Caribbean Theology as Public Theology:
The Caribbean Taking Theological Responsibility for Itself

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Abstract

The thesis that Caribbean Theology is Public Theology is an articulation of the praxis of seeking to build a just and responsible society. It surveys the historical and contemporary context of the Caribbean and defines its struggle against inequality and the distortion of identity. This history of the Caribbean is a history of the resistance by the people of the Caribbean against inequality and notions of their inferiority. Caribbean Theology is founded on this emancipatory imagination of the people and this spirit of resistance.

The liberation biblical hermeneutic reading strategy of Caribbean Theology is a reader response approach which comes to the text from the world in front of the text. The Legion narrative in Mark Chapter Five is offered as an example of this reading strategy. The narrative is used as lenses to reflect upon the problem of self-mutilating violence in the Caribbean. It argues that the high incident of violence is the result of the interiorization of oppression and therefore the distortion of identity. The narrative is also an analogy of Caribbean reality in the ways in which recalcitrant forces collude in order to seek to re-entrench patterns of inequality and oppression.

Caribbean Theology began as a self-conscious movement in response to the call for justice and liberation, to pursue Caribbean identity and to conscientize. It is also alert to the fact that the struggle for Caribbean selfhood contends with reactionary forces that are determined to reverse historical gains. These forces are aided and abetted by idolatry. Caribbean Theology must therefore pursue the triple tasks of exorcism, iconoclasm and holism through the congregational life and prophetic witness of the Church in the public square.
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Introduction

This thesis asserts that Caribbean Theology is public theology. Both “Caribbean” and “Theology” are contested ideas. The thesis clarifies what is meant by Caribbean and articulates the basis for contextual/emancipatory theologies such as Caribbean Theology. Caribbean Theology is concerned not so much with “thinking” but with “doing”. It asserts that Caribbean Theology existed in an antecedent form in the history of resistance by the oppressed people of the Caribbean. This resistance by a people who rejected enslavement and notions of their inferiority is both the foundation and the impetus for a theology of the public square.

A Caribbean Public Theology is one that seeks to place the Gospel of Christ at the cross roads of human experience. It seeks the welfare of the “city” rather than the welfare of the Church. It often takes the world’s agenda, or parts of it, as its own in seeking to restrain the influence of evil and to curb violence in building a just and responsible society. A Caribbean Public Theology is important for the following reasons: First is it an appropriate response to legacy of inequality, distortion of identity within Caribbean society. Secondly, it builds upon the foundation of the history of resistance that has marked the Caribbean people in an environment where there is a deficit of justice. Thirdly, it offers a counter-narrative both to missionary theology and to the more recent brand of American evangelicalism, which promote a theology which is pro-status quo and more inward looking. Fourthly, it takes account of the criticism made against liberation theologies, that there is the absence of a historical project. A Caribbean Public Theology
arises out of the praxis of seeking to shape the Caribbean for all its citizens at home and abroad and as a community that approximates the ideals of justice and peace.

Although I am dealing with the Caribbean as a whole, Jamaica will be my main focus as it is my home and it is also the supply centre for much of the region. Use will be made of narratives and data from the wider Caribbean, however, the primary context reflected upon will be the Jamaican context. Every attempt will be made to make use of circumstances which typify the social, historical, cultural and economic situation of the Caribbean as a whole.

The methodology utilized by Caribbean Theology includes setting out the relationship between text and experience, making use of cultural studies, among other multi-disciplinary sources, as analytical tools and making the case for its liberation/biblical resistant hermeneutics. Caribbean Theology, like other forms of liberation theologies, African Theology and also Protestant Theology and Roman Catholic Theology, use the Bible is the primary source of theology. This means a privileging of its reading strategy.

The reading strategy utilized by Caribbean Theology is one in which the Scripture is interpreted from the world in front of the text. It also provides a dialectic which reinforces the idea of Caribbean Theology as public theology. The locus theologicus of Caribbean Theology is the Caribbean itself, its origin, its history and its struggle for justice, equality and identity.

Caribbean societies were spawned in violence. When the Europeans first came to the Caribbean, the clash of civilizations resulted in the decimation of
the indigenous peoples, the Ciboney, Tainos and Kalinago (Caribs). The violence of conquest was succeeded by even greater violence in colonization and misrule. Both chattel slavery of the African people and indentureship have ended, but the deep wounds have remained open sores. The landless masses that fled to the hillsides after Emancipation have yet to benefit from more equitable distribution of land. The urban ghettos and the unorganized settlement schemes have facilitated increase incidents of violence and homicides. There is a disfigurement if not self-mutilation of Caribbean persona through violence and insecurity that have become entrenched.

The inheritance of inequality and deficits from the colonial past and from the plantation economy describe the Caribbean without becoming the whole story of the Caribbean. The failure of the programme of self-government and political independence to pursue, without deviation, economic development and economic independence is true enough. The fact that the Caribbean has failed to become a stakeholder society and its systems of governance have resisted attempts at empowering the people instead of merely seeking to prevent them from protesting is a flaw but it is not irreversible.

The Caribbean political experience over the last five decades appears to have been one in which confidence in the idea that Caribbean people can be fully and totally responsible to captain their ships and become the masters of their destiny has been in short supply. The institutional arrangements left behind by those who had been their masters have remained intact. Competitive party politics rather than providing checks and balance on the
exercise of political power have been something of a poisoned chalice inhibiting serious economic and social development.

The difficulties of the modern Caribbean are not entirely of its own making. The Caribbean exists in the periphery of the metropoles in the North Atlantic. From origin to globalization, the Caribbean has not been allowed to make decisions in the best interest of the people of the Caribbean without interference from others. Indeed, sections of the Caribbean are still carved up into various language groups and remain in the control of various nations in the North Atlantic. There are islands in the Caribbean which are departments and protectorates of the Countries in Europe. European hegemony without ending has been succeeded by pretensions at “empire” by the United States of America. There are U.S. Virgin Islands and British Virgin Islands, Dutch Antilles as well as Martinique and Guadeloupe which are departments of France. In addition, the Caribbean is an open society which is constantly penetrated both culturally, politically, economically. Along with all of this and perhaps because of all of this, there are significant interests within the Caribbean that identify more readily with interests in the North Atlantic than with the Caribbean. As such, the Caribbean is at odds with itself. The history of inequality has produced a crisis of identity.

The story of the Caribbean has not ended; it is a work in progress. The people of the Caribbean, its artistes, prophets, sages, academics, public servants, religious intermediaries and grass roots people are its reason for optimism. There are stop-starts in the attempts at regional integration and the development of regional institutions, but the intention to continue in that
direction is clearly there. The Caribbean survives to defy its history and its vulnerability to natural and economic shocks. It excels to exceed its geography, economy and demography. The over-performance by citizens of the Caribbean within the region and in far flung places all over the globe is a sign of hope. The tendency to violence is not proof of inherited character flaw in Caribbean peoples. It is a symptom of deeper causation to be identified and countered. To the enormous credit of the people of the region, the restlessness and the will to protest that made slavery too expensive to be maintained, have still continued in the search for solution and resolution.

Caribbean political and academic leadership is aware of the impediments to sustained economic development in the region. However, even in the post-colonial period, the social and economic arrangements have been less than adequate to overcome the legacy of persistent poverty bequeathed by plantation system and plantation economy. Political independence has taken an incrementalist approach to changing the social and political realities of the newly independent nations. More appears to have been done to keep in place the inherited power arrangements than to enfranchise the masses of recently emancipated and freshly independent nations. Addressing the landlessness of the masses of those who had been enslaved should have been a priority, but the development of the supreme law, their constitutions, appears to tie the hands of governments by deeply entrenching right to private property in the constitution. Attempts at repatriating Caribbean sovereignty and ending judicial surveillance from London have been resisted from within and thwarted from without.
The Caribbean, which is largely (exception of Guyana, Belize and Suriname) a chain of islands on the trans-Atlantic shipping route, has remained vulnerable to natural disaster made only worst by the advent of climate change. The vulnerability to environmental catastrophe is exceeded by incidents of self-mutilating violence. The Caribbean has a rate of homicide 30/100,000 greater than any other region in the world. This is not unrelate to the failure to fundamentally address inherited inequity and to misrule. In places like Jamaica with a rate of 60/100,000, the problem is even more acute. Social scientists have cogitated on this matter, but precise analysis let alone solid counter measures have proven elusive.

Theology has a duty not merely to speak from a lofty perch but to engage the search for answers. This project is one such contribution of theology in quest for solution and resolution.

The quest for solution and resolution has made it clear to me that the problem of the Caribbean is the problem of identity. I assert four reasons for this Caribbean crisis of identity. They are as follows: First, problems of identity are bound up with the learned, entrenched and reinforced self doubt of the people of African descent. Second, Caribbean identity is problematized by creolization. The present Caribbean population is made up of people from Africa, Europe, China, Asia and the Middle East. Third, Caribbean identity is further problematized by persistent poverty. The structure of the Caribbean economy has remained substantially unchanged despite the social political and economic experiments of self-government and political independence. Fourth, the Caribbean has needed to find an identity in the “shadow of empire.” The Caribbean is a region in the periphery and this has come to define it as a
place of conformists, consumers, customers, clients and sometimes clones of the goods and ethos, people and paradigms of the metropolitan centre. Caribbean identity is not thought to be clear cut, with a narrative of its own. Its worth and value is in the degree to which it approximates what is at the centre.

Caribbean Theology therefore seeks to respond to this interiorization of oppression which has led to the distortion of identity. It also seeks to be part of the process of Caribbean self-determination by taking responsibility for itself theologically. The methodology of Caribbean Theology is developed around its liberation biblical resistant hermeneutics and its use of cultural studies as an analytical tool.

Caribbean Theology has developed around the following themes: first, there is the theme of Resistance against injustice, idolatry and seductive snares in faithfulness to God. Second, it has developed around the idea of God as Father Son and Holy Spirit and Lord of history. Third, Caribbean Christology has emerged around the idea of Jesus incarnate in the poor, embodying the love of God, vanquishing the powers through His cross and saving by His blood and His Resurrection. Fourth, the Caribbean idea of the Church is as the basic ecclesial community, a servant and a prophetic community.

Six chapters follow. Chapter One sets out the nature of theology and makes a case for contextual theology. In Chapter Two, I give an account of the Caribbean context from historical and contemporary perspectives. I argue that the Caribbean emerged out of a history of resistance and the period of self-government has failed to advance the agenda of justice freedom and equality. Chapter Three discusses the problem of identity and raises two methodological issues. The issue of the use of
multi-disciplinary sources, especially cultural studies is highlighted. It also discusses the interaction between praxis and text and seeks to develop a Caribbean liberation hermeneutics. Chapter Four uses the Legion narrative in Mark Chapter Five as lenses to reflect upon the Caribbean. This provides an opportunity to interact with the issues of the distortion of identity which manifests itself in self-mutilating violence. It also affords an opportunity to look at the recalcitrant nature of the forces against which we struggle for human liberation and wholeness. Chapter Five reviews important developments in Caribbean Theology including watershed events and more recent events that have proven symbolic and catalytic at one and the same time. Major contributors to Caribbean Theology are highlighted. The discussion closes with the retreat of Caribbean Theology over the last three decades and calls attention to the problem of idolatry. Chapter Six summarizes core tenets of Caribbean Theology and lists three priorities for Caribbean Theology as Public Theology. These priorities relate to the challenge of the historical project of building a just and responsible society in the Caribbean.
Chapter One

Caribbean Theology in Context

The nature of theology

Christian theology emerged at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century of the Christian Era in a largely Hellenistic milieu. It rested on universalistic assumptions shared by both Hebrew and Greek thought. When Aristotle said ‘humans are political animals’ he meant all humans, although he considered that slaves were not truly human.\(^1\) Similarly when Paul said “all have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom 3.23) he meant all human beings in any culture.

Secondly, the overcoming of gender, class and race distinctions was at the heart of early Christian self understanding. Thus Paul says, “In Christ there is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female” (Gal 3.28). This denied that cultural or racial distinctions were fundamental. Later, Christians took their universalism from these two roots. One of the great teachers of Western theology, Augustine, simply assumes that he speaks for all humans when he defines theology as *de divinate ratio sive sermo* (reasoning or words concerning God).\(^2\) Drawing on the same kind of Platonic

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\(^2\) Saint Augustine, *City of God*, 8.1Tr H. Bettenson Harmondsworth: Penguin 1984 298 Similarly universal assumptions are implied throughout, for example in the famous words of the Confessions: Where then did I find you to be able to learn of you? You were not already in my memory before I learnt of you. Where then did I find you so that I could learn of you if not in the fact that you transcend me? There is no place...Late have I loved you, beauty so old and new. And see, you were within and I was in the external world and sought you there... You called and cried out aloud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace, which is yours (*Confessions* 10.37-8). Augustine assumes, and Christians have generally agreed, that he speaks for all believers here.
inspiration, Anselm classically defined theology as *fides quarens intellectum*, “faith seeking understanding.” In the Monologium, Anselm makes clear that the faith in question is not simply a matter of intellect but works through love and involves a fundamental commitment to justice.

For Aquinas, theology is a practical science which begins with revelation. “All the same”, he says, “it is more theoretical than practical, since it is mainly concerned with the divine things which are, rather than with things men do; it deals with human acts only in so far as they prepare men for that achieved knowledge of God on which their eternal bliss reposes”.

Luther, by contrast, insisted that “suffering, dying and being damned make a theologian not reading, thinking and speculating.” Despite that emphasis, a new form of scholasticism characterized Protestant theology within a century of his death.

The first real break in accounts of theology comes with Schleiermacher at the beginning of the 19th Century. He calls doctrines “accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech”. The Redeemer communicates his religious self-consciousness through speech and this quickly takes three different forms, of which

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3 Anselm Proslogion Preface Anselm: *Basic Writings* (La Salle: Open Court 1962) 2
4 Anselm Monologium, *Basic Writings*, 72, 141
5 Aquinas *Summa Theologica* 1a 1.4 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode 1964) 17
6 M. Luther *Complete Works* (Weimar 1883)- vol 5 *Op in Psalm*, 163
doctrine is the “descriptively didactic” type.\(^7\) Theology is “logically ordered reflection upon the immediate utterances of the religious self-consciousness.”\(^8\)

At the beginning of the 20th Century Karl Barth reacted to that account of theology. Scripture, the Word of God, lies at the heart of theology, and theological science is disciplined reflection on that.\(^9\) Barth argues that it is called “science” because like all other sciences, it is a human concern with a definite object of knowledge. It also treads a definite and self-consistent path of knowledge for which it must give account to itself and to others.\(^10\)

Paul Tillich agrees with Barth that theology is the function of the Christian Church and suggests that it moves back and forth between two poles, “the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received.”\(^11\) Tillich accuses both European theological orthodoxy and American fundamentalism of confusing eternal truth with a temporal expression of this truth. For Tillich, the “situation” to which theology responds is “the scientific and artistic, the economic, political, and ethical forms in which they express their interpretation of ‘existence’, the totality of man’s creative self-interpretation in a special period”.\(^12\) He argues that fundamentalism and orthodoxy reject this task, and in so doing, miss the

\(^7\) F.D.E. Schleiermacher \textit{The Christian Faith} Para 15 tr H.R. Mackintosh (Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1928) 77/8
\(^8\) Schleiermacher, 81
\(^9\) K. Barth \textit{Church Dogmatics} 1/1 The Doctrine of the Word of God, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975) 3, 4
\(^10\) Barth, 8
\(^12\) Tillich, 4
meaning of theology. Tillich emphasizes the notion of correspondence or correlation to reality as the watermark of what counts as theology.

As Gustavo Gutierrez points out, theology has undergone many transformations throughout the history of the Church. This is as it should be because theology is the product of the church reflecting and criticizing itself in the world and is therefore dependent upon the historical development of the Church. Theology has fulfilled different functions throughout the history of the Christian community, “but this does not necessarily mean that any of these different approaches has today been definitively superseded”. Gutierrez believes that theology has two permanent tasks which he defines as spirituality and rational knowledge. He divides the history of classical theology into these two tasks: he calls the first task wisdom, which is essentially meditation on the Bible geared towards spiritual growth, and the second rational knowledge which he sees as a meeting between faith and reason or faith and philosophy in general. In this way theology defines itself as a science. Though Gutierrez accepts the scientific nature of theology as a source of rational knowledge, he nevertheless holds the view that a rough outline of theology is present in every Christian community and in all believers.

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13 Tillich, 4
15 Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 4,5
16 Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 3

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Gutierrez shares the view that “the very life of the Church” is the locus theologicus.\textsuperscript{17} However, it is to him that the epistemological break is to be attributed. He has led the way in the development of a theology not so much of “thinking” but of “doing.” He says that the function of theology as critical reflection on praxis has gradually become more clearly defined in recent years, though it has its roots in the first centuries of the Church’s life.\textsuperscript{18} This historical praxis in the first place is based on charity which Gutierrez sees as the centre of the Christian life. He argues that the Biblical view of faith is an act of trust, “a going out of one’s self, a commitment to God and neighbour, a relationship with others.”\textsuperscript{19} This is the foundation of the praxis of the Christian and his or her active role in history. Secondly, this historical praxis resides in the strengthening of the process of the spirituality of the laity.\textsuperscript{20} Thirdly, it is the product of a greater sensitivity to the anthropological aspects of revelation. He argues that the fourth factor is a philosophical one, which is the importance of human action as the point of departure for all reflection. Fifthly, this historical praxis is influenced by Marxist thought geared to the transformation of the world.\textsuperscript{21} This is theology’s eschatological dimension.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{17} Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 8
\textsuperscript{18} He attributes this to the work of St Augustine in The City of God, which he says is based on a true analysis of the signs of the times and demands with which they challenge the Christian community. 6
\textsuperscript{19} Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 6
\textsuperscript{20} This strengthening of the spirituality of the laity has led to the reliance on the basic ecclesial communities as the place of theological reflection and engagement. This has democratized theology and broken its dependence on experts. It has simultaneously made the bible once again the book of the people and renewed the place of theology in the community.
\textsuperscript{21} Caribbean Theology belongs to the family of liberation theologies but does not depend on Marxist analysis in the same way as its Latin American counterpart. The class divide is not as rigid, though there is a significant and increasing gap between the rich and the poor. Poverty is an issue but the class divide does not factor in the same way.
\textsuperscript{22} Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 6-10
Thus, whilst for Barth theology is reflection on Scripture, for Gutierrez it is first and foremost critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word of God. This does not replace the critical task of wisdom and rational knowledge but is built upon them. It penetrates the present reality and identifies what is driving history toward the future. It retrieves the historical praxis of liberation as the instrument of the future that is believed in and hoped for. As Gutierrez asserts, this does not mean doing theology from an armchair; “rather it means sinking roots where the pulse of history is beating at this moment and illuminating history with the Word of the Lord of history, who irreversibly committed himself to the present moment of mankind to carry it to its fulfillment.” The goal of this theology is the transformation of the world. It is marked by openness, protest against the trampling of human dignity, struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, liberating love, and concretely seeks to build a new, just and fraternal society as a gift of the Kingdom of God.

Gutierrez’ contribution has been path-breaking. It has opened a new way of doing theology. This is especially so because it coincided with the emergence of the ferment of the struggle for identity, equity and equality in post colonial societies. These contextual theologies are marked by the following three features: they are grassroots or lay theologies; they are theologies of engagement and reflection upon engagements with the struggle for justice and liberation or transformation; and, they are marked by attention to context. I turn now to a consideration of these theologies.

23 Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 15
24 Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 15
25 Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 15
Theology in context

Universalist theology has one great strength: it cannot become the theology of one particular group. In being addressed to all humans, and building on Galatians 3.28, it refuses to be the theology of one race, one class or one gender. Thus, it can be used against any form of apartheid. However, it also has great weaknesses, both methodological and substantial.

In *The German Ideology*, written in 1845 but not published for nearly a century, Marx pointed out that human beings “developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with their actual world, also their thinking and the products of their thinking. As Marx states, “It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness”. This last sentence is the foundation stone of the sociology of knowledge. In the 20th Century it has become accepted that all knowledge is socially situated, and that there is no “view from nowhere”. The universalist way of speaking assumed that context was not important. It is an axiom of contemporary study, however, that texts need to be understood in their context because only then can we understand the condition which gave rise to particular ideas.

Additionally, in practice universalist theology was often made to speak for one particular group. In particular it often failed to reckon with the realities of poverty and oppression. So Alfred T. Hennelly, for example, complains that most European and North American theology “continues to choose to produce topics that painstakingly

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26 K. Marx *The German Ideology* in K. Marx and F Engels Collected Works (Moscow: Progress 1976) 37
support the *status quo* of the church and state, that are carefully chosen to ensure tenure and promotion, and that succeed in keeping good Christians in the first world tranquilized and pacified, despite the screams from all over the globe". 27 In the Caribbean, the theology of missionaries who formed and retained the leadership of the majority of Christian denominations, even up to recent decades, and the theology taught in seminaries and Bible colleges to the indigenous leaders, managed to avoid any articulated response to or analysis of the overwhelming realities with which the broad mass of the people contend in their daily lives. Is the claim to universalism therefore a snare and delusion?

Itumeleng J Mosala claims that a black liberation theology cannot, at the same time, be universal:

> If the Word of God transcends boundaries of culture, class, race, sex and so forth, how can there be a theology that is concerned primarily with the issues of a particular race? Conversely, if black people are correct when they claim that in their struggle for liberation Jesus is on their side, how can the same Jesus remain the supreme universal disclosure of the Word of God? 28

For him, "the insistence on the Bible as the Word of God must be seen as an ideological manoeuvre whereby ruling class interests evident in the Bible are converted into a faith that transcends social, political, racial, sexual and economic divisions." 29

Hermeneutics based on the idea of the Bible as the Word of God uses the weapon of


29 Mosala, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa”, 55
the oppressor in the fight against oppression and is “part of bourgeois ideology”. It is pro-humanity but anti-black-working-class and anti-black-women.

Mosala’s critique is, in my view, overstated. His position has been anticipated by the hermeneutics of suspicion and the hermeneutics of retrieval and he has not recognized the extent to which all Christian theologies will have a measure of continuity between themselves and other Christian theologies including those in reaction against which these theologies have developed in the first place. The continuity between Black Theology and so called White Theology ought not therefore to be a fatal criticism against the Black Theology project. Contextual/emancipatory theologies have, at one and the same to time, to resist the charge of ethnocentrism, particularism or insularity and to speak a liberative word to a particular group (Blacks, Women, Dalits etc).

T. J. Gorringe argues that the universal and the particular are basically complementary, that each particular culture makes its contribution to the universal whole. For him, it is the doctrine of the incarnation that affirms both the universal and the particular in a non-alienating way. Shoki Coe shares the view of the primacy of the incarnation. He also suggests that while “contextualized theology could become ‘chameleon theology,’ changing its colour according to its context, true

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30 Mosala, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa,” 55
31 Mosala, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa.” 56
33 Gorringe, “Liberation Ethics”, 101
catholicity need not mean ‘colourless uniformity’\textsuperscript{34} It ought to be rather a manifold and diverse theology which responds to a different context, just as the Incarnate Word did on our behalf, once for all.\textsuperscript{35} In summing up the Gospel that we proclaim, Gorringe concludes that the self-revelation of Godself requires meaning that is both universal and transcendent and able to critique all human cultures. He says:

If it cannot do that, it is not clear that we have a revelation. The claim to revelation marks a limit to cultural relativism because ultimate truth relativizes all cultures, and because the destiny of all cultures is in God. If God exists then the truth of God has to be capable of being conceived beyond and through all cultural systems if it is to amount to anything more than ethnocentrism.\textsuperscript{36}

He then goes on to list what he regards as five key elements of the gospel: justice between races, classes, and between men and women, and also the fulfillment of fundamental human needs; salvation from sin, evil, suffering and death; contest with the principalities and powers (understood as Walter Wink proposes); solidarity in the face of suffering; and the gospel of resurrection which is the promise of meaning and purpose, as well as of reconciliation for all people.\textsuperscript{37} He sums it all up by saying that total liberation is shalom, release from injustice, oppression, and poverty, but also and only through release from inner compulsions, patterns of violence, patterns of domination and ultimately death.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35} Coe, “Contextualization as the Way Toward Reform,”
\textsuperscript{36} Gorringe, “Liberation Ethics”, 210
\textsuperscript{37} Gorringe, “Liberation Ethics”, 213
\textsuperscript{38} Gorringe, “Liberation Ethics”, 213
Now liberation theologies, including Caribbean Theology, do not reject the core of the gospel, but they do reject the idea that what has been received from the missionaries and taught in the academy is universal theology. They reject the claim that theological reflection about God from one people grappling with their own realities, can speak for all peoples whose realities they have never taken fully into account. The Caribbean theologian William Watty reminds us that all theology, including Western theology, is contextual, parochial and historically conditioned and that Western theology has by-passed and overlooked significant corners of the universe including the continents of Africa, Asia, South America and the areas washed by the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. He asks ironically whether these corners of the universe are so irrelevant and inconsequential that it is possible for theology to establish a claim of universality while at the same time overlooking and by-passing them.\textsuperscript{39}

If we want a universal theology I would argue that we should think in terms of a harmony of voices drawn from the community of faith in various cultures and socio-historical circumstances across the globe. Universal theology in that sense would be more a prism through which many different cultural expressions of the gospel mutually correct one another or complement one another, a harmony of voices reflecting upon the lived experiences and the cultural self-understanding from various places in global community in the light of the scriptures. Such a theology would need to be prophetic; that is to say it would allow itself to stand over against the cultures

\textsuperscript{39} William Watty \textit{From Shore to Shore: Soundings in Caribbean Theology}. (Kingston, Jamaica: [s.n.], 1981) 11
out of which it has arisen as a critique of that culture. It would reflect on the nature and character of the God as revealed in Jesus Christ. A truly universal theology would have to retreat from the boundary maintenance approach that has, in my experience, characterised missionary theology.\textsuperscript{40} In particular, liberation theology insists that theology must listen to the poor and victimized. The periphery, the margins, the so-called particular is the end of the universal. Thus, in the Judaico-Christian story Abraham is one person, but the vehicle of God’s self-disclosure; the same is true of Jesus of Nazareth. God is revealed in the particular. As we seek to understand revelation, it is necessary to attend to the particular. Theology is the reflection upon God in a given context and a given culture. Because we share humanity, what we say about God need not be diametrically opposed or different from one culture to another. Rather, differently located and situated theologies must be understood as mutually enriching.

My account of contextual theology draws on what has been called “public theology”. Public theology invites the Christian faith and theological reflection to the cross roads of human existence in the public square and the public domain. Duncan Forrester argues that Public Theology seeks the welfare of the city rather than the interests of the church. Public theology “often takes ‘the world’s agenda’, or parts of

\textsuperscript{40} Allusion will be made in subsequent discussions to the requirements for ordination. One such requirement among American Evangelical groups has to do with the doctrine of Inerrancy. This particular tenet which has been made an axiom of faith reflects the concern of a particular set of people in a particular place for reasons peculiar to them. Those issues would not necessarily concern person who live in the midst of contradiction and contradictoriness but understand the authenticity, reliability and veracity of the Word of God in what it affirms. However, failure to confess this doctrine in keeping with creeds that originate elsewhere can be a cause for the denial of ordination. A similar point may be made in respect of the ordination of women, which is only now emerging as an option exercised by some churches, even though the Caribbean has been long accustomed to matrifocal leadership in its folk culture.
it, as its own agenda, and seeks to offer distinctive and constructive insights from the treasury of faith to help in the building of a decent society, the restraint of evil, the curbing of violence, nation-building, and reconciliation in the public arena."41 It seeks to deploy theology into public debate rather than a vague and optimistic idealism that tends to disintegrate in the face of radical evil.42 This deploying of theology into the public debate is in quest for a better earthly future. It acknowledges that sections of the church regard such a quest as impious and promise a day of judgment. However as Dietrich Bonhoeffer has observed, "it may be that the day of judgment will dawn tomorrow; in that case we shall gladly stop working for a better future; but not before."43

**Caribbean Theology**

William Watty argues that no other area of the colonized world has had as prolonged an experience or experienced the brutality of the impact of colonization in so naked a form as the Caribbean. He writes, "In no other area has the marriage between theology and colonial domination been closer, more obvious or more pervasive."44 Hitherto, Caribbean Theology has always been understood through other paradigms: as a reascent social Gospel, but without the ideological strength of the original; as a form of liberation theology, but without the political passion and analytical skills of the real thing; as a form of contextual theology which is, in fact, no

42 Forrester, “The Scope of Public Theology,” 2
44 William Watty *From Shore to Shore, Soundings in Caribbean Theology* (Kingston Jamaica: n.p. 1981), 4

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more than local adaptation of the right of centre theological outlook from the North, particularly the U.S.A. In this thesis I wish to challenge such a characterisation, and to propose a constructive alternative.

The theology I wish to articulate is Pastoral, Prophetic, and Ethical, shaped and influenced by local realities. It is built upon an ancestral indigenous faith response to oppression. It is politically aware, takes account of global realities, and hermeneutically alert. Caribbean Theology is contextual and in this respect it is a narrative theology because it is articulated in response to the lived experience of the people. It is the considered attempt to engage with the Caribbean context in the light of the word of God and the praxis of the creation of just and responsible societies in the Caribbean region. There is a degree to which the process of indigenization, which is both the training of indigenous religious leadership for all three church and missionary groups, and the adaptation of their liturgy to Caribbean culture are to be attributed to this process of the creation of a Caribbean Theology. (Training was provided for these groups which included; the establishment churches that catered primarily to the owning class and their heirs and successors, the nonconformist churches that were instrumental in the empowerment and liberation of the masses and the churches that were spawned by the American missionary movement.)\textsuperscript{45} At the same time, this process of indigenization and resultant emerging Caribbean Theology has to be positioned over against the background of the expansion of the evangelical/Pentecostal/fundamentalist influence among the churches in the region. Although substantial parts of the membership of the churches in the Caribbean are led

\textsuperscript{45} More will be said about this in chapter four.
by nationals, and though preaching and testifying and thinking about God have been
taking place among them, that does not necessarily constitute a theology that is
Caribbean or a Caribbean Theology. The preaching and thinking about God in these
churches do not take into account, except anecdotally, the matters that are part of the
lived experience within the Caribbean context. Moreover, the growth of these
churches has had a stultifying effect upon Caribbean Theology. This has resulted in
an effective retreat into the private world of the Church and disengagement from the
ongoing struggle for selfhood and the building of just and responsible societies in the
Caribbean. This has been especially so over the last three decades since the 1980s.

