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**Lukan Literary Strategy
and
Soteriology
as
Public Theology
(Part 1)**

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INTRODUCTION

Public theology may be defined as that which “invites the Christian faith and theological reflection to the cross roads of human existence in the public square and the public domain.”¹ The discipline takes as its chief concerns the well being of the populace (i.e., putting people first) as well as the political dimensions of culture and society (issues of governance). In other words, the business of the public theologian, like Dr Luke’s, is about human flourishing physiologically (and otherwise)—through sustainable good governance. If we define psychology as the study of human behaviour, then theology—broadly speaking—is the quest to understand God’s behaviour relative to his sentient creatures in particular. For the writer of the Third Gospel, the quintessential public theologian is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ whose manifesto Luke artistically published² in chapter 4 of his Gospel:

¹ Garnett Roper, *Caribbean Theology as Public Theology* (Kingston: GLR, 2019), 25.

²“Luke exhibits careful attention to structure at several levels. . . . Structural organization is apparent also in units of different sizes, such as the cycles of persecution in chap. 3-7, and individual units such as 19:1-7. Ring composition (chiasmus) and inclusion are means of presenting rounded sections. Chapters 13-14, for example, are framed by a complex inclusion. When travel is involved, the pattern follows the time honoured “there and back” formula, as in Jerusalem-Samaria-Jerusalem (8:14-28). This pattern continues with Paul, who repeatedly returns to Jerusalem, but is decisively broken off in chaps. 27-28”. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts*, 20.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."³

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

The artwork follows:

A. synagogue (16a)

B. Jesus standing (16b)

C. Jesus given the scroll (17a)

D Jesus' reading from Isaiah (18-19)

C'. Jesus giving back the scroll (20a)

B'. Jesus sitting (20b)

A'. synagogue (20c)³

Therefore, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry we get an inkling of what his public theological engagement looks like; it is:

- Pneumatic (*The Spirit of the Lord is on me*)
- Messianic (*because he has anointed me*)
- Evangelistic (*to proclaim good news to the poor*)
- Philanthropic (*He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners*)
- Therapeutic (*. . . recovery of sight for the blind*)
- Salvific (*to set the oppressed free*)

³ David Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 71-72.

- Prophetic (*to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*)⁴

In the selfsame chapter we see how energetic Jesus became when he faced temptation (vv 1-2), and even after that (v 14a). After the time of the Judges, the three classes of leaders (messengers, mediators, and monarchs) were anointed for the tasks. One of them in particular was an evangelist (Isaiah), and all the genuine shepherds of old were indeed philanthropic, therapeutic, salvific, and prophetic (defined in modern times as speaking truth to power!). The training of the apostles was to equip them to be the kind of public figures who would be less and less of the problem and more and more of the solution and to face the endemic societal challenges and structures of corruption, along the aforementioned lines of engagement (Luke 10). Therefore, we are not surprised that Luke's second volume is replete with echoes of the programmatic declaration of Luke 4 cited above.⁵

So this paper pursues the thesis that the Lukan concept of Bio-Narratives⁶ as a way of attempting to write a piece of history could serve as a useful tool to aid in the repositioning and rebranding of the project of Caribbean Public Theology. The Gospel of Luke, the longest book in the New Testament, has been long since recognised as the Gospel of the poor, the disenfranchised, and the marginalised--themes which resonate with the theological objectives of Majority World theologians, particularly those from the Caribbean whose forebears were numbered amongst the enslaved.

Although the precise nature of Luke's two-volume work is still being debated, few can question his purpose in producing a Gospel and its sequel as his contribution to the thrust of social re-engineering at a time when slavery was an accepted norm. If as Gordon points out that Luke and "quite a number of biblical texts are autobiographical while ironically pointing beyond the authors through the uniqueness of biblical textual intent . . . [and] read as moments of divine intervention,"⁷ the writer of the Third Gospel must have composed his work with the intention and anticipation of the kind of divine intervention that was familiar to him in his reading of the Hebrew Bible (*e.g.* Exodus 1-12).

And if the stories of liberators such as Moses and the Messiah were familiar to him, Luke drew his greatest inspiration from the latter whose exploits he researched

⁴ There are also notable instances of apologetic moments in both volumes (*e.g.*, Acts 2; 14; 17; 22, 26); I suspect that some of the adjectives (ministries) overlap, and not a few in parentheses are double entendre.

⁵ With even a similar ring structure, as we will see below.

⁶ The literary genre of both Lukan volumes. See Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospel and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 2000), 2.

⁷ Judith Soares and Oral Thomas, *Contending Voices in Caribbean Theology* (Kingston: Jugaro, 1998), 49.

diligently and whose manifesto and mission he published confidently. Perhaps if the practitioners of Caribbean Theology follow the Lukan paradigm as one way to express their concern over the ills of the region, further progress may come about. The type of reflection envisaged will also allow said practitioners to highlight the contribution of seminal thinkers like Hyacinth Boothe, Idris Hamid *et. al.* The proposal is not entirely new. What is being attempted here is an effort to ground the proposal in the putative writing strategy of the Third Evangelist. But before we do that we take a look at the writer's language and artistry, as well as his creative historiography or way of writing a 'published theology'.

