for the poor and marginalised. It also provided perspectives on the kingdom of God and embodied values and activities related to generosity, mercy, hospitality, royalty, and friendship while the house-churches were also economically self-subsistent, in terms of reciprocity, kin and fictive-kin groups. Both socio-historically and metaphorically, the *oikos* constitutes a social institution rivalling that of the temple in Luke-Acts.

In chapter three, in addition to general sociological considerations, a special focus will be given to the sociological analysis of families in South Africa. Subsequent chapters will apply these contextual and sociological frameworks in an attempt to re-contextualise the church as *oikos*.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIOLOGICAL AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF FAMILIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of this thesis the choice of methodology was outlined as a unique combination of the social-scientific method and the contextual hermeneutic. Unlike the conventional approach of contextual methodology that concentrates on the present context at the expense of the context of the text, a deliberate attempt was made to avoid these choices by an inclusive approach. A unique perspective of this thesis is the emphasis on the social-scientific method. This pursuit does not seek to operate at the exclusion of other accepted approaches namely those of the literary, linguistic and historical to concentrate on the text itself. This method functions eclectically whilst highlighting the social-scientific method to establish the context of the text and the contextual hermeneutic to identify our present context. A special focus of the previous chapter was the application of the social-scientific approach to the Lukan *oikos*.

In addition to the choice of the contextual methodology, the utilisation of the social-scientific approach has already been outlined as a unique thrust of this study. This social-scientific pursuit, combined with the contextual hermeneutic is not only concerned with a study of the context of the text, but is also deeply interested in a contextual analysis of our social context. Therefore current insights from family sociology will also be introduced in this chapter to apply this methodological framework. Concepts and definitions that will be introduced will not necessarily articulate with the social scientific categories of chapter two. This risk is anticipated in the attempt to be comprehensive. Special focus will also be given to the social context of families. Thereafter we will proceed with an analysis of the family from a South African perspective. A broad understanding of the wider context of families will be obtained through a survey of both the general and special factors influencing the movement of families, inclusive of forced removals under *Apartheid* and its aftermath.

3.2 THE FAMILY IN SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Popenoe et al., (1998:2) define sociology as 'the systematic and objective study of human society and social interaction'. Unlike disciplines such as literature and philosophy, sociology strives to

be scientific in its approach. Like natural scientists, sociologists often conduct research using the scientific method. However, the scientific method alone cannot produce a full understanding of human life.

Sociology has been sometimes accused of reaching obvious conclusions about the way people behave (Popenoe 1998:3, 19). But sociological research has shown many seemingly correct ideas about human behaviour to be wrong. This quality of the sociological perspective has been termed 'debunking' by Peter L Berger (1963: 2-24). The basic assumption that sociologists make about all human behaviour is that it is shaped by society and social circumstances. The principal interest of modern sociologists is, understanding the nature of society and its effect on individuals. Many sociologists are also concerned with the process of social interaction itself. Sociologists tend to look for the causes of social phenomena in other social phenomena, rather than in psychological or biological reality. Each social setting is seen as an intricate web of social forces interacting with each other. A social science involves the application of scientific methods to the study of society and human behaviour (Simon 1995: 1-7 and Popenoe et al., 1998:12-15,19).

Sociology is closely related to other social sciences, such as economics, political science, history, psychology and anthropology. The boundaries between these disciplines are often artificial. Various disciplines within the social sciences often study similar things, although from slightly different points of view.

Sociology, which began to take its present form only about a hundred years ago, had its origins in the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution (Popenoe 1998:9-11). Auguste Comte, the founder of sociology, was reform-minded. He developed the idea of a 'positive philosophy', which he later called 'sociology', and saw its aim as the investigation of the 'invariable natural laws' of society. Herbert Spencer was an English social thinker who compared human societies to organisms. Both evolve from simple to complex forms, governed by the law of 'survival of the fittest'. Karl Marx viewed society not as an orderly system but as the outcome of class conflict. A revolutionary, Marx used his analysis to suggest that a socialist society was inevitable. Marx's main

contribution to sociology is his emphasis on economic factors and class conflict.

Emile Durkheim argued that the chief concern of sociology should be 'social facts'. Society, according to Durkheim, is composed of social facts such as laws, customs, and institutions. These social facts are external to people but exert control over them. Max Weber was particularly interested in the larger dimensions of society, organisation and institutions, and is famous for his studies of bureaucracy and capitalism. He also felt that sociology should include the study of 'social action', the way people orient their behaviour to one another.

The most prominent American theorist was Talcott Parsons, who combined the diverse approaches of several classical sociologists into a system of thought he called a 'general theory of action'. He applied this to a wide range of subjects, including religion, education and race relations (Popenoe 1998: 11,19). Talcott Parsons also exercised considerable influence on the development of sociology in South Africa, which developed in response to the social problems of the 1920's. Sociology became bifurcated into two ideologically opposing organisations. These were a predominantly English-speaking 'liberal, Marxist oriented' and an Afrikaans-speaking 'functionalist supportive of the status quo', organisations which have now amalgamated (Popenoe 1998:11,19). Undoubtedly, there were also some Afrikaner sociologists of a liberal persuasion.

As a discipline, sociology is still in the process of definition. Sociologists differ in the theoretical perspectives from which they view society. The functionalist perspective emphasises the way in which each part of a society contributes to the whole so as to maintain stability. According to this view the parts of a society, families, businesses, and government work together in a systematic way that is good for the whole. The functions of a unit of social structure may be manifest, intended and recognised, or latent, unintended or unrecognised (Popenoe 1998:19-20). A unit of social structure is considered dysfunctional when it prevents society from meeting its needs. Social change is usually assumed to be introduced from outside.

In contrast to the functionalist perspective, the conflict perspective emphasises struggle over scarce resources as a permanent aspect of societies and a major source of social change. Conflict theorists stress the dynamic nature of societies and see the parts of society as being in conflict with one another. Order results from the domination of stronger groups over weaker groups (Popenoe 1998: 12,19,20). The conflict between the church and the family will be taken up later in this thesis.

Both the functionalist and the conflict perspectives are concerned mainly with the macro level of society, the large-scale structures of society and how they relate to one another. The perspectives also share a structuralist view of human society and behaviour. Structuralists tend to see individual behaviour as the product of social structures and forces that are not of the individual's own making, and they minimise the notion of free will (Popenoe 1998:12,19,20).

The interactionist perspective focuses on how people interact in their everyday lives and how they make sense of their social interactions. It is concerned with the micro level of society, social interaction and the individual as a social being. Interactionists, according to Popenoe (1998:13-15,20), stress that people are always in the process of creating and changing their social worlds, and they tend to rely on qualitative research methods.

The study of sociology gives us an understanding of the social forces affecting us and with this understanding we can have some control over our lives. C. Wright Mills (1959:i-vii) called this way of understanding ourselves through locating our positions in society and the social forces that affect us 'the sociological imagination'.

3.3 A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

C. Wright Mills is celebrated for providing a paradigm of the sociological worldview in his well-known book, *The Sociological Imagination* (1959:vii). He emphasised that all classical sociologists investigated social structure, history's 'main drift', and the varieties of men and women society was producing.

David R Simon's description of American society surprisingly fits the South African context like a glove. The structure of our society is that of a mass society, characterised by a capitalistic economy dominated

by huge multinationals and a heavily centralised government. The power structure is not monolithic, the middle-class competes with the elite, mass media owned by corporate institutions and influenced by the government and a mobile population (1995:25).

A master trend concerns the means by which social change takes place. Almost all the theorists of sociology assess this master trend: Karl Marx, 'class struggle and alienation,' Emile Durkheim, 'mechanical solidarity and anomie,' and Max Weber, 'iron cages and disenchantment' (Simon 1995:21-23).

Social character consists of personality traits and behaviours that are shared by a culture. There is no evidence to suggest that greed or aggression is inborn. Mills puts it that people are 'formed, liberated, and repressed, made sensitive and blunted' (1959:7). There are social characters specific to gender, ethnic groups, etc. The structure of selfhood differs in cultures that exhibit a collective sense of selfhood. People conceive of themselves as part of a family, including their ancestors, clan, tribe or nation. People have obligations to each other in collectivised cultures as opposed to individualised ones. Alienation relates to feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, loneliness, isolation, normlessness and estrangement from oneself, from others, and from society.

According to David R. Simon (1995:9), who has been largely influenced by Mills, a social imagination is an ability to see the interrelationship or linkages, causes and consequences between one's life, the historical period and institutional arrangements within a society.

The social structure is an interrelated set of societal institutions, which meet societal needs of an economy, polity, family, education, religion and aesthetics according to Simon (1995:18-21). The economy relates to producing and distributing goods. Polity concerns a political system that resolves conflict and protects society from threats. A family regulates the sex drive, produces and rears children, and serves as the emotional centre. Education imparts skills to participate in the economy and other institutions and also socialises the young in the values of society. Religion meets the spiritual needs and provides answers to the life's purpose, how we got here, why do we die, why do some people escape punishment for evil acts and why do the innocent

suffer? Aesthetic institutions produce and distribute art, music, literature, opera, plays, films and television shows (Simon 1995:21).

The field of family sociology has not been spared in the political and philosophical attacks that have been mounted against sociology during the past decade (cf Goode, 1982:xii). Nonetheless this sub-field of sociology has made good progress. Present-day scholars are now custodians to more accurate information about the family than Marx, Durkheim, or Weber ever knew. More is known than the family scholars of the 1960's, 1970's, 1980's and even 1990's. Unfortunately, these insights have not captured the attention of theology at large. Sociologists, on the other hand, continue to ply their research oblivious of the suitability of the church for an application of their theories on families.

3.4 THE FAMILY AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

South African society is one, in which the small primary groups, such as extended families and communities have lost their position, contends Popenoe (1998:270). Families no longer grow their own food, make their own clothing, or construct their own shelter, so people in mass society are dependent on one another for goods and services. As a result much of the life in our mass society revolves around institutions and organisations that have usurped the role of families in caring for the sick and elderly, child-welfare, criminal justice, mental health, etc. Families have lost their importance as sources of morality and relationships. Add to this the issue of finance moving outside the family. Furthermore with the ready availability of information the authority of the family has also shifted outside the family. The family as a sociological institution is under serious threat of extinction. These changes are outside the preoccupation of the younger generation. It is, in particular the older generation that view changes with concern. This concern is very evident among families in South Africa as more and more young couples marry for love and are unwilling to keep to traditional customs of arranged marriages (Popenoe 1998:270).

This trend is not typical for all families in our country. In South Africa there are different cultures within which the family is structured differently. The urban or rural location of these families introduces another variable into the 'equation'. Largely economic and

political forces have disrupted the African rural extended family. The African and Coloured communities living in 'townships' are reflective of a growing 'fatherless' society. Indian rural families still display an extended family structure whilst their urban counterparts are under pressure to follow a nuclear family type. Both the urban English and Afrikaner families favour a nuclear structure, with the English reflecting liberal family values and the Afrikaner demonstrating stronger family values.

What is meant by the term 'family'? A few generations ago in South African society, this was a fairly easy question to answer. It was generally assumed that a family consisted of a man and a woman, married to each other, and several children. It was further assumed that the husband made most of the decisions in the family and that unless the family was from the lower classes he was the sole breadwinner while his wife stayed home and looked after the children.

It is safe to generalise that the family as previous generations knew it is no more. It has evolved more than any other social institution in the last decades. For example, female-headed single-parent families are estimated to have increased considerably in this country. Furthermore, in 1960 relatively few married women were in full-time employment whereas by 1995, women represented 43.8% of the economically active population (Central Statistics Service (CSS), 1996). A strange variety of family forms confront the modern observer. They may include cohabiting couples with or without children, couples in which the wife works and the husband stays at home, and gay couples seeking to adopt children. The number of people who are financially independent who choose to live alone increases each year especially in the Western world. This increased diversity has led many observers, especially those who are strongly supportive of the traditional model, to fear that the family institution is in steep decline. Some of the evidence that we will review in this chapter such as the high South African divorce rate lends support to this view. Other evidence, such as the high remarriage rate, does not. In order to address crucial questions concerning the future of the family, we need to understand the social forces that are transforming the modern family.

3.4.1 THE FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE OF THE FAMILY IN SOCIETY

Functionalists emphasise that the family has been a universal and a social institution throughout history. Family systems were the foundation on which all other social institutions including government and education were formed and developed. These institutions become distinct sectors of society late in the process of cultural evolution.

In small traditional societies the family is largely self-sufficient and provides for most of its members' physical and emotional needs. However, in complex modern societies, the family serves fewer functions but continues to be especially important in four areas: socialisation, affection and companionship, sexual regulation and economic co-operation.

The family, in general, is well suited in many ways for the task of socialisation. It is an intimate group where parents are usually positively motivated. The progress of the child can be closely monitored and behaviour adjustments can be made as necessary. This task of socialisation is not always performed effectively or efficiently, however, and many alternative ways of socialising children have been tried but none of which have ever been entirely successful. The family is the main source of affection and companionship for both children and adults in modern societies (Melville 1998:23-29). Sexual regulations are designed to ensure that someone will assume responsibility for childcare and to provide a smooth transition from one generation to the next. The family also serves as an important economic unit. In rural and peasant communities, the family is generally the major unit of production. In modern societies, the main economic activity of the family is consumption.

3.4.2 THE CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE OF THE FAMILY IN SOCIETY

Conflict theorists view the family in a different light. They stress that the sexes are competing with each other in various ways and that the family benefits some members much more than others. The history of the family is viewed as the history of the domination of women by men (Popenoe 1998:273).

The division of work roles within the family may have been the original basis for gender inequality. To a large extent both the division and the inequality still exist today. Conflict theorists thus see the family as the primary arena in which gender inequality is played out. This inequality is reflected in the different social role that mothers and fathers, and daughters and sons play in the distribution of power within the family. In most cases, the father still rules (Popenoe 1998:273). There are some notable exceptions (e.g. on the Cape Flats)

3.4.3 FAMILY STRUCTURE

There are many variations in family structure around the world. In describing family structure, sociologists note the difference between the kinship group and the family. Kinship refers to a social network of people who are related by common ancestry or origin, by marriage, or by adoption. Although kin do not always live together and function as a group, they generally recognise certain obligations and responsibilities toward one another. The family is a relatively small domestic group of kin (or people in a kin-like relationship) who functions as a co-operative unit (Popenoe 1998:274).

During their lifetime, most people are members of two different types of family groups. The family of orientation is the family into which they are born and in which the major part of their socialisation takes place. The family of procreation is the family that they create when they marry and have children. Societies differ in the emphasis placed on these two groups.

The nuclear family is a two-generation family group that consists of a couple and their children, usually living apart from other relatives. An extended family is a family group that consists of three or more generations. Differences in family structure are primarily explained by economic factors. Most middle-class nuclear families can afford to hire someone to baby-sit for their children, to help them move to a new house or to care for the sick. They are able to borrow money from the bank when they need it for emergencies, and can also afford to buy a new car. Thus there are few economic reasons for a middle-class family to be extended (Popenoe 1998:275).

The purchase of many of these products and services is a luxury that poor families often cannot afford. Such families generally must rely on

family members and relatives to provide goods and services they cannot afford to buy. A sister or a relative will baby-sit temporarily or even on a daily basis. A grandmother will come to care for a sick mother or father. A brother will lend fifty rands to his sister until next payday. A cousin will take the children to the clinic and all the able-bodied members of the family will lend a hand on moving day. Without this network of mutual assistance families with low incomes would not be able to provide for their needs or handle many types of emergencies. The African concept of *Ubuntu* is relevant here. The more family members who are available, the more likely one are to get assistance (Harris 1989:2-7; Stack 1974:3-9). Thus large, extended families and kin groups with strong ties can be a real advantage, if not, a necessity, to the financially challenged.

There is, however, a global trend away from the extended family and toward the nuclear model. This trend is related to urbanisation, industrialisation, and modernisation (Harris 1983: 22).

Family authority has been patriarchal throughout Western history. A patriarchal family is a family structure in which most of the authority is held by the oldest male. A matriarchal family would be a family structure in which most of the authority is in the hands of the oldest female; this pattern is not characteristic of any of the world's societies. Some societies have families that are matrifocal. A matrifocal family is a family in which a woman is the central and most important member. In modern societies there is a trend toward the egalitarian family—a pattern in which the husband and wife are equal in authority and privileges (Malmaud, 1984:54; Young & Willmott, 1974:34).

From our study of the Lukan *oikos* in chapter two we noted the predominance of patriarchy, an influence from Jewish culture. Christian women in the first century generally did not have the opportunity to develop. This is in stark contrast to the freedom of the Christian women from a non-Jewish background at Corinth.

Patterns of marital residence, where a couple lives after marriage, also vary among societies. In some societies, patrilocal residence is the custom; a married couple lives in a household or community of the husband's parents. The opposite is customary in societies that practice matrifocal residence; a married couple lives in the household or

community of the wife's parents. In neolocal residence a married couple lives apart from either spouse's parents or other relatives.

The way in which kinship and lineage are traced over generations is referred to as descent. There are three major systems of descent. In patrilineal descent the father's side of the family is the basis of kinship and inheritance; boys inherit property through their father's line. In matrilineal descent the mother's side of the family is the basis of kinship and inheritance; girls typically inherit property through their mother's line. In bilateral descent children's kinship is tied to both the mother's and the father's side of the family. Children of both sexes can inherit property from both sides of the family.

3.4.4 MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND WIDOWHOOD

All societies place some restrictions on the choice of sexual and marriage partners. The incest taboo, a powerful moral prohibition against sexual relations between certain categories of relatives, is virtually universal. Some scientists believe that this is culturally determined in order to avoid conflict within the kinship group; situations could arise where a daughter might compete with her mother for her father's love (Harris, 1989:79). In South Africa, only a few patterns of marital choice are prohibited. Prospective partners may not already be married, they must be of legal age, they may not be too closely related, they must be of different sexes and they must not be insane, that is, legally declared to be so. All other marriages are legally permitted.

Many cultures have norms that prescribe endogamy, marriage within one's own group, while others encourage exogamy, marriage outside one's own group. Where mate selection is a purely personal decision, this pattern of marriage is called homogamy. Men tend to marry women who are younger, have less education and work at less prestigious occupations; this is called the marriage gradient. In Western societies, individual choice based on romantic love has replaced arranged marriages (which are still the norm in many premodern societies). However, many experts feel that value compatibility provides a more solid basis for marriage than romantic love (Davis, 1985:152; Goode, 1959:41).

Marriage is sociologically defined as a socially approved mating arrangement usually invoking sexual activity and economic co-operation,

between a man and a woman (Popenoe, 1997:280). Monogamy refers to a marriage between one man and one woman. Marriage invoking more than one man or woman at the same time is called polygamy. The most common type of polygamous marriage is polygyny, in which one man has more than one wife (Murdock, 1949:173). The opposite situation, in which a woman has more than one husband, is called polyandry. Most people marry sometime during their lives, but the trend, in South Africa, is toward later marriages, and a growing number of people are not marrying at all. There is some evidence of a relatively high level of marital happiness in those marriages that last.

Marital break-up is widespread in South Africa and can have significant effects on children. One study concluded that compared with children from intact families, children from divorced families perceive their relationships with both parents as less positive, that is, more distant, less affectionate and less communicative (Fine, Moreland & Schwebel 1984:703-713). Another study revealed that older children from divorced families are more likely to carry fears of abandonment into their subsequent relationships than younger children since older children tend to feel responsible for the divorce (Camara 1986:61-89; Wallerstein & Kelly 1981:22-37).

Although the remarriage rate has been declining, many divorced persons remarry. The high divorce rate in the United States, as in South Africa, is related to such social factors as the relative isolation of the nuclear family, its high rate of geographic mobility, changing family and sex roles, ethnic heterogeneity and more liberal divorce laws (Kitson, Babri & Roach 1985:54-78).

Widows do not remarry as often as widowers do, and widows frequently experience economic difficulties as well as problems of adjustment. This is mainly due to the dependence of many widows on their husbands for financial support. Studies conducted by Lopata (1986: 203-214) showed that higher educated widows handle the reconstruction of their lives, both financially and socially, better than do those with little education.

3.4.5 THE CHANGING FAMILY

Demographic and social trends in industrialised economies have shortened the childbearing and child-rearing stages of the family life cycle,

increased the number of single-parent families and stepfamilies, lengthened the empty-nest period and increased the chances of prolonged widowhood. Gender roles within the family have altered. The effects of these changes on the quality of child caring have yet to be determined. R E Smith calls the increase in the number of married women working outside the home one of the great social revolutions of the last century (1979:21-25). Dual-earner families in which both partners work continuously and full time over an extended period of time are growing in number.

Family violence and child abuse are attracting more public attention and are being reported more frequently, although the extent to which they are actually increasing is not clear. Income levels make the most difference in the occurrence rate of spouse abuse, which is five times more likely to occur in very poor families than in very rich ones (Strauss, Gelles & Steinmetz 1980:27-56). However, the income level makes relatively little difference in sexual abuse, which is more likely to occur in middle and higher-income homes.

Alternatives to marriage and the nuclear family include remaining single, heterosexual cohabitation and group marriages. Celibacy and remaining childless and single is still largely foreign to African cultures. Oppong (1987:3-15) notes that even the physically handicapped are ensured of entry into a union. Widows and the handicapped are generally absorbed into polygamous marriages. By age 50, between 90 and 95% of all men and women in Africa have been married at least once.

Although there have been demands to allow marriage between homosexuals, male or female, such unions are not recognised by law in most countries of the world. Heterosexual cohabitation is becoming increasingly popular as an alternative to remaining single as social sanctions to sexual activity outside marriage fall away. Cohabitation is often a prelude to marriage, particularly when one or more children have resulted from the liaison.

Does living together before marriage decrease the chances of having a good marriage? There is some evidence that it does. A recent study using Swedish data found that women who cohabit premaritally have almost 80% higher marital dissolution rates than those who do not (Bennet, Blanc &

Bloom 1988:127-139). The primary reasons for this may be that cohabitators are less likely to subscribe to the traditional conventions of marriage in the first place. In a study of 10 000 women aged 16 to 40 in England it was found that women who have had a series of live-in relationships before starting a family are far more likely to split from their partners (as cited in the Daily News, Thursday January 27, 2000: 15). South African society is also rapidly coming to a realisation that cohabitation offers no advantage for a successful marriage. Sociologists have certainly 'debunked' the notion that 'living together' prior to marriage gives a couple an advantages for success.

In the United States, a few young adults have tried group marriage, in which three or more individuals live as a family unit, sharing sexual and personal intimacies. Although they provide some advantages similar to those of the extended family in addition to sexual variety, few group marriages have been successful, mainly because of the strong tendency for interpersonal conflicts, such as jealousies, to arise (Constantine & Constantine 1973:3-14).

As documented throughout this chapter, the institution of the family has changed dramatically over the past few decades globally. Fewer people are marrying. Those who choose to marry are doing so later in life and are having fewer children. More marriages end in divorce and the number of single-parent families has grown substantially as more and more people live alone or with someone to whom they are not married, the percentage of 'non-family' households in the population has risen sharply. These trends have caused some people to suggest that the institution of the family is at death's door. This may be so in Western countries, whereas in African cultures the concept of family and allegiance remain strong despite Westernisation, urbanisation and education. Oppong (1987:12-19) reports that efforts to legislate monogamy in Africa have not met with success, with the possible exception of a small Christian minority.

For all that, in urban communities worldwide, the pervasiveness of the media and other agents of socialisation have caused the family to relinquish its role as the primary source of socialisation of children. Care of the elderly, another traditional responsibility of the family is also declining in importance. More elderly people are living alone today than ever before, and many are moving into newly developed

age-segregated retirement communities. Still others are cared for in frail-care centres or day-care centres for the elderly (Popenoe 1998:287).

These changes should not be seen as completely negative. Many of them result from improvement in the status of women and promote a new psychological climate within marriages that can be emotionally rewarding for both partners. Still, many people are concerned about the negative effects of recent family changes on specific groups, especially children. Some family changes have been linked to increased child poverty and abandonment, rising rates of juvenile delinquency, increased depression among teenagers and teenage pregnancy. Because children represent the future of society, any negative consequences for them are especially significant. There is no assurance that recent family trends will continue unchanged in the future.