The *locus theologicus* of Caribbean Theology is the Caribbean itself, its origin,
its history and its struggle for justice, equality and identity. In the *Sitz im Leben* of the
Caribbean, the political class and structure are only one of the sources of life
distorting and life diminishing realities. The planter class and their heirs and
successors among the merchant class, as well as private capital in general have not
acted in the interest of the masses of the people. To make matters worse, private
capital has disproportionately benefitted from the access to land, various incentives
from the State and the publicly demonstrated ethos of state protection often at the
expense of the broad mass of the people. In addition, there is the role of transnational
corporation, and multilateral agencies and the conditionalities they impose, much of
which has served to distort and diminish life for more and more of the broad mass of
the people.

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46 It has been caricatured as Coca Cola theology: the bottling is done in the region but the
ingredients and formula are from elsewhere.
To the end of creating a just and responsible society in the region, Caribbean Theology seeks to respond to the double call of Scripture and its historical legacy. The Caribbean has been built on the spirit of resistance of the under-classes whose humanity, prompted by emancipatory imagination, protested enslavement and rebelled against it. This emancipatory imagination retrieved from their readings of Scripture the themes of liberation and justice in pursuit of equality. Therefore, both in its antecedent form and as a self-conscious movement, Caribbean Theology has responded to this call. The ecumenical meeting in Chaguaramas Trinidad in 1971 which spawned the Caribbean theology movement identified the call as threefold. It was a call to pursue Caribbean identity, to seek justice and liberation and to conscientization.

I now turn to an account of the Caribbean in historical and contextual context. The history and circumstances of the Caribbean are an important point of departure for Caribbean theological reflection.
Chapter Two

The Caribbean Context

Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

Having established in the previous chapter that theology needs to be contextual, and since my project is a repristination of Caribbean theology, in this chapter I will give a brief account of the Caribbean context in two sets of perspectives, historical and contemporary. I begin, however, with some remarks on the meaning of the term ‘Caribbean’.

The Meaning of the term ‘Caribbean’

a. Origin

William Watty observes that the so-called discovery of the Caribbean by Christopher Columbus was as much the result of the favourable North East trade winds as anything else. By the time land was sighted in the Caribbean Columbus had survived a near mutiny by his desperate and superstitious sailors. Land was sighted only three days after he had negotiated a compromise with his mutinous men. On October 12 1492,

[T]he man on the look–out cries, ‘Tierra! Tierra!’ Land is sighted and at dawn the European makes his first landing in the Caribbean. With tears running down his cheeks Columbus plants the Christian standard on the beach, kisses the ground, sings the Te Deum with his men and promptly proceeds to rename the island San Salvador.¹

¹ Watty, From Shore to Shore, 11, 12

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Columbus mistook Cuba for Japan and the Bahamas for the islands off the Asian coast. According to Watty, "(...)he name West Indies survives to remind that the first contact of Europe with this part of the world was a sheer accident."  

According to historians, when the invaders from Europe came they found simple people living in relative harmony on the island chain and mainland washed by the Caribbean Sea. Johannes Meier provides this description of the indigenous Caribbean population:

The indios or indigenous people, as they were referred to by the Europeans, belonged to different nations and had achieved different levels of cultural awareness. The Caribbean islands, the first region colonized by the Europeans, were inhabited mainly by three groups: The Cibones, Tainos and the Caribs. They originated in the Orinoco Basin and migrated from there to inhabit different Caribbean islands. First came the Cibones, a few centuries before Christ, then the Tainos, during the first century of our era, and finally the Caribs, around the year 1000.  

According to Meier, when the Spaniards came at the end of the 15th century the Cibones were living in the Western coast of Cuba and in the remote areas of Haiti. The Tainos, a branch of the great Arawak population, inhabited the centre and east of Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti as well as Puerto Rico and the Caribs (the Kalinago people) lived in the east and south of Puerto Rico, in the Lesser Antilles. The Kalinago persistently fought the Spanish occupation of eastern Puerto Rico while attempting to defend their islands against slave raids, punitive expeditions, and campaigns of conquest. Their island chains, the Lesser Antilles, were the last to be colonized.

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2 Watty, From Shore to Shore, 13  
4 Meier, "The Beginnings of the Catholic Church in the Caribbean"  
The Spanish soon introduced the *encomienda* system under which land and inhabitants were granted to colonists.⁶ Meier observes:

... the Spaniards used the system to obtain land and to enrich themselves through excessive exploitation of the Indians. ...In this way the Crown (the Spanish Crown) achieved high economic growth but at a high cost: forced labour resulted in the suicide of thousands of Indians who drank cassava juice; many women aborted or killed their offspring while others were victims of hunger or of the newly acquired diseases introduced by the Europeans against which they had no defense.⁷

Within 50 years of the coming of the Spaniards, according to Watty, the Amerindian peoples of the Greater Antilles were practically exterminated. As a result, the word ‘indigenous’ cannot have the same meaning for the Caribbean that it does in Asia, Africa or Latin and Central America.

Caribbean society is unique in the world in that throughout the archipelago what exists is an almost totally imported society less than 500 years young, and it is only the name of the sea, a few place-names and a handful of the descendants of the doughty Carib warriors that have survived. The rest is history and archaeology.⁸

The extermination of the Amerindian peoples was succeeded by the chattel slavery of Africans brought to the region. The European invasion of what was called the West Indies and what has since been called the Caribbean (a somewhat ironic twist, since the name Carib was first associated with a people thought by the Europeans to be cannibals) resulted, therefore, in the extermination of the indigenous population and the importation of an uprooted people to repopulate the region for the economic benefit of Europe.

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⁶ Meier, “The Beginnings of the Catholic Church in the Caribbean”, 5
⁷ Meier, “The Beginnings of the Catholic Church in the Caribbean.” 5 cites as his authority Peter Martyr who stated that in 1494, 50,000 persons died from starvation, instigated by the Indians in the Cibao and Cibango regions. The Indians ceased to cultivate crops in a bid to get rid of the Spaniards. P. Martyr, Acht Dekaden über die Neue Welt, 6. He also cites K. Sapper Das Außersten, 33-34, 36, 42; Arciniegas, Karibische Rhapsodie 67
⁸ Watty, From Shore to Shore, 5
b. How the term ‘Caribbean’ is used

Byron Blake offers a geographic, cultural and a political definition of Caribbean.
The geographic use of the name is easy to understand but is not without its difficulties.

Central to any physical or geographic definition of the Caribbean is the sea. The Caribbean Sea has been defined by some cartographers as an area of about 1.02 million square miles (2.62 million square kilometres) between 9 and 22 degrees north and 60 and 89 degrees west. With those coordinates the Caribbean would be bounded to the south by the coasts of Venezuela, Columbia and Panama; to the west by Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and Mexico; to the north by the Greater Antilles chain of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico; and to the east by the Lesser Antilles chain of islands.9

Blake acknowledges that the geographic definition of the Caribbean excludes the Bahamas chain of islands, Barbados, which is in the Atlantic Ocean, and Guyana, which is on the mainland of Central America. Both the Bahamas and Guyana share a common history of colonization and enslavement with the rest of the British West Indies.

There is a cultural definition of “Caribbean” which is less problematic. The Caribbean is a cultural melting pot. Very little has survived from the indigenous Amerindian population except a few artifacts and the use of cassava, which was an Amerindian staple. In Dominica, there is a small full fledged Carib/Kalinago territory. The descendants of African slaves, of indentured labour from Asia (Chinese and Indian workers were imported in waves into the Caribbean)10 and the owners and planters from Europe are all part of the Caribbean societies.

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10 After emancipation in Trinidad for example, beginning in 1845 and continuing 1917 some 143,000 Indians from the Asian sub-continent were imported as indentured labours to serve a minimum period of 10 years in exchange for the cost of their passage.
The political definition focuses on the creation of CARICOM which is an acronym for the Caribbean Community and which promulgated the Treaty of Chaguaramas in 1973. Former colonies of the British West Indies are members of CARICOM but so also are Haiti and Suriname which were French and Dutch colonies and the Dominican Republic and Cuban which have been given observer status.

Norman Girvan observes that the choice of the name ‘Caribbean’ displays a degree of cultural arrogance. He argues:

...the term ‘Caribbean’ itself is used in many ways with many meanings. Anglophones like ourselves are in the habit of talking as if we are the Caribbean. We go about the place calling our regional organization the ‘Caribbean Community’ and christening a host of other primarily Anglophone organizations with the name ‘Caribbean’, displaying a degree of cultural arrogance that is exceeded only by our geographic ignorance and strategic myopia. Many, if not most of us, seem to be blissfully unaware of the fact that we are less than one-fifth of the population, land area and GDP of the island Caribbean.\footnote{Norman Girvan, ‘Creating and Recreating the ‘Caribbean’ in Kenneth Hall and Denis Benn,\textit{Contending with Destiny}, 31}

Girvan argues that there are at least four broad notions of what constitutes the ‘Caribbean’. There is the Caribbean as the \textit{island chain} lying in the Caribbean Sea, the Caribbean as \textit{basin}, the Caribbean as \textit{ethno-historic zone}, and the Caribbean as \textit{transnational community}.\footnote{Girvan, ‘Creating and Recreating the ‘Caribbean’,’ 31}

The notion of Caribbean as an island chain is “las Antillas, les Antilles, the Antilles, the West Indies (though this included the main land Guianas)—the strategically located islands encircling the shipping lanes that became the locus of
continued with US President Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative in the 1980s and culminated with the establishment of the Association of Caribbean States in the 1990s. The term also relates to a shared historical experience which includes plantation economy, extermination of the majority of the pre-Columbian population, production of sugar, slavery and indentured labour with ethnically diverse and strong predominantly African population base. Girvan argues that:

It constitutes a powerful source of psycho-cultural identity revealing commonalities of experience that transcend divisions of language, political status and to some extent ethnicity. Its main drawback is its lack of close correspondence with a defined state system, as it includes some portions of the mainland states and excludes others—Cartagena but not Bogota or Puerto Limon but not San Jose.

Finally there are notions of Caribbean as transnational community, embracing the Caribbean Diaspora abroad. There are no necessary conflicts between notions of Caribbean as ethno-historic zone and Caribbean as transnational community. One of the issues to be settled by Caribbean Theology is which biblical analogy is better suited to Caribbean reality. Is the Caribbean a community in slavery in Egypt hoping for the 'promised land' or is the Caribbean in exile in Babylon seeking the welfare of the city? The notion of Caribbean as transnational community prefers the notion of exile. The Report of the West Indian Commission, *Time for Action* that was tabled in 1992, discusses the Caribbean Diaspora and offers this assessment of the notion of an expanded Caribbean. It sees the experience in the United States, Canada and Britain as a unifying experience for people of Caribbean origin in which they come into a greater appreciation of their national heritage:

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16 Girvan, Creating and Recreating the ‘Caribbean’, 32
17 Girvan, Creating and Recreating the ‘Caribbean,’ 33. The initial characterization of this zone as a ‘culture sphere’ is widely attributed to the American anthropologist, Charles Wagely. However in the Anglophone Caribbean this conception has a strong nationalist and regionalist flavour and is associated with the work of people like CLR James, Eric Williams, Lloyd Best George Beckford, George Lamming and the New World Group. Similar perspectives are evident in the work of the Haitian scholar Jean Casimir and the Puerto Rican Gaztambide-Geigel.
Some of us may have come with small suitcases but we all came with a large cultural baggage. It is from this baggage that we draw sustenance from time to time, as we confront the challenges of assimilation into the host society. Our becoming West Indians in America has sharpened our appreciation for the common threads running through our individual heritages, such as our common history or struggle for freedom and our common desire to excel in our endeavours.  

The Report also suggested that with a regional population of nearly six million living in the Anglophone Caribbean it is not even "remotely approaching minimum critical mass required to achieve market share or to mobilize capital to be viable and to make a meaningful impact". However, improved access to foreign travel and expanded telecommunication penetration both within the region and between the region and the metropolitan centres have dramatically increased the scale and impact of the role of the Diaspora in the Caribbean. Jamaica has a substantial Diaspora along the Eastern Seaboard of the USA and also in Britain and Canada. Remittances from these overseas communities constitute one of the largest sources of foreign exchange entering the island.

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18 Report of the West Indian Commission, Time for Action (Mona, Jamaica: The Press, University of the West Indies, 2nd Edition, 1993) 409 The term West Indian was used in order not to prejudice what is meant to be included in the term Caribbean, which as indicated above is ambiguous. West Indian by contrast draws upon the symbol of the largely formerly English colonies and would include symbols of their collective identity as the University of the West Indies and the West Indian cricket team. More particularly however it was chosen in order to evoke the memory of West Indian Federation, in which Shridath Ramphal, former Commonwealth Secretary General and Chairman of the West Indian Commission, was also a significant figure.

19 Citing the US Department of Commerce, the 1991 Report estimates of West Indian population in the USA, it says: "...the estimated West Indian population in the US was 1,744,355, with almost 900,000 West Indians living in New York State alone and over 800,000 in New York City." Within the context of the wider Caribbean the population of Caribbean immigrants in the US is estimated at 3.5 million, with over 1 million coming from Spanish-speaking Caribbean and almost 2 million coming from the English-speaking Caribbean and the rest originating in the French-speaking and other areas of the Region. Report of West Indian Commission, 410

20 In the last decade or so Bauxite and Tourism flows have been exceeded by remittances, which constitute primary foreign exchange earner. Analysis has not been abundantly available because careful disaggregation of the data was not being done. There was also some doubt as to whether or not there was money laundering involved in these flows. Discussions are ongoing in Jamaica and other Caribbean territories as to the precise institutional mechanism that will engage the Diaspora in the ongoing political and economic life of the societies and economies of the region. There can be no doubt that the Caribbean people have always been a people on the move and they may well be ahead of their respective governments in their sense of what the Caribbean is. There are colonies of Jamaicans in Honduras, Costa
I now turn to a discussion of historical antecedents that are taken into account in terms of a Caribbean Theology. This will be followed by a discussion of more contemporary issues.

A. Historical Perspectives

I shall attempt a necessarily cursory account of Caribbean history in terms of occupation, slavery and resistance. The Spanish were the most active in the Caribbean, a region of perhaps 50 insular settlements and over 2000 miles of sea. The sea dominates the region, with societies ranging from a few square miles and population of a few hundred to the large island of Cuba with a territory of over 44,000 square miles.

It was in the waters of the Caribbean Sea that the European pirates fought each other for supremacy. The island of Jamaica was central to the struggle of the pirates, situated as it is in the middle of the Caribbean Sea, on the direct sea routes between North and South America, and between Europe and Panama. As a central station of the pirates, the notoriety of this island reached its zenith with the concentration of plunderers and explorers at Port Royal. The wealth accumulated from the piracy on the high seas and the plunder of the Central American civilisations went towards the setting up of plantations to provide sugar, tobacco and cotton for Europe.

Piracy on the high seas was transformed into piracy on land to exploit the labour of first the native Indians, and later the African slaves. Christopher Columbus, the adventurer who laid the foundations for the Spanish military occupation of the region, Rica, Panama and Cuba all of which were the result of major public sector construction projects from an earlier era. The Caribbean’s best hope in practical economic as well as in socio-political and cultural circumstances lies in deepening and heightening the role for the Diaspora. It also requires a greater integration in the Americas, especially all the countries washed by the Caribbean Sea.
Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. The experiments in inequality and social exclusion were carried out to the enormous financial advantage of the planters and of the metropole. Slavery was based on the notion of the European as a master class with the right to arbitrary rule over non-European peoples and a manifest destiny to develop the New World. 23 This was a view shared by all the colonizing powers. Without inhibition or restraint such force as was required was made available through militias and armies. Both the financial and legislative supports were provided to make the experiments work. Every Western European state from Sweden in the North to Portugal in the South participated in the commerce. By the time the Slave trade was abolished in 1807 some 15 million Africans had been transported through the Middle Passage to the Caribbean and the Americas. Europe was the mightiest of the three continents (Europe, Africa and America) involved in the trade and by the end of the trade, profits generated both by the trade in Africans and the surplus produced by the slave labour had come to benefit every town in England and cemented the advantage of Europe over the rest of the world. 24 The Caribbean was not merely the laboratory for the experiment in inequality, it was also the theatre in which the battle was waged to determine which European nation would be the unrivalled power and empire. The question which was posed by those historical circumstances is whether or not the idea of the master class with manifest destiny as well as the inferiority of other peoples, especially the Africans, could be sustained.

Slavery was an experience of total domination for which the whip was the most important symbol.

23 Gordon Lewis “Pro-Slavery Ideology” in Shepherd and Beckles, Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World, 546
24 The benefits of slavery were not necessarily distributed equally in the towns and cities of the colonizing powers, they had their own inequalities and oppression in their own territories.
Whipping was not only a method of punishment. It was a conscious
device to impress upon the slaves that they were slaves: it was a crucial
form of social control particularly if we remember that it was difficult for
slaves to run away successfully.25

The control symbolized in the whipping of the enslaved was life-long and it was
total. The enslaved could be given as a gift the way one gives a pet, or could be sold to
the highest bidder, the way paintings are sold on an auction, only with less care and
sentiment. The other feature of slavery was that it was in perpetuity. The distinguishing
mark of the state of slavery, according to James Curtis Ballagh, “was not the loss of
liberty, political and civil, but the perpetuity and almost absolute character of that loss,
whether voluntary or involuntary”.26

Slavery in the Caribbean takes on an added significance in that it was not only part
of its earliest formation, but it became its total reality. From the very outset, the
Caribbean was framed as a slave and plantation society. In parts of Jamaica the
population of slaves to the rest of the population combined was three to one at the start
of the 17th century and eight to one by the end of that same century.

Ali Abd Alwhahed makes the point that “all the situations which created slavery
were those which commonly have resulted in the natural or social death of the
individual”.27 Slavery is a substitute for death in war, a form of commutation of a death
sentence to a life of servitude and enslavement. In this respect, the slave owes his life
to the master. The enslaved suffered from a triangularity of oppression. The enslaved
was a chattel, a non-person without rights, freedom or honour. Orlando Patterson calls

1973), vol.1, 59. Stephen Crawford arrives at the same conclusion in his quantitative analysis of the slave
narratives: “Quantified Memory: A Study of the WPA and Fisk University Slave Narrative Collections”
(PhD dissertation University of Chicago 1980) chap.3
26 James Curtis Ballagh, History of Slavery in Virginia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press,
1902) 28
27 Cited in Patterson, “The Constituent Elements of Slavery”, 34
it natal alienation in which the enslaved ceased to belong independently to any formally recognized community. To be sure, the enslaved shared in human relationships and shared informal social relations. The important point is that these were never recognized as legitimate or binding. The enslaved could be renamed or sold apart from his/her children or his/her spouse and his/her age did not matter. Nothing that constituted the identity or the community or the memory of the enslaved was given any legitimacy or recognized as an entitlement.

Could slavery be sustained? Could societies spawned in inequality survive and prosper? If the African is separated from his culture and nataly alienated, if he/she has no rights or honour or freedom, if he/she cannot speak in his/her own defense or defend his/her honour or his/her family and if that this should be so were universally agreed upon, could it work? Would the enslaved come to accept the order of things as they are, since there were no options and there was no difference anywhere and there were no support anywhere for any other cause? This is the experiment to which the history of Caribbean is a response. Jamaica provides as fitting an example as any other slave society to discover what happens to the human spirit and to the consciousness of freedom. If a human being is stripped of his/her dignity, his/her family, his/her rights, if everything around him/her tells him/her that he/she is a non-person, and if every attempt to forge a different reality for himself/herself is still born, what becomes of him/her, and what of the society that is created? In fact, as I shall show, resistance marked Caribbean history from the beginning. The human being resists this inequality at every turn.

28 Patterson, “The Constituent Elements of Slavery”
29 An important footnote in Caribbean history is the history of the Jews in the islands. Jews of Spanish-Portuguese ancestry first landed in Jamaica in 1530 forty years after Columbus discovered Jamaica. They fled Europe in the wake of the Spanish Inquisition and settled in Spanish Town Jamaica. They were traders and not planters, because they were forbidden to own property. The major influx of Jews came to Jamaica in 1655 after England had expropriated Jamaica from Spain. Following the English Conquest, Amsterdam Rabbi Ben Israel visited Lord Protector Cromwell and requested
2) Resistance

Franklin Knight makes a distinction between petit marronage and gran marronage. Petit marronage is the strong personal inclination on the part of the enslaved to resist labour or procrastinate, to defy a master or a rule or to visit friends and family without requisite permission. Gran marronage is overt resistance to and rebellion against enslavement.

permission for Jews to settle in England. Cromwell welcomed this in the hope that Jews would bring capital and mercantile knowledge. This meant that Jews could settle in English colonies as well. Some 2500 hundred came to Jamaica and settled at Port Royal. All settlers naturalized as English citizens and were entitled to own property; a right denied to Jews in Medieval Europe.

Jews in Jamaica did not enjoy the rights of full citizenship. By 1671 Jews so dominated the retail trade from the base in Port Royal that the Governor restricted them from participating in the wholesale trade. They made several petitions to be granted the full rights as citizens. In the 1750s a Jew named Abraham Sanchez, petitioned the Jamaican Assembly for “the same rights and privileges as enjoyed by other of His Majesty’s subjects.” In 1820 another Jew named Levi Hyman, challenged the authority of the Returning Officer to refuse his vote in an election. It was only in 1831, “the planters in an effort to win over the Jews to the pro-slavery lobby, voted to grant them civil rights. By the elections of 1863 some seventeen Jews had been elected to the Assembly.”

The history of the Jews in Jamaica parallels the African population in some respect. Both Jews and Africans first came to Jamaica about the same time at the start of the sixteenth century. In the case of the enslaved Africans, they were first brought to Jamaica circa 1507-23. The Jews as well as the Africans were displaced peoples though in different ways and for different reasons. The Jews had to gain their rights as citizens against discriminatory practices rooted in social conventions and laws. The persecution of Jews, which resulted in their displacement had the support of religion. The difference between the experiences of Jews and the African is in degree and extent. However, the fact that the African was nataly alienated and that he was enslaved in perpetuity is a material difference. In 2005 the Jamaican Jews celebrated 350 years in Jamaica. Over those three and a half centuries, the circumstances of Jews locally and internationally have changed completely. The African however, has remained at the bottom of the economy and society as the least empowered and most disfranchised. It is in this regard that using the experience of the Afro-Jamaican population when compared with the progress of the Jamaican Jewish population, it is to be acknowledged that the handicap placed on the African by the systematic savaging of his connection with his ancestry and his past, as well as the denigration and denial of access to his traditions, has been a greater impediment to his upward mobility than has been readily acknowledged. Whatever else has been true of the lot and the experience of the Jews, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were allowed to keep their family and their traditions with them. Indeed the record of cataclysmic events in Jamaica parallels the Jewish history with major natural events in Jamaica. In 1692 the earthquake that destroyed Port Royal also proved ruinous to the Jewish establishment in Port Royal and resulted in a mass migration to Spanish Town. The great Kingston fire of 1882 destroyed the first Jewish synagogue built in 1744. All Jewish synagogues were destroyed in the Great Kingston Earthquake of 1907. The Sharae Shalom and the United Congregation Synagogues were re-built in 1912 by the Henriquez brothers. See Rebecca Tortella “Pieces from the Past”, A Jamaica Daily Gleaner Feature, August 2004., see also Trevor Monroe and Arnold Bertram, Adult Suffrage & Political Administrations in Jamaica, 1944-2002, 28. (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2006)

The point to be made is that along the way the Jews suffered many setbacks, but because family and tradition were kept intact they were able to show their resilience and to prosper. The natal alienation of the African and the systematic assault upon his self-confidence as a human being and an African have proven decisive.
The Jamaican experience seems rather to have been the *gran marronage* which not only included the flight to freedom, but the maintenance of alternative African communities in defiance of the slavery/plantation system and which often engaged in violent skirmishes with English plantations.\(^{30}\) Without seeking to establish any historical continuum, there are three types or levels of anti-slavery struggle that have been described: The first are the acts of day to day resistance which were aimed not so much at the overthrow of the system of slavery but which sought to undermine its efficiency. These include various forms of work stoppages and feigned illness as well as the wanton destruction of equipment. Secondly there is evidence of large numbers of unsuccessful plots and revolts which were characterized by collective organization with reformist and revolutionary objectives. There are many more frustrated plots which are to be accounted for more by the paranoia of the planters, than the imagination of the enslaved. Thirdly there are incidences of successful rebellion, from long term marronage to the St Dominique rebellion to the Baptist War of 1831 Jamaica.\(^{31}\) Michael Craton contends that there was a crescendo of slave unrest between 1816 and 1832. The highlights of the largest slave rebellions occurred in Barbados in April 1816, in Demerara Guyana in August and September 1823 and in Jamaica between December 1831 and February 1832.\(^{32}\)

Considerable data have emerged that indicate the African resistance to slavery throughout the period of enslavement was persistent. Robert Dirks finds reference in the literature of seventy uprisings between 1649 and 1833. Craton’s chronology of resistance between 1638 and 1837 lists some seventy five aborted revolts and actual

\(^{30}\) Franklin Knight “Imperialism and Slavery”, in Shepherd and Beckles *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*, 15

\(^{31}\) Shepherd and Beckles, *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*, 546

rebellions. This record of resistance indicates as Hillary Beckles suggests that “there was hardly a generation of slaves in the English West Indies that did not confront their masters collectively with arms in pursuit of freedom.” In this sense, therefore, the relations between slaves and masters in the West Indies can be shown as characterized by ongoing psychological warfare and intermittent bloody battles.

(a) The Maroons

The word Maroon means “wild” and “untamed”. It was used to describe persons living in the mountain region of Suriname and the West Indies who had either escaped slavery or freed themselves from slavery and who maintained an alternative existence to the plantation system and slavery within a slave society. There is disagreement as to their origin. Within Maroon communities some argue that the first Maroons were the indigenous Tainos, a group of Arawak people who migrated from South and Central America. They moved to the hills when the Spanish invaded Jamaica in 1494. It is then argued that a number of the first Africans that were brought into Jamaica by the Spanish, from 1513 onwards, moved straight to the hills and came into contact with and lived among the Tainos.

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33 Craton, “Chronology of Resistance”
34 Shepherd and Beckles, Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World, 532
35 Craton, “Chronology of Resistance”
36 The Maroons Our Story Web 09 July 2011 http://www.jamaica50.com/html/the_maroons.html, see also Francisco Morales Padron, Spanish Jamaica, (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003) 35–45. After an unsuccessful attempt to defeat the Spanish on the island of Hispaniola, the English captured the poorly defended island of Jamaica in 1655. There were merely 1500 Spaniards on the island and they released some African slaves to fight against the English. After the Spanish fled to Cuba from Rio Nueve some 300 African slaves who were well adjusted to the climate and who refused to follow their masters to Cuba took refuge in the mountains where they were able to live a free life and from where they could carry out forays. Jamaica is a mountainous country with the mountain range spanning the length of the island from East to West. The Blue Mountains reaches a height of 7,402 feet above sea level in the East while the
Franklin Knight takes a contrary view and describes the Maroons as those who had individually and collectively escaped slavery. He says:

The Maroons formed the most successful alternative to organized European colonial society. Born of the resistance to slavery, they were essentially communities of Africans who escaped individually and collectively from the plantations and households of their masters to seek their freedom, thereby continuing a tradition begun by the indigenous Indians. The word “maroon” was first used to describe the range cattle that had gone wild and after the first attempts at Spanish colonization on the island of Hispaniola. Then the Spanish transferred the term to the escaped Indian slaves and finally to their African successors. In any case, maroonage—the flight from servitude—became an intrinsic dimension of American slavery, enduring as long as the institution of slavery itself.37

The lifestyle of the early Maroons was a combination of Taino and African traditions, which were similar in many ways. There was a chief and a council of elders. They spoke several languages – the most common was called Kramanti, which was similar to the Twi language of the Asante people of Ghana. Their main contact with the outside was their secret trade in jerked pork (traded by the Buccaneers) to passing ships. Women were well respected — they were mothers, wives and farmers and the first teachers of the young. Women also participated in providing leadership and direction for their clan. An example of this is Queen Nanny who was also known as Granny Nanny, Champong Nanny and Grandy Nanny. She was a spiritual leader, fighter and strategist.

Age was respected among the Maroons, which was the same with the Tainos. Children were taught to respect their elders, community leaders and chief. Their education was through storytelling, and as they grew older they helped to clear the land for cultivation and were responsible for feeding the poultry. Each village had a midwife

Cockpit Country ranges to as high as 5,000 feet on the North Western end of the island. It is conceivable that for a long time the English were unaware of the Maroon villages.

37 Knight “Imperialism and Slavery,” 154
and herbal doctor, although every family was knowledgeable in the everyday use of herbs. Herbal doctors were able to find cures for many illnesses, from colds and fevers to infertility and eye infections. The knowledge of the herbal doctor was passed down from the ancestors, who the Maroons believed were wiser and greater and were always around them and in easy reach. They believed that these ancestral spirits watched over the community and shared in their concerns and were even able to intervene in the life of the community. Maroons believed in a creator God that was called Nyancompong or Yankipon and drumming and dancing were used in religious ceremonies. In many respects, the lifestyle of the early Maroons has remained the core of the ethos and culture of much of the rural peasantry in Jamaica up to the present: in language, cultural items including diet, taboos, music as well as kinship patterns in general.

