

**Towards a strategy for achieving a biblically faithful understanding  
of and response to Luke 4:18-19 at two congregations of the  
Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk in South Africa**

By

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A 60-credit Mini-Thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Theology in Integrated Theology  
at the South African Theological Seminary

Submitted in December 2018

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The opinions expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary or the Supervisor(s) of the research.

### **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this mini-thesis is my own original work and has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted to any institution for a degree.

Signed: Vernon Schmidt

Date: 20 December 2018

### **Acknowledgements**

I acknowledge and thank the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in electing me to be his child and working in me and allowing me the privilege of studying his Word. It is only through his grace and mercy shown towards me that he allowed me the honour of studying Scripture through the South African Theological Seminary, an institution that he has established, which is God honouring and Bible based.

A special word of thanks for the encouragement and advice I received from Dr Johannes Malherbe from the beginning and during the process of the Integrated Master of Theology programme.

A very special acknowledgement is appropriate to the Reverend Vernon Light, my Supervisor, who during the writing of this mini-thesis provided insight, encouragement, scholarly advice, mentoring and patience.

I conclude in thanking each respondent who answered the research questionnaire and cooperated in the interview, giving me a base line from which to work from. I trust their involvement in the project influenced them by bringing them into a closer relationship with the Lord Jesus and a functional Christian witness.

## **Abstract**

The Gospel of Luke comprises many statements that should impact the church in understanding God's mission emanating from before creation. One of these is Jesus' mission statement found in Luke 4:18-19. In this passage Jesus' mission is comprehensively, yet succinctly, defined. This text sparked many questions in my mind as to why South Africa and many other countries seem to be in a depressive spiritual and social malaise. Surely there is God's remedy in Christ? But seemingly this is not clearly understood by many church-going people today. These thoughts and concerns led to this study to seek a fresh understanding of the meaning and an appropriate response to Luke 4:18-19, especially with reference to two church congregations.

This study, firstly, reports on a field research project at these two local churches that was conducted to gauge their understanding of, and response to, Luke 4:18-19. Then, secondly, the study presents different perspectives on this Lukan passage: exegetical, biblical theology, historical theology, and non-theology. The results of these two parts of the study are then correlated, taking into account the contexts of the two congregations, to produce an operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for them. The operative theology provides the normative understanding of Luke 4:18-19 and the relevant practical response, and is defended based on the churches' beliefs and the transformation vision implied in Luke 4:18-19. Then, thirdly, the study presents a strategy developed to help these two churches to successfully achieve the proposed operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19.

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## **Chapter one: Introduction**

### **1.1 The background to the study**

My reading of Luke 4:18-19 (and related verses) led me to conclude that the gospel should bring spiritual change and loving service, that is, holistic transformation of the convert. In fact, I interpret the gospel, certainly from Luke 4:18-19, as the solution to all humankind's problems. However, my many years of experience of both the old South Africa and the new South Africa have forced me to the uncomfortable conclusion that a significant number of Christians and churches have not fully understood Luke 4:18-19 or responded appropriately. There is widespread unmet spiritual, material and other needs. Concern for justice in South Africa and combatting the disturbingly moral deficit is weak or absent. There seems to be a dearth of testimony of the power of the gospel to bring about the united, moral and prosperous society we all want in our rainbow nation.

The question that faced me thus was, "Is the heart of the problem a lack of faithful biblical preaching and teaching of the gospel and a paucity of examples of people holistically transformed by the gospel and committed to the mission of Jesus?" Could this be why observers of Christians and the churches often fail to witness spiritual and numerical growth, provision of material needs of the poor, care for the suffering, and the positive influencing of the values of our government, neighbourhoods, businesses, institutions of learning, politicians, and every other area of society?

This called for the kind of research that could be focused on a few local congregations to assess their praxis, establish a biblically faithful praxis, and develop a strategy to implement this praxis in these congregations. Because of the huge vista of God's will for the church, its growth and positive influence in society, I decided to narrow my focus on Luke 4:18-19 to capture the gospel of the Son of God and the mission of God to redeem his world. This passage summarises Jesus' sermon in a synagogue in his home town, Nazareth.

The two churches that presented the ideal focus for a study were known to me. They are in close proximity and within the same denomination, but culturally and socially significantly different. They represent two groups from somewhat different contexts – a relic of the old South Africa. My research question was therefore, “How may we improve the relevancy of Luke 4:18-19 to these two congregations in their understanding of the work of Christ and the contours and ministry of their lives and church in South Africa?”

## **1.2 Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to formulate a strategic plan to bring two congregations, one in a more affluent middle class area (it will be referred to as MAC) and one in a blue-collar and less affluent area (it will be referred to as LAC), to a biblically faithful understanding of, and response to, Jesus’ mission statement in Luke 4:18-19. The Lukan passage presents perhaps the most comprehensive and yet concise description of Jesus’ ministry, and thus to a great degree is the blue-print for the church’s understanding and ministry. I appreciate that there are aspects of the work of Christ that are totally unique to his calling and salvific ministry. But through proclaiming his redemptive work and ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit with his compassion for the human race, the church is clearly called to join his mission in the world to fulfil his purposes for it. The climax of the risen Christ’s mission is to restore the earth and resurrect and transform the dead and living Christians for existence in a world of endless perfect worship, righteousness, service, peace, joy and fulfilment (Rom. 8:20-23; Rev. 7:1-12; 19:1-8; 21:3-4.).

Thus the overall objective of this study is to help two churches achieve a biblically faithful operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19. This primary objective is achieved through a number of secondary objectives:

- (i) Interpreting the present situation regarding the operative theology with respect to Luke 4:18-19 at MAC and LAC.
- (ii) Formulating a biblically faithful operative theology with respect to Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC.
- (iii) Developing a strategic plan for introducing a biblically faithful operative theology with respect to Luke 4:18-19 in MAC and LAC



## **1.3 Presuppositions**

The theological position from which I operate is evangelical within a historical and doctrinal tradition summarised in Calvinism. MAC and LAC are in the same Reformed denomination. One key evangelical principle is commitment to the authority and teaching of Scripture in a life based on the all-sufficiency of Christ's work of salvation and sanctification by the Holy Spirit and participation in the mission of Jesus, yet understanding the personal responsibility of the Christian in using the means of grace.

Traditional historical evangelism believes humanity is incapable to save itself from the power and guilt of sin and God's judgement of sinners. Thus it is alone the triune God's ability to save sinners, involving salvation appointed by the Father, accomplished by God the Son, Jesus, and applied by God the Holy Spirit (Light 2012:14). Thus the Bible, with its message focused in the gospel, has the answer to humanity's moral problems and needs. The central message of the power of the gospel is that it changes lives and through such transformation influences society for its betterment and God's glory (p. 25).

## **1.4 The Research Plan**

### **1.4.1 Design**

Browning's approach to theology is that all theology is fundamentally practical (1991:7,47,67). This is why he proposes the following four steps (answering of four questions) for doing theology, which he calls strategic practical theology (pp. 55-56):

- "How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act?"
- "What should our praxis be in this concrete situation?"
- "How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?"
- "What means, strategies and rhetoric should we use in this concrete situation?"

It begins with practical questions regarding some area of concern (Browning 1991:47-48). These are taken to be the traditions of the church (p. 49). In the light of the findings of this endeavour and a careful reflection on the current situation

causing concern and the broader context, the concern is addressed (p. 51). Then the norms of this praxis are defended (p. 52). Finally an approach is formulated as to what should be done to achieve the new or preferred praxis (pp. 52,57).

It is helpful before proceeding further, to provide more information on Browning's strategic practical theology. It constitutes four movements (1983:8). The first movement is *descriptive theology*, which results from an interpretation of some practice and its encapsulated meanings (Smith 2011:38-39). The second movement is *historical theology*, which involves taking the questions raised by an examination of our practices to our normative texts in order to determine how those texts really apply to our practices (p. 39); and in this movement we have 'the traditional disciplines of biblical studies, church history and the history of Christian thought' (Browning 1991:49). The third movement is *systematic theology*, which is 'the fusion of horizons between the vision implicit in contemporary practices and the vision implied in the practices of normative Christian texts (p. 51). The fourth movement is *strategic practical theology*, which flows from and builds on the previous three movements (p. 9).

Browning's 'model' (he does not claim this status) of strategic practical theology thus follows an in-depth descriptive and theological analysis of a selected theme related to some concrete situation of concern in a particular local church, and provides a framework for exploring the practical outworking of the descriptive and theoretical research.

Browning's 'model' is well suited to achieving the primary goal of this study. Chapter 2 will answer his first question, chapter 3 his second and third questions, and chapter 4 his last question. The study will thus have the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Interpreting the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 at MAC and LAC

Chapter 3: Presenting and defending a biblically faithful operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC

Chapter 4: Formulating a theologically informed strategic plan for communicating and implementing a biblically faithful operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

## **1.4.2 Methods**

### Chapter 2

This chapter focusses on Browning's first question, namely, how do we understand a particular concrete situation? In this study it involves ascertaining the praxis regarding Luke 4:18-19 in two churches within the Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk, a more affluent one (MAC) and a less affluent one (LAC) – two local congregations originally separated by the Group Areas Act in the old South Africa but not geographically far apart. The study includes an attempt to understand the underlying theory of its praxis (Browning 1991:55). To answer Browning's first question, a limited quantitative qualitative study was chosen for the two churches using a questionnaire with closed-ended and open-ended questions followed by an interview. The questions and interview gauge the respondents' understanding of Luke 4:18-19 and the practical relevance and application thereof in their churches.

### Chapter 3

The focus in this chapter is on, firstly, answering Browning's second question (cf. subsection 1.3.1). In this study it was to establish what constitutes a faithful theology and praxis regarding Luke 4:18-19 for the Christian and the church, and in particular, MAC and LAC. This is achieved by a correlation of (i) the descriptive and interpretation of MAC and LAC's operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 and their context (chapter 2), and (ii) an exegesis of Luke 4:18-19, biblical and historical theology perspectives, and some non-theological perspectives related to the text's vision for the human race. Finally, the norms behind the new operative theology and the praxis itself are briefly defended, which answers Browning's third question.

### Chapter 4

Chapter 4 takes up Browning's fourth question dealing with appropriate actions to achieve the preferred biblically faithful operative theology formulated in chapter 3. It

thus constructs a strategic plan to, firstly, gain acceptance of the operative theology in the two churches (there are only slight differences in the operative theologies for the two churches – they are essentially the same); and, secondly, to achieve steps and time-lines that will ensure the effective implementation of the new operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 in LAC and MAC.

## Chapter 5

This is the conclusion chapter. It reviews the objectives. It then traces the argument. This is followed by a summary of the findings and their significance. Lastly, recommendations are made for further research.

## **Chapter 2: The operative theology with reference to Luke 4:18-19 at MAC and LAC**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter tackles Browning's first question: "What should our praxis be in this concrete situation?" This required research into the background of LAC and MAC and their operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19. The former is provided from my own first-hand experience of both churches and a literary study of the theological roots and beliefs and ministries of the two churches. The latter is achieved through a qualitative and quantitative study of the understanding and impact of Luke 4:18-19 on these two local churches, which is reported on in this chapter. Effectively, the purpose of this chapter is to elucidate the churches' understanding of Jesus' salvation message in Luke 4:18-19.

### **2.2 Background to MAC and LAC**

#### **2.2.1 Theological roots and beliefs**

This section deals with the theological background and beliefs of the two churches. This information is important as it will provide possible insights into the concrete situation. Browning states that this understanding is necessary to consider before action is taken to redress any shortcomings (Browning 1991:55,66).

The two churches that are the focus of the study belong, as noted above, to the Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church). The denomination is reformed, as the name implies, following the Calvinistic doctrines of *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola fide*, *Sola gratia*, *Solo Christo* and *Soli Dei Gloria*. These doctrines form the basis of their beliefs and practice. The belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit is accepted as presented in the Apostolic Creed. In line with this historic-reformation stance, the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 and the Canons of

Dort are used as a way of summarizing and teaching and preaching the denomination's core and key beliefs. These documents enable confessional unity.

Sections of the Heidelberg Catechism relevant to my study are now presented. I will use 'q' and 'a' to refer to the question and answer respectively, and the numeral of the question in the following way: for example, q+a:7 refers to question 7 and its answer. I will not give the question and answer word for word, but simply capture the teaching implied. The Christian Reformed Church (1975) has printed the English translation of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Humankind's nature was 'poisoned' at the Fall, sin becoming pre-eminent, incapacitating humans from doing good (q+a:7, partially 8). The Mosaic Law alerts humankind to their sinful state (q+a:2,3). Thus confronted, and sin acknowledged, a person repents, pleads for forgiveness and is washed in the crucified Christ's blood, bringing into effect God's grace and redemption in their lives. Believers then belong to him – body, soul and spirit (q+a:1). They become increasingly dead to sin and live for God's glory (q+a:70). Salvation/redemption initiates a new life in Christ with the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work: the believer dies to self and lives to God's will, through faith, doing every kind of good work (q+a:88,90,91). Through Jesus' redemptive act, believers' are restored by the Holy Spirit to God's image.

Christians, out of thankfulness, are to be witnesses to all humankind for God's praise and glory (q+a:6,86). The born-again believers share in Jesus' anointing through receiving the Holy Spirit, who empowers them to present themselves as a living sacrifice that is acceptable to God, thus sharing his righteousness (q+a:32,45,51,53). God commands believers to condemn hatred, anger and envy, to love neighbours as themselves, to be merciful, peace-loving, patient and friendly (q+a:107,111). Love for God must be primary, with love for neighbours equal to the believer's love for self (q+a:4). Believers are duty-bound to the service of all humankind. Engrafted into Christ, believers through faith must produce fruits of gratitude for God's glorious working in salvation and creation (q+a:8,55,64). God is the source of all good things, including daily needs (q+a:69-117,119,125).

In the light of some sections of the Heidelberg Catechism, it is stated that believers are also to make disciples of all nations and reach out to those in need, and all to the glory of God (q+a:4,71,86,90,91,111). Thus the Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk has

a functional social arm, undergirded by social workers, focused on the following: orphans and abused children who are cared for in orphanages; schools for the blind, deaf and disabled; old age homes; havens for unmarried mothers; and work and development projects. Individual churches are taxed according to their tithing-income to facilitate the spread of the gospel and its social witness (Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk 2017:1). The 2011 General Synod called believers to come into a living relationship with the Lord, to conform to his Word, and allow the Holy Spirit to enable their Christian witness to influence society for him (Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk 2011:1).

The above captures the official beliefs of the two churches and the implication of salvation for individuals, the church and growth of God's kingdom. It is clear that believers are to understand redemption of sinners as having more than just a vertical dimension, namely, reconciliation with God, justification by faith and adoption into God's eternal family. God's redemption is also concerned with reflecting God's love practically, not only through presenting unbelievers with the salvation message, but also addressing the physical and material needs of fellow believers and unbelievers (cf. the commands to make disciples of all nations and love one's neighbour, Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 12:31). Thus the statements of belief and related actions of the two churches should harmonise with the ministry of Jesus captured in Luke 4:18-19 and the implications for his followers.

The two churches, as noted above, were not only chosen from the same denomination, but also from different social settings: one from a middle class background and the other from a blue-collar poorer district. This selection would enable me to test if the interpretation of Luke 4:18-19 was fully understood or influenced by their different socio-economic status. The churches are racially and socially different, a reflection of the historical past. However, their memberships are now open to all race groups.

### **2.2.2 The present approach to studying God's Word and ministry of the two churches**

This section notes the two churches' ministries as they will throw light on their understanding of, and response to, Luke 4:18-19.

### *a) The study of God's Word*

Both churches adhere to a strict Word-based presentation of Scripture. However, church attendance ranges from 48-52% of the membership at worship services. MAC's attendance at Bible studies is very low in relation to its membership, while LAC has no active bible-study programme. In both churches, the lack of participation, on the one hand, and neglect of Bible study, on the other hand, does not auger well for spiritual growth and consequently a deeper relationship with the Lord and involvement in the church's calling. Furthermore, Bible instruction and worship in the home, as evidenced in the children's knowledge of the Bible through questions posed at Sunday school, is seriously lacking.

### *b) The present approach to ministries inside and outside the church*

MAC and LAC are primarily focused internally towards their own membership, which includes visitation of their sick and elderly among the members and adherents. Both churches have financial obligations to the Provincial Synod for funding outside ministries (see below). MAC has worship and weekly Bible-study programmes and has introduced meetings for the youth and young working adults.

LAC has a worship service weekly. No other ministries are presently active. However, ministry on an individual level is happening through some members. This is, however, more from a humanitarian standpoint and not co-ordinated through the church and thus most probably lacks the important God-glorifying element.

Denominational structures of the Provincial Synod to fund denominational needs and social projects within the province are sourced from churches through a tax on the gross income. LAC has a smaller membership than the sister-church MAC, and is financially restricted in many respects. The focus of these churches differs in a number of ways. MAC is structured and organised so that its emphasis is on its membership through teaching scriptural truth. This includes teaching the practicality of the gospel message in their lives and through reaching others with the gospel message of salvation and those in need. Yet, seldom does the practical implementation of the gospel in their lives bear fruit beyond the congregants.

LAC has similar scriptural teaching, yet lacks Bible teaching in smaller groups. It is only here that the biblical truth can be discussed with resulting impact on the



members. Though the church is inward looking, because of the level of poverty in its community it is more aware of, and focussed on, material needs. However, the church is not necessarily at the forefront of witness and relief where needed.

Both churches do not have an official evangelistic outreach programme. The result is no outreach into the communities. As such, no focus is in place to facilitate reaching the unsaved or the 'de- and un-churched'. As would be expected, the churches are stagnant in spiritual and numerical growth, except in the area of membership families' procreation and transfer of membership through natural movement of people due to job changes for instance.

It can thus be concluded that the two churches adhere formally to the five '*Solas*', especially honouring them in preaching. This includes the call to live in a full relationship with the Lord, allowing the Holy Spirit to enable their Christian witness to positively influence secular society (Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk 2011:1). But mission (gospel proclamation and mercy ministries) is seriously lacking in the market place, and often lives are focused only on family structures and friends. Many middle to senior children in Sunday school do not possess much scriptural knowledge. This fact is borne out by my observation of senior Sunday school students over a period of fifteen years, and their progression from the lower to the senior classes. The Bible and the Heidelberg Catechism, the latter being a summarised version of Scripture in a question and answer form to facilitate teaching, are not understood sounding alarm as to their relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).

When the actual ministries in the two churches are compared to the Lord's proclamation of his ministry as found in Luke 4:18-19, the following seems to be the conclusion: the full understanding of the nature of Christ's coming and its implications for his church are apparently lost on many congregants or simply ignored. Possible reasons would be that their spiritual eyes have not been opened or that the bondage to sin and Satan has not effectively been broken because of a form of godliness resulting from Christian tradition is considered sufficient to make them acceptable to God. The result has been an ineffective witness for the Lord Jesus in the spirit and tradition of Luke 4:18-19. This has conveyed mixed signals to unbelievers, who then reject Christianity as hypocrisy or irrelevant, and additionally being at best a non-influence in secular society and at worst a block of God's love.

In order to confirm the praxis regarding Luke 4:18-19 presented above and the implied underlying theory and ensure an even more accurate and in-depth understanding of these two churches, a small-scale research project was conducted at each church. The results follow in section 2.3 with some discussion of them.

## **2.3 Small-scale research into the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 in MAC and LAC**

### **2.3.1 Design and methods used in the research**

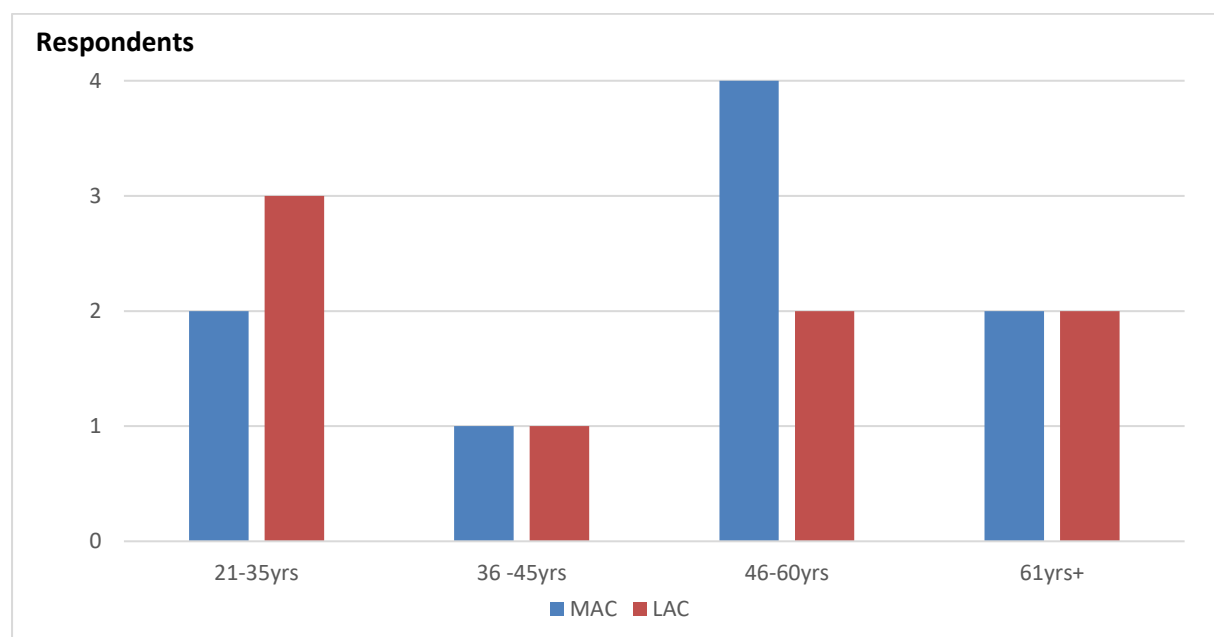
The design of the small-scale research project was built around quantitative and qualitative research in a survey approach to the two churches. The survey required a target group that fairly accurately represented MAC and LAC. The churches were too big for every member to have been covered in the research. This would have made the survey a lengthy process with a long set of results and a more demanding analysis of them. Such a substantial empirical research was not required by my study (a mini-thesis). The tools used to conduct the survey were, firstly, a questionnaire with mostly closed-ended, but with some open-ended, questions. This was followed, secondly, by an interview to gain greater clarity on the answers where required. A combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods ensures a more accurate picture.

#### *(a) The choice of participants*

It needs to be noted that I am acquainted with both churches having served as an elder in MAC and through my friendship with one of the elders of LAC. Further, that LAC has been without a minister for some time, with MAC ministers taking services at LAC. Permission was obtained from MAC's minister to conduct the research. Then it was decided that as an ex-elder of MAC I would select the participants from this church; and with the help of an ex-elder from LAC would select participants from that church. No further assistance was requested from or given by the churches. All potential participants who were approached were willing to take part in the survey. All involved were clearly informed that confidentiality of their answers and churches would be honoured in the report by not using their names.

A decision was taken to only include those faithful church members and adherents who were regular attendants at church services. This meant that they were most likely to have read and possibly studied or heard a sermon on Luke 4:18-19. Further, they would have had a chance to become acquainted with how Christ's mission was carried out by the New Testament Church and to become involved themselves.

The participants were selected from all age groups to ensure a more representative sample from the two churches: 21-35 years of age (four male participants – two from each church; and one female participant from LAC); 36-45 years of age (two female participants – one from each church); 46-60 years of age (three male participants – one from LAC and two from MAC; and three female participants – one from LAC and two from MAC); and 61 years of age and older (three female participants – two from LAC and one from MAC; and one male from MAC). Fifteen respondents were members and two were part of the youth groups functioning as leaders but not yet members. There was a total of nine respondents from MAC and eight from LAC. One respondent had been an elder at LAC; two respondents were currently serving as elders at MAC; and one respondent from MAC had been an elder but presently was serving as a ward leader. Between the respondents, the total Christian experience (from conversion date/rebirth) was 396 years. One respondent did not, as requested, provide the number of years since being converted. The following chart captures the age spread and numbers from each church.



## *Graph 2.1 Number of respondents per age group*

### *(b) Questionnaire preparation*

The questionnaire format was developed to allow for respondents to present their understanding of each item in the list in Luke 4:18-19 that describes Jesus' ministry. The questionnaire was prepared in both English and Afrikaans (see *Appendix 1*) as the chosen respondents were spread between the two language groups. There were nine questions. The majority of the questions probed the respondents' understanding of the ministries the text indicates that Jesus came to fulfil. All the questions, bar one and possibly a second depending on the answer chosen, had a number of options to choose from of which more than one could be chosen if together they provided a fuller understanding of the specific activity of Jesus' ministry and its target group. The final question (open-ended) allowed for the participants to provide in some detail what implications they thought the Lukan passage should have for the local church.

Prior to visiting and distributing the questionnaire among the respondents, the church minister (only MAC has one) was given the questionnaire for his approval. After completing the questionnaire himself, he had no opposition to it, but corrected the Afrikaans questionnaire grammatically.

### *(c) Preparatory contact*

All respondents were visited and the Lukan text presented with the questionnaire. During this preparatory encounter the instructions at the beginning of the questionnaire for answering were carefully explained. Any questions regarding the procedure were handled at this point. No coaching on the text was provided as the respondents' assessment and understanding of the text in relation to Christ's ministry and the church's resulting ministry were required. They were informed that there was no time limit for answering the questionnaire. All questionnaires were returned within 14 days of being received.

### *(d) Interview*

The interview, after the return and analysis of the questionnaire, was conducted in group sessions in a semi-informal way to allow me to gain a deeper understanding of the answers that had been given: one group interview was with six respondents;

another with four; one with two; and one with a single respondent (see *Appendix 2* for the questions). Due to circumstances, three interviewees could not attend and death of a respondent resulted in a fourth respondent being unable to attend. Thus four interviewees could not be present, two from LAC and two from MAC.

The group interviews were particularly helpful with regard to LAC respondents and some of MAC's respondents. The interview also probed the ministry programmes of the churches to see if in each church they collectively covered the practical implications of Luke 4:18-19 and to what degree.

### **2.3.2 Results of the research and discussion of them**

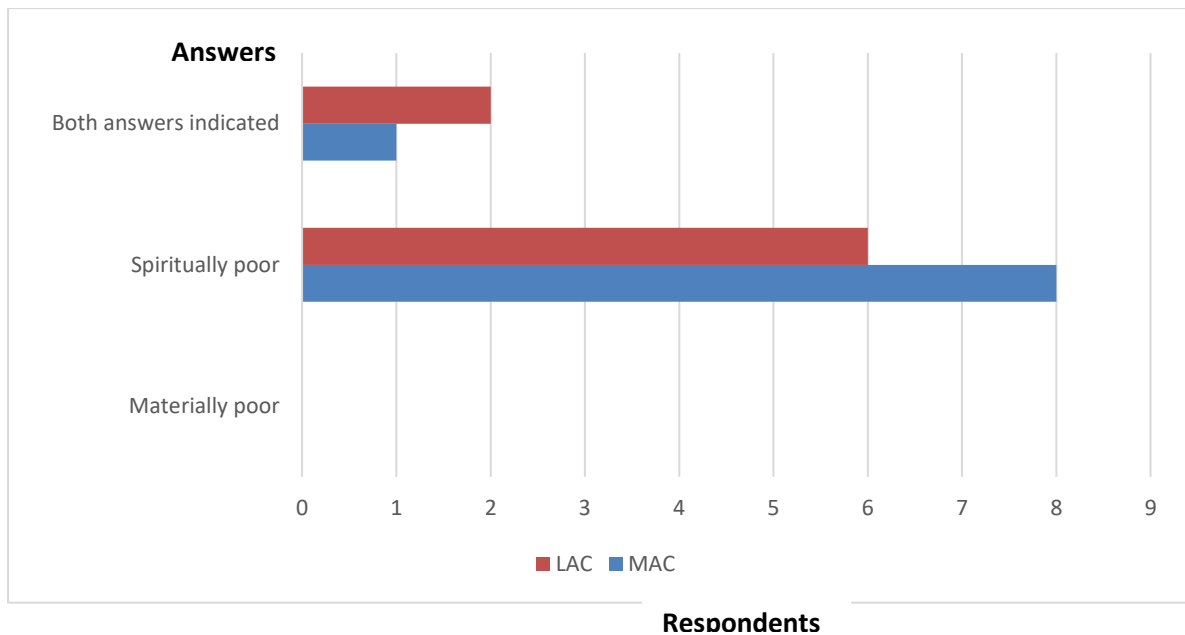
#### *a) Results of the questionnaire and discussion of them*

Initially it was planned to place the discussion of the results only after all the results had been presented. However, due to the many questions in the questionnaire, it was decided that a brief discussion of the results to every question best belonged immediately after the question's results. Subsection 2.3.2 ends with a conclusion to the whole small-scale empirical project.

Given that the two churches come from the same denomination, it is understandable that some of the answers specific to the theological questions would be similar. Where this is the case, the findings with reference to the two churches are discussed together. Any pertinent differences between the churches' responses are addressed.

The results of each question in the questionnaire are presented in graphic form with additional explanatory comment where necessary. The results for each church are separated to allow for comparison of the understanding of the wealthier church and the poorer church. I initially expected the former would prefer a more spiritualized understanding of the Lukan passage and the latter a more material and physical interpretation.

Question1: *What is understood by the phrase, 'the poor', in the text?*

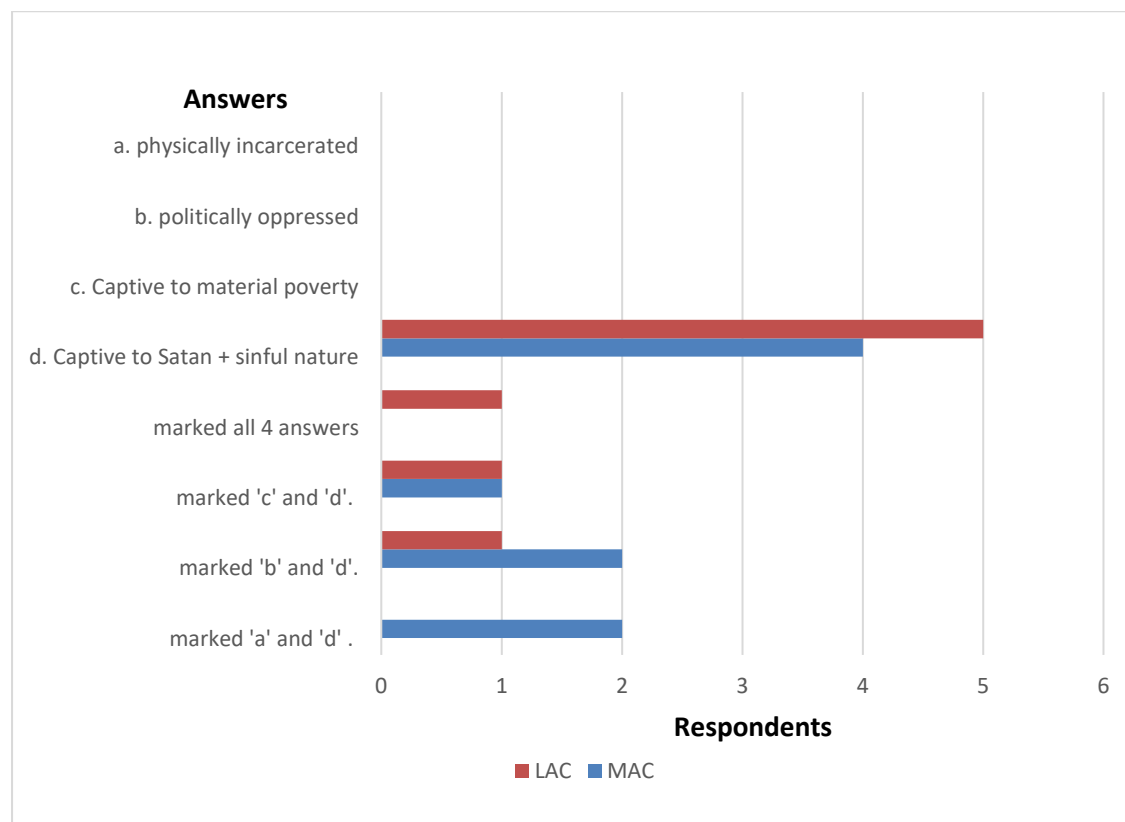


*Graph 2.2: Responses to question 1*

The graph means that no one from either church answered that ‘the poor’ means only those materially poor; that the greater majority of respondents from both churches believes it means only spiritually poor (LAC 6 = 75%; MAC 8 = 88.9%); and a small minority from each church believes it means both (LAC 2 = 25%; MAC 1 = 11.1%). The structure of all the graphs is such that each horizontal twin band represents the numbers in the churches’ sample that chose only that answer (which might be only one of the options or a combination of certain of the options that the question allowed). This also means that if one adds up the number of respondents represented by all the bands one gets to the total of the sample groups (nine in the case of MAC and eight in the case of LAC). Presenting the results in this way makes it possible to also easily calculate the answers in percentages and thus make comparisons within each sample group and between them.