3.5 UNDERSTANDING THE WIDER CONTEXT

Apartheid has deeply affected all strata of life in our country. Its consequences will still linger on for many decades to come. The scrapping of laws has not altered the distorted perceptions of people, over-night. The social aftermath continues to haunt this country. Enforced separation, the backbone of *Apartheid*, which has regulated the functioning of society for so long, cannot be easily reversed. This 'crime against humanity' has deeply impacted affected our national psyche. South Africans have had to function 'normally' within an abnormal situation. The ingrained racial presumptions, suspicions, hurts and fears will have to be challenged and eventually overcome. Insight into the general and special factors that influenced the social-mobility of people in South Africa could facilitate this process. A survey would also outline the challenges that lie ahead.

3.5.1 GENERAL FACTORS INFLUENCING FAMILY STRUCTURES

Previously most First World or Western countries have evidenced a steady movement from the extended family to that of a nuclear one. This trend has been taken over by the so-called 'Third World' or 'developing countries'. Barret classifies a mega-city having a population of 1 million, a super-city 4 million and a super-giant 10 million. Using these categories Patrick Johnstone notes an interesting trend:

... two centuries ago the world was rural, with an urbanisation of 4% and only one mega-city in existence - Beijing with 1.1

million. By 1900 these had increased to 14%, 18 mega-cities and 2 super-cities - London and New York. By 2000 these will have reached 51% urbanised, about 20 super-giants (only one of which is in Europe or North America), 79 super-cities and 433 mega-cities. That trend will continue so that by 2100 the number of rural inhabitants may be only 10% of the World's population (1998:241-242).

The factors that formed the nuclear family are both very complex and greatly varied. The joint forces of industrialisation and urbanisation, however, seem to surface as primary catalysts. When families moved from the farm to the city, vast changes resulted. But the resultant changes cannot be attributed to these two factors alone.

Some sociologists maintain that the family as we know it today was being formed prior to the industrial revolution (cf Simon 1975:53-58). But probably, the greatest factors influencing the family are the individualism and secularism that are encouraged by modern democracy. Still, whatever the factors that may be responsible for it, the family today is of a different texture and under extreme and unprecedented pressure.

Families in South Africa have not escaped this pressure. This country, like most First World or Western countries have also generally veered in a similar direction towards a nuclear family type. It has been noted that this trend is evident in both the English and Afrikaner cultures, with the Indian community coming under some pressure especially in urban settings. This movement has achieved an accelerated momentum because of additional 'political' factors.

A consideration of the family-types that prevailed in South Africa a few decades ago reveals some interesting features. There was undoubtedly a preponderance of the extended family. This was 'across the racial divide' which included both the white and black sectors of society. In the former grouping, the Afrikaner, chiefly descendants from the Dutch, and the English hailed from large households. The Afrikaner's home environment consisted typically of an Afrikaner farmer, his wife and his children. His parents together with his brothers and their respective wives often lived on the same family farm and in a huge dwelling. Afrikaners were generally monogamous. Whilst the Afrikaner relied on agriculture for his subsistence, the English who immigrated to South Africa with their wealth controlled the country's economy. In contrast

to the Afrikaner farmer's large farmhouse, these aristocrats lived in huge manors with their extended families.

The black population of South Africa followed a similar pattern to that of the white community. The term 'black' embraces Africans, 'Coloureds' (a term for the offspring of a white and a black, who only can lay claim to being exclusively indigenous to South Africa) and Indians. The umbrella term 'black', apart from being the present government's classification, indicates more than a reference to skin pigmentation. It conveys the contrast between the two former divisions within society. Despite the erstwhile unsuccessful attempt at co-option of 'Coloured' and Indian support by the former Nationalist government, both these communities, by and large, favoured the 'black' tag.

During the 'heyday' of *Apartheid*, it also devised an intricate system of 'differentiated *Apartheid*'. The Japanese received an 'honorary white status'. Coloureds received fewer privileges than Indians did, with the Africans being the most disadvantaged. The Chinese received a 'Coloured' status. This was social engineering at its 'best'. Such social sophistication dangerously 'pitted one group against another'. The 'media-initiated' tensions between the Indian and African communities could well be the sad results of such ill-conceived plans (cf Illanga 1999). Some African participants at the Afro-Indian Relations Workshop, which was called together to improve race relations, alluded to the advantages that Indians had benefited during *Apartheid* (cf Daily News 12 August 2000).

The first inhabitants, the San were here about 20 000 years before the present 'Africans' who ethnically cleansed the subcontinent. The societal heritage of the Africans included a tribal situation ruled by a chief. This embraced a wider constituency than that of the extended family. The entire tribe became one's extended family. This was larger than that of the Afrikaner. Both these groups relied on agriculture for their livelihood. A noteworthy difference between the two centred on their marital arrangements. Unlike the Afrikaner, the African followed a polygamous family arrangement.

The 'Coloured' population has traditionally followed the Afrikaner model, being the dominant political, economic, and cultural partner. It should be noted that when an Afrikaner male married a 'Coloured' female,

she was generally absorbed into his family if he was single or unmarried, prior to his marriage, provided that her skin pigmentation and hair texture was 'correct'. In the event of him being married, she was treated as a mistress who was supported together with their children. If a 'Coloured' male were to have relations with an Afrikaner female, this, however, being more rare during the days of *Apartheid*, she would be absorbed into his family. But whatever the combinations, the resultant family also generally favoured an extended family structure.

The emergence of the Indian sector in South Africa goes back to the 1860's. The local authorities in Natal, were experiencing continual setbacks in producing a reasonable sugar crop. Indians had been hired, very successfully, to improve a similar predicament on the island of Mauritius. It was this island's resultant bumper crop that finally prompted the Natal government to enter into protracted negotiations with the government of India. In 1860 the first batch of Indians arrived abroad the Truro. They were not immigrants in the strict sense of the word but were indentured labourers brought on an agreement, often called 'grimit' by these sugar-cane workers, with an option to become citizens. The majority of these workers did exercise this option to remain in this country after their contract ended (R Nowbath 1960:17-23).

The bulk of these sugar-cane workers or 'coolies', neutral words initially, which only assumed derogatory connotations later, were practising Hindus. Their family structure was also of an extended type. The term *kutum* refers to their network of parents, children, grandparents, aunts and uncles who lived in a common residence. The general marital practice was one of monogamy except for the subsequent 'passenger Indians' and traders who were predominantly Muslims. Their religion permitted them to marry up to four wives. Like their African counterparts, these Muslims had to provide for all their wives.

3.5.2 FAMILIIES IN THE WAKE OF FORCED RELOCATION

The white sector can enumerate general factors that have ushered their family structure towards a nuclear type, namely industrialisation, urbanisation and the individualism & secularism that are encouraged by modern democracy. The black community has to include economic, political, and ideological dimensions for the rapid disintegration of their family networks. It was the implementation of

'forced removals and relocations' under the *Apartheid* system that brought about the quick demise of the system of their social fabric.

The scale of this program made it a grave concern. According to the *Relocations: The Churches' Report on Forced Removals* by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the South African Catholic Bishop's Conference (SACBC) (1984:13) about 3.5 million people had been moved and 2 million were under threat of removals (cf World Council of Churches Programme to Combat Racism 1984: 56). Cameron and Spies confirm the relocation of 3.5 million people by 1960 (1986: 311). This was larger than the forced migration of various Soviet peoples imposed by Stalin. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Nazi deportations during World War II reached about 7 million-twice South Africa's total (15th Ed. Vol. xii: 186-7).

The thrust of this section is to clearly sketch the disintegration of families. The depth of our analysis would equip us to more meaningfully respond to this catastrophe.

3.5.3 FORCED REMOVALS AND RELOCATIONS

The vast majority of relocated persons were Africans, but approximately 600,000 people of other race groups have had to move in terms of the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 (SACC 1984:14). This legislation restricted the areas of both trading and residence of especially the 'Coloureds' and the Indians.

What reasons can motivate such a cynical and uncaring program, on so vast a scale? Many of the reasons for forced removals stem from South Africa's history, one in which the Blacks have been dispossessed amidst the economic growth of the country. Very careful reflection assists in isolating the major underlying causes (SACC 1984:15-17).

The first centres on economics. Human greed is a powerful motivating factor. In the contemporary world money and property are increasingly accumulated in fewer and fewer hands. If producers are to succeed in constantly increasing their wealth, they must at least equal, if not eliminate, any competitors. A docile and subjugated work force, as well as the adoption of increasingly sophisticated technology, helps producers gain an edge over their competitors. Anyone who wishes to accumulate wealth has to fit into this economic system. Although this

system may bring about social progress, so long as there are insufficient checks and balances to restrain individuals 'profit-seeking', it is not designed to do so. On the contrary, it is designed to produce larger and larger amounts of money in a few hands. In the new South Africa the circle of white hands has been widened to include a few black hands. New trends are also emerging that about one third of the expendable income is presently in the hands of Blacks (SACC 1984:15).

The economic expansion of South Africa has followed this system, with various enterprises, mines, industries and farms, seeking high profits for themselves and trying to eliminate competition. Removals have come as a direct consequence. For instance, in the 19th century, Whites most often seized land held by Africans for economic gain. The scope of white ownership was increased by the 1913 Land Act, which prevented African people acquiring new land (Nash 1980:1-20). Legislation prevented black people from being real economic competitors in white areas. Their role in these areas was to serve white-controlled economic interests. Otherwise, if the white economy does not require them, they became 'surplus' and so liable for removal. The Group Areas Act similarly prevented effective 'Coloured' and Indian competition with Whites (SACC 1984:15).

The modernisation of the economy has also led to increased removals, especially from the white-owned farms as mechanisation has lessened the demand for labour. Urban employment opportunities are no longer growing so fast, again, due to more capital-intensive production. So the economy produces a 'surplus' population, which is dealt with by removal. Furthermore, removing people elsewhere avoids the responsibility and expense of caring for their maintenance and welfare (SACC 1984:15).

The second cause for these removals and relocations derives from purely political reasons. Political democracy had always been regarded as a threat to the power of the minority white population in South Africa. Also, power sharing on a political level would lead to economic sharing. To prevent this the State had always legislated to exclude black people from political participation. According to an information paper entitled *Christians and Apartheid* published by South African Council of Churches (1982:5-8) the Bantu-stan policy was a means of preventing power sharing, ostensibly by giving Africans 'political rights' in their own states. This policy also served to direct opposition away from the

central government. The 'tri-cameral' constitution of South Africa, approved by parliament and the white referendum in 1983, whilst co-opting 'Coloureds' and Indians in advisory chambers, totally excluded Africans. It offered extremely limited channels for Africans to gradually participate in so-called 'Independent Homelands' (SACC 1984:15-16).

The aim of controlling the black population led to the policy of having as few Blacks, as possible, in white areas. Therefore families or individuals whose labour was not required were removed from the eighty-six percent of land of South Africa set aside for white occupation. Strict population control and continued white domination of South Africa outside the Bantu states had enjoyed the support of a bulk of the white minority group (SACC 1982:9-15). There were a number of conspicuous voices of protest, even from Afrikaners within the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) circles (cf Loubser 1991). Since the government aimed to keep and increase its political support among the white electorate, the erection of Bantu states and removing people to them was a suitable political policy (SACC 1984:16).

Ideological reasons ranked as the most important underlying cause for removals and relocations. An ideology is derived from an unquestioned set of attitudes and ideas that justify a particular line of action that is favourable to the person or group holding that ideology (cf our earlier discussion in chapter one). Certain prevalent ideologies that were held by white South Africans encouraged and justified the removal and relocation of other South Africans (SACC 1984:16-17).

The first such ideology is white racism, which using spurious Biblical, biological, and anthropological theories, together with a falsified view of history, regarded white domination as normal. A significant number of Whites opposed this pernicious system. Beyers Naude is one the sons of Arikanderdom who stand out. Loubser in his '*Apartheid Bible*' offers one of the most lucid and penetrating analyses of the application of *Apartheid* ideology (Loubser 1991). For its sources of information, his research draws on historical documents not accessible to the English-speaking world. Loubser traces the development of the interaction between theology and politics in Afrikaans thinking with reference to the DRC. This was followed by a review of *Apartheid* praxis within the

church. In conclusion some theological guidelines were proposed for the future.

White racism showed itself in a permanently aggressive, or fearful, attitude towards other races. It led to many white people having no feeling for the rights, the sufferings, and the potential of black people. To them it seemed acceptable that Blacks be wrenched away from their homes and dumped elsewhere (SACC 1984:16).

Another ideology is unrestricted capitalism, which viewed all forms of 'modernisation,' wealth accumulation and economic growth as good no matters what effect they had on other people. According to this ideology the function of workers was to sell their labour to employers. Apart from that the workers were unimportant. Unemployment caused by mechanisation was not considered a problem, except where it threatened security in the white areas. It was regarded as a problem only for the unemployed (SACC 1984:16).

'Afrikaner nationalism' was yet another ideology used to justify removals. Since its victory in 1948 the National Party had used its power to ensure the survival of the Afrikaner nation, at all cost. It has sought to maintain the racial 'purity' of the white people and the preservation of the chief symbols of the Afrikaans language and heritage. It emphasised how the Afrikaners were a threatened people, who required elaborate strategies, based on the Apartheid philosophy for their survival. One such strategy was the forced removal of people whose presence was regarded as a threat. Their removal was justified as necessary for 'preserving the Afrikaner nation'. While no one will deny a people's right to exist, this particular nationalism denied the rights of others and presupposed domination on a racial basis over other peoples. When this type of nationalism came increasingly under attack, in reaction it committed itself to developing a National Security State (SACC 1984:16-17).

The ideology of National Security regarded the preservation of the State as the highest ideal. Any and every means was used to defend the State and the prevailing social order. Having taken this approach, Afrikaner nationalism did not explore other options for self-preservation. In terms of National Security it regarded all its efforts to coerce and manipulate people into accepting the social order it imposed, as

justified. So long as the erection of Bantu states and the forced removal of people to them strengthened State security, it was regarded as unquestionable (SACC 1984:17).

Afrikaner nationalism as an ideology took over the injustices of racism, economic and political injustice, inherited from the British colonial period. It cemented these together with unrestricted capitalism and the ideology of National Security. This in summary is the ideological outlook that allowed for, and was used to legitimate South Africa's program of forced removals (SACC 1984:17).

Africans have been the people most affected by removals. The only obstacle to this pernicious program has been resistance, in one form or another, from the affected communities themselves.

People who were removed and relocated fell into various categories; the major ones will be mentioned briefly. 'black spots' were those categories of land occupied by Africans but surrounded by white areas, usually farms (SACC 1984:19). Many thousands of people have been moved, usually to Bantu states, as a result of the de-proclamation and abolition of townships. Hundreds of thousands of African people have been removed from white owned farmland as a result of the earlier outlawing of 'sharecroppers' and the more abolition of the 'labour tenancy' and 'registered squatter' systems. Only people with Section 10 exemptions lived in white cities and towns (Nash 1980:1-20). The Urban Areas Consolidation Act decreed that no black person might remain in any white town for more than 72 hours unless he or she has lived continuously in that town since birth. He may stay also if he has worked continuously in registered employment in one job in the same town for fifteen full years. These people were usually referred to as 'qualified urban Blacks' (SACC 1982:12-15). In the 1983 'Rikhotso judgement' the Supreme Court ruled that contract workers could qualify as urban residents under the same terms as others. After 1968 contract workers have had to return to the rural areas each year to renew their contracts. This was aimed at excluding them from eventually qualifying for urban residence (SACC 1982:9-15). The effect of the judgement was however, limited due to the introduction of the Orderly Movement Bill in Parliament in 1984.

The ten separate ethnic areas that for the Xhosa being further subdivided between Transkei-Xhosa and Ciskei-Xhosa were in broken tracts of land. In the process of consolidating the Bantu states, their borders were redrawn so that one gains while another loses. Strategic considerations necessitated the movement of Venda people living along the Limpopo River, which forms the border with Zimbabwe and people living along the Natal/Mozambique border for South African Defence Force border patrols. The last main category of removals had to do with infra-structural demands like game reserves and dams (SACC 1982:5-8; SACC 1984:21-22).

Varied forces were used to remove people. The government treated the differences within the white community as unimportant, but for the black sector, the government used ethnicity as a great divisive factor. Landowners were forced to evict tenants who were deemed to be illegal squatters or else faced stiff fines, and in this way they acted as government surrogates in the removal process. 'Persuasion' was also a force that was utilised by a policy of neglect directed towards the settled African community and the parallel provision of incentives and facilities (for example, clinics, schools, pensions, etc.) within the borders of the nearest Bantu state (SACC 1984:22-24). Insecurity was very much related to the force of coercive persuasion through pass raids and threatened loss of all compensation for their houses should they be expropriated. Intimidation by the security police or paid informers was also a common practice. Informers were also recruited from within the membership of the church. 'Sympathetic' church leadership was used to 'siphon' out information of so-called 'communist' activities in their black departments. Many an outspoken black clergy, critical of *Apartheid*, discovered only after being subjected to the interrogation, harassment and intimidation of the notorious security branch (SB's) that the security network of the government had already infiltrated his/her church. Some white church leaders who supported the policy of the government (cf Chetty & De Kock 1996:72) also tried to co-opt ministers from other communities through financial and other incentives (cf Chetty & De Kock 1996:83). To this list of forces must be added the appointment of co-operative chiefs or headmen. When all the above-mentioned incentives failed to lure people to their 'homelands,' brute force was used. The Crossroads and Nyanga squatter camps were glaring examples of this occurrence.

Attention has been drawn to the fact that the 'Coloured' and Indian populations have also been affected by removals. The Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 imposed control countrywide over all inter-racial changes in ownership and occupation of property not already governed by the 1913 and 1936 Native Land Acts (Cameron & Spies 1986:311). It also empowered the State to decide where members of the different racial groups should live and trade and also created machinery to enforce its decisions.

Used in conjunction with the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950, which classified all people from birth into one of four racial groups, it became a prime instrument of mass removal and dispossession of the land of 'Coloured' and Indian people, some Africans and a very small number of Whites (Cameron & Spies 1986: 278).

It has led to the destruction of Cato Manor in Durban; South End in Port Elizabeth; District Six in Cape Town; Fordsburg, Vrededorp and Pageview in Johannesburg; and countless integrated suburbs and villages throughout the country. The answer was the creation of Indian areas such as Chatsworth, Newlands East, and Phoenix in Durban; and Coloured areas such as Mitchell's Plain and Atlantis in the Western Cape. The whole structure of government in South Africa embodied in the 1983 Constitution Act was based on the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950, and the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 (Cameron & Spies 1986:278; SACC 1984:24-27).

The idea of separate land areas for different race groups had its roots in the 19th century. The 1846/7 Natal Commission for Locating the Natives began the process, with the Boer Republics soon following suit. The policy was extended to Indians in the South African Republic (now Transvaal) in 1885, when they were confined to certain town districts only, and in 1891 Indians were totally excluded from the Orange River Colony (subsequently known as the Orange Free State) (SACC 1984:25).

In Natal, with its much larger and stronger Indian population, mobilised in the early twentieth century by Gandhi, the process was slower. The Durban Land Alienation Ordinance 14 of 1922 and Ordinance 5 of 1923 covering all Natal towns were restrictive but did not prevent Indian 'penetration'. Fears of the latter, particularly of economic competition, led the Smuts Government to pass the Trading and Occupation of Land (Transvaal and Natal) Act No. 35 of 1943, the 'Pegging Act,'

which controlled and virtually froze property transactions between Whites and Indians for three years. Then came the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act No. 28 of 1947, the 'Ghetto Act,' which drastically restricted Indian ownership and acquisition of property outside certain specified areas and tampered with their franchise rights (Cameron & Spies 1986:278).

In 1939, after the Cape Municipal Congress had resolved in favour of segregated residential areas, Prime Minister Hertzog hinted at possible legislation but 'Coloured' people remained free of such restriction and removal until the Group Areas Act was passed (SACC 1984:25).

From 1950 to 1970 the Group Areas Act has been amended several times and consolidated twice (1957 and 1966). In 1962 control passed from the Department of 'Coloured' Affairs to the Department of Community Development, soon to rival the South African Bantu Trust as owner of expropriated property and, it might further be claimed, slum landlord of Apartheid's victims (Cameron & Spies 1986:278).

3.5.4 THE LEGACY OF FORCED REMOVALS AND RELOCATIONS FOR FAMILIES

Removals uprooted families and destroyed homes. Any person's experience of removal largely derives from its effects on their family. The forced removals ordered by the State had no concern for the problems of family life nor did they respect the delicacy of its structures.

A family is a group of people whose behaviour is closely interrelated. Its members develop expectations of each other, and the family develops through their striving to establish a healthy and workable balance in their relationships. They look to each other for support, healing and growth. Forced removals, thus, profoundly attack and undermine the delicate balance of family life. They sever the continuities a family has built up, and offer few prospects for its further growth. If a family migrates voluntarily, having weighed up the prospective gains as greater than its losses, this usually gives it an enhanced sense of self worth. People who choose to move are seeking an improved situation, and so will have the energy to cope with forming a new identity as the situation demands. This is lacking with forced removals. They frequently induce hopelessness and damage people's self esteem both personally and as a family. Removed people feel threatened, powerless and unable to

cope with their bewildering predicament. The fact of being coerced into moving accentuates this crisis (SACC 1984:31).

Inadequate or polluted water supplies, a shortage of productive land, an inhospitable climate and a lack of suitable housing are frequent and well-known features of resettlement camps. People's basic survival is threatened, and this leads to great strain within the family. It weighs heavily on parents if they are unable to provide for their children. Even if a family does not face actual starvation, they are still unlikely to enjoy full health, since resettlement camps are designed for mere survival with only a toilet, a tin hut or tent, and commuter transport being provided. To avoid destitution some family members became migrant workers, but that split the family and caused further stress. Usually conditions in relocation areas were so meagre that a family could not enjoy a sufficient standard of living to maintain itself in good health. Any family or community that were formerly living somewhat above the minimum level for survival is likely to experience relocation as a debilitating loss (SACC 1984:31).

Many rural families were fairly 'traditional,' having a close relationship to their land, a family life that extends to many relatives, and patriarchal authority. For the traditional African family, the land is the habitat of the ancestors, the place where they are looked after. Removal to different land, or especially a small plot, causes deep trauma. Also the 'housing' pattern of a relocation area may cause confusion and strain. For instance, a son who had his own house before now has to relocate with his parents, again. More often extended families were broken, and on other occasions too many people are pushed together. Traditional authority, vested in older males, was also threatened. The father to whom everyone looked up to may be shattered by his powerlessness, his loss of work and inability to provide for his family. If he becomes a migrant worker, this will be the same for the family as losing its head. Children, particularly boys, grow up without a male on which to model themselves. If circumstances force the father to become an illegal migrant, his self-esteem is further eroded. As the men enter the migratory labour "system, a step forced on them by relocation; new responsibilities are thrust on the women at home. With a major crisis, such as the death of a child, a frequent occurrence in relocation areas due to poverty and disease, they are likely to pack up and migrate to town illegally. Under these stresses many turn to an

abuse of substances, especially alcohol, and so use up the funds that should support the family (SACC 1984:31-32).

A further threat to families in relocation areas was their lack of protection and security. At times people who do not know one another were cramped together. There was no commonly recognised authority, for example, a group of elders that can deal effectively with their disputes and problems. Policing was inadequate. Any sense of authority and direction may be lost, and so violence and anti-social behaviour erupts. There are neither 'traditional' nor 'modern' means for dealing with the community's problems (SACC 1984:32).

Removals also cut across the socialisation that took place within the family and formal schooling. When the family was under stress, separated or split up by migratory labour, it could not supply direction and assurance to the young. Relocation also broke children's contacts with the significant members of the community, for example, its elders, who would normally set them a pattern and standard for life. Likewise, their schooling was upset, especially when the relocation area has no or only inadequate school facilities (SACC 1984:32).