Sketch of Luke's Language and Literary Strategy

The Greek language has enriched English in many ways. The former Greek scholar and principal of Jamaica Bible College (now Regent College of the Caribbean), Ted Edwards, for instance, has sought to show how heavily indebted the lexicon of the Queen's English is to koine Greek, the language of the marginalized, which, in some cases, supplanted, the official tongue (Latin) of the ancient Romans. The following examples of Greek words that have made their way into the English vocabulary⁸ are given by Edwards: *catharsis, asthma, dysentery, dogma, drama, echo, idea, criterion, horizon, basis, character, panacea, angel, paralysis, thorax, rheumatism, autonomy, biology, orthodoxy, energy, therapeutic, mathematics*, just to name a few! My two favourite are names of the greatest man who ever lived: *Alpha and Omega*.

If the language of Jesus was primarily Semitic,⁹ Luke's was definitely Greek.¹⁰ His works have come down to us in this language, and that of the best koine variety. At the time of Luke it was the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean world, legacy of the great Alexander of Macedonia; and while Jesus must have been fluent in Hebrew and especially Aramaic, Greek must have been known to him as well.¹¹ Once thought to be a combination of the Classical and Hebrew by some scholars, we have come to realize that the language of Luke (et al.) was

⁸ Ted Edwards, *Greek without Tears*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Resource Publication, 2014), 4-5. See also D A Black, *Linguistics for Students of NT Greek* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 144-169; D Thomas et al., ed. *Prison Epistles: Exegetical Questions/Devotional Expositions* (Kingston: DVP, 2001), 50-52.

⁹ According to Hughson Ong ("Language Choice in Ancient Palestine: A Sociolinguistic Study of Jesus' Language Use Based on Four 'I have come' Sayings," [BAGL 1: {2012}, 63-101], Jesus used both Aramaic and Greek.

¹⁰ Like he did for the Third Gospel, Luke's "effort to adapt the story of Jesus stylistically to the narrative style of the Holy Scriptures of Israel is guided by an interest in signalling to the reader that the narrated events are nothing other than a continuation of the history of Israel": Michael Wolter, *The Gospel according to Luke: (Vol. 1 [Luke 1–9:50 Waco, TX: Baylor, 2016], 5).*

¹¹ Richard A Horsley, *Archaeology, History and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbi* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 154-71.

indeed the language of the common wo/man. This knowledge has been vouchsafed through the discoveries of the various papyri in Africa.¹²

The Greek language in general has over 3000 years of history, from the sixteenth century BCE to the present. The Koine, the language of the NT, flourished between BCE 300-300 CE. In comparison to the forms which preceded it, the Koine was characterized by simplicity of syntax, form, and vocabulary amenable and useful for merchants, travellers, soldiers and statesmen alike. This is well attested by the thousands of Papyri found in North Africa, preserving “for us the actual life of the day and includ[ing] letters of all sorts . . . contracts, receipts, proclamations, anything, everything.”¹³

Accepting the overall contribution of the mass of Greek papyri on our understanding of the NT, Nigel Turner¹⁴ feels however that their value has been overstated to the neglect of other important features, such as the influence of the LXX (strong in Acts) and, what the REB calls, the Jewish languages. In other words, not all important terms in the Greek New Testament can be elucidated by invoking the papyri. There are many words that are best understood against a Semitic background, and even where the papyri shed light on some terms, a more complete colouring can be seen from the perspective of the Aramaic or Hebrew. So, with this caveat in mind, there is a wealth of knowledge to be gained by carefully weighing the vocabulary of Luke in the light emanating from the ancient Orient. Writing on “the more or less *popular*” appeal of the NT writers, particularly that of Luke’s companion, Deissmann remarks: “St. Paul too can command the terse pithiness of the homely gospel speech, especially in his ethical exhortations as pastor. These take shape naturally in clear-cut *maxims* such as the people themselves use and treasure up.”

But even where St. Paul is arguing to himself and takes more to the language of the middle class, even where he is carried away by priestly fervour of the liturgist [cf. Rom 15] and the enthusiasm of the psalmist, his Greek never becomes literary. . . . thickly studded with the rugged, forceful words taken from the popular idiom [like that of Jamaican], it is perhaps the most brilliant example of the artless though not inartistic colloquial prose of a travelled city resident of the Roman Empire, its wonderful flexibility making it just the Greek for use in a mission to all the world.¹⁵

¹²The conclusion is that “Biblical Greek, except where it is translation Greek [like the LXX], was simply the vernacular of daily life.” James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek, volume 1: Prolegomena* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908), 5.

¹³A. T. Robertson and W.H. Davis, *New Short Grammar of the Greek NT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 12-13.

¹⁴Nigel Turner, *Christian Words* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), vii-xiv. “It is important, therefore, to guard against two opposing errors: not everything which conforms to Semitic idiom is a Semitism, nor is everything which appears somewhere or sometime in Greek genuine Greek” (*BDF*, 4).

¹⁵Deissmann, *Light*, 63-64.

Since Deissmann wrote, not a few studies have demonstrated that both Luke and Paul are much better literary artists than was first imagined.¹⁶

Bruce adds,

Whatever truth there may be . . . that Luke was [also] a painter, he certainly was an artist in words. Many will endorse the verdict ... that his Gospel 'is the most beautiful book there is.' How immensely poorer we should be without his description of the herald angels with their *Gloria in excelsis*, the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, the story of the Emmaus Road!