The response to the first question from both churches overwhelmingly emphasised the spiritual meaning of the phrase, ‘the poor’, in the text. Thus the majority of respondents from both churches lacked an understanding of the wider broader meaning of poverty that Jesus’ mission came to deal with (see chapter 3). However, answers to other questions did indicate a broader understanding of ‘the poor’ (see below).

Question 2: *What is your understanding of the phrase, 'the captives/ the prisoners,' in the text?*



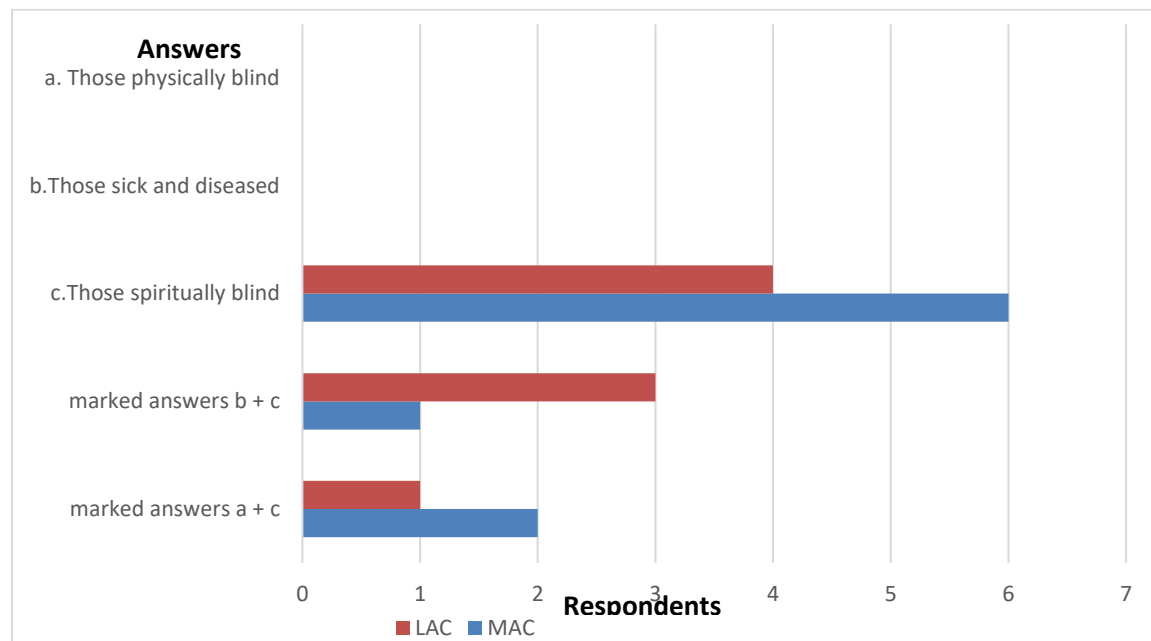
*Graph 2.3: Responses to question 2*

All respondents from both churches indicated that captivity was to sin and Satan. Only one (12.5%) respondent from LAC interpreted 'captives/prisoners' to cover all four meanings, while two others (25%) from LAC interpreted them to be captives to Satan and sin coupled with material and political oppression respectively. Five (56.6%) of MAC respondents recognised that other aspects of captivity were as a result from or linked with captivity to sin and Satan.

Both MAC and LAC respondents overwhelmingly agreed that humankind is captive to sin and Satan. Additionally, three (37.5%) of LAC respondents and five (55.6%) of MAC respondents answered that the release was also from incarceration, poverty, or political oppression. It can be deduced from the answers that there seems a definite understanding of Satan and sin's role in humankind's spiritual, social and physical problems. However, this understanding seemingly does not generally translate to active participation in confronting and redressing the obvious needs and vices of

neighbours and communities with the gospel and its answers in loving sacrificial service. Their understanding of Christ's ministry can be assumed to be academic to a large extent. Thus the compartmentalizing of the Christian life away from the real world and one's role in it is also evident.

Question 3. *What is your understanding of the phrase, 'the blind,' in the text?*

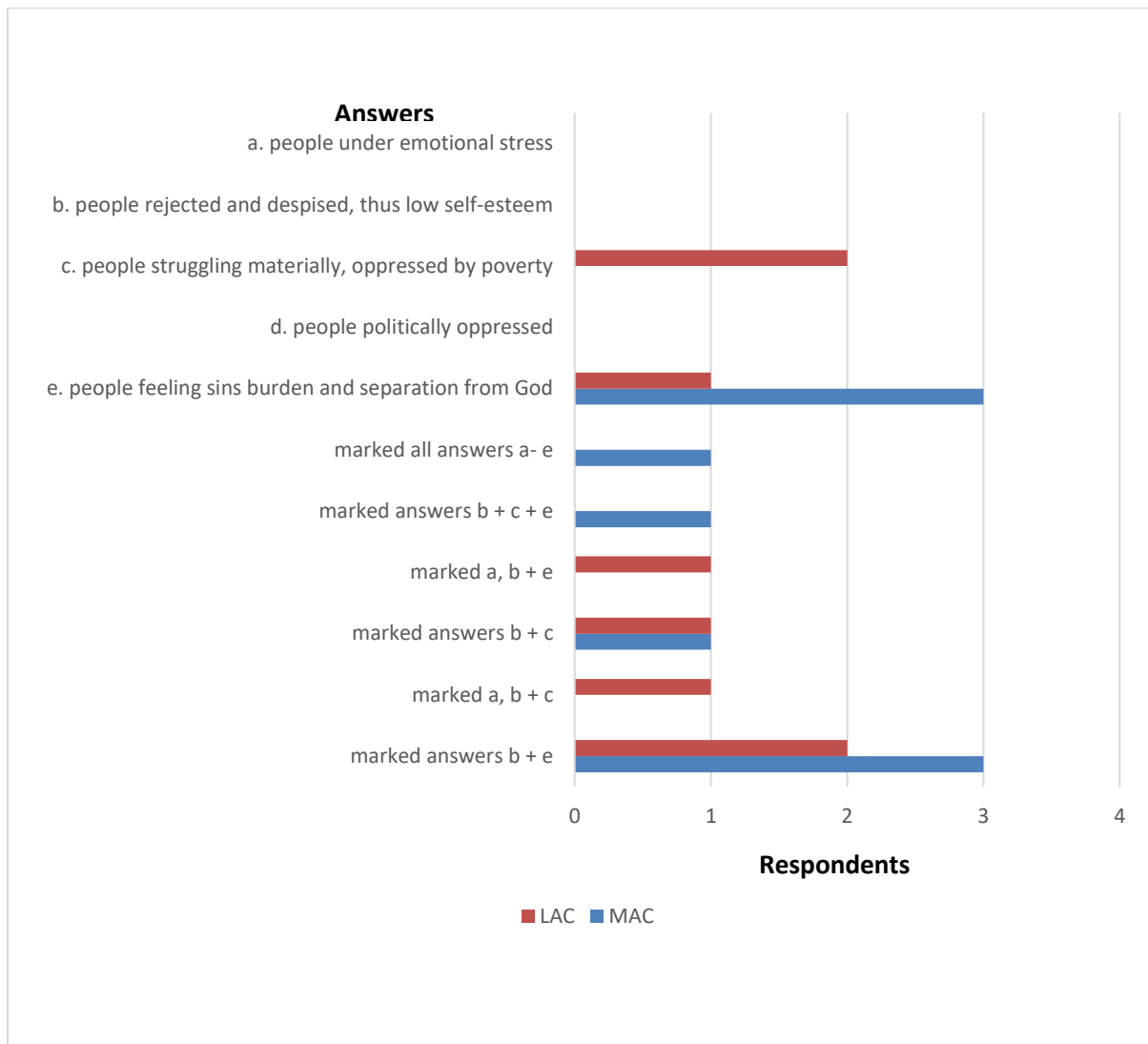


*Graph 2.4: Responses to question 3*

All respondents' from both churches understood 'the blind' to mean spiritual blindness. Four (50%) of LAC and three (33%) of MAC respondents' also realised that Jesus had come to bring healing to those physically ill or physically blind. However, this means that the majority (six = 66.67%) of MAC respondents understand the text to mean only spiritual blindness. Their Christian concern is thus removed from the many problems, including social, that affect many others in South Africa, including their sister church, LAC. The result also indicates LAC's greater awareness (four = 50%) that Jesus' ministry was more holistic.

Question 4: *What is your understanding of the phrase, 'the oppressed/downtrodden,' in the text?*

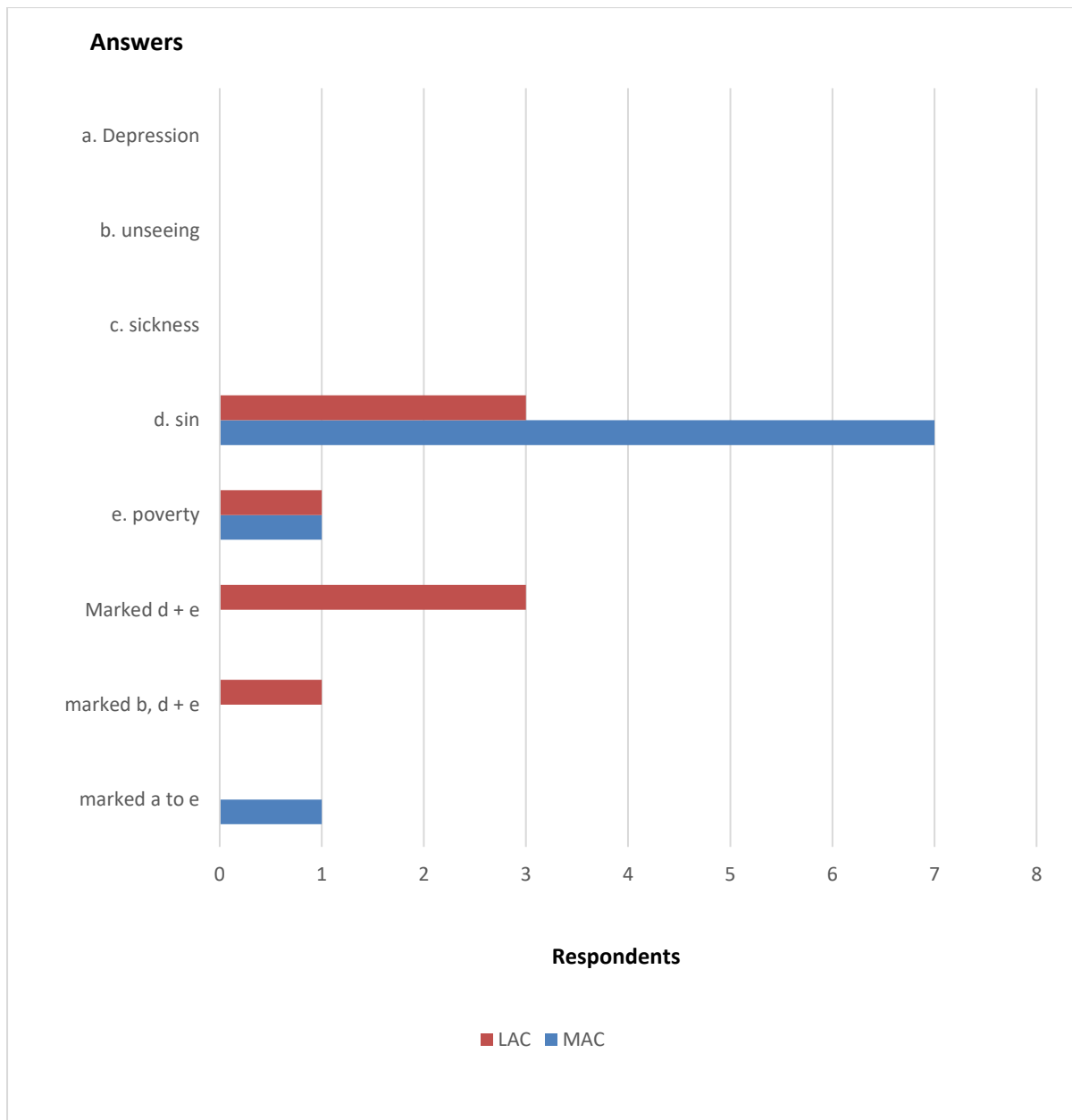




*Graph 2.5: Responses to question 4*

Of MAC’s respondents, eight (88.9%) ticked separation from God and sin’s oppression as either the entire meaning, or one of the meanings, of the state of ‘the oppressed/downtrodden.’ However, four (50%) of LAC respondents’ saw no connection with this meaning. Markedly, four (50%) of LAC saw material poor as either the entire meaning or one of the meanings of ‘the oppressed/downtrodden.’ Clearly LAC would need sound teaching on the role of separation from God, Satan and sin in causing directly or indirectly all kinds of oppression in society.

Question 5: *What is the root cause of humankind’s condition as described in Luke 4:18-19?*



*Graph 2.6: Answers to question 5.*

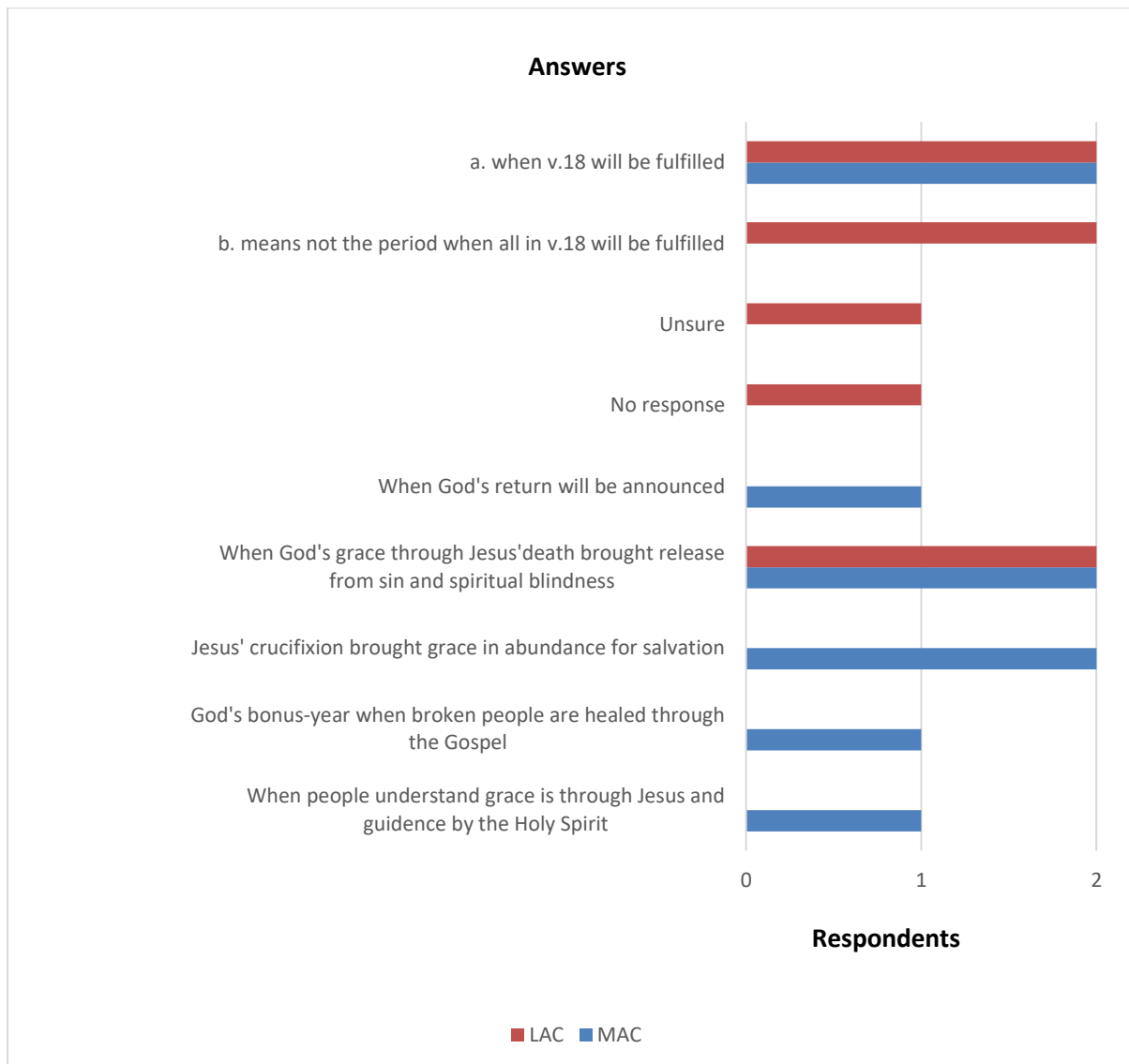
Seven of the nine respondents (77.8%) from MAC see sin as the root cause of humankind's situation described in the Lukan text. Another one (11.1%) gives this as well as all the other answers. Only three from LAC (37.5%) see sin as exclusively the root cause of humankind's problems; four others (50%) included poverty as well. One from each church (LAC 12.5%; MAC 11.1%) exclusively gave poverty as the root cause.

I had in mind that the answer to the fifth question should be only one of the options, namely, that the root cause of man's generally far from morally perfect condition

(spiritually, materially, physically, relationally, socially) is sin. This would of course mean the understanding of Luke 4:18-19 from an Old Testament and New Testament perspective as argued in chapter 3 (cf. also Gn. 3; Ps. 51:1-5; Is. 61:1-2; Rom. 1:18-32).

The majority of LAC respondents live in an environment where poverty and impoverishment are a daily experience. This situation has come about for many reasons that are all traceable to sin: the collective sin of past and present governments, individuals, families and communities. If MAC and LAC better understood Luke 4:18-19 (see chapter 3), this will be the message that they will want to live out and spread throughout their communities and further afield (cf. Jn. 10:10).

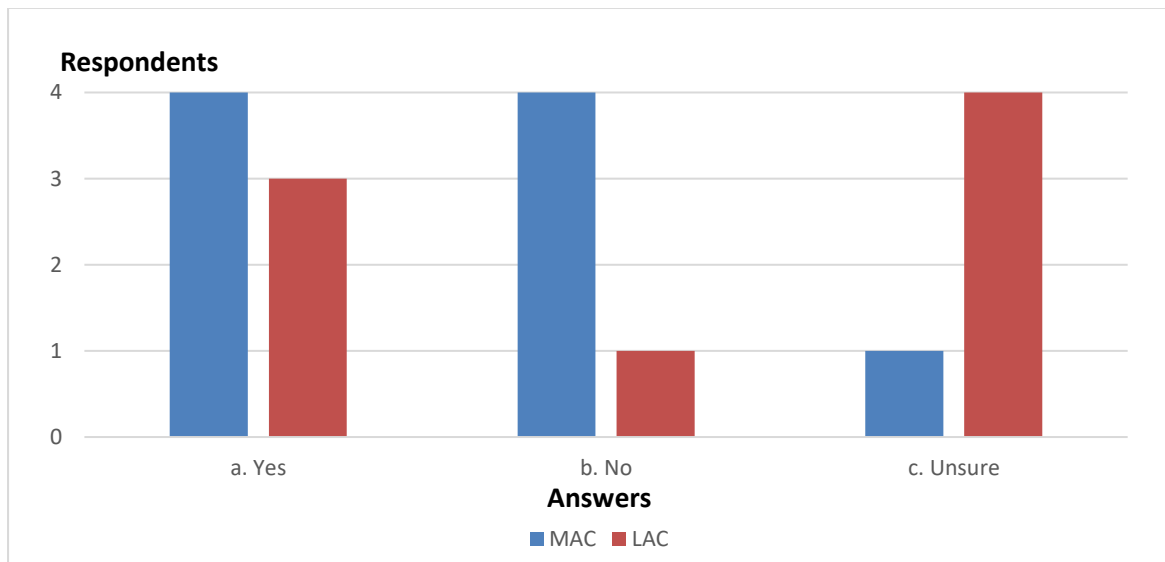
Question 6: *Give your understanding of the phrase, 'to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord' or 'the year of the Lord's favour' in the text.*



*Graph 2.7: Response to question 6*

All respondents did not have a full understanding of the phrase, '*to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*' (see Isaiah 61:2a) in the Old Testament context. This would have made it more difficult to appreciate the meaning of the Nazareth synagogue message by Jesus recorded in Luke 4:19. However, four (50%) of LAC and nine (100%) of MAC respondents had some idea that it was related to the purpose of Jesus' coming and the benefits of his ministry. One (12.5%) LAC respondent was unsure of the meaning of the phrase and another one (12.5%) decided not to answer, supposedly because uncertain of the answer. The answers to the next question show that many of the respondents also did not grasp that Luke 4:18-19 is unfolded in the New Testament.

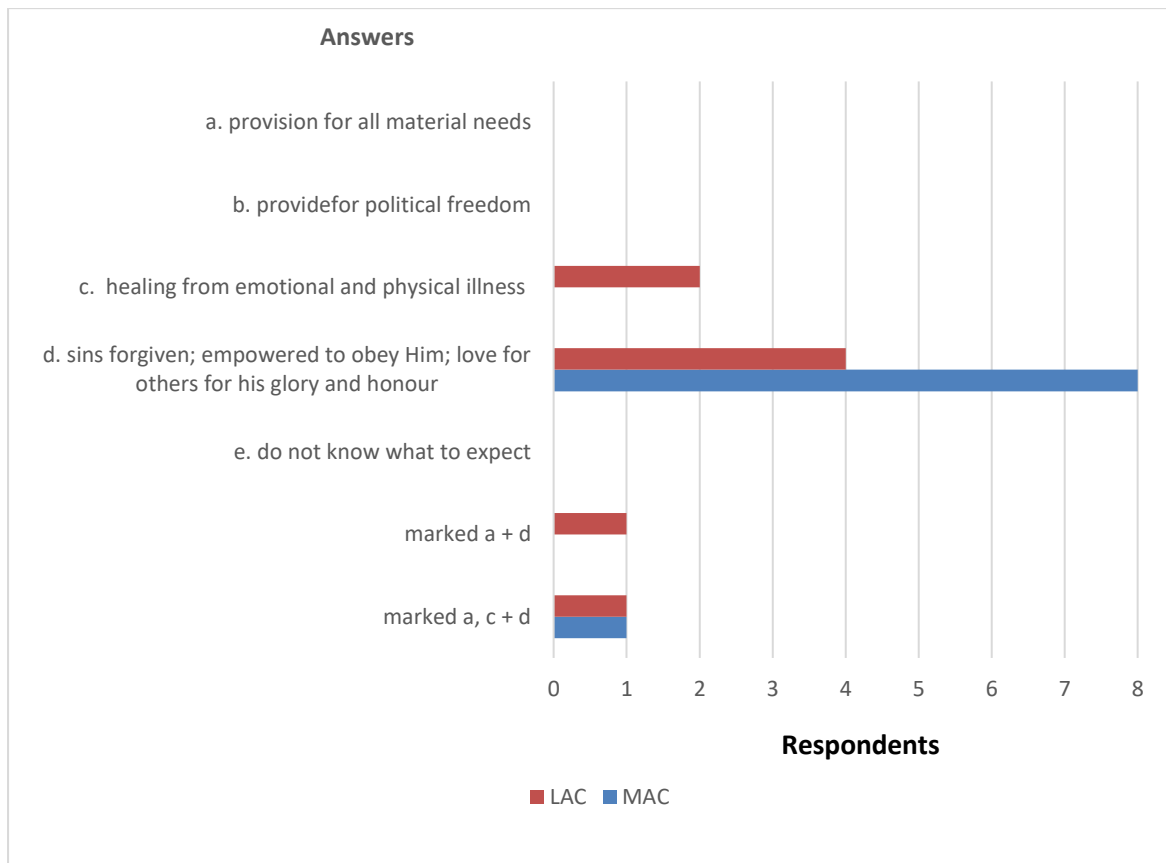
Question 7. *Luke 4:18-19 is a quotation from Isaiah 61:1-2. When Jesus had finished reading this passage in the Nazareth synagogue, he then said: ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing (verse 21). Must we therefore study the life and ministry of Jesus from the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament to find out how to interpret Isaiah 61:1-2, i.e. how to interpret Luke 4:18-19?’*



*Graph 2.8: Response to question 7*

Given the answers to the question, there seems to be uncertainty among the majority of respondents from both churches (five from both), especially LAC, that the Old Testament and the whole of the New Testament are necessary to understand the Lukan text. Seemingly, the majority of all seventeen respondents (10 = 58.82%, with five from MAC and five from LAC) did not couple the mission and ministry of Jesus to ‘the year of the Lord’s favour.’ Perhaps this would explain why the two churches, especially MAC, are not working on a holistic understanding of the gospel – that it is one geared towards ministering to spiritual, social and physical needs (see chapter 3).

Question 8: *What can we expect from Jesus’ ministry from your understanding of Luke 4:18-19?*



*Graph 2.9: Response to question 8*

Eight (88.9% (8) of MAC respondent's understood from Luke 4:18-19 that we could expect forgiveness from sin through the work of Christ, empowerment to be obedient to him, and serving others in love for God's glory and honour. Only one (11.1%) MAC respondent understood healing and material provision as also part of the purpose of Jesus' ministry. Six (75%) of LAC respondents listed sins forgiven, obedience and love for others for God's glory as either the only result or one of the results of Jesus' ministry in the light of Luke 4:18-19. Two (25%) of LAC respondents understood the text to mean only healing from physical and emotional baggage could be expected.

It is noteworthy, given South Africa's political history, that LAC did not tick the political answer to the question. Only one (11.1%) MAC respondent included material provision and healing as part of Jesus' ministry. Clearly, a detachment is seen between the spiritual and the material aspects within MAC's understanding of the text, thus influencing their ministry agenda and therefore detracting from God's

glory and honour. Another surprising result was that only two (25%) of LAC respondents saw Jesus' ministry as providing material provision.

Question 9: *From your answers to all the above questions that have dealt with Luke 4:18-19, what actions or ministries do you think the church should perform?*

The following table presents the answers given by each respondent. The Afrikaans has been translated into English. I have ensured that the translations are accurately represented.

LAC	Answers given to question 9
1.	The most important things for Jesus are: sin, purity and righteousness. Preach the word honestly so that people know what Jesus requires and become spiritually literate to continue on the path that Jesus requires.
2.	No comment given.
3.	The church must reach out to others, to teach them about God and all he has done for us, including to assist and support at all times.
4.	According to my opinion, I feel that the church should bring more people nearer to God and his services and teach people about God's works. Thus for them to grow spiritually and to preach his Word. Today it is not sufficient to just tell about God, but to emphasise the need to come to him "just as they are" so that their hearts can be cleansed.
5.	The church must focus on the spiritual realm, and not only the church congregants - but to love our neighbours (our homes, ourselves, neighbours, our enemies, the different ethnic groups, cultures, etc.). Our God is the only Almighty Lord, the Creator of the heaven and earth, and through him everything came into existence. He is our Creator over the good and the bad. The services of the church are to balance conservative and liberal views and to embrace God's Word continuously as an inspirational guide and a disciplinary measure and

	spiritual regulator.
6.	I propose that the church must give more attention to sin. It must also give attention to the poverty of our people.
7.	No comment given.
8.	We must repent and live holy lives, trusting God at all times. We have to live Jesus-pleasing lives, forgiving and loving each other as Jesus would have us live. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that those who believe in him should not be lost, but have eternal life.
<b>MAC</b>	<b>Answers given to question 9</b>
1.	Announce God's Word to those who live and work around us, leading them to God through our example, prayer, and witness, and where necessary to speak guided by the Holy Spirit to those who are still bound in sin. We cannot do it in our own strength
2.	The church should preach God's Word; reach out to the poor both materially and spiritually. Show love to neighbours. Promote strong relationship between husband and wife, children and parents.
3.	The church must have a focus on the unsaved and save them for God's Kingdom
4.	The church must preach the Gospel, but firstly attend to the material needs as people cannot be brought to repentance if they are hungry and thirsty. Therefore, attend first to life-emergencies and then afterwards give attention to the spiritual needs. The church must reach out to those who are in difficulty and through that preach the Word
5.	The church must bring the Good News to all so that they can become special to God, and through his grace be saved.