Many other aspects of community and family life were damaged through removal and relocation. For instance, a family may lose contact with their church or congregation. Patterns of recreation, especially those fostered by settled villages, schools and churches, were destroyed and vanished. The regular social controls on drinking of traditional beer (*chwala*) were weakened.

The question needs to be posed how do families react and respond to removal and relocation? The answer is that many were often simply unable to cope. Aggravated poverty may lead to fatalism or to antagonism towards those who still had resources. When people are overwhelmed by stress, the body's immunity system breaks down and so their resistance to disease lessens. The prevalent sense of anxiety and fear leads people to despair of ever being properly healthy again. Although many relocated families do overcome their dazed condition and survive all these threats. Their survival is due to their own resilience, community and/or church support.

Removals and relocations often destroy marriage and family life. The establishment of Bantu states and the forced relocation of people in them made it increasingly impossible for them to live as families near to their places of work. Not only the migratory labour system but also the need for breadwinners to spend many hours commuting long distances to and from work, at considerable expense, systematically destroyed family life.

Our study of the destruction of family structures offers an opportunity for an application of some aspects of the Christian *oikos*.

3.5.5 DUAL FAMILIES

In South Africa the emergence of 'dual' families amongst the African community in particular has to be placed at the door of the migratory labour system. African males working illegally in urban areas were faced with the perennial problem of the total lack of accommodation. The African females on the other hand who work as housemaids or servants for affluent Whites were provided with servant quarters. Add to the male's accommodation difficulty, his need for affection and companionship, the chances for 'shacking up' or living together becomes rather high. In spite of the fact of both parties often being married and having families in the Bantu states, they are often left with no recourse but to enter into a co-habitation agreement. This relationship invariably produced offspring. Thus, these individuals often ended up with two families--one where they live (hlala), that is, in the urban area and another where their homes were (khaya), that is, in the Bantu states.

This phenomenon illustrates that the migratory labour system ran counter to both the needs to produce a psychologically healthy and stable society, and the respect due to the bonds of marriage and family life. The 1982 Conference of the Methodist Church of South Africa condemned 'the iniquitous system of migrant labour which flouts the work of our Lord, 'What God has joined together, let not man separate', and destroys the life of the families involved'. (Conference Minutes, VII, 2a). Likewise, Pope John Paul II speaks of the relation of society to family and could well be describing the former South African situation when he wrote:

Institutions and laws unjustly ignore the inviolable rights of the family and of the human person; and society, far from putting itself at the service of the family, attacks it violently in its values and fundamental requirements...for this reason, the Church openly and strongly defends the rights of the

family against the intolerable usurpation of society and the State (Vatican City 1983:46).

Although the building up and maintaining of a healthy family life is primarily the responsibility and joy of each married couple, even their best efforts were negated because the dominant economic, political, and ideological forces of South African society operated against them. As the crisis caused by dispossession, relocation and migratory labour deepened, the defence, both for oneself and for others, of each family's right to exist and progress, as a family became an increasingly demanding form of Christian witness.

3.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THREE

A unique perspective of this thesis is the emphasis on the social-scientific method. Special focus is given to the social context of families. Thereafter an analysis of the family from a South African perspective is offered.

This chapter establishes that the extended family structure has largely been challenged by the nuclear family composing of a mother, father, and those children who have not yet reached their majority. Factors that threaten the extended family structure include industrialisation, urbanisation, the individualism and secularism that are typical of modern democracy and additional 'political' factors in South Africa. This has meant that family vocational traditions, life styles and work styles, could not be easily maintained over generations. Industrialisation has led to urban migration, so that people could be where the jobs were. Thus, young urban families, when they moved, left behind their extended family. They moved geographically, politically and socially. This loss of the extended family system deprived the urban nuclear family of the resources that had formerly sustained its family life. Even more significantly, it deprived the nuclear family of the extended social system that was the source of identity, values, and continuity of existence.

Some sociologists, like Popenoe (1998:270-289) and Talcott Parsons, concluded that the nuclear family could not survive because it lacked a stable social system (1943:22-38). Their prediction has in part materialised in the social experiments in marriage structure. Communal lifestyles are often an experiment to recapture the old extended-family form.

Whilst rural families still manage to maintain some form of the extended-family structure, what becomes of the urban nuclear family? Sussman has studied how these families establish coalitions with other families to form networks that replace the extended family (1959:334). Thus, the shift has been away from an extended family based on blood or marital relations and toward a new system of friends, neighbours, and colleagues from work. Pattison calls it a psychosocial kinship system (1977:18).

Besides the 'lack of a sense of rootedness' that an urban nuclear family experiences, which C.W. Stewart (1979:1-5) refers to, one has to recognise the additional emotional pressures. Sell captures this aspect well (1981:43). In the nuclear family, the emphasis is on intimacy. This is in contrast to the 'traditional' model of marriage. Therefore, greater demands are placed on the nuclear family. It could well be that these greater expectations 'set up' a nuclear urban family for the greater possibility of failure because this marital union has to function as the sole provider of emotional support. These urban nuclear families as 'families-in-transition' lack social and emotional support. These fledgling families are left floundering on a tempestuous urban bed. Their premature state has left a vacuum that can only be adequately filled by a sense of belonging. In short, they need a family.

In this chapter, as stated earlier, in addition to a sociological study of the family, an analysis of the South African context is imperative for this thesis. The depth of such an analysis is critical for insight into the challenges of society facing the church. These challenges include, amongst others, social and emotional support and the need for belonging or 'rootedness' for urban nuclear families as 'families-in-transition', care for the sick and the elderly and child-welfare. Other challenges include morality and relationships, changing definitions and roles of families, the alarming increase in divorces, the emerging trend of single-parent families and changing family-values. Furthermore growing trends of sexual and child abuse, financially motivated killing of family members, trends in teenage substance abuse, and the information revolution that has undermined the authority and individualism need to be addressed.

This thesis attempts to respond to these needs by developing the concept of the church as *oikos* in an attempt at re-contextualisation. The thesis of this study is that the concept of *oikos*, as reflected in the 'early church' of Luke-Acts, provides inspiration in adequately meeting the challenges of society. Despite the aftermath of our *Apartheid* past, the church has the potential and opportunity to absorb, shape and be a part of the essential healing and reconstructive process that is imperative for the families that make up our nation.

As stated earlier, the interface between the contextual and sociological approaches are critical to this study. A distinctive contribution regarding methodology in this thesis is the utilisation of the contextualising hermeneutic introduced by theologies of *praxis*. The second hermeneutical feature of this study is the bilateral application of insights from family sociology.

This chapter has illustrated one of the legs of the methodology framework by engaging in a contextual analysis of families in South Africa. From this contextual analysis of the historical situation, meaningful questions can be posed. The sociological composition of a local church warranted a detailed analysis of family sociology. These sociological categories of the family provide a rationale for the emergence of a sub-discipline of 'Pastoral Sociology', which will only be outlined here. Such a pursuit would warrant a separate study. This terminology is a new way of attempting to emphasise the sociological and pastoral expressions of the church. Seward Hiltner's definition of the nature of pastoral psychology is helpful in attempting to sketch out possible parameters of Pastoral Sociology. He characterised pastoral psychology as, 'psychology from the pastor's point of view...' (1950:7ff). Adapting Hiltner's definition to Pastoral Sociology the following features will similarly emerge. This idea emerged in dialogue with my former lecturer, Professor N A C Heuer (1999). This sub-discipline is sociology from the pastor's point of view. It is both practical and theoretical, both scientific and existential, both sociological and theological, both religious and secular, both clerical and lay.

3.6.1 THE FAMILY IN SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Popenoe et al., (1998:2) define sociology as 'the systematic and objective study of human society and social interaction'. The basic

assumption that sociologists make about all human behaviour is that it is shaped by society and social circumstances. Many sociologists are also concerned with the process of social interaction itself. Sociologists tend to search for the causes of social phenomena in other social phenomena, rather than in psychological or biological reality. Each social setting is seen as an intricate web of social forces interacting with each other. A social science involves the application of scientific methods to the study of society and human behaviour (Simon 1995:1-7 and Popenoe et al., 1998:12-15,19).

Herbert Spencer was an English social thinker who compared human societies to organisms. Marx's main contribution to sociology is his emphasis on economic factors and class conflict. Society, according to Durkheim, is composed of social facts such as laws, customs and institutions. These social facts are external to people but exert control over them. A unit of social structure is considered dysfunctional when it prevents society from meeting its needs. Social change is usually assumed to be introduced from outside.

The interactionist perspective focuses on how people interact in their everyday lives and how they make sense of their social interactions. It is concerned with the micro level of society, social interaction and the individual as a social being. David R Simon's description of American society surprisingly fits the South African context like a glove. There are social characters specific to gender, ethnic groups, etc. People conceive of themselves as part of a family, including their ancestors, clan, tribe or nation. The social structure is an interrelated set of societal institutions, which meet societal needs of an economy, polity, family, education, religion and aesthetics according to Simon (1995:18-21). Polity concerns a political system that resolves conflict and protects society from threats. A family regulates the sex drive, produces and rears children, and serves as the emotional centre.

3.6.2 THE FAMILY AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

South African society is one, in which the small primary groups, such as extended families and communities have lost their position, contends Popenoe (1998:270). Add to this the issue of finance moving outside the family. Furthermore with the ready availability of information, the authority of the family has also shifted outside the family. The family as a sociological institution is under serious

threat of extinction. This trend is not typical for all families in our country. In South Africa there are different cultures within which the family is structured differently. Economic and political forces have disrupted the African rural extended family. The African and Coloured communities living in 'townships' are reflective of a growing 'fatherless' society. Indian rural families still display an extended family structure whilst their urban counterparts are under pressure to follow a nuclear family type. Both the urban English and Afrikaner families favour a nuclear structure, with the English reflecting liberal family values and the Afrikaner demonstrating stronger family values.

How do we define a family? This was a fairly easy question to answer, a few generations ago in South African society. It was generally assumed that a family consisted of a man and a woman, married to each other, and several children. A strange variety of family forms confront the modern observer. In order to address crucial questions concerning the future of the family, we need to understand the social forces that are transforming the modern family.

3.6.3 THE FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE OF THE FAMILY IN SOCIETY

Functionalists emphasise that the family has been a universal and a social institution throughout history. Family systems were the foundation on which all other social institutions, including government and education, were formed and developed. In small traditional societies the family is largely self-sufficient and provides for most of its members' physical and emotional needs.

The family, in general, is well suited in many ways for the task of socialisation. The family is the main source of affection and companionship for both children and adults in modern societies (Melville 1998:23-29). The family also serves as an important economic unit. In rural and peasant communities, the family is generally the major unit of production. In modern societies, the main economic activity of the family is consumption.

3.6.4 THE CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE OF THE FAMILY IN SOCIETY

Conflict theorists view the family in a different light. The history of the family is viewed as the history of the domination of women by men (Popenoe 1998:273). The division of work roles within the family may have been the original basis for gender inequality. Conflict theorists

thus see the family as the primary arena in which gender inequality is played out.

3.6.5 FAMILY STRUCTURE

There are many variations in family structure around the world. In describing family structure, sociologists note the difference between the kinship group and the family. Kinship refers to a social network of people who are related by common ancestry or origin, by marriage, or by adoption. The family is a relatively small domestic group of kin (or people in a kin-like relationship) who functions as a co-operative unit (Popenoe 1998:274).

During their lifetime, most people are members of two different types of family groups. The family of orientation is the family into which they are born and in which the major part of their socialisation takes place. The family of procreation is the family that they create when they marry and have children. The nuclear family is a two-generation family group that consists of a couple and their children, usually living apart from other relatives. An extended family is a family group that consists of three or more generations. Differences in family structure are primarily explained by economic factors. There is, however, a global trend away from the extended family and toward the nuclear model. Family authority has been patriarchal throughout Western history. A patriarchal family is a family structure in which most of the authority is held by the oldest male. A matriarchal family would be a family structure in which most of the authority is in the hands of the oldest female. This pattern is not characteristic of any of the world's societies. Some societies have families that are matrifocal. A matrifocal family is a family in which a woman is the central and most important member. In patrilineal descent the father's side of the family is the basis of kinship and inheritance; boys inherit property through their father's line. In bilateral descent children's kinship is tied to both the mother's and the father's side of the family. Children of both sexes can inherit property from both sides of the family.

3.6.6 MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND WIDOWHOOD

In South Africa, only a few patterns of marital choice are prohibited. Most people marry sometime during their lives, but the trend, in South Africa, is toward later marriages, while a growing number of people are not marrying at all.

Marital break-up is widespread in South Africa and can have significant effects on children. One study concluded that compared with children from intact families, children from divorced families perceive their relationships with both parents as less positive, that is, more distant, less affectionate and less communicative (Fine, Moreland & Schwebel 1984:703-713). The high divorce rate in the United States, as in South Africa, is related to such social factors as the relative isolation of the nuclear family, its high rate of geographic mobility, changing family and sex roles, ethnic heterogeneity and more liberal divorce laws (Kitson, Babri & Roach 1985:54-78).

3.6.7 THE CHANGING FAMILY

Demographic and social trends in industrialised economies have shortened the childbearing and child-rearing stages of the family life cycle, increased the number of single-parent families and stepfamilies, lengthened the empty-nest period and increased the chances of prolonged widowhood. Gender roles within the family have also been altered.

Alternatives to marriage and the nuclear family include remaining single, heterosexual cohabitation and group marriages. South African society is also rapidly coming to a realisation that cohabitation offers no advantage for a successful marriage. In the United States, a few young adults have tried group marriage, in which three or more individuals live as a family unit, sharing sexual and personal intimacies.

Fewer people are marrying. Care of the elderly, another traditional responsibility of the family is also declining in importance. There is no assurance that recent family trends will continue unchanged in the future.

The social aftermath of Apartheid continues to haunt this country. Insight into the general and special factors that influenced the social-mobility of people in South Africa could facilitate this process.

3.6.8 GENERAL FACTORS INFLUENCING FAMILY STRUCTURES

Previously most First World or Western countries have evidenced a steady movement from the extended family to that of a nuclear one. The factors that formed the nuclear family are both very complex and greatly varied. When families moved from the farm to the city, vast changes resulted. Families in South Africa have not escaped this pressure. A consideration of the family-types that prevailed in South Africa a few decades ago reveals some interesting features. There was undoubtedly a preponderance of the extended family. Similar to the Afrikaner farmer's large farmhouse, English aristocrats lived in huge manors with their extended families.

The black population of South Africa followed a similar pattern to that of the white community. This embraced a wider constituency than that of the extended family. The entire tribe became one's extended family. Unlike the Afrikaner, the African followed a polygamous family arrangement.

The white sector can enumerate general factors that have ushered their family structure towards a nuclear type, namely industrialisation, urbanisation and the individualism & secularism that are encouraged by modern democracy. The black community has to include economic, political, and ideological dimensions for the rapid disintegration of their family networks.

3.6.9 FORCED REMOVALS AND RELOCATIONS

The scope of white ownership was increased by the Land Act of 1913, which prevented African people acquiring new land (Nash 1980:1-20). Legislation prevented black people from being real economic competitors in white areas. The Group Areas Act similarly prevented effective 'Coloured' and Indian competition with Whites (SACC 1984:15).

Furthermore, removing people elsewhere avoids the responsibility and expense of caring for their maintenance and welfare (SACC 1984:15). Political democracy had always been regarded as a threat to the power of the minority white population in South Africa. Strict population control and continued white domination of South Africa outside the Bantu states had enjoyed the support of a bulk of the white minority group (SACC 1982:9-15). Since the government aimed to keep and increase its

political support among the white electorate, the erection of Bantu states and removing people to them was a suitable political policy (SACC 1984:16).

Certain prevalent ideologies that were held by white South Africans encouraged and justified the removal and relocation of other South Africans (SACC 1984:16-17). It led to many white people having no feeling for the rights, the sufferings, and the potential of black people. So long as the erection of Bantu states and the forced removal of people to them strengthened State security, it was regarded as unquestionable (SACC 1984:17).

Africans have been the people most affected by removals. Only people with Section 10 exemptions lived in white cities and towns (Nash 1980:1-20). Strategic considerations necessitated the movement of Venda people living along the Limpopo River, which forms the border with Zimbabwe and people living along the Natal/Mozambique border by South African Defence Force border patrols. Varied forces were used to remove people.

3.6.10 THE LEGACY OF FORCED REMOVALS AND RELOCATIONS FOR FAMILIES

Removals uprooted families and destroyed homes. Any person's experience of removal largely derives from its effects on their family. A family is a group of people whose behaviour is closely interrelated. Forced removals, thus, profoundly attack and undermine the delicate balance of family life. People's basic survival is threatened, and this leads to great strain within the family. To avoid destitution some family members became migrant workers, but that split the family and caused further stress. Any family or community that were formerly living somewhat above the minimum level for survival is likely to experience relocation as a debilitating loss (SACC 1984:31).

Many rural families were fairly 'traditional,' having a close relationship to their land, a family life that extends to many relatives, and patriarchal authority. For the traditional African family, the land is the habitat of the ancestors, the place where they are looked after. More often extended families were broken, and on other occasions too many people are pushed together. Removals also cut across the socialisation that took place within the family and formal schooling. Many other aspects of community and family life were damaged through removal and relocation. For instance, a family may lose contact

with their church or congregation. Removals and relocations often destroy marriage and family life. Our study of the destruction of family structures offers an opportunity for an application of some aspects of the Christian *oikos*.

3.6.11 DUAL FAMILIES

In South Africa the emergence of 'dual' families amongst the African community in particular has to be placed at the door of the migratory labour system. This phenomenon illustrates that the migratory labour system ran counter to both the needs to produce a psychologically healthy and stable society, and the respect due to the bonds of marriage and family life.

Although the building up and maintaining of a healthy family life is primarily the responsibility and joy of each married couple, even their best efforts were negated because the dominant economic, political, and ideological forces of South African society operated against them. As the crisis caused by dispossession, relocation and migratory labour deepened, the defence, both for oneself and for others, of each family's right to exist and progress, as a family became an increasingly demanding form of Christian witness.

3.6.12 CONCLUDING REMARKS TO CHAPTER THREE

This chapter shifted the focus to the family in South Africa. It first provided a brief overview of some of the main theoretical tenets and concepts of sociology, (especially social structure, social change, social character and social imagination), and family sociology (the family as a social institution) and then proceeded with a sociological analysis of different formations of the family in terms of South Africa's multicultural population. This part and the following sections treat the family from functionalist, conflict, and structural perspectives. It also covers the different kinds of marital bond and dissolution. This chapter concluded with a focus on the changes family life has undergone due to certain general and particular socio-historical forces in South Africa. The chapter also mapped different perspectives on various kinds of family life in South Africa. As such, it presents a contextual analysis in terms of which the subsequent chapters, attempt to interpret the Church as *oikos* in systems perspective (chapter four), develop a ministry model, in terms of pastoral sociology, focused on the family (chapter

five), and the contextualising of the church as *oikos* in terms of *praxis* (chapter six).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHURCH AS *OIKOS*

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of the Lukan *oikos*, which was established by the implementation of the social-scientific method in chapter two, is expanded in this chapter by examining the relationship between the church and the family.

The social-scientific study of the Lukan *oikos*, in chapter two was offset against the rival social system of the temple as a distinct and opposing system of social life. In the process, it uncovered contrasting social values, orientations, attitudes, motivations and practices as well as perceptions of God's holy articulation with human life forms, and human institutions, spaces and times. It was this contrast, or even conflict, which resulted in the shift of the presence of the Spirit from the Jerusalem Temple to the Jesus movement and finally to the Diaspora households. Different from the administrative focus in the temple, the latter were characterised by hospitality, fellowship and mutual support, providing a sense of security and community. This new social system was crucial for the expansion of the gospel of salvation because it was characterised by open households and care for the poor & marginalised. It also provided perspectives on the kingdom of God and embodied values and activities related to generosity, mercy, hospitality, royalty, and friendship while the house-churches were also economically self-subsistent, in terms of reciprocity, kin and fictive-kin groups. Both socio-historically and metaphorically, the *oikos* constitutes a social institution rivalling that of the temple in Luke-Acts.

The *oikos* of the early church can inspire the church today, by her example, in responding to current challenges. One of the aims of this thesis is to catalyse a re-interpretation of the relationship between the church and family. 'Gems' can be excavated from the *oikos* of Luke-Acts that reflect transformative moments in the life of the early church. Some of these principles, if used discriminately, can revolutionise the church and society.

The interrelationship between church and family will be extended with reference to systems theory prompting us to redefine the church as a family of families.

4.2 THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY: DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS

One of objectives of the church is to assist the family in equipping subsequent generations in the faith but she is equally interested in the manner that home-life affects the church (G Rekers (1985:343-382). Therefore, some Christian leaders contend that programs to rescue the family are critical for the survival of the church. Robert Lynn notes that this view was also mirrored in the literature of the thirties by a writer who said:

The family needs the church; the church needs the family (1964:25).

The church and the home are intricately bound together, analogous to Siamese twins. Any attempt to cut them apart may damage a major artery and cause one or both to die. The church will not be able to accomplish her task if she does not encourage the family to play its foundational role in Christian socialisation. This constitutes the current challenge to the church in the midst of the rapid disintegration of the Christian family.

In spite of the strong case made for ministry to families, it is often met with either indifference or resistance. Based on a survey, Norman Wright established that churches in the USA that had a concentrated ministry to the family were the exception rather than the rule. Out of five hundred directors of Christian education and youth directors who received Wright's questionnaire (1972), ninety-six responded. Among these, only one-third indicated that their church members had heard any sermons on the family during the previous two years. One-third reported that there had been no program related to the family during that same period of time. These observations would be relevant to South Africa too.

Marriage counsellors and family-life educators also bear testimony to this neglect of families by the church. Sixty-six percent of twenty-five hundred of these professionals agreed with the following statement in a survey: 'The churches are not doing an adequate job of promoting and maintaining family life as a contemporary concept' (*Marriage and Family Resource Newsletter*, February 1975:1).

As noted in chapter three, both black and white families have suffered in the 'old' South Africa. Within the black sector, African

families have undergone the most severe devastation of their social fabric, whilst Indian and Coloured families have not remained unscathed. Except for the churches aligned with the SACC, others have largely not been in the forefront to promote and maintain family life.

This weakness of the church, outside of South Africa, may be partly so on account of the sense of incompetence of church-staff members for implementing this special ministry. Within our country political factors have also played a role, as was noted in chapter three. It is noteworthy that not all seminaries in the USA or theological institutions or faculties of theologies in South Africa, until quite recently, required a compulsory course on the family as part of their theological training. Larry Richard's survey establishes Pastors display no lack of interest in the family and that nearly all of the respondents were sensitive to the need for developing the home as the centre of Christian socialisation (Richard 1975:2-4).

Whilst this inadequacy of training may be a contributing factor to the neglect of the family, a very important, if not decisive, facet seems to be a slanted interpretation of Jesus' own statement concerning the priority of the kingdom. This is clearly illustrated by Guernsey. He had been invited as a consultant to elders' retreat for a 'thriving local church'. After eight hours of 'penetrating' discussion on an ecological approach for the families of that church, the senior pastor responded with this statement:

Why is there such an emphasis and concern about the family? I know people are hurting, but they've been hurting since the Creation and the Fall. What's of greater importance to me is God's institution, the church (1982:4).

Guernsey was disappointed, to say the least. He had mentioned, albeit only in passing, that both the family and the church were created by God. But later, he confessed that his error had been one of presumption. He had 'assumed that a person (*italics mine*) who was deeply committed to Christ and the building of Christ's Kingdom would be as equally committed to the families of those who made up that Kingdom'. This pastor had not yet bridged that relationship between the church and the family. To this minister, only the church was God's institution and therefore the family assumed a subordinate role, if not a tangential, to that of the primary focus, the church.

Yet, this Pastor would not advocate that the needs of the families of his church were secondary to the needs of his church. He would nevertheless find difficulty in expressing the inter-relationship between the church and the family. Despite preaching on family-related topics, he did not conceptualise the family as a vital institution in the building of the Kingdom of God (1982:4-7).