Bruce continues:

It is the same artist who in his second book depicts for us in vivid, unforgettable words the scene where Peter stands and knocks at Mary's door, the earthquake at Philippi, the uproar in the Ephesian theatre, the riot in Jerusalem when Paul was arrested, the appearance of Paul before Agrippa, the storm and shipwreck on the voyage to Rome, the fire of sticks and the viper of Malta. Renan also said of Lk. that it was 'the most literary of the Gospels'. We may extend this judgement to [Acts] and call the combined work the most literary part of the NT. We [consequently] find more really Classical Greek in Luke's writing than anywhere else in the NT....¹⁷

And if we are to believe the proposals of recent scholarship, we find more than a fair share of ring compositions in Luke's second volume as well.¹⁸ Take, for instance, the following structure, which purports to cover the major literary matters arising from a general discourse analysis of Luke's sequel:

A. Dominion Matters 1:1-7:59

- Here Luke records crucial matters regarding the *Dominium Dei* (divine lordship) relative to Jesus' perspective on the kingdom, his promise of power from the Spirit, his precept for world evangelization, and the prayerful waiting on the Lord¹⁹ on the part of the apostolate for the day of Pentecost. Chapters 2-7 catalogue some of the successes and setbacks of the church.

B. Dispersion Matters 8:1-14:28

¹⁶See for example, Spencer, *Paul's Literary Style*, 10, and Keener, *Acts*,

¹⁷ F F Bruce, *Acts*, 26.

¹⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson (*The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, Revised Edition [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999], 220) adds the following: "[E]vents in Acts clearly parallel those of the Gospel. . . . The cyclical patterns in Luke-Acts are placed within a story that is essentially and intentionally linear."

¹⁹ See Appendix.

- These chapters show how the gospel reached Samaria, Ethiopia, and Asia Minor (Turkey).

C. Deliberation Matters 15:1-41

- This crucial chapter, like the church councils it anticipates in the following centuries, points to the profound importance of theological reflection under the Spirit's guidance.

B.' Dispersion Matters 16:1 -28:16

- The closing chapters constitute a history (*His-story!*) of recapitulation and subsequent advancement of the gospel through precept, prayer and persecution.

A' Dominion Matters 28:17:31

- This completes the *inclusio* concerning the *Dominium Dei* (or kingdom of God motif) with which the book begins.

Above Luke employs ring composition (chiasmus)²⁰ to delineate the way in which the gospel reached Rome from Jerusalem.²¹ The structure highlights certain divine initiatives²² that engaged the Messianic community in a christologically motivated mission. A fifth initiative, the centrepiece of the macrostructure, focuses attention on the importance of theological discussion for the enterprise of gospel contextualization.²³

²⁰In commenting on Luke 9:6, Darrell Bock (Luke 1:1-9:50, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994], 817-818) comments: "By way of conclusion, Luke summarizes the mission briefly by referring to two primary tasks of the twelve: preaching the good news and healing (so also Acts 13:3 with 14:1-18). These are the same two categories with which Luke introduced the passage (Luke 9:1-2), except that he now gives them in reverse order (9:2 also spoke about the kingdom). The summary thus forms an *inclusio* with the introduction (Bovon 1989: 460). Some have pointed out the *inclusio* of Acts 1:6 ("kingdom") and 28:31 ("kingdom"); and the "reverse order" relative to the relevant Lukan mission mentioned by Bock that appears to parallel the purported macro-structure of Luke's second volume.

²¹For the chiasmus, see https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/cjet/17_094.pdf; and for one that includes the Lukan Gospel, see Kenneth R. Wolfe, "The Chiastic Structure of Luke-Acts and Some Implications for Worship," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 30 (Spring, 1980): 62-63.

²²See also Beverly Gaventa, "Initiatives Divine and Human in the Story World of Acts," in G.N. Stanton et al. eds., *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 79-89. According to J.B. Green (*The Gospel of Luke* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 830), "[T]he story of Luke-Acts is, in large part, the tale of two competing purposes--that of God and that which opposes God."

²³ In these four panels, there are four momentous movements, which sandwich another panel that is of no less missiological moment. The A-B structure straddles the eight Lukan summaries, dividing them in three parts (2:47; 5:14; 6:7/11:21, 24; 12:24/16:5; 19:20). Also each "of the key editorial markers (6:7; 12:24; 19:20) climaxes a section of the narrative recording the resolution of some conflict or the cessation of opposition and persecution"

Also, Luke's two volumes end the way they began, with both the prologue (Luke 1:1-4) and the epilogue (Acts 28:30-31) marked by a certain weightiness of literary style that forms an unmistakable *inclusio* (notice also the *inclusio* in the structure above, pointing to the kingdom of God).²⁴ A comparison between Luke 3:38 and Acts 3:21 shows that Luke was not unaware of the cosmic character of his public and published engagement, as depicted below;

CREATION OLD AND NEW

A-Material Universe (Gen 1:1-25)

B-Image Bearers (Gen 1:26-31)

B'- Image Bearers (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17)

A'- Material Universe (2 Pet 3; Rev 21-22)²⁵

If the vision²⁶ presented by the above macro-structure is true, theology as praxis in any shape or form (BB' as *imago Dei* and *imago Christi*, respectively) is well worth it in the end, notwithstanding the present struggle. That struggle will begin after Acts chapter 2—a chapter with its own ring compositions. Keener suggests the following chiasmic structure for Peter's speech:

A This one . . . you *crucified* and killed (Acts 2:23)

B But God *raised* him up . . . (2:24)

C David says + Psalm 16 quote involving right hand (2:25-28)

D The patriarch *David died* . . . (2:29)

E Being therefore a *prophet*, and knowing (2:30)

F that God has sworn and *oath* to him (2:30)

(D.G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 33). "Another significant point of progression," says Peterson (p.70), "is the offering of salvation to the Gentiles (1:8; 8:-40; 9:15; 10:34-43; 13:46-48; 22:21; 28:25-29)

²⁴ J. Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20* (Waco, Texas, 1989), 4.