The Maroons constantly raided the plantations for supplies, food and enslaved females, since this was the only way to get women for their men. In addition their numbers would swell from new runaways. This was ignored until 1663 by which time the English decided to offer land and full freedom to any Maroon that surrendered. The Maroons ignored the offer. There followed a 76 year irregular war which cost the English £250,000 and the passing of 44 Acts of Assembly. In 1738 British forces sued for peace.

Music was very important to the Maroons. Some of the musical instruments used were the Kramanti and Goombay drums, a string instrument called banjo, a wind instrument called fife and a variety of rattles, shakers, scrapers and cymbals. The abeng or akete is a war cry instrument, which was used for warning, calling and celebrating. Their songs told stories of their African past and ancestors and moral stories of the trickster called Anancy. Songs were sung to commemorate different events. Stories and proverbs were told to teach children about their heritage and how to conduct themselves in everyday life. "The Maroons," OurStory. Web. 09 July 2011. <http://www.jamaica50.com/html/the_maroons.html>.

In 1690 a large group of enslaved Africans, mostly Coromantee rebelled and escaped from plantations in Clarendon into the dense woods. They joined forces with the Maroons, some of whom were in Juan de Bolas or St Johns in St Catherine. Their leader was Cudjoe who was assisted by his brothers Acompon and Johnny. He was also assisted by two sub-chiefs Quao and Cufee. Disguised from head to foot with leaves and cunningly concealed, the Maroons chose to attack from ambush. This
The treaty granted the Maroons 2500 acres of land, the entire area of the Cockpit Country, from Accompong Town to Trelawny Town, now called Flagstaff, a town in the southwest St James. They were to remain in their five main towns, Accompong, Trelawny Town, Moore Town, Scots Hall and Nanny Town, living under their own chief with a British supervisor. In exchange, they agreed not to harbour new runaway slaves, but rather to help catch them. They were paid a bounty for each returned slave. This last provision of the treaty caused obvious tension between the Maroons and the enslaved African population, but it did not prevent runaways from finding their way into Maroon settlements.

The Maroons of Trelawny Town fought a second war against the English in 1795 which was eventually suppressed after five months. Nevertheless we can say that The Maroons persisted in resistance to enslavement for over 140 years.

form of warfare along with their skill in woodcraft, familiarity with the untracked forests along with their legendary skill as marksmen baffled and confounded those sent to fight them. Keen-eyed lookouts would spot an approaching force long before their arrival and spread the warning through the abeng horn, a kind of bugle made from a cow’s horn. Especially skilled horn blowers could use particular calls to summon each member of their party from long distances as if they were face-to-face. The English forces suffered huge losses both from the sharp shooting Maroons and the tropical diseases that were very common at that time. See Bill Evans, “History of the Accompong Maroons”, in Jamaica Overview. There is dispute as to whether or not Nanny actually existed or merely a conglomeration of female maroon leadership. However, the treaty signed in 1739 mentions the fact that 500 acres of land was given to her to build Nanny Town, eventually destroyed by the British, and in 1735 an enslaved man named Cupid indicated that he had seen three English soldiers brought to Nanny and put to death by Nanny. The legend surrounding her, including her ability to catch cannon ball and bullets with her buttocks, and boiling a cauldron of water without fire cannot be confirmed by any available evidence. Nanny has become a National heroine in Jamaica. Nannytown named in her honour and destroyed by the English was in the east in the Blue Mountain range. Nanny led many successful skirmishes against the English and protected her people from many raids by the militia organized by the planters and by the governor. In particular the war of 1720 which resulted in the English granting 500 acres of land on which Nannytown was built was of signal importance. According to Veront Satchel, Nanny “fought uncompromisingly against slavery.” In addition to being a feared warrior, she was said to be an Obeah woman, possessing supernatural powers that she allegedly used in repelling and defeating British attacks. Veront Satchel, "Jamaica." Africana.com. 1999. Web. 11 July 2011. <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43/130.html>.

40 What precipitated the conflict was the accusation that two Trelawny Town Maroons had stolen a pig in Montego Bay. The Maroons were whipped for the theft. What however aggravated the situation was that an enslaved African was made to do the whipping and runaway slaves that had been returned by the Maroons were made to witness the whipping. The resulting rebellion by 300 Maroons lasted some five months. The militia and the army both numbering more than 1500 were consistently rebuffed. The Maroons would attack and then retreat into the virtually inaccessible Cockpit Country. In their
Resistance through religious influences from Obeah and Myal to Native Baptist

Religious influences were not apparent in the war of resistance fought by the Maroons before the signing of the treaty with the English circa 1739 but such influences, especially indigenous African religious traditions, played a significant role in the slave uprisings during the next century and a half. As Dianne M Stewart argues "the ancient nature of African religion which was rearticulated in variegated Jamaican forms during the slave period, qualified them as holistically interwoven in all dimensions of African life".  

There is fluidity to the religious forms that emerged in the movement from Obeah to Myal (a Diasporic religion with strong African influences, centred upon possession trance through dance or ecstatic worship) to Native Baptist to Revivalism and Pocomania. Obeah was employed as a generic term to refer to any form of "African Superstition". The record of African derivative Diasporic religion in Jamaica indicates the extent to which Europeans reacted with fear and brutality to militant Obeah and Myal insurrectionists.

determination to put down this rebellion the English imported 100 blood hounds from Cuba and 40 handlers. The blood hounds were so vicious, that the very day on which they came, an enslaved woman, preparing meat for a meal, tried to fend away one of the blood hound was bitten to death as the savage blood hound went for her throat. It remained at her throat even after it was killed. The General whose horse was attacked by the blood hounds had to be rescued. The knowledge of the blood hounds that could sniff them out from the densely wooded Cockpit Country drove fear into the hearts of the Trelawny Town Maroons. They were given three days to surrender. After 140 of intermittent war with the Maroons, the Government wanted to get rid of the problem. They destroyed many Maroon settlements. However, they did not touch Accompong Town, but they deported the Trelawny Town Maroons. Some 543 men and women were deported to Halifax Nova Scotia. The Dover, Mary and Anne left Port Royal on June 26 1796 and arrived in Nova Scotia on July 21. Seventeen Maroons did not survive the journey.

The Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in North America, impressed with the proud bearing and other characteristics of the Maroons, employed the entire group to work on the new fortifications of the Citadel Hill in Halifax. Within three years however, the greater part of the numbers of the Maroons exercised their options and were deported to Sierra Leone because they could not bear the Canadian winter.


Stewart, *Three Eyes for the Journey*, 66

Stewart, *Three Eyes for the Journey*, 65
Braithwaite argues that Obeah was essentially a form of healing though it was understood in terms of sorcery and "black magic".\textsuperscript{44} It first came to the notice of the Europeans in the wake of the Coromanti uprising in 1760 led by a Coromanti chief named Tacky. The rebellion killed some 60 planters in St Mary. Investigations uncovered an association between Obeah and slave revolts and led to the development of strict legislation to ban Obeah. Those laws have remained on the books in many Caribbean societies and notably in Jamaica to this day.

Especially in the post-emancipation period there was evidence of antagonism between Obeah and Myal\textsuperscript{45} but generally they were part of the self-definition claims of the enslaved Africans. All of these religious forms betrayed strong African retention and manifested the interplay between religion and politics and the social implications of their collaboration.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{44} Kenneth M Bilby "The Strange Career of ‘Obeah’: Defining Magical Power in the West Indies” General Seminar. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1993) Lecture: Bilby agrees with Braithwaite that Obeah has been given an ill-deserved reputation for evil. He cites both Dyde and Braithwaite. Obeah: a form of sorcery or witchcraft originating in West African folklore once widely believed in and practiced throughout the West Indies. It is based on the belief that spirits may be employed to do harm to the living, and that objects may be bewitched for the purpose of bringing misfortune to individuals. Specialists in its practice are called oboahmen and oboahwomen. Although long banned in most countries such charlatans still exist, and a continuing belief in the power of obeah is not confined entirely to the poor and illiterate. Brian Dyde, Caribbean Companion: The A to Z Reference, 1992 , "The African presence in Caribbean Literature” 1974

\textsuperscript{45} Myal was mostly influential in St James and Western Jamaica. It was a form of African cultural religious retention about which like Obeah there was confusion. It included a wide range of quasi religious activities ranging from ecstatic dance, spirit possession to what some classified as sorcery. See Devon Dick, The Cross and the Machete: Native Baptist of Jamaica, Identity, Ministry and Legacy (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2009) 127-30

\textsuperscript{46} Stewart, Three Eyes for the Journey. 65 The Tacky rebellion which first alerted the master class to Obeah among the enslaved Africans was quickly put down and the instigators hung. According to Evans, Tacky was a Coromanti Chief who was a supervisor at the Frontier plantation in St Mary. He sketched out a simple but effective plan to escape slavery with some of his followers, which included enslaved persons from the neighbouring Trinity plantation. They struck early on the Monday morning after Easter Sunday in 1760. They easily overpowered and killed their masters as well as the storekeeper at Fort Haldaye where the ammunition to protect the town of Port Maria were kept. They overran plantations at Esher and Heywood Hall and were bolstered by their easy success and hundreds of enslaved who joined Tacky and his men. At Ballard’s Valley they stopped to rejoice at their success while Obeah men circulated around in the camp dispensing powder they claimed could protect men from injury in battle. They loudly proclaimed that the Obeah men could not die. One slave woman who sought assurance from Tacky’s rebels that the
The swift response by the authorities to cauterize the influence of Obeah by legislative maneuvers did not succeed in rooting out African religious influence. The authorities banned all the practices associated with African retentions including drumming and dances. The enslaved men when forbidden would travel great distances at nights especially on weekends to attend “dances”. The authorities were not entirely incorrect about the political potential of such dances, because it was at dances that some of the plots for rebellion were hatched.

A study conducted in 1994 by Roli Degazon-Johnson found that superstition and the fear of bad luck were significant factors at the work place. She contends that Jamaicans “… live in two worlds, the world of airplanes, tractors, and re diffusion radio—the world of a 20th century industrial culture—and they live in the strange spirit world that extends back in time beyond the seas to the dark west coast of Africa”. These findings exaggerate the problem of superstition at the work place or this duality and betray the usual contempt for things African. Suffice it to say, Obeah is still considered an option to solve problems, because there is the belief even among middle class members of the society in the power to manipulate the physical world of nature and the supernatural world of ancestral spirits.

baby for whom she cared in the ‘massa’s house’ would not be harmed, did not get that assurance. She therefore escaped the camp and betrayed the plot.

Approximately 80 Scott’s Hall Maroons were recruited. An Obeah man was executed in public to belie his claim of immortality. Eventually legendary Maroon marksman, Davy pursued and shot Tacky in full flight. Tacky was beheaded and his head placed on a stake at the entrance to the Capital city of Spanish Town. His followers took down his head from the pole at midnight. The followers of Tacky were eventually found in a cave having committed suicide rather than return to a life of slavery. The rebellion did not however end with the beheading of Tacky, but on the contrary, it spread across the island. By the time the rebellion was completely put down, some four hundred enslaved persons had been killed including two alleged ring leaders that were burnt to death and two others who were put in a cage in Kingston parade and made to remain in the cage until they starved to death. See Evans “History of the Accompong Maroons”  


48 Degazon-Johnson “Obeah”

Obeah and Myal factored in the framing of the Native Baptist movement which exerted some influence in the continued resistance to inequality and enslavement throughout the 19th Century. Baptist scholar Devon Dick has provided a summary of the origin of Native Baptist in which he has accounted for the relationship between the Native Baptist and Obeah, Myal, Kumina, Convince and Revival. The “special dance” and intense spirit possession of Myal have led some scholars to contend that by the time of 1831, the distinctions between Native Baptist Christianity and Myalism were often blurred. Dick raises doubts about the notions of inextricable links between Myal and Native Baptist Christianity. There is considerably more evidence to support the idea of continuity between the African religions and retentions on the one hand and the religious activities that emerged in the 19th Century among the enslaved population. It seems clear that the dominant predisposition of the Native Baptist was that they held to practices that more reflected “the African ancestral religions”.

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50 This is the contention of Hutton and linguist Mervyn Alleyne. Dick suggests that “Native or Black Baptists” blend of African and European religious beliefs and practices was really Myalism, not English Baptist. Linguist Mervyn Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1988) says that by 1831 the distinction between Native Baptist Christianity and Myalism was often blurred and Native Baptists was Christianised Myalism 91-4. Clinton Hutton “Colur for Colour: Skin for Skin: The Ideological Foundations of Post-slavery Society 1834-65” (Diss. UWI, 1992) 150, 167, claims that there is a “sameness between Myalism and Native Baptist (sic) Dick, The Origin and Development of the Native Baptist,” 56. He contends that Native Baptism was the public arm of Myalism even though he also admits that evidence of direct links between both as well as between, Myalism and other forms of African religious/cultural retentions was sparse.

51 Dick, “Origin and Development of Native Baptist in Jamaica,” 55 cites Monica Schuler, *Alas, Alas Kongo*: A Social History of Indentured African Immigration into Jamaica 1841-1865 and Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labour and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*, (Baltimore: Hopkins University Press, 1992). What was apparent in the Baptist War led by Sam Sharpe was that there was an overlapping membership and leadership between on the one hand, the Baptist movement led my missionaries and on the other hand, the Native Baptists. Dick raises the question as to whether or not George Liele, Moses Baker and Sam Sharpe were Native Baptists. In Dick’s findings, George Liele was a non-European Anabaptist and Moses Baker was a convert of George Liele to the Anabaptist faith. According to Dick, Liele can best be described as an original Baptist.
The Baptist movement in Jamaica began with George Liele who arrived in that Country in 1783. He was a slave from Virginia, U.S.A. who was ordained as a Baptist Minister in 1775. He built the first Baptist Church in Kingston 1790 and is said to have baptized 500 souls. Moses Baker who was also an enslaved from America became the most well known disciple of Liele. Baker’s preaching was more consistently revolutionary which brought him to the attention of the slave owners who had him arrested on the charge of sedition and stirring up the enslaved to rebellion.

Laws were passed in 1806 requiring licensing of preachers and teachers and in 1810 forbidding the gathering of the enslaved between sunrise and sunset. The Anglican Church, which was the planters’ church, became increasingly hostile to Liele and Baker and this prompted them to seek assistance from the Baptists in England. The contribution of the Baptists which included both the work of missionaries and indigenous leaders from among the African population in the period between 1790 and 1865 is of signal importance and include three main facets: a) the work of Sam Sharpe and Native Baptist leaders who through the class system organized the protest and resistance against slavery and the conditions of their enslavement. b) The resistance against slavery was as much the product of the preaching of a message of equality by Liele and Baker among others as the result of any other single factor. Baptist scholar Cawley Bolt insists that the English Baptist Missionaries were also committed to the

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53 Dick, “Origin and Development of Native Baptist in Jamaica,” 102; Munroe and Bertram, *Adult Suffrage and Political Administration*
54 Munroe and Bertram *Adult Suffrage and Political Administration*
message of equality of all persons, though they also believed in the inferiority of African culture.\textsuperscript{55} c) the work of the Baptist missionaries, especially James Phillipo and William Knibb who, in the face of opposition by the planters, developed a programme to uplift the enslaved spiritually and materially. In the post-emancipation period, they launched a ‘free village system’ with the aim of transforming those who were formerly enslaved into a community of small farmers with full civil rights.\textsuperscript{56}

The plots of land used for the sustenance of the enslaved were called ‘provision ground.’ Provision grounds predated the Baptist free villages. During slavery, it was the general practice for the enslaved to till the soil to provide the means of their own subsistence. Plantation system was mono-crop agriculture. The planters did not always or readily afford to pay for imported food to feed their cohort of enslaved Africans. The enslaved therefore worked on their provision ground before sunrise and after sunset, at the end of a full day’s work on the plantation. The enslaved were so prodigious that they not only fed themselves and such dependents as they had but produced surplus. The surplus was sold in the Sunday markets. The Sunday market later was succeeded by ground provision market, which became the centre of most rural townships. Jamaican towns developed largely around the markets which sold ground provision from the provision grounds. The Jamaican trade of higglering developed around the Sunday markets and the division of labour among the enslaved and the emancipated required the men to cultivate the land as farmers and their women to trade as higglers.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{56} Munroe and Bertram, Adult Suffrage and Political Administration, 33
\textsuperscript{57} Victoria Durant-Gonzalez, “The Occupation of Higglering”, Jamaica Journal Quarterly 16/3, 105, 1980
What Knibb and others did was to buy land and first rent it and then sub-divided and sold plots to the newly emancipated African population. The following two observations deserve to be made in relation to the significance of the combination of provision ground and free village to Jamaica’s early social development: The first relates to the special characteristics of West Indian peasantry in that it existed alongside and in conflict with the plantation. These plots of land varied in sizes from a part of an acre to 50 acres. As a result, the early peasant as well as later ones combined cultivation of their land with activities like fishing or shop keeping and casual estate work. 58 By 1860 in Jamaica, the number of holdings under 50 acres in extent had reached 50,000. 59

Secondly, even before the abolition of slavery, the Baptists recognized the need to provide the enslaved with access to land. In 1834, James Phillipo acquired land in the hills above Spanish Town, to establish Jamaica’s first free village. By 1844, the free village movement was so successful that the census showed “that in six parishes alone 116 villages had been founded and 18,365 houses had been built on freehold land”. 60 Knibb was the first to see the electoral possibilities of the grassroots organization of the Baptist Church, providing as many as possible of the former enslaved acquired land and they also satisfied the criteria for voting. 61

With the Native Baptist movement biblical Christianity comes to the fore as a source of resistance. Resistance against inequality and repudiation of slavery was neither unequivocal nor uniform among Christian groups and denominations. Bolt

58 Woodville K Marshall, “Peasant Development in the West Indies Since 1838” in Beckles and Shepherd Caribbean Slavery in Atlantic World, 99
59 Marshall, “Peasant Development in the West Indies Since 1838” 101 cites O. Eisinger, Jamaica 1836-1930 Manchester 1961 210-11
60 Munroe and Bertram, Adult Suffrage and Political Administration, 34
61 Munroe and Bertram, Adult Suffrage and Political Administration, 34
contends that the missionaries were committed to the equality of all persons as an axiom of faith, but thought any involvement in “animistic” religions from Africa would have been damaging to faith.\textsuperscript{62} This ambivalence was not shared by the Native Baptists and the indigenous leadership of the Baptist movement.

The Baptist deacon Sam Sharpe was born in Croydon in St James in 1801 and was later sold to Kensington. He was a highly literate and very intelligent house slave who kept abreast of local and international events by reading both the British and local newspaper of the day. He was a member of the Baptist movement, a class leader with responsibility for others.\textsuperscript{63}

In the decade preceding emancipation there was great ferment. There was increased slave rebellion with a growing number believing that emancipation had already been granted by the British Parliament but was being held back by the local Assembly and the white planters.\textsuperscript{64} The local planters who denounced the British Parliament and the Abolition movement, considered themselves “bound by every principle to resist”, and wanted to seek protection from another nation.\textsuperscript{65}

This is the context in which Sam Sharpe set out to organize a strike on the plantations in Western Jamaica from Christmas day 1831 in which the slaves were to refuse to return to work until a wage payment system was agreed. “The Baptist War” of 1831 takes its importance not only from the fact that it is seen by many as a decisive

\textsuperscript{62} Bolt, “Some Evangelical Missionaries Understanding of Negro Character”
\textsuperscript{63} Munroe and Bertram, \textit{Adult Suffrage and Political Administration}
\textsuperscript{64} Michael Craton, “Emancipation from below? The Role of the British West Indian Slaves in the Emancipation Movement 1816-34” in \textit{Out of Slavery: Abolition and After}, ed Jack Hayward (London: Frank Cass, 1985) 110 contends that as early as 1816 enslaved were plotting rebellion and singing the words of a ditty, “Oh me good friend, Mr Wilberforce, make we free”
\textsuperscript{65} Munroe and Bertram, \textit{Adult Suffrage and Political Administration}
factor in precipitating the end of slavery in the British empire, but also because it provides insight into political awareness among the enslaved.

There is no unanimity that the bloody battles were always the intention of the slaves. Dick is of the view that Sam Sharpe because of his “intensely Christian principles and thoughts” disagreed with those who wanted to take up the sword claiming that this was against the Bible. According to Dick, Sharpe’s proposed plan was for passive resistance and to fight only if ‘Buckras’ used force to compel them to turn out and work as slaves. He contends that the burning of plantation and the violence offered to whites were no part of Sharpe’s design.66 Arnold Bertram, on the other hand, accepts that the violence of the Sharpe led rebellion was in response to the refusal of the white planters to yield to the demand for a system of wage payment and the counter-revolutionary violence by the militia led by General Sir Willoughby Cotton, the officer commanding the British troops in Jamaica that escalated the conflict. The torching of the “trash house” at Tulloch Estate in Kensington Pen by the enslaved man John Dunbar was the signal to start the rebellion on December 27 1831.67 Immediately after the fire was lit at Kensington the revolt spread over an area of 750 square miles involving more than 200 estates.68 By the time the fighting subsided in January 1832 some 60,000 men and women had been involved in the protest. The rebellion was joined by a number of freedmen and at least one white man, a Mr. Ellery.69 Whatever misgivings there might be about violence, the organizing genius of Sharpe was both unmistakable and

67 The plaque erected at Tulloch Estate appears to attribute the torching of the Trash House to an enslaved woman, (rather than to a man, John Dunbar) who said to the soldiers standing nearby, “you will kill me but my children will be free,” as she threw the torch into the trash house.
68 Craton “Emancipation from Below,” 121
69 Monroe and Bertram Adult Suffrage and Political Administration

61
undeniable. So many black deacons and their followers were to be involved in the rebellion that it is known as 'the Baptist War'. 70

The Governor, Lord Belmore, declared martial law and the military commander, General Sir Willoughby Cotton, acted with ruthless efficiency. Some 200 slaves were killed and 340 executed. Sam Sharpe was among the last to die, being hanged in Montego Bay on May 23, 1832. His last statement was “I would rather die on yonder gallows than live in slavery”. 71 Craton argues that slave resistance and emancipation were clearly intertwined in British slavery’s final phase. 72

(d) Resistance in Post-Emancipation and Post slavery Jamaica 1838-present

The end of chattel slavery for African-Jamaicans came in two stages. The Emancipation Act which ended chattel slavery in the British Empire took place in 1834. It was thought, however, that the enslaved African population was not ready for “full freedom,” so an apprenticeship period of four years was granted to the planters. 73 In so far as the enslaved were concerned, nothing else was done to grant them justiceable rights. Immediately after emancipation, planters throughout the West Indies sought to bind their “apprentices” and, after 1838, their ex-slaves to continued labour on their estates in one of two ways: they either imposed high rent on estate houses (hobbles) and provision grounds, or they insisted that continuing occupation would only be allowed if

70 Craton “Emancipation from Below,” 120
71 Craton, “Emancipation from Below,” 122
72 Craton, “Emancipation from Below,” 124 - 5
73 This was not uniformly across the Caribbean. Barbados and Antigua served no apprenticeship period; full emancipation was effected in 1834. In the case of Jamaica and Guyana, however, there was a four year apprenticeship which expired in 1838.
African population. There have been significant legislative shifts but the fundamentals of the ethos of protection of the privileges of the privileged have remained intact and have not been subject to a thoroughgoing and radical overhauling.\textsuperscript{76} It was the case between 1865 and 1944 that law was used to curtail the drive towards equality and social justice for the mass of the people.

Brathwaite suggests that Jamaica has had “a double struggle within it: one, to maintain that fact (colonial plantation) and structure (the activity of what we call the master/ruled class, the elite); the other, to reform, liberalize and liberate itself from that fact and structure (the activity of the people and the leaders and allies of the people)”\textsuperscript{77} There were those sections of the church that proclaimed a message of equality and pursued a mission of resistance to inequality. At the same time there were other elements within the church that sided with privilege and power and partnered with those seeking to limit if not reverse the gains of the project of equality.

Jamaica, like most colonial societies, was not an autonomous social reality but was subject to the fluctuating demand and interests of the metropolis. In addition, it was subject to the untrammeled power of the planter class which was dependent economically, militarily and psychologically upon Mother Country. As such, the approach taken to the impact of the loss of slave labour on the sugar plantations was to seek to mitigate the impact in terms of the survival of the plantations and the prosperity of the planters, rather than in terms of the survival and improved living standards of the

\textsuperscript{76} Apart from the Emancipation Act of 1834 in the British Parliament, 1938 saw the facilitation of the trade union movements and the birth of political parties in Jamaica. Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944 and the promulgation of political independence in 1962. There have been incremental changes along the way and through the pre- and post-independence period in Jamaica. In the decade of the 1970s under Michael Manley there was a concerted attempt to do legal reforms and to remove some legislative impediments to social inequality. Acts were abolished that had been used to maintain the disadvantages of the mass of the people, including the Vagrancy Act and the Bystady Act.

\textsuperscript{77} Kamau Brathwaite Nanny, Sam Sharpe and the Struggle for People’s Liberation, (Kingston: API, 1977) 3
former enslaved. The moot question is whether the change from “forced labour” to 
“labour force” had made a material difference.

Munroe and Bertram provide a summary of the measure and counter-measures 
including the passage of the new franchise Acts of 1834 and 1836 which were designed 
to prevent the African population from voting. There was also the early dissolving of 
the Assembly by Lord Elgin, then Governor, in order to upset the Baptist election 
agenda. It had been the intention of Knibb’s Anti-State Church Convention to organize 
the black and coloured electorate for an attack on the establishment of the Anglican 
Church as well as on the increase in taxation on land and animals. 78 The early 
dissolution of the Assembly was sufficient to thwart the effectiveness of Knibb’s 
strategy as only two of the five candidates fielded were successful in the 1844 elections. 
Unfortunately Knibb died the following year and political mobilization by the Baptists 
ever recovered its momentum. 79 However, in the elections of 1844, unconnected to 
Knibb Anti-State Church Convention, George William Gordon emerged as a 
representative for St Andrew. He was the son of a Scottish planter and an enslaved 
woman. His mantra was the defense of the interest of the small settlers against the big 
planters. Gordon was himself a church man but not initially of the Baptist faith. He 
however met Deacon Paul Bogle whose passion for social justice and his flair for 
organizational detail set him in the mould of Sam Sharpe. 80 Bogle became the campaign 
manager for the re-election of Gordon by registering voters and by mobilizing them for 
political action. Thomas Holt observes that:

78 Munroe and Bertram, Adult Suffrage and Political Administration, 35
79 Munroe and Bertram, Adult Suffrage and Political Administration, 36
The energy of the Bogle-Gordon alliance was rooted in the extraordinary religious enthusiasm of black Jamaica in general and its native Baptists in particular. For both men, religion shaped their worldview and gave strong millennial underpinnings to their vision of political entitlement and social justice.\textsuperscript{81}

Political participation among blacks was limited by the Franchise Act, so that of a population of 436,000 in 1862 only 2000 blacks were eligible to vote. Blacks outnumbered whites by 32 to one. All whites were eligible to vote. This was the context which forms the backdrop to protest and rebellion which were to follow in 1865.

On October 7, 1865 a black man was arrested and imprisoned for trespassing on a long abandoned plantation in St Thomas in the Vale. On October 11, 1865, Bogle, along with his 27 followers, precipitated a riot in which two whites were killed and many fled in fear. Governor Eyre declared martial law and with the help of the Maroons, the rebels were rounded up. The revenge by the state apparatus was severe. The official records state that 1,000 homes were burnt, 354 people executed by court martial, 50 shot without trial (25 by the Maroons), 10 killed otherwise and 600 men were flogged.\textsuperscript{82} Both Gordon and Bogle were among those executed.

The Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 became a watershed in Jamaica's history. Among the significant developments were the controversy it generated in the metropolis, with some calling for Governor Eyre to be tried for murder, the Jamaican Assembly voting to return to Crown Colony government, and the establishment of the Jamaica Constabulary Force. When Jamaica once again became a Crown Colony, Barbados was the only Caribbean territory with representative government.

\textsuperscript{81} Holt, The Problem of Freedom
\textsuperscript{82} Richard Hart, From Occupation to Independence: A Short History of the Peoples of the English Speaking-Caribbean (Kingston: Canoe Press, 1998) 81-82
Both what preceded the events of 1865 and what was to follow in Jamaica’s history indicate the reaction and reversal, “the dip and fall back” of its development by the alliance of hegemony, (Britain) and ideology (planter/merchant class and Anglican Church establishment). The strategies and tactics have varied but the intention has been singular.

In the century following what I have called “the great reversal” that is, the return to Crown Colony Government, (1865-1962) there have been at least three important movements in the process of resistance which were simultaneously religious, cultural and political. Their origin and sources of influence included both Christianity and African traditional retentions through Myal, Pocomania and Revival.

The first of these derived from Alexander Bedward who founded the Jamaica Native Baptist Free Church in 1889, one of the largest and most significant lower-class religious movements in Jamaica. It had some 3,000 members drawn from all parishes in Jamaica and with membership in Panama, Costa Rica and Cuba where black lower class Jamaicans had emigrated. Bedward led the movement from 1891-1921. Bedward was first arrested in 1895 for blasphemous and wicked, inflammatory incitement to sedition. In a sermon Bedward had declared that the time had come for a black majority to end white oppression by rising up and crushing the white minority and taking control of their destiny. He was found not guilty by reason of insanity and ordered confined to a lunatic asylum. His lawyer, however, got him released on a writ of habeas corpus.

