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CONTENTS

THE GOSPEL MANDATE AND THE JEW-GENTILE COALITION

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Dip Th

INTRODUCTION

We wish to pursue the thesis that the Matthean (Jewish) and Lucan (Gentile) concept of Bio-Narratives[1] 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 Contextual Theology. Contextual Theology may be defined as that which "invites the Christian faith and theological reflection to the crossroads of human existence in the public square and the public domain."1 The discipline

[1] The literary genre of both Lucan volumes. See Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 2000), 2; and D. L. Turner, *Interpreting the Gospel and Acts: An Exegetical Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2019), 49-52.

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

The Gospel of Luke, in particular, the longest book in the New Testament, has been long since recognized as the Gospel of the poor, the disenfranchised, and the marginalized--themes which resonate with the theological objectives of Majority World theologians.

> **Both Matthew and Luke shaped the Jesus tradition handed down to them to meet the needs of their Jewish and gentile constituents, with the latter providing a sequel with a universalizing literary format with no less persuasive rhetoric. Luke, of course, has been approached by many with a hermeneutic of suspicion because "one of the curious features of the Third Gospel is that, having been anointed to proclaim good news to the poor (4:18), Jesus is found, repeatedly, frequenting the homes of the wealthy (*e.g.* 5:29; 7:36; 14:1; 19:5)…. Indeed, one searches Luke's Gospel in vain for any narration of Jesus' preaching good news to *the poor*".[2] Also, the extent to which Luke is seen to be a reliable historian is still hotly debated.[3]**

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[2]J. B. Green, "Good news to whom? Jesus and the Poor in the Gospel of Luke, " in *Jesus of Nazareth, Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1994), 59.
One response to Professor Green comes from Dr David Cheung: "If you want to help the poor, you must disciple the rich; if we want to help the rich, you must understand their poverty;" cited in *Bethel Journal of Christian Theology and Ministry*, vol. 2 (February 2012), 5.

[3]But see Craig Keener's reflections in the following works: *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 320-382; and *Christobiography: Memory, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

These perceived weaknesses notwithstanding, we find the evangelists' historiographical strategy attractive because they wrote not just to theologize and inform but to subvert the worst features of Empire. Although Contextual Theology is for the most part postcolonial, its potential as a tool to ensure that the Lucan corpora of the poor and the marginalized permeate every stratum of the society is yet to be fully realized. Like the nations of the majority world, Luke, we believe, was a Gentile. He along with the other gospel writers also saw quite clearly the power of storytelling (with a focus on *bios*) as a way to effect meaningful cultural change. Writing the only Gentile Gospel treatise then (Luke-Acts), one can discern efforts of excellence in his work.

Minority status can be a motivating factor in this regard. While this may explain the quality of his work, the anxiety to outdo himself could be an explanation for the quantity of his output (cf. the following: of the 7, 947 verses found in the New Testament, the Gospel of John accounts for 1407; Paul's epistles, 2032; and Luke-Acts, 2157, over 25 percent of the New Testament).[4] Luke has shown keen interest in Gentile conversions and congregations (Acts 9-28). He also appears to epitomize and illustrate the *dictum* that all our theology must become biography, that is, a lived-experience of faith within community. But this to some extent, was an emphasis of the other Evangelists. Where Luke differs from them was to highlight the Messiah's interest in the plight of widows in particular (7:11-17; 18:1-5) and women in general (Luke 7: 36-50; 8: 1-3; 10: 38-42; 13: 10-17; 21: 1-4).

There are two other Lucan emphases that we need to examine. In the Third Gospel, one finds quite a number of references to prayer. What is very revealing is that a significant number of these references surround the prayer life of the Messianic Figure. This Figure not only prayed regularly; he is also portrayed by the Third Evangelist as one who allowed the Spirit of God to control and guide him, and this is precisely how he becomes an ideal role-model. In the sequel of Lucan Gospel which has come down to us as the Book of Acts, the writer appears eager to show that the early followers of the Messianic Figure not only sought to understand their world, but engaged it by the power of the Messianic Spirit in an effort to introduce other-worldly life transforming values. In other words, the theological relevance in terms of a radical social ethic that some

[4] . D. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 27.