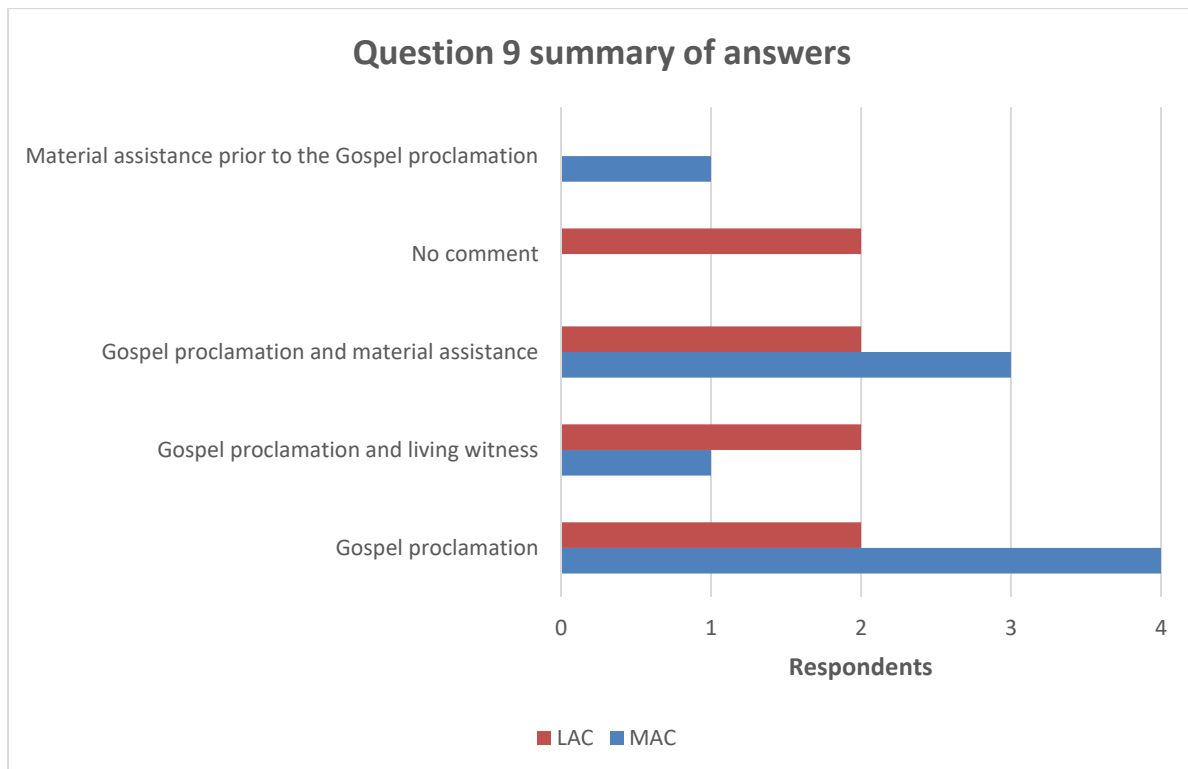


6.	The church must be activated in all spheres to assist the helpless and lead them to Christ to accept him as their Deliver and Saviour.
7.	The church of Jesus Christ must show their thankfulness to him for his grace that has saved them because they have given their hearts to him, believe in him and put their trust in him. Thus out of thankfulness the church has to be a light to the world. Our thankfulness should be exemplified in our lives
8.	The church must make people aware of sin. Teach people how to overcome sin. Teach that Jesus alone can forgive sin
9.	The church must have a ministry of love (love for God; love for neighbours; love for yourself because God loves you)

*Table 2.1: Responses to question 9*

As seen above, all respondents gave a view of what the church's ministry should be with the exception of two (25%) LAC members, who seemingly were unsure. LAC respondents that answered do not always demonstrate a clear understanding of the need to proclaim the salvation Christ made possible and call people to embrace it through repentance and faith. There tends to be rather a works-oriented approach (just teaching the Scriptures in general) rather than a conviction that repentance-faith-conversion brings one into the blessings inaugurated by Jesus as described in Luke 4:18-19 and a need to proclaim the gospel to others. Furthermore, only one (12.5%) mentioned mercy or compassion ministry. Seven (77.8%) of MAC respondents indicated that the church should spread the gospel, indicating that Christ is necessary for salvation. However, only two (22.2%) mentioned ministries to meet financial and other non-spiritual needs.

The results to question 9 can also be summarized into four categories: gospel proclamation and material assistance (or vice versa); those that desisted from commenting; gospel proclamation and living witness; and gospel proclamation only. They are captured in the graph below.



*Graph 2.10: Answers to question 9*

The LAC respondents were equally divided into the four categories. Six (75%) of LAC respondents believe in proclaiming the salvation message. Four (50%) also include material assistance. However, as seen above in subsection 2.2.2, the church is functional only on a Sunday. Thus practical ministry to the needy in the church and the wider community is not done under the banner of the church of Jesus. This does not mean individuals do not at times attend to needs. Therefore, the witness of the church as a collective body of believers in showing and promoting the love of Jesus in practical ways is compromised. This leads to organizations other than the church showing humanistic/social concern without the gospel proclamation.

MAC, distanced from grinding poverty, has four (44.4%) of the respondents believing the church's response to Luke 4:18-19 needs only to be gospel proclamation. The other five (55.6%) include gospel proclamation of the gospel with other more practical responses to material and physical needs. But it has already been noted that the latter seems to be little more than academic acknowledgement. The MAC respondents are probably unaware that their material advantages present the opportunity to spread the gospel by word and deed, especially to those less fortunate and disadvantaged by the apartheid laws.

LAC sees and experiences the influence of poverty in their community. It seems that this has somewhat blinded their minds to the full realization that all people in South Africa (and of course the rest of the world) have a sinful nature and have contributed to the many problems in this country. Sin has proved to be a problem in the apartheid government and also the democratic government, especially selfishness and greed that has negatively influenced the socio-economic development and upliftment, especially of the previously disadvantaged.

*b) The results of the interview and discussion of them*

*Appendix 3* provides in more detail the answers to every question. The results of the interviews revealed more clearly that the concept of salvation is minimally understood. This was seen in that the Afrikaans word '*bekeer*' ('*convert*' in English) was intellectually grasped without a full understanding of repentance with remorse for sin before a Holy God and a deliberate and ongoing turning from sin. For instance, the respondents' personal information concerning the awareness of their sinful state and new-birth in Christ was mostly mechanically linked to their dates of confirmation. However, this was not so in all respondents, especially those in middle age, where answers reflected a time period other than their confirmation dates when a clear conversion change was experienced. Accordingly, doubts arise as to their complete understanding of sin and its effects on humankind's spiritual and personal relationship with God and on horizontal relationships.

This does not necessarily discount God's saving grace in their lives. Calvin believed a paedobaptised child could become God's child through familial biblical instruction and nurturing leading to realising their sinfulness and need of salvation, given God's electing power (Calvin 1559:2541-2545§§17-22). If so, the churches' practice of 'Confirmation of salvation' at age 17-18 underscores this and would hopefully be the time when it could be affirmed that they had previously come to repentance and faith (whether over a period or at a specific moment or even during the confirmation season). This then would provide some justification for linking confirmation with infant baptism. Sadly, a significant number of the respondents, in spite of having undergone confirmation, noticeably showed little evidence of an experiential saving relationship with God through the person and work of Christ.

The interview also provided clarity on actual ministries in each church. Though both churches fell short in positively living out the vision and ministry implications of Luke 4:18-19, this was markedly so in LAC.

In conclusion, the biblical manner of acceptance of salvation and its impact on the believer and the church corporate were generally not well understood. A conscious conviction of sin, remorse, reception by faith of Jesus' salvation, turning from sin and a renewed mind in Christ Jesus were lacking in a significant number of the seventeen respondents. Their professed knowledge of salvation, the work Christ came to do that is captured in Luke 4:18-19, is largely academic with little or no emotional and corrective life experience. The Christian life is rather a legalistic system of church rules. The missionary dimension of Luke 4:18-19 and the implied holistic ministry are also markedly minimal.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter was concerned to present the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 at MAC and LAC. The necessary research required a background study to see what the beliefs of the churches and to what degree they were reflected in these churches. The significance of the findings is that they can be measured against the normative operative theology implied in Luke 4:18-19 (see chapter 3). This will pave the way for the leadership and the churches to correct any shortcomings so that a correct understanding of God's mission in the world and the intended Christian's involvement can be achieved.

My first-hand observations, the answers to the questionnaire, and the interviews, indicated that not all the respondents appeared to fully understand salvation as captured in Luke 4:18-19. Both churches have an intellectual understanding of Luke 4:18-19, which condenses the purpose of Jesus' ministry and is the basis for the later commands he gave to his disciples recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, the mandate still relevant to the church today. But the respondents did not fully comprehend that salvation is holistic – intended to deal with spiritual, social, physical-mental, and material needs of the human race.

The sample groups from each church were admittedly relatively small. However, because the questionnaire and interviews concur with and my observations from

years of involvement, the picture that emerged from the respondents' answers widely reflects the situation in the churches. The next chapter presents a biblically faithful operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC, a yardstick for measuring their operative theologies regarding Luke 4:18-19 and seeing where improvement is necessary.

## **Chapter 3: A biblically faithful operative theology with reference to Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter follows Browning's second question that comes after the concrete situation has been researched (see chapter 2) (1991:55-56). Thus this chapter presents the normative understanding of what the situation in the churches should be. It is achieved through establishing different perspectives on Luke 4:18-19. Firstly, it provides a biblical theology perspective on Luke 4:18-19 (taking into account an exegesis of Luke 4:18-19; the Lucan context, all the Gospels, and the rest of the New Testament). Secondly, there is a historical theological perspective. The last perspective is an extra-biblical one.

Then the different perspectives are collated to attain a more biblically faithful understanding of Luke 4:18-19 and the implications for the local church. The result is then contextualized for LAC and MAC to provide a normative praxis. It is a theory of practice to assist the participating churches – leaders and individual members and church corporate – to be obedient to God's Word and to be used to address any shortcomings presented in chapter 2. Then the preferred praxis is critically defended (the answer to Browning's third question, 1991:56).

### **3.2 A biblical theology perspective on the significance of Luke 4:18-19**

#### **3.2.1 Introduction**

Section 3.2 provides a biblical theology perspective on Luke 4:18-19's significance. This follows a number of steps:

- An exegesis of Luke 4:18-19: attempting to ascertain the best translation of the text; consulting the Old Testament context; consideration of the Lukan

context; attention to the immediate context of the passage; and by correlating these elements.

- Then the other Gospels and the rest of the New Testament are briefly taken into account.
- Finally, a biblical theology with regard to Luke 4:18-19 is concluded by correlating all the preceding sections.

The majority of all the Scripture references are from the English Standard Version, and where otherwise, the Bible translation is cited.

### **3.2.2 The Exegesis of Luke 4:18-19**

#### *a) The text*

Luke 4:18-19 is nearly a verbatim rendering of Isaiah 61:1-2a.

The English Standard Version of Luke 4:18-19 is as follows:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.’

The rendering of this translation is similar to that of the Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Bible and ‘*Die Bybel in Praktyk*.’ However, the King James Version differs in that it follows the Septuagint (LXX) and the Hebrew version of Isaiah 61:1-2a, inserting ‘to heal the broken hearted’ (v. 18c) and translating the word ‘oppressed’ in v.18e as ‘bruised’.

Luke does not follow the Old Testament Hebrew and Septuagint texts in that ‘to set the oppressed free’ is added from Isaiah 58:6. Importantly, the Lukan text excludes Isaiah 61:2b (‘the day of vengeance of our God’). The differences between the Isaiah verses, excluding Isaiah 61:2b, is superficial, as the association of ideas explains purpose. All Scripture is God-breathed, thus supporting the text as Luke rendered it (1 Tim. 3:16; Meyer 1883:50).

*b) Old Testament context of Isaiah 61:1-2a*

Isaiah 61:2a refers to the Jubilee Year experience. The Jubilee year signalled the time when people could return to their own properties they had been forced by circumstances to sell and when Jewish indentured workers were granted freedom (Lev. 25:10,28,40-41). It was thus a time of freedom from poverty and slavery. It began on the Day of Atonement with a trumpet rendering that sounded the start of the Jubilee year. Isaiah 61:1-2a was relevant to the captives in exile in Babylon and the Jews enslaved and in poverty living in Judah. It is important to note that the Jubilee year was coupled to the Day of Atonement. The latter was the time when the Jewish individual's and the nation's sins were forgiven through the atoning blood sprinkled before the Ark of the Covenant, and therefore the Jubilee year had a strong spiritual meaning (Lev. 16:11-16).

Isaiah 58 was a rebuke against those in Judah because they were captives or prisoners to sin, including the sin of not caring for the poor (Bock 2004:66). Thus Isaiah 58 adds colour to the kind of slavery from which the Jews in Judah, and possibly even in exile, needed deliverance. To exiled Judah, Isaiah's message was one of literal encouragement of God's forgiveness and promise of release from Babylon; this had overtones of a new Exodus (Gaebelin 1986:§D). The prophet's message was also relevant to those at home in Judah in a devastated country, where extreme poverty and hopelessness were a reality due to their forebears' and their own sins.

The themes of deliverance from the exile, an exile due to God's punishment for sins (Dt. 28:47-48), deliverance from captivity to sin, and God's forgiveness through atoning sacrifice, are clearly significant for understanding the meaning of Jesus' words in Luke 4:18-19. Also lying within the orbit of the context of Isaiah 61:1-2a is the sin of neglecting, and even unjust treatment of, the poor; also the need of the care of the poor, thus bringing hope to them. Jesus' quoting of the Isaiah passage, therefore, cannot be interpreted apart from the need of atonement for sin, repentance, forgiveness, and material provision.

Isaiah 61:1-2a must be seen against the background of the whole OT. This will explain why such a prophecy was necessary in human and Israel's history. God's documented ministry to humankind began at Creation, prior to the Fall, recording an



interlude of walking with the Adam and Eve in the Eden Garden (Gn. 3:8). They rejected God's Word through coveting forbidden knowledge and power and disobeying it, thus rebelling against his sovereignty and Lordship (3:1-6; Berkouwer 1971:12) and coming under his judgment. A sinful nature has as a result been propagated throughout all Adam's progeny. However, God immediately initiated his restoration plan and intervention, theologically termed '*Missio Dei*' (Barram 2007:43), promising a salvific solution to humankind's slavery to sin through the ministry of Jesus and proclaimed in the Nazareth synagogue. God met the Eden pair's immediate material needs, but they forfeited God's presence and fellowship with him (Gn. 3:15, 16-19).

The next clear phase of the *Missio Dei* was the salvation of Noah's family from the flood that destroyed those who rejected God's provision of the ark. However, after the flood God promised never to destroy the world with water again (Gn. 7:6-7; 8:11; 9:13 KJV). God's covenant symbol was a [rain]bow in the clouds, '*keh'-sheth*' in Hebrew. Interestingly, the bow was used in hunting for killing. The rainbow pointed heavenward to God, possibly prophesying that Jesus would take full punishment for humankind's sin (Serafini 2019), confirming the Genesis 3:15 promise. Jesus proclaimed this message in the Nazareth synagogue prior to his actualising the prophecy through his propitiatory death, resurrection and ascension, and thereby offering release and freedom from humankind's enslavement to sin (Lk. 4:18-19a; 23:26-24:51).

Self-worship saw the Babel debacle, which God ordered to inhibit the unrestrained march to self-glorification and honour of humankind (Gn. 11:4). Yet God continued his mission ministry through the calling of Abraham and succeeding patriarchs to Moses, through whom he manifested signs and miracles in Egypt to achieve Israel's deliverance from slavery and the desert wanderings. This further demonstrated God's redemptive action, a preview of what Jesus' Nazareth sermon promised on a universal scale (Gn. 12:1; 21:2-5; 27:22-29; Ex. 3:10; 7:11; 13; 14:21, 28; 15:25; 16:4; 17:1-7; 19-20; Köstenberger 1998:58).

During the Judges period there were repeated stretches of time of unfaithfulness to God through disobedience and idolatry (Jud 2: 11-12; 8:33; 10:6). During the history of the kings the sins were myriad: the self was idolised; the needy were neglected

(Ez. 16:49-50); unjust laws were promulgated and injustice prevailed (Is. 10:1-2; Am. 6:12c); love for neighbour was negated; sexual sins became commonplace (Am. 2:7-8); people were oppressed (Is. 3:5); wealth accumulation, including lands and houses, caused others poverty (Am. 5:11b); people became commodities and extortion pervaded society (Am. 2:6b+c; 5:11a); prophets and priests taught falsehoods (Jer. 23:9-32); theft from God was evident through the withholding of tithes (Mal. 3:8); worship of God became ritualistic and a self-righteous act (Am. 4:4-5; 5:21-23). Proverbs 4:19 describes the way of the sinful as darkness, taking the earth off course, which led to the abuse of the poor (Ps. 82:4-5).

The consequences of the Deuteronomic curses for spiritual unfaithfulness were evident not only through the period of the judges (Jg. 6:1; 8:33; 9; 10:6-10; 13:1), but also through much of the history of the kings (crop failure and famine – 1 Kg. 17:1; Joel 1:10-12; cattle herds decreased – Jg. 6:4-6; 1 Kgs 18:5; Joel 1:18-20 ; extensive poverty – Jer. 5:1-4; and attacks from surrounding peoples and the bigger world powers, leading eventually to exile of many from the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel – Jg. 2:14; 2 Kgs 17:6; 25:4,10.).

God's mission in the world through Israel does not come to an end through her sin. His judgments can be prevented through and reversed through repentance. There is a repetitive call in the Old Testament to repentance, translated as 'turn from evil' or 'return' to God (Dt. 30:1-3, 6; Jos. 24:23-24; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; 1 Kg. 8:47-48; 3 Chr. 30:9; Job 36:10; Is. 44:22; 55:1-3,6-7; :2-4,11-20; 17:10-11; 30: 1-2; 45:2; 55:1-3, 6-7; Jer. 6:16; 7:23; 15:19; 26:13; 29:11-13; 33:3; Lam. 3:22-26; Ez. 3:18-21; 14:6; 18:30-32; 33:11; Joel 2:12-13; Elwell 1996). God's gracious forgiveness is, therefore, given to those who repent of sin and ask for it from him (Ex. 32:32; Num. 14:17-19; Chr. 6:21; Ps. 25:18; 32:5; 99:8; 103:3; Jer. 31:34; Dan. 9:18-19).

The Old Testament presents God's mission to Israel and ultimately a mission to all humankind (Lev. 19:33-34; 1 Kg. 8:41-43). Jonah's message typifies God's love to an unbelieving nation, calling for repentance from sin to be spared his judgment. Over a period of three days the city of 120 000 repented and experienced God's salvation (Jn.1-4; Moreau *et al.* 2015:35). The Temple worship indicated the need for propitiation of sin to undergird forgiveness upon repentance. But it also became a symbol of a time when God's redemptive mission through Israel was always open to

the other nations; a time when God's mission would bring in a great harvest from people of every tribe and nation (Ps. 2:10; 33:18; 46:10; 47:1; 57:45; 66:1-4; 67:2-3, 5; 72:17; 96:7; 98:2; 100:1; 105:1; 108:3; 117:1; 145:10-11; Moreau, Corwin and McGee 2015: 35). Amos prophesies hope that God's mission would embrace all nations that bear his Name; Joel also predicts the outpouring of God's Spirit on all people and looks forward to the day when all nations will worship the Lord (Jl. 2:28; Am. 9:-12; Hab. 2:14; Mic. 4:1-4; Moreau, Corwin and McGee 2015:35).

The Old Testament picture that has emerged is that underlying all humankind's problems, individuals, families, societies and nations, is sin. Sin is inherent in humankind (Ps. 12:1; 13:2; 14:1; 27:7-14; Am. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; Mic. 1:5; Mal. 1:7-10; 2:13-16) and clearly needs a long term solution. But the Old Testament leaves us without a final solution. There are precursors – times of repentance and forgiveness and freedom, but they are short-lived. The Old Testament cries out for a greater act of salvation, of deliverance, for Jew and Gentile. But, as already noted, it offers many prophecies of such a salvation that will climax in shalom – perfect peace, righteousness, healing, the absence of all needs, and resurrection to new bodies fit for eternal fellowship with God that will never again choose the destructive way of sin. Luke 4:18-19 announces that these glorious Old Testament prophecies are at last about to be fulfilled in the life and ministry of the incarnate Son of God.

### *c) The Lukan context*

Luke as physician (Col. 4:14) had been educated and programmed to carefully analyse information and make careful observations. For example, he specifies the time-period of writing the Gospel by mentioning Porcius Festus, procurator of Judea, thus dating the book anytime during 59-62 A.D. (Bruce 1962:309; Laverdiere and Thompson 1978:341; Moscato 1976:357). Ceasar Augustus and Tiberius as Emperors are named, including Herod the Tetrach, Pontius Pilate, Annas and Caiphus, therefore dating the exact period of Jesus' life (Lk. 2:1; 3:1-2).

The subjugated Jewish folk were poor, non-elite, generally without citizenship and landless, similar to their forbears exiled in Babylon years prior. Jesus confirms his own financial status as poor, and thus fully relates to the Jewish impoverished (Lk. 9:58). The Jewish ruling-theological-political class supported Rome for their own benefit (Lk. 1:5, 23:1-4; Bruce 1962:309; Moxnes 1994:380,381,382). Judaism was

divided into Pharasaical Judaism, the Sadducees who disbelieved the resurrection and were influenced by Hellenistic culture, the Scribes and law-experts, and the Essenes of cultic-ascetic persuasion (de Witt 2014:1,2). All the above strains of Judaism operated within a Greco-Roman philosophical, aesthetic and polytheistic context, including Emperor Worship (Tenney 1978:130,131). Jesus' message comes to this milieu, Jewish-Greco-Roman environment, to challenge its beliefs and practices at odds with God's purposes (Lk. 2:34b+c; Pickett 2009:425).

The purpose of Luke's Gospel was to give an accurate descriptive account of the key parts of Christ's life – his birth, words and deeds. It was written to Theophilus, a Gentile, and thus to Gentile Christians, authenticating and confirming what they had been taught about Jesus Christ and thus anchoring their faith in firm convictions (1:1-4). Its literary genre is thus biographical and historical narrative (Lk. 1:1-4; Bailey 2001:18). It is not necessarily a chronological account as much of Jesus' life is missing. Further, from 9:51 the Gospel focuses on Jesus' resolute decision to go to Jerusalem for his atoning sacrifice on a cross and his resurrection.

Luke's Gospel is concerned to clarify the identity of Jesus as God's Son, through whom God intervened in the world to carry out his redemption plan for humankind (Lk. 1:17, 28-33, 76-78; 2:11, 26-32, 38; 3:22; Perowne 1886:3). Jesus' ancestral connection from God to Abraham and David and therefore to God's covenant, alerts the readers to the fact that Jesus occupies an everlasting throne and dominion (Lk. 1:32-33, 72-73; 3:23-37). Luke 4:16-21 not only elucidates God's progressive revelation of Jesus' true identity, but also Jesus' willingness to please God the Father by fulfilling his will for the redemption of humankind (Lk. 4:24-27, 31-41, 42-44; 5:12-26; 6:6-11; 7:1-17, 36-50; Perowne 1886:3; Wallace 2011). The time for the next epochal moment in God's glorious plan of salvation for wayward and rebellious sinners, Jew and Gentile, had come (Hanna 1983:101). The Old Testament has reference to the fact, as noted above, that God's mission in his world was destined to bring an experience of God's redeeming work to not only the Jews but also the Gentiles (Lev. 22:18; 1 Kgs. 8:41-43; 2 Chr. 6:32-33; Is 2:2; 11:10; 49:22; 60:5; Hos. 2:23; Jonah 3:1-8; Gill [2017]<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Where a year is given in square brackets, it indicates that the source was accessed online in this year and there was no date of writing provided for the document/article quoted. Similarly in the bibliography.

Luke unmistakably shows that from Jesus' birth and throughout his life the abundant anointing of the Holy Spirit marked his calling and equipped him for ministry. He is born of the Holy Spirit (1:35). His ministry was launched at his baptism through the powerful anointing of the Spirit (3:22), which enabled him to overcome the temptation of Satan in the wilderness, so crucial to his work. From this experience he embarks on his ministry in the power of the Spirit (4:14). Then comes 4:18-19, showing that Jesus' unique empowerment by the Holy Spirit is in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy in 61:1-2a.

Jesus understood his mission as coming to fulfil the promises to the Israel of faith. Thus, Jesus mission to Israel opposed the Judaic religions of that time, challenging attitudes, practices and structures that restricted and excluded members of society that were the poor, blind, lepers, hungry, mourners, sinners, tax collectors, demon possessed, captives and those weary from the physical, psychological and spiritual burdens they carried (Bosch 2011:41). Thus Jesus became the hope of 'the poor' (Schattrof and Stegemann 1986, cited in Bosch 2011:42).

Who qualifies for the salvation Luke indicates in his Gospel and what does this entail? Jesus' salvation is available to those who are poor and humble – those who realize their need of a Saviour. Mary understood the importance of humility for which God chose her to facilitate the incarnation of his Son (Lk. 1:47, 50, 52b). Throughout Luke the needy come to Jesus, humbly acknowledging that he could fulfil their need (4:40; 5:12; 8:41, 42, 44; 17:13). He released those oppressed by Satan (4:31-35, 41; 6:18b; 7:13; 8:26-38; 9:37; 10:33; 15:20), and healed those with physical ailments (4:38-39; 5:12-15; 6:10, 18b; 7:3, 10; 8:40, 46-47; 13:10-13; 17:11-19; 18:35). Forgiveness was part of the healing process granted by Jesus to the paralytic and a sinful woman (5:17-20; 7:36-48). The prodigal son and the thief on the cross acknowledge their need of salvation and experienced it as a gift (1:9-11; 11:9; 15:18-19; 23:41-43).

Healing not only brought physical release, but also deliverance from demonic or physical ailments, resulting in economic advantage as the restored were now able to work. Similarly, those raised from the dead could meet the needs of the families who were in dire material want (7:12-15; 8:53). The salvation Jesus came to provide catered not only for the material indirectly through healing the sick so that they could

become economically active. It also achieved this in direct miraculous ways, for example, in the case of the disciple-fishermen and the audience in need of income and food respectively (5:1-6; 9:10-17). The rich man and Lazarus bring a warning pertinently to the fore for all believers, that God is concerned about believers' physical needs (16:29-31). However, Jesus came for both rich and poor, oppressed and oppressor, sinner and saint to reign over all of life (Bosch 2011:47-48). He breaks down the barriers, dissolving alienation (p. 42). It therefore follows that the 'poor' mentioned has a wider meaning.

From the beginning and throughout Luke's Gospel, emphasis is placed on God's heart for the spiritually poor through sin, the materially and socially poor, and those captive to sin and Satan. Jesus is central to God's grace made possible through his perfect sacrifice. Jesus is God, visiting and redeeming his people from their enemy, Satan, and his catastrophic impact on humankind that has caused all oppression. Jesus offers release and freedom therefrom (4:18-19, 43; 6:20; 7:22; 8:4-18,26-38; 14:13, 21; 16:20,22; 1:52,54-55; 67-80; Pickett 2009:429). The freedom and release is made available not only to the poor and sinners, but also to the outcasts, including the Samaritans, Gentiles, tax collectors, and women (the latter are pertinently mentioned in the Gospel) (Blomberg, Schreiner and van Pelt 2018:4-6). Though Jesus' salvation is by God's grace, the sinners must repent, renounce sin, deny themselves, and follow the Master (9:23). The confirmation by God the Father of Jesus as his beloved Son, to whom humankind should listen, brings additional responsibility to sinners to respond to Jesus' message (3:22; 9:35).

Luke's Gospel is Christocentric, yet of Christological and ecclesiological significance in that it bridges the divide between Jewish and Gentile believers' concerning the origins of their faith and how they should live, witness and function (Bovon 2002:28; Laverdiere and Thompson 1978:568, 583). Jesus' servants/believers must continue his work, preaching the gospel of salvation to all, enabled through God's Holy Spirit (9:1-2; 10:1-20; 24:47-48; Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs and Wiseman 1972:887). Thus, Luke is programmatic in that it anticipates in Acts the gospel to not only Jews but also the Gentiles (Matthey 2000:5; Siker 1992:75). In the context of Luke's Gospel, the fulfilment of the Isaiah 61:1-2a prophecy was that Jesus came to bring salvation to not Jews alone (19:1-9), but also Gentiles (Is. 40:5; Lk. 3:6).

Leading up to Luke 4:18-19 in the book we are presented with (i) the true identity of Jesus as God's incarnated Son and the prediction that would bring redemption to his people, and (ii) Jesus' increasing self-awareness of his unique relationship to God (the Father) and his being equipped through the Holy Spirit to bring salvation. Luke 4:18-19 is the moment when Jesus embraces his salvific calling. The rest of the Gospel comprises a lengthy account of his ministry that spells out the nature of God's salvation (the consummation of which awaits his return, stated at the beginning of Acts which is his sequel to this Gospel). Luke 4:18-19 is thus strategically placed in Luke's Gospel, in fact in Luke's two works.

*d) The immediate context*

Verse 1 of chapter 4 confirms that Jesus' anointing by the Spirit was full and complete ('πλήρης') (reinforced in v. 14). Against the background of the investiture and consecration of the priests and prophets in the Old Testament (Ex. 28:41; 1 Kgs. 19:16; Meyer 1983:50), we gain further insight into how Luke perceived Jesus' role. Luke 4:18-19 is part of the 4:16-30 pericope. It is encapsulated by two summary statements found in vv. 14-15 and 31-32, which emphasise the Holy Spirit's anointing on Jesus for his role in God's mission to humankind, both Jew and Gentile, the latter implied in vv. 25-27 (Bock 2004:56; Matthey 2000:3).

The pericope is immediately preceded by Satan's challenge of Jesus as God's divinely Anointed and includes the Nazareth synagogue congregation's rejection of Jesus (4:3-12, 23; Kistemaker 1982:34, 35, 37). Jesus presents the focus of his ministry on the poor; the setting aside of vengeance and the Gentile mission through which he challenged the Nazareth synagogue on the ethics of election, as God was not only the God of Israel, but for the Gentile nations as well (Nissan 1984:75 cited in Bosch 2011:92). Clearly there is going to be opposition to the redemptive mission of Christ.

*e) Preliminary conclusion concerning the meaning of Luke 4:18-19*

In the light of sections a) to d), Jesus' homily in the Nazareth synagogue unmistakably identifies his ministry as a fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-2a. He is central to God's mission to bring salvation, and his ministry is to be seen as descriptive of it (Kistemaker 1982:36; Laverdiere *et al.* 1978:568; Matthey 2000:4;

Tenney 1978:128, 130). Isaiah 61:2b was omitted by Jesus: '[to proclaim] the day of vengeance of our God.' This was clearly not part of Jesus' first mission to the world (Jn. 3:17; Godet 1976:234; Hanna 1983:101).

Jesus was uniquely equipped to bring the good news 'because' he was sent and anointed by the Spirit of God (Lk. 4:18; Godet 1976:234; Hanna 1983:101; Meyer *et al.* 1883:50). Jesus' statement of his anointing invites belief in him, yet brings warning concerning unbelief, which, after the sermon, elicited an angry response from the Nazareth congregation (Lk. 4:24-27; Bock 2004:61).

He came to preach 'good news to the poor.' In the light of Luke's Gospel and the Old Testament context of Isaiah 61:1-2a, this wonderful message was to be fulfilled through his ministry. It was one of deliverance, not merely from material poverty. Jesus' ministry is holistic – spiritual, physical, emotional and material (Lk. 4:43-44; Cho 2005:88, 93). Luke has a clear focus on the poor, *ptochos*, throughout the Gospel – the word occurs ten times (Luke 1:53; 6:20,24; 12:16-21; 16:19-31; 19:1-10; Bosch 2011:99). The wretched life of the poor is contrary to God's purposes of which Jesus came to put an end to their misery (p. 42). Misery in Luke's Gospel includes demonic oppression and also the burden of social issues, being deprived of dignity, selfhood, sight, voice and bread through being controlled by others for private gain, selfish goals and own security (Mazamissa cited in Bosch 2011:99). Thus Luke 4:18-19 cannot be spiritualised; neither can it be collapsed into a programme for social restoration (Barton, Veerman and Taylor 1997:41).

Another category of poor, is *plousios*, the rich, a collective including those who exploit the poor to make monetary gain, negating the important things in life, and not noticing the needs around them. They are only focused on the self and can be labelled worshippers of mammon (Bosch 2011:110). This category of poor are lovers of money (Luke 16:14) and it involves the whole moral identity of the person and orientation of their lives (Schotroff and Stegemann 186:96 cited in Bosch 2011:110), thus placing themselves outside of God's grace, with their temporal blessings translated to woes (Luke 6:24; 8:14; 12:21; 14:18; 16:14,20; 18:19). God's concern for the poor, therefore, does not exclude the rich, but entails the hope that the rich would act in solidarity with the poor, through accepting Jesus message and reconciliation, realising their own poverty, captivity and blindness to sin's



enslavement and need of God's grace (Schatroff, Stegemann and D'Sa cited in Bosch 2011:101).