²⁵ This structure is commentary on Luke 4: 18-19.

²⁶Undoubtedly, it is clearer in 2020!

- G that he would set one of his descendants *on his throne* (2:30)
- H he foresaw and spoke (2:31)
- I of the *resurrection* (2:31)
- J that he was not abandoned to *Hades* (2:31)
- J' nor did his flesh see *corruption* (2:31)
- I' This Jesus God *raised up* (2:32)
- H' of that we are all *witnesses* (2:32)
- G' Being therefore exalted *at the right hand of God* (2:33)
- F' having received from the father the *promise* of the Holy Spirit (2:33)
- E' He has poured this [*phenomenon*] which you see and hear (2:33)
- D' For *David* did not ascend into the heavens (2:34)
- C' For he himself says + Psalm 110 quote involving right hand (2:33-35)
- B' that God has made him *Lord and Christ* (2:36)
- A' this Jesus whom you *crucified* (2:36)²⁷

The centre of the structure is the unit **JJ'**, but it is artistry gone awry if the body of Jesus was never buried, as suggested by Martin.²⁸ What follows is an adaptation of a schema on 2:38 mentioned by Blomberg:²⁹

- A** Invitation to Incorporation (*Repent*)
- B** Identification (*and be baptized/identified, every one of you*)
- B'** Identification (*within the name of Jesus Christ*)
- A'** Initiation and Incorporation³⁰ (*forgiveness ... the gift of the Holy Spirit*)

Keener also offers the following proposal that encompasses the final verses of the chapter.³¹

²⁷ Keener, *Acts*, 1:864; italics and ellipses are original. Bold type added.

²⁸ D B Martin, *Biblical Truths* (New Haven/London: Yale, 2017), 211; contra Paul et al.; 1 Cor 15:1-4.

²⁹ Craig Blomberg, *New Testament Theology* (Waco, Texas: Baylor, 2018), 446.

³⁰ i.e., becoming a permanent member of the *Corpus Christi* (cf. John 14:15-16).

A People turning to Christ (through proclamation, 2:41)

B Shared worship meals (2:42)

C Shared possessions (2:44-45)

B' Shared worship meals (2:46)

A' People turning to Christ (through believers' behaviour, 2:47).

The B-C-B sections are quite stunning, considering the fact that neither the noun nor the verb for love appears in the book.³² Luke prefers to show love in action throughout his second volume (e.g., 2:44-47; 5:33-37). Interestingly, the ring composition which includes Acts 2:41 above dovetails nicely with other succeeding chapters.

[A] Temple-house Frame (2.46)

[B] Public-Temple Tour (3.1-4.22)

[C] Private House Interlude (4.23-5.11)

[B'] Public-Temple Tour (5.12-41)

[A'] Temple-house Frame (5.42)³³

When we come to chapter 15, the centre of Luke's second volume and putative middle of his macro-structure, we are invited to ponder yet another ring composition:

A Antioch (v. 1)

B Revelation of the problem by the delegation, apostles and elders (vv2-7a)

C Peter's speech (7b-11)

D Missionary report featuring the acts of God (v.12)

C' James' speech (13-21)

B' Resolution of the problem by the delegation, the apostles and the elders (vv 22-29)

A' Antioch (30-35)

³¹ C Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 2014), 325.

³² So Dunn, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), xxii.

³³

For Luke, then, even when the missionaries are not carrying out their substantive responsibility, the acts of God among the Gentiles take centre-stage. Tannehill³⁴ also notes a neat design in v.16, built around four first-person singular future verbs; the construction (with some embellishments) looks something like this:

A I will return after these things

and

B I shall rebuild the fallen tent of David

and

B' I shall build again its ruins

and

A' I will restore it

These I-statements justify Stauffer's insightful observation that "divine I-declarations in the NT are extremely rare, being limited for the most part to quotations from the OT." In his summary of the OT data, Stauffer (TDNT 2: 343ff) informs us that the "'I-style' became characteristic of the self-revealing God of Israel'. This is perhaps best exemplified by ' Ex. 3:14 (I am what I am) and the introductory . . . I am YHWH of the Decalogue (Ex. 20:2ff; cf. Dt. 32:39ff)". According to Stauffer, God is presented as the 'ultimate Subject' in Isaiah 40-45—the first and final Word, the omnipotent Will and exclusive Source of 'revealing and reconciling grace [on which] we are totally dependent'. Therefore, similar predications of kings or gods are considered arrogant and blasphemous (Ezek. 28)." Stauffer continues: "The NT maintains the belief that God is absolute Subject, but offers few I-declarations on God's part except in quotations, e.g., Is. 45:23 in Rom. 14:11, Deut. 32:35 in Rom. 12:19, Ps. 2:7 in Acts 13:33; Heb. 5:5, and Ex. 3:14 in expanded form in Rev. 1:8. . . . The rabbis avoid this style, fighting against the real or apparent pretension of I-sayings in the name of monotheism (cf. Gamaliel's caution in Acts 5:36-37)."