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84 Satchell, “Colonial Injustice,” 48
A march organized in 1921 led to the arrest of 685 people charged with vagrancy offences and the sentencing of 240. Parliament, later the same week, granted “free pardon” to 208 of them. Alexander Bedward was never seen or heard from again, having been confined by the courts to a lunatic asylum. As Satchell points out, the arrest and trial of the Bedwardites forcefully demonstrates the contempt, disregard and disdain the upper and official classes held for the lower classes and the gross denial of basic civil and human rights to them by colonial authorities.85

More significant was the influence of Marcus Garvey.86 At the turn of the 20th Century resistance turned inwards towards the development of a black ethnicity, race consciousness and a sense of self. Garvey was influenced by Robert Love who was born in the Bahamas in 1835 and died in Jamaica in 1914.87 Love studied as an Episcopalian priest and worked as a clergyman in the Southern U.S.A. before he turned to medicine. The threefold contribution of Love were his militant journalism in the Jamaica Advocate (1894-1905), his organization of black representation in the colonial legislature, and his advocacy of land reform, agitating for the distribution of Crown lands to the landless peasantry.88 Garvey was to continue the national political consciousness that Love initiated and advocated.

Garvey was born in St Ann Jamaica in 1887, travelled to England in 1912, where he paid careful attention to the struggles between Ireland and England for two years and came under the influence of a group of black colonial writers. He returned to Jamaica in 1914 and promptly founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association

85 Satchell, “Colonial Injustice,” 62
88 Lewis, Marcus Garvey, Anti-colonial Champion, 26
It is on the shoulders of Garvey that the tenets of social, political and economic self-determination for Africans and the creation of a global African nation were built. In fact, the widespread influence of Garvey as a Pan-Africanist and liberation ideologue far outstripped the achievements of his lifetime.

The third movement of resistance is Rastafari which originated in the rural peasantry, squatter settlements and urban ghettos, especially Western Kingston, out of the experience of desperate poverty among the black underclass. Rastafari, following upon the philosophy of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, was the first to inject the notion of blackness and African-ness in the notion of the society’s identity. It was also in direct contrast to the notions of Jamaicanness as a multi-racial harmonious society. Jamaica’s multi-racial nationalism met its fiercest and most positive antagonism from the black activist Rastafarian movement especially in the 1950s and 60s. Every expression of Rastafari was in protest against the traditional values of what it deemed a Euro-esque society.\footnote{Garvey, “Africa for Africans”, 45, 6.}

Rastafari as a cultural and religious movement coincided with the Black power movement which was seeking to rid the black majority of its sense of powerlessness and hereditary degradation. However, the Jamaican sensibility in general is averse to both racism and reverse racism. Suggestions of racial exclusivity and claims of black
‘superiority’ found effective opposition from the national commitment to multiracialism. Rastafari proved even more problematic because during its infancy, the Jamaican elite were promoting the myth of Jamaican multi-racial nationalism. What made this mythical is that it sought to promote multi-racialism at one and the same as it sought to preserve the legacy of notions of African inferiority. Discrimination in Jamaica takes the form of preference of shades (lighter is preferred) as compared to rejection on the basis of race. Jamaica faces more colourism than racism. It is society that has remained stratified from the days of the big plantations, with the planters, legislators, and colonial administrators comprising the elite. With the exception of Jews who up to the 19th Century led a precarious existence, all whites belonged to the enclave of elites. Below them were the smaller land owners, parsons, bookkeepers, merchants, attorneys, and a slightly lower tier included skilled hands and former indentured servants. At the very base of the society were the people of the darker hue, the black African population. There was also an attack on self subsistence farming. Rastafari

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93 While it may be argued that there has been the merging of the colour and class lines in the upper tiers, black Africans have remained at the base. As late as 1992, a popular Dance Hall Disc Jockey, Buju Banton celebrated love for ‘mi brownin,’ street name for a girl of light complexion. Barry Chevannes, Rastafari: Roots and Ideology (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994) 5, see also discussion by Anne Paul, “No Space for Race? The Bleaching of the Nation in Post-Colonial Jamaica,” in Levy, The African-Caribbean Worldview, 94-113. Some progress has been made in Jamaica, in obviating the social stratification by colour, but the changes have been very recent. The Anglicans did not elect the first black bishop until the 1950s and as late as the 1960s an eminent judge was bypassed as chief justice because of his colour. A Jamaican who rose to the position of Central Bank Governor in Haiti in the 1950s and applied for a position in a local bank was told that the only post available was that of junior. Chevannes, Rastafari: Roots and Ideology, 5 The study by Derek Gordon on upward social mobility in Jamaica 1943-1984, found that blacks proceeded at a slower rate than any other group. Derek Gordon, “Race, Class and Social Mobility in Jamaica” in Lewis and Bryan, Garvey: His Work and Impact.

94 The rise of export banana to Europe, as an economic option saw the increase of landholding five acres or less from 37,000 in 1880 to 96,000 in 1890. By 1930 there were 180,000 holdings of fifty acres or less; eighty-five per cent of those had holdings of less than five acres. However “after 1930 decline set in and the lowest stratum of the peasantry began to lose its foothold on the land.” Chevannes, Rastafari: Roots and Ideology, 5 The people resisted this impoverishment with their feet: the earliest migrants went to Central America with an estimated twenty four thousand leaving for Panama in 1884. Between 1904 and 1914 the migration went mostly to the United States and Cuba. George Roberts, The Population of Jamaica, (Cambridge University Press, 1957)

Attempts to escape rural impoverishment led to internal migration as well. Mention has been made above of the implied problem for the oligarchy, posed by the internal migration with the resulting introduction of the Vagrancy Act 1907. The internal migration after 1921 went mostly towards Kingston

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built upon the world view of Myal and Revival which was in response to European subjugation and dominance. It was inspired by the rise to power of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia and in particular, his resistance to Mussolini.

The theological content of Rastafari as it relates to a Caribbean self-consciousness will be given more attention in a subsequent discussion. However, the impact of the movement as resistance to the dominant culture of the day in Jamaica has been significant and pervasive. This impact has been demonstrated in various ways including the idealization of Africa, the use of marijuana as liturgical and as a cultural habit, the introduction of the new vocabulary and world view. In addition, Rastafari has forged alternative communities with their own ethos and mores that have played a decisive role in Jamaica’s development. From a theological standpoint, the introduction of the interpretative frame in respect of the dominant culture as Babylon, has proven to be valuable in the development of Caribbean Theology.

Finally, there has been resistance through the visual and performing arts: Anne Paul contends that there is a bleaching and whitening of official Jamaican culture away from its African origins and that this persists and manifests itself in many ways from actual skin bleaching to the seamless assimilation of colonial norms, values and practices on the part of middle and upper classes. Paul contends that this was demonstrated by furor created in response to Laura Facey-Cooper’s sculpture “Redemption Song,” which was unveiled at Emancipation Park on August 1, (Emancipation Day) 2003. The

which had become Jamaica’s capital city in 1872. Kingston was the only totally urban parish in Jamaica and its population doubled between 1921 and 1943 and grew by a further 86% between 1943 and 1960 to nearly 500,000 souls. Chevannes, Rastafari Roots and Ideology 16. It is important to note that this urbanization was not in response to industrialization in the urban centre, indeed, it preceded industrialization. It was in response to rural impoverishment. The largest squatter settlements were therefore to be found in the vicinity of the markets in Western Kingston.


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bronzemonumentdepictsan eleven-foot-tall black male figure accompanied by a black female figure, ten feet tall. Both are portrayed naked and the figures are thigh-deep in a pool of water, arms by their sides with faces uplifted to the sky. The base of the monument is inscribed with the words “None but ourselves can free our minds”, a quote attributed to Marcus Garvey and reggae legend Bob Marley.96

The public responses were largely negative and were as filled with passion as the monument was rich with irony. The controversy surrounded the appropriateness or inappropriateness of nude black figures depicting emancipation. What was missed was the opportunity to have a straightforward discussion of the race factor. It missed also the irony of a white/light woman sculpting black bodies or even the irony of a wealthy white Jamaican representing emancipation from slavery for majority black population.97 Facey-Cooper is not the first from her social group to have played this role. Before her, Edna Manley sculpted “Negro Aroused” which was controversial in its time.98

Jamaican music, like Jamaican art, is also message music and the theme of resistance predominates. Since gaining political Independence in 1962, various performing arts groups have cultivated a tradition of excellence in celebrating Jamaica’s cultural heritage. The theme of resistance has been identified with the international struggles for justice.99

96 Paul, “No Space for Race”
97 Paul, “No Space for Race”
98 Edna Manley, a white Jamaican, was wife of the late Premier National Hero Norman Manley.
99 The University Singers in their 2009 season celebrated the legacy of resistance through music. The University Singers concert entitled “One People, One voice, One Song” is a prime example of the relationship between performance and resistance. Their combination of song and dance traced the genealogy of Jamaican music ranging from folklore and traditional dance to Rock Steady, Reggae and Dancehall to recount the island’s history of colonization, resistance and freedom. In part 1 of the performance, the songs take us on a journey that begins with Jamaica’s Taino people, moves to the colonizers in Spain and France, traverses the motherland mapping out the violence of stolen African bodies ravaged in the middle passage and finally ends with the arrival of the enslaved to the Caribbean
Oral Thomas argues for an interpretation of Caribbean Carnival as hermeneutical practice of resistance. He argues that this premier Caribbean cultural expression also demonstrates the relationship of social struggle for self-determination and self-identification between "play" and resistance and subversion.\(^{100}\) The original manifestation of carnival was a festival in which the French Planters mimicked the *negre jardín*, or field labourer. In this festival, the planters disguised themselves by blackening their faces and wearing tattered clothes typical of the enslaved African field labourer.\(^{101}\) It was not just play; it was a further act of dehumanization of the enslaved Africans. In time, the enslaved Africans after emancipation from slavery celebrated Canboulay, which was a midnight procession. In this procession at midnight, the enslaved would march singing, dancing, armed with sticks and torches and they paraded through the streets. This was the imitation of the planters but was symbolic of the revolutionary intent of the underclass.\(^{102}\) As Thomas pointed out the Africans turned

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narrating the struggles of plantation life and the fight for freedom. Part 2 is a celebration of Jamaican music from Ska to dancehall that highlights the progress that has been made since colonization and slavery and ultimately commemorates the triumph over struggles and challenges the people have faced.

This journey through music bespeaks the power of performance to turn the past into the present. The African song "asikhatali" and freedom medleys become avenues for the audience to relive the tragic story of African enslavement and violence and it is on stage that history comes to life. The music has been used in ways that museums are, as public history, it stores the record of the progress of a people. The performance, however, only revives the past in order to celebrate the story of black resilience and triumph over adversity. The progression from "asikhatali" to the drumming of "melting pot", "De Real Mento" and ultimately to dancehall indicates that it is that past that has made Jamaica what it is and in some respects shaped how the people live.

Moreover, the continuous temporal shifts in the performance place contemporary music within the historical context of colonization and freedom. Not only does it display the interconnectedness between the African drumming of their ancestors and the booming rhythms of rude-bway culture and Rock Steady, but it also demonstrates that music today is a product and a part of the legacy of black resistance. The culmination of the show with "Dancehall nice again" captures the power of the Jamaican people to continue to find joy and happiness even after the hardships and struggles of their history and demonstrates how performance can be a space in which citizens can find common ground to rejoice in their culture and shared past. The very title of the show "One People, One Voice, One Song" seeks to suggest that performance and nationhood are deeply intertwined. The choreographers correctly message the idea that Jamaican music is inseparable from Jamaica's self-understanding and how it interacts with its past. The challenge remains to continue to harness the arts and performance to challenge the lingering legacies of inequality and to turn creative energy into the impetus for social transformation.


\(^{101}\) Thomas, *Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics*

\(^{102}\) Thomas, *Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics* 201
the \textit{negre jarden}, a parody intended to dehumanize them, into a Canboulay; a mask of a mask or a liberating practice.\footnote{Thomas, \textit{Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics}}

\textit{(e) The rise of trade unionism and worker representation as a challenge to the establishment}

The rise of trade unionism and worker representation is indebted for their origin to the increasing wave of protests, centred on the sugar plantations of the British West Indies, in the early 20th Century. The history of trade unionism in Jamaica reflects a wider trend of resistance in the Caribbean in the 1880s and 90s, post-World War I and the interwar years ending in 1938. Trade unions were illegal in the British West Indies and as a result, many workers formed Friendly Societies that channeled dissent and provided the organizational structure to facilitate some collective bargaining.\footnote{Nigel O. Bolland, \textit{On the March: Labour Rebellions in the British Caribbean 1934 – 1939} (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995); Hart, \textit{On the March}, 4} As ‘proto-unions’, these institutions provided their members with a measure of job security in the face of illness, and general adversity. One of the earliest known trade unions was that of the Artisan Union formed in Jamaica in 1897 which was, however, short lived.

Over 100 strikes occurred between 1886 and 1889, 49 in 1895 – 1897, and 60 strikes between 1899 – 1903. Many of these strikes were led by representatives of Friendly Societies, form proto-unions. This first wave of labour unrest led to the development of techniques of collective bargaining and trade unions amongst the British West Indians. By the end of the First World War, labour movements in Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana became more organized. J.A. Bains-Alves, originally a member of the short-lived Cigar Makers Union formed in Jamaica in 1908, organized dock and tram workers in Kingston for a series of strikes in 1918. By 1919, with the

\footnote{Thomas, \textit{Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics}}

help of Alfred Mends, former vice president of the Artisans Union (1897), Bains-Alves formed the Jamaica Federation of Labour which petitioned the governor for the formal and official recognition of trade unions in the island.\textsuperscript{105} This eventually led to the passage of the Trade Union Law in October 1919 that “conferred legal status on registered trade unions and protected them from prosecution from conspiracy or unlawful combinations, but it did not confer immunity for unions and workers from liability of Tort or breach of contract, nor did it legalize peaceful picketing”.\textsuperscript{106} A similar legislation was passed in British Guiana in 1921 and in the rest of the Caribbean during the 1930s and 40s.\textsuperscript{107} Several leaders emerged from trade union movements in the Caribbean during this period and entered the political forum.

The British West Indies Regiment (BWIR) was subject to racial discrimination in the First World War. The racist policy relegated West Indian soldiers to mainly positions of labour battalions and allocated white leaders rather than appointing qualified black and West Indian soldiers.\textsuperscript{108} Under the strain, many members of the West Indian regiment refused to perform their duties, which included washing dirty linen and cleaning latrines, and protested their treatment by attempting to create a union called Caribbean League.\textsuperscript{109} The soldiers would air their grievances, which included the need for higher wages and the replacement of white European leaders with black West Indians, but the League was betrayed to officials. Several of the soldiers were court marshaled and/or executed by firing squad. All of these events contributed to the eventual disbanding of the BWIR and heightened anti-colonial feelings in the Caribbean as the treatment of the soldiers was widely reported. The Colonial Office forewarned

\textsuperscript{105} Bolland, \textit{On the March}, 23 - 24
\textsuperscript{106} Bolland, \textit{On the March}, 24
\textsuperscript{107} Bolland, \textit{On the March}, 24
\textsuperscript{108} Bolland, \textit{On the March}, 27 - 28
\textsuperscript{109} Bolland, \textit{On the March}, 28
local governors of the possible threat these former soldiers posed to the order of society. Nonetheless, over 14,000 men returned to the West Indies to join the ranks of the unemployed and destitute. However, their experiences enabled them to provide leadership to many of the local unions that developed.

There is no dispute that modern Jamaica was spawned by the labour unrest which took place between 1935 and 1938. The only difference is in determining precisely what the precipitating event was. According to Arnold Bertram, the key event is the three weeks of militant action in May, 1938 when the working people of Jamaica broke the back of the colonial government, won for themselves rights which they had been denied after a whole century of petitions, and created the foundations of modern Jamaica.  

Richard Hart chronicles protests, uprising strikes and riots beginning in St Kitts among cane cutters, followed by general uprising and riots in St Vincent. Similar protest arose in St Lucia and in Barbados. Trinidad and Guyana had started the decade of the 1930s with multiple strikes uprising and protests. A serious disturbance at Frome in Westmoreland on May 2, 1938 having to do with labourers on the sugar factory of Tate and Lyle (the West Indies Sugar Company) resulted in clashes between strikers and police leaving four strikers dead and nine wounded. This was followed by a series of strikes on the waterfront by wharf labourers in Kingston on May 11 and 20. The general strike on May 21 for higher wages did not prove quite effective. It was the withdrawal of their labour by street cleaners that were employed to the Kingston and St Andrew Corporation that proved decisive. The police initially appeared to quell the

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110 ‘Within a generation, Jamaica will become completely ignorant of its historical traditions if it continues to relegate the 14 killed, 41 injured by gunshots, and the 139 otherwise injured during the rebellion, to the ranks of those ‘... who have no memorial who are perished as though they had not been’ Arnold Bertram “The 1938 Frome Riots” (Part I) Sunday Gleaner May 28 2006
111 Richard Hart, “The Labour Rebellions of the 1930s” in Beckles and Shepherd, Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World 370 - 373
mob, but they regrouped and were joined by others. This spread island wide and lasted for days. When the dust settled eight persons had been killed and 171 wounded, over 700 were arrested and prosecuted.\footnote{Arthur Lewis “The 1930s Social Revolution” Beckles and Shepherd, 376-386}

The riots of 1938 proved decisive not only in giving birth to trade unionism and the two main political parties in Jamaica: the Jamaica Labour Party and the People’s National Party but the two main agitators, Alexander Bustamante and his barrister Norman Washington Manley, were made national heroes. These events paved the way for Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944. The birth of the People’s National Party in 1938 signalled the opportunity for broad based political representation and therefore the hope to disrupt the dominance of the ruling elite. The Bustamante Industrial Trade Union also began in 1938 and between 1938 and 1943 it absorbed and merged with many smaller trade unions. Though labour unrest continued in this period, the trade union movement provided the beginnings of an organized voice at the work place. The National Workers’ Union was born in 1940 and further ensured a healthy rivalry that only served to strengthen the workers movement. The amendment of the Jamaican Constitution in September 1943 to provide for Universal Adult Suffrage in Jamaica was the signal that Bustamante needed. By the following year he had launched the Jamaica Labour Party and changed his name by deed poll from Alexander William Clarke to Alexander Bustamante, in order to become a candidate for Mayor in the Kingston and St Andrew Corporation.

The 70 years after the uprising and unrest of 1938 brought the long gestation period of the birth of political representation for the mass of the people to an end. At the same time, the need to raise both the economic and cultural standards of the masses
and to secure for them conditions of freedom and equality remain a key issue. The attempt to raise the standard of living itself has two sides. First the total income of the West Indies must be considerably increased, and in the second place it must be more equitably distributed. It would be a mistake to ignore either of these two aspects.\footnote{Lewis, "The 1930s Revolutions" 388}

B. **Contemporary Perspectives**

I. *A Caribbean Economy*

(a) *Persistent Poverty in the Caribbean*

The Caribbean does not often betray extremes of abject poverty and dereliction including palpable signs of public health and food security crises. The extent of the penetration of HIV/AIDS or the incidents of malnutrition or malaria cases in the Caribbean is not yet at the level of public health crisis. Nevertheless, the income disparities and inequalities are quite real. If I follow George Beckford and talk of ‘persistent poverty’ it is as a way of speaking of lack of development even though some countries in the region are classified by the World Bank as Middle Income Developing Countries.\footnote{George Beckford, *Persistent Poverty* (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1999) xii Clive Y. Thomas is George Beckford Professor in Caribbean Economics at the University of the West Indies, Mona The assertion of persistent poverty is being made in respect of the Caribbean despite the fact of the notable exception of Trinidad and Tobago, which is the only oil rich country in the Anglophone Caribbean, has recorded, during the most recent oil boom years of 2005-08, economic growth in double digits. It has a per capita income of US$21,700. Barbados has always regarded itself as a cut above the rest and reports per capita income of US$19,800, literacy rates of 97.6% and life expectancy of 76.4 years. Even Jamaica, with a per capita income of US$4,800, is classified as a middle income developing country. Compton Bourne "Challenge and Opportunity: An Investment Overview of Caribbean Community Countries," Address, Euromoney Conferences/LatinFinance Caribbean Investment Forum, Ritz-Carlton Golf and Spa Resort, Montego Bay, 11-13 June 2007. Web. Dec. 2008 <http://www.caribbank.org/titanweb/odb/webcms.nsf/AllDoc/827DEA76CD5C92A7042573E50066583A/$File/BourneChallenge.pdf> Beckford suggests that persistent poverty is endemic in plantation economies and that poverty and dependency are the nature of the relationship between all Third World} As in the days of the plantation economies, today’s Caribbean economies are organized towards systematic self-impoverishment.\footnote{Political independence has}
formation of institutions of governance in the region. Poverty persists in the Caribbean not merely because of an inherited economic structure but also because of the cultural underpinnings of that economic structure, including its institutions and governance ethos. At the same time, “persistent poverty” refers to the leaps and lurches in development that resulted in the number of persons falling below the poverty line in Haiti, Guyana and Jamaica as well as in other Caribbean territories.\footnote{Evan Barbados, that is regarded as a middle-income economy because of its tourism and off-shore sectors, has recently had to contend with persistent poverty with 13% of the population falling below the poverty line. St Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenada and Dominica all have poverty of greater than 30% of their population living below the poverty line. See UNDP Draft Report 2004.} There is high unemployment, “unattachment”, a growing problem of urban blight and informal as well as unorganized communities.\footnote{A category used in Jamaica to refer to those who are not captured by labour statistics because they have not sought employment, but are not in school and not in training.}

Eleanor Wint insists on the development of new perspectives on poverty in the region and recommends the use of qualitative rather than quantitative measures to assess poverty.\footnote{Juliet Melville and Eleanor Wint eds., \textit{A New Perspective on Poverty in the Caribbean} (Kingston, Jamaica, 2007) 2} She contends that while poverty is rooted in the history and colonial legacy of the region, and while significant progress has been made in all areas of social development, in recent times poverty has taken new forms and dimensions, including urban poverty which has been exacerbated by the rural urban drift and new forms of rural poverty as a result of the decline of farm gate prices, an impact of global market arrangements. There is also a rise in feelings of economic insecurity and negative environmental impacts on health and safety. There is poverty associated with displacement, uprootedness and dislocation as a result of economic disaster, natural catastrophe and political crises. The impact of HIV and AIDS on the 20-34 age group is
also a new form of poverty along with rapid aging and inadequate economic provisions.\textsuperscript{121}

The problem of persistent poverty is obviated by migration which both provides a trap door through which those who cannot easily be provided for in the job market in the region can explore the options for upward social mobility available in the metropolis; and also makes a large contribution to GDP through remittances.\textsuperscript{122} This is not peculiar to the region. It is however of pivotal importance in a context where the economies are not growing at a rate to provide adequately for their populations.

The Caribbean economist Arthur Lewis makes the observation that based on the available arable and cultivable land in Jamaica it could carry, at European peasant standards, only a density of 60 per square mile whereas density is already 294 per square mile. All other islands in the Caribbean with the possible exception of Trinidad and Tobago are similarly overcrowded. This means that the best that can be afforded a Jamaican family from agriculture is a living standard roughly equivalent to one fifth of

\textsuperscript{121} Melville and Wint \textit{A New Perspective on Poverty in the Caribbean}, 2, Wint goes on to list some of the new factors and forces that contribute to the persistence and spread of poverty as well as increased vulnerability in the region:

- Growing economic disparities within countries and communities;
- The reduced capacity of the state;
- Changes in personal consumption patterns;
- The emergence of new health issues, especially the HIV/AIDS epidemic;
- The growing importance of personal and community security and safety issues;
- The impact of environmental degradation and environmental uncertainty on livelihoods;

The poverty created by the weakening of traditional institutions, in particular the extended family, and its impacts on the most vulnerable, including single-parent, female-headed households and the elderly\textsuperscript{122} Edward Seaga, "Higher Education At Crossroads," \textit{Jamaica Gleaner}. 14 Dec. 2008.Web. 9 July 2011. <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20081214/focus/focus3.html>. Edward Seaga is a former Minister of Finance contends that Remittances contributes at least twice as much to the Jamaican economy as the top foreign exchange earners, tourism and bauxite.
the minimum required for a European peasant.\textsuperscript{123} Moreover the mono-crop which was
the orientation of the Caribbean was never determined with any sensitivity to food
sufficiency or food security needs of the given country and necessarily required a
companion import substitution policy. In addition to all that, the value added from these
crops did not benefit the national economy from which the commodity was exported.
Capital was injected and profits were expatriated; related activities such as shipping and
banking among others developed to the benefit of the metropole. The plantations
occupied the largest tracts of cultivable land without making a comparative contribution
to the growth of income, (the wages of the labour force, often at subsistence level, are
the only contribution from the plantation to the local economy) and in that respect the
plantations also limited the options of the local economy for alternative and more
efficient land utilization.

The dominance of sugar in particular and agriculture in general has been replaced
in post-independence Jamaica with bauxite and tourism as well as more recently the
growth in the service sector. This has been similar in other Caribbean islands, although
neither tourism nor bauxite is common to all. Trinidad and Tobago has oil and Guyana,
which is on the mainland of Central America, has huge under-utilized acreages of
cultivable land.

\textsuperscript{123} Arthur Lewis, ‘The Industrialisation of the British West Indies’ in Dennis Pantin, \textit{Into the Valley
(b) Economic growth instead of economic development

After independence the inherited imbalances and inequity rooted in the economic structure were not addressed and an incremental approach was adopted. From import substitution to structural adjustment to economic liberalisation and free trade to the neoliberal experiment, colonial economic arrangements have remained largely intact with mere incremental changes along the way. Economic growth was therefore favoured over economic development.\(^{124}\)

The Caribbean is neither uniformly developed nor underdeveloped. Barbados is classified both by its per capita income, rate of literacy and state of its physical infrastructure as a developed society. Jamaica has aims to become a developed society by 2030. However, the legacy of under-development bequeathed to the region by discovery, enslavement, colonization, and, in particular, the plantation system has not been overcome in the half of century of self-government and political independence.

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\(^{124}\) According to Arthur Morris, economic growth refers to the increase in production and consumption by a region or a nation whilst economic development is the increase of such production or consumption by each person putting growth as growth in per capita income. Growth may increase the weight of the nation in world affairs even while the nation fails to improve the quality of life of its citizens. Development provides an increase in goods and services that may be felt by the population. Morris, Arthur, Geography and Development, (London: UCL Press, LTD, 1998) 1. The following abstract sets out the issues succinctly: it suggests that economic growth is a necessary but not sufficient condition for economic development. Development it says, is multi-dimensional and involves the re-orientation and reorganization of the entire economic and social system. It contends that there are two equally important aspects to economic development: 1. Raising of income and consumption levels 2. Creating conditions conducive to promoting human dignity and respect; increasing freedom of options and choices. It contends that Economic growth may be defined as an increase in a country's ability to produce goods and services. Economic growth merely refers to an increase in the real Gross Domestic Product, or GDP per capita over a period of time.

It is natural to be misled by the idea that economic growth is the key to economic development and perhaps a condition of development itself, but development is more than simply increasing economic output i.e. GDP per capita. It is a wider concept than economic growth. A country's economy may experience real growth of GDP with no economic development taking place. Nevertheless, wider more meaningful indicators of development are often correlated with GDP per capita, such as The Physical Quality of Life Index, Human Development Index, Human Poverty Index and the Human Suffering Index, which help us include the non-monetary factors of development.

Economic growth may track growth of income and output but can be indifferent to the spread or evenness of the spread in income across the economy and society as a whole. Economic development is a measure both the population and economy.
The economic and political experiments including continuation of mono-crop agriculture, “industrialization by invitation” and the adoption of the Puerto Rican model of industrialization and import substitution and their surrogate children of structural adjustment and neo-liberalism have failed to bring economic prosperity to the region.

Michael Manley, the late Prime Minister of Jamaica, was a devastating critic of the economic experimentation in the early post colonial years. Speaking at the International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia (1977), he stated that, “where political sovereignty has been conceded but economic power remains untouched, equality remains a myth, social justice proves unattainable and even freedom becomes an ambiguous phenomenon”. Manley may have been addressing a gathering on the African continent but his feet were firmly planted in the Caribbean. His thoughts were driven by the Jamaican reality and evidence. He was critical of the early fathers of political independence for their failure to define the project of political independence as the rooting out of inequality and the challenging of inherited economic structures. Manley contended that “the capitalist system of the Puerto Rican model served to reinforce the elitist colonial plantocracy, strengthening the middle class ties with the capitalists, thereby further excluding the growing Black majority.” Under this reformed capitalist system worker exploitation was common, with employees working between 12 and 15 hours at five Jamaican dollars per day. The surplus value of labour was still geared towards building the elite capitalist. Overall, in spite of the “two-party democratic system, the society was still firmly elitist; and those elements of the economy which were in local hands were controlled by a tight oligarchy”. Manley did not trust the Washington Consensus and rejected out of hand such values of Bretton

126 Manley, *Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery*
127 Manley, *Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery* 40
Woods as reduced government, open economies, free market, devaluation and subjecting the poor not only to reduced social services but also to inflation without protection by the state. He was to become less trenchant during his second stint as Prime Minister of Jamaica in the 1990s but succeeding events in the economic and political experience of the Caribbean have rather vindicated him.

Looking at the way in which the banana industry has been devastated by European and North American trade agreements, Joe Mandle contends that there is a failure to pursue the people’s interest and that regional development has had a bias away from the path in which local decision-making and self-interest would have resulted. Caribbean people have not chosen freely the products that have been put for sale from the Caribbean on the global markets. The maintenance of what colonial power permitted rather than what is in the best interest of regional development has been the pattern. He concludes:

Formal colonialism ended in the 1960s and 1970s. But economic thralldom prevailed, this time in the seemingly benign environment created by protectionism. With it, and notwithstanding its probable benevolent intentions, the pattern of production which emerged still was dependent on what policy-makers in the metropolitan countries deemed appropriate for a region like the West Indies to produce. Windward Island bananas were throughout this period a response to British and European policy.