Many of the crippling and sad conditions of Israel, and the whole human race, are clearly related to sin, and sin arouses God's anger and judgment. Sin and sinners are often related to moral corruption in Luke; and if sin is denied, the sinfulness is greater (Luke 10:30-37; 15:11-32; 16:19-31; 18:9-14; 19:8; Bosch 2011:105). People – rich and poor, educated and non-educated – are enslaved in their own sinfulness and sinful state, are spiritually poor, needing to repent and receive God's forgiveness (Bosch 2011:111). So any effective and lasting salvation would require dealing forensically and existentially with sin. Jesus provides such a salvation.

The 'poor' would also, therefore, refer to those poor in spirit who realise their inadequacy of overcoming their sinfulness which is forfeiting acceptance by and communion with God (Grudem 2006:376). They are those who respond in humility and honesty to God's Word realizing their spiritual bankruptcy in relation to Almighty God and need of his redemption and forgiveness, which when received translates to a transformed life and interaction with all those in need (Bosch 2011:112), both spiritually, physically emotionally and materially.

The 'captives' are those oppressed by guilt, sin, Satan and others in positions of abusive power. The term in Isaiah 61:1 denotes captives securely bound. Paul uses this word to express that Aristarchus is his fellow prisoner (Col. 4:10; Godet 1976:233, 235). The captives are, therefore, technically prisoners of war where Satan and sin have been the victors. This bondage is to sins like sensuality, hatred and greed. These sins flow from transmission from Adam through progeneration and one's own sins committed through self-idolisation (Hughes 1998:46). Sin is the subjugation of the soul, the imprisoning of it (Jn. 8:34: Kittel vol.1, 1978:196)

The captives can have hope through God's mission, found in his Word. Though most translations use the word 'liberty' or 'freedom' to describe what Jesus proclaims to the captives, the Greek word is ἄφεσις/*aphesis* and translated forgiveness or remission in other places in the New Testament. It has been noted that the Jubilee year ('the favourable year of the Lord') was launched at the time of the Day of Atonement. So though deliverance might be perhaps a better translation of *aphesis* in Luke 4:18, the Greek word suggests deliverance from guilt as well as sin and its

effects. This means that the most important aspect of being freed from captivity is first having one's sins forgiven, which was part of the Jubilee year festivities. Jesus' forgiveness emphasizes the importance that the captives' legal rights are restored, bringing release and freedom from Satan and chains of sin (Bock 2004:69-70; Butler 2000:35), ensuring a legal right-standing before God the Father through belief in Jesus' redeeming work.

The word ἄφεσις/*aphesis* also has the meaning of deliverance like the Greek word σωζειν/*sozein*, to save. *Sozein* is used eighteen cases with reference to Jesus healing the sick; but in addition to forgiveness of sin, it can also mean freeing from bondage, monetary debt, and eschatological liberation (Bosch 2011:46). As can be noted from the other aspects of the ministry of Jesus stated in Luke 4:18-19, those captive to all sorts of misery and bondage can expect the transforming freedom through Christ.

Salvation, *soterios/soteria*, occurs six times in Luke; four of the six times salvation is found in the infancy narrative emphasising that salvation is only in and through Christ Jesus. Only in Luke, in the synoptic gospels, is the word Saviour used in reference to Jesus (Luke 2:11; Bosch 2011:104). Salvation is the reversal of all the evil consequences of sin against God and neighbour, thus not having only a vertical dimension, but also a horizontal practical implication (p. 106). Salvation is God's prerogative (Wilken cited in Bosch 2011:107). The process of forgiveness is unfathomable where undeserved kindness is received; where sinners are sought; where they are found and accepted; and above all receive honour, responsibility and authority through Jesus Christ (Luke 15:20-23; Ford 1984:77 cited in Bosch 2011:107). In the final chapter of Luke's Gospel, repentance and forgiveness is proclaimed to all nations (24:47; Bosch 2011:105).

The 'blind' could certainly refer to the physically blind (Lk. 7:21; 18:35-45; Nolland 2002:112). Physical blindness is but a result of the Eden-fall and thus a by-product, directly or indirectly, of a sinful state. But it clearly can also refer to those blind to their spiritual poverty and bondage and in need of a saviour, for example, the Pharisees (cf. Jn. 9:31-41). Sin equates to darkness, the dungeon-like conditions that have been satanically orchestrated. Spiritual blindness promotes the self and therefore negates God as Creator, Sovereign and Redeemer. This can manifest in

bondage to the self and material things, inhibiting the intellect, warping the emotions, and creating physical and material oppression of others.

Yet, through Jesus' proclamation, the sinful state of spiritual blindness is realised and healed so that the light of the gospel of Jesus is seen and believed (Bingham 2002:114; Godet 1976:235; Kittel vol.3, 1978:699). Jesus as the Light brings spiritual sight, even to these that are blinded by sin and Satan (Luke 1:76-79; 4:18-19; 10:23-24; John 12:46; Godet 1976:233; Green 1995:79; Hughes 1998:46; Kittel vol. III, 1978:699; Meyer et al. 1883:50). Luke uses the same terminology in Acts 26:18: '... to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God...' (Hughes 1998:46). Thus the light of the gospel is found in Jesus, enabling the captives to see the glory of God in Jesus, who is the exact representation of God and their own deficient cleanliness before a Holy God (Piper 2004:10,17).

The 'oppressed'/'downtrodden' would also include those oppressed by sin and guilt. In Luke 4:18f, the root of the word 'oppressed'/'downtrodden' literally means broken in pieces, shattered or crushed. Additionally 'the oppressed' have a distinctly social profile in Isaiah 58, thus in Jesus Nazareth proclamation, indicating his social concern for this category of people (Bosch 2011:101). Jesus' message was to include release of the oppressed. The ESV's translation reads, 'to set at liberty those who are oppressed.' Again, the Greek word translated 'liberty' is ἄφεσις/aphesis, denoting pardon, forgiveness and deliverance, all of which result in freedom. In the light of the exegesis above, Luke could well mean that our sin and its results can leave us crushed and broken and that he came "to forgive and free those who are crushed" (Hughes 1998:46), but not limiting this liberty alone to the spiritual dimension.

Now more comment on the meaning of 'the poor' can be made. It can include the humble, as found in Mary's jubilation song, who believe God's promised message of salvation. Humility is crucial to acknowledging the need of Jesus' intervention and humbly seeking all his blessings (1 Cor. 1:27-29; Eph. 1:13; Bock 2004:68, 69). The poor's action is contrary to the self-sufficient rich. The latter refuse to admit their spiritual poverty. Though at some level they are accommodated and sometimes admired, they are yet also rejected by society and are outside of God's plans and

purposes (Godet 1976:233; Hughes 1998:46; Meyer et al. 1883:50). The poor, who are crushed in spirit, eagerly await God's release (Butler 2000:35; Hendriksen 1978:10). Spiritual impoverishment is frequently the cause of physical ailments and material debts, obligations, penalties, greed and guilt from which Jesus promises release through the acceptance of his message as the Anointed One of God (Abogunrin 2003:234). Thus God's Holy Spirit, through Jesus' mission programme, is to radically change the spiritual, personal, social and economic condition of humankind.

The Jubilee year is the 'the favourable year of the Lord.' It is of the Lord and not of human source. In the OT, as already noted, the commencement of this year of freedom from all debt and slavery and the restoration of inheritance began with the sounding of a trumpet on the Day of Atonement. It was a legal system within one nation, which corrected growing social and economic hardship and injustice. Jesus de-nationalises the year, as his proclamation transfers the Jubilee year into a permanent ongoing year of the Lord's favour where forgiveness from sin is available from God for those who will respond to the gospel message (Godet 1976:234; Matthey 2000:7; Meyer 1883:50), a gospel that is focused on meeting all human needs – a holistic salvation. Jesus' ministry would be the basis for true liberty and freedom.

Additionally, the Jubilee, the year of the Lord's favour, has the eschatological promise imbedded in it (Bosch 2011:108; Hanna 1983:101). It is both the realized and yet to be realized reign of God in the life of the believer (Bosch 2011:45). It is in the life of the believer that the captive is freed; the broken heart is mended; the blind given sight; the deaf, hearing; the crippled now walk; and the whole gospel is presented to the poor (Matt 11:1-6; Luke 4:18-21; König 1980:194). The work of Jesus brings the reign of God to bear on this world, not yet universally, fully or finally, but it exhibits that God's kingdom has drawn near and that the war against the evil powers of this world has commenced (Bosch 2011:45).

The Jubilee also unites the time of Jesus and the church era into one era of the Spirit and is the year of favour for both the Jew and the Gentile (p. 109). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is central to repentance, forgiveness, prayer, love, acceptance of enemies, justice, fairness and inter-human relationships, which include, bridging the

social and religious barriers to include women, tax-collectors and prostitutes (Senior and Steulmeuler cited in Bosch 2011:89). Thus Jesus practised boundary breaking compassion (p. 89). This transformation through the redemption through Jesus is without sociological or religio-sociological parallel (Schottrof and Stegemann 1986:58,61 cited in Bosch 2011:42). The Jubilee year is launched with the crucifixion of Jesus as the New High Priest, who now intercedes for sinners, both Jew and Gentile before the Father (Ford 1984:133 cited in Bosch 2011:110)

In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus describes the visible and hidden or unrecognized range of physical, material and spiritual needs of humankind. The solution needed the breaking into our world by the Son of God, one who would qualify through a perfect life of obedience to the Father's will and the unique empowerment of God's Spirit for the needed redemptive work. There is now hope for the poor, the captives to sin and Satan, the spiritually blind, the sick, the oppressed, the broken-hearted, those in spiritual distress, the abused, and even the rich. Jesus has triumphed over all that which has been undermining, and to various degrees, ruining humankind in the present life and for eternity and this glorious achievement can be the sinner's through repentance and faith (Abogunrin 2009:235). Coming into this New Testament Jubilee experience includes the overcoming of material poverty through the liberated sinner's new capacity for work and being part of the caring body of Christ (Turner 1981:23).

Thus Jesus' proclamation and mission ministry is an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestations which include, pain, sickness, death, demonic oppression, personal sin, immorality, self-righteousness, class-privilege, broken relationships - all of which and more are addressed by God's love and redeeming power (Bosch 2011:46). The Luke 4:18-19 proclamation clearly implies that if Jesus' ministry is rejected, God's judgement can be expected. Therefore, evangelisation that includes the proclamation of coming judgement, omitted by Jesus in his reading of Isaiah 61:1-2 in the Nazareth synagogue, is also one of love (Bosch 201:43). This judgement warning was veiled in Luke 4:24-27.

### 3.2.3 Further perspectives on Luke 4:18-19 from the other Gospels and the rest of the New Testament

#### a) *The Gospels*

Insights from the other three Gospels regarding the meaning of Luke 4:18-19 are now briefly considered. The structure of the Gospels and the centrality of Jesus' ministry as God's unique incarnate Son to set sinners free to serve God in righteousness with the hope of eternal salvation, show that all the Gospels endorse the Nazareth message and its outworking. All the Gospels teach that Jesus' greatest theological teaching sign and heart of his redemptive work was his crucifixion, death and resurrection that exhibits God's love, mercy, grace and almighty delivering power. They confirm that Jesus is humankind's hope of salvation from sin, sin's consequences in life and eternity (Matt. 27:24-28:10; Mk. 15-16:8; Lk. 3:22; 23-24:12; Jn. 1:14; 3:16; 19-20:9; 6:57-58; 14:6; Morrill 2005:483).

The interpretation of Luke 4:18-19 arrived at so far strongly supports the importance of repentance from sin. If the sinful nature and our personal sins lie behind problems of a broken relationship with God, each other and the creation, it stands to reason that God's wonderful intervention epitomised in the Lukan passage requires a change of mind about our sinful actions (Jesus called for repentance in Lk. 13:3,5; 15:7; 16:30). The synoptic Gospels make it clear that conviction of sin, repentance, belief in Jesus and forgiveness belong together (Mt 4:17; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 4:18; 10:13; 13:3, 5; Elwell 1996). '*Aphesis*' (forgiveness, pardon, liberty or remission) is God's gift of grace, justifying the believer through the sinless life, propitiatory death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that translates to spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing (Lk. 1:77; Strong 1996, s.v.859). '*Mētanoēō*' (to change one's mind) together with '*ēpistrēphō*' (to convert) are concomitant with deeds consistent with repentance (Mt 3:8; Lk 3:8; Elwell 1996; Vine, Unger and White 1949) to the glory of God (Esler 1987:81; Marshall 1978:184; Young 1956:808).

Furthermore, Jesus sends out his disciples in the same manner (*kathōs*) as he was sent out by his Father to carry out his mission. His ministry role is transferred to the disciples, namely, preaching the kingdom of God and healing the sick (Lk 7:21-22; Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15-6; Lk 9:1-6; Köstenberger 1998:13, 51). They are to represent Christ in ministry, witness and obedience. In this, Jesus was the disciples' example –

using not only the Nazareth synagogue or Jerusalem Temple, but every opportunity to present the gospel. Jesus added material blessings to the poor in his ministry, thus providing an example to his followers (Mt 19:20; Lk 7:22; 14:13, 21-23; 18:22; 19:8).

Jesus began his ministry after his anointing by the Holy Spirit. Similarly his disciples were commanded to wait for the Holy Spirit's empowerment before beginning their ministries and witness (Mt 7:29; Mk 6:30; Jn. 7:14; Köstenberger 1998:184). The Nazareth declaration describes the full mission template for God's church on earth (Abogunrin 2009:248). His mission was that of the eschatological prophet and messiah, but also Saviour, thus redefining the Isaiah 61:1-2a prophecy to include a Christological and Christocentric focus (Lk. 7:19-22; Black 1996:32; Cho 2005:32)

#### *b) The rest of the New Testament*

The call to repentance and the remission of sin could not be preached immediately after Jesus' ascension. Jesus had given instructions to the twelve disciples 'to wait for the promise of the Father... you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now' (Ac. 1:4b, 5b). At Pentecost the Spirit of Jesus (the Holy Spirit) that empowered his ministry was given to the disciples to carry out the command to spread the message of Jesus' salvific ministry. Over three thousand experienced spiritual sight and deliverance from spiritual captivity to sin (Ac. 2:1-4, 41). The same Holy Spirit power would nullify any hindrance to the gospel reaching those the Father had elected (Lk. 4:18; Jn. 17:6; Ac. 3:6-7; 4:13; 5:1-12; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; O'Grady 1991:40-41).

The call to repentance and faith and release from sin through Christ's forgiving love occurs throughout the New Testament (Ac. 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 11:18; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 11:29-32; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:25-26; 2 Pt. 3:9; Rev. 2:21). Jesus' redemption and welcome into God's kingdom was preached throughout Judea and Samaria, and in, Damascus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaia and Rome, to Jews and Gentiles in synagogues, homes and public places (Ac. 4:4; 8:4-5, 25; 9:27; 14:25; 17:16-21; 2 Cor. 1:1, 19; Phil. 1:1-8; Col 1:23).

The new community of disciples, the church, emulated Christ's compassion for the materially poor and suffering through sharing and hospitality and by reaching out to

the physically sick and handicapped resulting in a growing number of converts (Eph. 4:11-12; Acts 6:1-7; Ac. 3:1-10; Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; 9:1-3; Gal. 2:10; Heb. 13:1-3; Jm. 2:15-17; Thiesen 1992:45; Acts 2:42-47). These new believers studied, were taught, prayed and fellowshiped.

Jesus ministry of deliverance is fully expanded in the New Testament (Acts 2:42-47). It needs to be understood in the wider context of the purposes and plans of God from eternity past to eternity in the future. This will entail the preaching and teaching of (i) **God's predestination** plan (Jn. 6:65; Rm. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:1-5, 11); (ii) **God's electing** power (1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Cappoccia 1998:3; Grudem 1994:671); (iii) **Regeneration** which is a new life in Christ which is eternal (Jn. 3:16; Eph. 2:1-7; Eayrs 2014; Finney 1851). Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:1-8), begins under the Holy Spirit's convicting of sin (Jn. 16:7-9; Ac. 2:37; Eccl. 7:20; Rm. 3:9-8, 23; 7:11, 18; Titus 1:15), confession of sin (1 John 1:9), and leads to repentance (Acts 2:39; 2 Cor. 7:9-1) and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation (Acts 16:30-31; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:9-10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eayrs 2014).

Number (iv) is **Justification** through faith and not works and is the impartation of the righteousness of Christ, of God, made possible through the propitiatory death of Jesus, making it possible for the converted person to be adopted into God's family and be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 3:19-30; Gal. 3:8-14; 4:4-7; Rom. 8:14-16; Eph. 2:8). The Holy Spirit guarantees the eternal salvation of the believer (Eph 1:13-14; 4:30; cf. Jn. 10:27-29). (v) **Sanctification** is God the Holy Spirit's work in the believer, assisting them to become more and more like Jesus' character of holiness, love, concern and mercy (1 Thess. 5:2; Gal 5:1-18,22-25; Col. 3:1-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-8). Sanctification involves serving in the mission of God that spreads the gospel and seeks God's rule to be honoured in the world (Mt. 28:18-20).

Finally number (vi) is **Glorification**. This refers to the glorious fulfilment of God's purposes when his kingdom is fully established in the new heavens and earth. Here the resurrected saints will live in perfect righteousness, love, service and fellowship with God (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:18-25; Rev. 21:1-4).



### **3.2.4 Summary and conclusion**

Section 3.2 started off with an exegesis of Luke 4:18-19 in the light of Isaiah 61:1-2a from which Luke 4:18-19 is taken, the immediate context of the periscope in which these two verses are embedded, and themes from Luke's Gospel. The Old Testament background is the Babylonian captivity and the desperately poor state of the Jews that remained in Judah. The New Testament background is, firstly, the oppressive practicalities of life under Roman rule – brutal and included 'enslavement' and impoverishment. Secondly, there were also religious burdens imposed on the Jews by their leaders. The Lukan text was then shown to deal with more than just external pressures (Babylonians, Romans, harsh economic times), but also spiritual poverty, captivity and blindness.

The preliminary conclusion about the significance of Luke 4:18-19 from a biblical theology perspective was that the ministry of Jesus is good news. This is because it deals with all the problems flowing from original and actual sin: bondage to, and destructive oppression of, sin, God's judgment for falling short of his righteous standards and requirements, blindness to these realities, and helplessness to rectify this desperate situation. Further, the good news of Luke 4:18-19 includes a commitment to solving physical and material needs. To benefit from this great news, humility, repentance from sin and reception by faith of Jesus' redemptive ministry are crucial.

Then the broader biblical theology implications of Luke 4:18-19 from the other Gospels and the rest of the New Testament were briefly explored. This confirmed the above findings, but also demonstrated that the church is to play a major role in the world mission Jesus launched by spreading the gospel message – a mission that will achieve its fulfilment at his return. Thus the experience of the fruit of Jesus' work in the Christian's life is to flow into proclaiming the message of Luke 4:18-19 to all the nations of the world so that they too might repent of their sins and embrace this glorious salvation. In this way disciples (Christians) are to participate in God's mission of restoration in his world.

Section 3.2 also made clear that Christians do not experience the realities of Luke 4:18-19 in isolation. The progressive continuation in the blessings of the gospel of

Christ require **holistic** ministry in the context of the church, including meeting material and physical needs of fellow believers.

In conclusion, Jesus' coming and ministry (incarnation, miracles, teaching, death, sufferings, resurrection and ascension) are central to meeting the needs of the poor and impoverished (spiritually, physically and materially). Those who realize their spiritual brokenness receive through the forgiveness and spiritual healing Jesus offers re-instatement to fellowship with God. It also brings release from sin's dominion. It is also intended to bring physical and material help when needed. In short, Luke 4:18-19 informs us that Jesus came to save the whole person. Individual Christians and the church corporately are to be involved in declaring Jesus' message and living its realities. The church is obligated, as demonstrated vividly in the New Testament church, to examine its witness in light of what Jesus taught, proclaimed and practiced.

Section 3.2 has presented a biblical theology perspective on Luke 4:18-19 by interpreting it in the light of the Old Testament and especially the NT. It has shown that the entire biblical narrative is about God's deliverance of his people, both in the Old and New Testaments, with Christ playing the central role as captured in the Luke 4:18-19 pericope (Cunliffe-Jones 1952:27).

Now the historical perspective on the text will be provided.

### **3.3 A historical theology perspective related indirectly to the significance of Luke 4:18-19**

Jesus' message in the Lucan passage has influenced the Church over the centuries. The message of release and freedom, stemming from a radical encounter with Jesus through conviction of sin and faith in his redeeming work, has influenced not only individual Christians, but also the collective church, which in turn led to social changes through the influence of Jesus Christ's ministry and gospel message as seen below. Ogletree argues that contemporary churches are inclined to avoid the ethical importance of the Christian message, effectually allowing a withdrawal from the public arena (2010:6). The historical survey will show that this was often not the case.

### **3.3.1 The post-apostolic church**

Polycarp, the Apostle John's protégé, preached the gospel message, facilitating many Gnostic followers coming to salvation. Believers' righteousness was through union with Christ, facilitating death to sin and living for him (Rom. 6:10-12; Dryden 2006:187). Clement of Rome (died 110 A.D.) and Ignatius of Antioch (98-117 A.D.) affirmed the church's ministry as apostolic, priestly and ministerial in obedience to God and a continuation of the Apostles' teaching and Paul's teaching in his letters (O'Grady 1991:68; Wells and Quash 2010:34). Tertullian (160-225 A.D.) also commanded believers' separation from pagan culture. This was noted by the pagan Celsus, who commented positively on Christian society's care for the needy and incarcerated (Wells and Quash 2010:32,34). The Apology by Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.) emphasised Christ's righteousness in believers in their transformed focus on rather living for God's glory and purpose (Rom. 4:11; Wells and Quash 2010:86).

The above Apostolic Fathers emphasized the gospel's pre-eminence in bringing release and freedom from sin. Through spiritual sight, Christ's imparted/imputed righteousness, and the Spirit's leading, lives were permeated with Christ-like love for the human race that was suffering the effects of sin. Thus believers witnessed by proclamation and example.

### **3.3.2 The church in the later Roman Empire and Middle-Ages**

Constantine's (247-337 A.D.) conversion led to a close union of state and church. Christianity positively influenced secular life through adjustments to slavery and criminal law, including addressing the issues of poverty through grants being given to poor children. Though the feudal system was believed to be divinely supported, the rich and landowners were encouraged to help the landless and poor through alms-giving. Yet impoverishment was a direct result of the feudal system as it enriched the landowners through the poor's labour (Wells *et al.* 2010:41, 45). The Patristic Fathers Basil of Caesarea (330-379), Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390) and Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) promoted the practice of the alleviation of poverty among the poor. Ambrose decried the economic injustice through wealth accumulation of the rich, which he regarded as an offence against God and the poor (Lk. 10:7; 1 Tim. 5:18; Wells *et al.* 2010:87, 88).

The Roman Catholic Church promoted that charity or alms-giving to the poor was a virtuous act (Friar Philip 2008:n.p.), which is biblically encouraged. However, the way the affluent in the Roman Catholic Church turned any assistance to the poor, the disabled and unemployed into a salvific work, undermined the biblical teaching that salvation is only through faith in Christ and not also through works. The Roman Church, when confronted, seemed incapable of changing their belief of salvation effectively by works and so continued to promote this belief (Rinehart 2014:581-582; Sider 1981:20).

Augustine (354-430 A.D.) experienced his own deliverance from sin. His experience thus proved that only God's work of salvation and sanctification could free the Christian from self-will and self-love (Bloesch 1979:158). He, therefore, believed the church's primary task was gospel proclamation – bringing souls to saving faith and nurturing believers in order to infuse Christian values into secular society for its revitalisation through prioritising love for God that would translate to charity (St. Augustine, convert who changed church history 2018).

Augustine's Confessions famously include the following prayer: "Give what Thou commandest and command that Thou will." Pelagius (360-420 A.D.), influenced by this prayer, believed that through the guidance of God's Law, human free-will had the ability to control a person's motives and actions. However, Augustine's belief was that God's grace and conversion and the indwelling Holy Spirit were essential for salvation that would include works of righteousness (Piper 1991:150,151). Pelagius' theory was totally repudiated by Bible-believing theologians (Babcock 2018:np; Pelagius facts [2018]).

In the sixth century, known as the beginning of the Middle Ages, Gregory the Great (540-604) wrote on a number of issues, including pastoral care, emphasising the need of the bishopric to be humble but not weak, authoritative but not severe, when dealing with parishioners (Hastings 1999:112). When the Roman famine in 589 brought severe hardship to Rome, his writings influenced a city-wide penance to systematise relief for the poor (Gregory the Great [2018]).

Later, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.) stated that believers, in subordination to God's will, should live out the virtues of faith, hope and cardinal love. In the Era of the Church Fathers (100-800 A.D.), Polycarp, Ambrose and Augustine not only

understood Jesus' message captured in Luke 4:18-19, but were radically affected by it (Wells *et al.* 2010:88-89,91). Aquinas wrote important theological works that included 'The Restoration of humanity to God' and 'The manner in which the Person of Christ brings salvation to humanity' (Introduction to historical theology 2018). He also underscored the necessity of the work of Christ in the salvation of souls. For Aquinas, God's justification makes a difference in the new believer – a change of the inner nature, not just a legal status (McDermott 2012:2), thus God's saving work translates to works of righteousness.

The gospel thrust was interrupted by the Crusades. However, from the end of the Middle Ages (1290 A.D.) friars preached the gospel throughout the European continent (Wells *et al.* 2010:45).

In summary, it could be stated that in the later Roman Empire and Middle Ages there were two streams of theology. There were church leaders like Augustine and ordinary believers that understood that the freedom Jesus came to bring was essentially spiritual: deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. However, they also saw the gospel as leading to the alleviation of poverty and illness and practised charity and ministry to the sick. The other stream put the emphasis on human effort leading to what approximated to salvation by works (2 Tim. 3:5; Introduction to historical theology 2018).

### **3.3.3 The church of the Reformation**

Luther (1486-1546 A.D.) came to an understanding of salvation through God's grace and received by faith alone. Like the other Reformers, he de-idolised the medieval approach to poverty, changed social policy by providing lower interest rates, subsidised education and encouraged tax support for the poor. He believed in equality before God and brotherly love as an outflow of the Christian faith and rejected the socialisation of wealth, that is, wealth passing from the private to the communal spheres amongst Christians (Sider 1981:20, 21). His declaration on salvation to works of righteousness stated that

We live on earth for no other purpose than to be helpful to others..., God lets us live here in order that we may lead other people to believe, doing for them what He has done for us (Schulz 1972:17 citing Luther, IX: 968).

Zwingli (1484-1531 A.D.) promoted a similar biblical interpretation of salvation. He believed that the Christian influence would also bring necessary change to secular society (Baschera, Gordon and Moser 2014:38,39).

John Calvin (1509-1564 A.D.) in the Reformation Era believed a spiritual new-birth was necessary to reinstate humankind's spirit, will, intellect, emotions and the body with God (Bloesch 2007:10). His passion was to build a godly community by emphasising the church's spiritual mission. He promoted civil government that would protect the right to worship, defend piety and redirect and adjust society for God's glory, believing that God's Law was the basis for ethics, refuting salvation by works (Heb. 13:20-21; Hall 2006:16; Wells *et al.* 2010:47,95, 101). Calvin thus taught the pre-eminence of the gospel of salvation, yet one that would also practically impact society for God's glory (Lk. 4:18-19).

Puritanism (16<sup>th</sup> century) originated in the doctrine of vocation. Believers' owed God life-service marked by self-discipline (Hall 2006:22). This doctrine stemmed from the biblical injunction of 'redeeming the time', which entailed a well ordered life, putting God first and central in their lives (Eph. 5:16). Reformers like Calvin and Luther and Radical Reformers like the Christian faction pejoratively called the Anabaptists because they opposed infant baptism and baptized believers and challenged Roman Catholicism, realigned their behaviour in every area of their lives to what God required as revealed in the Bible (Kreider 2019). Hans Denck captures this: 'No one can know Christ except by following Him in life' (Wells *et al.* 2010:95).

The Separatists (17<sup>th</sup> century) followed the Puritans in the practical application of the gospel in life, endeavouring to align church and God's kingdom on earth. They believed in the purity of God's people through covenant, which signified a promise of ethical behaviour – living in faithfulness to the gospel. Ministers' roles were adjudicated against their social interaction within the community (Hall 2006:26,131).

The Roman Catholic Church countered the Reformation's teaching by affirming salvation by works alongside that of faith (Council of Trent 1545-1563) (Wells *et al.* 2010:49). The Roman Church, therefore, contradicted Jesus' Nazareth proclamation, where the recognition of a sinful state and forgiveness and deliverance from a holy God through in Christ were vital; this church did not seem to understand that humankind's selfish works are as filthy rags in his sight (Lk. 4:18b; Is. 64:6).

The Quaker, Digger and Leveller movements (17<sup>th</sup> century) taught an intuition based on a model of personal, communal and moral discernment with a strong egalitarian, political vision focused on economic equality and the commonality of property (Wells *et al.* 2010:49). This undermined the ministry of the Holy Spirit and God's Word and the realisation of a sinful-self from the equation.

### **3.3.4 The church in the New World specific to North America**

Reformation influences predominated in New England with Baucer believing that ministry was God-ordained, preaching had to incorporate sacrificial obedience, and the church was a voluntary association that should practise penitence, discard hypocritical religion and believe in self-disciplined constraint (Hall 2006:5.15). Jonathan Edwards preached salvation through faith in Christ's atoning work, divine spiritual insight and freedom from sin (Lk. 4:18-19). He was a preacher who shared God's love for humankind. He preached the extension of the gospel in social engagement through charity expressions within the community. Faith in God's salvation translated into interpersonal responsibility (Story 2012: n.p.). The American Puritans' ethics included balancing the commands to show charity and self-discipline that ensured worldly prosperity as a sign of divine favour (Heimert and Delbanco 1991:n.p.).

### **3.3.5 The church in modernity**

Newtonian historical scholarship challenged Christianity. The church countered by emphasizing Christ's atonement for sin and a visible radical transformation in the believer's life as proclaimed and promised by Jesus (Lk. 4:18-19; Wells *et al.* 2010:104). Kierkegaard (1813-1855), for example, called believers to demanding self-sacrifice (Wells *et al.* 2010:98, 131, 132), which embodies what Jesus did on the cross to purchase freedom for the poor, blind and captives (Lk. 4:18-19; 23:26-46).

Anglican Maurice and other clergymen within Methodism believed to some degree in the social priority of improving society; that the gospel through the church would result in a moral and integrated society (Wells *et al.* 2010:16, 85, 99). The above approach thus linked salvation with works. The above emphasis on only, or primarily, changing and improving society's external circumstances was also reflected in Moltmann's (b. 1926) (1967; 1975) in his writings of the hope for change that

biblically eschatology brings into the present due to Jesus' redemption should lead the believers to social and political programmes to liberate the socially and politically oppressed. This stress on societal transformation tends to neglect or bypass the need for deliverance from the guilt, and God's judgement, of sin in everyone's life – oppressed and oppressor. This focus on human effort bringing deliverance had an impact on pastoral psychology. It influenced it to focus on assisting with guilt relief on a purely horizontal level (not guilt before a holy God) and the realization of human possibilities with little or no reference to the need of the new birth and empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Bloesch 1979:164,165,168,169).