It is against this background—the reticence of the Rabbis to use first person pronouns in the singular, the infrequency of the divine 'I' in the NT, and the shared conviction of the NT writers that God is the ultimate Subject—that the I-locution above stands out in bold. Talbert's contribution is worth citing as well, since it includes the central section (Acts 15) of Luke's second volume.

³⁴ Cited in D.G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*. PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 431.

- A 15:1-29 (“Paul and others go to Jerusalem”)
 B 15:30-16:15 (“.... The Holy Spirit forbids”)
 C 16:16-40 (“We hear of an [exorcism accomplished]”
 D 17:1-15 (“Synagogue debates”)
 E 17:16-34 (“Pagans are taught accurately”)
 F 18:1-11 (“Paul argues in the Synagogue”)
 F’ 18:12-23 (“Paul argues in the Synagogue”)
 E’ 18:24-19:7 (“Christians are taught accurately”)
 D’ 19: 8-10 (“Synagogue debates”)
 C’ 19:11-20:12 (“We hear of an [attempted exorcism]”
 B’ 20:21:14 (“.... The Holy Spirit warns”)
 A’ 21:15-26 (“Paul and others go to Jerusalem”)

The final ring composition we will display comes from ACTS 20:

- [A] 18-19: “You know . . . , serving the Lord with all humility”
 [B] 18b-20: “the whole time . . . tears . . . in public and from house to house”
 [C] 20: “I did not shrink from announcing”
 [D] 21: “bearing witness”
 [D’] 24: “to bear witness”
 [C’] 27: “I did not shrink from announcing”
 [B’] 31: “three years night and day . . . with tears”
 [A’] 34: “You know that these hands served”³⁵

³⁵ R.C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A literary Interpretation*, v.2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 253.

Like the structure in chapter 15, the one immediately above is also connected to significant I-statement.

- *The 'I' of Pastoral Commitment* (31)
- *The 'I' of Prayerful³⁶ Commendation* (32)
- *The 'I' of Personal Conviction* (33-34)
- *The 'I': The Paradigmatic Christ* (35)

This final declaration is climactic, precisely because it is Christocentric. It echoes in a very definite way the programmatic declaration of Luke 4. A comparison of the two discourses, that is, of Acts 20:35 and the one in the Gospel, helps the reader to appreciate better what Luke means by the 'weak' and the 'poor' – all the marginalized, disenfranchised, imprisoned – in a word – the enslaved. The whole discourse of Acts is dedicated to fleshing out these themes first enunciated in the Third Gospel, and all the artistry displayed above is in the service of the writer's soteriology.

But there is a question we need to ask at this juncture: Why did Luke not include the dominical saying of verse 28 in his first volume? It seems that the narrator strategically positioned this messianic gem here (v 28) to tighten the connection between the Messiah and the apostle to the Gentiles, similar to what is done elsewhere. For example, in 13:47 there is also an important echo of Luke 2:32, where similar language is used of Jesus. The Mission of the Servant is undertaken both by Jesus (cf. 26:23) and, to a far lesser extent, Paul, who with much difficulty managed to tear himself away from his beloved brethren (36).

More recent studies of Luke's language and literary devices have returned to an emphasis which was that of early Greek grammarians, that is, on the verb.³⁷ In fact the modern study is enriched by the study of linguistics, particularly the investigation into the nature of the verbal system. A work that is useful in this regard is that of Timothy Brookins, who summarizes the findings of the growing consensus by positing the following:

According to this new perspective, Greek verbs grammaticalized not time but rather the semantic values of "aspect" and "space." . . . I accept the emphasis of recent studies that Greek verbs grammaticalize aspect (and in some sense also space). On the basis of the cognitive-linguistic theories of "viewpoint," "mental space," and "conceptual blending," however, I argue

³⁶ See Appendix 2 on the Lord's Prayer.

³⁷Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 20.

that time also remained a grammaticalized, or semantic, feature of indicative verb forms . . . , I [also] demonstrate that particular tense forms correspond invariably with particular times, relative to projected mental space: the imperfect, aorist, perfect, and pluperfect with anterior time; the present with contemporaneous time; and the future with posterior time. In short, Greek indicative verbs grammaticalize aspect as well as time and (in the cases of the perfect and pluperfect) distinctive configurations of mental spaces.³⁸

The character of the Greek of Luke (which reminds us so much of the JNT) and the other NT writers may best be summarized in the words of a twentieth-century translator:

I must, in common justice, confess here that for many years I had viewed the Greek of the New Testament with a rather snobbish disdain. I had read the best of Classical Greek both at school and Cambridge for over ten years. To come down to the *Koine* of the first century A.D. seemed, I have sometimes remarked rather uncharitably, like reading Shakespeare for some years and turning to the Vicar's letter in the Parish Magazine! But I think now that I was wrong: I can see that the expression of the Word of God in ordinary workaday language is all a piece with God's incredible humility in becoming Man in Jesus Christ. And, further, the language itself is not as pedestrian as I had at first supposed.³⁹ We now turn our attention to outstanding West Indian Bible students who have followed in Luke's footsteps.