The banana regime which allowed Caribbean bananas preferential access into European markets had the effect of freezing those economies which had come to rely on those markets, in time and in a false sense of security. When the regime changed because they had expired or were forced to be abandoned because of the World Trade

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128 Michael Manley, in his second stint as Jamaica’s Prime Minister, changed strategy without changing ideology and was less inclined to seek quarrels with the United States, Jamaica’s largest trading partner. He appeared to also have been convinced of the role of the Market in the political economy.

Organization (WTO) ruling it set in train a cycle of economic deterioration in those economies.

The first generation of political leaders after the island states of the region gained political independence in the decades of the 1960s merely tinkered with their economies without seeking to reform them radically. In terms of agriculture the pattern of commodity export to Europe and to a lesser extent North America continued. Tobacco and bananas were added to the export of sugar in the pattern inherited from the plantation system and economy.

Tourism was an important addition. Over time the Caribbean has become the most tourism dependent region in the world. In 1998, gross revenues from tourism were an estimated US17.9B and there were more than 900,000 persons in direct employment by the sector.\textsuperscript{130} However, whereas resorts development and the hospitality industry in general has brought much needed foreign exchange, tourism can hardly be accused of accelerating the pace of national economic development. Put differently, tourism both required and to some extent facilitated the modernization of the economic infrastructure of the resort areas in particular and the nation in general. However, in general the pattern of reliance on foreign capital from the metropolis inherited from colonialism and the plantation economy remained.\textsuperscript{131} The pattern of payment of wages that virtually


\textsuperscript{131} In Jamaica with a fairly developed tourism industry since the late 1970s, there has been substantial investment by local private investor along with some state agencies and pension funds that own hotels. The all-inclusive brands developed by local entrepreneurs are well known international brands. Only in the late nineties and early third millennium has that ownership been diluted by significant Spanish hotel chains.
kept workers in poverty within the industry at levels not dissimilar to the pattern established by plantation agriculture also persisted.\textsuperscript{132}

The tourism sector has resisted making provisions for social investment including investment in housing for workers in the industry. Tourism is the largest foreign exchange earner in Jamaica. Tourism does not make as great a contribution to GDP in Jamaica as it does in Barbados, and does not attract as many visitors as it does in the Bahamas. Moreover, Government routinely provides the tourism sector with carte blanche tax relief, exemption and holidays.

Mining is by contrast a multiplier industry. Not only have higher paying jobs been provided, but the mining sector has, in general, provided greater social investment than has been the case in the tourism sector. Jamaica and Guyana have a bauxite and alumina industry and Trinidad and Tobago has a petro-chemical industry. Mining, however, in terms of total numbers of persons employed, is a much more marginal player than either tourism or agriculture.

The fact that Caribbean societies are small, their economies are small and that they are import-dependent with high unemployment and poverty figures has inevitably led to a balance of payments crisis. Starting in the late 1970s economies of the region began

\textsuperscript{132} In the 2007/8 Budget Debate in the Jamaican Parliament Omar Davies, Minister of Finance, pointed out the anomaly in which tourism interests paid workers below the threshold that required them to make statutory payments thereby ensuring that tourism workers would not be able to benefit from existing social protection through the National Housing Trust and National Insurance Scheme. Workers in the tourism sector get the greater portion of their incomes through tips and gratuity, from which statutory deductions are not made. The Finance Minister made the critical observation "much of the take home pay of workers in the tourism sector...is outside of their formal compensation...if you subtracted the gratuity, many of these workers are hovering around the poverty line. This is the reality we have to face" Presentation by the Minister of Finance, Dr Omar Davies in the 2007/2008 Budget Presentation in the Jamaican Parliament.
cites the case of Jamaica which she says is virtually in receivership to the multilateral international agencies and which has suffered a 30 per cent drop in per capita income when compared with the 1970s. Guyana has been listed among countries in social disintegration as a result of their structural adjustment loan.137

Levitt observes that poor countries from Asia, including giants like China and India, have set in motion a process of self-sustaining economic development without significant external assistance. She raises the question as to whether the reason for the crisis in Africa, in Latin America and the Caribbean is "not related to the special role of these regions in supplying Europe and North America with export commodities in the past and to this day?"138 She points out further that one of the net effects of these Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP)139 is negative net transfer to creditor countries. She observes:

Net transfers from all developing countries, which had reached US$36 billion by 1985, have increased steadily, year by year, and have now stabilized at over $50 billion per annum totalling $242 billion by 1988, most of it paid out to commercial banks ($160 billion). At the same time, developing country debt increased from $75 billion in 1982 to $1,159 billion in 1988.140

Neville Nicholls, then President of The Caribbean Development Bank, suggested that what was regrettable for the region is that the structural adjustments were imposed and monitored externally and that economic theories that worked well in Europe, "soon led to disastrous consequences".141 He appeared to attribute more of the ill-effect of structural adjustment to the competiveness of local politics than to the measures

137 Levit, Debt Adjustment and Development, 2
138 Levit, Debt Adjustment and Development, 6
139 Structural Adjustment Programmes
140 Levit, Debt Adjustment and Development
141 Sir Neville Nicholls, The Caribbean -after Structural Adjustment, Distinguished Lecture Series, Institute of International Relations (University of the west Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago 1992) 13, 14
themselves. He says, "[I]t appears ... that sometimes the appropriate economic policies have been correctly understood by governments, but they have not been implemented because those governments have feared the possible negative electoral consequences of those right polices." He argues that "the Caribbean beyond structural adjustment must become much more responsible for the production of the resources that support our standard of living." According to him, a vibrant and efficient agricultural sector is the basis of self-sustaining economic development.

(c) Physical Environment in the Caribbean and Climate Change

Even before the advent of global warming and climate change, the Caribbean, by a sheer accident of geography, was a region prone to natural disasters including tropical cyclones, earthquake and volcanoes. Port Royal in Jamaica was destroyed by an earthquake in 1692. Plymouth, the capital town of the British dependency Montserrat, was submerged by lava flow from the eruption of the Soufriere Hills volcano in 1998. The impact of natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, storms and floods on societies and economies has increased considerably in the last two decades and is likely to grow further as a result of two complementary trends. First, the scale and frequency of major weather-related events are likely to rise due to climate change. Secondly, the economic impact of natural catastrophes is increasing due to the growing number of people living in areas with high risk exposure.

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142 Nicholls, The Caribbean—after Structural Adjustment, 15
143 Nicholls, The Caribbean—after Structural Adjustment, 18
146 The Soufriere Hills volcano began erupting in July 1995.
146 http://www.strategicrisk.co.uk/story The financial consequences of natural disasters
Caribbean societies and economies have amply illustrated the foregoing. In the last two decades the frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones affecting the Caribbean have increased. On the one hand, there are those who contend that human induced climate change has increased incidents of tropical cyclones whilst others believe that this is due to the natural 50 year cycle. That conflict does not need to be settled here but what is undeniable is that in the recent experience of the Caribbean there have been multiple hurricanes above category two, and that these have affected more than one Caribbean territory in the same season.\textsuperscript{147} Public goods, such as roads, bridges, utilities, and education infrastructure, housing stock, agriculture and public revenue sources have all been disrupted. The hurricane season extends from June to November each year. On average, one major hurricane affects a Caribbean country every two years.\textsuperscript{148} To deal with such catastrophes, member countries of CARICOM, with the help of the World Bank, developed a response mechanism, the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) in 2007.\textsuperscript{149} Since its establishment, CCRIF has made payouts to two member countries (Dominica and St.

\textsuperscript{147} In fact in a four week period in 2008 Haiti was hit by four tropical cyclones and Cuba was hit by three within the same three month period. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/sep/05/haiti hurricanes, Fay Gustav, Hanna and Ike hit within a month and caused damage of US$1B. Many lives were lost. Available data indicate that Hurricanes Gustav and Ike have between them inflicted the worst storm damage in Cuba's history. The storms -which hit within two weeks of each other- have caused some US$5B of damage, affecting nearly 450,000 homes officials said. At least 200,000 Cubans lost their homes and crops have been destroyed. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/7619274.stm Information coming out of Cuba on the impact of the cyclones on the island has been limited. Action by Churches Together International (ACT) and the international media have been primary sources of information. In September 2004 Hurricane Ivan hit Grenada with winds of greater than 135 miles per hour. The island has a population 102,000. There were 41 confirmed deaths and 90 per cent of it housing stock was destroyed. There were scenes of horrific destruction on the “Spice Isle.” http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/environment/IEES/grenada/IEE04_76.pdf

\textsuperscript{148} In 2004, Hurricane Ivan wreaked havoc on Grenada, Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. In Grenada, losses amounted to 200% of the country's GDP. Caribbean states often depend on post-disaster international aid which is usually slow and uncertain.

\textsuperscript{149} 16 CARICOM countries currently participate in this, the region's first parametric product. The CCRIF, in its 2007-8 annual report stated that, “the CCRIF was developed to help mitigate the short term cash flow problems small developing economies suffer after major natural disasters. It represents a cost effective way to pre-finance short term liquidity to begin recovery efforts for an individual government after a hurricane or earthquake catastrophe, filling the gap between immediate response and long-term redevelopment through raising debt or support from donors. The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility audited Annual report 2007-8.
Lucia) which were affected by the earthquake of November 2007. The response of creating the CCRIF however, is the kind of innovation and cooperation that could serve the region well if that approach were applied to the economic management and the further development of governance institutions in the region.

2. Caribbean Politics

Shridath Ramphal, one of the elder statesmen of the Caribbean who was among those who drafted the Treaty of Chaguaramas in 1973 argued for the need for political change:

Time, we believe is short. The world faces a kind of unspoken ultimatum: either we go forward to a more ordered world governed by the values of sharing and tolerance, a world of mutual rights and responsibilities, one of rules and laws which all respect, a more democratic world with power constrained in the interest of all—or (ironically, freed of the constraints of the “cold war”) we can regress to a world in which the few who are rich and strong keep subjugating the many who are poor and weak, and in which the selfish and the lawless get their bullying way: a world that amidst today’s realities would be one of chaos and ultimately self-destruction.\(^{159}\)

The Commonwealth Caribbean has a long tradition of democratic governance. Liberal democracies, including free and fair elections based on adult suffrage, as well as political parties and labour unions enjoying mass following, have characterized governance in the region since the 1940s. The region has a solid record of orderly and democratic regime change. Except for isolated instances in Grenada in 1979 and 1983, political parties have taken political office only by way of democratic elections. Trevor Munroe observes that, “Post-Cold War democratic governance in the Commonwealth

\(^{159}\) Shridath Ramphal, “Global Governance: Can the South Afford the Status Quo?” *Caribbean Affairs* Vol. 7 No. 5 1995 18 - 19
Caribbean has arisen on a mixed foundation.” On the one hand there have been more than 100 national elections based on adult suffrage in which more than 130 political parties and movements participated in the region. This has taken place in the period of decolonization and post-colonial development. “Competitive party systems and constitutional government; popular attachment to freedom and justice—both survived alive and relatively well into the end of the 1980s.” 151

Concurrently, the private sector is at best displaying a mixed record in taking the lead to bring about economic growth with social equity. In this context, constitutional democratic governance in the Commonwealth Caribbean, long institutionalized and deeply legitimated is undoubtedly in malaise and very probably in a process of decay.152

Selwyn Ryan celebrates the history of impressive liberal democratic politics and questions whether or not it can be sustained. Is the “historically favourable political culture” which was inherited together with a sophisticated complex of liberal democratic institutions sufficiently well entrenched to withstand hurricane-like social storms that are roaring throughout the region?153 Ryan’s concern for threats to

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152 Rex Nettleford compares the Caribbean favourably in relation to aberrations in the Soviet Empire and in the West. He says the following:

We in the Caribbean have escaped somewhat, but only somewhat! For there have been the Haitian experience, the miscalculations of Grenada leading up to the tragedy of 1983 complete with assassinations and foreign invasion, the continuing uncertainty of Cuba made no better by the United States embargo and the proven attempt at destabilization of the tenacious Castro regime, and the aberrations of government in Santo Domingo and pre-Caricom Suriname. Rex Nettleford “Governance in the Contemporary Caribbean: Towards a Political Culture of Partnership” in Governance in the Caribbean, Selwyn Ryan & Ann Marie Bissessar eds., (Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Research (SALISES) Mona Jamaica 2002) 11

153 Selwyn Ryan “Democratic Governance in the Anglophone Caribbean: Threats to Sustainability” (Trinidad and Tobago: Institute of Social and Economic Research University of the West Indies St Augustine 1997) 2
Caribbean democracies by indelicacies or excesses in the practice and development of electoral politics and political behaviour in the region, especially in Guyana and Jamaica, is shared by many Caribbean scholars. Brian Meeks speaks of the exhaustion of the two-party-political cycle and its replacement by one instead of two term governments. Ryan believes the “common ruin of contending classes” is the likely fate of the Caribbean.

Mark Figueroa sees the threat posed by the political garrisons:

The garrison is, in its extreme form, a totalitarian social space in which the lives of those who live within its boundaries are effectively controlled. Indeed, the core garrison exhibits an element of extraterritoriality; they are states within a state. The Jamaican state has no authority or power except in as far as its forces are able to invade in the form of police and military raids. In the core garrisons, disputes have been settled, matters tried, offenders sentenced and punished, all without reference to the institutions of the Jamaican state.

These concerns are well founded. However, there are prior questions that deserve to be raised as regards to governance in the Caribbean. Is democracy a one size fit all? Is it self-evidently the case that imposition of systems imported “lock stock and barrel” from elsewhere and imposed upon the Caribbean without adaptation is necessarily in the best interest of the Caribbean? Is it of material importance that adult suffrage when first applied to the Caribbean first meant property owners and necessarily excluded landless masses?

Were notions of democracy ever rooted in social equality, and were they practised as such? Is the mainstreaming of the masses and the enfranchisement of the

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155 Ryan “Democratic Governance in the Anglophone Caribbean: Threats to Sustainability” 20
dispossessed a part of the democratic agenda? Is it the not the case that the working assumption of liberal democracy has been that there is a master class and a servant class? What material importance is to be given to the circumstances in the Caribbean when models of Western democracy were first imposed upon the region? What consideration is to be given to the fact that in the history of the practice of democracy in the region the agenda of the people has been diluted by the programmes and policy imposed by the multilaterals and the room to manoeuvre has been curtailed by the machinations first of the planter class and then of the transnational corporations? Has democracy itself served the Caribbean region well, and what do Caribbean people have to show for it?

If it is the case that both the circumstances in which democracy came to be part of the Caribbean reality and the fact that in practice throughout the years the voice of the people has been muted by the cacophony of multi-lateral agencies, transnational corporations, the ruling elite including the political class or society, what role has this played in making liberal democracy such as it is unsustainable in the region?

Does the fact that the Caribbean is celebrated as a region in which the Westminster model has become entrenched not militate against the necessary requirement of attainment of political maturity by developing Caribbean institutions suited to its reality and needs?

Nettleford raises both the question of the legitimacy of the inherited model of democracy in the region and the efficacy of the practice. He suggests that the obstinacy with which the "inheritance is safeguarded is regarded by some as a sign of the need for
our liberation from mental slavery."\textsuperscript{157} He laments the controversy surrounding the development of a Caribbean Court of Justice and the lack of reflection in the region about globalization which he sees as "old wine in a new bottle" and an indication that "the hegemony of the rich of the new world persists in concentration of money-power and trading-options in the North Atlantic where imperial power has resided for the past half a millennium."\textsuperscript{158} He raises stark issues concerning the reality of democracy:

The fervent call for democracy is not always matched by the practice of it. It is as if the inheritance of an authoritarian temper coming out of plantation history and colonialism has left an indelible mark. The replacement of planters and Crown officials by autocratic messianic native political leaders and humourless native bureaucrats, respectively, has not always advanced the decolonisation process with the speed anticipated. So political leaders in many ex-colonial territories have been caught less than fully prepared for the new roles and functions demanded of governments and related agencies not just in Independence but in an Independence that must find for itself a discrete form against the background of shifting paradigms and transforming ideologies.\textsuperscript{159}

Nettleford's reference to the need for liberation of the Caribbean from mental slavery is not original. Marcus Garvey, Jamaican National Hero, first coined the expression and Reggae Music legend Bob Marley made it famous as stated above. Academics, sages and artists agree that the notion of "we the people" was not a developed one among the leaders at the time of political independence.

The Jamaican Constitution was written in the wake of political independence. The constitution itself reflects the desire for change and the necessity of continuity. The appointment of a Governor General, which is a feature of the constitutions of former British colonies, the establishment of a non-elected Upper House and in the case of the

\textsuperscript{157} Ryan, Democratic Governments in the Anglophone Caribbean, 12
\textsuperscript{158} Ryan, Democratic Governments in the Anglophone Caribbean
\textsuperscript{159} Ryan, Democratic Governments in the Anglophone Caribbean 13
Jamaica, the entrenchment of the Bill of Rights in the constitution indicates that continuity predominated over change.

The first of these features is the clear commitment by the framers of the constitution in the Anglophone Caribbean in general and in Jamaica in particular, to the maintenance of the British Monarchy and its continued influence over the Caribbean. There can be no doubt that the decision taken by the leaders to adopt a conservative approach to accept a notion of political independence that maintained the British Monarchy was influenced by the experience of Guyana in the 1950s when that Country was invaded by Britain within 133 days. What is unclear is whether or not the leaders were uniformly of the conviction that the Caribbean was capable of full self-government. The appointment of Governors General to each independent territory is a function of the maintenance of the British Monarchy but also gives concreteness to this self-doubt. The Jamaican constitution simply says that “there shall be a Governor General of Jamaica who shall be appointed by Her Majesty and shall hold office during Her Majesty’s pleasure and who shall be her Majesty’s representative in Jamaica.”

The Governor General is an unelected person but one who has, in other jurisdictions, exercised the authority to fire the Prime Minister who has been duly elected. The maintenance of the Monarchy and its trapping of the appointment of the Governor General as Head of State betray the impression of political leaders who are not convinced of their capacity for full self-government.

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160 The Jamaican Constitution begins as follows:
At the Court at Buckingham Palace, the 23rd day of July 1962, Present,
The Queen Most Excellent Majesty in Council Her Majesty, by virtue and in exercise of the powers in that behalf by subsection (1) of section 5 of the West Indies Act, 1962 or otherwise in Her vested, is pleased, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered as follows. - 1. (1) This Order may be cited as the Jamaica (Constitution) Order in Council 1962 Jamaica (Constitution) Order in Council, 1962 Statutory Instruments 1962 No. 1550 Caribbean and North Atlantic Territories Made 23rd July 1962, Laid before Parliament 24th July 1962. 5
161 The Jamaica Constitution, 57
(CCJ). It is in the attempts to establish the CCJ that the self-doubt as well as reactionary forces has been betrayed.\textsuperscript{164}

CARICOM was seeking to establish the CCJ to have an original jurisdiction for interpreting the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, to settle trade disputes between member states as well as a final appellate jurisdiction to replace appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.\textsuperscript{165} Kenneth Hall, who became Governor General of Jamaica, in commenting on the debate on the establishment of the CCJ in the Jamaican Parliament observed that “what was at stake . . . was more than the establishment of another regional institution—with the transfer of legal sovereignty to the region, the Caribbean Court of Justice represents the completion of the process of decolonization.”\textsuperscript{166}

Then Jamaican Prime Minister PJ Patterson, in closing the debate in the Jamaican Parliament in 2003, set out precisely what was an issue:

Why should there be greater confidence in judges of the Privy Council, chosen by a system in the United Kingdom over which the Lord Chancellor, who is a member of the Cabinet, presides? Does he not believe that Jamaica can devise a system to ensure judicial probity within our parliamentary democracy? If after 40 years, as an independent nation we still need judicial surveillance from London, we are unworthy of the heritage which our national heroes and great ancestors have entrusted to us.\textsuperscript{167}

The schizophrenia of the region as regards notions of sovereignty and the development of a regional jurisprudence were on show during the debate in the

\textsuperscript{164} Franklin, \textit{We Want Justice}, Delano Franklin has provided a summary of the presentations in the Lower and Upper Houses of the Jamaican Parliament in the debate on the establishment of the CCJ. There are also papers from non-members of the Parliament.


\textsuperscript{166} Franklin, \textit{We Want Justice}, vii

\textsuperscript{167} Franklin, \textit{We Want Justice}, 62
its sovereignty and reinforcing the idea that the Caribbean is condemned to a future of judicial and political surveillance from London.

Trevor Munroe concludes that the composition, procedure and conclusions of the Committee which drew up the Jamaican constitution were finely in tune with both the style and content of middle class politics which had emerged in the decade of the 1950s. He contends that the constitution is an elitist document. The committee that drew up the constitution was representative in only the most formalistic sense. “In neither its social composition nor its origins was it popularly based.” The 16 members included five lawyers and five members were drawn from the un-elected Upper House. Trade Unionists were conspicuous by their absence. Munroe contends that “embourgeoisement, having taken hold of the political and governmental orders, was being carried to its logical conclusion in the very process of defining the new Jamaican State.”

Furthermore there was insufficient effort to involve the people in the constitution making process; the ideology may have been democratic but the processes were not. Few submissions were received, and it became more important to meet a deadline and complete the document expeditiously than to meaningfully involve the public. Both the press and the public were excluded from committee deliberations. As Munroe points out, “whereas ordinary law was debated in public, the fundamental law was


\[173\] Munroe, The Politics of Decolonization, 139

\[174\] Munroe, The Politics of Decolonization

\[175\] Munroe, The Politics of Decolonization, points out that this was the case with the Trinidad and Tobago constitution. Trinidad with a population one-half of Jamaica received twice as many memoranda in a situation where good time was allowed for submissions.
drafted by a few men in secret conclave, presented to Parliament and passed as the basic law of the land."\textsuperscript{176}

One submission that was received and was eventually accepted was the submission by the very influential Law Society for the Bill of Rights clause to be entrenched.\textsuperscript{177} The significance of this is that this is the clause that L. Ashenheim who, as a member the Society, successfully persuaded the committee that it was required to ensure that investors would consider Jamaica safe for investment. It was essentially concerned to make the right to private property sacrosanct. The significance of the decision to entrench the right to private property in the Jamaican constitution should be lost on no one. In the context of inherited landlessness of the masses as an outcome of chattel slavery and the process of colonization, the Jamaican constitution prevented the wholesale re-distribution of land. After slavery was abolished in 1834 in Jamaica, a further four years of apprenticeship was required to be served by those who had been enslaved. In 1838 when slavery was fully abolished, those who fled the plantation were given no land of their own. Nothing has happened since then to alter the reality of landlessness among the broad mass of the people. The new independence constitution ought to have allowed for the options to alleviate this inherited inequity. The deep entrenchment of the right to private property was not merely acquiescence to the privileged Law Society; it effectively tied the hand of future governments preventing them from fundamentally redressing the inherited imbalance.

\textsuperscript{176} Munroe, The Politics of Decolonization, 140
\textsuperscript{177} Munroe, The Politics of Decolonization, 142
3. Crime and Insecurity in the Caribbean

From the very outset of political independence Jamaica, as a Caribbean society, was not a stakeholder society. While it cannot be successfully argued that landlessness or the inherited sense of lack of stakeholdership is the only or even the main factor driving crime and insecurity which have characterized the experience in post-Independent Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, it is most self-evidently the underlying context from which the reality of crime and insecurity has to be examined.

Former PNP Minister of National Security Peter Philips sought to make a case for the renewal of debate about the imposition of a State of Emergency.\textsuperscript{178} Philips was making this contribution in the wake of citizens of Gravel Heights, a community in the Kingston Metropolitan Region, ordered by gunmen to abandon their homes; members of the Jamaica Constabulary Forces provided safe passage while residents hoisted their belongings on haulage trucks and abandoned their homes. He pointed out that Jamaica has 280 crimes committed per 100,000 of the population and 50,000 persons ready to commit crime. With more than 60 murders per 100,000 of the population, Jamaica's homicide rate is ranked in the top three most murderous countries in the world. Philips' observes:

> What we are witnessing here is the gradual, almost imperceptible moving of the boundaries of the State. In effect by the very act of publicly acknowledging their existence and underscoring their sense of their own power, these criminal organizations are demanding acceptance from the 'body politic' of their place in Jamaican society.

> We have all become inured and complacent in the face of this criminal onslaught and the apparent ineluctable dismemberment of the Jamaican state. Thirty years ago, the country was appalled and outraged at the prospect of 500 murders in a year. Eight years ago we broke the barrier of 1,000 per year. Now, again for the second year in succession

\textsuperscript{178} Writing in the Sunday Gleaner December 28\textsuperscript{th} 2008
we will surpass 1500 murders per year, our collective resistance and outrage clearly sapped.¹⁷⁹

Sociologist Herbert Gayle points out that the murder rate in the Caribbean before independence was 10 per 100,000. Only Barbados which is the one country in the region that is classified as a developed society has maintained that rate. The rest of the Caribbean has a rate of 30 homicides per 100,000 of population, a rate which is three times the average rate of other regions in the world. He contends that “throughout the Caribbean there has been rapid social change since independence and such dramatic periods can make societies vulnerable to factions or violence worsened by a trans-Atlantic drug trade and high levels of corruption.”³⁸⁰ Gayle points out that the rate of 30 per 100,000 makes the Caribbean the most violent region in the world. He contends that many Caribbean societies have homicide rates at the level of civil war bench mark. Belize with a population of less than one million has 30 murders per 100,000. Jamaica’s homicide rate is twice the rate of civil war bench mark. Jamaica’s homicide rate has moved from 887 homicides in 2000 which is a rate of 33 per 100,000 to 1611 in 2008, a rate of 61 per 100,000. In 2009, the single most murderous year in the history of the Caribbean, 1680 persons were killed at a rate of 64 per 100,000.

Anthony Harriott contrasts the two extremes in terms of violence in the Caribbean: Barbados with crime rates approximating developed societies and Jamaica is an extreme case even among developing societies. He says that Jamaica has become a high violence society with an average of greater 20 per 100,000 of population for longer than 20 consecutive years. El Salvador and Guatemala showed similar patterns but only for the duration of their civil wars. Puerto Rico, the Bahamas and the U.S. Virgin Island in the 1980s and early 1990s showed similar patterns but this was attributed to drugs

¹⁷⁹ The Daily Gleaner Sunday, December 26th 2009
³⁸⁰ Hebert Gayle “The Context of our Murders,” the annual Sue Cobbs Lecture 2009
trafficking. Decline in the drugs trade because of counter narcotic measures resulted in a reversal in the rate of homicide to sub-20 per 100,000. By contrast in Jamaica, where law enforcement report an eight-fold decline in cocaine seized between 1990 and 2007, the number of murders increased three-fold.\(^{181}\)

Harriott therefore concludes that Jamaica has a subculture of violence which has been demonstrated by the following: a) More than 20,000 incidents of serious injuries that are the result of violent encounters between ordinary citizens. b) An affinity to guns demonstrated by polls that indicate that 37 per cent wish to own guns. c) Popular approval for the use of violence. Harriott contends that there are three types of violence: predatory, regulatory (violence used to curtail violence) and conflict violence. d) The culture of honour that feeds upon the fragile egos of those in search of being respected. e) the thirst for revenge; more than 40 per cent of persons injured as a result of interpersonal violence indicated an intention to seek self-help justice. f) The rise of overt violence, violence that is violence done in full public view without fear of prosecution.\(^{182}\)

Reference has already been made above to political garrisons and the way they threaten the stability of Jamaica’s democracy. Garrisons as such facilitate criminality. The fact that Jamaica and the Caribbean are along the trade routes and the shipping lanes has been exploited by narco-traffickers in their attempts to exploit the lucrative markets on both sides of the Atlantic.


\(^{182}\) Harriott, *Bending the Trend Line*, 29-38
In addition to the inner cities there is an extensive problem of squatting in Jamaica. Jamaican Minister of Housing, Horace Chang, has indicated that at the end of 2008, 25per cent or 655,000 of the Jamaican population live in unorganized housing settlements. There is a spatial component to violence in Jamaica with inner city and squatter settlement communities accounting for three times the mean average of the rest of the island.  

Other scholars have used both cultural and medical metaphors in order to account for the extent of criminal violence in the Jamaican and other Caribbean societies. Obika Gray proposes the term “badness-honour” or “honorific fundamentalism” which he sees as insisting on an end to social domination. Karen Richards, a Clinical Psychologist, uses medical metaphor and suggests that the Jamaican nation is suffering “Borderline Personality Disorder” (BPD) which she says causes patients in her practice to do harm to themselves. She suggests that the more than 1600 homicides in a single year for each of the last three years (2005-08) in Jamaica is made worst by the fact that the society appears numb and unresponsive to the incidents of extreme violence.

Brian Meeks offers the term “Hegemonic Dissolution” and argues the case by responding to questions of whether or not Jamaica is a failed state. Meeks identifies the elements of this hegemonic dissolution as a) the relatively autonomous inner-city fiefdoms which have been if anything, consolidated as quasi-statal forms, providing reliable systems of security and social welfare for people with the ambit of their power. b) the withdrawal of the middle class from the centre of Jamaican life which he sees as

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183 Harriott, Bonding the Trend Line, 22
184 Cited by Brian Meeks, Envisioning Caribbean Futures: Jamaican Perspectives, (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2007) 74
185 Sunday Gleaner February 15, 2009
much the result of physical migration of waves of skilled professional, entrepreneurial and technical people as the erosion of cultural domination.  

There can be no doubt that socio-cultural, political and economic factors all make a contribution to the climate of insecurity which dominates places like Jamaica but are also apparent in Trinidad and Guyana. Since the fundamental duty of the state is security of the people, both the response to it and responsibility for it must be laid at the feet not only of government but of governance.