This trend in theology was discounted by Forsythe (1848-1921). He wrote that the message of salvation should be proclaimed and manifested in believers for unbelievers to see the gospel's transforming power and seek it. He argued against a social gospel but for a complete gospel that regenerates believers that leads individual Christians and the church corporate to acts of righteousness that also address the social needs where observed within their field of reach and beyond (Higginson 2019:76,72). Karl Barth, Abraham Kuyper and Reinhold Niebuhr, who were all alive during part of the period 1837-1971, promoted gospel proclamation and divine worship as primary, but that service to God must also relate to service to humankind. Humankind has special status through being created in God's image and is thus sacred and to be honoured. Therefore believers' restoration from bondage through God's gracious salvation must lead to (i) sharing the gospel with one's unbelieving neighbours with the hope of its acceptance and the commencement of the process of restoring God's image, and (ii) loving one's neighbour as oneself (Gn. 1:26; Mt 22:34-40; Browning 1991:195).

Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) understood the church's ministry as preaching redemption to influence every life-area, thus realising God's presence in the midst of life (van der Westhuizen 2017). My conclusion of what he believed indirectly relates to the understanding of the Lucan 4:18-19 passage arrived at in section 3.2. He deplored spiritualizing the church's mission, alienating it from worldly cares, stating that the church/believer exists in the world for humanity to present a holistic gospel of God's salvation as Jesus did (Bloesch 1979).



The primary and most loving and merciful act believers can perform towards unbelievers is gospel proclamation. This is because it addresses original sin and the need for divine forgiveness, and leads to a spiritually transformed life capable of good works that honour God (Rom. 12:2; Tit. 2:14). Without belief in the person and work of Christ, secular and political solutions are not sufficient in themselves to reconcile sinners to God and successfully transform society. However, the love of God for neighbour in social justice and action must be prioritised in times of crisis (Bloesch 1979:161,162,163,170; Ju 1989:56).

The missionary church in the third world during the colonial era had a two-kingdom theory: it was committed to building a spiritual community (the church) and impacting the church and the wider community through social concern initiatives like providing education. Later, education became the responsibility of government in South Africa and sadly an inferior education for the indigenous people was the outcome. Since they were considered as suitable only for menial secular employment, this basic education was thought adequate. Since the apartheid government was 'Christian,' place was made for the reading of the Bible and for Christian teaching in the schools, but not really modelled by a so-called Christian government.

Later, decolonised countries engaged the fight to redress economic disparities with the church trying to establish credibility by attempting social upliftment programmes. However, the reality of impoverishment in South Africa has forced social change onto the church's agenda (Sider 1981:21,23,25,38,42). But not always accompanied by proclaiming the salvation message of the need for spiritual sight, release from sin and liberty found through Jesus' atoning work that would ultimately affect societies (Lk. 4:18-19).

Coupled to the dichotomy of a two-kingdom theory and practice, Langdon Gilkey (1919-2004) proposed the church promote a new social order of freedom, justice and liberation to humanise the world; and Gutierrez advocated achieving this through a radical social, violent revolution that would free people from economic-socio-political oppression, believing this to be salvific (Bloesch 1979:164). Marxist ideology demands radical change in the redistribution of wealth for people to achieve their God-given potential. Papers at the Lausanne Congress of World Evangelism also focused on God's concern for justice and oppression. Liberation theologians

questioned the evangelical churches' lack of social awareness and focus on only preaching and teaching and a personal relationship with God through Christ. Therefore they challenged these churches to rather engage in a social gospel to the Third World as the major or total part of God's liberating work in the present life (Sider 1981:22,23,24,27).

In opposition to the social gospel, Pannenburg (1928-2014) and Martin promoted a gospel that emphasized repentance and justification by faith (Bloesch 1979:166,167). Nevertheless, Pannenburg emphasized that no human suffering lies outside Jesus' concern, nor should it be outside the church's domain. Here emphasis was placed on proclamation (evangelism), yet without neglecting the practicalities of the Christian life, namely, seeing and addressing physical and material needs. However, if the church only meets the material and psychic needs in society, its gospel is seriously truncated (Bloesch 1979:166,167; Ju 1989:62).

The 20<sup>th</sup> century and the 21<sup>st</sup> century so far have bequeathed a legacy of militarism, uncontrolled greed through capitalism and materialism, environmental damage, social oppression, authoritarian rulers, new technologies, population explosion and disease. These, together with modernism and post-modernism's compartmentalising of life, have impacted the church and thus watered down its theological beliefs and capacity to challenge and impact society and non-Christian ideologies, resulting in its marginalisation in the public arena (Light 2012:37; Wells *et al.* 2010:55, 81).

Stephen Mott (2011) wrote that sin does not take care of itself, is selfish in character and produces social disharmony. It seeks advantage through power opportunities and cracks of weaknesses in people and systems and destroys families and communities (Sider 1981:23). Thus, a radical God-salvation is needed in peoples' lives, which Jesus offers (Luke 4:18-19). A movement of the Holy Spirit sweeping major sectors of society into the experience of Luke 4:18-19 would have a significant transforming effect on morals and care in the wider society.

Section 3.3.5 has revealed that Christians have responded differently to Luke 4:18-19. Some focused more on the personal spiritual transformation experienced by the believer but without denying the importance of impacting society with kingdom of God principles reflected in Luke 4:18-19. Others have put most or all their efforts into transforming society into an oppression-free one with marked social care. If

Christians are truly transformed by the gospel they will reach out in love through evangelism and general love of neighbour, and this together with common grace will mitigate the effects of original and current sin in society. Further, the more citizens that receive Christ's deliverance the more likely existing sinful cultural norms will be transformed for God's glory.

A fitting conclusion to section 3.3.5 based on section 3.2 is that the gospel cannot be replaced with any social or economic solution to save humankind (Bloesch 1979:159,160, 161; Ju 1989:56, 62; Wells et al. 2010: 102,136). Spiritual deliverance is vital before freedom to serve neighbour and society in love is truly possible. It is the message of Luke 4:18-19 that brings salvation and makes possible the Christ-ethic in the market place as Christians model it and share the reason for their righteousness and godliness.

### **3.3.6 Summary and conclusion**

Section 3.2 concluded that it was the preaching of Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to sinners held in bondage to all forms of poverty and oppression that brings about a new humanity – one transformed by the Holy Spirit's power and gifted to serve believers and unbelievers sacrificially and selflessly and to live holy in a corrupt world to God's glory. This is what Luke 4:18-19 is all about.

Has section 3.3 demonstrated that this is how Luke 4:18-19 is reflected in the Church during the long period from post-New Testament times to the present day? Or did it demonstrate another understanding of this passage? How did it interpret and respond to Isaiah's prophecy that Jesus claimed was fulfilled his his anointed teaching, miracles, compassion for people's material and physical needs, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension and his promised return? This historical survey did not specifically endeavour to study how the theologians and church leaders interpreted Luke 4:18-19. Rather, this was indirectly revealed through the gospel message they proclaimed and its outworking.

Where the gospel was faithfully proclaimed, that is, in harmony with Luke 4:18-19, it transformed believers in the post-apostolic church, which in turn influenced society through its works of righteousness and love. The effect of the gospel message also impacted government policy and practice in the Roman Church. Similarly so in the

medieval period. During the latter age Bible-believing theologians proclaimed salvation as portrayed in Luke 4:18-19, with the Lord freeing believers from guilt, self-focus, self-will and self-love. Yet there was the belief that God caused poverty to allow the rich to obtain virtue by charity. This led to the poor being trapped in poverty and stifling the love for neighbour that God requires and which the gospel should promote. Another negative feature of the medieval period was the lack of understanding of the Bible and its gospel due to the church using Latin and exegesis that was often unbiblical.

The Reformation leaders believed the gospel was necessary for all of life – it was to impact every area of life and society. Therefore it also entailed ministry to the materially poor. The reformation countered Roman Catholicism's acceptance of works to ensure salvation, which was contrary to Jesus' message of his exclusive role in bringing salvation (Lk. 4:18-19). Personal salvation with its restored relationship with God the Father through Jesus brought active engagement with those in need.

The Church in the New World, North America, preached a comprehensive gospel that included practical love, for instance, deeds of charity. Yet there was a strong reliance on self-discipline that produced the potential for wealth generation, which was viewed as a sign of divine approval. There was the challenge to balance this with the Christian ethic of compassion and love. During this time Europe eventually transformed into a secularised self-reliant, humanistic approach to life. The stress on human efforts and interventions to solve human problems and advance civilization increasingly pushed reliance on God and life beyond death off the radar. The claims of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 and elaborated in the Old Testament and New Testament were, therefore, not viewed as important or relevant.

The Church in the modern period has been largely marked by increasing humanism. This period has witnessed major sections of the Church de-emphasizing salvation as primarily spiritual, and majoring on meeting material and social needs and working towards greater justice in society. This has led to a lack of appreciation of the greater importance of the salvation of the soul/spirit (justification; reconciliation to God; adoption into his family; the gift of eternal life; the hope of glorification). But still, today there remain the faithful, who preach the gospel message of salvation as

Jesus taught: deliverance from sin and Satan commensurate with changed lives marked by compassion for the poor and sick. However, the church in the modern age with its inroads of post-modernism has largely failed to convince a generally secular society that Luke 4:18-19 does present the blueprint and dynamic for solving human and society's moral, relational and the myriad of other intractable problems.

The interpretation of Luke 4:18-19 presented in the biblical theology section (3.2) has been proclaimed throughout the history of the church by many theologians, pastors and other Christians. This provides support for the conclusion arrived at in 3.2. Now the extra-biblical perspectives on Luke 4:18-19 will be handled. Do we find outside of biblical theology that there are concerns and strategies for personal and societal freedom from selfishness and all forms of bondage and oppression? If yes, can the church not learn from them?

### **3.4. Perspectives from extra-biblical sources related to Luke 4:18-19**

Socrates believed the body restrained the soul, inhibiting knowledge, and that without knowledge and informed free-will, evil could not be overcome (Pelikan 1971:281). Socrates, preceding Aristotle, therefore saw the virtuous life emerging from two activities: education and reason for a proper understanding of the virtuous life and then an initial action of acting out these virtues. This leads to the true self being discovered and the soul determining a lifestyle marked by the qualities or virtues of courage, temperance, prudence and justice and the experience of happiness (Socrates 2013; Aristotle 350 B.C.E.:91 2018).

Plato believed the soul to be indestructible, ruling over irrational and rebellious human faculties and that there were absolutes in beauty, goodness and greatness, which are universal truths to live by (Mark 2019). Therefore, if the soul was ignorant, evil would continue in thought and action (Markos 2013:n.p.). Knowledge of virtue was therefore needed to become virtuous. Through self-knowledge and philosophical enquiry, people could be led to a more appropriate view of good and evil and self-evaluation as an unexamined life is not worth living (Mark 2019).

Has this belief that knowledge of a virtuous life is the key to living such a life been proved? When one's soul is informed can it command the body and thus overcome

sin and constantly display all the moral attributes that mark human experience at its best? The answer hardly seems a confident Yes. Knowledge has increased yet sin abounds; we witness immoral living, with a continual downward spiral in many quarters away from the virtuous life into degrading acts of sin and selfishness (König 1991:204; Wassermann 2008:22).

Greek, Roman, Enlightenment, and modern-day philosophers and moralists effectively deny original sin and its impact on the human race (Brians 2016; Packard 2016) – that it influences the will, intellect and emotions towards selfishness and yielding to sinful temptation and succumbing to it (Somó 2019). Biblically, this situation cannot be brought under God's control except through accepting salvation and with the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work; moral health and ethical values can never improve permanently through self-discipline alone and produce an ethically sound society that is based on God's Word nor achieve eternal life (1 Cor. 15:22a; Wassermann 2008:5; 22).

The humanistic concern for humankind's social and material wellbeing, one major motivation for the science of sociology, mimics God's concern. The efforts of humanists ignore any need for God's intervention, wisdom and power (International Humanist Ethical Union [2019]). Humanism has generally not enjoyed great success as we are daily informed by the media with, *inter alia*, the disturbing realities of social ills, selfishness, corruption, greed, abuse, crime, stress, conflict, hatred, broken relationships, deterioration in the upbringing of children, and a world with embarrassing wealth and dehumanizing poverty. Humanism believes humankind is capable of an evolutionary steady upgrading of political, economic and cultural dynamics and systems through free enquiry and free thought, focussing on accessible knowledge (International Humanist Ethical Union 2019). There is little or no acknowledgement of the existence of God or dependence on God to right the wrongs in the world. However, its track record does not commend it as the solution to solving humankind's ills.

Secular psychology maintains that negative mental processes lead to what the Bible would define as sins. It tends to scorn belief in an inherited sinful nature and the subsequent sin of rebellion against God's standards of righteousness. It has its own non-religious definitions of what is wrong and preventing mental ill-health. It has

removed sin from its vocabulary and interpretations of human problems – personal and relational. The problem is essentially wrong choices or lack of knowledge or some other non-spiritual factor or influence (The Metamorphosis 2015:3; Psychology a science 2015:1). Freud's psychological transference theory hypothesizes that humankind represses any threatening aspects which undermines psychological health. Thus the fear of sin because it leads to God's wrath and judgement (fully in the life to come) (Ps. 9:7-8; Rm. 14:10c; 2 Cor. 5:10) is dangerous to mental health and not to be believed (Braungardt 1998:¶19). But what success has psychology had in producing emotional, mental and relational health?

Psychology over the last few centuries has achieved helpful research and approaches to assisting children with learning disabilities and improving educational theory and systems. Its aptitude testing has also proved most relevant to choosing a career for which one is most suited. It has also entered the realm of business and religion in an effort to assist in behaviour and competence in personal and group functioning. It has been effective in discerning and solving lifestyle stresses. In spite of how this discipline has mushroomed, its success rate in bringing psychological healing and fulfilling, significant meaning and purpose to life, has been disappointing (Janz 2016:np).

Behavioural scientists believe that instinct and environment are the underlying determinants of behaviour (Gunton 1997:69). This theory ultimately takes away personal responsibility and accountability. It is thus not greatly helpful in sorting out individual and societal problems. There is some parallel between this scenario and the biblical view that the will is enslaved to sin (not necessarily to the worst degrees of sin). However, a survey determined that two billion people adhere to the Christian faith presently (Pew Research Centre 2019) indicates that many of these can testify that in any situation, through salvation through Christ with its new birth and new mind focussed on God's purposes, there is freedom to live a God-glorifying life (cf. Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23).

The main economic systems are reflected in capitalism, socialism and communism. The advocates of each claim it will ensure elimination or major reduction of poverty and other belittling inequalities. Capitalism has no restrictions placed on its economic structure or growth, and rewards those who work hard and with initiative.

Competition is inherent in capitalism. This and the making of profit are seen as fostering advancement. One feature of capitalism is that property can be privately owned as well as businesses and means of production. Negatively, unregulated capitalism tends to lead to different classes: the very wealthy and others spread across the wealth scale, with the wealthy owning most resources and means of production which can lead to monopolies making it possible for exploitation of workers (Capitalism 2018; Klein 2019). Responsibility in a capitalistic mind-set requires an extraordinary act of will insofar that economic institutions continually thwart efforts that fully address needs in society (Klein 2019). Capitalism can sadly lead to some hoarding and the showing off with one's wealth to the detriment or even shaming of others. It therefore produces in many a materialistic mind-set and love for the self which overrides love for needy neighbours (Pr. 27:20; Mk. 12:31). The sinful nature's exhibiting of greed has clearly contributed to the massive gap between the rich and the poor. True Christianity would not countenance this (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9, 12-13).

Communism differs from socialism in that the former is driven by politics and economics and the latter by economics, but both promote equality and seek to eliminate social class. Communism does not permit personal ownership of property, whereas both capitalism and socialism do (Dictionary.com 2019). Communism, as witnessed in the twentieth century, results in low production, mass poverty and limited advancement, while the leaders indulge their power and live in comparative luxury.

Socialism has philosophical and humanistic foundations with both economic-social and political motives (Klein 2019) Socialism allows workers to spend wages as they choose, but government owns the means of production and workers receive what they need to survive, but have no incentive to achieve more (Socialism 2018). However, according to von Mises, a planned economy is incapable of making rational decisions about production and investment (von Mises cited in Klein 2019) as presently observed in centrally-planned existing socialist countries (Klein 2019). The implications of a socialist economy eventually results in unemployment, low growth rate and a stagnant economy with high inflation within a global economy. This means it is unable to address the needs of the population and resultant effects. One of the latter is noted by Thomas Sowell, an African-American (cited in Holmes 2016):



The black family, which had survived centuries of slavery and discrimination, began rapidly disintegrating in the liberal welfare state that subsidized unwed pregnancy and changed welfare from an emergency rescue to a way of life'.

Sebastian Bjernegård, a Swedish citizen, aired his views on democratic socialism in Sweden. Government if it gets too powerful affects the family. This is seen in the family and church becoming secondary to the state which presumes to know what is best for the family (Holmes 2016).

From the above it can be observed that socialism concentrates on the material dimension. The root cause of the human condition remains untouched, namely, the spirit and soul of people captive to a sinful nature and various sins. The Christian gospel is specifically tailored to this context, resulting in good works (Eph 2:8-9). This was evident in the early Church (Acts 2:44-45) where all needs were met. Therefore, no church member should go hungry; none should fail to have a roof over their heads; and no one should be without healthcare or without work in at least the long term (Piper cited in Holmes 2016).

Communism is the science of creating conditions for accommodating those who derive their means of livelihood solely and exclusively from the sale of labour (Engels 1925:6). Thus in communism industry must be controlled as well as all branches of production by society as a whole and all competition discontinued and replaced with co-operation (pp.15-16). Every member of society is compelled to work, with all credit, financial and banking systems centralised. Most importantly, as soon as the child has outgrown the initial care of the mother, it is to be raised in national institutions and educated uniformly at the state's expense (pp. 18-19).

Lenin decreed that all religion is an abomination. Communism has done all in its power to make this statement a reality in their societies (Hegerty 1935). Lenin described religion as spiritual oppression to exploit workers and therefore must be stopped by the class struggle, employing atheist propaganda. He further stated that there is no room for a Creator as people cannot be happy and free until deprived of this illusory happiness linked to a non-existent Creator (Hegerty 1935). The Soviet Union collapsed morally, materially and intellectually through enforcing its man-made ideologies and an atheistic system that was tyrannical, impoverishing and decimating

of tens of millions of its subjects. Communism was repudiated and rejected as a theory and practice. Its champions, intellectual founders and sociopathic rulers have been exposed and side-lined (The Economist 2002).

Both communism and socialism undermine diligence and hard, creative work through enforcing an ideology on its people. In contrast, the Bible applauds diligence and working as if for the Lord, thus witnessing through quality work that is to God's glory (Pr. 10:4; 1 Tim. 6:1-2). However, Christians can so easily be misled and idolise work and money, effectually removing God from their lives. Most disturbingly, communism and the end result of socialism are summed up by Bradley: "When government takes control of all economic activity it requires a dictatorship and totalitarian measures of oppression and violence" (2016:n.p.).

It is thus all too obvious that the ideals of capitalism, communism and socialism, are just that – ideals. They do not broach the subject of sinful humankind, which is foundational to humankind's problems, impoverishment and brokenness.

The above rather negative assessment of extra-biblical sources of knowledge to achieve a more moral, healthy and caring society does not imply they are totally impotent and ineffective. So clearly extra-biblical knowledge, in limited ways and spheres, can assist to contribute to achieving what Jesus came to accomplish summarized in Luke 4:18-19. However, the overall conclusion of 3.2 and 3.4 is that the message of Luke 4:18-19, with its incredible claims that Jesus made for his coming, deals more thoroughly with the stumbling blocks to building a more humane, stable, healthy and safe world. The biblical diagnosis of the underlying sinful nature that only Jesus can effectively deal with, and the testimony of Christians in the New Testament church and since, need to be taken far more seriously by society. The message of Luke 4:18-19 for the Christian will always take priority when dealing with the human race and its endemic and intrinsic dilemmas and fault lines that have multiplied evil and suffering in the world.

### **3.5 An operative theology regarding the significance of Luke 4:18-19 for all churches**

This section builds on sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4. This means it correlates the conclusions of the different perspectives provided on the significance of Luke 4:18-

19 for all churches: biblical theology, historical theology, and extra-biblical theology. It effectively provides a systematic theology perspective. My understanding of systematic theology relating to any topic is that it culminates in the practical implications of theology, and hence it can be described as an operative theology.

The biblical theology perspective pointed out that Jesus' coming and ministry (incarnation, miracles, teaching, death, sufferings, resurrection and ascension) are indispensable for holistically meeting the needs of humankind: spiritual, physical and material. The benefits of Christ's atoning work are available to those who humbly realize their spiritual brokenness and need to receive deliverance from the guilt, penalty and power of sin through Jesus. The solving of the spiritual problem, the heart's greatest problem, paves the way for God's compassion and mercy to be experienced in the areas of health and material needs.

Another implication of the biblical theology perspective on the significance of Luke 4:18-19 for the church is that it is to play a major role in spreading and demonstrating the message of Luke 4:18-19 throughout the world. The new community of redeemed disciples, the church, is to thus not only emulate Christ's proclamation of the good news but be part of its fulfilment through compassionate ministry to the spiritually ailing, suffering sick and materially poor among them. The church is to be a hospital for the healing of all internal and relational brokenness; a home for personal and community growth, service and provision of essential material needs.

The short and selective history perspective showed the Church has largely supported this conclusion. It also provides ideas for evangelism and ministry to the whole person.

The limited consideration of some extra-biblical knowledge revealed that it is relevant to understanding some of the needs that characterize the human race and how to meet them. Some attention, therefore, to this perspective on how to achieve holistic (including societal) health is required. This area of knowledge, gained mostly through scientific research, also provides both diagnostic tools and actual or potential remedies. However, the overall conclusion of 3.4 is that the message of Luke 4:18-19, with its incredible claims Jesus made for his coming, deals more thoroughly with the stumbling blocks to building a more loving, stable, healthy and secure world. The biblical diagnosis of the sinful nature and the solution that only Jesus can provide

(Lk. 4:18-19) (supported by the transformation of millions through the gospel), will always take priority for Christians when dealing with human suffering and evil.

The operative theology with reference to the significance of Luke 4:18-19 for the local church would, therefore, need to incorporate the following elements:

- (i) Teach the central elements of the doctrines of anthropology, soteriology and ecclesiology.
- (ii) Facilitation of discipleship that in addition to the activity described in (i), increasingly transforms the members into the image of Christ so that they can be effectively engaged in living the experience of the effects of Christ's ministry summarised in Luke 4:18-19. This will include the training and appointment of leaders.
- (iii) Provide training for the church to be trained and involved in spreading the good news of Luke 4:18-19 in the power of the Holy Spirit both locally and abroad where possible to unreached peoples.
- (iv) Equip the church to be a hospital where oppressed and broken people can experience release and healing through the gospel in a loving and caring community.
- (v) Lead the church into practical ministry to meet the material needs of its poor members who have been unable even after fervent prayer and hard work to provide for themselves.
- (vi) Some attention to be given to extra-biblical knowledge where it can help diagnose personal and societal problems with helpful insights on how to solve them. But that knowledge that contradicts the biblical theology related to Luke 4:18-19 would need to be rejected.
- (vii) Greater unity between LAC and MAC so that they benefit from the spiritual gifts of each other and in order that there can be greater material assistance from MAC to LAC. This will enhance their evangelistic influence.

Sections (ii) to (vii) are the practical applications of the theoretical knowledge gained in (i).

### **3.6 An operative theology regarding the significance of Luke 4:18-19 contextually adapted for LAC and MAC**

Chapter 2 records the results of the small-scale research project with LAC and MAC. Not all respondents understood that Luke 4:18-19's outworking in their lives has marked shortcomings. Gospel proclamation for the salvation of souls is acknowledged as important, with the majority of the respondents agreeing on the outworking of the gospel practically in compassionate love. Nevertheless, the practical response is very disappointing, revealing an indifference to evangelism and the wider implications of mission in their communities, public domains, work places, towns, and beyond. It seems that they do not fully comprehend sin's power and consequences for this life and the one to come and therefore the need for experiential repentance and trustful faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apparently LAC and MAC churches' denominational policy of financing ministry has resulted in them being bystanders in evangelism. An incomplete understanding of the seriousness of sin and the Great Commission implied in Luke 4:18-19 would also contribute to this situation. Further, a significant number of the respondents understood that the gospel will minister to practical needs, but from the interviews it is questionable about the commitment to providing this support and help. Unfortunately, the respondents from the middle-class MAC were not asked how involved they were with alleviating poverty among the poor of LAC's members.

The limited number in the sample group in the research means that the results do not necessarily represent the situation with all the members in the two churches. However, they must at least represent enough members to justify formulating an operative theology regarding the significance of Luke 4:18-19 contextually adapted for them. For the others, the operative theology would enhance their understanding of, and response to, the theological implications of Luke 4:18-19. It would also be needed for future members for the same reasons.

In South Africa there is (i) a strong stress on religious freedom, (ii) the existence of a plethora of religious beliefs and practices that confront born-again and nominal Christians, (iii) pressure to conform to a liberal (man-centred) interpretation of how the kingdom of God comes and grows, (iv) the position that it is politically correct to

respect all religions, and (v) a strong societal acceptance that they all lead to God. This creates uncertainty if Christian believers are not grounded in the biblical account of anthropology and salvation.

The results of the questionnaire and interviews with LAC respondents were similar to those in the case of MAC. This means that the operative theology regarding the significance of Luke 4:18-19 for both churches could essentially be the same. The standard model constructed in 3.5 could be used with suitable minor adaptations where necessary for each of the two churches. One example would be that MAC should extend their response to Luke 4:18-19 in the practical area to LAC as is appropriate. Greater interactive unity between the two churches with mutual ministry based on the spiritual gifts the churches have would also enhance unity between the two churches, edification of both congregations and the evangelistic impact on the wider community. This would be relevant to both churches' operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19.

### **3.7 A defence of the operative theology regarding the significance of Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC**

There are a number of reasons why the proposed operative theology regarding the significance of Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC can be defended. Firstly, it concords with the beliefs of the two churches. Secondly, it effectively corrects the shortcomings of the churches in their understanding of the theological meaning and implications of Luke 4:18-19. This honours the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church's call and directive in 2011 and 2017 to believers to come into a living relationship with the Lord, to conform to his Word, and to allow the Holy Spirit to enable their Christian witness.

Thirdly, the operative theology can be defended in that it recognizes that extra-biblical sources can provide some insights on achieving human freedom from various internal and external pressures that disturb or prevent human wellbeing and maximum functioning. However, it recognizes their limitations and that only the gospel is up to solving the underlying problem of the sinful nature and all its negative manifestations and effects in individual lives and every area of society. Thus it

accommodates all areas of knowledge, but gives preference to biblical teaching as required by the official statements of faith of the two churches.

There is a fourth reason why the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 can be defended. It is most suitably related to the human condition with its many insoluble problems. The biblical message, summarized in Luke 4:18-19, is well aware of the human story and its failed efforts to consistently bring freedom from the sinful nature into a liberated life of altruism and human flourishing in united societies. It therefore follows a different narrative for achieving the virtuous life. Though it recognizes the unmistakable fallen condition of the human race, it chronicles the following composite solution: a divinely produced new-birth linked with accepting Jesus Christ's propitiation for sin; a mind change about sin and true repentance through God's grace; God's Spirit's coming to dwell in the convert; and a release from the enslaving sinful nature and entanglement with sinful acts and addictions; and thus a life now lived for the glory of God and the true blessings of fellow human beings (Lk. 4:18; Jn. 3:3; ; Gal. 5:6; 6:2,10; Eph. 4:11-13).

Scripture presents examples, like in the case of Zacchaeus and Saul/Paul, of Jesus' saving work and renewal of the spirit and soul, leading to works of righteousness (Lk. 19:5-10; Ac. 9:20-22). They all exemplify the change of heart and character which is sufficient evidence for the claim of Jesus (Lk. 4:18-19). This same life-transformation was experienced by Augustine of Hippo (St. Augustine, convert who changed church history 2018). The effect of Christ's work and the changes wrought by God through his converted people has changed societies throughout the world. Some examples are in the areas of slavery, education, health care and acts of mercy, yet always against the tide of evil and of Satan's attempts to thwart God's blessings. The Welsh and Indonesian revivals are evidence of God's saving power and changed lives, not to mention the Reformation and its effect on society (McGrath 2012:175; Roberts 2018).

From an economic point of view poverty is not only defined in material terms. The poor are also limited in options, prospects, and effectiveness, and experience a poor self-worth. The poor are prey to systems and institutions (Causes and effects of poverty 2015:1, 3). Much of their self-image and related poverty cannot be easily overcome by secular means or economic policies. But Christianity, if properly

understood and experienced, removes the poverty of identity through its teaching on being created in the image and loved by God, through having that image increasingly restored through the new birth and union with Christ, and through the promises, riches and prospects possessed in Christ (Gn. 1:26; Ps. 37:25-26; Jn. 3:16; Eph. 1:3-14; Jm. 2:5). This, together with a proper understanding of Isaiah 61:1-2a and Luke 4:18-19, the heart of God the Saviour is seen in addressing the spiritual, physical, emotional and material realms of humanity - the whole person.

Luke 4:18-19 and its Old Testament background also have an eschatological dimension, only briefly mentioned so far in this study. This is another plus for the Christian faith. The Jubilee year began on the Day of Atonement implying freedom from sin and all needs. From the Christian's perspective the Jubilee experience has both present and eschatological ramifications. God wants justice and peace on earth to allow his purpose for creation to be realized (Konig 1980:205). Though Christians now experience much of the Jubilee blessings, they await the eschaton when the fulfilment of God's plan occurs. Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13), with the promise of glorification (Phi 1:6) when the mortal must put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53) and God's kingdom of peace and righteousness has come in its fullness. When God's final act is completed with his purposes accomplished, Christians will enjoy a heavenly existence that will have no end (Rev. 22:1-5) on a renewed earth where God makes his presence fully known. It will be Paradise restored (Acts 3:21a) and a God-economy.

The evil-one and evil have been conquered, but not yet annihilated. Therefore believers long for the fulfilment of their salvation which will be fully consummated at the return of Christ, continuing on into eternity (König 1980:7,245). Further, this means that any church will face disappointments in spreading and living the message of Luke 4:18-19. But at time like these the eschatological fulfilment needs to be kept as a motivating beacon to inspire perseverance in the faith and Christian service.

The normative operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for LAC and MAC have been formulated and defended. The stage has been reached in the study where the fourth question in Browning's 'model' needs to be answered: 'What means, strategies, and rhetoric should we use in this concrete situation?' (1991:56)? This



question is concerned with constructing a strategy to implement the proposed praxes for LAC and MAC.