Caribbean Public Theologians

Over the years Caribbean theologians have shown more than a passing interest in the Bible.⁴⁰ If, Like Dr Luke, they insist that their starting point for doing theology is their lived-reality in the shadow of Empire, this must never be understood to mean they have devalued the OT⁴¹/NT as a source and point of departure for theological reflection. If the writer of the Third Gospel made good use of Koine Greek, perhaps the first to employ the Jamaican Language in a scholarly work is Dr Carlton Dennis, former Academic Dean at the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology (CGST). His monograph, *Proverbs and People: A Comparative Study of Afro-Caribbean and Biblical Proverbs* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1995) is replete with what is commonly called Patwa/Patois. Concerning this work, Dr Neville Callam has this to say: "Dennis examine[s] the folk wisdom tradition of Caribbean people

³⁸ "A Tense Discussion: Rethinking the Grammaticalization of Time in Greek Indicative Verbs," *JBL* 137, no. 1 (2018): 147. I'm yet to digest the vocabulary drawn from cognitive linguistics and the like, but his examples appear quite convincing. A third reading may help my cause.

³⁹Phillips, *Ring of Truth*, 18.

⁴⁰Theresa Lowe-Ching, "Method in Caribbean Theology," In *Caribbean Theology*, ed. H. Gregory. Kingston: UWI, 1995; John Holder, "Is This the Word of the Lord? In Search of a Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics." In *Religion, Culture and Tradition in the Caribbean*. Edited by Hemchand Gossai and Nathaniel Samuel Murrell. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

⁴¹ It is now common knowledge that Luke's soteriology is rooted in the Hebrew Bible.

to discern ways in which God was at work among [them] . . . [He] offer[s] a theological analysis of Proverbs in use in the region and probe[s] the meaning of this reality.”⁴²

As dean, Dr Dennis supervised the following works: Kathy Earle, “An Exegetical Analysis of Psalm 1 in Light of the Contemporary Trends toward Humanism in the Development of Self Identity,” M. A. Thesis. CGST, 1996; Patrick Harrison, “The Song of Songs and Human Sexuality, with a Focus on 8:4-14 and Application to the Jamaican Context. M.A. Thesis. CGST 1998, and Anthony Oliver. *Salvation as Justice in Amos 5: J 8-27: Implications for Jamaica*. Ann Arbor: UML 1991. Dr Oliver, a Trinidadian, would go on to succeed Dr Dennis⁴³ as academic dean at the CGST, but not before completing his doctorate at Trinity International University, with a dissertation entitled *Creation and Redemption⁴⁴ in Amos: A Multi-faceted Approach, with Emphasis on the Hymns*.⁴⁵ (Ann Arbor: UMI. 1998), and making a contribution⁴⁶ to the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

Another scholar from the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is Steed Vernyl Davidson. Hailing from Tobago proper, Dr Davidson is associate professor of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. He earned a PhD in Hebrew Bible from Union Theological Seminary in New York, an STM from Boston University and both an MA and BA from the University of the West Indies. His work centres on deploying postcolonial theory as a means of interrogating aspects of power in the Bible, biblical interpretation, and use of Scriptures in contemporary cultures. He is the author of *Empire and Exile: Postcolonial Readings of the Book of Jeremiah* (2011) and the co-editor of *Islands, Islanders, and the Bible:⁴⁷ RumiNations* (2015). Dr Davidson’s current research focuses on the oracles against the nations in the Prophetic Books in light of contemporary challenges of the nation-state. Dr. Davidson was an ordained minister in the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas before becoming an elder in the United Methodist Church (USA). He served churches in St. Vincent, his native Tobago, as well as in the New York Annual Conference of the UMC in Manhattan and Long Island.

Former lecturer in Hebrew at CGST and now president of the JTS, Dr Garnett Roper, commemorated Jamaica’s 50th anniversary with a publication bearing the title, *Jubilee*,

⁴² Callam, *From Fragmentation to Wholeness: Race, Ethnicity, and Communion* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2017), 94.

⁴³ He is also the author of *Jonah: A Picture of the Modern Christian*. Kingston, JA: SRI, 2001.

⁴⁴ Two Lucan themes.

⁴⁵ Cf. Luke’s similar emphasis in chapters 1-2 of his Gospel.

⁴⁶ An article on mourning (*abl*).

⁴⁷ The Barnabas of Acts, a native of Cyprus, would love to read this!

Jubilee: This Is the Year of Jubilee. Essentially The book, we are told, is “a profound theological statement on our progress as Jamaicans” as well as a call to reflect on the love of God for the marginalized in our society.⁴⁸ A later and more substantial publication along similar lines is *Thus Says the Lord* (Kingston: Jugaro, 2018).

J Richard Middleton, professor of Biblical Worldview and Exegesis at Northeastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, NY, and adjunct professor of Old Testament at the CGST, believes that Roper’s latest OT contribution “has done the church and the wider society in opening up the . . . radical message of the Minor Prophets. These mediations not only challenge the conscience; they model an approach of listening to Scripture for its ancient message, which continues to speak with great relevance to our context.” The same thing could be said of Dr Middleton’s revised doctoral dissertation (*The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), because:

Middleton exhibits a powerful capacity for big issues, a patience with detail, and a sure theological sensibility. His study ranges all the way from comparative historical analysis to contemporary issues of ideology critique. The result is a study of a crucial biblical-theological phrase that is sure to become a benchmark in exegetical-hermeneutical work. Middleton's unwavering theological focus keeps the detail in the service of big issues, and culminates with a wondrous affirmation of a generous God. Such a God stands over against ancient modes of parsimonious violence and, by implication, over against contemporary practitioners of the same parsimonious violence. A most important read! (Walter Brueggemann, Columbia Theological Seminary)

It is Cristina Garcia-Alfanzo who interrogated the Hebrew Bible concerning its stories of womanhood (a Lucan emphasis) in order to unmask and seek vistas of liberation vis-à-vis patriarchal hegemony.⁴⁹ UTCWI graduate Dr Raphael Thomas has a popular-level piece (*Biblical Dynamics for Revival Today: Lessons from the Life of King Hezekiah*. Annotto Bay, St Mary: RTP, 2011) that elicits the following comment from a Denver Seminary professor:

Through the combination of a marvellous gift of exposition, profound knowledge of the Scripture, and a heart that thirsts after God, Dr. Raphael Thomas makes this ancient text speak with power and poignancy to contemporary believers. All those consumed with

⁴⁸ “BOOK REVIEW,” *Groundings* (July 2013): 81-83.