This experience provoked Guernsey to examine three other assumptions that he had made. They will be detailed. The first had wrongly equated a leader's commitment to the church with a commitment to the families of that church. Not much discussion has centred on the relationship between the church and the family therefore leaders have a scarcity of resources to catalyse their thinking. Part of the rationale for this study is to facilitate dialogue of the interrelationship between the church and the family.

The second assumption has to do with the methodology of a ministry to the family. It is not axiomatic that a philosophy and methodology of ministry intended to sustain and enlarge the ministry of the church would be productive to the family. This is particularly evident where the educational philosophy of the church has been influenced by philosophies of public education. This has encouraged the idea of the family as inefficient for this critical task of socialisation of its young. Therefore, what were previously functions of the family have been transferred to other agencies that are more competent. The church confirms these accusations when she conducts programs that compete with the family. In chapter five we shall establish that certain tasks of the family is identical to that of the church. This involves the socialisation process and makes the family co-equal to the church.

The current state of marriage and family ministry is the third assumption. Prior to the eighties, neither a theology nor a methodology of marriage and family existed. Instead, there was a popularisation of psychological and sociological models, which were not necessarily Christian. But, now it is encouraging to note the emergence of theological and methodological literature on the family. Anderson and Guernsey have provided a seminal contribution to the literature on the theology of family, by their book *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family* (1985). This interest in the family

has been catalysed by urgent appeals from floundering Christians. As theological reflection flows out of ministry, which is initiated by needs in the market place, bookstores are predictably well stocked with books about the family because that is precisely the area of hurt and pain.

Against the possibility of dogmatism in marriage and family ministry, it is critical that hermeneutical guidelines are established. More foundational investigation is required for the formulation of a model that could be used in interpreting Biblical material relevant to the family. Guernsey asks:

... how is it that some Christians interpret the apostle Paul's teachings regarding the authority of men over women in 1 Corinthians 11 to be universal while at the same time take his teaching in the same chapter regarding hair and the covering of the head to be culturally specific, that is, particularly to that day and age (1982:8).

Cultural conservatism seems to be the hermeneutic for gender issues, which are critical for the development of a theology of the family. It is not uncommon to find ministers, who romanticise their family-of-origin or culture, 'eisegeting' Scriptures. The author of this study who hails from an extended family, being aware of this temptation, whilst extolling some virtues of this family type is also acutely aware of its weaknesses. Thorough research has to be done by those who consider the Word of God as the ultimate authority for their lives.

There is a dire need to be open to the intrusion of cultural blinkers into our interpretation and application of the Bible. Because culture is like the air that is breathed, or the contact lens that we have grown accustomed to, its formative role is often subtle and goes unchecked. An example comes to mind here. It concerns the views of two male ministers of the same denomination conversing on birth control. One from the African community, which traditionally scorn the lack of children, and another from the Indian sector, which in days gone by, also adopted a similar conservative attitude to the role of women. They both asserted, emphatically, that the Bible did not advocate the practice of birth control but encouraged parents to be 'fruitful and multiply'. Both their wives, who were conversant with Scripture, did not welcome the thought of being in perpetual

confinement. The ensuing debate accented the arduous task ahead in differentiating the influence of culture from a Biblical perspective.

It is necessary to resume our consideration of the interrelationship between the church and the family. Whilst it is rare to find a pastor that intentionally programs to destroy families, often the end result does add up to the undermining and perhaps in rare cases, the disintegration of families (Sell 1981:31). This cautions for a re-evaluation of programs. Blind spots should be isolated. Sincerity of intentions does not reduce culpability. Reference will be made to Guernsey's continuum of the parasitic, the competitive, the co-operative, and the symbiotic, to facilitate an appraisal (1982:17-25).

The parasitic church is placed on the extreme negative side of the continuum. Parasites are creatures that live off another and give no useful return. A church is often parasitic in the way it relates to its staff. Does the church perceive its pastor or elder and staff in terms of itself without reference to the family of that leader or staff member? Do the members of the church expect unassailed access to the leadership with little or no thought of the families of the leadership? Are the pastors expected to lead despite the financial rewards being inadequate? Are we paying for the privilege of meeting together as a church out of the financial hide of the leadership and/or their spouses? Guernsey furnishes an example of this church:

I know of a very doctrinally sound church that hangs on to its own existence by asking its Pastor year after year to forgo even a cost-of-living raise. Even though the church serves a middle-to-upper class congregation, the Pastor is asked to live with a yearly wage near that of the poverty level. When the Pastor finally gathered up enough courage to ask the church board for a raise, they asked him to submit a detailed budget demonstrating how he was spending his money. When the Pastor challenged them about their request, their retort was to classify him in a different category from themselves. He was expected 'to serve in humility'. When he pushed them further, they all agreed that personally they would never submit what they were asking of him in their own places of employment. When the Pastor persisted (by now he had become angry), they each wrote on a secret ballot their yearly salary, only to find out that their average was more than twice that of their Pastor (1982:17-25).

This church was definitely not rewarding the pastor commensurately to his/her work or needs. This reveals the features of a parasitic congregation.

A parasitic church is also occasioned by the manner in which it construes its mission. People transact life through three commodities, namely, space, time, and energy. A church can become parasitic when she pre-empt's the family of these three basic commodities. Space relates to geography and here we refer to the church with regard to its geographical location, that is, a place, or a building. A caricature of this posture would be one that asserts the priority of the place or church building. To be parasitic in terms of space is to unconsciously assume that the church as place should be the centre of the people's world.

Time relates to the hours of the day and the months of the year. A church is parasitic when the members relate to their pastor as if he or she or their family have no right to time of their own. They expect, and often, demand total access. The pastoral leadership can also reveal a similar attitude to its members. A census of the time and number of scheduled meetings is a good indication of pastoral expectations. Some pastors request that meetings be arranged during prime time, not in respect of television, but in terms of finding the family together. This attitude is definitely parasitic. It unfairly confronts people with a choice between the family and the church, presuming that the church would receive priority in terms of time.

Energy concerns what we do with our time. The parasitic church makes energy demands that have no limits, resulting in a high dropout rate. Often laypersons, who love a church, complain of fatigue. They find it extremely difficult to support all the regular services of the church and also resist positions of responsibility. No sooner are they out of leadership do they plan weekends away from the church just to be 'away from it all'. Pastors in such churches often do not understand the plight of these laypersons, who cannot uphold their absolute commitment. Commitment to the church, measured in terms of space, time, and energy, was co-equal with commitment to Christ. Here was a perceptual difficulty. Because the members were a means to an end, leadership problems would continue. People would continue to drop out because they had burned out. This was undoubtedly a parasitic church.

Following Guernsey's continuum of the parasitic, the competitive, the co-operative, and the symbiotic, the competitive church occupies the

next place on the continuum. Whilst being similar to the parasitic church, it is less severe. This church recognises the pastor's family but the relationship between the two is hostile. The attitude of the pastor's family towards the church is one of jealousy, resentment, and bitterness. The family feels that they are competing with the church for the pastor's attention. He is unavailable for important family events. Those having school-age children are unable to attend a 'sports-day' or an 'open-day' at their children's school. This often results in what Monfalcone terms 'church orphans' (1980:48). These pastors often feel 'hemmed-in' between two competing loyalties. This is a no-win situation. Either way, someone has to lose. The church can also be competitive in relation to its people by desiring to consume the resources of the family first. Unlike the parasitic church where the family is passive, in the competitive church the family resists. They resist against emphasis on the church building as central. The pastor has great difficulty finding a time for a meeting or the correct time to initiate a program. The yearly church calendar becomes a battle as all the church departmental leaders try to schedule events. The family also schedules its vacations, seemingly on purpose to conflict with church camps and conferences. Also, the families hoard their energy possessively. From the family's perspective, the church demands too much and is not satisfied, hence the resentment that characterises a competitive church.

Unlike the parasitic church that feeds off its host, or the competitive church that sets up a win/lose situation with the family, there are churches that work creatively with the family. These are the co-operative churches that fall on the positive scale of the continuum. This church protects family life by scheduling not to meet one night each week, thus ensuring that the family is free. This could provide a welcome start. The attitude of this church to the pastor is commendable too as he or she is requested to have a real 'day off'. People respect a sense of privacy in their leaders' lives and ensure that their quality of life is good. This church is also a friend of the people and is healthily other-directed. It defines its role as being truly in the world, and senses that the work of God is larger than that of one particular church. Co-operative churches have both a sense of near and far mission. The concept of space has flexible boundaries and the family is encouraged to expand its influence in the world as a means of extending the influence of the

church. The family becomes the church in the world. This church encourages outside involvement in order to include rather than exclude the world. Its concern is that families flourish and its role is one of facilitating that growth and health. Besides providing seminars on family-related topics it serves its members by actively strengthening their families. If viable families are not available to some of its members, this church provides new or substitutes familial relationships and environments. This co-operative church encourages relationships between its members, as part of the discipling of its members to Christ.

The fourth category of church is further on the positive side of the continuum. The symbiotic church is similar to the co-operative church, only differing in degree. The relation between the church and the family is one of mutual interdependence. Sell offers us a colourful explanation of symbiosis:

The small Claviger beetle moves inside the anthill, unalarmed by the fact that ants are one of its most ferocious enemies. The anthill offers it easy access to life's necessities: it's warm inside and the ants stock a variety of tasty foods.

The beetle soon stops in its tracks - it spots a fast-approaching ant, one of the hungry predators that call this hill home. The ant, in turn, stops when it reaches the motionless beetle. But, instead of striking out, it strokes the beetle. A secretion then appears on the beetle's body; and the ant eagerly consumes it and goes on its way, leaving the visitor unmolested.

These two species, the Claviger beetle and the meadow ant, have a pleasant arrangement; biologists call it 'symbiosis'. Though they should be enemies, they live together in a mutually beneficial way. The beetle gets a warm home with a lot to eat, and the ant has its portable refreshment stand (1981:9).

A symbiotic relationship between the church and its families is one in which the life of the church and the life of the family are inextricably bound together. This is much like the relationship of Siamese twins, cutting them apart endangers both. It is therefore inconceivable how church leaders can simultaneously proclaim the health of a church whilst sounding distress calls on behalf on the family. The one thing needful is a change in philosophy where the relationship of mutual interdependence, or symbiosis, is central to ministry.

Whilst this discussion may, *prima facie*, seem like an unnecessary attempt of the problematising of the church, it is specifically

intended to flesh out the complexity of the interrelationship between the church and the family (inclusive of the family of the minister).

Earlier in this study there was a call for the church to re-evaluate its mission in the light of its relationship to its families. It has to take into account the critical importance of the family. But, how do we evaluate our philosophy of ministry? What are the questions that we should ask? Based on the Family Impact Analysis, Guernsey has generated a series of questions that are extremely helpful (1982:26-31):

- What is the purpose of the program, stated Biblically and in terms of your philosophy of ministry?
- Who will be involved: As participants, both directly and indirectly? As leaders, both directly and indirectly?
- What will be the 'money' costs of the program, the participants, and the church?
- What will be the time costs in terms of daily schedules, weekly schedules, and the yearly calendar?
- How will it affect other programs in the family, in the church, and the community?
- What are the alternatives to the program or the event?
- What will be the benefits of the program to the participants, to the family, and the church?

Guernsey also suggests three other important issues that merit consideration. Each church should have a family ombudsman or an advocate who represents the family. Secondly, we need to question the assumptions that undergird ministry. If the task of the church is deemed to be the socialisation of its members into the Kingdom of God, then the chief agent for socialisation, that is, the family, will be seen as crucial. But if the task is one of education, then classes, programs, teachings, activities will be emphasised. Assumptions invariably determine our direction of ministry. The third concern centres on the emergence of a new area of specialisation in the ministry of the church, that of Marriage and Family. There is a dire need for specialised training for this critical task. This specialisation has to be both preventative and corrective. The preventative dimension necessitates an understanding of the skills to stimulate the socialisation task of the family. The second dimension, that of the corrective component, should be relational and interactional.

The pressures of our age upon the family necessitate only our best efforts. The training of this new calibre of ministers with marriage and family skills should render them competent to handle most counselling problems and also equip them with knowledge of when and where to refer. Their training should involve direct participation in the counselling task and extensive supervision of that counselling. They should have already confronted the dynamics of their families-of-origin and should feel comfortable with themselves as persons and feel at ease in their counselling role.

4.3 FROM AN 'INDIVIDUAL' TO A 'SYSTEMS' APPROACH

The purpose of this section is to furnish an introduction to a systems approach to the family, which also integrates Biblical principles for effective ministry.

It is important to consider the idea of symbiosis or mutual interdependence of a systems approach to the family and the church. The legacy of the ministry of Western and many South African churches has been a primary focus on the individual rather than the whole and/or the interrelationships of its members. A systems approach, in contrast, accents the interaction between the members. The net result is a clearer grasp of the intricacies of human relationships that cannot be adequately understood within linear thinking. Linear thinking suggests that if the first cause in a chain of relationships changes, then the rest of the relationships must change. Such thinking does not acknowledge the interaction and interrelationships that other members have with each other. This thinking is also deterministic. If the first cause fails, then the following relationships must also fail.

In the systems approach that necessitates interaction and feedback in understanding the family, choice and creativity are fostered. Within this framework change is normal, and development is necessary. Linear, causal thinking often results in frustration and resentment on the part of helpless and powerless underlings but systems thinking results in creative and positive change, which permits everyone to become what God, intends them to be.

Sir Arthur Eddington, a famous British biologist, was the first to apply modern systems theory to the field of biology. This statement

from Eddington reveals the unique contribution that systems theory renders:

We often think that when we have completed our study of 'one' we know all about 'two' because 'two' is the product of 'one and one'. We forget that we have to make a study of 'and' (as cited in Guernsey 1982:65).

It is precisely that unravelling of the 'and' that places ministry to humans in a category of their own. God created male and female and so founded the mystery we know as family. A prerequisite for ministry involves grappling with the nature of the 'and' and the dynamics of relationships that it implies.

As people, created in God's image, we should not consider ourselves in isolation. God, in the mystery of the Trinity, is never in isolation. So persons are never isolated but should be seen as a member of a community. In that sense of the word, no one is an individual, but every person is a member of a whole. We all belong somewhere and to some grouping of people, even if it is only to our families-of-origin.

The implications for the church's ministry become clearly evident. There is a need to address itself to the dynamics of relationships and the communication skills necessary to facilitate those relationships. A fully rounded ministry has to include a basic understanding of the concepts and nature of systems. Galvin and Brommel define a system as a set of objects that interrelate with one another to form a whole. If one component of the system changes, the others will change in response, which in turn affects the initial component (1986:27-28).

Guernsey isolates two occasions in Scripture that reveal a systems perspective (1982:67-68). One example of a system is the Scriptures' description of marriage. In Genesis we read, 'Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh' (Gen.2: 24). Marriage is therefore more than a man plus a woman, but rather like a third entity that is created between them, the 'one flesh' that is in addition to either one of them.

The innovation and merits of the systems perspective become evident when counselling a couple. Individualistic psychology would suggest

counselling the husband and wife separately. This approach would clearly miss the area of tension that lies in their interrelationship with each other, the 'one flesh' dimension.

Paul's description of the church in 1 Corinthians 12 offers us another example of a system. The following verses highlight the whole as well as the parts:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body! So also is Christ (v.12). For the body is not one member, but many (v.14). But now are they many members, yet but one body (v.20). And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it (v.26).

Paul's intention behind the use of the metaphor of the human body accents the fact that the whole is of greater importance than any one part and stresses the dependency each part of the body has on the other parts. Paul further draws attention to the interrelationship between the parts as of utmost importance in chapter 13 where he expounds the concept of love. Love is a relationship word that defines how the parts are to relate to one another. Love is an 'and' word. The church, the body of Christ, is a system to be governed by the fruit of the Spirit rather than by self-centred motives and aspirations.

Another facet of systems is that they operate by rules that are either explicit or implicit. These rules relate to members' patterned-response to one another that we term communication. In systems terms good communication refers to the increase of useful exchange of information between the members. Poor communication exists when this exchange of information is non-existent or dysfunctional. The rules whether functional or dysfunctional, determine the health or the disease of the system (Wynn 1982:43-45).

Strategy is a property that all human social systems share. This includes complex human systems such as the family and the church. Humans are participants of their system rather than mere parts, the difference having to do with intention and creativity. Members of a system generally collaborate functionally, or in a dysfunctional manner. The difficult task of the counselling process lies in discovering the strategy that undergirds the family's dysfunction. Family strategies can be changed by members refusing to play their

part or by switching parts. The system is never short of contingency plans. The hard work lies in provoking the members to change their parts (Galvin & Brommel 1986:30-33).

As any social system becomes more complex, the kind of energy needed to run the system moves from activity to information. When a dad changes with the birth of an infant, the demands for more information become greater. Furthermore, in order to be effective the system must be able to process two kinds of information, negative feedback that implies constancy and positive feedback or change-promoting information (Galvin & Brommel 1986:30-33). The family's ability to ascertain whether it must change or remain the same is of critical importance. The significance of a church's ministry lies in the family's need to be able to know when, why, and how to change. They must learn it among a caring community, a family of families (*oikos* of God) that will reassure them when they needlessly panic or confront them when they require change.

Concepts that can facilitate understanding how families work are found in Kantor and Lehr's book, *Inside the Family* (1975:27ff). They discovered how normal families related to one another when they are together. Family members tended to adopt predictable parts. The part one is given or chooses greatly determines how the relationships or the 'ands' of the family work out in daily life. An understanding of these parts is very helpful (1975:29).

What follows is a summary of Guernsey's discussion of these parts from the perspective of a family that Jesus loved, the family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They, together with Judas, capture the parts that were identified by Kantor and Lehr, namely, that of mover, follower, bystander, and resister (1982:73-78).

Martha is the mover in the family Jesus loved. She was the initiator. She got things going. She was an activist. One gets the feeling that Martha was on the 'bossy side' and that she liked things to be organised. Movers are that way. They usually see themselves as the activity centres of the family. Often movers believe that little if anything will get done in the family unless they make it happen.

Whilst movers or captains are important, their problem lies in the desire to control or choose what is best for others. They can be either drivers who push people thus provoking resistance or leaders who go first and give others the freedom to follow. Some movers like Martha, become martyrs. Martha said, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?' (Lk.10: 40 NIV). But movers are active persons who meet problems head-on (cf. John 11:20). They are bold and even dare to tell Jesus what to do and how to do it (cf. John 11:21). Movers need to wait on God and allow Him to lead.

Movers particularly appreciate followers as they usually do what they are told. Mary is the classic follower, sitting at Jesus' feet, responsively. Although movers require followers, they resent them because movers are never pleased no matter what followers do.

Many people in families play the part of bystanders. They are observers, spectators, or onlookers who do not get involved. They are always at the fringe of action in the family, a sort of onlooker, who is present but not part of the heartbeat of the family. Lazarus is a bystander, passive, always being acted upon. Bystanders experience frustration from others in the family largely because they avoid responsibility. There is also the continuous pressure to get involved.

The resister is characteristic by his or her contrastive position to the mover. The resister very usefully challenges the mover's inappropriate action and seeks to defect the initiative of the mover. Judas fits the role of the resister. In John 12 he criticises Mary for anointing Jesus' feet. Like all resisters, Judas is notorious for his voting against.

People can play different parts in different systems but we generally play the part we learned in our family-of-origin. When two movers come together conflict results and one becomes a resister.

One of the struggles of the church is determining appropriate roles for males and females in the family. Does God intend all males to be movers and all females' followers? The 'headship' of the family has often been interpreted in this way. Some families, however, have

benefited with the mother as the mover and the father as the follower.

One of the most powerful relationship or 'and' word in Scripture is servant (*doulos* or *diakonos*) which defines the relationship between two or more Christians. As Jesus became a bond-slave for us, so are we to become bond-slaves for one another. The first-century church was willing to lay aside traditional roles and to serve one another. Even though the parts we play in our family can sometimes lead to conflict, the rule for the Christian is to serve in love. All other roles are insignificant in comparison to that over-arching responsibility. Our calling is to function as *diakonoí*.

This aspect of serving in love was also isolated in our study of the Lukan *oikos* in chapter two. From our examination, largely following Elliott's analysis of the two major institutions in Luke-Acts, the Temple and the Household, we concluded that the ethos of the kingdom according to Luke is shaped by the logic of generalised reciprocity typical of the Household and the obligations of kin and fictive kinship. Given the economic and social splits within the missionary communities addressed in Luke-Acts (Karris 1979; Esler 1987:164-200), it was precisely this ethos of sharing which was essential for the continued viability, solidarity and growth of the early church.

The reciprocities of the household are especially evident in Luke's stress on giving/forgiving/lending without expectation of return, other than a future heavenly reward. Such deeds of mercy and justice/righteousness (Karris 1985:23-78) are distinguished as the true purity, which unites benefactors with both beneficiaries and their benefactor God, and Lord. Thus mercy rather than cultic purity is the essential bond between the people of God and their heavenly Father (cf Borg 1984:73-195). This kindness, exemplified by the centurion at Capernaum, the good Samaritan, Zacchaeus, Barnabas, and Cornelius, typifies the mutual sharing of the Christian community and it embodies the generosity of its divine Benefactor (Danker 1987,1988) thereby establishing its honour in a benefaction-conscious society (Danker 1982).

Distributing without expectation of return, hospitality and the sharing of food and shelter, care for the ill, generous support and

redemption of those in debt, are all actions typical of kinship groups and the Household. In Luke-Acts this pattern of domestic relations, serves as the definitive model for the character of the Christian community. This form of community, organised around the roles, relationships and responsibilities of the Household, stands in stark conflict to the Temple.

Luke contrasts the domestic associations of the movement initiated by Jesus. Here the gospel of a universal salvation is socially incarnated in a community of 'brother and sisters' where repentance, faith, forgiveness, generosity, mercy and justice, familial loyalty and friendship unite the faithful with a God of mercy.

Systems theory also informs us of the motivations of the members of a family system. These motivations energise movement within a family system. By identifying why members do what they do, we can structure resources and opportunities that foster growth in terms of these motivations. Because motivations do not operate on the conscious level, families have to be consistently encouraged to place their agendas out on top of the table. There is a need to congregare as the church in a caring community and to consider the ramifications of our personal agendas as they impact our families.

In their book, *Inside the Family*, Kantor and Lehr have identified three major motivations that energise a person in his or her actions in the family and towards the environment. These goals or targets are affect, power, and meaning. All of us desire all three of these goals at some time or another. We need to ascertain the target that animates us the most (1975:31).

Affect has two basic dimensions, one for intimacy or mutual emotional closeness, and the other for nurturance or emotional support. Generally, intimacy is reciprocal whilst nurturance is unidirectional. Affect relates to the need in all of us to love and be loved and also determines how family members join and separate from each other. Power in terms of family systems is the freedom to decide for yourself what it is that you want, and the ability to secure it. It relates to an already existent pecking order or an established hierarchy of relationships. Meaning is the family's development and maintenance of its sense of self as a living whole.

Every healthy family has a sense of 'who we are' and a sense of 'who they are'. The former relates to a family's sense of meaning. Earlier on, we referred to strategies that family systems create for themselves. In healthy families those strategies coalesce so that the individual members of the family achieve their goals while supporting the goals of the other members of the family. But how is that achieved? With what and how do they do it? We have to consider the means that families use to achieve their goals.

In the discussion of the parasitic, competitive, co-operative, and symbiotic church, three resources of space, time, and energy were isolated according to Guernsey (1982:17-25). Space relates to the environment of the family. There are two kinds of space, an inside one that covers the living quarters of the family and an outside space. Conflict over inner space may arise when two siblings share a room, or when an adolescent decides that his or her room is off limits to everyone else in the family. Parents usually set limits to a child's outside space and as he or she matures the boundaries are expanded. Tension surfaces when outside space become the means by which the issues of affect, power, and meaning are worked out inappropriately. Few families have the communication skills to resolve these crises, and even fewer know why they do what they do. Their needs operating at the unconscious level destine them to repeat these mistakes. But this furnishes the church with a challenge for ministry, in helping families ascertain their systems' goals, and teaching them to openly communicate them to each other.