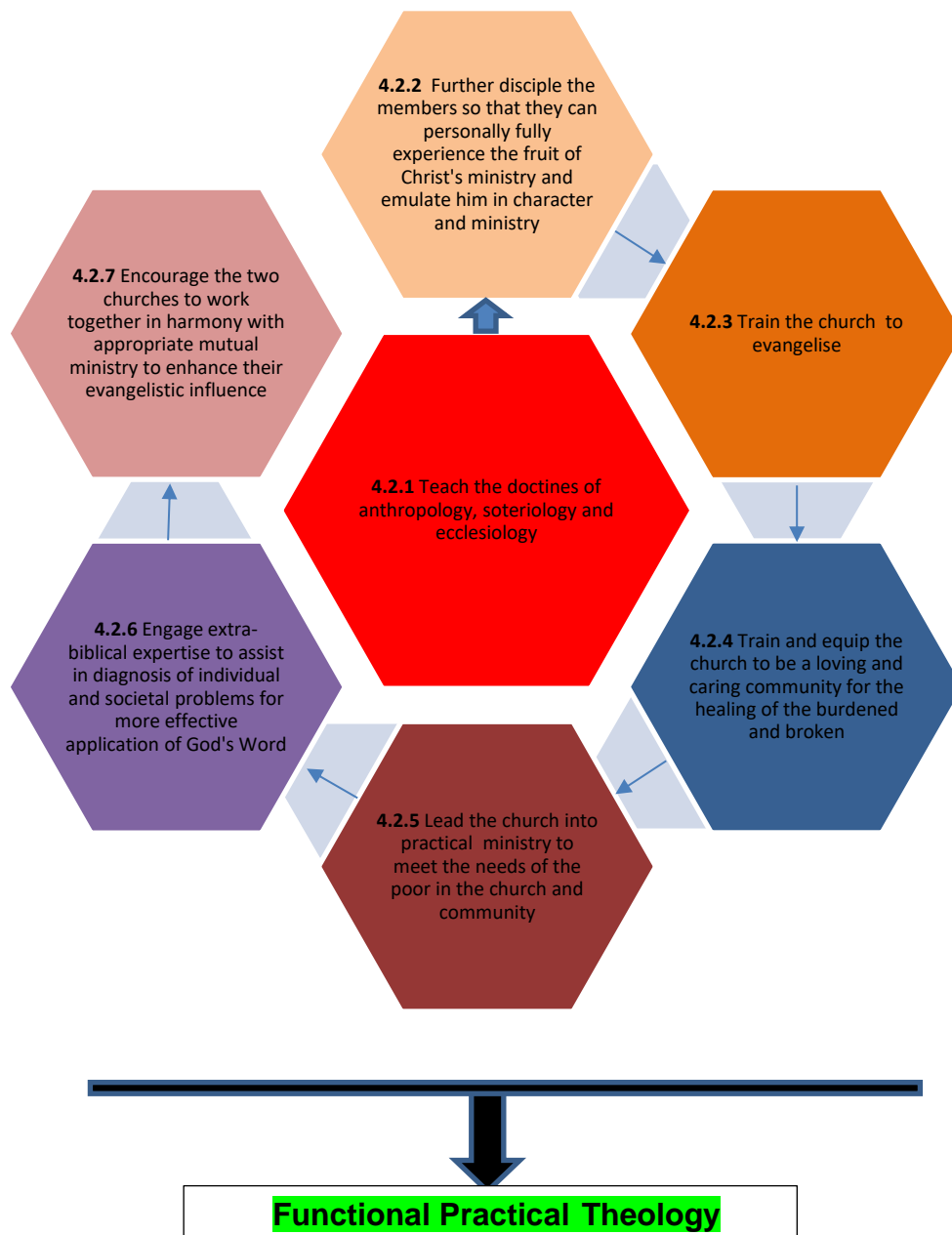
## **Chapter 4: A strategic plan to achieve the implementation of the operative theology with reference to Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter 3 constructed an operative theology regarding the significance of Luke 4:18-19 for LAC and MAC. Chapter 4 is concerned primarily with a strategic plan to achieve this operative theology in these two churches. But as important as this stage is, more is required before the strategic plan can be applied, namely, its acceptance. Thus the chapter also constructs a strategy to gain the approval of the praxis by the leadership and the other members of the churches. Finally, a strategic plan to inaugurate and monitor the operative theology is necessary and therefore is provided.

### **4.2 A strategic plan to achieve the seven components of the operative theology in LAC and MAC**

The strategic plan to make the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 in LAC and MAC (cf. 3.5 and 3.6 in chapter 3) a reality is captured in the following diagram:



*Figure 4.1: Graphic presentation of the plan to achieve the operative theology in the churches*

Each of the seven steps needs elaboration to ensure it is effectively tackled. It needs to be noted that the Heidelberg Catechism is central to the doctrinal beliefs of LAC and MAC. Thus it will play a part in section 4.2.1

#### **4.2.1 Teach the central doctrines of anthropology, soteriology and ecclesiology**

*a) Anthropology* (Heidelberg Catechism q+a: 3-5,7,8)

The following diagram provides a helpful tool for teaching anthropology, especially the seriousness of sin, bondage to it, and the need for deliverance reflected in Luke 4:18-19. For convenience of explanation I recommend the tripartite view of human makeup. It would need to be noted that Scripture does not draw a rigid line between spirit and soul. Grasping the biblical description of humanity in its fallen state is vital for a full understanding and experience of the need for the redemptive work of Christ summarized in Luke 4:18-19.

The unregenerate person's spiritual state in the eyes of God is represented by the inner sphere. The soul is depicted by the inner concentric band, and comprises the intellect, emotions and will. The body (and its acts) is represented by the outer concentric band. There are arrows that indicate that the unregenerate spirit negatively affects the soul by causing it to sin, which in turn results in sins being committed by the body (this does not deny that the unregenerate persons are not capable of good deeds; but these would in some way reflect a sinful influence or motive). The diagram also shows the many sinful sources that lead the soul and spirit to sin implicating the body. This diagram simplifies biblical anthropology as the line of influence is not strictly-speaking only one way (spirit to soul to body). However, the tripartite view as depicted in the diagram makes it possible to give some idea of how spiritual, mental, emotional and physical needs develop and why the intellect, emotions and will struggle to avoid sin.

The unbeliever is  
controlled by sin  
and Satan

Sinful influences can  
come through:

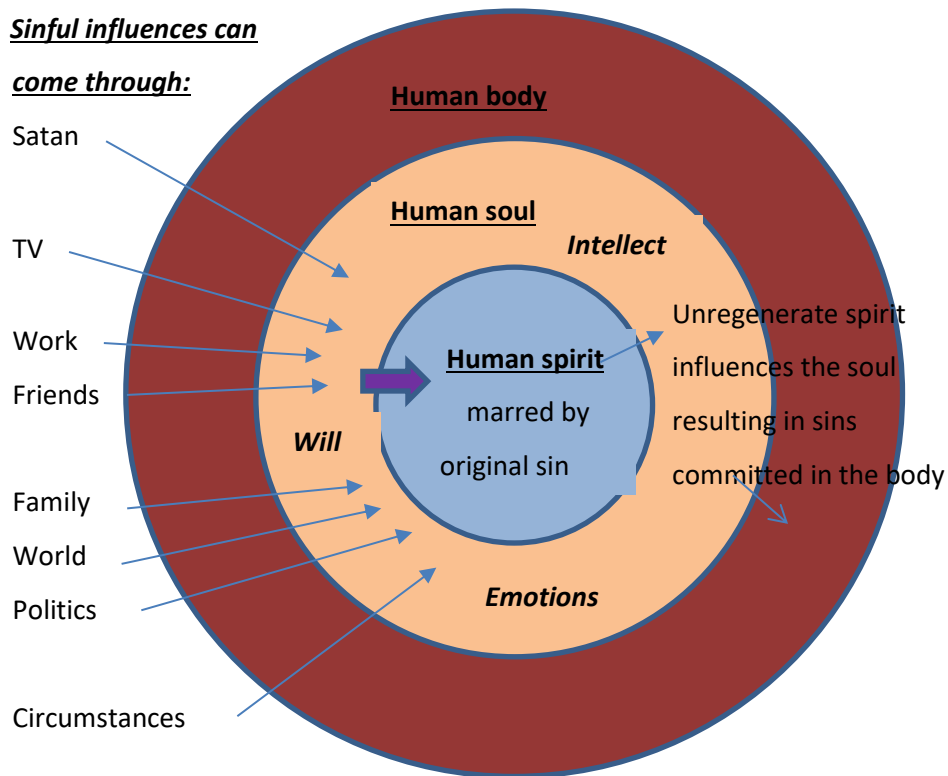


Figure 4.2: Graphic representation of humankind's pre-salvation state (Philadelphia 2007 [graphic modified for this study])

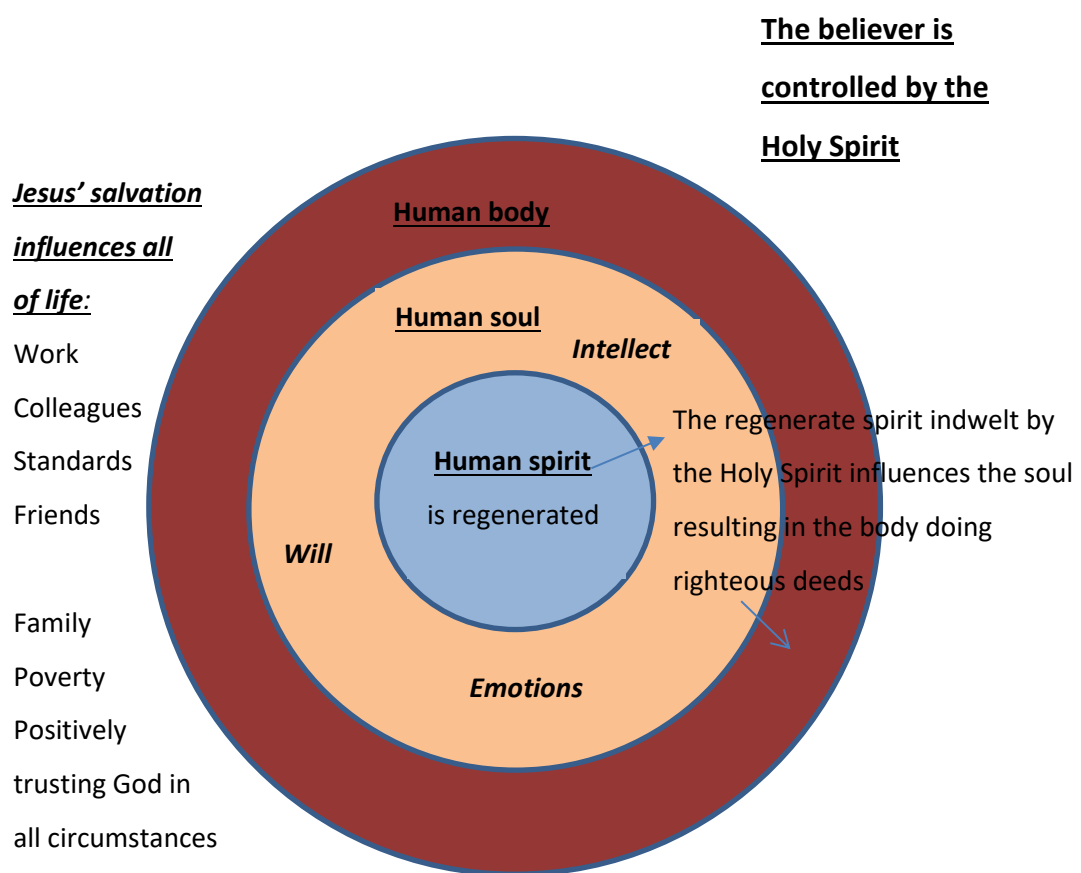
So, firstly, to apply the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19, the negative spiritual state and life-style of the human race needs to be made clear and not bypassed. This prepares the way for appreciating and understanding the need for, and nature of, the doctrine of salvation (soteriology) that radiates from Luke 4:18-19. It is thus essential to work out a brief syllabus on biblical anthropology that needs to be taught yearly in Bible studies and confirmation classes and focused in a sermon or two.

*b) Soteriology* (Heidelberg Catechism q+a: 16-21,29,56,57,58,88,89)

Understanding the biblical teaching of, and need for, the doctrine of salvation (soteriology) that is succinctly captured in Luke 4:18-19 logically follows the doctrine

of anthropology. It is centred in the redemptive work of Christ through his perfect life and atoning death vindicated in his resurrection and the pouring out of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and changed lives.

The following diagram provides a helpful tool for teaching certain elements of a biblical understanding and experience of salvation (with the future perspective to be worked out in the rest of this life and then fully throughout eternity). It can be seen how salvation reverses the state and conduct of the spirit, soul and body of the unconverted person.



*Figure 4.3: Graphic representation of humankind after experiencing God's saving grace in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and his indwelling power (Filadelfia 2007 [modified graphic for this study])*

It is thus essential to work out a brief syllabus on biblical soteriology. However, it must cover all the dimensions noted in Romans 8:28-30. This also needs to be

taught yearly in Bible studies and confirmation classes and focused in a sermon or two.

*c) Ecclesiology* (Heidelberg Catechism q+a: 54)

Luke 4:18-19 has been shown to imply, in the light of its exegesis against a much wider biblical background, a definite ecclesiology. The qualitative research indicated the need for a better understanding at MAC and LAC of biblical teaching on the church implied in Luke 4:18-19. This part of the operative theology must, therefore, spell out this ecclesiology, centred in the church being the clearest manifestation of the kingdom of God. In the context of a well-functioning local church God's grace leads members to increasing conformity to the image of his Son and the promotion of his kingdom through the numerical growth of the Church and impacting the world with kingdom principles. The basic structure and government of the church will be explained as well as its ministries will be taught.

Here too the design of a syllabus will be required. It is thus essential to work out a brief syllabus on biblical anthropology that needs to be taught yearly in Bible studies and confirmation classes and focused in a sermon or two.

**4.2.2 Further disciple the members so that they can personally fully experience the fruit of Christ's ministry and emulate him in character and ministry** (Heidelberg Catechism q+a:1,43,51)

Subsection 4.2.1 focused on verbal instruction. Subsection 4.2.2 concentrates on practical application in the lives of the members at LAC and MAC. This covers the need for, and means of, facilitating discipleship into the image of Christian character and ministry. Believers, now restored from spiritual and other bondage to a relationship with God through Christ Jesus, are also called to be holy. This means being transformed in mind and not conforming to worldly patterns but walking in newness of life that also reflects Jesus' love for the world (Rom. 6:4c; 12:2; Gal. 5:16; 1 Pt. 1:16; 1 John 2:6; Williams 1997:33). At the heart of discipleship is 'a comprehensive process of ... growing in commitment to him throughout a lifetime' (Goodnough cited in Walker 2012).

It follows that biblical teaching, nurturing, encouragement and admonishing are needed so that believers may be presented perfect in Christ (Col. 1:28-29; Ogden

2007:20). Jesus is the disciple's perfect example; other examples that are worthy of emulation are Moses, David, Paul, Timothy, Barnabas and John Mark and many others (Deut.5:5 Ac. 15:37-39; Gal. 1:12, 15-18). This requires not only commitment to biblical study, but also equipping believers to naturally share the gospel in their different spheres in society (Jn. 14:23; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17; Cotterell 1981:158; Walker 2012).

Training disciples will also entail teaching on the gifts, natural and supernatural, God imparts to the members and promoting their faithful and loving operation in the life of the church (1 Cor. 12:31-14:1). This too is necessary for the believers to become mature in Christlikeness (Eph. 4:11-16).

Though MAC and LAC are part of the same denomination in relative close proximity, LAC would need more help with building an infrastructure that facilitates discipleship as it has been most lacking here. Past political and economic subjugation, together with present-day economic challenges, also call for appropriate support for LAC by MAC to more faithfully reflect Luke 4:18-19.

One area of support would be helping establish cell-group Bible studies at LAC in different home venues. Leadership would need to be tutored to lead using a pre-programmed weekly study, uniform for each venue, initially focused on teaching the doctrines listed above and facilitating their application. Engaging in this way with God's Word in an informal setting with discussion would go a long way to maximise understanding and retention of biblical truth and it's outworking (Is. 55:11). Similarly, the children's Sunday school, youth, elderly and other ministries would need to be initiated and become solidly functional, thus accommodating all the age groups in the church.

A church that achieves its God-ordained goals is one that has godly and able leaders. Thus both MAC and LAC need a programme that encourages leaders to emerge and then to be trained to be effective and faithful servant shepherds of the flock. It is imperative that they understand and embrace the enormous responsibility of leading in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jam. 3:1; Blundell 2018). However, the Christian leader, if called to office, can be sure that Jesus equips those he calls, yet they will be strictly judged by God (Heb. 13:21).



Presently in MAC and LAC nominated elders and deacons, of both genders, are elected by the incumbent church-board without any official interviews assessing the nominees' standing of faith and discipleship and leadership competency. It is proposed that all nominees should be personally interviewed by the senior minister to ensure their understanding of salvation, and that the biblical standards of leadership are understood and practiced in their lives and families, showing they are qualified to lead (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 8-13; Titus1:5-9).

Through the study of God's Word, prayer, qualified leaders, fellowship and mutual sacrificial love, the early church grew exponentially (Acts 2:42-47). This should be the goal of LAC and MAC.

#### **4.2.3 Train the church to evangelise (Heidelberg Catechism q+a: 83,84,116-119)**

Believers are in the wonderfully privileged position of having been cleansed from the guilty defilement of sin and delivered from the kingdom of Satan and eternal death (O'Grady 1991:58). They are being increasingly restored in God's image through God's word and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. They have come under the benevolent lordship of the head of the Church, the resurrected victorious Christ. The logical outworking of all these amazing blessings should be the inspiration to be channels of God's love to one another and neighbours that will above all else reflect the power and winsomeness of the gospel to the unconverted (Chambers 1935:144,146; Newbigin 1995:39).

The Great Commission and the testimony of the early church make it clear that the church is to spearhead evangelism in their communities; this implies knowing their target audience in order to contextually formulate the gospel for more effective communication (Cotterell 1981:158; Moreau et al. 2015:234; Morrill 2005:483; Lindsey 1968:347). All gospel preaching and teaching has the Holy Spirit's authority to bring conviction of sin and enable response to the call to repentance and acceptance of God's salvation and to conform their lives to the will of God under Christ's lordship (Matt. 7:29; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Bloesch 1979:170; Clarke 2006:235; Prior 2009:51). The results of fervent evangelism, together with ongoing biblical instruction and encouragement, lead to a moral and ethical sound life-style (Lindsey 1968:347; Dryden 2006:82).

LAC is less equipped than MAC in understanding and presenting the gospel. Therefore it is advised that an evangelistic set of meetings be held at LAC where God's life-altering gospel is presented. In this regard, culturally-acquainted evangelists gifted by God to present the gospel message clearly and succinctly should be engaged for the proposed meetings. Furthermore, door-to-door invitations to the community as part of the campaign would ensure every community member has an opportunity to hear and respond to God's offer of salvation.

It is proposed that LAC's membership, after the in-house-teaching on salvation (cf. 4.2.1 and 4.2.2), but prior to an outreach programme, goes through a training program similar to Evangelism Explosion 3 (EE3 2018). This would be geared to training the believers' to share their faith and present the call to repentance and faith. It will teach them prayerful dependence on God as it is through his Holy Spirit that sinners are convicted of sin and led to faith in Christ's gospel. It will show that thereby they are being used for his glory and the extension of his kingdom. It will teach them to share the gospel with confidence in expectation of God working to grow his church. They themselves will not only grow in their knowledge of Scripture, but be trained to answer difficult questions posed by unbelievers.

Evangelism is not restricted to organised outreach. Gospel proclamation must be both privately and collectively conducted (Bock 1996:1351; Matthey 2000:7). This needs to be done in personal networks, the market place, places of learning, other institutions, local governments, other areas of society, and private homes, through word and holy, loving action.

Prayer must be taught as necessary to precede evangelism. This is because it is the primary way to seek God's strength, guidance and intervention for successful evangelism. Leaders and members need the corporate church to pray for them so that God's name can be honoured in ministry and impact society (Ac. 2:42-43; 4:29-32; Eph. 6:18-20; Col 4:3-4; 2 Thess. 3:1; Van Rheezen, Parker 2014:401).

It is most revealing to compare the results of an evangelist, who under God sees 365 conversions a year through his public pulpit ministry with the Christian who leads one person to Christ in a multiplying chain. In the latter case, one person leads one person to know Christ in the first year. Then the two each lead a person to Christ in the second year. In subsequent years they each lead a person to embracing

salvation in Christ. Notice from the table below that after year 12 the number of converts resulting from every Christian leading one person to Christ every year grows exponentially and bypasses that of the fruit of the evangelist.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Evangelist</b>	<b>Active Disciple</b>
1	365	2
2	730	4
3	1,095	8
4	1,460	16
5	1,825	32
6	2,190	64
7	2,555	128
8	2,920	256
9	3,285	512
10	3,650	1,024
11	4,015	2,048
12	4,380	4,096
13	4,745	8,192
14	5,110	16,384
15	5,840	32,768

*Table 4.1: Keith Phillips' table cited in Ogden 2007:22.*

The above shows the great necessity and importance of individual evangelism and must be taught to the church to impact the world with God's salvation.

#### **4.2.4 Train and equip the church to be a loving and caring community for the healing of the burdened and broken (Heidelberg Catechism q+a: 91)**

This is the fourth component of the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for LAC and MAC. Believers' now relationally restored and under the Holy Spirit's control are to become living sacrifices – committed to costly service in the kingdom of God. This will be marked by deeds of love for a world in bondage to sinful selfishness and/or social poverty. MAC and LAC need to become hospitals and homes for those burdened and separated from the redeeming and empowering mercy and love of God that brings freedom and wholeness. They need to be places of safety where the healing grace of God is available for broken lives and where God can meet their spiritual, physical and material needs (Rom. 12:5-9a; Eph. 2:10; Gal 6:10; Corbett, Fikkert 2009:120; Heyns, Pieterse 1990:58; Barram 2007:49; Cotterell 1981:36, 47; Dryden 2006:107; Light 2012:4).

Hospitality should be encouraged as one aspect of this caring ministry. Abraham's hospitality, Moses' command to show hospitality, Jesus' example, Lydia's example, and Peter's exhortation are recorded for the church to follow (Genesis 18:1-5; Leviticus 19:33-34; Mt 9:11-13; Mk 2:15-17; Acts 16:15; 1 Pet 4:9). Through such ministry a healing environment of the spiritually weary, burdened and sick can be wonderfully provided (Bretherton 2006:125-126; Van Rheen, Parker 2014:396). It requires the Samaritan's deed of concern and care, exemplifying God's love, and when experienced by the unsaved it will have the potential to lead them to repentance, abundant life and ultimately the Great Banquet Feast of the Lamb (Mt. 25:35-36; Lk. 10:33-37; 14:12; Rev. 19:9; Bretherton 2006: 130-132).

#### **4.2.5 Lead the church into practical ministry to meet the needs of the poor in the church and community (Heidelberg Catechism q+a: 86)**

The gospel does not become public truth when advanced as a theory, worldview or religion. This only happens when it is embedded in a church through practical involvement in the life of the world (Newbigin 1995:39). It was noted in chapter 3 that the gospel is concerned about the salvation of the whole person. It ministers in time and eternity to spiritual and also physical and material needs. This was demonstrated in Jesus and the New Testament church's ministry and church history.

MAC is a sister church to LAC and the wealthier. It should be concerned in assisting those in LAC in need out of love for the Lord Jesus and confirmation of their Christian faith (1 Jn. 3:17-18). This will also go some way in empowering LAC to

reach out to its community with the gospel and acts of mercy. It will also allow for healing and cohesion between the two ethnically/racially different churches as LAC at last experiences a genuine concern for them by MAC.

As presented in chapter 3, depravity often leads to impoverishment – either by some becoming self-centred, greedy, and controllers of wealth (this is not usually regarded as impoverishment in the world) and others through self-degradation, self-pity, deep seated brokenness, and poverty. Chapter 3 has shown that the ultimate solution to both groups is the gospel (Chambers 1930:23, 52; Corbett *et al.* 2009:58, 79, 121).

Contrary to the above, Lindsell states the church is not to present economic, social and political solutions, but rather to evangelize and promote knowing and practising God's Word (cited in Ju 1989:59). How should we understand this statement other than that the gospel as primary mover under the Holy Spirit's conviction impacts all of life and thus addresses societal problems and needs? A part of the gospel and God's justice and compassion would surely lead the Christian believer and the church to identify community concerns, assist in social empowerment programmes, and defend orphans and widows and care for them and others that are vulnerable and in need (Is.1:17-18; 58:6-7; Mt. 25:35-36; Gal. 6:9-10; Jm. 1:27; 1 Jn. 3:16-19; Sider 1981:46; Corbett *et al.* 2009:38, 40). The gospel is concerned to minister to humankind holistically. So evangelism would go hand-in-hand with eliminating degrading poverty and concomitant suffering (Hayshida 2009:64).

An evangelistic praxis and compassion through Christian involvement would soften hard hearts and influence people and systems, bringing justice and accelerating social transformation (Matt. 9:18-26; Rm. 14:17-19; 1 Tim. 2:4; Bloesch 1979:157; Corbett *et al.* 2009:79; Light 2012:351). Salvation might not immediately change life's circumstances, but brings patience in suffering and a realisation that support is close at hand through hope in God's promises (Ps. 37:25). Once the church is alerted to the physical and material needs, especially among its members, a Christ-like response in obedience to God will facilitate the assistance required (Ac. 4:35; Bloesch 1979:156; Moreau *et al.* 2015:50, 62).

LAC and MAC need to appreciate that relief of any kind, including humanitarian, cannot express God's comprehensive love without sharing the gospel message (Lk 4:18-19) as part thereof (Williams 2009:35). Redemption, salvation and deliverance

are not attractive if physical and material needs are not met (Matt. 17:14-18; Mk. 10:46-52; Light 2012:350; McDermott 2007:95). Bunyan believed evangelism could not be divorced from social concern; Carey's concern over poverty created by Colonisation was also of concern to him in his ministry (James 2009:125).

#### **4.2.6 Engage extra-biblical expertise to assist in diagnosis of individual and societal problems for more effective application of God's Word**

It is necessary that the churches use resources in the scientific arena to assist in their pastoral work and counselling. This is rather an interdisciplinary co-operation than intra-disciplinary co-operation (Streets 2014). For Brunsdon this includes identification of partners and strategies as a collaborative means of addressing social problems (2014). Gill states that the church has either retreated from or secularised its pastoral function (2016:1) and this needs correction. For the church a balanced multidisciplinary approach that affords the Scriptures final authority regarding the gospel and principles of Christian living is the ideal. This approach acknowledges that the Bible is not the only source of truth. The biblical claim that the human race has been created in God's image means humans have been blessed with intellect, initiative and capability that can assist in undergirding all biblical truth through the sciences (Psalm 19; Romans 1:19-20).

Knowledge coming from psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, sociology and other sciences has insights and strategies that are useful for diagnosing causes of problems and assisting the churches in solving individual, family and societal issues (Hiltner cited in Brunsdon 2014). Psychology and sociology have recently come to understand that communal problems, experienced in the common fields of life, must be addressed by a one-on-one approach to cure ills in individuals, families and society as these problems are multi-storeyed in the broader social context (Morgan cited Brunsdon 2014).

It has been noted in this study that the pastoral/church's involvement brings a God solution to all human problems by restoring fellowship with God, facilitating harmonious relationships between individuals, in families and community, and bringing other dimensions of holistic wholeness and also concern for justice and social upliftment in society where needed. This is because the gospel deals with the primary problem of the sinful nature leading to positive ethical and psycho-social

impacts (Johnson [2018]). 'Psyche' in the New Testament refers to the living person as a total, real unity of the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical in the context of community (Streets 2014). When this unity is disturbed, wholeness or shalom is prevented. When the vertical (spiritual relationship with God) is in order the other elements (including the horizontal) can be helped to function fully and unimpaired leading to the desired state of abundant living (cf. the likely significance of the order of the two great commandments, Mk. 12:30-31). However, this unique divine remedy needs to collaborate with the relevant scientific disciplines for the best possible outcome.

#### **4.2.7 Encourage the two churches to work together in harmony with appropriate mutual ministry to enhance their evangelistic influence**

MAC can be viewed as a partly functioning church as it is not outwardly or missionally focused. It has enjoyed political, educational, social and economic advantages in the old South Africa in contrast to LAC. MAC is therefore positioned to assist LAC in at least the following areas:

- Presentation of the gospel
- Organization
- Providing Sunday school material for each age group or helping produce it
- Youth programming
- Women's events
- Men's events
- Biblical training where required
- Bible-studies until LAC leadership feels competent to create or able to purchase them
- Training of leaders for all departments
- Overcoming material shortcomings (2 Cor. 9:6-14).

Assistance in all these areas would need to carefully and deliberately avoid a patriarchal or superior approach. It would also need to be humbly and graciously offered in a spirit that LAC will have lots to teach MAC. Further, partnership should be structured to promote unity between the two churches to overcome the barriers that the apartheid years fostered. This will require combined events that bring the

two congregations together. This deepening fellowship could start at the leadership level to demonstrate that no matter what the past racial policies that divided society , in Christ there can be true unity where we are all needed for the church to grow to full maturity (Col. 3:11; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-16).

Leslie Newbigin describes the church as a 'sign, foretaste and instrument' of God's reign, presenting an image of that great multicultural, eschatological congregation in Revelation (cited in Branson and Martinez 2011). Thus these two churches working together in unity will be better equipped to accomplish God's mission, present the redemption message and demonstrate kingdom life. Unity between these churches will enhance their evangelistic impact (Jn 17:20-24). The church in South Africa when operating as the true church will demonstrate the power of the gospel to bring reconciliation with God and within and between different ethnic, political, and social groups. However, it needs to be acknowledged that God's mission through the church will undergo satanic opposition from within and without as predicted by Jesus and later Paul the Apostle (Matt 24:10; 2 Tim.3:1-5) and this will challenge its unity and effectiveness.

Section 4.2 has fleshed out the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC. It has thus provided a plan to accommodate the more biblically faithful operative theology. Section 4.3 focuses on a strategy to gain acceptance of it, to implement it, and to monitor the progress so that adjustments can be made to ensure its ongoing effective implementation.

### **4.3 A strategic plan to gain acceptance of and inaugurate and monitor the operative theology**

#### **4.3.1 Persuading the minister and leadership**

Within the Reformed churches, the minister plays a highly visible leadership role in the church and the community. Further, the church leadership's (minister and elders) approval for any proposed change is cardinal if such change is to be implemented.

So I would need to present the leadership with a synopsis of my research in a reader-friendly style, keeping in mind that many of the leaders would not have had any formal theological or other tertiary training. The minister of MAC (at present LAC



does not have a minister) could be given a copy of my study as he would be more than competent to digest it.

After providing enough time for all to familiarize themselves with my research I would, firstly, make myself available to meet with the minister for a discussion to allow for clarification of any points and to possibly improve the operative theology and the strategy to implement it. Gaining such support will be crucial to the success of improving the churches' ministry to better conform to the pattern and vision of Luke 4:18-19.

Then, secondly, a power-point presentation to vividly capture the main points of my study would prove useful with the elders, with the minister present (in LAC's case MAC's minister would fill in). Again, allowing for significant interaction is most advisable to satisfactorily deal with questions related to the study (Munodawafa 2004). The governing church board, as executive decision-maker, will need to agree on the final form of the operative theology to guarantee their endorsement of, and help in implementing, it. The leadership's understanding of the church's function is *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia* (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:57), which corresponds to the findings and recommendations of my study, but with the latter bringing strong attention to specifics needing focus and action.