4. Caribbean Cultural icons

A legacy of persistent poverty, lagging economic development, incrementalist political culture, vulnerability to environmental catastrophe and a climate of insecurity and violence do not tell the whole story of the Caribbean. An analysis of the Caribbean situation requires an acknowledgement that the Caribbean in world affairs has managed noteworthiness in its achievements and recognition that belie its size (geography, economy and demography). To begin with, the fact that the island chain of the Caribbean is located along the shipping lanes and trade routes for trans-Atlantic cargo has gifted the Caribbean with uncommon access to international travel. The people of the Caribbean have always been on the move. The fact that the international language of commerce, English, is spoken in the Caribbean has also assisted the portability of Caribbean culture. Both of these factors have contributed to the phenomenon whereby the Caribbean punches above its weight class in international affairs, but by themselves they do not completely account for it.

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386 Meek, Envisioning Caribbean Future, 64-78
Cricket, a game played both by England and many Commonwealth nations, was dominated by the West Indies cricket team for more than a decade and a half. For the Caribbean cricket is both mirror and arena. Cricket has, in the past, provided lenses through which one may examine Caribbean reality.\footnote{CLR James Beyond the Boundary, Michael Manley’s A History of West Indies Cricket and Oral Thomas’ work have portrayed the game as interpretative lenses for understanding Caribbean reality. See also Oral Thomas, Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics within a Caribbean Context (London, Equinox, 2010) 189-203} It is clear that especially when the West Indies played England in the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s that to West Indians at home and in the Diaspora the contest was more than the one for the Frank Worrell trophy. The game on the field of play was a contest to counter the history of oppression. Precisely because Caribbean societies are small and the opportunities for upward social mobility and economic independence few, sports and the performing art take on greater significance. Caribbean athletes and sports personalities have become household names internationally in a variety of endeavours.

Even before note is taken of the achievements of the Caribbean through the sport of cricket, it is important to indicate that it was an arena both of comment on and challenge to the existing social arrangements. As Thomas, James and Manley have all pointed out, West Indian passion, aggression and willingness to cross the boundary was in response to their social reality. Thomas cites three major instances in which Test Cricket was the arena to vent West Indian frustration and suggests that there was more going on than merely the result of the game. The three instances are the test matches between England and the West Indies at Bourda in Guyana in 1953, the Queens Park Oval in Trinidad in 1960 and Sabina Park in Kingston Jamaica in 1968.\footnote{Thomas, Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics, 197-99} Thomas argues that cricket is a game of order. The umpire is the ruler and his decision is final. He argues further that the field of play is sacred space. Yet, he says in West Indian
cricket that order has been challenged and the sacred space traversed. This is so because in the West Indies (Caribbean) cricket is a paradox. It is the colonizer’s game which is a reminder of the imposed social, political, racial, cultural and personal inferiority. On the other hand with little opportunity for upward social mobility the game provided an arena to outdo, outperform and outwit the masters.

The contrast between how the two (the English and the West Indian) watched and played the game was about much more than styles. The inhibited restraint and respect for the sacred space of the boundary with which the English watched and played the game was not the case in the West Indies. Every role on the cricket pitch including batting order is given meaning and mirrored the social roles, relations and tension in the society beyond the boundary. In many ways the game on the field of play was often the society at play. In this respect the boundary was crossed with impunity to celebrate success and register approval for decision and tactic. There was as well a co-participation between players and spectators. “Cricket provided a vent for frustration, so batsmen hit the ball hard, bowlers bowled fast and spectators crossed the boundaries.”

In the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing China, the Caribbean out performed its usually high standards with world records in sprint events and with record medal hauls. Usain Bolt surpassed Asafa Powell a former world record holder, who is also from the Caribbean, with world records thought to be near the limit of the human potential in sprints. Jamaica’s performance in international track and field competition has earned it

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Thomas, Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics 188
Thomas, Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics 189
Thomas, Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics
Thomas, Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics 182
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Thomas, Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics
the reputation of a sprinting super-power. However, the international achievements of the Caribbean go beyond sport: both soca, the music of the Eastern Caribbean, and reggae, the Jamaican signature music, have become the preserve of Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The Rastafarian movement, a major export from the Caribbean, with its iconic dreadlock hairstyle is popular in Latin America, Europe and Asia. Caribbean poets, lyricists, sages, academics and public officials have made their mark on the world in a manner that has little bearing on its size and the viability of its economy. The ideas for the struggles for black liberation and black consciousness had their origin in the Caribbean. Colonialism began in the Caribbean and it was in the Caribbean that the birthplace of resistance to slavery and the embers of the struggle for freedom were ignited. In 1791 slaves in the northern region of Haiti staged a revolt that began the Haitian revolution.\(^{196}\)

The Caribbean is a brand new civilization 500 years young. It has no antiquity. Watty celebrates this by pointing to the fact that the Caribbean has no ruins of Pompeii, no Catacombs of Rome, no Pyramids of Egypt and no Great Wall of China. He contends as well that the Caribbean does not have the hang-ups, “the inhibitions and the prejudices which have come down from these ancient civilizations which have dehumanized human beings, caricatured human relationships and demonized the world.” He says that the Caribbean will be a culture of people not of things.\(^{197}\)

**Conclusion**

Caribbean Theology must account for and respond to Caribbean reality which I have attempted to sketch in the foregoing. Clearly there are many problems, as well as


\(^{197}\)Watty, *From Shore to Shore*, 6
rich potentials and grounds for hope. My constructive task will be to elaborate a theology which responds to the analysis and offers a vision to sustain the Caribbean in constructive growth, on a path to ‘fullness of life’ (Jn. 10.10).
Chapter Three

Identity as the issue of Caribbean Theology

Caribbean Theology locates itself in the family of liberation theologies and shares theological method with them. What distinguishes Caribbean Theology from other forms of liberation theologies is a special concern with identity. Issues of identity arise in all postcolonial societies but they do so in an especially intense way in the Caribbean for four reasons.

First, problems of identity are bound up with the learned, entrenched and reinforced self doubt of the people of African descent. The people of African descent form the base of the social pyramid in the Caribbean and are the majority demographic grouping. In the case of Jamaica more than 90 per cent of the population is of African descent. Among the black-skinned masses attitudes still exist that betray a self-contempt and a lack of self-confidence. As Rex Nettleford puts it, “A people who do not believe in themselves, cannot hope to have others believing in them. The insecurities of this important racial grouping persist with a vengeance”.1 Reflecting on the first decade after gaining political independence in Jamaica, Nettleford argues that “notions of national identity centred for a long time on the fight for self-government and the liberation of the island of Jamaica from metropolitan overlordship by way of transfer of power in the shape of progressive control of inherited political institutions by the native population. But once this phase of the ‘struggle’ was won, the question

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of national identity shifted to definitions about who comprised the ‘native population’ and, by implication, what constituted ‘nativeness’ of the society”.\(^2\)

Nettleford points out that black-skinned Jamaicans understand that they have to compete on the same ground as their brown (Chinese and Indian) and white compatriots. However, they do not possess the strong racial memory of the great cultural achievements in the way their European, Chinese and Indian compatriots do.\(^3\) He argues further that,

The Africans, of all the groups which came to the New World, came as individuals and not as part of a group which maintained identity through great religion, or activity through age-old recognizable customs. To the contrary everything, the language, customs, retention of their ancestral past, has been systematically demonized, delegitimized and discouraged in the new world. The obvious answer for the African or black Jamaican is to sink his racial consciousness in the wider, greater aspirations to acquire education and other means of making himself economically viable.\(^4\)

The learned inferiority and self-contempt of African-Jamaican culture has been reinforced and entrenched by both the mass media and religion. Progress has been made in the last 50 years in mainstreaming black-skinned Jamaicans, but self doubt persists.

Second, Caribbean identity is problematized by creolization. The present Caribbean population is made up of people from Africa, Europe, China, Asia and the Middle East. As we saw in the previous chapter, the indigenous Tainos, Ciboney and Kalinago population were decimated by the early encounters with the Europeans. Africans who were transported to the Caribbean for slave labour on sugar cane

\(^2\) Nettleford, *Mirror, Mirror*, 11
\(^3\) Nettleford, *Mirror, Mirror*, 35
\(^4\) Nettleford, *Mirror, Mirror*, 35
plantations are the overwhelming majority. White Europeans came as pirates and then as planters. Elements from the Middle East also came, including Jews who became the merchant class, to be succeeded later by Chinese and Indians who originally came as indentured labourers. This means that any discourse on Caribbean identity cannot be framed along the lines of culturally distinctive and unitary origins but only by recognizing the intrinsic ethnic and cultural pluralism of the islands. On the one hand, there is a pull towards the culture of the places of peoples’ origin; on the other hand, in the second half of the twentieth century the popular culture of the Caribbean also came under North American influence. In fact, European culture tends to trump all. Another factor in creolization is the impact of the huge Caribbean Diaspora in the United Kingdom, the Eastern seaboard of the United States of America and Canada. Creolization also has a class dimension. For example, Carnival and Crop Over in the Eastern Caribbean are festivals that originated in the planter class seeking to indulge itself in the revelry of the underclass. It is the unmitigated joy of the underclass being copied by the owning class in a festival of the flesh. Carnival and Crop Over represent the overlords disguising themselves as the underclass disguised as the upper class. As noted in the previous chapter, it has become the mask of the mask of the underclass and therefore a liberating practice.

Third, again as noted in the previous chapter, Caribbean identity is further problematized by persistent poverty. The structure of the economy has remained substantially unchanged despite the social political and economic experiments of self-government and political independence. The changes to economy and society have been incremental. The classes that were privileged have remained at the top of the social and economic structure of the society, and the changes for the underclass have been symbolic or modest. What is more, the pace of economic reform has not been
sufficient to satisfy the aspirations of the majority that were disfranchised by the previous economic and social arrangements. Landlessness of the African majority has remained largely unaddressed. This has both an economic and psychological effect on the base of the population. Without access to land economic mobility is limited. Also, without expanding access to land ownership for the people at the base of the economy and society the sense of stakeholdership in the society is stymied. Fiscal budgets, in more recent times, have placed an accent on education as a policy priority. Even so, the outcomes have been hardly dramatic. 70 per cent of the work force in Jamaica still has no certification. A case could also be made for education in the region to become what others call “the pedagogy of the oppressed,” that is, to raise the consciousness of the people.

However, the point is economic disempowerment and economic marginalization have a bearing on the understanding of Caribbean identity. The struggle for the ownership and control of the means of their subsistence is a perennial struggle to become the masters of their own destiny. A black middle class and a black intelligentsia have emerged over time, but economic independence and economic mobility among the underclass have been elusive dreams. In this respect Caribbean Theology has to be concerned with the persistence of domination and discrimination in the Caribbean.

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Fourth, the Caribbean has needed to find an identity, as Burchell Taylor puts it, "in the shadow of empire." As a subject people, Taylor contends, the peoples of the Caribbean are reduced to being imitators, never initiators, of what is considered worthwhile. According to Taylor, "Their worth and value, the extent to which they are considered worthy of praise and the point at which they will be placed on the scale of civilization and development, are invariably determined by their imitative capability and achievement as a result of it." The general approach from the perspective of the academy or the media, or those who speak about progress and development, has treated people in the "shadow of empire" as having no real story of their own. It is not thought that they have any significant narrative of their own existence; rather, they are understood in terms of approximating and reflecting (in varying degrees) life at the centre of empire. They are no more than clients, conformists, consumers and imitators. Independent thinking, creative imagination and cultural realities—with special and significant formative possibilities toward the fulfilment of their true human potential—are discounted as a rule. What obtains at the periphery—by way of beauty, quality, morality and value—are judged from the point of view of what obtains at the centre. This means that people at the periphery are, to all intents and purposes, invisible. Their existence is not clear-cut and they do not have a properly defined identity. They have no real human face or substance. They are therefore open to being stamped with the stereotypical economic and ethnic images chosen by imperial interests. They have no acknowledged identity, save that which is conveniently assigned to them; their importance or lack of importance is determined

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6 Burchell K. Taylor, "Stepping Out of the Shadow of Empire," The Swope Lecture, at the University of Puget Sound, March 2004 (pages unnumbered and unpublished). In the Shadow of Empire speaks of the life in the periphery or under the influence and the hegemonic interest of the dominant cultural, economic and political force.

7 Taylor, "Stepping Out of the Shadow of Empire."
by their value in relation to imperial interests. Of course, this is true of all colonial peoples, but the fragmentation of population in the Caribbean means that it is true here, a fortiori.

*Caribbean Theology requires multi-disciplinary sources of analysis*

Examination of the Caribbean context makes it clear that it is not the issues of race, ethnicity, class or gender that are central, but the issue of identity. The cultural studies in the postcolonial environment have served to clarify and unpack notions of identity. According to Stuart Hall,

> Identities are...constituted within, not outside representation’. There is no pre-existing ‘essential self’ which is then represented or expressed; rather, subjectivity and identity are ‘constructed within discourse’. There is no ‘unitary’ subject, ‘identical to itself across time’, but rather identity is always unstable, fragmented and contingent, since it is dependent on the exclusion of that which is ‘Other’.  

For Hall, identity is not a hidden essence to be uncovered, but an active process of representation or discursive construction. The suggestion by Gorringe, citing Clodovis Boff, that all knowledge, including theology and economics, is socially situated, holds also for Caribbean Theology. He says:

> This experience taught ... that all knowledge, including both economics and theology, is socially situated and serves particular interests. The sociology of knowledge had already arrived at these conclusions, but it was the struggle for new perception in the Latin American context which burned this into theological consciousness in an entirely new way and established social analysis as an indispensable

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aspect of all theological discourse. In the words of the liberation theologians, theology needs a social-analytic mediation.\(^9\)

If Gorringe is correct, and I believe he is, then both the text and the interpreter are socially and politically situated. The interaction between text and reader bears further analysis in terms of the elements of the self-understanding of the interpreter. This means that methodologically Caribbean Theology (which is reader-centred) requires multi-disciplinary sources of analysis. While such sources necessarily include all forms of social and anthropological analysis including history, sociology, economics, linguistics and literature, for the Caribbean, the accent falls on the field of cultural studies. This begs the questions; what is culture in respect of the Caribbean? And what is cultural studies?

Culture is the whole way of life of a people; it all about shared everyday, human experience.\(^{10}\) Hall notes that it is “both the meaning and values which arise amongst distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationships through which they ‘handle’ and respond to the conditions of existence; and as the lived traditions and practices through which those ‘understandings’ are expressed and in which they are embodied.”\(^{11}\) Cary Nelson, Lawrence Grossberg, and Paula Treichler see culture both as a way of life-encompassing ideas, attitudes, languages, practices institutions, and structures of power—and a whole range of cultural practices: artistic forms, texts, canons,

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architecture, mass-produced commodities and so forth. In the Caribbean, as elsewhere, there is a tension between “cultured” and “culture” or between what is called “prim and proper” and “ragamuffin”. The pull towards Europe and the push from the mass culture with the strong African retention means that culture is a contested space in the Caribbean.

In tracing the history of resistance in setting out the context of Caribbean Theology in the previous chapter, I showed the roles played by the African cultural and religious retentions, music and the arts, sports, the native Baptist movement, Rastafarianism and the trade union movement as pivotal to the developing of self-determination of the Caribbean. I also showed the ways in which Carnival and Crop Over represented the interplay and admixing of both the planter class and the mass culture.

Hall’s definition of culture acknowledges this tension between social groups and classes in any given setting such as the Caribbean. It is this dimension of struggle and confrontation between opposed ways of life in a given culture which betray the ideological character of culture. “Distinctive cultural identity presumes distinctive, and very often contrasting cultural beliefs. When those identities and beliefs harden, as they always do, into social and political positions, we have entered the realm of

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ideology."\textsuperscript{13} John Storey argues that ideology is the central concept in cultural studies.\textsuperscript{14}

In approaching the subject of Caribbean culture, it has to be borne in mind, as has been noted above, that there is fluidity to Caribbean culture. Caribbean societies are open, with extended borders, easily breached and constantly penetrated. Caribbean societies are societies in the periphery and "shadow of empire". In addition, the Caribbean has been constantly subjected to cultural penetration from the North. As I have pointed out above, therefore, the issue of identity and self-determination is pivotally important in coming to terms with Caribbean reality. This is the reason cultural studies is an important source of analysis upon which the Caribbean Theology project relies.

Cultural Studies according to Brian K Blount resists precise definition. It is a plural noun because it is not a single entity.\textsuperscript{15} Storey contends that it has no one distinct method to the object of his study.\textsuperscript{16} This view is shared by Hall who sees Cultural Studies as having multiple trajectories, methodologies and theoretical positions.\textsuperscript{17} Angela McRobbie describes it as messy and a contested space, with a certain magic that results from its methodological diversity.\textsuperscript{18} She asserts that

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{13} Blount, \textit{Can I Get A Witness}, 8
\textsuperscript{15} Blount, \textit{Can I Get A Witness}, 6
\textsuperscript{16} Storey, \textit{Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture}, viii
\textsuperscript{17} Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies," in Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler, \textit{Cultural Studies}, 278
\end{flushleft}
“cultural studies draws from whatever fields are necessary to produce the knowledge required for a particular project.”

This is the case with cultural studies in the Caribbean and with Caribbean Theology which relies upon cultural studies as a part of its analytical tool kit. The history of resistance in which the mass of the people rejected enslavement and marginalization, and thereby precipitated their emancipation is only one frontier. Sports, music, poetry and the visual arts are part of the narrative about Caribbean identity. It is important that cultural studies, the work of cultural anthropologists and more generally, the social and political scientists provide important insight into the problem of identity in the Caribbean. The intellectual tradition which is part of the foundation upon which Caribbean Theology has been built includes among others, Robert Love, T. E. S. Scholes, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Marcus Garvey, Claude Mckay, C. L. R. James, and Rex Nettleford. This intellectual tradition which has been influential both within the Caribbean and in the Caribbean Diaspora includes history, culture, the social sciences and the arts.

Mining of the lived experience of the Caribbean in deepening Caribbean self-understanding requires knowledge of arts and music for the lenses that they provide in coming to terms both with the history of resistance and the struggle of Caribbean self-

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19 McRobbie, “Post-Marxism and Cultural Studies”
20 W. A. Roberts, Six Great Jamaicans, (Biological Sketches) (Kingston: Pioneer Press, 1951)
21 T.E.S. Scholes, Glimpses of the Ages; or the ‘Superior’ and ‘Inferior’ Races So-called Discussed in Light of Science and History, (London: John Long, vol. I 1905); vol. II (1908)
23 Winston James, A Fierce Hatred of Injustice: Claude McKay’s Jamaica and his Poetry of Rebellion (New York: Verso, 2000)
determination. A few Caribbean Theologians regard Caribbean culture as text and not merely as lenses through which to examine the text. These include J. Richard Middleton\textsuperscript{26} and Althea Spencer Miller\textsuperscript{27} who use reggae music as text. George Mulrain uses calypso, which is a narrative folk song, which is at once, methodology, culture and communication. Thomas regards cricket as mirror and arena.

The question of whether culture is text or lenses should detain us sufficiently to say that there is confusion between culture itself and reading strategies that see God as working within Caribbean culture. This is the point to be made in response to observations by Middleton about historical memory and God's intention at creation. Middleton draws upon insight gained from reggae music to suggest, correctly in my view, that it was the divine intention, from creation of the world, to provide a counterpoint, an alternative to the \textit{status quo}. According to Middleton, what was done by the lyrical content of reggae music from Bob Marley and the Wailers extends the biblical story of liberation to include Black struggles against dehumanization and degradation.\textsuperscript{28} And Thomas concludes from Middleton's observation that "the biblical story of redemption stretches from the Exodus to Marcus Garvey and beyond".\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28} Middleton, "Identity and Subversion in Babylon: Strategies for 'Resisting Against the System' in the Music of Bob Marley and the Wailers." He identifies the underline ideological character of the dominant stories of creation in the Ancient Near East and shows how the Biblical creation narrative challenges them and introduces new concepts of power and gives greater value to human life.
\textsuperscript{29} Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 56
It is one thing to say that Rastafarian hermeneutics has been widespread and reggae music spreads its message throughout the Caribbean and elsewhere. It is another thing to say that Caribbean culture influenced by this reading strategy is a text over against the text of Scripture. When Marley made use of the enthronement speech by Haile Selassie for his song *War*, it was finding analogy in culture, politics and history for the biblical theme of justice and equality.\(^\text{30}\) Similarly, when in the Exodus album Marley shows continuity between the crucifixion of Jesus and the mistreatment of Garvey and Bogle, it is merely his reading strategy finding resonance in the lived experience of the Caribbean. Marley says,

I’ll never forget, no way

They crucified Jesus Christ

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\(^{30}\) The lyrics for “the War” made use of speech given by Haile Selassie I in Ethiopia at his enthronement as Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930.

Until the philosophy which hold one race superior
And another
Inferior
Is finally
And permanently
Discredited
And abandoned -
Everywhere is war -
Me say war.

That until there no longer
First class and second class citizens of any nation
Until the colour of a man’s skin
Is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes -
Me say war.

That until the basic human rights
Are equally guaranteed to all,
Without regard to race -
Dis a war.

That until that day
The dream of lasting peace,
World citizenship
Rule of international morality
Will remain in but a fleeting illusion to be pursued,
But never attained -
Now everywhere is war - war. [http://www.lyricsmania.com/war_lyrics_bob_marley.html](http://www.lyricsmania.com/war_lyrics_bob_marley.html)
I’ll never forget, no way
They stole Marcus Garvey for rights
I’ll never forget, no way
They turned their backs on Paul Bogle
So don’t you forget, no youth
Who you are and where you stand in the struggle.\textsuperscript{31}

Once again it is my view that the danger of being carried away is not always avoided by some Caribbean thinkers. Culture as text is eminently unreliable. Reggae music, calypso, and cricket are not uniformly useful. Cricket is no longer played in the Caribbean with the passion and aggression of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. It is less and less seen as reflecting the game beyond the boundary. Reggae has not consistently remained a form of message music. In recent years Dance Hall music which has been regarded as the heir and successor of Reggae music has been dismissed as a mercenary trade catering to the least common denominator and in many ways abandoning the noble spirit of resistance.

Finally, the Caribbean context brings to the fore more profoundly the issues of identity and therefore requires a historiography as well as the insights of sociology, anthropology, linguistic philosophy and, as we have shown, cultural studies. The issue of identity which is a matter arising from the history and circumstances of the Caribbean is not new. West explains what he sees as the importance of this new cultural politics as follows:

Distinctive features of the new cultural politics of difference are to trash the monolithic and homogenous in the name of diversity, multiplicity and heterogeneity; to reject the abstract, general and universal in light of the concrete, specific, and particular; and to historicise, contextualise, and pluralise by highlighting the contingent, provisional, variable, tentative, shifting, and changing.32

Matters of identity in the Caribbean are not so that we can, as Edward Said has put it, “defend peoples and identities threatened with extinction or subordinated because they are considered inferior, but that is very different from aggrandizing a past invented for present reasons”.33 The pursuit of a Caribbean self-consciousness and sense of identity is neither merely in order to archive stories from Caribbean past so that they can be preserved, nor to seek to glorify its history so that the Caribbean can compete. Examination of the Caribbean context makes it clear that it is not the issues of race, ethnicity, class or gender that are central, but the issue of identity which is central. Issues of identity include issues of race, ethnicity, gender and class but are more than the sum of them.

This is the reason the Biblical symbol of exile and views about the colonizing and imperialist forces as Babylon find resonance. The Caribbean is the new identity forged for a people who are perpetually alien and strangers. The matters arising from the issue of identity that remain are the distortion and dysfunction that persist in the Caribbean, especially the question of violence. The legacy of injustice which shaped the Caribbean has remained unaddressed. Those who have been denied justice on the plantations and have been disempowered and disfranchised have yet to have their day of recompense. The landless poor blacks at the base of social pyramid need to be

given a stake in the society which gives them reason to hope in the future of the Caribbean. This would mean among other things; creating the framework that is participatory and inclusive socially, politically and economically. It would also mean seeking to create a society that can give expression to a clarified sense of self and to add value to their contribution on the international stage to the advantage and benefit of the people of the Caribbean. Multi-disciplinary sources are required for Caribbean Theology to contribute to Caribbean selfhood. Utilizing multiple sources ensures that the Caribbean is in a position to tell its own story that reflect its reality and respond to the outstanding issues.

When it comes to the Caribbean, the problem of identity is also bound up with issues of self-definition and self-determination. Thomas points out that the Caribbean has never had “full control of decision-making processes and the forces and systems of production”. He argues further “that where a people are deprived of the right to self-definition or to name who or what they are, and denied pursuing self-determination” as well as the opportunity to decide their own future, they are powerless. Powerlessness is the cause not merely the symptom of their lack of self-definition and self-determination. This powerlessness continues to have a bearing on how the Scripture is read and understood in the Caribbean. This is how I am proposing it should be understood by Caribbean Theology. It is the right to tell one’s own story as a Caribbean people, to become both subject and object of the discourse, narrator as well as narrative. The issue of identity is a way of speaking about the self-understanding of the Caribbean people and their lived experience.

35 Thomas, *Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics*
36 Thomas, *Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics*
Text and Experience

In doing a Caribbean theology, I am assuming that the Christian narrative is part of the identity of a Caribbean Christian and the Caribbean church. Identities are not singular but multiple: for example, Jamaican, male or female, Christian or Rastafarian and so on. When we do Caribbean theology, in my understanding, we need to read Scripture, to incorporate that narrative into our narrative, or to read our narrative through that narrative. In the next chapter, I shall propose a paradigm for doing that, but first, I need to say something about how we go about reading Scripture as part of our theological endeavour.

Caribbean Theology, like Latin American Liberation Theology, is put forward as critical reflection on praxis in the light of the Word. Christopher Rowland and Mark Corner contend that this understanding of theology as a second order task is not new to Christian theology.37 They argue, “That subtle dialectic between the ‘text’ of life, viewed in the light of the recognition and non-acceptance of unjust social arrangements, and the other ‘text’ of Scripture and tradition is the kernel of a lively theological, or for that matter any, interpretative enterprise.”38 Praxis does not merely provide an angle on the ‘text’ of Scripture, it also provides the agenda. Priority of praxis is the pre-understanding that emerges from the situation, derived by the experience of the situation, engagement with the situation and the reflection on the situation. It is life that is clarified by the ‘text.’ The outstanding question, however, is whether or not praxis is prior to the text. Gorringe challenges the idea that theology

begins with praxis. He cites the example of Bartolomeo De Las Casas who in reflecting on Ecclesiasticus 34, saw that the mistreatment of indigenous people by Spain was impossible for Christians. Gorringe says:

What is concealed here is the reason for outrage, the moment in which the process gets started. Outrage is the proper moral response to an immoral situation, but it is not, like Kant’s categorical imperative, innate in human nature. Social conditioning, the fatalism of centuries, can make it seem improper even to the victims, a process which psychology has deeply illuminated in its account of the internalisation of oppression. The famous story of Bartolomeo de las Casas illustrates the way in which illumination can come. It was whilst reflecting on the portion of scripture set for the mass (Ecclesiasticus 34) that he finally came to see that Spain’s treatment of the indigenous population was impossible for Christians. Of course, the dehumanising treatment he had himself been involved in was the necessary presupposition of his illumination, like Saul’s persecution of Christians, but a spark was necessary to break the old presuppositions.

As Gutiérrez has emphasised, conversion stands at the root of the process. Segundo prefers to speak of commitment, which he insists cannot simply follow from knowledge of the gospel message and its demands, because interpretations of the gospel differ according to one’s political commitment. Well, of course, they do, but exactly the same applies to experience. The question is, then, how one acquires commitment, or comes to the moment of conversion, and it seems that the answers to that question are infinitely varied, and may very well involve the ‘priority’ of the text, as in las Casas’ case.

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39 Rowland & Corner, Liberating Exegesis, 4
40 Rowland & Corner, Liberating Exegesis,
42 Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, 205.
43 Juan Luis Segundo, Liberation of Theology, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976) 84
44 TJ Gorringe, “Liberation Ethics” in Cambridge Companion on Christian Ethics 3

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There is an analogy to las Casas’ story in the story of Sam Sharpe. Thus, when Sam Sharpe read in the Sermon on the Mount that “no one can serve two masters,” it found resonance with his own rejection of the idea that he was the planter’s chattel. According to Dick, Sharp insisted that he did not learn his rejection of his enslavement from the missionaries or from anyone else but his passion for equality and justice arose out reading the Scriptures. The choice about which the writer of Hebrews speaks was made prior to Moses’ call and conversion in the back side of the desert in the experience of the “burning bush.” Moses reacted to the situation that faced the Israelites as a human being. The mistreatment of his people he saw was an affront to his humanity. It was the offence to which he intuitively responded and which alienated him from the palace of Pharaoh.

As I showed in the previous chapter, the history of the Caribbean can be understood as a history of resistance. The Kalinago people subscribed to no great religion but they resisted to the end as did the Maroons. Those who had knowledge of the Christian Scriptures were their oppressors, and in response to their rebellion and in

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45 Dick, The Cross and the Machete, 47
47 Hebrews 11.25
48 Exodus 3

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the name of the Christian Scriptures, outlawed both their African cultural and religious retentions and their rebellion. I contend that the impulse to reject injustice is a fundamental human impulse rather than one learned through a particular religious faith. Such intuitive outrage at injustice and the denial of justice is universally accessible in all cultures. Social location/situation, however, may be an advantage or disadvantage in creating the openness to recognize and reject injustice. Privilege is blind and often blinds the privilege to real injustice. At the same time, this intuitive sense of outrage can be muted either by disorientation caused by oppression or by the interiorization of oppression. The attempts at indoctrinating the oppressed in order to desensitize them to their oppression and to make them more accepting of their oppression as the will of God are blunt instruments which cannot by themselves inevitably remove the intuitive rejection of injustice and oppression. Historically, the human spirit has triumphed over many and varied attempts to subdue it. Even where conscience has been marred and mutilated by oppression and distortion of the truth, there is a resonance when justice and liberty are encountered.