Members of the family use time to meet their goals. Usually, one person in the family 'wears the family's watch,' the one who determines when things happen. The problem of being on time may often be the result of someone's resistance to the way the family's watch is being worn. This renders time as the arena in which the issue of power is dealt with. Similar tensions may arise over calendar time when someone in the family decides that he or she is being left out of the decisions regarding the family's calendar.

The third commodity, energy, comes in two categories, kinetic, what we do, and static, energy at rest. Because fathers often assume unfair priority in the pecking order, energy, that is what the family does, is always tilted to the father's benefit.

Static energy, focusing on what a family does when it is at rest, can become as much a problem as can kinetic pursuits. What families do with their time becomes the arena in which the issues of affect, power, and meaning are either dealt with adequately or inadequately.

Given then, that members of a family have different goals and use different commodities to meet these goals, how does a Christian appropriately respond to these issues? Guernsey (1982: 27-28) isolates three relationship rules from the teaching of Paul that guide the individual to fit with his family and the family to fit with the church (cf Philippians 2:3,4 and the example of the emptying of Jesus Christ, verses 5-8).

[1] The first rule concerns that of a servant. Paul exhorts each of us never to act selfishly or conceitedly. This from the systems perspective would render selfishness as the assumption on the part of one member that the commodities of space, time, and energy belong to them rather than to the family as a whole. Similarly, conceit would entail choosing how you are to use your space, spend your time, or what to do with your energy. Both these extremes are to be avoided. In spite of the parental responsibility for their children, which often demands control, the Scriptural mandate requires that we act in their best interests (cf. Eph. 6:4).

[2] The rule of assertiveness is implied in verse four when Paul counsels us to act not only in terms of our own interests. Paul assumes that everyone has interests of his or her own. Families often are guilty of forgetting this and create much pain for a passive member in a family. They are to be encouraged to assert their own interests, and are allowed to express their needs. Besides selfishness, the church seems to be particularly characterised by passivity.

[3] Paul counsels us to look after interests of others as well as our own. This is the rule of equity. Whilst relationships may become unequal at times (like an infants' demands compared to an older child), there should always be a sense of equity. Members of a family should display and expect a sense of fairness to and from each other, respectively. Every family has a quiet member, a young person who does not exert him or her, therefore often going with their needs unmet. When we open ourselves to each other, then can we begin to 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (verse 5).

4.4 OIKOS: A FAMILY OF FAMILIES

In this chapter we have already established that families are systems of interacting persons who maintain relationships with one another based upon their needs and their access to resources. The families' rules that determine the distribution of those resources are

important for our understanding of families and the mission of the church. Scriptures that govern the relationships between family members should occupy the attention of the church. Guernsey suggests that the church focus on two important questions:

How does a particular role as defined in the Scripture fit in today's world in terms of its meaning?

And, what are the relationship rules in Scripture that govern the interaction of that role with other roles in the family? (1982:97).

This will furnish us with a working definition of any role and develop a hermeneutical basis for interpreting Scripture. While the specific nature of the roles may change with time and the cultural contexts, the Scriptural teaching on human relationships will remain constant. This has far-reaching if not radical implications for the idea of the mission of the church.

Applying the systems theory to families, each church must see itself in a new way, as a family of families (*oikos* of God). This does not mean that a church has to be construed as a conglomerate of families, literally. In the cities many of the churchgoers are single. This is also so in university towns with predominantly student congregations.

This perspective necessitates a new role for the church, for the pastor, and for the laity. Guernsey offers us some guidelines that will serve as a touchstone (1982:98-112).

In chapter three of this study, reference was made to the influence of thoroughgoing individualism, especially in the Western world. Individualism should not be construed as negative. It should be noted that it was the collectivist ideologies that wreaked havoc on societies in the previous century. It is also individualism that inspires Christian groups to insist on adult baptism as the only option. Every one has to make a personal decision to follow Jesus and has to be baptised as an individual. Also, without installing a new sense of individualism into extended family ethics, entrepreneurship will not develop, nor will a critical mentality emerge that is indispensable for a democracy.

The challenge is that developing countries have revealed an indiscriminate assimilation of this individualistic philosophy. We

have arrived at an age typified by individualism and narcissism. This is also reflected in perceptions of the church.

Church leaders often label people in the church as individuals. The Gospel is preached to individuals. In spite of the existence of cultures that display collective thinking we have to acknowledge the complexities of families coming to Christ (as a whole), as was the case of the Philippian jailer. When the church is perceived as a collection of individuals, as *oikos tou theou*, our mission is influenced accordingly.

Narcissism is best revealed in the assumption that the Gospel is given to meet the wants of the individual. The purpose of the church is therefore viewed primarily to bring pleasure to people than to bring glory to God. The Pentecostal church, in particular, is susceptible to this pitfall. Whilst the *gloria dei* may embrace what is good for our lives, such a narcissistic viewpoint is definitely not God-centred. This obsession with individualistic priority conjures up ideas of success without sacrifice. The 'hard' sayings of Jesus to take up our cross, counting the cost, and denying all, are not welcomed by this narcissistic age.

The main problem with individualism and narcissism lies in its lack of relationship of the parts to the whole. In any system the welfare of the whole overrides the importance of the parts. There exists an interrelationship between the two. Paul stated this succinctly, two thousand years ago:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, and one body, so it is with Christ ... But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together (1 Cor.12: 12, 24-26).

Therefore a relevant issue for the church is the relationship between the individual, the family, and the local church. Any neglect of the whole, for the happiness of the individual, weakens the body. This interrelationship has to regain its priority.

In the first section of this chapter, we considered a church relating to the families of its member parasitically, competitively, co-

operatively, or symbiotically. A case was developed for the integrity of the family in terms of the integrity of the church. Now, the emphasis is that the family is not to be ignored in the church's preoccupation with itself. An obsession with the individual can rob the family of its status. The church, as the recipient and perpetuator of culture can fall prey to this snare. The individualism and narcissism of our present-day culture fuels the individualism and narcissism of the church. But the two cannot co-exist and still foster and strengthen families at the same time. Individualism and narcissism of either the person or a church can threaten a ministry to the families in that church. What does a healthy interrelationship between individual, family, and church look like in systems terms? Guernsey offers a perspective that has been foundational for this entire study. He suggests that:

The church redefines itself in system terms as the whole but with the parts being its families rather than the individuals in those families. Even where there are no families, such as in the case of the single person or the between-families adult, I am suggesting that the parts, which make up the whole be construed as those clusters of primary relationships which function as family. The church according to this redefinition becomes a family of families (1982:100).

In chapter two, by means of a social-scientific study, the Lukan *oikos* of the early church was uncovered. The subsequent chapter identified the challenges of families. Here we enlisted support from systems theory, which extended the concept of *oikos* to the *oikos tou theou* (family of God).

Having established a new role for the church as a family of families (*oikos* of God), does this not imply a new role for the pastor also? Let us now consider these new pastoral roles in terms of providing leadership for the church. We shall make reference to the five dimensions that are offered by Guernsey (1982:106-109).

This pastor of a 'family of families' (*oikos* of God) church must promote family integration. S/he must bring the parts (families) together. A well-integrated family has a sense of collectiveness. So, churches should have a sense of responsibility for one another. Therefore, if one family in the church is impacted, the entire church should feel the stressor (1 Cor.12: 12, 24-26). For this to occur the pastor has to shed his/her role as the primary caregiver. S/he has to share the responsibility of care giving. Others are to also respond

to others in need. A 'family of families' (*oikos* of God) church has a sense of fellowship. Because people like to be together, the pastor facilitates such occasions.

The new role for the pastor includes encouraging family adaptability. This must of necessity commence with a pastor who is personally flexible. The church has to be also open and willing to change, if warranted. First-order changes are easier because it functions within existing rules and structures. Second-order change is more difficult as it necessitates thinking outside accepted categories for novel solutions. Much of the work of God in history and through the Spirit today is through second-order change and solutions. A pastor, who is a first-order thinker, will promote families in the church to be first-order thinkers also.

There is also a need to promote family adjustment. This refers to fitting in with others. Secular research shows up certain characteristics of families that are adjustable (Guernsey 1982; 106-109). They are affectionate and sharing, and have the ability to unashamedly demonstrate their feelings, be it positive or negative. They are vulnerable, and risk sharing their weaknesses, avoid phoney shows of perfection, and trust that others will deal with them graciously. They are able to resolve their differences not aggressively but assertively, trust others to be for the right, and when someone is hurt they work that through with them. This should also apply to a family of families (*oikos* of God), who should also be affectionate, sharing, vulnerable, and equally committed to the constructive management of differences for the sake of unity and for the viability of relationships in the body.

The pastor should also foster individuation. Instead of dependency, s/he must encourage growth and as it were 'work her/himself out of a job'. Families that are strong stay in fellowship by choice. Interdependency is a deliberate choice one makes to be in relationship with another. That choice can only be made if we still have the option to be independent.

The pastor should develop a sense of community that is all-inclusive and promotes a sense of belonging or rootedness. A church where community prevails is a church where its people belong as individuals

and as families. Besides primarily belonging to God, people need to be bonded and healthily connected with others in the human family. That relationship of community can be found in the church, which is a family of families (*oikos* of God).

These dimensions for the pastor also have significance for the laity. Additionally, they must demonstrate a commitment to these new issues that are considered important. They also have a task of discipling, of leading others to a place of health and wholeness as family people. The church needs to find men and women who are willing to commit themselves to the task of ministry at a personal and intimate level. This task is not being filled by any institution today. Precisely on account of the vacuum, this constitutes our greatest opportunity. The second role for the laity is to become a unique extended family to one another. A significant number of individuals in South Africa still have the support of an extended family network. In chapter three we traced the pressures on this kinship system and argued for the church filling the gap as a family to these floundering nuclear families 'on a tempestuous urban bed'.

If the church functions as a family of families, there would be someone to turn to. When there is loss, there would be someone to help process that loss. When there is pain, there would be someone with whom to share the pain. When there is irresponsibility, there would be someone to confront. When there is ignorance, there would be someone to show us what to do. The church as a family of families (*oikos* of God), drawn from the example of the early church, and discriminately applied, is a viable alternative to the rapidly threat to extended families.

We identified a trend away from the extended family in South Africa. This was the situation for both the black and white sectors. The church as a family to all these urban nuclear families can meet a vital need. In addition to sustaining the black urban nuclear family, the church as a family of families (*oikos* of God) can minister to these hurts and pain through the therapy of the Holy Spirit. Where there is hostility, resentment and scepticism, she can model love and hope by her prophetic witness, stewardship and physical presence where the family is impacted the greatest.

This family of families (*oikos* of God) has the mandate to move across all barriers: racial, economic, geographic, etc. to help members discover fellow members of the one new and unique family of God from which she has been regretfully isolated. There is no telling what a full grasp of this truth of belonging to one family of families (*oikos* of God) can initiate in this troubled land. We can only guess. We must also hope that, at least, this profound realisation does dawn upon us. Openness is a prerequisite; openness to relationships and to God's working through us to others and His work in us through them.

The concept of the church as a family of families (*oikos* of God) lies at the heart of this study. This is the precise calling for the church in our era. All around us there is a lack of meaningful and lasting relationships. Apart from the world being alienated from God, humankind is alienated from humankind. The solution lies in the Gospel of God's grace through Jesus Christ. This is mediated through His church. We, as His church are His presence in the world. By reflecting individualism and narcissism we bear false witness to His nature but by our love for one another and our belonging to one another we mirror His true nature and elevate the church as a new family, a family of families, the *oikos* of God.

An excellent example of this sense of family is to be found in the Bethesda group of churches among the Indian population in South Africa (Chetty 1995:149-159). The origin of this movement can be traced to the coming of the Rowlands family to Natal, South Africa. This family hailed from Bristol, England and was of Quaker stock. Whilst engaging in a milling enterprise in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, this family initiated a fellowship group, which mushroomed overnight. The mantle of leadership of this emerging church soon fell on their sons, John Francis and Alec. In a relatively short span of time, this fledgling group expanded into hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands. A striking feature of many of the early converts was their pride in belonging to the family of Bethesda. This period of phenomenal growth of this church occurred during the removals or demographic upheavals precipitated by the architects of *Apartheid*, as was noted in chapter three. The sense of rootlessness was met by a church, which became a family to individual converts. They often identified themselves by the adorning of a badge to show that they belonged to each other. This expression of membership was more than a

mere label. It epitomised the depth of familial relationships as a family of families (*oikos* of God). Therefore, it was no surprise that this group waxed strong gaining a membership of some fifty thousand adherents, at its peak. Both the leadership and members attribute a very important factor of this phenomenal growth, to a sense of belonging (Arkin, Magyar and Pillay 1989:145-152).

The example of the African Initiated/Indigenous/Independent Churches (AICs) offers us a national example (J Kiernan in De Gruchy and Prozesky 1995:123-128). This spontaneous urban expression of religiosity is indeed remarkable. The migrant experience was one of dislocation and disorientation, coupled with social stress and uncertainty from being thrown into close and protracted association with strangers. African migrant workers as strangers in a foreign, hostile and 'evil' terrain congregated spontaneously. The AICs provided a sense of belonging to each other, an *oikos* in a 'strange land' (cf. G C Oosthuizen 1986).

4.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR

The concept of the Lukan *oikos*, which was established by the implementation of the social-scientific method in chapter two, was expanded in this chapter by examining the relationship between the church and the family. One of the aims of this thesis was to catalyse a re-interpretation of the relationship between the church and family. Principles were isolated from the *oikos* of Luke-Acts that reflected transformative moments in the life of the early church. Some of these principles, if used discriminately, can revolutionise the church and society.

4.5.1 THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY: DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS

The interrelationship between church and family was extended with reference to systems theory prompting a re-definition of the church as a family of families. The church and the home are intricately bound together, analogous to Siamese twins. Any attempt to separate them may endanger one or both. The church will not be able to accomplish her task if she does not encourage the family to play its foundational role in Christian socialisation. This constitutes the current challenge to the church in the midst of the rapid disintegration of the Christian family.

Marriage counsellors and family-life educators also bear testimony to this neglect of families by the church. As noted in chapter three, both black and white families have suffered in the 'old' South Africa. Within the black sector, African families have undergone the most severe devastation of their social fabric, whilst Indian and Coloured families have not remained unscathed either. Except for the churches aligned with the SACC, others have largely not been in the forefront to promote and maintain family life.

This interest in the family has been catalysed by urgent appeals from floundering Christians. As theological reflection flows out of ministry, which is initiated by needs in the market place, bookstores are predictably well stocked with books about the family because that is precisely the area of hurt and pain.

Against the possibility of dogmatism in marriage and family ministry, it is critical that hermeneutical guidelines are established. More foundational investigation is required for the formulation of a model that could be used in interpreting Biblical material relevant to the family. In some circles, cultural conservatism seems to be the hermeneutic for gender issues. Thorough research has to be done by those who consider the Word of God as normative. There is also a dire need to be open to the intrusion of cultural blinkers into our interpretation and application of the Bible. There will remain an arduous task in differentiating the influence of culture from a Biblical perspective.

This aspect of serving in love was also isolated in our study of the Lukan *oikos* in chapter two. From our examination we concluded that the ethos of the kingdom is shaped by the logic of generalised reciprocity typical of the Household and the obligations of kin & fictive kinship. It was precisely this ethos of sharing which was essential for the continued viability, solidarity and growth of the early church. The reciprocities of the household are also especially evident in Luke's stress on giving/forgiving/lending without expectation of return, other than a future heavenly reward. Such deeds of mercy and justice/righteousness are distinguished as true purity. Thus mercy rather than cultic purity is the essential bond between the people of God and their heavenly Father.

Distributing without expectation of return, hospitality and the sharing of food and shelter, care for the ill, generous support and redemption of those in debt, are all actions typical of kinship groups and the Household. In Luke-Acts this pattern of domestic relations, serves as the definitive model for the character of the Christian community. This form of community, organised around the roles, relationships and responsibilities of the Household, stands in stark conflict to the Temple.

Luke contrasts the domestic associations of the movement initiated by Jesus. Here the gospel of a universal salvation is socially incarnated in a community of 'brothers and sisters' where repentance, faith, forgiveness, generosity, mercy and justice, familial loyalty and friendship unite the faithful with a God of mercy.

4.5.2 FROM AN 'INDIVIDUAL' TO A 'SYSTEMS' APPROACH

This chapter then applies the systems theory to families, each church must see itself in a new way, as a family of families (*oikos* of God). This does not mean that a church has to be construed as a conglomerate of families, literally. In the cities many of the churchgoers are single. This is also evident in university towns with predominantly student congregations. This perspective necessitates a new role for the church, for the pastor, and for the laity.

In chapter three of this study, reference was made to the influence of thoroughgoing individualism, especially in the Western world. This chapter outlines the challenges of individualism and narcissism to the church functioning as an *oikos*: a family of families.

By means of a social-scientific study, in chapter two, the Lukan *oikos* of the early church was uncovered. The subsequent chapter identified the challenges of families. Here we enlisted support from systems theory, which extended the concept of *oikos* to the *oikos tou theou* (family of God).

4.5.3 OIKOS: A FAMILY OF FAMILIES.

Having established a new role for the church as a family of families (*oikos* of God), does this not imply a new role for the pastor also? These new pastoral roles must promote family integration, encourage family adaptability, promote family adjustment, foster individuation,

develop a sense of community that is all-inclusive and promotes a sense of belonging or rootedness.

These dimensions for the pastor also have significance for the laity. They must demonstrate a commitment to these new issues that are considered important. They also have a task of discipling and of leading others to a place of health and wholeness as family people.

The second role for the laity is to become a unique extended family to one another. A diminishing number of individuals in South Africa have the support of an extended family network. In chapter three we traced the pressures on this kinship system and argued for the church filling the gap as a family to these floundering nuclear families who are left 'on a tempestuous urban bed'.

If the church functions as a family of families, there would be someone to turn to. The church as a family of families (*oikos* of God), drawn from the example of the early church, and discriminately applied, is a viable alternative to the rapidly increasing threat to extended families.

4.5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

We identified a trend away from the extended family in South Africa. This was the situation for both the black and white sectors. The church as a family to all these urban nuclear families can meet a vital need. In addition to sustaining the urban nuclear family, the church as a family of families (*oikos* of God) can minister to these hurts and pain through the therapy of the Holy Spirit.

This family of families (*oikos* of God) has the mandate to move across all barriers: racial, economic, geographic, etc. to help members discover fellow members of the one new and unique family of God from which she has been regrettably isolated. There is no telling what a full grasp of this truth of belonging to one family of families (*oikos* of God) can initiate in this troubled land. We can only guess. We must also hope that, at least, this profound realisation does dawn upon us. Openness is a prerequisite; openness to relationships and to God's working through us to others and His work in us through them.

The concept of the church as a family of families (*oikos* of God) lies at the heart of this study. This is the precise calling for the church in our era. All around us there is a lack of meaningful and lasting relationships. Apart from the world being alienated from God, humankind is alienated from humankind. The solution lies in the Gospel of God's grace through Jesus Christ. This is mediated through His church. We, as His church are His presence in the world. By reflecting individualism and narcissism we bear false witness to His nature but by our love for one another and our belonging to one another we mirror His true nature and elevate the church as a new family, a family of families, the *oikos* of God.

An excellent example of this sense of family is to be found in the Bethesda group of churches among the Indian population in South Africa and the African Initiated/Indigenous/Independent Churches (AICs). Both Bethesda and the AICs provided a sense of belonging to its following, as *oikos* in a 'strange land'.

CHAPTER FIVE

A MODEL FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the pursuit towards 'Pastoral sociology' is advanced further through consideration of the common tasks of families and the church. The church has the added task of redressing problems created by a lack of family support. The church should also reinforce and ennoble family life. The task of socialisation will be used to construct a model for the ministry of the church. The dynamic nature of socialisation will demonstrate the need for a creative response to the specific demands of each phase of the family life cycle. In chapter one a convincing case was made for an approach that seriously considers the context. Here the focus is on the micro-context of different stages of the family life cycle.

Previous studies have focused on the sociological perspective of the life cycle of the family with little or no reference to Biblical foundations. These sociological patterns will be related to Scripture thereby providing a basis for a Pastoral Sociology. Some conclusions will also be drawn for the ministry of the church as *oikos* from this synthesis of Biblical and sociological categories.

5.2 THE COMMON TASK OF FAMILIES AND THE CHURCH

There is a dire need to cut through the confusion and competition of the church and the family since the family is the most natural and effective place for the church to fulfil its mission. Dennis B. Guernsey argues convincingly for an ecological perspective of the church and families. The discussion that follows will draw from his book, *A New Design For Family Ministry* (1982:9-16) as a starting point.

In formulating a philosophy of ministry, Guernsey utilises the Great Commission found in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 28:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age (Mt.28: 19-20, RSV).

There have been recent challenges from some scholars within the New Testament Society of Southern Africa (NTSSA 2002 Annual Congress)

that the Great Commission is imperialistic. Questions were raised whether it was intended as a commission. Nonetheless this directive to engage in evangelism has received well-deserved focus in the all the theological literature emanating especially from evangelical circles. The well-known work of Ladd provides an excellent example (1974:30-76).

Given then, the theological importance of the Great Commission, how does this relate to families? Guernsey contends that when this passage is viewed through the eyes of the family sociologist, ministry imperatives for the church surface, and that these imperatives are critically interrelated with a ministry to the families of our churches (1982:9). If such a family-sociological approach is grounded upon Biblical perspectives, the contention of this chapter is that we would derive a Pastoral sociology. This is precisely what will be attempted in this chapter.

The family is critical for the making of disciples. Jesus had commanded the church to 'Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations'. K H Rengstorf presents a commonly accepted definition of the term disciple. A disciple is one who has formed a personal allegiance to Jesus and has committed himself to learn of Him (1967:12ff). This definition focuses on the character of the disciple. Guernsey offers another perspective that centres upon the nature of the relationship between the disciple and his teacher. In sociological terms, a disciple is one who has entered into a close, primary relationship with the one who has become his teacher (1982:10). Charles H. Cooley introduced this concept of a primary relationship in the late 1920's. Groups were classified as either primary or secondary, according to Cooley (1929:3-9). A primary group is any small, intimate group that is important to the individual as a source of emotional satisfaction.

In contrast, a secondary group is characterised by its relative impersonal nature. This does not imply that it is necessarily 'secondary' in terms of its effects on the individual's life. Primary relationships are typified by intimacy as opposed to function, by their personal nature rather than the impersonal and by their sensitivity rather than their lack of it.

Earlier on, in chapter three, we developed a definition of 'family' as that 'primary' group from which the individual derives his or her earliest sense of belonging and identity. This family constellation could include husband-wife and/or parent-child relationships. It could also embrace others in the extended family, or household, who relate intimately with the individual. Therefore, 'family' may mean the nuclear family, the extended family, the single parent family, etc. (Getz 1977:12-27).

The immediate pursuit is to isolate where primary relationships are formed, and where the skills for forming such relationship are learned? Both have their contexts within primary groups (Cooley 1929:1-5). When one minimises the effectiveness of the primary group, one minimises the effectiveness of the relationship as well as the skills for forming other primary relationships (Parsons & Bales 1955:3-12).

The family is the primary group critical to the initial learning of these skills. Here, they are learned for better or for worse (Mussen, Cougar, Kagan & Geiwitz 1979:23-34). Children learn to associate intimately with their caretakers through the processes of attachment and interaction. This is contingent upon the degree they have interrelated with their primary grouping (Harlow & Harlow, 1966:244-272). The family, therefore, becomes the first testing ground where the child practices his/her skills of relationship as well as develops his/her sense of self-esteem and/or self-concept.

Relating this to the Great Commission, Guernsey develops three conclusions:

If the disciples are those who relate with their teacher in a context of a primary relationship, then the capacity to form relationships is necessary to the process of disciple making. Secondly, if primary relationships consist of relationship skills that are generalised from one primary group to another, then the family is key in its significance because it is the place where those skills are learned well or learned poorly. And last of all, if the family is the social organisation in which these skills are learnt first, and thus most essentially, then the family becomes central to the process of disciple making. It is a place where disciple-like relational skills are learned, and it is a primary group in which disciple making takes place (1982:11).