⁴⁹ *Resolviendo: Narratives of Survival in the Hebrew Bible and in Cuba Today*. Peter Lang. 2010. Cited in Roper *Caribbean Theology as Public Theology* (Kingston: Xpress, 2012), 204.

the desire to see revival in our time and more importantly to experience revival in their lives, will find a great resource here. (Dieumeme Noelliste)

Dr Burchell Taylor, in many ways Roper's scholarly and pastoral mentor, has a trilogy⁵⁰ that makes a serious contribution to the project of Caribbean Theology, namely, *Psalms 23, Daniel, and Living Wisely: Reflections on the Wisdom Books*. This latest book "deals with lessons to be learnt from the wisdom books i.e., Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes with special focus on the Caribbean context. For Taylor, the wisdom tradition focuses on the day-to-day struggles, which assist in making sense of life."⁵¹

As we have come to expect from William Watty, a challenge is presented in his latest publication to "the valuable insights that have accrued from Martin Noth's hypothesis of a 'Deuteronomistic History [i.e.] the hypothesis itself and analyses deriving from it.'" Watty senses some failure here "to account satisfactorily for the place of 2 Samuel 7:1-17 in the Joshua-Kings composition. That failure is due to a methodological flaw of taking a non-canonical configuration--namely the Deuteronomy-Kings corpus--as the point of departure and the interpretative key. His work (*The Nathan Narrative in 2 Samuel 7:1-17: A Traditio-historical Study*. [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016]) attempts "to remedy that flaw".⁵²

Hemchand Gossai, Associate Dean of Liberal Arts at Northern Virginia Community College, USA, has published a flurry of OT works which includes the following: *Barrenness and Blessing: Abraham, Sarah and the Journey of Faith*. Havertown: Lutterworth, 2010; *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2005; *Social Critique by Israel's Eighth-Century Prophets: Justice and Righteousness in Context*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006; and *The Hebrew Prophets after the Shoah: A Mandate for Change*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014. Recently he edited *Postcolonial Commentary and the Old Testament*. Edinburgh: T & T Clarke, 2018. Dr Stephen Russell's pieces, "Abraham's Purchase of Ephron's Land in Anthropological Perspective," *Biblical Interpretation* 21 (2013): 153-170 and *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009) are also worthwhile studies.⁵³ Finally, sometime ago the editor of Scripture Union JA,

⁵⁰ He has also written *Reflections on the Book of Micah*, which I have not seen.

⁵¹ https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/cjet/18_065.pdf.

⁵² https://www.amazon.com/Nathan-Narrative-Samuel-Traditio-historical-Study-ebook/dp/B01K0ARTU8/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1547334903&sr=8-1&keywords=william+watty%2C+old+testament.

⁵³ For a review of this, see http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/8240_9011.pdf

Margaret McLaughlin, brought together a number of writers to help produce a devotional for teens. The resulting project (*Time Out fi know God*. Kingston: SU: n.d.) covers a number of articles ranging from Genesis to Malachi.

Part 2 will explore an update of the NT engagement of Caribbean scholars as well as further examples of Luke's soteriology.

APPENDIX

THE LORD'S PRAYER, THE POPE, AND SOME SLICED-BREAD PROPOSALS

So right after this Jamaican mother taught her twins the Lord's Prayer, her son queried: "Mom, why ask for daily bread; why not ask for a whole year's supply of sliced bread?" Before his mother opened her mouth, his sister Dotty chimed in: "So that it might be fresh, Delly!"

The Lord's Prayer, which some of us learnt when we were very young (do parents still teach their children this gem?), is no stranger to proposals for change. One of the first such proposals concerns its name: should it still be called 'the Lord's Prayer' or 'the Disciples' Prayer'? The Lord's Prayer, some point out, is found in John 17 not Matthew 6 or Luke 11. I believe that the traditional name can stand because the Lord's Prayer is the prayer given by the Lord to his disciples to pray (at their request, according to Luke!), similar to the Lord's Supper is the sacrament given to said disciples to partake of. No one as far as I know has suggested a name change for the Eucharist!

So what is the Pope's proposal all about? It is not about the label as discussed above. In fact, the circles in which he moves and in the translation well known to him (the Latin Vulgate), the Prayer is simply known as the Pater noster (Latin for "Our Father")—a very good 'candidate' for a name change. The Pope's concern is more substantial. According to the *Christian Post* ⁵⁴ 'Despite opposition from traditionalists, Pope Francis has officially approved a change to the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:13 that replaces "lead us not into temptation" with "do not let us fall into temptation."'