insist should become a part of God-Talk in any geographical or historical context was already a Lucan burden shared with Theophilus and company. The conviction here is that the Lucan plot is no mere narrative, but a story which invites us to share its world, the commitment of its leading characters, and its enthusiasm for life. We now turn to Luke's exemplar.[5]

MATTHEW'S COMPOSITON

The theological emphases of the Evangelists are outlined as follows:

***Matthew: The revelatory discourse of the Sovereign (*Incarnate Royalty)**

Mark: The revelatory discourse of the Servant **(Incarnate Ministry)**

Luke: The revelatory discourse of the Son **(Ideal Humanity)[6]**

John: The revelatory discourse of the Shekinah **(Incarnate Deity)[7]**

[5]E.g., only Matthew and Luke provide us with genealogies, the Nativity, the *Pater noster*, and, arguably, a somewhat fulsome Passion and resurrection narratives. Luke also appears to pattern some of artistic works after Matthew's as we will try to show below.

[6]The 'Word' that became flesh (John 1:14) was a theological and redemptive necessity; the Son of God had to become the Son of Man (i.e., human) in order to die as the spotless Lamb of God (John 1:29). And he had to retain his divinity (John 1:1c), in order to give global and eternal value to his sacrifice. If Jesus were a sinner, he could only have died for his own sins (Rom 6:23a); if he were only a perfect human, he could only have died for one other person—most likely for someone in the Caribbean (conventional substitution)! But being the unique (*monogenēs*) member of the God-head, the only one to have taken on permanent human status, his death has value for all humanity, and his resurrection by the Spirit (Rom 1:1-4), the Father (Rom 6:4), and the Son of Man (John 2:19) makes available a right relationship with God (Rom 4:25). "'Tis mystery all!"

[7] *Acts: A Contextual Commentary* (Kingston: EMI, 202O), 51. See also, D V Palmer, "Chiastic Contours and the Book of Acts," CJET 17 (2018): 94-112.

Interestingly the canonical arrangement of the Gospels appears to have a fortuitous chiastic shape, with the two apostolic writers flanking the couple of apostolic associates:

A Matthew
B Mark
B[1] Luke
A[1] John

There are those who observe that the First Gospel not only has a few instances of ring composition[8] but is artistically and structurally shaped that way as well. For example W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr.[9] shared the following, which we have adapted:

A GENERATION 1-4 (Narrative)
B BENEDICTIION 5-7 (Discourse)
C INVITATION 8-9 (Narrative)

D INTERLOCUTION 10 (Discourse)

E REJECTION 11-12 (Narrative)

F CIRCUMLOCTION 13(Discourse)

E' RECEPTION 14-17 (Narrative)

D' INTERLOCUTION 18 (Discourse)

C' INVITATION 19-22 (Narrative)

[8] Ring Composition (used as a synonym for Chiasmus here) may be defined as: an "inverted sequence or cross-over of parallel words . . . sentence, or larger unit." Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: John Knox, 19--), 40. Ring Composition/Chiasmus belongs to an author's surface structure; therefore, as J. P. Louw (*Semantics of New Testament Greek* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982], 77) puts it, "This means that if an author wishes to say something (deep structure), he will choose a specific form (surface structure) in which to say it."

[9] *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 60; citing C.H. Lohr.

B’ MALEDICTION & DOMINION 23-25 (Discourse)

A’ EXPIRATION AND REGENERATION 26-28 (Narrative)

John Nolland speaks about the narrator’s

LUKE’S COMPOSITON

That the narrator of the Third Gospel used sources is widely acknowledged (cf. Luke 1:1-4). That one of these sources is Matthews Gospel is the conviction of very many NT scholars. So it comes as no surprise to discover that Dr Luke himself constructed similar ring compositions for his two-volume corpus as a literary artist in his own right. According to Bruce:

> **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 Phillipi, the uproar in the Ephesians 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 judgment 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….**[ii]

The following structure of Acts, rightly perceived, bears testimony to the above endorsement:

A. DOMINION MATTERS 1:1:7:59[10]

B. DISPERSION MATTERS 8:1-14:28[11]

C. DELIBERATION MATTERS 15:1-41[12]

B.' DISPERSION MATTERS 16:1 -28:16

A' DOMINION MATTERS 28:17:31

The artwork of Jesus' programmatic pronouncement recorded in Luke 4 also informs the book of Acts:

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)[13]

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*)**

[10] 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 Lord on the part of the apostolate for the day of Pentecost.