Therefore in the context of parenting, two processes are taking place. This has to do with discipling the child for Christ's sake,

and teaching children to relate either primarily or secondarily to us and to others. On account of the parent's natural processes of attachment and interaction no one can accomplish these two functions better than the parent can. If the parent fails, someone else must compensate for the parent's failure. If the parent succeeds, then the discipling process has been facilitated and the Great Commission has already begun to be appropriated.

This discovery has important implications for the church. Leaders in the church should ally themselves with that primary group who can effect disciple-making most naturally and efficiently, namely, the family. But, this is not largely the posture of leaders *vis-à-vis* families. An enormous amount of time and energy is spent trying to create new primary groups (in Sunday School classes, youth groups, small groups, etc.) where there are really none. Church leaders often fail to nurture, stimulate and protect the primary group (families) where discipleship is being actualised daily. Families make or break disciples, and depending on their degree of success they either accelerate or retard the task of the church.

The second directive in the Great Commission is to baptise these disciples in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The mode of baptism is not the main thrust of this injunction. Instead, the meaning of baptism as those in the first century experienced it is highlighted here. Baptism was a ritual in which the individual publicly identified himself/herself with Jesus as Jesus had redemptively identified Himself with mankind. According to Oepke the essential process of identification with the risen Christ was and is inherent to the meaning of baptism (1964:27-39).

Again, Guernsey offers us a family-sociological perspective by suggesting that one way to conceptualise the phenomenon of baptism and its inherent meaning of identification is to view it from the perspective of socialisation (1982:12).

Socialisation is the process by which people acquire the knowledge, skills, and disposition that make them more or less 'able' members of their society (Brim 1966:12-19, Goslin 1969:34-42).

It also refers to the process through which a given culture builds into its 'fledgling' members the role expectations that are important to that culture. It has to do with the process by which any group translates those who are out there into those who are one of us, the journey from 'they' to 'we'. Guernsey suggests that Jesus had instructed us through the symbol of baptism to bring those who are out there to in here, that is, the process of becoming fellow citizens and no more strangers and foreigners to form the *oikeioi* of God - Eph.2: 19 (1982:12).

Therefore, baptism is more than a symbol. It relates to the process of socialisation into the Christian community. Socialisation does not only involve the communication of information but also includes the building of skills and motivations that are necessary to fulfil the demands ushered in by the new expectations in the person's life. Socialisation is therefore an inclusive term. It brings a new and floundering member to a place of maturity in the group. It is more than education and involves the fitting in of the person into his or her environment. Baptism becomes an act of identification that initiates the process of socialisation, which is only completed when a person reaches maturity in Christ.

For centuries the task of socialisation into the broader society has been relegated to the family. It was only since the 1930's that the socialisation function of the family has been brought into question. The church soon followed the spirit of the age and ignored the family. Families were regarded as inadequate to meet these demands therefore the church began to create new groups to socialise these new members. This was clearly an unnecessary duplication of a function that is best served by the primary group, the family. Instead, the church should assume responsibility for people whose natural families lack spiritual interest by building new family structures for them. This provides the church with an avenue to minister to these floundering individuals who lack a sense of belonging by becoming an *oikos*, just like the early church of Luke-Acts did.

The majority of people in the Western world that require evangelising come from families with a Christian background. These families needed to be encouraged, taught, and supported by the church to do

their discipling and baptising, that is, their socialising, effectively. One can only speculate on the possible impact if such measures were implemented. When the church begins to neglect the family as the church's priority for fulfilling the Great Commission, it minimises the probability of its subsequent success.

Such observations support an ecological perspective of the church and the family. Church and family are not to be separated. Families are involved in the redemptive activity of God in the world as the church is. So, the church should be in family business, either through the strengthening of existing family units, or the creating of *oikos* or new centres of nurture for those who are in some transition and require a sense of rootedness or belonging.

The third directive in the Great Commission is to teach those whom we have discipled to obey everything Jesus has commanded us to do. Guernsey's perspective, as a family sociologist, of the phenomenon of obedience to Christ is expressed in terms of the acquisition of a value system similar to that of Christ's (1982:14). Scholars like Ladd (1974:1-34) and Berkouwer (1962:3-21) also give this passage such an emphasis. According to Sager, values can be defined as that system of priorities one assigns to the material and immaterial objects in one's world (1976:2-7). Prioritisation follows closely on the heels of the capacity of language and the assigning of symbols to the phenomenal world. Jones and Gerard refer to this function of socialisation as information dependence and cognitive socialisation (1967:3-9). Despite the varied manners in which children may acquire a language, they always order their world in a similar pattern to their tutors (Brown 1973:22-28). Language is also the transmitter of culture and through the acquisition of language the older generation passes on values that are considered to be important to the younger generation (Lindesmith & Straus 1968:9-17).

The acquisition of a Christian value system follows a pattern identical to the process of disciple making and socialisation. Thus far, we have established that it is the family that presents the child with the capacity of language, and it is the family that bequeaths its cultured value system through language. Guernsey contends that:

Jesus Christ was crucified by His antagonists in the main because of the clash between His value system and theirs (cf.

Mt.15: 1-20). He dared to break with the traditions of the elders. He ran contrary to the dominant culture of His day, that of the Scribes and the Pharisees (1982:15).

Today, in like manner, the battle between the god of this world and the Lord of the Universe has to do with value systems. Therefore, Paul enjoins us to be renewed in the mind (Rom.12: 2). Our value system has to be consistent with Jesus Christ's attitudes and behaviours. We are not to be conformed to this world: but ... transformed, thus fulfilling God's will for us (Rom.12: 2).

Both the manner and content of obedience is either learned or not learned within the context of our first primary group, the family. The extended family has an advantage here compared to the nuclear type. The process of obedience to Jesus Christ's commands is contingent to the successful transmission of a Christian value system by the family. No other grouping can rival the family as a giver of language and as a bearer of culture. Church leaders are wiser and definitely more benefited when they join hands with the family.

This, once again, affirms the dire need for mutual interdependence between the major tasks of the church in the fulfilment of the Great Commission and the natural tasks of the family. Church leaders would do well to recognise this correspondence. Guernsey therefore recommends a model for ministry that:

... parallels the Church's tasks of making disciples, baptism, and teaching obedience, with the family tasks of establishing primary relationships, socialisation, and building values (1982:15-16).

This is a call for a symbiosis, that is, two dissimilar groups in a mutually beneficial relationship, between the church and the family. It is such interdependence that mandates a ministry to families by the church. Families are more important to the church than we realise. The present erosion of the family as an institution is erosion of the church. No sooner than the church begins to strengthen its families, would it tap the facilitator in its fulfilment of the Great Commission.

5.3 THE TASK OF SOCIALISATION

The task of socialisation by the family has to be viewed in the light of the breakdown of traditional roles. In addition to the variance

between the church's ideals and the family's goal, practically all previous roles have gradually been set aside. The former family patterns provided defined roles for males and females, making the institution of marriage rather rigid but more secure. Whilst departure from some of these roles has resulted in freedom and creativity for many, it has also ushered in a great deal of instability, anxiety and confusion.

According to Sell part of this upheaval is a result of the democratic and industrial context of the West. The traditional industrial era began in England about 1760 and later took hold in the United States also. The major consequence for the family was that the home was no longer the production centre and the father was absent from the family for most of the day. In the more agricultural society of pre-industrial times the father's role as parent was reinforced by his role as foreman of the work, but with the decline of the cottage industry and the rise of factories, work became a much more individual matter for each family member (Sell 1981:10-24).

He further adds that:

The role of the father has changed from that of economic patriarch to a role built on affection. Individual freedom for other family members has increased because government and industry cater to the individual, not to the family unit (1981:24).

So, deprived of clear-cut roles, present day parents are often uncertain about the pattern of rearing for their children. This important function of parents is now threatened with a sense of ambivalence. The flood of books on parenting is reflective of this ambiguous milieu that we live in. But, this basic function of the family to its young has to be performed. If the family fails its newcomers, society has no foundation to build upon.

It is very difficult to establish an accurate estimate of the situation of families but the frequency of juvenile delinquency must, at least, indicate deficiencies in homes. The increase of cases of child abuse also reflects some friction between parent and child. A survey of American families revealed that physical abuse had reached epidemic proportions (Bronfenbrenner 1984:4-19). Developing countries do not lag far behind. The Durban Child Welfare Society was alarmed to discover a dramatic rise in child abuse among all race groups (Daily News, 5 September 1987).

Before a Congressional hearing in the USA, Urie Bronfenbrenner, stated:

Parents find themselves at the mercy of a society which imposes pressures and priorities that allow neither time nor place for meaningful activities and relations between children and adults, which downgrade the role of parents and the functions of parenthood, and which prevent the parent from doing things he wants to do as a guide, and companion to his children (1984:9).

Without making the Apartheid system a whipping horse, the 'forced' migratory labour practice in South Africa has undoubtedly exacerbated the plight of black families. The general implications of this family-destroying policy have been discussed in chapter three. Our focus here is on the insurmountable difficulties of socialisation of black children by their parents, given the need for frequency of contact. The pattern of 'absentee fathers' is an established phenomenon in the African community, in particular. In some cases the extended family comes to the rescue.

What role can the church play in such a situation? The church has to contextualise herself as *oikos*, functioning as counter-culture, as the early church did. She has to become active in the restoration of families and must also engage in a preventative strategy of building strength in the family by giving special attention to the task of socialisation.

The acquisition of a language system provides a convenient example to illustrate the socialisation role of the church as *oikos*. In the social scientific study of chapter two, the Lukan *oikos* of the early church displayed features that resemble those of a family. Here the argument is that the present church that should act as a family.

Language is the bearer of culture that equips a person to perform two necessary functions of sorting and organising (Guernsey 1982:32-39). Language has a sorting function that permits a person to distinguish objects in the world. The individual can then prioritise the objects in his or her world according to the value system of his or her culture. Appreciation of particular colours and preference for certain foods, etc. are established. This ability to assign meaning to objects furnishes a person with the facility to organise his or her personal, social, and geographical world. By reference to

'objects' we do not include only material ones like table and chairs but embrace immaterial dimensions of truth, justice, peace, grace, etc. Becoming a Christian involves the acquisition of a unique nomenclature or vocabulary and their meanings as part of our world. A new language system has to be learnt to view the world as God views it.

The second function of a language is one of organising. Because language has a grammar, it furnishes rules that determine the ability to think and to create order between the objects in the person's world. Language provides perspective, that is, to see objects in relationship to one another. The grammar of one's language fosters creativity in one's response while the words grant one the perception of the building blocks of one's world. But, it is language as grammar that provides the ability to arrange those building blocks into meaningful patterns.

The nature of conversion gains new perspectives from an understanding of the function of language and the task of socialisation. A child that is raised in a Christian home can have the use of the language of salvation and also an appropriate response of faith from an early age. Therefore it is understandable that some Christians cannot plot an exact date when they personally appropriated the Christian faith, equally, as they cannot recall precisely when they began to talk.

Yet, there are others who even though they 'enjoyed' a Christian rearing failed to grasp the meaning of the words and grammar of Christianity or perhaps, refused to respond to those meanings. Still others could have been raised without a Christian background and consequently been completely exposed to a secular outlook. These two groups would certainly require a conversion response.

But, in both instances salvation remains a process, sometimes culminating in an event, where a person responds by faith to the Word of God. Within this framework, evangelism of children, youth, or adults is essentially a socialisation task involving the transmission of language skills so that the person responds appropriately to the Word of God. Furthermore, the nurturing of new Christians entails the ongoing provision of skills and abilities to understand the Word of God. It is the development of a new nomenclature, an introduction

into a new sub-culture. The church can learn from the family what she does naturally and regard her as an *oikos* to the extent that she socialises her new converts.

Churches globally are concerned with their rapidly increasing 'drop out' rate. Perhaps a closer scrutiny of her methods of socialisation of new believers might provide fresh insights. Many newcomers require help to use and understand the new language system. But unfortunately, many are left to cope on their own. This is indeed a difficult task. Their fumbling to pray or to share their joys or trials in public can be better understood when we recall our own stumbling around in a foreign country without the facility to speak the language. So it is with new believers. They are lost without an introducer. Therefore, the church has to become an *oikos* to these families, functioning both as an interpreter and a teacher of this new language.

The entire church programme has to also take into account the varying levels of Christian maturity. A fluency in the English medium does not necessarily facilitate the ability to speak and think in the new language system of Christianity. The level of basic Bible knowledge in churches should not be taken for granted. Perhaps the presumption is indicative of wishful thinking. A great deal of work and research needs to be done on this issue. It would be wise to commence from the basics, even at the peril of repetition.

A new language is always learned within a context. It is very difficult to learn a new language from written materials. One would not be able to speak the language properly. Audio aids still leave a student without a context. The ideal solution would be to spend time in the country where the language is spoken. This acquisition of a new language would be further accelerated if one were to live with a family that speaks the language. The context of primary relationships always makes the learning of a new language so much easier.

This also applies to the learning of the language of Christianity. When one is accepted as a member of the *oikos* and is surrounded by other members the chances are greater that one would persist in one's language acquisition. So, functioning in a similar manner, the church as *oikos* can render an invaluable service to newcomers in the faith.

Language acquisition is only the first step in the task of socialisation. Secular literature has identified the other areas. The presentation offered by Orville Brim is particularly helpful. In his book, *Socialisation After Childhood*, he writes:

There are three things a person requires before he is able to perform satisfactorily in a role. He must know what is expected of him (both in beliefs and values), must be able to meet the role requirements, and must desire to practice the behaviour and pursue appropriate ends. It can be said that the purposes of socialisation are to give a person knowledge, ability and motivation (1966:25).

Therefore only one third of the task is achieved by stopping with knowledge. Effective socialisation requires that a person also have the ability to act on the information and the necessary motivation to do so. Knowledge of the necessity for change is really of no avail without the skill to act differently.

Brim has a very helpful model for the task of socialisation.

	Behaviour	Values
Knowledge	A	B
Ability	C	D
Motivation	E	F

In his model knowledge relates to the information that is required to perform a specific task. Ability refers to the skill to carry out the action. Motivation involves the willingness or desire to do it. The behaviour column could be summed up as the 'what' and the values as the 'why'.

Therefore, a military recruit must know what s/he must do (A) and why that is important (B). S/he must know how to do what s/he must do (C) and why that is important (D). Lastly, s/he must want to do what s/he is to do (E) and know why that is important (F). This model illustrates very simply what every adult must learn.

Brim's analysis to socialisation has some very interesting implications for the context of churches. Let us illustrate this to the difficulties often encountered within the pastoral context. A

young couple desiring to be married comes in for counselling. One usually begins at the knowledge level with information about the meaning of marriage, issues of 'becoming one', 'getting along' with in-laws, financial management, managing conflict, sex, etc. An attempt is made to convince the couple of the importance of the information.

The pastoral counsellor is well aware that there is a need to go beyond the knowledge level to that of skills. Couples generally overestimate their knowledge and abilities. Therefore, they often remain under-motivated to fulfil any pastoral counselling tasks that may be given to them.

It is primarily this common experience of pastoral counsellors that has prompted a post-marital emphasis rather than a pre-marital one. The pre-marital component often centres on emotional stability for marriage and the marriage ceremony itself. But, post-marital sessions that are scheduled after the marriage have to often assume a 'crisis-management' mode. By the time the couple reach the 'six-month after' zone they become both highly motivated and have a sober estimate of their lack of skills. When they reach this stage no pastoral counsellor can wish for a better couple to counsel with.

Despite this approach being largely curative, there are some important benefits. It dwells on the problem areas whilst ignoring the areas of success and is therefore less time-consuming. Because these sessions are very soon after marriage, problem areas can be speedily dealt with before they exacerbate.

Brim's study also focuses on the varying levels of motivation, ability and knowledge commensurate with different age groups. This factor has to be taken into consideration in formulating church programmes. An illustration can be found in attempting to develop a life-related study for two age groups in a church. The first group consists of new parents with their first child and the task you are concerned with is toilet training. The second group is adults in the pre-retirement years and your concern is the preparation of a will. Applying Brim's model we come up with some interesting insights. The new parents are probably very motivated to toilet-train their children. They would be sick and tired of napkins. Motivation would

not be their problem. They just lack the 'know how'. It would be appropriate to build skills with demonstrations from experienced parents.

Whereas the mature person without a will perhaps has the knowledge but probably lacks motivation. Making a will is tantamount to acknowledging one's mortality. This is no easy task. Therefore, the unique concerns for each task must be seriously considered and be appropriately met in a specially tailored programme.

To maximise its effectiveness the church must respond creatively to the unique demands of each situation. This is best illustrated by relating the tasks of socialisation to the broader South African context. Given the *Apartheid* legacy, for the blacks the 'significant others' (primary grouping) on a broader scale will undoubtedly be the white community. Black American history has also evidenced a similar socialisation experience. Whilst one could argue that for many blacks, the whites were not really the 'significant others,' and that the 'Yes Sir' (*Baas-skap*) mentality was merely a survival technique, decades of this abnormal practice have invariably affected the black psyche. Furthermore, scientific theories were adduced in support of black's alleged lower mental abilities. This resulted in an exceptionally low self-esteem that went near to apologising for one's presence in the land of one's birth. Black Consciousness sought to remedy this apologetic black syndrome. But, very often the reserves of courage that are required to move from passivity, due to decades of social conditioning, to assertiveness often resulted in an overkill or overshoot situation, if not in blatant aggression. A variant of this also exists in a passive-aggressive posture. The 'gangs' of black road-workers often practise this when their previous white 'gang leader' is outside hearing-range, perhaps drinking a cup of tea and reading the newspaper. They break into a chorus of *ugu muntu uguswine* (the white man is a pig).

These particular issues have been highlighted to establish the need for special re-socialisation of both black and white adults, in particular. In the new South Africa prejudices seem to have gone underground. But it still exists, only covertly. It remains a challenge for the church as *oikos* to find new means to correct these imbalances in South African society. Additionally, the socialisation

process of the present and future generations of children has to be focused in a positive way thus minimising the transmission of these negative attitudes in both black and white socialisation.

The point that general information can be no longer thrown at people has been sufficiently stressed. There is a dire need for a thorough analysis of the special context and demands of each situation.

Socialisation is also not a static concept but is a dynamic process. By dynamic we refer to the socialisation tasks that change over time. The tasks in the early years of marriage are not the same as that in the retirement years. Therefore, we must understand both the concept of socialisation and the life cycle of the family. In this next section the task of socialisation in relation to the life cycle of the family will be considered.

5.4 SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR A LIFE CYCLE OF THE FAMILY

Almost all researchers into the family accept the position that people experience critical periods of change until death. Both D Levinson's work, *Seasons of a Man's Life* (1978), on the stages of adult male development, and G Sheehy's popular work, *Passages* (1976), has highlighted this issue. But there is a difference of opinions as to whether the development focus should be on learning theories or on stages. Those who stress learning theories maintain that

... learning one task or living through one kind of experience makes one ready for the next, presumably more difficult, task, or open to the next order of experience (Troll 1975:3-21).

Therefore, life is perceived as a series of learning experiences that are not tied to a person's age or position in the life cycle. But, those who adopt the 'stage' approach emphasise a sequence of changes, and stress that all humans experience similar problems or challenges at about the same time in their lives.

In his work, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, Erikson (1968:3-21) fleshed out his eight stages of development through which one must pass successfully in order to master one's environment, display a cohesive personality, and view the world and self correctly. All these stages lead towards a sense of integrity, and of having lived authentically and meaningfully, so that one can accept old age and death with a measure of dignity. Hoffman, adopting a similar framework, describes

developmental tasks that must be solved or completed in order to reach satisfaction. An example could be found in the tasks of adolescence that would include developing a sense of self, acquiring an appropriate sex role, and achieving social maturity. Some tasks of middle age would include relating to one's spouse as a person, adjusting to ageing parents, and assisting teenage children to become happy and responsible adults (1980:53-68).

After engaging in a thorough study of the lives of forty men aged thirty-five to forty-five from four occupations, Levinson called his book, *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, thereby implying that the life course has a certain shape, and that it evolves through a series of definable forms. He explains this in the following way:

To say that a season is relatively stable, however, does not mean that it is stationary or static. Change goes on within each, and a transition is required for the shift from one season to the next. Every season has its own time; it is important in its own right and needs to be understood in its own terms ... It is an organic part of the total cycle, linking past and future and containing both within itself (1978:7).

Just as individuals move through the various seasons of their lives, family systems also pass through certain seasons. Family researchers have applied this stage concept to whole families so that the entire family system is construed as moving through particular stages. This approach has its difficulties because families are often made up of a number of individuals in different life stages. It also does not account for families with a large number of children or those with widely spaced children. They also omit adult development tasks that do not relate to child rearing. These stages do not apply to many black and Indian families where children remain in the home after marriage. Despite the limitations these stages do offer a broad framework to gain insight into the complex tasks of a family system.

Based on the findings of Satir (1972:4-16), Troll (1975:1-7), Carter and McGoldrick (1980), and others, the following stages predominate:

1. Unattached young adults
2. The engagement period
3. Beginning the marriage
4. Initial parenthood
5. Individuation stages (pre-school children, school-age children, adolescents)
6. Families as launching centres (from the departure of first to the last child)

7. Families in middle years (from the time children leave until retirement)
8. Families in older years.

To facilitate an understanding of the development process, reference to the concepts of cohesion and adaptability, may be helpful. Extremely cohesive (emeshed) families may resist certain changes, like children leaving home, whilst low-cohesion (disengaged) families may break up when children start to leave. The ability to adapt aids a family in moving through stages of development. A rigid family may try to avoid change that is necessary for growth, whereas highly chaotic families may not place sufficient importance on changes.

Families having low adaptability and high cohesion may often fight the passage that carries them through developmental stages. Also, family themes, boundaries, images, and biosocial beliefs complicate the movement through the stages even further. Before we give consideration to each of the above-mentioned stages, let us sketch the possible role of the church as an *oikos* of families.

A ministry to families must take advantage of the predictability of the life cycle. No institution in society prepares the family to surmount these hurdles that are 'part and parcel' of these stages. Despite each stage in the developmental process requiring new roles, no one comes to the rescue of the naive, nuclear family. They are left to survive on their own. It is precisely this vacuum that provides the church with a 'window of opportunity' for meaningful and effective ministry as *oikos*.

It has been already noted that the absence of Biblical foundations for the sociological perspective of the life-cycle of the family is conspicuous. Sociologist could benefit from studying the Bible. Attempts need to be made to ground these sociological patterns Biblically thereby providing a basis for a Pastoral Sociology. After the analysis of the needs of families we proceeded to show how the church could provide for these if it develops some of the features already present in the first century church. Some conclusions will also be drawn for the ministry of the church as *oikos* from this synthesis of Biblical and sociological categories.

5.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE

In this chapter the pursuit towards 'Pastoral sociology' was advanced through consideration of the common tasks of families and the church. The church has the added task of redressing problems created by a lack of family support. The task of socialisation was used to construct a model for the ministry of the church. The dynamic nature of socialisation demonstrated the need for a creative response to the specific demands of each phase of the family life cycle. In chapter one a convincing case was made for an approach that seriously considers the context. Here the focus was on the micro-context of different stages of the family life cycle.

Previous studies have focused on the sociological perspective of the life cycle of the family with little or no reference to Biblical foundations. These sociological patterns were related to Scripture thereby providing a basis for Pastoral Sociology. Some conclusions were also drawn for the ministry of the church as *oikos* from this synthesis of Biblical and sociological categories.

5.5.1 THE COMMON TASK OF FAMILIES AND THE CHURCH

The common tasks of families and the church called for an ecological approach. Using the 'Great Commission' from a sociology of family perspective, a Pastoral sociology was developed. Firstly the family is critical for making disciples (skills for making relationships), baptising (socialisation) and teaching (values). The importance of the task of socialisation is highlighted given the breakdown of traditional roles. Here the church as *oikos*, should function as counter-culture like the early church. She needs to become active in family restoration and building strength in families. Socialisation should provide an individual with knowledge, ability and motivation. Language can serve an organising function in addition to being a bearer of culture.