#### **4.3.2 Communicating the decision of the church eldership to the members**

The minister (leader-elder) would need to be the chief communicator to the whole church of the decision taken by the church board to implement the new operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19. The power-point presentation can be modified accordingly to assist the churches' understanding of the study and implementation of the findings. Discussion would help the elders to appreciate where the operative theology might need tweaking in order to make sure the praxis is properly contextualized.

The church would need to commit to the vision and related ministries of Luke 4:18-19 if the new operative theology is to be successfully implemented. Following implementation of the findings according to the recommended strategy presented in subsection 4.3.3, a two-way communication, both positive and negative, between the

leadership and membership would be important to encourage and assist in the continuance of the change-process (Cushman and King 1995:2).

#### **4.3.3 Implementation and monitoring strategy**

The implementation strategy involves setting achievable and measureable goals for the short term, medium term, and long term. If too much is attempted in the short term, the process will be overwhelming and lead to exhaustion and superficial application. Discouragement would also possibly cancel out any further motivation to continue with the project. Both leaders and other members would need to be supportive of the implementation strategy that would ensure all the steps necessary for successful implementation of the operative theology. The strategy too would need to be discussed under subsections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 and finalized for maximum support.

##### *a) Short-term goals for the first six months*

- *The church minister develops a syllabus for the doctrines of anthropology, soteriology and ecclesiology*
- *The elders are given a summary of the syllabus and the minister spends one or two sessions with them to help them understand it*
- *Gain clarity on the need for, and the heart of, salvation and the signs and fruits of conversion*
- *The elders then visit all member families and single members to ensure their basic understanding of the gospel and to challenge them if it has not been truly believed to embrace this life-changing message of redemption through repentance and faith. This visit would also seek to correct any misunderstandings or false beliefs.*
- *Preach on the doctrines of anthropology, soteriology and ecclesiology over a week of special services.*
- *Implement weekly cell Bible studies in each ward to steadily work through the syllabus with interaction (questions and discussion) and accountability on application*
- *Implement official church prayer meetings*
  - *Prayer for the salvation of the unconverted in the church and community*

- Prayer for the church ministries that seek to reflect God's will for his church, including to live out and proclaim the message of Luke 4:18-19
- *Train servant leaders*
  - Incumbent church-board members to undergo a training course on servant leadership at the beginning of the first sixth month period
  - The minister and elders to hold each other accountable to exercise leadership that inspires a following, especially in applying the new operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19
  - Once trained they would lead the Bible studies
- *Activate mercy ministry and social justice in the church and surrounding community*
  - First make members aware of individual and collective needs and any injustices being suffered
  - Actively involve the church in assisting and transforming the situation of those trapped in poverty and countering injustices in the spirit and vision of Luke 4:18-19. The leadership to appoint a management committee of three church-board members to adjudicate and decide an appropriate response to each situation. The committee to report back at church-board meetings with a strategy to involve the church and provide the church-board periodic feedback on their progress in applying the strategy.

*b) Medium-term goals for the next 6-18 months*

- *MAC to be available to assist LAC if requested to help facilitate fully achieving the first six months' goals*
  - MAC to decide who would provide this assistance if desired and report back on the progress to MAC and LAC church-board meetings
  - The church-boards of LAC and MAC to mutually decide when the training has achieved the necessary competency in LAC ministries
- *Testimony before acceptance into membership*
  - All new applicants for membership to be interviewed by the minister or lead elder as to their salvation experience and assurance of salvation,

allowing any lack or confusion in understanding or experience to be addressed

- Additionally, their understanding of discipleship and cognisance of their gifts and talents for participation in the church's ministry to be addressed if necessary
- Interview details to be recorded and filed for use and appropriate attention if necessary by the minister or elder responsible for direct pastoral care of the member
- *Train Sunday school servant leaders*
  - Servant leaders to be trained for Sunday-school ministry, which will require training in: (i) child adapted techniques for reaching children with the gospel, (ii) other basic Christian teaching, (iii) appropriate pedagogy, and (iv) discipling of those showing evidence of conversion
  - Minister to arrange for this training, even bringing in outside qualified trainers if necessary
- *Implement a discipleship training course for members*
  - The minister, possibly with the help from certain competent elders, to plan a course that is complementary to the syllabus on the three central doctrines. The purpose would be twofold: (i) to train members to easily and naturally communicate the gospel message of salvation to people that cross their paths (for instance, including using the Evangelism Explosion EE3 training course), and (ii) disciple members in the spiritual disciplines.
  - Train those able to become competent trainers
  - Trainers to provide the church board with the outcome with each new member, which information is to be filed for use and appropriate attention if necessary by the minister or elder responsible for direct pastoral care of the member
- *Elder and deacon nominee and selection process*
  - When it comes to the time for nominations to either the eldership or the diaconate, the minister to teach on the biblical qualifications and that nominations must be of people meeting them
- *Activate interaction between MAC and LAC*

- Institute a quarterly meeting where LAC and MAC board members are together to (i) share their church activities, challenges and encouragements, and (ii) enhance inter-church interaction, co-operation and assistance, both financial and material where required, and intercession
- Each church congregation to receive a report on the meeting by the person appointed for this task
- The minister and the two church boards to plan occasional pulpit exchanges and, when applicable, joint functions to achieve the goals set out for both churches and to have fellowship, mutual ministry, and the strengthening of the unity between them, so important in the light of the apartheid years of forced separation.

*c) Long-term goals for the next 12 months*

- *The minister and elders to plan monitoring of all ministries and encourage faithful operation*
  - Minister and elders to finalise a chart listing all the church ministries
  - Minister and elders to appoint the appropriate persons from their ranks to monitor and encourage the ministries (perhaps only one per ministry and a different one for each ministry)
  - A quarterly report to be provided to the minister and elders for discussion and appropriate action
- *The minister and elders to conduct faithful pastoral care*
  - The minister and competent elders to design a programme for the elders' pastoral ministry of the members under their care (see Appendix 2) for an example)
    - The minister and elders to meet quarterly to discuss their pastoral care for mutual encouragement and to benefit from each other's experience and to hold each other accountable for the pastoral ministry to those assigned to their care. Clarification of points in the pastoral programme to be given if necessary
- *Plan a roster for door-to-door ministry after the evangelistic training*

- Somebody to be appointed by the church board to compile the roster that covers the area around the church building and links those trained in evangelism with a number of homes
- Encourage these members to visit the homes appointed to them and to provide any encouraging report back at the weekly cell meetings and once a month in the Sunday service
- Encourage the bringing of neighbours to the weekly cell meetings and Sunday service.
- The minister and elders to meet quarterly to discuss progress in this ministry and how to further motivate it

Any teaching involved is not to be designed to make theologians of every church leader or member. It is to instil in the membership the meaning and implications of Jesus' Nazareth sermon for the ministry and life of the church. Once the goals set for the short, medium and long term have been achieved, it will be obvious that to sustain the new operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 in MAC and LAC they will need to be achieved again from time to time and some goals will involve permanent ministry.

#### **4.4 Summary of the chapter and conclusion**

The chapter started off with fleshing out the seven elements of the operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC developed in chapter 3. Then it developed a communicative strategy to gain acceptance of the operative theology in the two churches and the strategy for its implementation. It ended with the details of the strategic plan to inaugurate and monitor the operative theology. The chapter has thus achieved a strategy for these two churches in the same denomination that will enable them to achieve and maintain a biblically faithful praxis in partnership in the *missio Dei* summarised in the Lukan passage.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study was prompted by witnessing a disconnection between (i) the gospel message preached in two local congregations in the Nederduitse Gerformeerde Kerk, designated MAC and LAC, and (ii) their church life and ministry and witness in the world. MAC is the more affluent church in a middle class area and LAC is the less affluent church in a blue-collar and lower class area. The two churches are situated in culturally different contexts. They appeared to be absconding from living out the gospel and the responsibility for influencing family, friends, neighbours, businesses, and local, provincial and national governments with the gospel and Christian values. Congregants seemed to be only church goers; not practising their faith in their daily lives. It concerned me that they appeared Christian in name only and were losing credibility as salt and light in the world.

My reading of the Bible, and especially the New Testament, was that God was on a mission to restore his world. Further, that this enterprise was centred in the person and work of his Son's incarnation, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God as reigning Sovereign over the world. In particular, I felt convinced that Luke 4:18-19, where Jesus announces his mission in the Nazareth synagogue, provided a powerful synopsis of his calling. In addition I viewed this text as having clear implications for the ministry of the church.

This study then brought together my concern about the two congregations, especially with regard to their apparent lack of appreciation of the relevance for them of Luke 4:18-19. I was confronted with the need to work out a biblically faithful operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC and a strategy to achieve it. To facilitate this research project I Browning's (1991) strategic practical theology was chosen because of its suitability for achieving my major objective. It entails answering FOUR questions:

1. How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act?

2. What should be our praxis in this concrete situation?
3. How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?
4. What means, strategies, and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation?

Chapter 5 presents a review of the objectives of the study. It then traces the argument. This followed by a presentation of a summary of the findings and their significance. Finally it suggests ideas for further research.

## **5.2 Review of the objectives**

The primary objective of this study was to formulate a strategic plan to bring two congregations in different areas – a more affluent one and a less affluent one, to a biblical and faithful understanding of, and response to, Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4:18-19. The Lukan passage describes the mission of Jesus in a minimum of words, each pregnant with meaning. It captures a template for Christian ministry, but which excludes those features unique to Jesus' calling and redeeming work.

The primary objective of establishing and implementing an operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC was attained through achieving three secondary objectives:

- (i) The first secondary objective was to interpret the present situation regarding the operative theology with respect to Luke 4:18-19 at MAC and LAC. This was achieved by tracing the beliefs of the two churches and through a small-scale empirical study at the churches. This research and its findings are presented in chapter 2.
- (ii) The second secondary objective had a number of parts. Firstly, the formulation of a biblically faithful theology perspective on Luke 4:18-19. Secondly, a brief church history survey to explore how Luke 4:18-19 was approached and applied. Thirdly, some extra-biblical information was engaged. Fourthly, these three perspectives were correlated to arrive at a biblically faithful operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for any church; and then adapted to suit the contexts of LAC and MAC. Finally, the operative theology for the churches was defended. Chapter 3 contains this research.



- (iii) The third secondary objective was to develop a strategic plan for implementing and sustaining all areas of the proposed biblically faithful operative theology with respect to Luke 4:18-19 in MAC and LAC. It also covered gaining acceptance of this strategy at these two churches.

### **5.3 Tracing the argument**

It was necessary to conduct a more accurate description of MAC and LAC's concrete situation. My own assessment might have been biased and slightly inaccurate as it was based only on my observation and participation. Though the sample group in the small-scale empirical study from each church was not large, the results I believe give a fair picture of the situation as they confirmed my first-hand evaluation. The research mostly explored the respondents' understanding of Luke 4:18-19 and their response as well as that of their churches. This part of the study fulfilled Browning's first step.

Then it was necessary to establish a faithful theology and praxis regarding Luke 4:18-19 and defend it. This would provide the standard by which to assess the situation in LAC and MAC to see if changes were required. The normative position regarding Luke 4:18-19 was established through integrative theology by means of an exegesis of Luke 4:18-19 and a biblical and church history study and consideration of some non-biblical sources relating to the passage. It also needed to be defended for greater credibility and justify its use. Thus the second and third steps of Browning were fulfilled.

The next logical phase of the study (Browning's fourth step) was to develop a strategy for achieving the normative operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 formulated for MAC and LAC. This involved, firstly, a structured programme spread over the short, medium and long terms to effectively obtain the implementation of all aspects of the operative theology, and, secondly, a communicative strategy to gain acceptance of the new praxis and the method of implementation. In the former the programme for the two churches differed slightly in a few places.

The argument meant that the primary objective of the study was achieved. This was to formulate a strategic plan to bring two congregations to a biblically faithful understanding of, and response to, Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4:18-19.

## 5.4 Summary of findings and their significance

MAC and LAC belong to the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, whose theological roots are in Calvinism: the five '*Solas*' (Kraby [2018]). This means the Bible's teaching is to faithfully reflect the Apostolic Creed/*Apostoliese Geloofsbeleidenis*, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort. This was found to largely be the case.

The reference to the 'poor' in Luke 4:18-19 was overwhelmingly (14 of the seventeen respondents = 82.4%) understood to be spiritual poverty by both churches. Further, that the 'captives' were captive to sin and Satan which affected the spiritual, physical and material well-being of humankind. Yet there was a lack of solid understanding that the effects of sin in the life of the individual, family and society at large necessitate a transforming encounter with the gospel and active participation in evangelism and other deeds of love to overcome the devastating impact of sin in the world.

As expected, 'blind' in the text was understood to have both a spiritual and physical meaning by LAC, while the majority (8 = 88.9%) of MAC respondents believed blindness to be spiritual. Four (50%) of LAC respondents understood 'oppressed' in physical-material terms, having been on the receiving end of the harsh laws of apartheid South Africa; and the majority (8 = 88.9%) of MAC's respondents' favoured spiritual oppression.

Regarding the root cause of humankind's condition, five (63%) of LAC respondents saw material poverty as one of the causes (with sin) with only one (12.5%) respondent taking this as the sole cause. The majority (8 = 88.9%) of MAC respondents identified sin as the source of all problems in life.

The 'year of the Lord's favour' was generally not understood by respondents from both churches against its background in Isaiah. Its significance as the extension of God's grace was effectively not fully appreciated as there is no urgency in LAC and MAC to proclaim the gospel in word and deed. The churches are inwardly focused, meaning obedience to the injunction of the Lord to the churches in Matthew 28:18-20 is seriously or totally lacking.

The majority (6 = 75%) of LAC respondents understood that Jesus' ministry included forgiveness of sin, but that this would be coupled with the provision of material, physical and emotional healing. Disconcerting is the fact that (i) two (25%) of LAC respondents failed to answer that God's granting of forgiveness was paramount to the purpose of Jesus' ministry, and (ii) eight (88.9%) of MAC respondents did not include the practical provision and physical-mental healing as being part of Jesus' ministry, which would explain their detachment from being concerned to see the materially impoverished, especially in members in the church (LAC in particular), having sufficient.

The respondents in both MAC and LAC do not have any or a clear picture of the practical ministries Luke 4:18-19 would imply. However, most in the MAC sample and a few in LAC believe that the proclamation of the gospel should be paramount. It was surprising to note how few, especially of MAC respondents, concluded that this passage in Luke's Gospel would include concern about and facilitating physical-mental health and material assistance for the poor (particularly in the church).

The overall conclusion to the small-scale empirical research (questionnaire and interview results) is that the majority of MAC respondents only possess an academic understanding of salvation as portrayed in Luke 4:18-19. There seems to be an absence of conviction, certainly in most of LAC respondents, that it implies a markedly changed life and commitment to costly discipleship with a strong evangelistic thrust and concern to also meet needs other than the spiritual ones. Thus, most of the respondents did not fully comprehend that salvation is holistic – intended to deal with spiritual, social, physical-mental, and material needs. Further, that preaching salvation is more than the prerogative of the minister.

It needs to be noted that the sample groups from each church, though representative of the congregations, especially the more spiritually mature ones, were relatively small. Thus the results of the research cannot simply be extrapolated to the whole churches' memberships. However, the interview, which also focused more on the actual ministries in the churches, provided a unanimous picture that confirmed my years of observation and participation, namely, that Luke 4:18-19 is not guiding the life and ministry of MAC and LAC. The results of the research then would carry high representative weight.

As noted above, the normative praxis regarding Luke 4:18-19 for any church was established through the integrated theology approach. Firstly, a detailed exegesis of Luke 4:18-19 (a direct quotation of Isaiah 61:1-2a) was conducted taking into account the immediate context of the passage in Luke, its meaning in Isaiah, Luke's Gospel and the other Gospels, and the rest of the New Testament (key relevant passages). The Isaiah context was seen to be the Jubilee Year, beginning on the Day of Atonement, which brought forgiveness of sin and also emancipation of the people who had become slaves and deliverance from debt. The holistic nature of the results of the Jubilee year is obvious and thus was found to be relevant to interpreting Luke 4:18-19.

Jesus, as God's Holy Spirit anointed one, claims in his Nazareth message that his ministry is to fulfil the prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-2a. The 'poor' were seen to be those spiritually impoverished; but it also covered the materially poor, as well as the humble. The captives were primarily those enslaved to sin and unable to free themselves. The 'blind' were clearly not only the physically blind, but more particularly those in spiritual darkness, needing a revelation of their unspiritual state of sin and guilt, and need before a holy God for pardon and deliverance that could come only through Christ. The 'downtrodden'/'oppressed' are those weighed down with the maltreatment of others; also their own sin. The result is that they are crushed and broken. Jesus announced that he came to bring hope and transformation for the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. It was to be a fulfilment of the Old Testament Jubilee year.

Luke 4:18-19 in a few vivid and powerfully informative words describes the range of needs that characterize the human race. But here, too, the glorious message of Christ is heralded as the only one qualified to provide the deliverance and freedom so desperately craved (if only inwardly) and needed.

It was noted that the Gospels affirm Jesus' anointing and ministry, and also the anointing and sending of his disciples (and by implication the whole Church) to carry the Luke 4:18-19 message to the ends of the earth and disciple converts in the truths of this gospel concerning the Son of God. The rest of the New Testament was found to endorse and provide greater clarity on Christ's epochal claim in Luke 4:18-19 and its realization. It shows how the early church took this message of salvation and

proclaimed it in all situations and carefully disciplined converts so they in turn would experience the fullness of Christ's Jubilee ministry and spread the message themselves. The first generation of believers could testify to the holistic power of the Luke 4:18-19 message – spiritual and material, physical and social needs were met.

The study also demonstrated that the post-apostolic church faithfully presented the gospel message – its solution to humankind's sinful depravity through repentance and faith in the salvific work of Christ. Christians were exemplary in caring for the needy and incarcerated. The Church during the Roman Empire and Middle Ages had God-fearing theologians and preachers that faithfully proclaimed the message Jesus announced in the Nazareth synagogue, resulting in a holistic experience of salvation. Sadly the Roman Catholic Church's official stance corrupted the salvation message by reducing it to largely salvation by works.

The Reformation leaders denounced the position of the Roman Catholic Church because they believed it had corrupted the gospel message and argued for the sinful state of humankind, God's redemptive act in Jesus, and a transformed life through the power of the gospel. Calvin believed that a spiritual new-birth was necessary to reinstate humankind's spirit, will, intellect and emotions, emphasising the need to build a community under God. The reformers expressed and addressed the physical and material needs in society, bringing change.

The survey of the church from the reformation period into the modern period showed it emphasised Christ's atonement for sin, the need of repentance and the radical transformation of life leading to love for neighbour and justice and influencing society. However, deviant theologies promoted a need for a social gospel to be proclaimed, which either underplayed evangelism or viewed God's kingdom as coming through human effort alone. But faithful theologians continued to present the true gospel of salvation: proclamation and ministry to the whole man. Sadly the evangelical church did not, and still does not, seem to have escaped being caught up in different degrees of materialism causing love of neighbour and mercy ministries and advocacy for justice to suffer.

Postmodernism, present alongside modernism, has argued and postulated that absolute truth is inaccessible, but views all avenues of knowledge, including experiential, as possibly providing some aspect of truth. This has made it unpopular

to present an authoritative gospel and made toleration of all views the only acceptable way. Though postmodernism does allow for the Christian to hold a biblical view of Luke 4:18-19, it does not countenance us claiming its exclusive truth regarding reconciliation to God and the truly abundant life. But in spite of the powerful influence of postmodernism in society, millions of Christians around the world have held the traditional evangelical understanding of salvation.

The church history survey provided much evidence to support the biblical interpretation of Luke 4:18-19 in this study. This strengthens the biblical case that emerged from the study of this passage. Finally, the brief excursion into relevant areas of the sciences and other ideologies indicated that the vision of Luke 4:18-19 for the betterment of humankind is shared by the wider academic world and leaders in society. However, although these extra-biblical sources have brought some meaningful improvements to personal, family and societal life, they have not been able to fix the inherent problem of sin and its effects on the human race. The best solution then was seen to be the ministry of Jesus and other areas of knowledge that can help make the vision of Luke 4:18-19 an even greater reality.

Based on (i) the results of the small-scale empirical research with regards to MAC and LAC's understanding of and response to Luke 4:18-19, and (ii) theological and other areas of consideration, a biblically faithful operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 was constructed suitable for MAC and LAC. It covers seven areas:

- Teaching the central doctrines of Christianity
- Further discipleship to achieve greater Christlikeness and training of leaders
- Training in sharing the gospel
- Equipping the church to become a hospital for the broken and oppressed through the gospel and being a loving community
- Ministries to counter poverty
- Some attention to valuable extra-biblical sources
- Greater unity between MAC and LAC for mutually edifying ministry and to enhance their evangelistic influence

Then the operative theology was defended on the basis that it concords with the beliefs of the two churches, corrects the shortcomings in understanding and responding to Luke 4:18-19, and takes into account relevant extra-biblical sources.

Finally the study developed a strategic plan to gain acceptance of the new operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 and its implementation. This was achieved by communicating the findings of the study to, and discussing them with, the minister and later to the other elders in the two churches and finally the rest of the churches' members. This process allows for discussion and tweaking the operative theology to gain maximum consensus and contextualization. This also emphasises and honours the leadership structure of the churches.

The operative theology is structured around a detailed strategic plan spread over three years to achieve a successful implementation. The plan is divided into short term, medium term and long term goals. Once every one of the seven elements of the operative theology has been put into motion, aspects of them will from time to time need to be repeated.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

This study, based on Browning's four step design for strategic practical theology, has arrived at an operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 for MAC and LAC. If the biblical-theological and the resulting contextually-sensitive praxis are fully grasped and inaugurated respectively, these churches will move much closer to faithfully responding to the vision of this Lukan passage describing our Lord's ministry, both within the membership and to those near and far needing to hear this good news. It will lead to showcasing the fully-orbed salvation that Jesus has provided that deals with humankind's comprehensive needs and problems holistically – in the spiritual, physical, material and social areas with resulting impact in the political and justice arenas in society.

MAC and LAC have sound biblical teaching, yet certain adjustments need to be made to the preaching and teaching ministry to inform them of the full growth in Christ made possible through his salvation; and to activate them to greater responsibility to more effectively play the critical role implied in the Luke 4:18-19 vision in their families, work-places and society in general. This is especially so if

Jesus' declaration in the Nazareth synagogue is true, which the two churches believe.

Finally, it needs to be admitted that the empirical part of this study is very limited. This was due primarily to the whole study only constituting 60 credits. Further research is necessary in these two congregations in the same denomination to more comprehensively discover with reference to Luke 4:18-19 the members' understanding of salvation and the call Jesus has placed on their lives to be involved in spreading the good news of, and advancing his, kingdom in the world. From such additional research, more insights would be gleaned that would facilitate an operative theology regarding Luke 4:18-19 that is more adapted to the needs and shortcomings of MAC and LAC in their preaching, teaching, discipleship, evangelism, and justice and mercy advocacy ministries with special reference to bringing down the frighteningly and disturbingly high unemployment rate and countering widespread poverty in the country.

The gospel, encapsulated in Luke 4:18-19, must be prioritised, preached, taught, and lived through Holy Spirit empowerment and prayer. MAC and LAC need to be captivated by the gospel and to be part of the great enterprise of praying for conviction of sin in the hearts of all South Africans and a great harvest where converts experience the life-changing work of God's salvation leading to obedience to Jesus Christ and positively impacting South African society.



## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

### Questionnaire based on Luke 4:18-19

*To be answered anonymously*

Name of Church .....

Details of person answering questionnaire:

Gender .....

Age group.....

Number of years since being converted .....

Member / adherent / youth .....

Office bearer..... (if yes, name office)

#### **Instructions:**

- i. In every question circle the letter of every option you think is true. This means that for every question you might choose more than one answer.*
- ii. Where there are lines provided, please write in your answer.*

1. What is your understanding of the phrase 'the poor' in the text?
  - a. It means the materially poor.
  - b. It means the spiritually poor (poor towards God because they do not know His salvation from the penalty and power of sin and His presence in their lives).

2. What is your understanding of the phrase 'the captives/the prisoners' in the text?
  - a. It means prisoners in prison.
  - b. It means those living under an oppressive government.
  - a. It means prisoners or captives to material poverty.
  - c. It means those captive to a sinful nature and Satan.
  
3. What is your understanding of the phrase 'the blind' in the text?
  - a. It means those with physical blindness.
  - b. It means those who are sick and diseased.
  - c. It means those who are spiritually blind, (they are unable to see their sin and need for God's salvation from the power and penalty of sin and the need of His presence in their lives).
  
4. What is your understanding of the phrase 'the oppressed/the downtrodden' in the text?
  - a. It means people who are under great emotional stress and who are heavily depressed.
  - b. It means people who are struggling with material needs and are consequently oppressed by their poverty.
  - c. It means people who are rejected and despised and therefore burdened by a sense of unworthiness and low self-esteem.
  - d. It means people who feel the burden of their sinfulness and separation from God.
  - e. It means people who are politically oppressed.
  
5. What is the root cause of humankind's condition as described in Luke 4:18-19?
  - a. Depression
  - b. Sightlessness
  - c. Sickness
  - d. Sin
  - e. Poverty

6. Give your understanding of 'to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord' or 'the year of the Lord's favour' in the text?
- a. It means the time when everything described in verse 18 will take place.
  - b. It does not mean the time when everything described in verse 18 will take place.
  - c. Please describe what you think the phrase means if you do not agree with a or b.  
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.....  
.....  
.....
  - d. I do not know what the phrase means.
7. Luke 4:18-19 is a quotation from Isaiah 61:1-2. When Jesus had finished reading this passage in the Nazareth synagogue, He then said: 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing' (verse 21). Must we therefore study the life and ministry of Jesus from the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament to find out how to interpret Isaiah 61;1-2, i.e. how to interpret Luke 4:18-19?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
8. What can we expect from Jesus' ministry from your understanding of Luke 4:18-19?
- a. He will provide all the material things we need, e.g. adequate food, clothing, housing and a good education.
  - b. He will provide political freedom.
  - c. He will provide healing from all damaging stress and emotional and physical illness and weakness.
  - d. He will provide forgiveness for our sins and the power to live to obey and please Him, which will include loving one another and our neighbour.

e. I do not know what to expect from Jesus' ministry in the light of Luke 4:18-19.

9. From your answers to all the above questions that have dealt with Luke 4:18-19, what actions or ministries do you think the church should perform?

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Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire.

## Bybelse vrae gebasseer op Lukas 4:18-19

### *Vrae word anoniem beantwoord*

Kerk Naam.....

Besonderhede van person wat die vrae antwoord:

Geslag: .....

Getal jare vanaf bekering: .....

Ouderdomsgroep: .....

Lidmaat/ Aanhanger/ Jeug

Amp beklee in die kerk:.....(Indien ja, noem  
benaming)

### **Instruksies:**

- i. Omring **AL** die opsies wat u dink waar is. Dit beteken dat u dalk meer as een antwoord per vraag sal kan kies.
- ii. Waar stippellyne aangeteken is, skryf asseblief u antwoord daarop.

1 Wat verstaan u van die woorde: 'die armes', in die teks?

- a. Dit beteken materieel arm.
- b. Dit beteken geestelik arm (arm teenoor God omdat mense geen kennis van Sy reddingswerk om hulle te verlos van die mag van die sonde en sondestraf ken nie)

2 Wat beteken die sinsdeel: 'die gevangenes', in die teks?

- a. 'n Prisonier in 'n gevangenis.
- b. Die wat onder verdrukking verkeer deur politieke omstandighede.
- c. Dit beteken om in materiële armoede gevange te wees.
- d. Dit beteken om in sonde 'n gevangene te wees van Satan.

3. Wat beteken die woorde: 'die blindes' in die teks?
- a. Die wat fisies blind is.
  - b. Die wat siekte ervaar en in siekte verkeer.
  - c. Die wat geestelik blind is (die wat nie die mag en straf van sonde in hulle lewens erken nie)
4. Gee u mening en betekenis van die sinsdeel: 'die onderdruktes' in die teks.
- a. Dit beteken mense wat onder groot emosionele druk verkeer of depressief is.
  - b. Dit beteken mense wie verwerping 'n werklikheid in hulle lewe is en wat onwaardig voel en self-beeld probleme ervaar.
  - c. Dit beteken mense wat materiële gebrek ly en dus deur armoede onderdruk word.
  - d. Dit beteken mense wat deur 'n politieke stelsel onderdruk word.
  - e. Dit beteken mense wie die vrag en skuld van sonde besef met die gevolg dat hulle van God geskei is.
5. Wat is die hoof oorsaak van die mens se toestand soos beskryf in Lukas 4:18-19?
- a. Depressie.
  - b. Blind
  - c. Siekte.
  - d. Sonde.
  - e. Armoede
6. Hoe verstaan u die woorde: 'die genadejaar van die Here aan te kondig' in die teks?
- a. Dit is die periode wanneer alles in vers 18 volbring sal word.
  - b. Dit beteken nie die periode wanneer alles in vers 18 volbring sal word nie.

- c. Beskryf in u eie woorde wat u dink vers 18 beteken as u nie saam met a of b stem nie:

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- d. Ek weet nie wat die sinsnede beteken nie.

7. Lukas 4:18-19 is amper 'n woordelike aanhaling uit Jesaja 61:1-2. Toe Jesus die stuk klaar gelees het, het Hy in die Nasaret sinagoga die woorde gesê: "Vandag is hierdie skrifwoorde wat julle nou net gehoor het, vervul" (vers 21). Moet ons dan die vier Evangelies en al die geskrifte van die Nuwe Testament wat Jesus se lewe en bediening beskryf, bestudeer, om die Jesaja teks asook die Lukas teks te kan verstaan?

- a. Ja
- b. Nee
- c. Onseker

8. Wat kan ons van Jesus se bediening uit Lukas 4:18-19, verwag, soos u dit verstaan?

- a. Jesus sal alle materiële behoeftes voorsien bv. kos, klere, huis en opleiding ens.
- b. Hy sal politiese vryheid besorg.
- c. Jesus sal alle siektes, stress-en verwante emosionele en fisies kwale genees.
- d. Jesus sal alle sonde vergewe en vir die bekeerde die krag gee om vir Hom te lewe, insluitend om ander lief te hê, tot Sy eer en vir Sy plesier.
- e. Ek is nie seker wat om van Jesus se bediening, vervat in Lukas 4:18-19, te verstaan nie.

9. Gegewe u antwoorde op alle vrae oor Lukas 4:18-19 hierbô, watter aksies of bediening dink u behoort die Kerk van Jesus Christus betrokke in te wees?

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Baie dankie dat u die moeite gedoen het om die vraelys te voltooi.



## **Appendix 2: Results of the interview**

*The sample groups from MAC and LAC that answered the questionnaire were divided into focus groups led by the researcher to discuss the questions to gain greater clarity on their answers and further stimulate their thinking. This appendix provides a thorough summary of the results.*

Question 1: *What is your understanding of the phrase ‘the poor’ in the text?*

The answers given in the meaning of poverty entailed were mostly defined in spiritual terms. I discussed whether they don't think that poverty has a wider meaning in the text and practically in life? Most respondents' reiterated that the meaning emphasised the spiritual dimension, but did not discount a wider understanding to the word given.