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

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

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

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

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,"[iii] 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 LXX/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 diligently and whose manifesto and mission he published confidently.

LUKE'S COMMISSION

Acts 1:8 introduces the programme of global blessing: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* The form of the imperative ("you shall be witnesses to Me"), I think, should be carefully noted.[iv] It is the same form of that found in Deuteronomy 6:5, and there is a possibility that Luke wants his hearer (Theophilus and any other 'lover of God') to make the link, especially in a treatise that, inexplicable, does not carry the popular word (*agapan*) for love (neither noun nor verb);[14] only the love of God can truly motivate the people of God to carry out this mandate (cf. Luke 10:25-37 that segues into the Good Samaritan story, and is preceded by the mission of the 70, too, and its sequel [17-24]).

[14] James Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), xxii.

The mission of Luke 10 is definitely a localized one, but the one in Acts 1:8 is global in scope.[v] Any discussion of the purpose of Acts must factor this in. And however we understand the baptism of the Spirit (1:5-8 vis-à-vis Acts 2:1-3, 38 [?]; and chapters 10 and 11), what is unmistakeable is that the boldness and empowerment for the mission is tied to it. This is ably demonstrated by Luke's catalogue of power-encounters throughout.[15] If chapter 1 verse 8 mandates witnessing, then the first act of witnessing is to be seen in chapter 2 which we will examine later. Acts 1:8 is an integral part of the so-called Great Commission which envisions Christ's disciples witnessing to the ends of the earth.

MATTHEW'S COMMISSION

Many churches today seem to treat the Great Commission (Mt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:45-49; Jn. 20:21 and Acts 1:8) as if it were given to a select few. But the Great Commission is for all of God's people and one does not need a call to obey it. [16]

At the beginning of Matthew's Gospel Jesus calls his disciples to become fishers of folk. When the period of training shall have run its course, the disciples' responsibility will take on global proportions. In 10: 5-33 we get a glimpse of what their practicum looks like, complete with a parting word of authoritative wisdom and warning (vv. 16, 32, 33). The first century apprenticed disciples were empowered by their Master not only to proclaim the truth and good news of the kingdom but to conduct healing clinics that would include various kinds of exorcism and the raising of the dead. Eventually Jesus later joined them (11:11; 12:22-23) in their philanthropic endeavors (with an offer of rest to the hurting in verse 28: "come to me all those who are deeply depressed, and I [*kagō*] shall refresh you"). He had also warned them to expect some negative reaction (10:22-25), which was

[15] On some of these, then and now, see Craig Keener (*Miracles: the Credibility of New Testament Accounts,* 2 vols. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011]); on 1:30 he observes, for example: "Luke does not describe miracles in Corinth, [but] Paul reports them as a dramatic and observable part of his ministry there (2 Cor 12:12). Whereas Luke mentions miracles merely in several locations, Paul seems to believe that they occurred virtually whenever he preached (Rom 15:18-19)."

[16] The Caribbean's Response to the Great Commission,"

exemplified in his own encounter with the Pharisees (12:24-26). The commission at the end of the book may be divided into three parts:

Girls' Testimony and Commission: *We held it!*

It has often been pointed out that the testimony of women in first century Palestine was considered inadmissible;[17] so for Mark and company to have privileged them in the passion and resurrection stories is remarkable. Matthew, unlike Mark, begins his gospel by including women in his genealogy. One would think that if he is doing such a thing, he would have included more reputable characters like Sarah or Deborah or Huldah, but this was not to be. But come to think of it, none o the prominent men he documents fare any better. He begins with David, Abraham; he even named Judah. If none of Judah siblings is mentioned by name, it is understandable that Dinah is missing in action, genealogically speaking. The last woman mentioned in the genealogy takes the spotlight. She is even linked to Isaiah's young maiden (Isa 7:14) of seven centuries earlier. Peter's mother-in-law is also fore grounded in Matthew 8, primarily because she became the recipient of the healing touch of Mary's firstborn. Peter's own mother[18] suffers the anonymity of Eve and other matriarchs like Rebecca. In chapter 28, Matthew apparently follows Mark in including Mary Magdalene and the "other Mary" but drops Salome. It was to these women the first commission was given. [Is Mk 16:5 and adumbration of messiah's enthronement? They came to anoint a body (τὸν τάφον) but saw none! What they saw instead was an angel. It was he who gave them the first installment of a two-part commission for the benefit of the male disciples; this much was gleaned from Mark's gospel. What Matthew added was the other part of the commission issued by the Lord himself, where "fear not" is repeated, along Galilee as the rendezvous setting (over 70 miles away, where the northern trajectory of his ascension will continue). Whereas the message is for "his students/disciples" in v. 7, "my brothers"—a more intimate term—is used in v.10.[19] Both the promise continued in the injunction (*apangeilate*) and the place of its fulfillment were successfully delivered by the female disciples.

Guards' Testimony and Commission: *The Disciples have it!*

[17] C. Chisholm,

[18] Rumour has it that she had three sets of twins: Pete, Repete, Kate, Duplicate, and finally, Max and Climax—hardly names that were common at the time,

[19] Quite often in the NT *adelphoi* may be translated 'sisters and brothers'. Here, as elsewhere, it refers only to the male apostles.

While the sisters were on the way to carry out their mandate (*apangeilate*), the sentry made its way to the high priests to give their report (v. 11; ἀπήγγειλαν). It was about the missing corpse. The guard's report generated a new mandate (Εἴπατε)—a mandate that was handsomely underwritten by the ugly religious authorities (v. 12). The message the guards were paid to convey rivals the incredible and unsponsored announcement of the messenger in verses 5-6. With the kind of assurance given to the guards (nd the full realization of their new found wealth), the success of their assignment was almost guaranteed (vv 14-15).

Guys' Commission and Test: *"We beheld it but what shall we do with it?"*

There is a sense in which Matthew agrees with the guards, but not in the way the authorities intended it (the guards knew better!); for him the disciples were in possession of the *Corpus Christi* in ways in which the people of the day would come to understand later, if only they would believe. So playfully, he interrogates his readers by his elaboration of the following queries:

CARIBBEAN APPROPIATION

CAFU

Chronological Survey

Forty years before Pogba and company won the World Cup, the Christian Ambassadors Footballers United (CAFU) came into being with the express purpose of reaching other men with the Gospel. The movement first started with a group of Christians from Maranatha Gospel Hall in the Vineyard Town-Franklyn Town community, who was desirous of entering a team in the local corner league competition. Later Christians from other churches were invited to participate to strengthen the team and before long a ministry of rich inter-denominational endeavour was born.

Over the years CAFU has engaged Manning Cup, Major League, Premier League and other teams in order to spread the word. CAFU has also entered a few competitions, namely, the former Red Label league, as well as the Tourers and Masters League competitions, all under the auspices of the JFF. Twice in the 80s the squad travelled to Washington D.C. to enter the annual Bob Marley tournament. In October 98 CAFU toured Cuba, and in 2003

And 2006, Orlando.

Today the group is now divided into two squads, one bearing the name M V (Men of Vision) Exodus and the other bearing the original Christian Ambassadors label. This has resulted in a more effective witness. Both squads are made up of pastors, lecturers, physicians (one of whom is a Jew), engineers, students, attorneys, artisans, accountants, business men, technical directors (formerly Rene Simoes and Carl Brown), a translator, one scientist and a few unemployed. A chapter of CAFU was established in Florida in the 90s and there are plans afoot to do the same for Boston, Toronto and New York. Another tour is also planned for Orlando in short order. Like the local church, CAFU seeks to be always self-governing, self-supporting, and of course, self-propagating in its auxiliary ministry.

Canonical Support

Superficially, CAFU is encouraged by a text like John 4 which talks about the 'fields' (football, that is) that are white and ready to harvest. Members of both squads are also impressed with the 'beautiful feet' which are mentioned in connection with the evangel expounded in Romans (10:15).

Substantially, it is recognized that reaching men is a much more daunting task than is first realized. Ever since the 'seed' (masculine in the original) was announced in Genesis 3:15 there has been a conspiracy of the enemy to madden some males (like Cain) and murder others (like Abel; ever wondered why Cain killed Abel, without cable?