There is a dire need to cut through the confusion and competition of the church and the family since the family is the most natural and effective place for the church to fulfil its mission. Dennis B. Guernsey argues convincingly for an ecological perspective of the church and families. Guernsey contends that when the Great Commission is viewed through the eyes of the family sociologist, ministry imperatives for the church surface, and that these

imperatives are critically interrelated with a ministry to the families of our churches (1982:9). The family is critical for the making of disciples. This family constellation could include husband-wife and/or parent-child relationships. Both have their contexts within primary groups (Cooley 1929:1-5). The family is the primary group critical to the initial learning of these skills. Guernsey contends that

Secondly, if primary relationships consist of relationship skills that are generalised from one primary group to another, then the family is key in its significance because it is the place where those skills are learned well or learned poorly. And last of all, if the family is the social organisation in which these skills are learnt first, and thus most essentially, then the family becomes central to the process of disciple making (1982:11).

This discovery has important implications for the church. Leaders in the church should ally themselves with that primary group who can effect disciple-making most naturally and efficiently, namely, the family. Church leaders often fail to nurture, stimulate and protect the primary group (families) where discipleship is being actualised daily. Families make or break disciples, and depending on their degree of success, they either accelerate or retard the task of the church.

Socialisation should be considered as an inclusive term. For centuries the task of socialisation into the broader society has been relegated to the family. It was only since the 1930's that the socialisation function of the family has been brought into question. The church soon followed the spirit of the age and ignored the family. When the church begins to neglect the family as the church's priority for fulfilling the Great Commission, it minimises the probability of its subsequent success.

Such observations support an ecological perspective of the church and the family. Church and family are not to be separated. Families are involved in the redemptive activity of God in the world as the church is. Jones and Gerard refer to this function of socialisation as information dependence and cognitive socialisation (1967:3-9). The acquisition of a Christian value system follows a pattern identical to the process of disciple making and socialisation. Thus far, we have established that it is the family that presents the child with

the capacity of language, and it is the family that bequeaths its cultured value system through language.

Both the manner and content of obedience is either learned or not learned within the context of our first primary group, the family. The extended family has an advantage here compared to the nuclear type. The process of obedience to Jesus Christ's commands is contingent to the successful transmission of a Christian value system by the family. No other grouping can rival the family as a giver of language and as a bearer of culture. Church leaders are wiser and definitely more benefited when they join hands with the family.

This, once again, affirms the dire need for mutual interdependence between the major tasks of the church in the fulfilment of the Great Commission and the natural tasks of the family. Church leaders would do well to recognise this correspondence. Guernsey therefore recommends a model for ministry that:

... parallels the Church's tasks of making disciples, baptism, and teaching obedience, with the family tasks of establishing primary relationships, socialisation, and building values (1982:15-16).

This is a call for a symbiosis, that is, two dissimilar groups in a mutually beneficial relationship, between the church and the family. It is such interdependence that mandates a ministry to families by the church. Families are more important to the church than we realise. The present erosion of the family as an institution is erosion of the church. No sooner than the church begins to strengthen its families, would it tap the facilitator in its fulfilment of the Great Commission.

5.5.2 THE TASK OF SOCIALISATION

The task of socialisation by the family has to be viewed in the light of the breakdown of traditional roles. Sell observes that 'Individual freedom for other family members has increased because government and industry cater to the individual, not to the family unit' (1981:24). If the family fails its newcomers, society has no foundation to build upon.

The general implications of the family-destroying policy of Apartheid have been discussed in chapter three. The new phenomenon of the

emergence of 'absentee fathers' in African families is a frightening reality, as boys do not have any adult role models. In some cases the extended family comes to the rescue.

What role can the church play in such a situation? The church has to contextualise herself as *oikos*, functioning as counter-culture, as the early church did. The acquisition of a language system provides a convenient example to illustrate the socialisation role of the church as *oikos*. In the social scientific study of chapter two, the Lukan *oikos* of the early church displayed features that resemble those of a family. Here the argument is that the present church that should act as a family.

Language has a sorting function that permits a person to distinguish objects in the world. A new language system has to be learnt to view the world as God views it. Language provides perspective, that is, to see objects in relationship to one another. The nature of conversion gains new perspectives from an understanding of the function of language and the task of socialisation. A new language is always learned within a context. This acquisition of a new language would be further accelerated if one were to live with a family that speaks the language. The context of primary relationships always makes the learning of a new language so much easier.

Language acquisition is only the first step in the task of socialisation. Brim has a very helpful model for the task of socialisation. Brim's study also focuses on the varying levels of motivation, ability and knowledge commensurate with different age groups. Black American history has also evidenced a similar socialisation experience. Socialisation is also not a static concept but rather a dynamic process.

5.5.3 SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR A LIFE CYCLE OF THE FAMILY

Family researchers have applied this stage concept to whole families so that the entire family system is construed as moving through particular stages. Despite the limitations these stages do offer a broad framework to gain insight into the complex tasks of a family system.

In the discussion on sociological perspectives for a life cycle of the family, eight stages are isolated: Unattached young adults, the engagement period, beginning the marriage, initial parenthood, individuation stages (pre-school children, school-age children, adolescents), families as launching centres (from the departure of the first to the last child), families in middle years (from the time children leave until retirement) and families in older years. Mention is also made of the family dynamics of cohesion, adaptability and communication. A ministry to families should capitalise on the predictability of this cycle.

Here again we note that the nuclear family is alone to fend for its survival. The church should not neglect this window of opportunity.

Extremely cohesive (emeshed) families may resist certain changes, like children leaving home, whilst low-cohesion (disengaged) families may break up when children start to leave. The ability to adapt aids a family in moving through stages of development. A rigid family may try to avoid change that is necessary for growth, whereas highly chaotic families may not place sufficient importance on changes.

5.5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

To assume the role of the church as an *oikos* of families she must take advantage of the predictability of the life cycle. The church has the added task of redressing problems created by a lack of family support. The task of socialisation was used to construct a model for the ministry of the church. The dynamic nature of socialisation demonstrated the need for a creative response to the specific demands of each phase of the family life cycle. Here the focus was on the micro-context of different stages of the family life cycle.

Previous studies have focused on the sociological perspective of the life cycle of the family with little or no reference to Biblical foundations. Some conclusions were also drawn for the ministry of the church as *oikos* from this synthesis of Biblical and sociological categories. The common tasks of families and the church called for an ecological approach. The importance of the task of socialisation is highlighted given the breakdown of traditional roles. Here the church as *oikos*, should function as counter-culture like the early church.

CHAPTER SIX

CONTEXTUALISING THE CHURCH AS OIKOS: THE DEMANDS OF PRAXIS

6.1 THE CONCEPT OF PRAXIS

Our penultimate chapter, whilst taking our model of the church as *oikos* to families, will consider the demands of praxis in South Africa. Praxis, which literally meaning practice, has, in critical theory, come to mean practice or action that is subject to critical reflection. This is action which is not blind or undirected, but action shaped by a particular theory, or set of values and goals (cf Bernstein, 1971 for the development of the concept of 'praxis').

Praxis, a key term in liberation theologies, denotes truth in action. This is a familiar Biblical notion, especially in the Johannine writings: 'Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth' (1 John 3:18), or 'the one who wills to do God's will shall know my doctrine...' (John 7:17).

At the 1975 Detroit Conference, Gustavo Gutierrez puts it this way:

What we understand by 'praxis' is 'transforming action', not simply any kind of action, but rather a historical transformation of nature and society (Torres & Eagleton 1976).

Another way of viewing praxis is a spiral process of action and theory which leads in successive stages to revised action in the light of revised theory, and to revised theory in the light of revised action. This view is basic to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) but more especially to his notion of 'conscientization'. His 'praxiological' method of interpreting reality for the sake of its transformation was worked out in an innovative approach to literacy among the Brazilian peasants. This led to such a revolutionary awareness and consequent action that he was among the first intellectuals forced into exile after the Brazilian military coup of 1964. Liberation theology was deeply influenced by his work.

An investigation of the meaning of praxis leads us to its crucial role in the definition, content, and method of liberation theology as well as the claim that this is a 'new way of doing theology'. We have already discussed this 'new way of doing theology' and the theological method of liberation theology in chapter one.

The classical definition of theology is that of St. Anselm of Canterbury: *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith in search of understanding). In typical fashion among the liberation theologians, Juan Luis Segundo accepts the definition, but goes beyond it: 'By 'theology' I mean *fides quaerens intellectum* in order to give guidance and direction to historical praxis' (cf Gibellini 1979:250). Hugo Assmann, expanding on the meaning of praxis for theology, notes that 'the basic reference of traditional theology, the Bible and tradition ... do not suffice for doing theology, because they are not directly accessible'. Blocks of past interpretation, he argues, affect our approach to them. Their removal requires present analysis and praxis.

Praxis, then, becomes the basic reference point for any contextual theology. Never forgetting the historical implications of our faith and the need for concrete involvement, we are forced to engage in the ongoing process of self-criticism (Gibellini 1979:135).

The implications, which become more apparent when we examined issues of method, in chapter one, is that apart from the cycle of analysis-action-analysis we may not understand its original, liberating intention.

6.2 THE CHALLENGES OF PRAXIS IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

An investigation into the ethos of the church in South Africa furnishes some important insights. Very often conservatism, moralism, and authoritarianism constitute the *de facto* ethos of the church, especially the church within the black communities.

Moralistic preaching is often the norm, which creates feedback from the congregation that often demand this kind of preaching. So, black Christians have become the product of a 'moralising' ministry and have in turn internalised this. There is a dire need to isolate the theological, sociological and psychological forces behind this phenomenon. The journey has to go beyond a discovery of the cause and pose crucial theological and pastoral questions.

Jesus' life and ministry displays some interesting features that would better inform our current discussion on religious abuse. His controversy with the pharisees is precisely one in which He rejects the way in which the Torah is misused to sanction the status quo and preserve those 'traditions of men' which, in the name of the Torah deny its critical power and sanction the oppression of the poor. Jesus represents another tradition, the tradition that faithfully articulates the Torah as God's

sovereign and just reign in His own critical moment and context. Therefore, according to Matthew, Jesus attacks the pharisees with the words:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of you spices-mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matter of the Law-justice, mercy and faithfulness (Matt. 23:23).

Jesus does not deny the tradition of the Torah, but He affirms it even more strongly, by re-stating and radicalising its demands in a new time and situation.

The canticles in the Lukan nativity stories stand in direct continuity with the prophetic tradition, and also with Jesus' own identification of His mission with the liberatory role of the Messiah in Luke 4:16-21. Jesus' mission is related to the coming of the Kingdom of God, and is demonstrated in His liberating praxis, His concern for the oppressed, whether they be women, the poor, or those who are deaf, dumb, blind or possessed by demons. Through His actions, Jesus proclaims that the reign of God has begun in a new and decisive way, and that it is in continuity with the tradition that began with Moses and found its expression in the prophets of Israel.

The coming of Jesus according to De Gruchy (1987:70) is a *kairos*-event, a critical movement in the history of Israel and the world, long awaited by the humble and the poor, and perhaps dreaded by the powerful and rich. While there is undoubtedly a predictive element in prophecy, Jesus' fulfilment of the prophets (Matt. 5:17) must surely be understood as Him having continuity with those who proclaimed the Law, or Torah, against the injustices and oppression of their day (1987:70). That is, Jesus stands in what Brueggeman calls the liberatory trajectory (1983:308).

Jesus' ministry does not bring to an end the liberating prophetic tradition. On the contrary, Jesus makes it central to His own mission and confirms it with His suffering, death and resurrection. In doing so, Jesus deepens and transforms the tradition, filling it with new content because in Him the reign of God has broken decisively into human history (De Gruchy 1987:71).

Therefore, the church must be in continuity with the socially critical and liberating witness of the prophets if it is to be faithful to the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

The proclamation, in word and action, that God's Kingdom or reign was imminent, and had, in a decisive sense, arrived in the coming of Jesus Christ, is the central theme of the gospels. In His own life and ministry, Jesus called His followers to 'enter the Kingdom' and bear witness to it (cf inter alia, Jeremias, 1971). Jesus calls the church to follow Him in the midst of the world in obedient action and prayerful expectation of the promised 'new heaven and a new earth'.

Albert Nolan writes

Biblical spirituality is Kingdom spirituality. To be moved and motivated by the Spirit of Jesus is to be moved and motivated by an all-absorbing concern for the coming of God's Kingdom (1982:57).

At the very heart of Kingdom spirituality is the prayer of Jesus:

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

If the Christian life is understood from the perspective of the Kingdom of God, then it embraces the whole of life and reality. Life can no longer be compartmentalised into the sacred and profane, as though part of life belonged to God and the rest to some other realm or power. This dichotomous separation of piety from life in the world no longer becomes tenable. For the Christian, all life is under the reign of God in Christ, whether this is acknowledged or not. This is the Biblical perspective, which is often forgotten in thought and practice with disastrous consequences, but always regained and affirmed in times of renewal and reformation.

From the perspective of the Kingdom of God, personal and social transformations belong together. It is false and unbiblical to suggest that they can be separated. God's will and purpose is not only the transformation of our own lives and relationships but also the transformation and renewal of society. True spirituality, then, enables Christians to bear a more faithful witness to the whole gospel of the reign of God in Jesus Christ (Moltmann 1978:45). The priority of the Christian is 'to seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness' (Matt. 6:33) in every realm of life.

Bearing witness to the reign of God in the world does not mean we are able to 'bring in the Kingdom of God'. That remains God's prerogative. However, it does mean that we may become agents of change in the hands

of God, and that is what the spirituality of the Kingdom is about. Through prayer and listening to the Word of God, alone or in community, Christians begin to perceive reality from the perspective of the Kingdom and so place themselves, according to Moltmann, at the disposal of the God whose purposes are worked out in history (1978:41). Jürgen Moltmann could therefore write,

Christian meditation and contemplation lead us to discover our own self as self accepted, freed, and redeemed by God in the comprehensive context of His history with the world. When we meditate upon Christ's history and through the Spirit experience our own history with Christ, we find not only ourselves but also our place and our personal tasks within God's history with the world (1978:45).

This holistic spirituality is most needful in South Africa yet it is one that is generally lacking among ministers. Both sacred and profane zones are still declared. Christian ministry is restricted to spiritual issues. Other crises, whether they be social crises; normative crises; substance abuse; divorce, separation & abandonment; unemployment; death, dying & catastrophic illnesses; domestic violence and sexual abuse are often ignored. The church as *oikos* to families has to 'be there' for families when they are hurting. Better still, rather than functioning only in a curative mode or 'ambulance ministry', there is dire need to adopt a preventative strategy. A discussion of the anatomy of crises will be helpful.

Crises are 'part and parcel' of life. Whilst a social crisis like the *Apartheid* situation in South Africa might be unique, all of us encounter crises as we go through life. They may include the death of a loved one, the birth of a deformed child, the breakdown in a marriage, failure to be accepted into a university, the loss of one's job, or the occurrence of a car accident. These are just a few of those happenings that shake us and can make us feel threatened, anxious, and confused.

A crisis is any event or series of circumstances which threaten a person's well being and interferes with his/her routine of daily living. Most of us move along from day to day, meeting the problems and challenges of life in an efficient way. There are, however, times when a situation arises which is so novel and threatening that our usual ways of handling problems no longer work. Quite suddenly, we are forced to employ new and untried methods to deal with the tension that has invaded our lives.

Previously, people turned to their extended family on such occasions, seeking their advice and accepting their help and sympathy. Whilst in some parts of the world this may still take place, in Western and rapidly developing countries the situation is different. In South Africa, we identified a steady urban trend. The emergent nuclear families are geographically removed from extended family members who could offer support in times of crisis. In the absence of their extended family structure, Pattison speaks of the creation of psychological kinship system of friend, neighbours, etc. as substitutes (in Clinebell 1977:18). Here again, is the church presented with an opportunity for ministry. The church functioning as an *oikos* to families can provide the social support that is critical for adequately coping with a crisis. A church focused on relationships can provide timeous support.

Generally the presumption is that life will continue in a relatively predictable way. No one anticipates winning the lottery, nor expect to parent a handicapped child. There is also wishful thinking that our family members will live to a ripe old age. Sometimes we are correct but more often we are proved wrong. Unanticipated crises do enter the stage. To adapt the words of a popular song-'Into every life, different crises must fall'. In addition to the normative, developmental, or predictable stresses faced by family systems, we also have to contend with unpredictable or external stresses. These unpredictable stresses or catastrophes are brought about by events or circumstances that disrupt life patterns but which cannot be foreseen from a developmental perspective. Negative stresses involve, among others, untimely death, divorce, economic setbacks, serious injury or sickness. Some positive events, such as inheriting a large inheritance, a job promotion and transfer, or the rediscovery of long-lost relatives, are also stresses that test our resources.

There is a certain amount of overlap between unpredictable stresses and the more predictable normative crises. Galvin and Brommel illustrate this point well:

Becoming pregnant or having a child may be considered a development event, but an unwanted pregnancy or the birth of a severely handicapped child may also be classified as an unpredictable stress. Death is a development experience for all persons, but the untimely death of a family member is a severe crisis for the system (1986:224).

Even if only certain members of the entire family are initially affected by the event, the family system will eventually reflect the tension of such stress in its interaction.

The characteristics of a crisis offer tremendous insight for any intervention strategy. According to Puryear (1979), five major features can be identified. There are psychological and physiological symptoms of stress that may include depression, headache, bleeding ulcers, anxiety, etc. An excellent starting point lies in the ownership of the stress. Because a crisis does not occur until you have run out of possible solutions and have depleted your arsenal of coping mechanisms, there is the attitude of panic or defeat. The person experiencing a crisis often focuses on relief of the stress than a solution. There is a desire for the pressure or symptoms to be removed. The helping professions need to hear this cry that challenges the leap from the symptom to the solution. There is a danger of doing a good job too quickly and thereby removing a primary motivation for the individual. People are often goaded into change as a result of stress and pain. Stress diminishes our problem-solving abilities and we begin to function at a level of lower efficiency. Our sense of creativity also drains off. The nature of crises is that it creates disequilibrium for a period of up to six weeks. If it however, persists, the system draws it in. Hence, another feature of crisis emerges in its duration being limited. Moreover, a crisis by definition does not last forever but the symptoms nonetheless could linger on for a while. When the crisis is provoked beyond the period, as in the old *Apartheid* South Africa, a pendulum action results. There is a back and forth movement from crisis to equilibrium and equilibrium to crisis. A crisis also presents a 'window of opportunity'. The individual is extremely vulnerable to external influence and change.

Each family displays unique coping behaviours. Coping entails 'the central mechanism through which family stressors, demands and strains are eliminated, managed or adapted to' (McCubbin & Figley, 1983:10). One of the chief models that are currently used to understand family crises have evolved from Hill's original, which proposed that:

a [the stressor event], interacting with b [the family's crisis-meeting resources], interacting with c [the family's definition of the event] produces x [the crisis] (McCubbin and Figley 1983:6).

Galvin and Brommel explain this further (1986:225). Stressor, a, represents an event or transition that has the potential to change the family system. Such events as the loss of a job, untimely death, serious illness (perhaps HIV-Aids), or good fortune by way of a lottery may fall into this category. The b ['b'] factor represents the resources a family has to keep an event from creating a crisis, such as money, friends, space, or problem-solving skills. This dimension relates to the level of cohesion and adaptability of a family.

The c factor represents the importance a family attaches to the stressor (a). Whereas in one family a diagnosis of a member's diabetes might overwhelm the system, another family might cope extremely well with that news by viewing diabetes as a manageable disease. The influence of both the family-of-procreation and family-of-origin shapes the perception of crises. A family that has not experienced divorce may construe a granddaughter's marital separation as a severe crisis. Taken together, a, b, and c contribute to stress uniquely in each family, contingent to their background, resources and interpretation of the event (Galvin & Brommel 1986:226-227).

The x factor represents the degree of disruption that the family system experiences. This reveals 'the family's inability to restore stability and by the continuous pressure to make changes in the family structure and patterns of interaction' (McCubbin & Figley, 1983:10).

Subsequent family researchers have developed a double ABCX model based on Hill's original work but incorporating post-crisis variables (McCubbin & Figley, 1983:10-15). Families do recover over time. All social systems seek a state of balance or equilibrium. So, whenever stressors threaten disequilibrium the entire system cooperates in eliminating it. Family dysfunction does not always imply a state of disequilibrium. Dysfunction can be normalised to achieve equilibrium. Very often in a case of incest, members of a family collude and maintain a state of balance or homeostasis.

Social support has been isolated as a critical factor in the coping process of a family system. The absence of social support results in a significant increase in stress symptoms. Furthermore, people feel more comfortable to turn to family for the emotional support, encouragement, advice, companionship and tangible aid that they provide. It has also

been demonstrated that the existence of healthy social support facilitates recovery. In cases where families do not enjoy proximity to the larger family, social organisations have stepped in (McCubbin & Figley, 1983:11-20). This is precisely where the church can serve as *oikos* to families. The church, unlike social organisations, does not need to find a cause to bring members together. Its very nature and purpose was intended for situations like these. Times of crises provide the church opportunities to effect a ministry of praxis as *oikos* to families.

Some comment on the stages of crises is appropriate here. In any serious situation, a family goes through a process in coping with the stress that ensues. Contingent to the event, the stages may last from a few days to several months or even years. These stages are most defined in the case of death, divorce or news of an incurable illness. Nevertheless, in any crisis family members experience a progression of feelings from denial to acceptance. But, since no two families handle a crisis in a similar manner, they eventually reach the final stages of acceptance through various paths. The stages that follow approximate the general process of coping with stress. While the stages generally succeed each other, they may occasionally overlap or even be repeated.

1. Shock resulting in numbness or disbelief or denial.
 2. Recoil resulting in anger, confusion, blaming, guilt and bargaining.
 3. Depression.
 4. Reorganisation resulting in acceptance and recovery.
- (Kubler-Ross 1970).

The process of going through the stages after a serious crisis affects the family system. People either find themselves more separated from or connected to different members. Also, adaptability patterns shift. An understanding of the process allows one to assess one's progress through the stages and fosters greater tolerance and understanding.

We have approached this study of the church as *oikos* to families (in addition to the church also being a family for individuals) with a praxis orientation, which makes it imperative that the church as a family moves beyond an 'ambulance' ministry. Self-criticism, that is, critical reflection on praxis has to characterise all efforts to be a family of families. Stated differently, a praxis-oriented ministry does not merely attend to the symptoms but isolates and deals appropriately with the causes.

Pastoral care is not of much help if it reinforces the values of a social milieu (Browning 1976). Pastors do not help those for whom they care by protecting them from the prophetic challenges of the gospel. But, this prevents them from discovering the real causes that produce tension and conflict. Genuine pastoral care enables discipleship and growth in Christian maturity that includes engagement in transforming praxis. Christian pastoral care is not intended simply to resolve personal problems, vital as this is, but to do so in such a way that those who are being helped and healed are in turn enabled to participate in some ways in helping others and thereby facilitating the transformation of society (De Gruchy, 1987:42).

6.3 SOCIAL CRISES

Pastors who seek to minister to the needs of their congregation at this time of socio-political reconstruction in the new South Africa know that they have to take very seriously the fears, expectations, tensions, mistrust and general sense of despair that are endemic to the situation, particularly within the white community. The pastoral situation varies from one community to another. The issues in the black community will, more often than not, be those of struggle, conflict, poverty, HIV-Aids and suffering, even in the new democratic South Africa.

Pastoral problems are often related directly to the social context even if they are not caused by it. While the disintegration of a marriage may have nothing overtly to do with the general ethos, we are aware that societal norms and pressures affect human relationships. This became clear in South Africa during the political uprising and community unrest in 1985-6. Personal or interpersonal problems were exacerbated by the socio-political crisis (De Gruchy, 1988:42).

South Africa has a democratic government but there is still a 'long walk to freedom' (cf Nelson Mandela's book *Long Walk to Freedom*) ahead. Our society continues to reflect similar injustices of the past, especially on the economic front. A significant proportion of largely black masses still live in abject poverty. There is a lot to be done to remedy this situation. Churches should encourage its members to take sides in this struggle for economic justice. Further, the church itself is required to prophetic in word and deed, and, therefore, to identify itself with the struggle for justice.