Question 2: *What is your understanding of the phrase ‘the captives/the prisoners’ in the text?*

We discussed whether captivity only referred to the spiritual realm of life, or whether it could also apply to other spheres of life and living? The conclusion was that captivity spoken of in the text meant an inclusive captivity: spiritual, emotional, physical and material with each affecting the other; however, not all initially took that view.

Question 3: *What is your understanding of the phrase ‘the captives/the prisoners’ in the text?*

*Blindness was seen by the majority as affecting the spiritual dimension of life. We discussed whether the text has other dimensional meanings? Some respondents were unsure of how to answer the text, especially as physical healing does not always occur in the believer's life. However, after Scripture was engaged, according to God's will it was agreed that physical healing could take place and that thus “the captives” could mean those being held by, or in the grip of, sickness.*

Question 4: *What is your understanding of the phrase ‘the oppressed/the downtrodden’ in the text?*

We discussed both the nature and causes of this condition. There were some who understood oppression to be caused by circumstances, conditions in the home, work, and the political arena, and pressure or abuse in relationships, but material specifically poverty. After further debate it was concluded that the origin of oppression was indeed sin, thus spiritual, originating from Satan’s beguilement and Adam and Eve’s resultant disobedience to God’s command. This resulted in all other forms of oppression such as being oppressed by self-indulgence in sinful pleasures that in turn lead to material impoverishment.

Question 5: *What is the root cause of humankind’s condition as described in Luke 4:18-19?*

Here we discussed in the light of some answers to previous questions if they thought there was an exclusive cause of all human bondage and suffering. It was concluded that sin was determined to be the overriding cause of humankind’s ills. It is a spiritual cause that manifests negatively in all areas of personal and societal life.

Question 6: *Give your understanding of ‘to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord’ or ‘the year of the Lord’s favour’ in the text?*

We discussed what the Lord’s favour might mean. Then we debated Jesus’ birth, death and resurrection possibly related to the Lord’s favour. Generally the respondents’ had very little to add to the understanding given in the questionnaire. The dominant answer remained the spiritual release experienced by Jesus’ atoning work which they coupled to the year of the Lord’s favour. However, the importance of the meaning of this grace was discussed with reference to the need for MAC and LAC members to reach others with the gospel message.

Question 7: *Luke 4:18-19 is a quotation from Isaiah 61:1-2. When Jesus had finished reading this passage in the Nazareth synagogue, He then said: ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’ (verse 21). Must we therefore study the life and ministry of Jesus from the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament to find out how to interpret Isaiah 61:1-2, i.e. how to interpret Luke 4:18-19?*

Here it was discussed if the whole Bible is not ultimately a testimony to God's transforming love through Christ for his people, and therefore to fully understand Isaiah 61:1-2a and Luke 4:18-19 all Scripture must be studied? It would seem from the answers gleaned that there is a lack of scriptural and theological knowledge of the Old and the New Testaments, excluding the narrative stories in both Testaments. Thus the discussion was directed to emphasize the whole Bible as pointing to Christ Jesus, from Genesis to Revelation and therefore the need to interpret Luke 4:18-19 (Isa 61:1-2a).

Question 8: *What can we expect from Jesus' ministry from your understanding of Luke 4:18-19?*

We discussed that thought the majority of the respondents believe that Jesus came to forgive sin and to empower believer's to obedience, witness and serve others, this is not seen to be a reality in the two churches? The respondents felt the members are extremely busy and are pushed by economics and family responsibilities with little or no time over for other activities. Nevertheless, they see the importance of living a life of witness through service, yet unsure of the way forward together practically as individuals as well as the church.

Question 9: *From your answers to all the above questions that have dealt with Luke 4:18-19, what actions or ministries do you think the church should perform?*

Here their church's activities were discussed and their relative importance in the light of Luke 4:18-19. Most of the respondents had an idea of the churches official list of committees responsible for implementing the various actions. A minority of respondents were actively involved on these committees. However, the interviewees' main focus was the functioning of the church service, the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings, and the financial committees which had oversight of the churches finances and thus influenced the activities of the churches. However, even though the churches had a committee for attending to members' needs, to their knowledge it functioned only in individual crises and little or no action had been implemented to reach people outside the church in need, both physical and spiritual. Thus the churches are inwardly focused.

# **Appendix 3: St. James Community Church Shepherding Programme Manual**

(used by permission)

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- 1.Introduction
2. The shepherd's work
- 3.Reasons for a shepherding programme
- 4.Guidelines
  - Counselling
  - Home visiting
  - Visiting the sick in home and hospital
  - How to be discerning, sensitive and approachable
  - The place of the Scripture and prayer in visiting
  - Confidentiality and trustworthiness
  - Tools for the shepherd
- 5.The Commitment of the shepherd
- 6.Prayer
- 7.Conclusion
- 8.Appendix
  - Pastoral Care Cards
  - Visiting Cards

## INTRODUCTION

St James Church needs to strive to build a church where there is adequate, effective and timely pastoral care for all its members. One of the intended hallmarks of the New Covenant Church was to be a superior quality of pastoral care to that given during the Old Testament period: the Messiah to come would be the perfect shepherd under whose direction caring and faithful under-shepherds empowered by Christ would work (see Ezek. 34:23; Jer. 3:15; 23:1-6; Jn. 10:11,16; Hebr. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4). This feature of the New Covenant Church is surely why the New Testament strongly suggests that local churches were pastorally best served by a plurality of shepherds (see Acts 20:17-28; Hebr. 13:7,17,24; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Tit. 1:5). If St James' care of souls is to be a fulfilment of the prophecies of superior shepherds, then the full-time, ordained pastor needs a team around him to help with pastoral care. God has providentially brought together at St James a group of mature Christians – some ordained – to make this vision of quality pastoral care possible. It has been proved over and over again that comprehensive spiritual care of the flock does not happen if there is no specific strategy and planning to this end. This is the motivation behind this document. It gives guidelines and a methodology for a programme of pastoral care at St James Church.

Throughout the manual the role of the full-time pastor is central. This is not to signify that the role of the supporting shepherds is minimal or unimportant. It is based on the fact of the full-time pastor's training, pastoral gifts, full-time position, availability, and key leadership role. The full-time pastor needs to be at the heart of the pastoral team's ministry – giving the team direction, encouragement, evaluating their ministry, and generally seeing that the programme of pastoral care is fulfilling the wishes of the Chief Shepherd. The team around him is firstly responsible and accountable to Christ, and then secondly to him for their part in this vital aspect of the ministry at St James. In the rest of this manual the full-time pastor is referred to as the minister.

## THE SHEPHERD'S WORK

The role of the shepherds in a Christian community will at least include the following:

1. To pray regularly for the families allocated to them.
2. To visit their families on a regular basis.
3. To feedback information about their families/individuals to the minister so that he can make his pulpit and caring ministry and the church's ministries more effective.
4. To encourage, guide, exhort, support, pray for, and care for the needs of their families and the individuals in those families and any single people in their group.
5. To bring Christ and His Word to them and to encourage them to:
  - (a) attend church on Sundays, and
  - (b) become involved in church activities and ministries.
6. To, where necessary, distribute and highlight important notices and newsletters.
7. To be the first line of communication (a) concerning the church's goals and ministry and (b) for feedback on how their families are fitting in at St James, their involvement, and how they are finding the church's ministry and fellowship. Their pastoral visits are the ideal opportunity to discover if there is any discontent and any teachings held that undermine the Gospel or threaten the unity of the church.
8. To communicate pressing spiritual and material needs of people to the minister and members in leadership of appropriate special ministries.
9. To be a father and mother figure (see 1 Thes 2:7-12).
10. To identify the resources of the people, e.g. musical gifts and other talents that may be of benefit to the Church.
11. To monitor in a positive manner church attendance.
12. To encourage unity, fellowship and concern for one another, and create an atmosphere of trust.
13. To phone the families/individuals at least once every two weeks.

14.To get all of the families and individuals they care for together for a function once every two months. If these times can be arranged more regularly, positive results will be seen.

### REASONS FOR A SHEPHERDING PROGRAMME

Pastoral care focuses on ministering to families and individuals in the church so that they cope with life's problems, live effectively as believers, share the Gospel, and improve their stewardship of their time, money, talents, etc. It is also concerned with meeting their needs, especially the more urgent ones. In South Africa at the present time many are living with high levels of stress. This means pastoral care is currently one of the great needs of the church. Pastoral care is also to protect the flock from heresy and maintain the unity of the church and promote the priesthood of all believers. Shepherding can also never be divorced from bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the unsaved whom the shepherds will meet in the course of their shepherding duties. Clearly to achieve all these pastoral ministries on a regular basis to all members, a team of shepherds and a specific programme are necessary.

Some specific reasons for a shepherding programme are the following:

- 1.To be better able to nurture and care for all families and individuals in the church.
- 2.To make visiting and caring easier, regular, more accessible and natural.
- 3.To encourage people to attend church activities, e.g. Home-cells, etc.
- 4.To identify' the resources and needs of the people.
- 5.To be more effective in developing unity and godliness in the church.
- 6.For the church to be more effective in its teaching, discipling, evangelism, and dissemination of notices and literature.
- 7.To strengthen and protect the unity of the church.
- 8.To strive to implement the 6 E's in every facet of the church's life.

## GUIDELINES TO DIFFERENT SHEPHERDING MINISTRIES

This section gives a summary of the range of ministries shepherds will be involved in and how to approach and fulfil these ministries with confidence.

### 1. Counselling

(a) Christians are not immune to trials, difficulties, problems and confusing situations. The 'one-another' passages teach that Christians are all to minister to one another. Clearly such ministry is the first line of caring ministry. So all Christians are to some degree counsellors.

(b) But there are times when the problems of members require more skilled counselling. Such counselling is usually necessary in the areas of major marriage problems, trauma cases, bereavement, social rehabilitation, alcoholism, deep psychological problems, etc.

(c) People who are deeply traumatized should be receiving therapy from a recognized professional. The relevant shepherd should inform the minister if such professional help is needed but not being pursued, so that the minister can be in the position to take up the matter for further investigation and make recommendations.

(d) However, people with 'minor' problems usually just need someone to talk to, and the shepherds who do not have special training in counselling will be more than competent in such situations. In such cases

(i) Be a ready and interested listener: allow the person to have his/her say without interruption or interjection with some quick solution to the problem. All that is frequently needed is for the troubled member to merely unburden himself/herself to someone else who really cares. Listening 'actively' is thus very important and very effective.

(ii) Be empathetic: understand and feel with the person; get alongside and hold the person's hand for extra comfort if necessary.

### 2. Home visiting

Some DON'TS to remember:



(a) Don't visit at an inappropriate hour, e.g. at meal times, during favourite TV programmes (the shepherd needs to get to know his people's preferences), bath time for the children, at other unreasonable times or when either spouse is not present in the case of married persons (unless the visit involves a member of the same sex).

(b) Don't just arrive; rather phone beforehand to ensure that a visit is in order (there may be many reasons why it might not be convenient to visit even if it is convenient for the shepherd).

(c) Don't enter into a gossip session, or pass on information you have about another person, no matter how innocent it might be.

(d) Don't discuss fellow church members/shepherds/the minister in a derogatory manner (remember they are one's brothers and sisters in Christ and are to be accepted and loved).

(e) Don't pass judgement easily on anything or anybody, or be drawn into an ugly argument – theological or otherwise. This does not mean the shepherd cannot endorse the Scriptures' judgement on any sin or situation or that he must not have strong opinions about certain doctrines and other matters. Great wisdom, full knowledge and mercy are needed before the shepherd passes judgement.

(f) Don't monopolize the conversation or stay too long (this will put the member against any future visits).

(g) Don't forget to fill in the Pastoral Care Card and the Visiting Card after the visit!

Some DO'S to remember:

(a) Be congenial, unpretentious and exude love in the Lord in a disciplined, wise, and sincere way.

(b) Be yourself – don't give the impression that you are an angel!

(c) Be guarded in your conversation and inoffensive.

(d) Also enquire after the rest of the family members by name. Remember that family members are precious.

(e) Offer prayer and a relevant Bible reading before leaving, but respect the wishes of the host if he/she does not want prayer or a reading from the Bible.

(f) Pray for the needs of the family and give thanks to God for blessings that have been received. Keep prayers short.

(g) Remember the objective of home-visiting is:

(i) To entrench those visited into the fellowship of the Church and to Jesus Himself, through whom alone we are able to come to the Father.

(ii) To find out how you can more efficiently care for them.

(iii) To seek opportunities to share the Gospel with the unsaved people you come into contact with.

(h) Understand that the visit has nothing to do with 'collecting' money, but that it has everything to do with Christ's and the Church's interest in the family and the individuals who make up the family. It is also for mutually encouraging fellowship with fellow brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. Shepherds will often be amazed at how blessed they are through their pastoral visitation programme.

(i) Understand that the object of the shepherd's visit is not to 'fill the pews' or 'swell the coffers', but to bring the love of Jesus Christ and the Gospel to the people visited. If this is the attitude with which the shepherd visits then the rest will follow.

(j) Pray before each visit: pray for each person by name, and for God's blessing on the visit. The shepherd's 'flock' should be prayed for daily.

(k) Visit each family at least ONCE EVERY TWO MONTHS.

(l) Phone each family at least ONCE EVERY TWO WEEKS. Seeing them at a church meeting or supermarket, etc, is not a substitute for the phone call.

### 3. Visiting the sick in the home or in hospital

Some DO'S to remember:

- (a) Introduce yourself if you do not know the person and give the name of the church you are from.
- (b) Ask the question. "How are you feeling this morning/this evening?" Never just say, "How are you?"
- (c) Always be friendly and smile, even if you are uncomfortable with pain and suffering. Never betray your inner feelings or a shocked expression if you find the patient looking dreadful.
- (d) If the patient is sleeping, do not awaken him/her as he/she might have had a bad night and need sleep. Say a silent prayer and leave a calling card/note to say you had visited.
- (e) Always have a Bible handy for the reading of an appropriate passage of Scripture. However, most hospitals have a Gideon Bible on hand and many patients have their own Bibles.
- (f) Be considerate to families who have first preference to the visiting hour - remember it is the only time they can see their loved ones. Include the family in your prayers at the bedside.
- (g) Offer to read an appropriate passage of Scripture and pray, but always give the sick person the option of refusing prayer and a Bible reading. Don't force these on him/her.
- (h) In a hospital situation always ask the ward sister's permission to visit if the visit is out of visiting hours. Also always thank the sister when leaving. She might not let you in next time if you don't!
- (i) Suggest that the sick person's name be put on the 'sick list' at church to enable the church family to pray corporately for his/her recovery).
- (j) Encourage the sick person, especially to glorify God in his/her time of illness.
- (k) Be sensitive to the person's suffering without being a Job's comforter, or telling the person that he/she looks awful!

(l) Be considerate and always put the 'patients' well-being before your own. Show empathy rather than 'sympathy.'

(m) Remember that visiting the sick in hospital has always been a vital part of pastoral ministry. This is the ideal opportunity to offer much-needed comfort and consolation and support, and to assure the person of the love and presence of God. If the sick person is not converted this is an opportune time to present the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Part of the shepherd's caring must be focused on the patient's needs and that of the family while the hospitalization lasts.

(n) Be natural, compassionate, and enter into the pains and insecurity of the patient without becoming too emotionally involved.

(o) Understand that even bedside visit will be different, a new experience, with new opportunities to bring love and hope into the life of a person. Be Christ centred: reflect Him through what you are and

through what you say and in your reading of the Bible and prayer time, and recognize Him in others as they recognize Him in you.

(p) Make your visit a short one, especially if the patient is tired, or has had a restless night, or feeling too ill to talk

(q) Decide beforehand what Bible passage you will most likely read to the patient.

Some DON'TS to remember:

(a) Don't easily volunteer advice because if taken and things don't work out you will be blamed for its failure. Rather encourage the person to find his/her own solution to his/her problem by leading questions that will direct him/her into 'seeing' the path to take, e.g. in a conflict situation the sort of leading question would be, "Are you sure that you are not letting your emotions cloud the issue?" or "Have you not considered that you may be wrong and are allowing a small, insignificant matter to grow out of proportion?"

(b) Don't betray any confidence as you may never be trusted again. Train your mind to listen and to forget IF NEED BE.

(c) Don't ignore threats of suicide. Sometimes people who really want to terminate their lives won't talk about their intentions; and often those who do are crying out for help. However, be careful as suicides often occur after a number of threats. Be of help by also referring them to an expert, e.g. Life-Line, etc, as well as the minister.

(d) Don't find yourself embroiled in family issues that can be amicably resolved within a family or you may get hurt.

#### 4. How to be discerning, sensitive and approachable

##### *A. Discerning*

One dictionary defines discernment as 'good judgement or insight,' and discerning as 'having or showing good judgement or insight.' Before any visit, it is recommended that you pray to the Lord for discernment and guidance during the visit. Discernment is vital when 'thorny' issues crop up and if there is a problem in the family. Remember that families, especially mothers, will defend their young (like a lioness defends her cubs) despite perhaps some deep hurt caused by an errant son or daughter. Rather than pronounce judgement be an interested listener, and allow the person to 'bounce' his/her frustration off you, giving him/her the satisfaction of airing his/her frustration (which in itself is a healing exercise); and share the love and solution of God with the family. Curtail your visit if you discern a sense of intrusion rather than 'entrench' yourself for a long visit and cup of tea! Your first visit might be your last if you ignore this advice!

##### *B. Sensitive*

(a) Be sensitive to the needs of the person you visit and don't omit to include these needs in your prayers before you leave.

(b) Prevent embarrassment in any discussion.

(c) Human nature is unpredictable and therefore be alert to mood changes during the conversation and change the topic if necessary.

##### *C. Approachable*

(a) First impressions are lasting impressions, so be friendly and approach the visit positively.

(b) Remember your host may be a little apprehensive. Therefore radiate a kindliness that will make it easier for the family to feel comfortable and for conversation to flow.

(c) You are Christ's representative, and therefore you must mirror His image when visiting. He was supremely approachable.

(d) Shake hands with your host in a friendly manner when you arrive and when you leave. Love can be communicated through a warm handshake. It is easier to communicate with a loving person than with someone who is cold and distant.

##### 5. The place of the scripture and prayer in visiting

(a) Because you are instruments of God's mercy and ambassadors for Christ Jesus, it is important that you prepare yourself for each visit by committing yourself to God's love and His guidance, praying not only for yourself but for the family to be visited.

(b) The shepherd must be a person of prayer, and one who regularly meditates upon God's Word so that he has the mind of Christ and is filled with the Scriptures and love of God for others. An unspiritual shepherd is not fit for the onerous and spiritual task of pastoral work.

(c) Always entrust yourself to: God the Father, who sends you to visit and knows you and the help you need; God the Son, who came and bought you back from sin to the service of God and the church, God the Holy Spirit, who still inspires the Church and empowers and guides the individual. A prayer of encouragement for the shepherd is: "I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

(d) Always read from the Bible and pray before leaving. If you need assistance in choosing suitable biblical passages for any visit, please get help from the minister or buy a pastoral book that provides biblical passages for all situations and problems.

## 6. Confidentiality and trustworthiness

(a) In the course of time – after several visits – you will win the love and respect and confidentiality of those persons you visit. Then they will tell you confidential things, especially their fears and hurts and other problems known only by them. When these 'secret' things come out it is imperative that you strictly maintain the confidentiality shared with you. Never betray a trust, even to your best friend. If you do you will never be asked by that person to visit again, and it may cause a loss of members/adherents from the church.

(b) The following procedure is for cases of deep spiritual need or cases that require someone with counselling training: ask the permission of the person to discuss his/her problem with the minister first and then under his (the minister's) guidance, to consult with the appropriate person(s) with a view to seeking help on the person's behalf.

(c) WHENEVER YOU ENCOUNTER A DIFFICULT OR CONFLICT OR VERY NEEDY SITUATION THAT COULD OR WILL IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH OR ON ALL OR SOME OF ITS MEMBERS/ADHERENTS, NOTIFY THE MINISTER IMMEDIATELY!

(d) The minister is to be informed by the shepherd if he is counselling any member/adherent/family of the church. Details are not necessary but accountability to and transparency with the minister is important. Usually a member/adherent with a deep-seated personal or family problem will benefit most from the minister's input, counselling and care. Team counselling (say minister and shepherd) has many advantages. This is equivalent to a general practitioner and medical specialist teaming up to diagnose the cause of an illness in one of the general practitioner's patients.

## 7. Tools for the shepherd

(a) The Bible (NIV)

(b) St James Shepherding Handbook

(c) Pastoral care cards – see Appendix

(d) Visiting cards – sec Appendix

(e) Resource list – to be obtained from the minister:

(i) Books on pastoral care and counselling (ii) Daily Bible Reading Notes (iii) Evangelism Booklets (iv) Follow up Booklets, etc.

### THE COMMITMENT OF THE SHEPHERD

1. God wants the total commitment of each shepherd to his/her ministry. And once embarked upon God wants the shepherds to give of their best in this work. Many people find it difficult to commit themselves to anything. They are tentative, indecisive and afraid of responsibility. A decisive and wholehearted commitment from the shepherd pleases God and results in peace for the individual and the family of God, the Church.

2. God calls the shepherd to commitment not comfort. He promises to be with them through the difficulties and even sufferings and hardships of pastoral care, not to spare them from them.

3. The church for its spiritual health needs shepherds, and because Christ loves the Church he raises them up in local congregations. Those God raises up therefore are to willingly serve Him in the shepherd's role. The shepherds' commitment to the shepherding programme is thus to be by choice and not by force. Within the shepherding team, led by the minister, there is to be mutual commitment and cooperation.

4. God commends a humble attitude and a steadfast trust in Him. He will therefore be particularly close to all shepherds who maintain this attitude as they minister to others

5. Shepherds are to remember 1 Pet 5:4 which comes after a stirring exhortation to elders to fulfil their ministry: 'And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.' What an incentive to be faithful shepherds!

6. Here is a verse to encourage shepherds to faithfully fulfil the pastoral ministry God has called them to: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to



do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:10). The Christian is designed for service. There can hardly be a more rewarding work than pastoral care.

## PRAYER

1. The writer of the Book of Hebrews (4:16) says, "Let us then approach the throne of Grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." What a relevant verse on prayer for shepherds!!

2. *That great 19th century preacher, Charles Spurgeon, wrote the following about prayer:* "True prayer is an approach of the soul by the Spirit of God to the throne of God. It is not the utterance of words, it is not alone the feeling of desires, but it is the advance of the desires to God, the spiritual approach of nature toward the Lord our God. True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that – it is spiritual transaction with the Creator of heaven and earth. God is a Spirit unseen of mortal eye and only to be perceived by the inner man. Our spirit within us, begotten by the Holy Spirit at our regeneration, discerns the Great Spirit, communes with Him, presents to Him its requests, and receives from Him answers of peace. True prayer is a spiritual business from beginning to end, and its aim and object end not with man but reach to God Himself." He goes on as follows: "To qualify for such prayer the work of the Holy Spirit Himself is needed. If prayer were of the lips alone, we should need only breath in our nostrils to pray. If prayer were of the desires alone, many excellent desires are easily felt, even by natural men. But when prayer is the spiritual desire and fellowship of the human spirit with the Great Spirit, the Holy Spirit Himself must be present all through it - to help our weakness and give life and power – or else true prayer will never be presented. The thing offered to God will wear the name and have the form of prayer, but the inner life will be far from it."

3. *Prayer is the main way in which we develop our relationship with our Father in Heaven – not a torrent of mechanical and mindless words but an intimate and precious conversation with our heavenly Father. When we pray it must be not to ourselves or to others, but to God. Oh how our prayers need to be focused on God – marked by a sweet fellowship with and total dependence on Him.*

4. "In every expression, petition, and argument of this prayer, we see Jesus: He and His Father are One. He has a 'Name' given to Him, which is above every name. He is the blessed and only potentate, and His Kingdom ruleth over all. He is the 'Living Bread', which came down from Heaven. He has power on earth to forgive sins. He is able to succour them that are tempted. He is the angel that redeems from all evil. The kingdom, power and glory pertain unto Him. He is the fulfillment and confirmation of all Divine promises and gracious assurances. Himself the 'Amen,' and faithful witness. Well did Tertullian term the Lord's prayer 'The Gospel Abbreviated.' The more clearly we understand the Gospel of the Grace of God, The Gospel of the Glory of Christ, the more we shall love the wonderful prayer, and glorifying in the Gospel which is the power of God and the Wisdom of God to them that believe, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable as we offer the divinely prescribed petitions and expect gracious answers (Thomas Houston)" *(taken from 'Beatitudes and The Lord's Prayer' by AW Pink.)* "PRAYING PEOPLE STAY TOGETHER - THEREFORE PRAYER IS VITAL."

5. From the Bible we learn that Jesus' life was one of constant prayer. There are numerous references to His praying (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12,18,28; 11:1). In Matthew 6:7 He says to His disciples, "When you pray", not "If you pray". So if Jesus expected His disciples to pray, don't you think that God is waiting patiently for us to communicate to Him in prayer all our needs, thanksgivings, praise, adoration and confession?

6. God does answer prayer as the Psalmist indicates in Psalm 91:15: "He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him." The shepherd needs to encourage his heart and his ministry with this amazing fact: God ANSWERS prayer and will be with him when he is hurting and with his families when they are hurting.

7. *There are hindrances to prayer. W.E Sangster says the following in his book, "Teach us to Pray":* "Many people want to pray well, but find themselves strangely hindered. The two chief hindrances are enslavement to feelings and wandering thoughts. When we pray when we feel like it, we are pleasing ourselves. We want to pray and we do pray, and our prayer is in harmony with His. But when we pray not feeling like it we bring God not only the content of our prayer but a disciplined

spirit. We have kept our appointment with Him against inclination. We have displeased ourselves in order to please Him ... low to keep your appointment with God whether you feel like it or not." *Writing about wandering thoughts, he makes the comment that even the saints were not free of this, and that a permanent emancipation from this difficulty is not to be expected on earth. One's power to remain concentrated in prayer will grow with practice and skill in outwitting the bias of the mind to roam away will increase as well. He writes, "Let us learn to be quiet within: to come to God, however brief our time in prayer, unhurried; to be still before Him, recognizing that the day has nothing more important than this intercourse with heaven."*

8. *There is so much more to be said on prayer. Here is a final quote from William Barclays' book, "The Plain Man looks at the Lord's Prayer": "Prayer is not so much an emergency appeal in need as it is a communing and unbroken conversation and fellowship with God. When a man has in his mind the holiness of God, as he prays, there must of necessity be two other things in his mind. There must be the desire to obey and to please God. Above all, in prayer a man will take all his weakness to the strength of God. A man is only too well aware of the insecurity of life, of his helplessness in the face of the chances and changes of life, of the way in which the light can suddenly turn to darkness. 'The Lord' said David the Psalmist, 'is a refuge for the oppressed, and a stronghold in times of trouble' (Psalm 9:9). "*

## CONCLUSION

St James Church, like all other churches, needs shepherds. The fact that Christians still have a fallen nature and live in a fallen world necessitates pastoral care. If we have shepherds that diligently follow the shepherding programme, great blessing will come to St James Church.

1. One of Charles Wesley's hymns has the following verse in it to encourage us to launch the shepherds' programme with much expectation: "Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees. And looks to that alone; Laughs at impossibilities. And cries it shall be done."

2. The success of the shepherding programme will depend on each individual shepherd taking his or her God-given responsibility seriously, and faithfully fulfilling the work of an under-shepherd and ambassador of Christ and instrument of God's mercy.

3. The Book of Acts could be written because the disciples took seriously the injunction in Matthew 28:19-20 to "Go therefore ..." In modern parlance the command was to 'get cracking' which they did in the power of the Holy Spirit. And similarly the success of the shepherding programme will depend on the shepherds' enthusiasm to launch it and keep it going through the power of the Spirit.

4. A church that offers effective pastoral care for all its members will be a happy church, a united church, a healthy church, a contented church, a strong church, and a GROWING church.

Yes, the programme will certainly benefit the church:

- a) The great privilege of the child of God is relationship; God's great responsibility is growth. The shepherding programme will see to it that relationships with God and fellow members are enhanced, nurtured, protected and enriched. God will bring the growth.
- b) From such relationships will flow a deeper level of love for our Lord and each other, resulting in significant spiritual growth, vitality and holiness of life.
- c) The life of the church will be transformed, friendships will be forged and strengthened, there will be a sense of belonging, and Jesus Christ will become a reality in a way never experienced before by shepherds and those members under their pastoral care.
- d) Church attendance will grow as news gets out that St James offers a quality of pastoral care not experienced in the other churches. The worship will be marked by thankfulness to God and stirring praise to a Saviour who cares for his children through His under-shepherds. There will be greater unity which will strengthen the corporate worship.

and vision of the church. God's Word will be listened to more enthusiastically and more readily heeded.

e) In short, GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED!!

## 1. PASTORAL CARE CARD

(a) Each shepherd will receive a set of two Pastoral Care Cards for each family/person under his/her care - one for the office and one for the shepherd.

(b) The basic data as per the Church records will be inserted on the office copy.

(c) The shepherd is to please add information to his/her personal Pastoral Care Card during the early contact with the family.

(d) The additional information is to be recorded on the office copy which is then to be given to the minister on Sunday or even sooner if possible.

(e) It is recommended that information be added to the Pastoral Care Card on an ongoing basis to assist the shepherd in his/her communication with the family.

(f) Details of all follow-up (visits and telephone calls) and needs must be communicated to the minister (see the Visiting Card).

**CONFIDENTIALITY MUST BE GUARANTEED! ONLY THE MINISTER AND THE SHEPHERDS ARE TO SEE THE PASTORAL CARE CARDS AND VISITING CARDS!!**

## 2. THE VISITING CARD

(a) The shepherd is to please fill in a Visiting Card after each visit or contact with a family and to GIVE A COPY TO THE MINISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE – PREFERABLY THE NEXT SUNDAY.

(b) The purpose of the Visiting Card is to maintain records and to facilitate routine communication between the shepherds and the minister.

(c) In the event of an emergency, direct contact with the minister is recommended.

<b>PASTORAL CARE CARD – ST JAMES COMMUNITY CHURCH</b>		
PASTORAL CARE CARD (OFFICE)		
SURNAME:		Home phone:
MAN'S/HUSBAND'S FIRST NAME:		Cell number:
Man's/husband's date of birth:		
Man's/husband's occupation:		Business phone:
WOMAN'S/WIFE'S FIRST NAME:		Cell number:
Woman's/wife's date of birth:		
Woman's/wife's occupation:		Business phone:
CHILDREN'S NAMES	Date of birth	School/grades/comment
OTHER INFORMATION (e.g. pets; hobbies; church involvement; sport, etc)		

**VISITING CARD (Report Back Card) - St James Community Church**

NAME OF PASTORAL CARE-GIVER (SHEPHERD): \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF VISIT/PHONE-CALL: \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT: \_\_\_\_\_

NEEDS/REQUESTS:	YES/NO	COMMENT:
Request for prayer-chain		
Needs a visit from the minister		
Needs special care/support		
Other:		

NATURE OF VISIT	YES/NO	COMMENT
SICK VISIT (home/hospital)		
DISCIPLING		
FOLLOW-UP AFTER CONVERSION		
GOSPEL PRESENTATION		
OTHER		
OTHER		



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