Check out 1 John 3:11). Either way there was an attempt to prevent the 'Bruiser' from carrying out his work. Witness as a well the work of Pharaoh in Exodus 1 and the move of Herod in Matthew 2.

Of course Satan did not prevent the Seed from accomplishing his task (Colossians 2:15), but this does not prevent the enemy from unleashing his fury against all who have the same gender of his Bruiser. After all, the more youths he kills the fewer will benefit from the salvific achievement of Calvary. I very well believe that this dynamic goes a far way in explaining the spiralling murder rate in our country—and elsewhere (a case of *caan ketch Quaku yu ketch im shut*?). It may also partially explain why males are marginalizing other males and why the educational system does not seem to be working for 'mankind' in Jamaica. Most certainly the prevalence of illegal drugs particularly among the male population is more than a pharmaceutical matter. It is spiritual to the core.

If the forgoing thesis is correct it is understandable why Christ laid such emphasis on the calling and training of men, why he concentrated his efforts in the area of Galilee, which could be considered the 'ghetto/inner-city' of Palestine in those days. A similar emphasis for women was hardly needed, since they routinely came for help (Luke 7:36ff) and readily understood his mission (John 12:1ff). The contrast of the male disciples would have been hilarious if it was not so serious (John 18:1ff). It is no wonder that James likens the disobedient to a male who looks in the mirror and promptly forgets to make the requisite adjustments (James 1:23ff). Neither 1st females nor 21st women are in the habit of doing that.

The thesis also adds meaning to the enigmatic phrase, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' Why was this disciple given this special privilege? Was he that special? Was it because his family was wealthy? When I first made my probe of these questions I knew from the outset that there was no partiality on the part of the Master. So why then was John known as the disciple whom Jesus loved? The answer to this question I found revealing.

When John and his brother James first met the Lord they were nicknamed sons of thunder. The new name was hardly complimentary. It was more descriptive of their fiery and misplaced zeal more than anything else. In a fairly objective profile of these sons of Zebedee, the gentile Gospel writer, Luke, enlightens our darkness in chapter 9 of his first volume. In verse 46 we are told of a heated discussion among the disciples concerning bragging rights. (It is Matthew's gospel that informs us as to what precipitated the quarrel. The boys' mother had come requesting special (cabinet?) privileges for her sons. And the other disciples were indignant.

Possibly, James and John must have openly supported and defended mom's request. What exactly Jesus perceived in their hearts we are not told. But whatever it was warranted a mild rebuke (Luke 9:46-48). What I find intriguing is that it was John who stood to give the 'vote of thanks' in the following verse. Well not quite. Verse 49 appears to present John as making some attempt to redeem himself. After all, if *yu trow stone inna pigpen di fus wan whey bawl out a im get lick*! But John should have kept his mouth shut. Here comes another rebuke in verse 50.

Jesus and his disciples are now on their way to the capital city. Needing visas to pass through central Palestine, messengers were sent to the Samaritan embassy (v. 52). The application was promptly turned down. No surprise here, for Jews have no dealing with Samaritans (today it is the Palestinians!). 'And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"'(v. 54). Sons of thunder indeed! Needless to say another rebuke follows (vv. 55-56).

Personally speaking, if I were Jesus John could never be a part of my apostolic band in training much more to be known as the disciple whom I love dearly! Neither James nor Peter who completed the unholy trinity. All three were from Galilee known in those days for its pugnacious and foul-mouthed citizens. If Peter's denial of his

Master was accompanied with expletives, we are not surprised. He was Galilean. If Peter was aiming for the head of Malchus, we are not surprised. He was brought up in Galilee, and can anything good come out of any of its towns (John 1:46)?

So why then was John so privileged? To reach men in general special effort must be made. But to reach really bad men like Peter, James and John special effort must be doubled. Whenever the Lord went on a special mission he would take three of his students with him (guess which three?) for at least two reasons: 1) it was too much risk to leave them behind, and 2) because his brand of love is tailor-made for sinners (Rom. 5:8).