The proposal is not new. A previous pontiff (Pope Benedict XVI), for example, introduces verse 13 with these words: '[t]he way this petition is phrased is shocking for many people: God certainly does lead us into temptation' (*Jesus of Nazareth* [NY:

⁵⁴ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/pope-francis-approves-change-to-the-lords-prayer>

Doubleday, 2007], 160). He then cites texts like James 1:13 and 1 Corinthians 10:13, to help elucidate his point. Even prof. Grant Osborne of blessed memory (formerly of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) in his magnum opus on Matthew's Gospel has a similar rendering to what the present Pope is proposing; translation work is challenging.⁵⁵

THE SYNOPTIC TRADITION

The Gospel of Mark does not carry the Lord's Prayer; Luke does, but in a shortened form as below.

Πάτερ, ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου ·

(Father, let your be set apart)

ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου ·

(Let your reign be fully manifested)

τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν ·

(Provide food for us regularly)

καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν,

(Forgive our sins)

καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν ·

(for we ourselves forgive our debtors)

*καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν.*⁵⁶

*(And do not allow us to be severely tested)*⁵⁷

In the Third Gospel, it is the disciples who are the ones who make the request for a "template" on prayer. After the Pater-noster, they are given a parable, a set of precepts, and a promise that was fulfilled at Pentecost (11:1-13).

⁵⁵ Here we need to note as well that the other Synoptic Gospels (Mark and Luke) employ relatively strong terms (including 'driven') to describe the beginning of Jesus' trials.

⁵⁶ Italics added.

⁵⁷ A plea of mitigation?

Another proposal, this time from a layman, is, ‘Do not *leave* us into temptation’. Some Bible scholars point to a possible Semitic (Jewish) turn of phrase behind the term for ‘lead’ which, they say, is employed with permissive force (‘do not allow us’). This comes very close to the intuitive layman-rendering above. Probably, then, the objections to the Pope are premature. Hopefully soon somebody will share with the Pope and his detractors the best translation of verse 13 since sliced bread: *An no mek wi fies notn we wi kaaz wi fi sin, bot protek wi fram di wikid wan.* (JNT; Emphases added).

Interestingly, *wikid wan* is a translation of *poneros* (evil) in the original – a word that is an ambiguous (deliberately?) masculine or neuter. If the latter is intended by the writer, it means (by way of application) *hurricane* or *drought* or *obeah* or *bike accident* or *stray bullet*, et cetera. If the former the JNT is right on target and the main reference in context is to the devil or any person he may choose to manipulate in order to harm those who have an intimate relationship with *Pater noster* (our Father). There’s even a story which brings out the point: ‘Pilot to tower, pilot to tower, I am low on fuel and I’m 300 miles away from the airport, what must I do?’ After a seven-second period of silence, a response came, ‘Control to pilot! Control to pilot! Say after me: Our Father ...’

The prayer is about our provision (vv 11-12) and protection (13). But let us not forget it is pre-eminently about our Father (Paternoster) – His honour, His kingdom, His will (vv 9-10). Its seven petitions (in Matthew 6) begin with these values that are also enshrined in Jamaica’s National Anthem – the same set of values that should shape our lives!

<p>Eternal Father bless our land Guard us with Thy mighty hand Keep us free from evil powers Be our light through countless hours To our leaders, Great Defender, Grant true wisdom from above Justice, truth be ours forever Jamaica, land we love Jamaica, Jamaica, Jamaica, land we love.</p>	<p><i>hltornal Faada, bles wi lan, Giaad wi wid Dai maiti an, Kip wi frii frahn hiiwl powa, Bi wi lait chruu kountles howa. Tu wi Liidaz, Griet Difenda, Grant chuu wizdam fram abov. Jostis, Chuut fi wi fieba, Jumieka, lan wi lob. Jumieka, Jumieka, Jumieka, lan wi lob.</i></p>
<p>Teach us true respect for all Stir response to duty's call Strengthen us the weak to cherish Give us vision lest we perish Knowledge send us, Heavenly Father, Grant true wisdom from above Justice, truth be ours forever Jamaica, land we love</p>	<p><i>Laan wi chuu rispek fi haal, Tor rispans tu juuti kaal, Chrentn wi di wiik fi cherish, Gi wi vijan les wi perish. Nalij sen wi Ebnli Faada, Grant chuu wizdam fram abov. Jostis, Chuut fi wi fieba, Jumieka, lan wi lob.</i></p>

Jamaica, Jamaica, Jamaica, land we love. ⁵⁸	<i>Jumieka, Jumieka, Jumieka, lan wi lob.</i>
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The anthem also reminds us that while we bask in the sunshine of God's blessings, there is darkness to overcome and evil forces within and without—a point that is made so well in the Lord's Prayer. Quite poignantly, the lyrics of our anthem do not allow us the luxury of forgetting that we are our brothers' keeper, and that we need divine strength to carry out this responsibility to God's image bearers. The quest for truth is a stark reminder that Christ is the true and living way to the eternal Father, to whom we pray. Our need for vision, as in Proverbs 29:18, is more than just foresight; it is nothing less than the divine counsel rightly understood and diligently obeyed. This is the knowledge and wisdom needed; this is the light through countless hours for which we have pleaded, lest we perish. Lest we perish. One more thing:⁵⁹

*He hath shown thee, O man, what is good: and what
doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to
love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?
(Micah 6:8)*

⁵⁸ <https://jamaicans.com/anth/>

⁵⁹ From *New Testament Theology* (Kingston: EMI, 2019), 372.