At the same time, I allow a dialectic. Intuitively the enslaved rejected a compartmentalized faith that ignored their earthly condition and they did so in protest \textit{and} as readers in response to the Scriptures.\footnote{Beckford, \textit{Persistent Poverty}, 75} We can understand this in terms of a reader response hermeneutic. This foregrounds the reader's own cultural and political themes. The Native Baptists, for example, came to the text and intuitively, as a function of their emancipatory imagination. They knew that the God they encountered

\footnote{One must accept that history provides a clarifier for what is written in Scripture. One must assert the rejection of the teachings of the missionaries that their enslavement was ordained by God and that they were by reason of race and geographical location inferior to others was rejected on the basis that it did not fit with their a priori understanding of themselves. This is what has been asserted above that to reject un-freedom is innately human. This is what it means to be \textit{imago dei}.}
in the Christian Scriptures was different from the God spoken of by the missionaries. They interpreted the God of the Bible as being one who was on the side of the oppressed. A new reading of the text began from the situation of oppression and the denial of justice. At the same time, interaction with the text clarifies the understanding of the context and provides a total liberation approach to the engagement with the context.

The resolution from the Accra Conference of 1977 indicated that the Bible is the basic source of African theology. Caribbean Theology shares this focus on Scripture with Gutierrez and African Theology as well as with European theology. In this respect, Caribbean Theology is typically Protestant and shares the use of Scripture with some account of Roman Catholic theology as well. It is to reflect upon Scripture in the light of the lived experience of the life-diminishing and life distorting reality of the Caribbean, in the context in which justice is denied that contributes to the distinctions of this theology.

**Reading Scripture in the Caribbean**

But, how are we to read the text? I suggest that a Caribbean theology will draw on liberation hermeneutics. It seeks to articulate through the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures the righteousness of this God bringing justice to a people that have been denied justice. What is common to Liberation, African, and Caribbean theology is a liberation hermeneutics which seeks to empower the marginalized and which relativizes the authority and influence of the experts.
Biblical hermeneutics in the Caribbean is somewhat of a contested issue. The inherited and dominant reading strategies in the Caribbean are those that either promote an acceptance of the status quo ante or those that promote a resolution of the earthly struggles in the afterlife. Oral Thomas has developed a reading strategy which he calls Biblical resistant hermeneutics. His work which uses the text of Philemon as its locus surveys the reading strategies employed in the Caribbean. According to Thomas, in a period when the social and political realities produced a natal alienation, commodification and exploitation of black humanity, there was complicity and duplicity on the part of the Church. He traces this complicity and duplicity to the reading strategies that were conservative and failed to analyse the context out of which the Biblical writers spoke. The reading strategies promoted by missionaries may be illustrated by Count Zinzendorf who said that “God has punished the Negroes by making them slaves” and William Hart Coleridge who enjoined them to be contented in poverty. This way of reading the biblical text which promoted an acquiescence of the status quo ante predominated in the Caribbean Church and persists to this day. This has led to readings out of the text, on the text and proof-texting. These reading strategies that predominate in Caribbean church create an undue reliance on experts, (they are leader centred) and are often culturally illiterate. Such strategies encourage readers to take the text as it stands and to pay attention to

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51 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 25-27 cites, J. E. Hutton, A History of Moravian Missions, (London, Moravian Publications Office 1922) 44, Count Zinzendorf was a Moravian missionary to the Caribbean from Germany.

“universalities”. Readers are, therefore, less inclined to deal with the social implications of their exegetical findings.\textsuperscript{53}

In the post-Independence era, a dependency syndrome has deepened in the Caribbean. This dependency syndrome coincides with the emphasis on continuity rather than change in relation to the apparatus of colonization which I alluded to in the previous chapter. It has been further facilitated and reinforced by what Thomas calls “an explosion of American-inspired right-wing evangelical religion with its emphasis on personal salvation and triumph over earthly struggles and injustices in the hereafter.”\textsuperscript{54} Thomas concludes that the chief role of the missionaries that came to the Caribbean during slavery was to complete enslavement by enslaving the people in their minds so that they would believe that slavery was their lot.\textsuperscript{55} In addition, the work of missionaries inculcated European values so that the church accepted racial stratification as the norm. To be white is to be a person of worth and consequence. The pacified and grateful middle class valorized being anglicized (or Europeanized) and accepted the few opportunities on offer for upward social mobility. The middle classes, for which Church membership was often a badge of entry, put distance between themselves and the struggle of the masses in order to “attain the freedoms, economic and political power of the ruling and leisured class”.\textsuperscript{56}

There is ambivalence towards the missionary movement in the Caribbean: much good came of the missionary movement. Where it erred was in regards to the reading strategies which it used to interpret the Scriptures. These were the reading strategies

\textsuperscript{53} Thomas, \textit{Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics}, 71
\textsuperscript{54} Thomas, \textit{Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics}, 49
\textsuperscript{55} Thomas, \textit{Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics}, 31
\textsuperscript{56} Thomas, \textit{Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics}, 38, cites C L R James, Beyond the Boundary, 52, (London: Stanley Paul & Co 1963)
that rendered the people powerless to do much in their context about their situation. These are the reading strategies that have predominated in the Caribbean. These reading strategies along with the Euro-esque values that they inculcated in the life of the congregations also resulted in a reinforcement of the rejection of the elements of the African folk culture, and a deepening of self-doubt among the mass of the people.

Over against the pro-status quo ante reading strategies, with the advent of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) in 1973 there had emerged, self-consciously, different reading strategies. These reading strategies are built upon the foundation of works of Sam Sharp, Paul Bogle, Marcus Garvey, Rastafari and Phillip Potter. The hermeneutic was developed as CCC got involved in the process for self-determination and self-definition which advocated human liberation and social transformation. Sharp contributed the emancipatory imagination that interpreted God as Master and delegitimized enslavement by human masters. This reading strategy sowed the seed for emancipation and eventually social transformation. Paul Bogle and George William Gordon read the God of the Bible as the dispenser of justice for the people of God. Human systems of justice failed to deliver justice: this was symbolized in the courthouse which denied justice to Bogle and his followers. The courthouse came to be regarded therefore as a symbol of injustice and an instrument of oppression. Garvey focused on the God of creation. The denigration, oppression, enslavement and exploitation of people of African descent were a despoliation of the purposes of God in creation. It was never the divine intention for any person to descend to the level of peon, serf or slave. It is, rather, that all human persons should

57 Philip Potter is Caribbean and Methodist, a former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches who has spent most of his life since 1948 outside of the Caribbean, returning only for brief periods.
be in fullest possession of his/her senses and have truest knowledge of himself/herself. Potter added the ecumenical or multicultural approach in which to speak about the unity of the church is at one and the same time to speak about the unity of God’s design for the entire humanity. Finally, the new Caribbean hermeneutic which was precipitated by the CCC was built on what Thomas calls the self-affirmation hermeneutic of Rastafari. This reading strategy rejected both the oppressive economic circumstances and the inculcated and self-induced racial and cultural inferiority of black people.

A variety of hermeneutes and theologians have contributed various accents and emphases in the Caribbean liberation hermeneutic, all of which are reader-centred rather than text-centred or author-centred. All of these reading strategies are seeking to contribute to the process of self-determination and self-definition leading to human liberation and social transformation in the Caribbean. Among these, the works of Taylor and Thomas are the most self-conscious and thoroughgoing. The two most significant outcomes of these reading strategies spawned as a result of the CCC are the critical rereading of the biblical texts they provide and the critical reflection on praxis.

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59 See discussion by Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 37-47 also Philip Potter, Life in All its Fullness, (Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1981) 142
60 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 31
61 These include Ashley Smith, Noel Erikin, John Holder, Joyce Bailey, Leslie James, Marjorie Lewis, Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, George Mulrain, Richard Middleton, Idris Hamid and Clive Abdullah.
62 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 52-57 is impressed with George Mulrain reading into the text. He also cites the works of Winston Persaud, Joseph Nicholas, Michael Jagessar, and J Richard Middleton all of whom use the Caribbean context as text for their context of interpretation and meaning in biblical interpretation. For my part I believe that the culture provides lenses and must be critically
Liberation hermeneutics rejects proof texting. It is an interactive hermeneutic which is not author-centred or text-centred but reader-centred. The interaction between text and reader responds to the quest for meaning, clarification and understanding of presuppositions, as well as to questions, challenges and expectations arising out of the experience of and engagement with the day to day realities of life. Such realities are often life-distorting, life diminishing and life-denying. Liberation hermeneutics represents a break with the use of the Bible by traditional sources to legitimize the situation of the oppressed and marginalized classes and the status quo ante. In liberation hermeneutics the reader engages in conversation with the text which is seen as source of shedding light on the reader’s experience. The text is engaged, interrogated and reflected on with the faith-expectation that the exercise will result not just in personal but also in societal transformation.

Taylor puts it like this:

It is in order for more specific attention to be paid to the hermeneutical emphases related to the approach of liberation of the people and with conscious awareness of the conditions of that location and their impact on their lives. There are conditions that have been dominated by socio-political, economic and cultural factors that have disadvantaged the plans of people, (the readers). It is out of this situation that they come before the text with a willingness and openness to engage the text and let the text speak in their lives in a new and fresh manner in the conversation. Reading the text from such a location offers a new hermeneutic of privilege. It enables the reader to gain insight into and discover things that hitherto were not seen or known about. There are things that are not obvious to those who read the Bible from a position of dominance and who themselves are beneficiaries of the situation that disadvantaged the readers who are now reading for themselves from their location with a sense of the realities of that situation."
Jurgen Moltmann agrees. Reading the Bible with the eyes of the poor is different from reading it with the eyes of a man with a full belly, he says:

‘If it is read in the light of the experience and hopes of the oppressed, the Bible’s revolutionary themes – promise, exodus, resurrection and Spirit, come alive. The way in which the history of Israel and the history of Christ blend with that of the hungry and oppressed is quite different from the way they have often been linked with the history of the mighty and rich.’

Liberation hermeneutics draws on the work of, amongst others, Carlos Mesters, Georg Hans Gadamer and Paul Ricouer. Carlos Mesters divides the process into three aspects, ‘Pre-text’; ‘Context’; and ‘Text’. The third aspect of the hermeneutical exercise in Mester’s triad is the ‘text’ itself. The emphasis is not on what was meant by the author, the so-called original meaning, but on what it means to the present reader as this is determined by the interaction between the reading community and the ‘text’. The text is seen in a manner conditioned and influenced by the social position from which it is approached and with the questions, expectations and hopes raised by faith out of that common experience, addressed to the text. This reading is done with an openness to be spoken to by the text. The outcome is that the Bible becomes a book for the people and it stimulates an eagerness to become familiar with the stories and experiences. This does not mean that liberation hermeneutic provides an arbitrary and undisciplined approach to the text which marginalizes critical and scientific exegesis. On the contrary such hermeneutic is facilitated by the role of the trained scholar. It is the monopoly of the experts that is broken, not their discipline and rigour.

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in coming to the text. Gerald West argues that “provided the trained reader is willing to serve and to learn ‘from below’, and provided the poor and marginalized continue to empower and be empowered, there is hope for something truly transformative emerging from the interface between trained and ordinary readers of the Bible”.\footnote{66} West argues for three hermeneutical moves in Biblical interpretation, behind the text, within the text and in front of the text.\footnote{67}

Mere understanding of the text is not the goal of this liberation hermeneutic. Its aim is total liberation which is personal, social and political transformation, bearing in mind the location from which the reading is done. This reading is therefore closely related to praxis and in this way the hermeneutical circle is completed. Taylor offers the following four steps in the hermeneutical exercise:

a) It begins with the people’s own quest for meaning which includes suspicion of the received interpretations they have had.

b) The quest itself arises out of commitment to praxis or engagement in terms of the realities of the situation in which they find themselves and to which they are subjected. This praxis is toward transformation of the situation.

c) The approach to and reading of the Scriptures take place with questions and issues that arise out of the praxis or engagement addressed to the Scriptures.

d) The critical questions and challenging issues that are addressed to the Scriptures will lead to new insights and understanding gained from the

\footnote{66} Gerald West, “The Bible and the Poor”, in Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology, Christopher Rowland, Ed., (Cambridge Press 1999), 146, 7

\footnote{67} See also Thomas, Biblical Resistant hermeneutics, 11

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interactions. These insights and understanding will be applied to the praxis or engagement which would be re-shaped and or guided accordingly.

This whole process becomes an ongoing exercise. It will constitute the hermeneutical enterprise from a Caribbean theology perspective. All the ingredients to which reference has been made are found in this exercise. Pretext, context and text all come into play. The commitment to socio-political transformation informed and inspired by Biblical insights and guidance takes place as part of the interpretive purpose. In all of this, the facilitation and learning by the trained reader are presupposed.  

In its appeal to Scripture, Caribbean Theology privileges the social location of the reader. However, it does not regard the shaping tradition that forms the horizon of the

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68 The reader centered approach described above has benefitted from the work of Hans Georg Gadamer. It is Gadamer who speaks of the text as a work of art. As a work of art, it is only as the text has a transformative impact on someone who is seeking to understand and interpret it that it will come into its own. In such a case, its real artistic nature as a work of art or the real truth-value of a text will always remain a potential, waiting to be recognized by way of interpretation.

Gadamer also introduced the idea of the world behind the text, the world within the text, and, the world in front of the text. Interpretation is the subjective process in which the horizon of the writer, the world within the text, shaped, formed and conditioned by the social location of its writing and the horizon of the interpretation, (similarly shaped, formed and conditioned) interacts. Interpretation is therefore the fusion or merging of horizons. Hans Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, (New York Seabury Press, 1975) 254-64

Paul Ricoeur differs from Gadamer but, if anything, he may be said to pick up where the dialogue ends in Gadamer's process. He focuses more on the text while not neglecting the more active role of the interpreter. His view is that the text stands on its own and has its own history once it has been written. In this he emphasizes the difference between oral communication and conversation and engagement with a written text, in an interpretive exercise. In oral speech to another or an audience, there is immediacy between the speaker and the hearer. In the speech, the speaker has the opportunity to interact in such a way as to make certain that what is being said is comprehended as well as to recognize what is intended by any particular reference.

Ricoeur insists that the text is autonomous and that there is surplus meaning in the text. The text is not time-bound or audience-connected and that it transcends cultural and generational boundaries. He says:

Hermeneutics is the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding levels of meaning implied in the literal. Paul Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics" (1965), in David Klemm, ed, Interpretation of Existence, Vol. 2 in Hermeneutics Inquiry comm. (Atlanta Scholar Press, 1986)
text or that which forms the horizon of the interpreter as entirely wholesome and benign. The hermeneutical process must include an awareness of the possibility of distortions of the tradition and must include an element of suspicion. Here also the interpretative process involves what Ricoeur calls the hermeneutic of suspicion and the hermeneutics of retrieval.\textsuperscript{69}

The hermeneutics of suspicion requires self-consciousness on the part of the reader. As Gadamer makes clear, interpretation is an interactive process between the reader and the text. What Ricouer has added to this is an insistence that the interpreter must be conscious that one's pre-understanding is formed by influences, issues, traditions, customs, and perspective that arise from the Sitz im Leben or the social location of the interpreter. The location may be one deliberately chosen by the reader, or historically bequeathed or imposed by one means or another. The perspective shaped by the location of the reader may play an influential role in the interaction with the text either consciously, unconsciously or both. No one approaches the interpretative process without presuppositions, prejudices and interests that form part of one's pre-understanding. Interpretation is an interaction, dialogue or conversation between the interpreter or reader and the text, both having shaped perspectives or horizons. As Taylor correctly observes, "the interpreter is part of the interpretive process as both contributor and receiver in terms of the meaning or understanding finally gained."\textsuperscript{70}

In addition to self-criticism by the reader, the hermeneutics of suspicion demands an ideological critique. It seeks to call attention to perspectives that seek to privilege

\textsuperscript{69} Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics," 45, 46
\textsuperscript{70} Taylor, "The World in Front of the Text." United Theological College of the West Indies, Kingston. Lecture.
power and legitimize the status quo of oppression and injustice. Attention is paid to identifiable ideological systems, values and interests that put others at a distinct disadvantage or simply legitimate the unfair advantages that some enjoy. These ideological systems may be identifiable in the text as well as in interpretations of the text.

Ideological suspicion demands reading of the text by paying attention to the interest of those regarded as inferior, marginal, or expendable and those that are voiceless. The text is read with the interest of securing a more just outcome for those persons. In this respect, there is a canonical or Biblical theological perspective that is brought to bear on the text. In other words, the text is cross-examined in the light of Scripture as a whole and in particular the incarnation-cross-resurrection event of Jesus Christ.

In addition, ideological suspicion or criticism is sensitive to, and concerned about, interpretations that are ideologically influenced and controlled and so supportive of situations of oppression and injustice. In the process, it is also sensitive to emancipatory themes in the Scriptures that are often overlooked and neglected. The oppressed, reading from their locations, are more open to discern and appreciate the emancipatory themes.

Thomas argues for a resistance hermeneutics. According to Thomas, “to resist means constructing a consciousness that results in challenging, exposing and conquering those social systems and practices that oppress”.71 The four movements

71 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 7 cites Chris Mullard, Race, Power and Resistance, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) 38, 47,48, 172, 3
are; (a) protection of interest and power by the ruling elite, which results in oppression and repression; (b) the powerlessness of oppressed resulting in the development of interest in an alternative social order; (c) the counter strategy of the ruling elite with further oppressive and repressive measures to legitimize and give effect to their supremacy; (d) the establishment of camps of interest, one protecting and the other resisting as the oppressed agitate to construct power arrangements in order to transform the unjust social order. The hermeneutical outcome when the text is approached with suspicion from the hermeneutics of resistance is threefold. First, it includes the element of "separating oneself from the dominant social order, in order to secure what is ultimately in the interest of the oppressed community. Second, it involves denouncing the hidden intentions and pretensions of the social system organized in order to oppress, exploit and marginalized the community. Thirdly, it announces the Judgment of God upon the unjust socio-economic system that oppresses. A hermeneutics of resistance involves, he claims, cultural-literacy consciousness, praxis of resistance, culture as "text", text as cultural construction and context.

To ideological suspicion must be added a hermeneutic of retrieval which seeks to retrieve emancipatory and liberative themes from the text of scripture. The effect of the hermeneutical process that privileges the reader and involves suspicion and retrieval has been to democratize the hermeneutical process making the Bible the

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72 Thomas, *Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics*, Mullard, Race, Power, and Resistance, 6, 7
73 Thomas, *Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics*, see also 19-66
74 Thomas, *Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics*, 145
75 T.J. Gorringe, "Political Theology" in *The Expository Times*, 2011 122. 417 http://ext.sagepub.com/content/122/9/417 has argued the key markers in political theology are freedom, shalom and justice. This would also hold true for Caribbean Theology. The themes of freedom, shalom and justice would be among the key themes retrieved from the Scriptures in the liberation hermeneutics reading strategy.
people’s book once more. The dependence on experts has been succeeded by a more
dynamic process by scientific exegesis and popular readings mutually supporting each
other.

It is especially true that this method of criticism has resulted in the text taking on
new life for persons living on the periphery. Marginalized, disempowered, oppressed,
discriminated against classes, these sets of persons have found new meaning and
possibilities in the Scriptures, when and where the Scriptures have usually been used
to endorse their condition of life. They have discovered that the Bible has a word that
speaks to their experience and sheds light on the realities they encounter in their
struggles where before this was not recognized or acknowledged by the traditional
interpreters.

Whatever rudimentary signs there might have been of oppressed people having
intuitive intimations of emancipatory themes in the Bible by their quiet rejection of
the traditional interpretation, they now have the Bible released to them by this
method. It, therefore, represents a democratization of biblical interpretation which is
liberative in the process. Thomas sets the following guidelines as to the process of
that hermeneutic: first, he argues that for the critical importance of the knowledge of
place. Knowledge of place ought to mean knowledge of the social system and
practices of both the biblical text and the context of the interpreter. Second, he argues
that there should an awareness of one’s own cultural biases and interests in reading
and appropriating the tradition and the danger of being seduced by an alien culture
which may be opposed or inimical to the liberative and transformational agenda for
one’s context. Third, in order to avoid the danger of this seduction one should seek to
understand the socio-ideological agenda and social practices at work in the
composition of the biblical text, as well as in the interpreter’s context. Fourthly, one should discern the cultural meaning and socio-economic and historical realities in the context of the interpreter in order to construct an alternative consciousness. This will also help the democratization of the hermeneutical process in order that the lived experience of the people is engaged in analysing the material realities. Thomas concludes by suggesting finally, that:

It is crucial to judge those realities and organize for social transformation whilst ensuring that theology arises from praxis and is grounded in the lived realities of the people. It is a biblical resistant hermeneutic that will put an end to the alluring ways of a foreign culture, establish knowledge of place and consequently bring about authenticity of existence.

Thomas is in general critical of what he calls liberationist hermeneutics. He defines this hermeneutic as aimed at freedom from structural and systemic bondage and operating at the level of analysis of lived realities (socio-analytical), theological reading of the lived reality, (hermeneutical) and commitment to and involvement in the social realities (pastoral). Thomas argues that the liberation reading strategy “reconstructs the biblical texts as well as giving agency to both context of the interpreter and the material circumstances out of which the biblical texts emerged”. This is necessary for the marginalized and subaltern because, he argues, “the biblical texts came out of various colonial contexts—Egyptian, Persian, Assyrian, Hellenistic,

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76 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 202
77 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 203
78 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 129-37. In relation to Philemon which is the focus of his work, he makes analysis of the readings of Philemon by Theo Preiss, Amos Jones Jr, Robert E. Dunham, Clarice J. Martin and Sabine Bieberstein as representatives of Liberationists hermeneutics. He groups them in terms of those who focus on the coequality and social inequality in the household, coequality and inequality in the House Church and those who saw Philemon in relation to exposing oppressive systems and practices. He also includes the work of Burchell Taylor who argues that Onesimus speaks through his silence. He disagrees with Taylor that who says that though there is not a word from Onesimus in the Philemon correspondence, its running away is protest but Thomas prefers to see it as subversion.
79 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 136
Roman—and were composed within the royal courts.” But, he then argues, incorrectly in my view, that what such rereading reveals is that reports of divine—human encounter, values and struggles in the biblical texts come from the perspective of those in power. It seems to me, the opposite is the case: it is precisely the point that liberation hermeneutic argues that the reports are given from the perspective of or in solidarity with the perspectives of the marginalized and oppressed. Thomas argues that these reading strategies including liberation hermeneutics need to clarify the site of struggle and the socio-ideological and theological agenda. His distinction between liberation and resistance hermeneutics seems to me to be questionable. Surely, subversion is protest and protest is subversion. Both reading strategies (liberation and resistance) read the text from the world in front of the text, from the perspective of the marginalized and with the intended outcome of challenge and change to existing power relations and the status quo ante. It is best to see the two reading strategies as one contributing the merest accent to Caribbean readings of the biblical text.

Liberation hermeneutics therefore appeals to Ricouer’s idea of a surplus of meaning, according to which it is possible for a text to have a number of different meanings without at the same time undermining its literary integrity. In uncovering the surplus meaning in the text, Ricoeur differentiates explanation from understanding. There is a relationship between explanation and understanding.

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81 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 136
82 Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics, 137
83 This refers to Thomas’ criticism of Taylor’s interpreting Onesimus’ running away as protest. Thomas, Biblical Resistant Hermeneutics 129-37

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Exegesis does not stand on its own but is to be matched by understanding which is the grasp of meaning. The suggestion that to appeal to the idea of a surplus of meaning in the text can lead to chaos and confusion related to the message of the Bible is not lost on the exponents of this type of liberation hermeneutic but they insist that abuse does not determine use. All interpretative methods, including liberation hermeneutics, must be used with appropriate integrity, ethical sensibilities and keen sense of responsibility for those with whom and for whom the interpretation is being done. It is important that the method be judged by the criteria of validity applicable to other methods considered to be valid.

In this regard, Caribbean/liberation hermeneutic has been sensitive to the two global criteria advanced by Sandra Schneider for establishing the correctness of the message being put forward. There is no single message that represents the only way a given text may be understood. The idea that the text may have multiple meanings must always be borne in mind. The two global criteria advanced by Schneider are:

a) ‘An interpretation has a chance of being valid if the process meets the standard: that which cannot be done or left undone.’

b) The principle of ‘fruitfulness’ ‘If the critic has expended enormous energy and used extravagantly complex techniques to arrive at what anyone reading the text would have understood anyway, one might question, if not the validity, at least the value of such an interpretive exercise.’

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84 Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, (Forth Worth Texas Christian University Press, 1976) 45, 6
86 Schneider, *The Revelatory Text*, 165
Put differently, Schneider requires that the hermeneutical process be done with the double duty of simplicity and productivity. She has also suggested some helpful controls as for example the interpretation must honour the text as it stands and must be self-consistent and devoid of internal contradiction. It must satisfactorily account for the challenges and anomalies presented by the text and must be in keeping with what is known or attested by credible sources both biblical and extra-biblical. She has suggested that valid method of interpretation must be open to embracing all the methods or insights from other methods that are appropriate for application to the text. Exclusivist claims on behalf of any method of interpretation or on the part of any interpretive method that would deliberately exclude any other method from application to the text when it could appropriately be applied, invalidate such a method.87

Conclusion

Caribbean Theology is concerned with the problem of identity: Identity is a contested issue in the Caribbean because of the learned and entrenched inferiority among the largest racial grouping, the people of African descent. It is further problematized by creolization and persistent poverty. The Caribbean exists in the “shadow of empire” and in the periphery of the metropolis. It is not thought of as having any narrative of its own and its identity is not clear cut. It is seen as client, conformists, customers and consumers with nothing worthwhile in and of itself to

87 Schneider, The Revelatory Text
contribute save and except to the extent to which it approximates the metropolitan centres.

The problem of identity is bound up with issues of self-definition and self-determination. The development of a Caribbean Theology that is concerned with Caribbean identity and the transformation of Caribbean society is the Caribbean taking theological responsibility for itself. Caribbean Theology is a theology existing in fragments. The on-going project continues in the testimonies of the people of God and preaching from the sons and daughters of the prophets of the Caribbean, in the context of bible studies as it brings the Word of God to bear upon the lived experience of the people. Therefore, Caribbean Theology, which is the project of the postcolonial people of the Caribbean taking responsibility for themselves in terms of forging their self-awareness, self-development, self-reliance, self-authentication and the creation of a new Caribbean society and a new Caribbean person, must necessarily include all its peoples.

The overarching metaphor of Caribbean Theology is the metaphor of the exile rather than the exodus. The Caribbean has been in the throes of a Babylonish captivity throughout its history. In coming to terms with this, in order to forge its own identity, it has developed reading strategies alternatively described as liberation hermeneutics and biblical resistant hermeneutics. The key elements of this reading strategy are that it is reader centred rather author or text centred and there is an interaction between text and experience. The reading strategy seeks to retrieve themes that contribute to the liberation and transformation of the society. With this reading strategy the marginalized, disempowered, oppressed, discriminated against classes, have found new meaning and possibilities in the Scriptures, when and where the Scriptures have
usually been used to endorse their condition of life. They have discovered that the Bible has a word that speaks to their experience and sheds light on the realities they encounter in their struggles where before this was not recognized or acknowledged by the traditional interpreters.

Finally, the methodology of Caribbean Theology makes use of multi-disciplinary sources. In particular use is made of the field of cultural studies. Cultural studies is messy and contested but it draws upon a variety of disciplines and helps Caribbean Theology to make use of Caribbean culture in all its multiple facets as interpretative lenses. Read though the lenses of Caribbean culture, the text resonates with the lived experience of struggle of the people. Interpretation is democratized without becoming chaotic.

In the next chapter this liberation hermeneutics is utilized in order to grapple with the biblical text in the light of the problem of violence.
Chapter Four

The Story of Legion as a Lens to Reflect on the Caribbean

A. The Legion Narrative

As I illustrated in the second chapter, the Caribbean is among the most violent societies in the world and I suggested this was the result of the persistence of inequality and the problems of identity. In this chapter I want to reflect on this situation through an interpretation of the story of Legion in Mark 5.

In Mark’s fifth chapter we find an account of three miracles stories, the exorcism of Legion, the healing of the woman with the menstrual discharge and the raising from the dead of Jairus’ daughter. The three stories are found in exactly the same sequence in Luke and Mark.¹ Matthew interrupts the sequence by putting the healing of a paralytic, the call of Matthew and questions about fasting (Matt. 9.2-17) between the exorcism, the healing of the woman and the raising of the child. David Bruce Taylor contends that the three miracles should be read along with the miracle of the stilling of the storm which immediately precedes them in Mark’s account and that together they make a persuasive statement about Jesus as Messiah.²

The Marcan account of the exorcism of Legion is the longest and most detailed account of exorcism in the New Testament. Mark’s miracle stories are typically telescoped and summary and the additional details in the Legion narrative betray the

¹ Matt. 8.28-9.26; Lk.8.26-56
² David Bruce Taylor, Mark’s Gospel as Literature and History, 144, (London: SCM Press, 1992)
significance of the narrative to Mark’s overall purpose. The details are to be read, as Ched Myers and others have argued, as more than merely stories of demons or disembodied spirits and in particular as instantiating the parable of the binding of the strong man in Mark 3. The discussion of the binding of the strong man in response to the accusation from the teachers of the law that the source of Jesus’ powers of exorcism was Beelzebul, prepares the reader for the encounter with Legion. Mark describes Legion as one whom no one was strong enough to bind or control. However, in the narrative encounter with Jesus, Legion meekly surrenders and the hosted demons plead for clemency, not to be sent out of the region but rather to be sent to occupy the pigs (5.12). Mark’s story of Jesus is of one who faces down the unmitigated power of evil and is able to vanquish evil, its agents and collaborators.