This means that the Gospel writers did not necessarily follow the sometime popular tradition of Israel, to conveniently forget the barbarity and disreputable incidents of David's reign, and focus instead upon those elements which appealed to the political and religious aspirations of each succeeding age. They too were also well aware of the matriarchs and patriarchs who provided the necessary biblical role-modeling for their day and whose lives were handled in such a way as to highlight certain episodes which would serve as encouragement for people of faith. We have in mind here people like Sarah and Abraham. Fitzmyer for instance, comments on how Paul in Romans 4 "passes over the fact that Abraham was convulsed in laughter at the thought that he might beget a son."[20] In fact, both Abraham (Gen 17:17) and Sarah (Gen 18:12) appear to have gained some measure of comic relief from the promise, and not at their own expense. So both incidents are, to use Fitzmyer's language, "passed over" in what may be called paschal silence. This literary phenomenon is not limited to Paul. We see it, for example, in 2 Chronicles where another man (David) to whom righteousness is credited and eulogized not because he was perfect but because he was justified. Here then, we see 'that historical memory is highly selective and interpretive'. John's Gospel (cf. 1:29 with 13:10-11; 17:6) as well as Priscilla's homily (Heb 11:3-40) will employ the same literary strategy. This literary strategy stands out in bold relief against the aforementioned discourse regarding James and John, and the following backdrop.

[20] J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (NY: Doubleday, 1993), 387.

The holy books of no other religion depict their followers so negatively as the Bible does the Jews and the Christians. Scripture describes very graphically the doctrine that Jews and Christians are also sinners and capable of the most dreadful sins, and denounces not only the atrocities carried out by the Gentiles, but also those of the supposed (or true) people of God. This pitiless self-criticism is integral to Judaism and Christianity, in contrast to other religions. No other faith criticizes itself so severely as Old Testament Judaism or New Testament Christianity. Scripture exposes the errors of the leaders very clearly, and God often employs outsiders to recall His people to obedience.[21]

Conclusion: The Model of Matthean and Lucan Theology and Historiography

Matthew and Luke, then, have paved the way for all who would seek to do theology in their own context by underscoring, first and foremost, the value of *bios* and narrative for such an enterprise. In fact, they invite to us to write a counter-narrative to the prevailing hegemonic spirit that has dominated the lives of majority peoples for centuries. The Gospels in general and Matthew and Luke in particular, demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt, the observation that "when God sets people free, He doesn't set them free for their own ends and their own means; it doesn't become self-indulgence, it's a 'giving awayness'".[22] **Now what is proposed here regarding the employment of the Lucan Bio-Narrative genre as one effective way to carry forward the worthwhile enterprise of Contextual Theology should not be thought of as writing mere eulogies or hagiographies of the ancestors/practitioners of our faith.**

[21] T. Schirrmacker, *Toward a Theology of Martyrdom* (Bonn: VKW, 2008), 43.

[22] J. Edwards, *The Jamaican Diaspora* (Kingston: Morgan Ministries International, 1998), 18.

What we mean by this is that whatever is written should be realistic enough and faithful enough to the lives that are chosen for scrutiny and paradigmatic value. When Luke, for instance, recorded the strong disagreement between Barnabas and Paul, we see a type of boldness in his literary endeavor that reminds us that theology concerns our lived-experience and the human condition of which we are a part.[vi] The creative author of Luke-Acts has recorded for us some of the best lyrics of all time; for instance, Mary's magnificent and the nunc dimitis both found in the Third Gospel.[vii][viii] What is not well celebrated—at least in the Caribbean—is the way how Dr Luke has appropriated the songs of Israel in his sequel to his Gospel, in order to enrich the redemptive story he tells. We will look at some of these in due course. For our author, then, singing is at its best when it is the expression of redeemed hearts (Acts 16). Therefore, the inclusion of Isaiah's most famous Servant Song is certainly not fortuitous.

One, however, should not overstate the potential of any strategy to effect long and lasting change within a society, within a region. This *caveat* notwithstanding, we are optimistic that what has been suggested allows us to echo, "I have a dream" (Martin Luther King) that a "change is going to come" (Sam Cooke): a change in doing Caribbean theology as a just and justifiable response to regional reality, including the painful experience of dysfunctional family structures, the challenges of violent crime, gender struggle, issues of regional governance and mimicry, poverty, and the like.