Within the South African churches, there will be ongoing debate on the appropriate role of the church within the new social arena. Some churches claim the right of the church to speak prophetically to the nation. Their enigmatic posture arises out of a different social perception and analysis; a different reading of Scripture and reflecting different group interest and commitment. Thus, while all churches may agree on the need for justice in society, they disagree on what justice entails in politically concrete terms (De Gruchy, et al., 1987:44). The conflict between the statements of churches in *Apartheid* South Africa vividly illustrates this.

To alleviate the plight of the church speaking either with a 'forked tongue' or about issues which it had little knowledge and thereby becoming a champion for doubtful causes, De Gruchy advocates the

need to exercise self-criticism (critical reflection on praxis), engage in careful analysis of the situation which needs to be addressed, and discern what the Biblical message is which needs to be proclaimed here and now (1987:86).

This method has been subsequently developed into what is now called the pastoral-hermeneutical circle. This new method can be facilitated through the creation and fostering of social action groups. The *comunidades eclesiales de base* of Latin America, that is, small groups of Christians together at grassroots levels for common life and worship, can provide a convenient framework for these social action groups. Base Christian communities are normally understood as aiming at both the renewal and restructuring of religious and social life. Our model of the church as *oikos* to families can give further impetus to this forum.

Whilst the action of these groups is most likely to encompass a wide range of tasks, they require a starting point and orientation. It is critical that they begin with their concrete social reality and confront this reality with the gospel. The function of the clergy lies in encouraging and strengthening these groups, extending their horizons, supporting initiatives, and generally putting their skills and training at the service of such groups.

All too often, Christians are challenged to minister more meaningfully to those around them who are in need. After resolving to do something, their plight either becomes one of abortion through paralysis or reversion to former strategies. Both these states of inactivity or limited-meaning activity persist because no means for the implementation of the new concepts are presented. The praxis-orientation of this study prevents us from allowing this model to get 'stuck in the pipeline'. The strategies and guidelines that are offered are by no means prescriptive. Any praxis (self-reflection on action) model has to allow subsequent action to revise former theories, thus providing for revised new action that have to be open to criticism and yet novel means of action. It is hoped that a pastoral-hermeneutical cycle will thereby be set in motion.

6.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIX

This final chapter, whilst taking the model of the church as *oikos* to families, considered the demands of praxis in South Africa.

6.4.1 THE CONCEPT OF PRAXIS

Praxis, which literally meaning practice, has, in critical theory, come to mean practice or action that is subject to critical reflection. Praxis, a key term in liberation theologies, denotes truth in action.

6.4.2 THE CHALLENGES OF PRAXIS IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

An investigation into the ethos of the church in South Africa furnishes some important insights. Very often conservatism, moralism, and authoritarianism constitute the *de facto* ethos of the church, especially the church within the black communities.

Jesus represents another tradition, the tradition that faithfully articulates the Torah as God's sovereign and just reign in His own critical moment and context. Jesus' ministry does not bring to an end the liberating prophetic tradition. Jesus deepens and transforms the tradition, filling it with new content because in Him the reign of God has broken decisively into human history (De Gruchy 1987:71).

Therefore, the church must be in continuity with the socially critical and liberating witness of the prophets if it is to be faithful to the gospel of the Kingdom of God. The proclamation, in word and action, that God's Kingdom or reign was imminent, and had, in a decisive sense, arrived in the coming of Jesus Christ, is the central

theme of the gospels. Biblical spirituality is Kingdom spirituality. At the very heart of Kingdom spirituality is the prayer of Jesus:

Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

If the Christian life is understood from the perspective of the Kingdom of God, then it embraces the whole of life and reality. From the perspective of the Kingdom of God, personal and social transformations belong together. True spirituality, then, enables Christians to bear a more faithful witness to the whole gospel of the reign of God in Jesus Christ (Moltmann 1978:45). The priority of the Christian is 'to seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness' (Matt. 6:33) in every realm of life.

A holistic ministry is needed in South Africa yet it is one that is generally lacking among ministers. Both sacred and profane zones are still declared. Christian ministry is restricted to spiritual issues. Other crises, whether they be social crises; normative crises; substance abuse; divorce, separation & abandonment; unemployment; death, dying & catastrophic illnesses; domestic violence and sexual abuse are often ignored. Crises are 'part and parcel' of life. Whilst a social crisis like the *Apartheid* situation in South Africa might be unique, all of us encounter crises as we go through life. In South Africa, we identified a steady urban trend. The emergent nuclear families are geographically removed from extended family members who could offer support in times of crisis. The church functioning as an *oikos* to families can provide the social support that is critical for adequately coping with a crisis. A church focused on relationships can provide timeous support.

In addition to the normative, developmental, or predictable stresses faced by family systems, we also have to contend with unpredictable or external stresses. Galvin and Brommel illustrate this point well:

Death is a development experience for all persons, but the untimely death of a family member is a severe crisis for the system (1986:224).

Even if only certain members of the entire family are initially affected by the event, the family system will eventually reflect the tension of such stress in its interaction.

When the crisis is provoked beyond the period, as in the old *Apartheid* South Africa, a pendulum action results. There is a back and forth

movement from crisis to equilibrium and equilibrium to crisis. Each family displays unique coping behaviours. Families do recover over time. All social systems seek a state of balance or equilibrium. Family dysfunction does not always imply a state of disequilibrium. Social support has been isolated as a critical factor in the coping process of a family system. The absence of social support results in a significant increase in stress symptoms. In cases where families do not enjoy proximity to the larger family, social organisations have stepped in (McCubbin & Figley, 1983:11-20). Times of crises provide the church opportunities to effect a ministry of praxis as *oikos* to families.

In any serious situation, a family goes through a process in coping with the stress that ensues. The stages that follow approximate the general process of coping with stress. The process of going through the stages after a serious crisis affects the family system. We have approached this study of the church as *oikos* to families (in addition to the church also being a family for individuals) with a praxis orientation, which makes it imperative that the church as a family moves beyond an 'ambulance' ministry. Self-criticism, that is, critical reflection on praxis has to characterise all efforts to be a family of families. Genuine pastoral care enables discipleship and growth in Christian maturity that includes engagement in transforming praxis.

6.4.3 SOCIAL CRISES

The pastoral situation varies from one community to another. Personal or interpersonal problems were exacerbated by the socio-political crisis in South Africa (De Gruchy, 1988:42).

Within the South African churches, there will be ongoing debate on the appropriate role of the church within the new social arena. The conflict between the statements of churches in *Apartheid* South Africa vividly illustrates this.

The *comunidades eclesiales de base* of Latin America, that is, small groups of Christians together at grassroots levels for common life and worship, can provide a convenient framework for social action groups. Base Christian communities are normally understood as aiming at both the renewal and restructuring of religious and social life. Any praxis (self-reflection on action) model has to allow subsequent action to revise former theories, thus providing for revised new action that have to be open to criticism and yet novel means of action.

6.4.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In summary, *oikia*, (houses, homes and households) first of all, provide in Luke-Acts the setting for a wide range of events in the life of Jesus and his followers. They include, according to Koenig, 'the proclamation of the gospel, the experience of forgiveness of sins, salvation and the presence of the Spirit, teaching, healing, prophecy, revelations and visions, recognition of the resurrected Christ, redefining the family of Jesus, hospitality and lodging, hospitality of meals and dining sociality, worship: prayer, praise, fasting, Passover-meal, baptism, Lord's Supper, sharing property and distribution of goods to the needy, hospitality, fellowship and mutual support typical of these house-church communities united itinerant prophets and residential believers in a co-operative effort which for Luke, was essential to the success of the Church's missionary enterprise' (1985:85-123).

For Luke the hope of Israel's salvation initially linked with the temple is finally achieved in the reciprocities of the *oikos*. The role of the Temple has been superseded and there is no reason for regret over its annihilation. In Luke's theological vocabulary, the Temple was a house of prayer and hope twisted into a den of thieves, a symbol of a holiness ethic opposed to the inclusive holiness of God. In contrast, the Household was the realm of the children of God, the prime metaphor of life in the kingdom. In social-scientific terms, the Temple, its authorities, its law, and its purity ideology epitomised, from Luke's perspective, an exclusivist, exploitative, and alienating system. It failed to inhibit a reforming movement seeking justice for the powerless, intent on extending borders to include all seeking a place of belonging, acceptance, and nurture. This movement, which was shaped by the reciprocities of kinship and friendship, united by a sense of common brotherhood/ sisterhood, incorporated 'all the families of the earth' in its worldwide mission.

The thesis of this study is that the early church functioning as *oikos* provides inspiration for the church to meet some of the challenges of our new South Africa. Through the application of the methodology of social-scientific criticism and contextual theology this study attempted to formulate principles for the ministry of the church. It was

imperative that these guidelines take into account the exigencies of its situation, as part of contextual methodology. The church as *oikos* is best suited to heal the wounds inflicted by any hostile environment. The present challenge of reconstruction and HIV-Aids pandemic in the new South Africa offer a very unique opportunity in the shaping of such principles.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.1 SUMMARY

7.1.1 CHAPTER ONE

Chapter one focussed on the methodology of this study. This study reflects a distinctive choice regarding methodology in the application of a unique combination of both the contextual and social-scientific methods. A danger of contextual methodology is to concentrate on the present context at the expense of the context of the text. A deliberate attempt is made to avoid this by an inclusive approach of both contexts.

The emergence of the social-scientific analysis of the Bible has not evidenced a linear development. The one scholar concentrates on social description, while the other on social-scientific interpretation of the Biblical text. The social-scientific approach operates on a different level from that of social description. According to Gager, then, one could use the terms 'sociological', or 'social-scientific' interchangeably, but the meaning of the terms sociological, social-scientific and social differs. The social-scientific method remains as one of the most productive of the 'social' methodologies that have emerged. The works of Gerd Theissen, John G Gager, Wayne A Meeks, Bruce J Malina, John H Elliott, and Norman R Petersen have contributed immensely to the social-scientific study of the New Testament.

Juan Luis Segundo has written one of the clearest methodologies of Latin American theology, in *The Liberation of Theology* (1975). For Cone, therefore, black theology must detoxify itself from the corruption of white theology and build a theology on sources and norms appropriate to the black community. Johannes A Loubser's analysis of the theology of *Apartheid* as 'a contextual theology gone wrong' offers interesting new insights on the methodology of contextual theology (1996: 321-337). Leonardo Boff's theology/christology of liberation, as described by Wachege (1992:31) reveals five general characteristics of contextual theologies. *Apartheid* theology shows stark similarities to these characteristics. This inherent contrast between *Apartheid* theology and contextual theologies is best exemplified by its use of the Bible. *Apartheid* theology consciously proposed to be a Biblical theology, drawing on

Biblical proof-texts and Biblical principles. In liberation theology 'the poor' had become equivalent to 'the believer'.

A clear differentiation should be maintained between approaches concentrating on constructing a social history of the text, and approaches that wish to analyse the text by means of the methods and models developed in the social sciences. This thesis advocates the innovative combination of the social-scientific method with contextual hermeneutics. It then focused on the combination of the contextual hermeneutic and the social-scientific approach. A social-scientific approach goes equally deep and warrants social-scientific analyses of both the context of Scripture and the contemporary situation. It concludes by providing a more articulate model of contextual hermeneutics in a social-science perspective.

7.1.2 CHAPTER TWO

A social-scientific study of the Lukan *oikos* is the thrust of chapter two. Temple and *oikos* denote divergent social spaces and conflicting forms of social life. The distinction between Temple and Household in Luke 18:9-14 is also demonstrated by the structural features of Luke-Acts. The juxtaposition of scenes in Acts 1-8 and the inclusive framework of Luke (Temple) compared with its counterpart in Acts (household) suggest an intentional contrast of locales, groups, and institutions commencing with the Temple and concluding with the household. These larger patterns of contrast in the Lukan narrative seem compatible with the contrast drawn between Temple and *oikos* in Luke 18:9-14. The Temple and the household are bases of conflicting groups of actors with divergent interests.

For Judaism, the Temple as Israel's central holy place represented the chief visible symbol of its identity as God's holy people. The Temple police exercise the constraining power of the holy place. In Luke's account, it is these scribal Temple and Torah authorities that symbolised the inequality of the Temple as an economic institution. The pharisees, enforcing Temple purity regulations still more rigorously, had extended the norms of Temple and priestly holiness to every Jewish home. In Luke-Acts this purity system controlled by the Temple establishment becomes a major point of controversy. Malina (1981:122-152) and Neyrey (1986b: 91-128: cf Neusner 1973) have shown that the Temple purity system controlled the social identity, social

classifications, and social boundaries of the Jewish people. In contrast to the Temple, the household emerged as the venue of sanctity and divine salvation (1991:102).

This consideration of all the related aspects of the Temple as a comprehensive social institution, its political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions and its accompanying purity ideology has provided a fuller picture of the Temple system. This survey has revealed key issues for Luke over which the Jesus movement and the Temple establishment clashed. In contrast to a society led by the temple administration intent on the elimination of Temple critics and purity violators according to Luke, stands a community in solidarity with Jesus and the righteous victims of Temple injustice. Malina emphasises the critical role of the household in contrast to the Temple.

This social-scientific model also contrasts divergent forms of social organisation characteristic of pre-industrial societies including those of Jesus and Luke's time. Finally, the match between the social arrangements of Luke's world and the emphasis of his composition will allow us to assess the persuasive power of Luke's representation of Temple and Household. This Temple system had grown morally bankrupt. Luke's portrait of Temple and Household would have been extremely persuasive to his contemporary audience because it conformed to contemporary social and economic life. In summary, Temple and Household and the contrasting realities that they embody assume significance in Luke-Acts both structurally and thematically. The Temple frames and provides the central fix for the first segment of Luke's narrative. Temple and Household are also tied with the basic Lukan thematic emphases. The social and economic system centred in Temple, Torah and purity, where redistribution had failed, served Luke as a foil with which to contrast the social and economic relations of the Household in the sphere of justice, mercy and *koinonia*. The Household functions as Luke's prime metaphor for depicting social life in the kingdom of God.

In social-scientific terms, the Temple, its authorities, its law, and its purity ideology epitomised, from Luke's perspective, an exclusivist, exploitative, and alienating system. It was offset against the rival social system of the temple as a distinct and

opposing system of social life. Both socio-historically and metaphorically, the *oikos* constitutes a social institution rivalling that of the temple in Luke-Acts.

7.1.3 CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three engages in a sociological and contextual analysis of families in South Africa. The loss of the extended family system deprived the urban nuclear family of the resources that had formerly sustained its family life. Communal lifestyles are often an experiment to recapture the old extended-family form. Whilst rural families still manage to maintain some form of the extended-family structure, what becomes of the urban nuclear family? Sussman has studied how these families establish coalitions with other families to form networks that replace the extended family (1959:334). In the nuclear family, the emphasis is on intimacy. In short, they need a family.

Other challenges include morality and relationships, changing definitions and roles of families, the alarming increase in divorces, the emerging trend of single-parent families and changing family-values. The sociological composition of a local church warranted a detailed analysis of family sociology. South African society is one, in which the small primary groups, such as extended families and communities have lost their position, contends Popenoe (1998:270). Furthermore with the ready availability of information, the authority of the family has also shifted outside the family. The family as a sociological institution is under serious threat of extinction. This trend is not typical for all families in our country. In South Africa there are different cultures within which the family is structured differently. Economic and political forces have disrupted the African rural extended family. Indian rural families still display an extended family structure whilst their urban counterparts are under pressure to follow a nuclear family type. Both the urban English and Afrikaner families favour a nuclear structure, with the English reflecting liberal family values and the Afrikaner demonstrating stronger family values.

How do we define a family? A strange variety of family forms confront the modern observer. In order to address crucial questions concerning the future of the family, we need to understand the social forces that are transforming the modern family. Functionalists emphasise that

the family has been a universal and a social institution throughout history. The family also serves as an important economic unit. In modern societies, the main economic activity of the family is consumption. Conflict theorists view the family in a different light.

There are many variations in family structure around the world. In describing family structure, sociologists note the difference between the kinship group and the family. Differences in family structure are primarily explained by economic factors. Family authority has been patriarchal throughout Western history. Some societies have families that are matrifocal. A matrifocal family is a family in which a woman is the central and most important member. Children of both sexes can inherit property from both sides of the family. Gender roles within the family have also been altered. Alternatives to marriage and the nuclear family include remaining single, heterosexual cohabitation and group marriages.

The factors that formed the nuclear family are both very complex and greatly varied. Families in South Africa have not escaped this pressure. There was undoubtedly a preponderance of the extended family. This embraced a wider constituency than that of the extended family. The entire tribe became one's extended family. Unlike the Afrikaner, the African followed a polygamous family arrangement.

Removals uprooted families and destroyed homes. A family is a group of people whose behaviour is closely interrelated. Forced removals, thus, profoundly attack and undermine the delicate balance of family life. People's basic survival is threatened, and this leads to great strain within the family. To avoid destitution some family members became migrant workers, but that split the family and caused further stress. Many rural families were fairly 'traditional,' having a close relationship to their land, a family life that extends to many relatives, and patriarchal authority. Many other aspects of community and family life were damaged through removal and relocation. Removals and relocations often destroy marriage and family life. The emergence of 'dual families' was left on the 'doorstep' of Apartheid.

This thesis attempts to respond to these needs by developing the concept of the church as *oikos* in an attempt at re-contextualisation. The thesis of this study is that the concept of *oikos*, as reflected in the 'early

church' of Luke-Acts, provides inspiration in adequately meeting the challenges of society. Despite the aftermath of our Apartheid past, the church has the potential and opportunity to absorb, shape and be a part of the essential healing and reconstructive process that is imperative for the families that make up our nation.

This chapter presents a contextual analysis in terms of which the subsequent chapters, attempt to interpret the Church as *oikos* in systems perspective (chapter four), develop a ministry model, in terms of pastoral sociology, focused on the family (chapter five), and the contextualising of the church as *oikos* in terms of *praxis* (chapter six).

7.1.4 CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four begins with the interrelationship between church and family with reference to systems theory prompting a re-definition of the church as a family of families. Marriage counsellors and family-life educators also bear testimony to this neglect of families by the church. This chapter then applies the systems theory to families. Each church must see itself in a new way, as a family of families (*oikos* of God). This chapter outlines the challenges of individualism and narcissism to the church functioning as an *oikos*: a family of families. The previous chapter identified the challenges of families. Here we enlisted support from systems theory to extend the concept of *oikos* to the *oikos tou theou* (family of God).

Having established a new role for the church as a family of families (*oikos* of God), does this not imply a new role for the pastor also? These new pastoral roles must promote family integration, encourage family adaptability, promote family adjustment, foster individuation, develop a sense of community that is all-inclusive and promotes a sense of belonging or rootedness. If the church functions as a family of families, there would be someone to turn to. The church as a family of families (*oikos* of God), drawn from the example of the early church, and discriminately applied, is a viable alternative to the rapidly increasing threat to extended families.

We identified a trend away from the extended family in South Africa. The church as a family to all these urban nuclear families can meet a vital need. In addition to sustaining the urban nuclear family, the

church as a family of families (*oikos* of God) can minister to these hurts and pain through the therapy of the Holy Spirit. This family of families (*oikos* of God) has the mandate to move across all barriers, inter alia, racial, economic, and geographic to help members discover fellow members of the one new and unique family of God from which she has been regretfully isolated. The concept of the church as a family of families (*oikos* of God) lies at the heart of this study.

7.1.5 CHAPTER FIVE

A model for the ministry of the church is offered in chapter five. The church has the added task of redressing problems created by a lack of family support. Here the focus was on the micro-context of different stages of the family life cycle.

The common tasks of families and the church called for an ecological approach. Firstly the family is critical for making disciples (skills for making relationships), baptising (socialisation) and teaching (values). Here the church as *oikos*, should function as counter-culture like the early church. She needs to become active in family restoration and building strength in families. Dennis B. Guernsey argues convincingly for an ecological perspective of the church and families. The family is critical for the making of disciples. This family constellation could include husband-wife and/or parent-child relationships. The family is the primary group critical to the initial learning of these skills. Church leaders often fail to nurture, stimulate and protect the primary group (families) where discipleship is being actualised daily. For centuries the task of socialisation into the broader society has been relegated to the family. The church soon followed the spirit of the age and ignored the family. Church and family are not to be separated. Families are involved in the redemptive activity of God in the world as the church is. Church leaders are wiser and definitely more benefited when they join hands with the family. It is such interdependence that mandates a ministry to families by the church. Families are more important to the church than we realise. The present erosion of the family as an institution is erosion of the church.

Concerning the task of socialisation, in some cases the extended family comes to the rescue. Here the argument is that the present church should act as family. Family researchers have applied this

stage concept to whole families so that the entire family system is construed as moving through particular stages. A ministry to families should capitalise on the predictability of this cycle. The common tasks of families and the church called for an ecological approach. Here the church as *oikos*, should again, function as counter-culture like the early church.

7.1.6 CHAPTER SIX

The penultimate chapter (chapter six), whilst taking the model of the church as *oikos* to families, considered the demands of praxis in South Africa. Praxis, a key term in liberation theologies, denotes truth in action.

An investigation into the ethos of the church in South Africa unravels a tendency to separate the 'sacred' from the 'profane'. Biblical spirituality is Kingdom spirituality. If the Christian life is understood from the perspective of the Kingdom of God, then it embraces the whole of life and reality. From the perspective of the Kingdom of God, personal and social transformations belong together.

Attention is then given to crises as 'part and parcel' of life. Whilst a social crisis like the *Apartheid* situation in South Africa might be unique, all of us encounter crises as we go through life. The emergent nuclear families are geographically removed from extended family members who could offer support in times of crisis. The church functioning as an *oikos* to families can provide the social support that is critical for adequately coping with a crisis. A church focused on relationships can provide timeless support. Each family displays unique coping behaviours. Families do recover over time. All social systems seek a state of balance or equilibrium. Social support has been isolated as a critical factor in the coping process of a family system. Times of crises provide the church opportunities to effect a ministry of praxis as *oikos* to families.

The process of going through the stages after a serious crisis affects the family system. We have approached this study of the church as *oikos* to families (in addition to the church also being a family for individuals) with a praxis orientation, which makes it imperative that the church as a family moves beyond an 'ambulance' ministry. Self-criticism, that is, critical reflection on praxis has

to characterise all efforts to be a family of families. Personal or interpersonal problems were exacerbated by the socio-political crisis in South Africa (De Gruchy, 1988:42). The conflict between the statements of churches in *Apartheid* South Africa vividly illustrates this.

The thesis of this study is that the early church functioning as *oikos* provides inspiration for the church to meet some of the challenges of our new South Africa. Through the application of the methodology of social-scientific criticism and contextual theology this study attempted to formulate principles for the ministry of the church. It was imperative that these guidelines take into account the exigencies of its situation, as part of contextual methodology. The church as *oikos* is best suited to heal the wounds inflicted by any hostile environment. The present challenge of reconstruction and the HIV-Aids pandemic in the new South Africa offer a unique opportunity in the implementation of such a model for ministry.

7.2 CONCLUSION

The concepts of church and family in the Gospel of Luke and in the Acts of the Apostles were examined in this study. It was found that the first church community was constituted on the pattern of the extended family in the Greco-Roman world of the first century. This allowed for the development of a rich culture of interpersonal relationships. It was within this environment that the love taught and exemplified by Jesus found its first concrete expression. In family churches, comprising of between 50-100 members, care was taken of individuals in a holistic sense. This was especially important in a society that existed long before the invention of social services, pensions, hospitals and care for the aged. This example set by the first church had far-reaching political consequences. In the fourth century it was this kind of church structure that was taken as a model for the whole of the Roman Empire.

This study successfully employed contextual and social scientific methods to analyse the biblical concept of the early church as a 'family'. This was a pioneering attempt to look at the first century church through South African eyes. A sociological and structural analysis of the structure of local families was effected, while also exploring the interface between present day family structures and the

first century *oikos*-based churches. The result of this research is of importance to the church in this country and will serve to foster a culture of rich personal relationships in a situation where church communities tend to become impersonal and apathetic. This has profound implications for both churches and families. It also establishes the hope that the church of Christ can once again present a model for social change.

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