The attention given to demon possessions in general and to the Legion narrative in particular in the Gospel is intended to serve a more strategic objective, namely to present Jesus as Messiah in a way that confronts, challenges and vanquishes the power of evil that oppresses, marginalizes and distorts the lives of people. Placed in the context of the two other miracle stories in Mark 5, Legion is one type of the example of the lived experience of empire, of marginalization, disorientation and oppression. The use of the language of demons to speak about the tyrannical use of power with its life-distorting, life-diminishing and life-destroying effect conceals as much as it reveals. The exorcism of Legion is symbolic action and the narrative is a

\[3\] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999) suggests that Mark’s sentence structure is paraatactic and this, together with his frequent use of the adverb, “immediately” gives his narrative an immediate, but also sometimes frenetic quality. He argues that this technique makes his narrative less linear and more dialectical. He also points out his fondness for sets of three, which is relevant for the consideration of Mark 5 with three miracle stories.
“hidden transcript.” It is a message understood by Mark’s audience. It is language that intends to subvert the view of the invincibility of the forces of oppression.

The denouement of the miracle story of the exorcism of Legion in Mark 5 is the account of those who came from the town in the company of the pig herders “to see what had happened” pleading with Jesus to leave their region. The story closes with Jesus resisting the desire of the transformed demoniac to accompany him outside of the region, but, rather, instead enjoining the transformed man to return to his family and announce to them how God has shown mercy to him. The importance of this periscope lies in the opportunity it provides to reflect upon the matters arising after the event of liberation. From the perspective of the Caribbean reader, it problematizes the struggle to build upon the gains of emancipation from chattel slavery, political independence and the struggle for Caribbean selfhood. In particular, it provides lenses to reflect upon the institutionalized sin that is counter-revolutionary, reactionary, neo-colonist, recalcitrant and determined to preserve or to re-impose the dominance of the master class.

The interrogation of Mark 5 in general and the Legion narrative in particular is about a salvation which is here and not yet here. It is about “Emancipation Still Coming” in the words of Kortright Davis. It is seeking to articulate the parameters in which the struggle to build a just and responsible society which both shows and tells “what good things the Lord has done and how he has shown mercy” takes place.

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1) The Context of the Legion Narrative

a) The Gospel of Mark in the history of interpretation

In the history of interpretation, the Gospel of Mark was first neglected because it did not meet the liturgical and catechetical needs of the church in the way that it was thought that its synoptic successors, Matthew and Luke, did.\textsuperscript{5} However, since the 20th Century Mark has been the most popular of the Synoptics for scholars. This has been largely due to conclusions drawn by many in respect of Marcan priority.\textsuperscript{6} The interest in Marcan studies which began in the 20th Century has been intensified since the Gospel of Mark has become the site of new interpretative strategies. Fernando Belo’s Materialist Reading of Mark has been succeeded by Myers’ Political Reading of Mark. Rowland and Corner suggest that the political and material readings involve concentration on the particularities of Jesus’ political project and the dynamic of the conflict that he engendered with the powerful. The political reading is concerned with the egalitarian message and the egalitarian project.\textsuperscript{7} The materialist reading by comparison seeks to relate the production of the text to complex economic systems. The material of the text is therefore, “capable of laying bare some of the secrets of another story to be told of the writer’s world of oppression and struggles for power, of the suppression of the ideas of the weak and insignificant, and the dominance of the

\textsuperscript{5} Johnson, \textit{The Writings of the New Testament}, 159
\textsuperscript{6} Johnson, \textit{The Writings of the New Testament}
\textsuperscript{7} Christopher Rowland and Mark Corner, \textit{Liberating Exegesis: The Challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies}, (London SPCK 1991) 93
ideology of the powerful." The use of Mark as the site to illustrate a Caribbean liberation hermeneutic is attempting to build on this emerging pattern.

Brian Incicneri locates the provenance of Mark in 71 C.E. and contends that Mark is a ‘pathetic’ Gospel, seeking to engage with and meet the needs of Christians who were struggling with recent persecution. Myers sees Mark’s Gospel as a manifesto. He contends that it is written to those committed to God’s work of justice, compassion and liberation in the world and willing to provoke the wrath of the empire. For Myers, Mark has been fundamental to the genesis of the radical discipleship movement. He cites as support Eduard Schweizer’s synopsis of Mark’s thesis that “discipleship is the only form in which faith in Jesus can exist.” Myers locates the provenance of Mark in the locus imperium between 66-70 C.E and indicates that Mark is an anti-establishment document.

(b) The Gospel of Mark as an anti-establishment document

Suggestions that Mark is an anti-establishment document find rich textual support in Mark’s stories of Jesus in the theme of conflict in his narrative and in his use of the crowd.

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8 Rowland and Corner, Liberating Exegesis, 94. The work is critical of Fernando Belo, A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark. This suggests that Belo’s reading is strange because it downplays the Cross which is a feature which is dominant in Marcan Study. 96ff


10 Ched Myers, Binding The Strong Man: A Political Reading of the Mark’s Stories of Jesus (MaryKnoll: Orbis Books, 1988) 11


12 Adam Winn, The Purpose of Mark: An Early Christian to Roman Imperial Propaganda, (Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 76 is unconvincing in his determination that the prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple is post-factum and has tipped the arguments in favour of a composition and date no earlier than 70 C.E. His offer of two internal factors, eschatological expectation and the presence of worldwide mission as support for the lower limit of 65 C.E. is more convincing.
(i) The theme of conflict in Mark's narrative

By referring to Mark as an anti-establishment document, I suggest that Mark presents the story of Jesus not as one seeking to lend plausibility to social reality or giving normative dignity to its practical imperatives. Rather, the stories of Jesus are presented in ways that unmask and uncover the workings of the inner structure, underpinning and network of things as they are with the intention of challenging, subverting and overturning them. Further, I consider that the stories do not present reformist but revolutionary strategies. The aim of these strategies is to delegitimize and disestablish by a pressure from below with new ideas, new norms and create a new ethos.

Mark presents Jesus as a figure with whom the established Jewish religious leadership was in conflict from the outset of his ministry. The plot to kill Jesus was not one hatched in the week of his passion, after his entrance into Jerusalem and his cleansing of the temple but in the very early stages of his ministry. The following texts support the idea that Mark portrays Jesus as an anti-establishment figure:

(a) Jesus is presented in Mark as one whose authority and teachings exceeded that of the members of the establishment described as teachers of the law. (1.22)

(b) The words put on the lips of the demonized men in chapters one and five are open to the interpretation that Jesus was regarded as a threat to the establishment: “what do you want with us Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?” (1.24)

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13 Mark 3.6 This is the climax of the story of the healing of the man with the paralyzed hand. It is presented at the early stages of Jesus’ public ministry. The Fourth Gospel places the cleansing of the temple after the first miracle, the turning of water into wine in John 2 and, like Mark, develops the plot of conflict and misunderstanding with the Jewish establishment. Mark also places the cleansing of the Temple towards the end of Jesus earthly ministry rather than at the outset, but he develops the idea of a plot from the time of his ministry in Galilee.
“What do you want with me Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God don’t torture me.” (5.7)

(c) Jesus appeared to treat with the customs and laws to which the members of the religious establishment attached a great deal of importance in a manner that could be seen as provocation. This includes the fact that he healed on the Sabbath. Put differently, the Sabbath did not inhibit his miracle working activities. (1.29-34; 3.1-6)\(^{14}\) He provided justification for his disciples of doing “what is unlawful on the Sabbath,” by citing an example from David in the Old Testament. (2.24ff) He introduced the revolutionary and anti-establishment idea that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. (2.27) He downplayed the importance of activities of personal piety like fasting by suggesting that such activities had merely a cosmetic impact in the face of the need for more fundamental changes. (2.18-22)

(d) The offer of forgiveness of sins was intended to establish beyond doubt the nature of Jesus’ authority (2.10) and therefore to throw down the gauntlet to the religious establishment.

(e) The use by Jesus of the not too subtle parable of the wicked tenants (12.1-12) infuriated the religious establishment and cemented their intention to arrest Jesus. (12.12)

(f) The discourse given by Jesus on the tradition of the Elders criticized the religious establishment for superficiality and hypocrisy and exposed the shallowness

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\(^{14}\) The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law, who had a fever is deemed to have taken place on the Sabbath because it suggests that the miracle took place as soon as he left the synagogue, (1.29) while other miracles took place “that evening after sunset.” (1.32)
of rituals and regulations insisted upon by the religious leaders and which were burdensome to the people. (7.1-23)

Throughout the Gospel of Mark both the actions and the teachings of Jesus placed him in direct conflict with the Jewish religious establishment. From very early in his public ministry there was evidence of the intention to engineer the demise of Jesus. Each new encounter between the Jewish authorities and Jesus was used by them to seek to arrest or trap him. The confrontation between Jesus and the political authorities - that is, the officials and representatives of the Roman Empire - was far more subtle. It will be a working hypothesis of this project that the references to demons and evil spirits throughout Mark’s Gospel are a part of the hidden transcript\textsuperscript{15} which is a way of speaking about empire and a way of betraying the oppression by evil forces upon the lives of the people in the far flung places of empire. It will be argued below that this is the way Mark chooses to speak about the resistance and challenge by Jesus in response to oppression, marginalization and distortion of the lives of people by the powers that be.

\textsuperscript{15} “Hidden transcript” is preferred to “apocalyptic.” Each option presents its own limitation. Gerald West, “The Bible and the Poor,” in Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology, Christopher Rowland, Ed., (Cambridge Press 1999) 146 - 7, uses hidden transcript over against public transcript. In that usage hidden transcript is almost deceptive or even insider communication. Apocalyptic language is concerned to demonstrate the inner reality of things in a manner that may prove to be subversive. In this respect apocalyptic should have been preferred over hidden transcript. However, the breadth of usage of apocalyptic makes its use somewhat more loaded than is intended here. Hidden transcript is being used therefore to include the elements of coded language, unmasking the true nature of things and therefore subversive.
(ii) The use of the Crowd in Mark

Mark’s stories of Jesus have managed skillfully to integrate two apparently opposite themes at the same time. On the one hand Mark presents Jesus as a reticent and reluctant Messianic figure and on the other hand there are all the appearances of a mass popular movement surrounding Jesus’ public ministry. In Mark, stories of exorcism, of which the story of Legion is an exception (Mark 5.19), Jesus silences the ‘demons’ in order to prevent them from making him known. Some miracle stories end with strict instructions to keep the account private: the leper is told “see that you don’t tell this to anyone” (1.43); the parents of the dead twelve year old girl restored to life are strictly instructed “not to let anyone know about this.” (5.43). It can be argued that the instruction to keep the account private is in the service of the refusal of Jesus to allow his ministries (the miraculous events) to be treated as light entertainment or the occasions for Jesus’ own self-indulgence or self-aggrandizement. In the case of the 12 year old girl, keeping the story private could have been meant to facilitate her getting on with her life without becoming the object of intrusive speculation into the past details of her life. However, when it is put alongside the other stories in Mark in which Jesus appears to seek to evade the attention and adulation of the crowd (1.37, 38) and particularly using the shorter reading (16.8) as the intended end of Mark’s Gospel, it seems justifiable to deduce that the reticence

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16 Mark 1.25, 34; 2.11, 12; In both the account of the healing of the daughter of the Syrophoenician woman’s daughter and the child with the epilepsy which Mark describes as demonization there is no reference to the silencing of the demons. This is perhaps due to the flow of the narrative. In the account of Legion Jesus instructs the man, clothed and in his right mind to return to his home and people (from which Jesus is deported) and to declare “how much the Lord has done for you, and how much he has had mercy on you” (5.19). This is because Mark is using the intentional declarations in as subversive a manner as the withholding of Jesus’ identity.
and reluctance of Jesus were strategic.\textsuperscript{17} The suggestion is being made therefore that Mark’s stories of Jesus portrayed Jesus in a manner that would have been regarded as a threat to the establishment. Jesus, therefore, sought to avoid premature disclosure of his identity and that also prevented his ministry from suffering from any association with popular distortions of messiahship.\textsuperscript{18} Jesus was arrested, tried and crucified in a manner consistent with the view that he was an insurgent and a threat to the establishment.

There is little doubt that Mark portrays Jesus in a way that suggests that he had mass following. Throughout the Gospel of Mark there is a great pull towards Jesus on the part of the crowd. The rigidity of ethnic cleavages does not appear in Mark: Jews and Gentiles appear to comingle in thronging Jesus. The crowds came from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon as well as from Galilee.\textsuperscript{19} The crowd is comprised of artisans and peasants, women and children. At points, Jesus takes steps to avoid the crowd and indicates that he has to guard the nature of his ministry from descending into rank populism and at other points he appears to deliberately limit their access to him.\textsuperscript{20} The Marcian Jesus, however, privileges the masses and responds to their plight; he shows compassion on them, feeds their hunger, heals their diseases and casts out their demons. In response,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Mark 16.8 “trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.” Text critical conclusion that most reliable manuscripts end Mark’s Gospel at this point would mean that the messianic secret remained in tact even after his resurrection.
\item \textsuperscript{18} The evidence in text does not support Elsa Tamez’ assertion that “There is a strategic silence advised by Jesus himself and a self-imposed silence motivated by fear. The shadow of the betrayal, even with the Jesus movement, is ever present in the Gospel.” The narratives show no fear on Jesus’ part. Elsa Tamez. “Conflict in Mark: a Reading from the Armed Conflict in Colombia,” in Nicole Wilkinson Duran, Teresa Okure and Daniel Patte, eds, Mark, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011) 101
\item \textsuperscript{19} Mark 3.7-12
\item \textsuperscript{20} Mark does not develop the theme of Jesus’ deliberate avoidance of becoming a bread and fish or a political messiah the way the Matthew and Luke position it in the account of Jesus’ temptation or the way the Fourth Gospel develops this idea in terms of the response of the crowd to his provision of food after feeding of the five thousand. See Matthew 4.1-11; Luke 4.1-13 and John 6.25-27.
\end{itemize}
the people are impressed with his authority and compare the teachers of the law unfavourably with him.\textsuperscript{21} Jesus selects and appoints his followers from among the common people and gives them authority to extend his reach and influence in response to the plight of the masses.\textsuperscript{22} 

Mark does provide a disclaimer to distance the ministry of Jesus from overt political challenge, placed on the lips of Jesus at the time of his arrest. Jesus insisted: "Am I leading a rebellion ... that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scripture must be fulfilled."\textsuperscript{23} Despite this disclaimer, a picture emerges of a Jesus whose crowd support would have placed him over against the religious establishment and no doubt, in their eyes, in a manner that would make him a threat to them. Nothing that he did in the way Mark presents Jesus would have caught the eye of the Roman imperial establishment, but in the role that was played by the members of the Roman imperial establishment in Jesus’ trial and crucifixion they were, at best, unwitting collaborators. The Marcan Jesus is, therefore, an anti-establishment figure.

\section*{2) The Socio-Political Context of Legion}

Mark’s narrative not only tells a human story, but it offers a critique on the existing power structure, both religious and political. The scene in Chapter 5 portrays Jesus moving betwixt and between Gentile and Jewish territory, between Decapolis and Capernaum, and between a place under direct rule by Rome and a

\textsuperscript{21} Mk 1.22, 8.1,2
\textsuperscript{22} Mk 3.13-19, 6.7-13
\textsuperscript{23} Mk 14.48,9
place in Galilee in which the local religious elite were either witting or unwitting collaborators with Roman rule. Galilee was also a hotbed of opposition to Roman rule where many uprisings and rebellions emerged. Brian K Blount and Gary W. Charles note that:

The context of culture suggests that for the community to which Mark wrote, the times were anything but good. Threatened by false messianisms of nationalism, the colonial domination of Rome, the economic subjugation of the subsistence living, and the institutional controls of a holiness/cultic ideology, the proclamation of a good news to the people of the land suggests some form of outside intervention.\(^\text{24}\)

The use of the word “Legion” at the time when Mark wrote his gospel towards the end of the seventh decade of the first century (circa 66-70) inevitably invoked dread and terror as well as deepened the sense of trauma among the peoples of Galilee. Legions were the strike force of Roman imperialism. The relationship between imperial Rome and subject people in places like Galilee was simple: Taxation and tribute extracted from the people maintained and fed the legion occupying the land as the most visible face of Roman oppression. The revenue taken on the backs of the people sponsored the elaborate games in the centre of empire. Failure to comply with their obligations to pay over tributes, revenues, duties and taxes was met with firm, resOLUTE and extreme measures. Even more severe measures were reserved to stamp out any form of rebellion and uprising. This is how Josephus describes it in setting out the situation in relation to the Galilean uprisings:

They were accordingly beaten and subjected to torture of every description \(...\) and then crucified opposite the walls. Some five hundred or more were captured daily. \(...\) [Titus] hoped that the spectacle might induce the Judean to surrender for fear that continued resistance would involve them in a similar fate. The soldiers out of

rage and hatred amused themselves by nailing their prisoners in
different postures; and so great was their number that space could not
be found for the crosses nor crosses for the bodies.²⁵

Horsely offers his own assessment of the terror and vengeance exacted on subject
people by Roman imperialism:

There is no way we can understand such practices as crucifixion,
mass slaughter and enslavement, massacres of whole towns and
annihilation of whole peoples other than as purposeful attempts to
terrorize subjected peoples.²⁶

He goes on to talk about such forms of viciousness as crucifixion including
unburied bodies as carrion for wild beasts and birds of prey.²⁷ The social arrangement
included a pyramid of patronage with a rigid social stratification. Some lived in
extravagant opulence and others in dire poverty and want. The general populace was
treated like props; they were never taken into consideration as the centre of anything
that was worthwhile. They were subjected to the arbitrary and unregulated use of
power, unaccountable and unrestrained. The name “Legion” therefore necessarily
invoked this sense of terror and trauma.

The narrative has a political undertone but this does not exhaust its intention.
The argument for a political character to the Legion narrative is strengthened by the
way in which Mark locates it. Mark begins by referring to the region of Gerasa (5.1),
which raises questions about Mark’s knowledge of the geography of Palestine.
Gerasa was thirty miles from the lake, a long way for even demonized swine to rush
to their peril. Matthew offers the compromise of Gadara (8.28) which was a mere six

²⁵ Richard Horsely, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Order*,
Essential Works*, (Grand Rapids Kregel Publications, 1994), 288-379
²⁶ Horsely, *Jesus and Empire*, 27
²⁷ Horsely, *Jesus and Empire*
miles from the lake, but even so it would hardly be appropriate to speak about the pigs rushing down the steep bank into the lake to be drowned. A six mile long cliff takes some imagining. Origen's suggestion of Gergesenes is a much too transparent attempt to assist Mark. On these grounds it is suggested that Mark was writing from a safe distance possibly from the centre of empire, Rome itself, and his audience would have been able to recognize only some major place names. The region of Gerasa would have been more recognizable to his audience than Gadara or Gergesenes and it is especially the case that its recognisability would have been enhanced by the fact that as a part of the Gentile territory of Decapolis it was under direct rule by Rome. The choice of Gerasa as the site of the symbolic confrontation and subjugation of 'Legion' accentuates the political connotations of the story. Allusions have already been made to the massacre of thousands of villagers when Vespasian dispatched Lucius Annus with cavalry and foot soldiers to Gerasa, of families captured and villages burned. Peniel Rajkumar suggests that the site chosen would have been evocative to Mark's audience and that the story is encoded cryptically with the implications of freedom from Roman rule.

In the context of Galilee and Judea, the term “Legion” would have been traumatic because of the memory of the scenes of devastation wreaked by the Roman army. “The reference to Legion fits with the metaphor of occupied territory overrun by a power which brutally plunders and oppresses the original inhabitants.”

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30 Rajkumar *Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation*
3. The Interpretative key for Legion

Generally “Legion” is treated among New Testament scholars as derangement and schizophrenia. Herman C. Waetjen describes him as “a violent schizophrenic devastated by a fragmented psyche and deeply estranged from himself and his society. Abandoning his fellow human beings, he has taken residence with the dead, but his despair has not been alleviated. In his desolation he continues to be tormented by self-hatred and impelled to self-destruction.”

Franz Fanon is quoted to give credence to the view that this type of deranged behaviour is consistent with the conduct of the underclass in societies that are underdeveloped. Fanon says:

The native will strengthen the inhibitions which contain his aggressiveness by drawing on the terrifying myths that are so frequently found in underdeveloped communities. These are maleficent spirits which intervene every time a step is taken in the wrong direction, leopard-men, serpent-men, six-legged dogs, zombies ... which create around the native a world of prohibitions, of barriers and of inhibitions far more terrifying than the world of the settler.

Waetjen furthers his point by arguing that “the demoniac is possessed by many unclean spirits. As such, he is the representation of a gentile ‘(dis)order’ and ‘(dis)integration,’ and there are many more like him who are afflicted with the same derangement.” The issue is not what the man was but how the narrative is being used by the Gospel writer. The details provided by the narrative are useless if all the writer wishes to convey is the fact of the “legion’s” derangement. Furthermore

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31 Herman C. Waetjen, A Reordering of Power: A Socio-Political Reading of Mark’s Gospel (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1975) 115
33 Waetjen, A Reordering of Power, 117
demon possession in the Gospel of Mark seems to have a wider reference than simply to schizophrenia or madness. As has been asserted above, the encounter with Legion is being used to speak at least in part about the encounter of the people of the land with the occupying force. This is why the narrative is suffused with military language. However, while the occupying force is the representative of the evil that has brought disorientation, disorder, life-diminution and destruction, the occupying force does not exhaust the evil on the land.

(a) Jesus disarmed and unmasked the powers

There is an emerging consensus amongst recent scholars that exorcisms in general and the Legion narrative in Mark 5:1-20 in particular were about Roman imperial occupation of the land. Horsely contends that the exorcism of Legion,

(Is) about “what’s happening” in the lives of the people in Galilee and round about. When the demon is exorcised, it is possible for it to be identified. Its name is Legion. The original hearers would have recognized immediately that “Legion” referred to Roman troops. For in their recent experience, Roman legions had burned villages around such towns as Magdala and Sepphoris and slaughtered or enslaved thousands of their parents or grandparents.

In Mark 5, two powers are named; “Legion” and “the synagogue ruler”. In this way attention is called both to Roman imperialism, by way of the occupying force, and to the local religious establishment that were their collaborators. In addition attention is called to the pig herders whose interests were savaged by the process, or outcome of the exorcism, and to those who appointed themselves as the spokespersons and gatekeepers for the region. These are the ones who felt it

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34 This is the position taken by Belo, Myers, Hollenbach, Horsely in Jesus and Empire Waetjen, and Rajkumar. It is also a position to which Lawrence is open.
35 Horsely, Jesus and Empire, 100
necessary, in protection of the interests they served, to entreat Jesus to leave the region.

Myers argues that the two key roles performed by exorcism stories in Mark’s gospel, first, as a central characteristic of the messianic mission of Jesus and, second, as a symbolic action of the political character of Jesus’ mission. He argues that it is a main vehicle for articulating the apocalyptic combat myth between the powers (and their earthly minions) and Jesus (as envoy of the Kingdom). The demons know exactly who Jesus is and understand the political threat he poses to the status quo. They struggle to name him, (1.34; 3.11) however, in the Legion narrative, Jesus turns the tables by extracting from the demon his name, Legion (5.9)

Legion is, therefore, an unflattering description of the power of the occupying force from the most important perspective, namely, its impact on the lives of the powerless underclass. This is how it looks and this is what it does. Power thinks of itself as benevolent, in the service of the greater good, or even the national interest. However, when it is seen in proper perspective, it is bestial and demonic. It marginalizes, mangles and mutilates human life and sets on course a pattern of self destruction. When power has its way the people have no good options. They must always be made to choose between the bad and the worse, never between the better and the best. Jesus, by his presence and by his deed, unmask and unveils power as it really is, he shows its true colours and gives it its real name.

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36 Myers, Binding the Strong Man 143
37 Myers, Binding the Strong Man
Mark presents a challenge and response to power by the saving action of Jesus Christ. Legion has identified Jesus as the Son of the Most High God. The scene of the first miracle is in Gentile territory which is under direct Roman rule. The narrative about the exorcism is suffused with military imagery. First, there is the word “Legion”; then Myers has pointed out that pigs do not travel in herd; 
\textit{agele}, therefore, may be used as a reference to a military platoon; \textit{epetrepse} is a military command and \textit{ormesen} in 5.13 connotes soldiers rushing into battle. There might also be an allusion to the drowning of Pharaoh’s army as if enemy soldiers were being swallowed by hostile waters.\textsuperscript{39} On one level, therefore, Mark portrays Jesus as dealing with demons and, on another level, it is visible presence of empire, the Roman army that is being routed. Jesus is therefore a challenge to the distortion and oppression of empire, but not in the ways that false messiahs promote. Instead, it is by breaking the bonds of oppression and in such a way that sets the captive free and set people on course for the rest of their lives. The language used calls attention to the true nature of the evil that was being challenged by the irruption of the Kingdom of God in their midst made manifest in Jesus Christ. It was evil represented but not exhausted by political domination.

Horsely prefers \textit{eptiman} “to vanquish” in describing the outcome of the encounter between Jesus and demons, instead of the word generally used in Mark \textit{ekballein} “to cast out”.\textsuperscript{40} However, neither is used in Mark 5. Instead, the words used are \textit{exelthon}, (they came out) \textit{epistrepse} (he commanded) and \textit{ormesen} (they rushed into or charged down). The effect is the same however as a vanquishing of demons. The

\textsuperscript{39} Myers, \textit{Binding the Strong Man}, 191

\textsuperscript{40} Horsely, \textit{Jesus and Empire}, relies upon the work of Howard Kee, \textit{The Terminology of Mark’s exorcism Stories}, (NTS14, 1968) 232-46.
demons perceived the threat and asked of Jesus, “are you come to destroy us,” and, “I adjure you by God not to torment us”. The Legion narrative preserves the magisterial authority with which the agent of liberation brings the representatives of demonic powers into submission, establishes the Kingdom of God and accomplishes the salvation of his people. Miracles of healing and exorcism are not divine thaumaturgy or magic. They are symbolic acts that are powerful not because they challenge the laws of nature, but because they challenge the very structure of social existence.41 What takes place in the narrative can be said to caricaturize, dramatize and exaggerate the dominant social order, “unmasking the way in which it functioned to legitimate concrete social relationships. Insofar as this order dehumanized life, Jesus challenged it and defied its strictures: that is why his miracles were not universally embraced.”42

“Legion” in the context of Galilee and Judea would have been traumatic because of the memory of the scenes of devastation wreaked by the Roman army. Rajkumar suggests, “The reference to Legion fits with the metaphor of occupied territory overrun by a power which brutally plunders and oppresses the original inhabitants.”43 What is being portrayed in the story is the effect of Roman power on the lived experience of the people, life-distorting, life-diminishing and life-destroying. The sense of the invincibility of the forces of oppression, the loss of the sense of themselves and their sense of place, and their marginalization and disorientation were also being conveyed by the narrative. In this respect, the narrative is public symbolic action which is subversive in the sense that it shows the invincible force of oppression being vanquished.

41 Myers, Binding the Strong Man, 148
42 Myers, Binding the Strong Man
43 Rajkumar Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation
(b) Mark’s critique of power and domination

The use of the language of power and domination takes into account the complex of issues involved in discussions of certain words used in the New Testament that seem to speak to the surplus capacity of evil in its superhuman or supernatural dimensions. Such words include principalities, powers, rulers, dominions, authorities, evil angels and demons. Marva Dawn,⁴⁴ who critiques Walter Wink’s trilogy on “the Powers”, offers three types of interpretation of these “evil powers” or “principalities and powers”: She suggests that there is a demythological approach led by Rudolf Bultmann, the personal demon approach led by John Stott and a structural approach led by Cullman and others.⁴⁵ A fourth option, however, is possible which has not been offered by Dawn but may yield some fruit. It is the contextual approach. This is the approach that seeks to identify the principalities and powers as they manifest themselves in a given context.

Mark’s Gospel presents Jesus in an intentionally political manner that seeks to challenge the imperial domination over the lives of the people including both Jews and Gentiles. He does so in a way that avoids the popular distortions of messiahship that were abroad in the society. What has been described therefore as reticence on the part of Jesus in respect of his messiahship was to avoid any direct associations with other rebellions, uprisings and anti-Roman movements that were taking place in places like Galilee. The Galilean and Judean people were prominent among peoples

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subjected by Rome for their persistent resistance and rebellion. They were the most adamant in reasserting their independence and defending their traditional way of life, persisting in their resistance for nearly two centuries.\footnote{Horsely, *Jesus and Empire*, 35}

Therefore, the tradition of which Mark makes use and the stories of Jesus is presented in a manner that shows Jesus as unmasking, confronting as well as vanquishing the powers and their collaborators (the Jewish religious establishment). The stories are clad with the hidden transcript or a sub-text which carries the message of the challenge and victory over the powers. William Stringfellow offers the following description of the principalities and powers:

Legion in species, number, variety, and name; creatures that are fallen (meaning that they thrive in chaos, confusion and competition); an inverse dominion (one that works backward—not to foster life but to dehumanize); not benign, but aggressive; causing all to be victims (with or without their knowledge); capturing leaders as acolytes enthralled by their own enslavement; engaged in rivalry with each other since their very survival is always at stake; and creating a new morality of survival.\footnote{Dawson, *Weakness and the Tabernacle of God*, 5. 6 cites William Stringfellow, *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land*, (Waco: Word Books, 1973) 77-94}

The use of references to demons in Mark fits easily into the categories that Stringfellow has suggested. The notion of hidden transcript is being nuanced for the purposes of this discussion.\footnote{Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 53, James C. Scott developed the distinction between “public transcript” and “hidden transcript.” He used it to illuminate different kinds of communication that take place in the conflictual dynamics of power relations between the dominant elite and the people subordinated to them in James Scott, *Domination and the arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990)} It is being suggested that it was Mark’s purpose to present Jesus as a challenge and response to Roman domination and, in so doing, to unmask the real nature of the principalities and powers of which it was a part and its
most self-evident representation. It was also Mark’s purpose, at one and the same time, to avoid popular distortions of messiahship. It is for this reason that Mark uses the language of demons which contemplates evil and its impact on human life. Demons and the exorcism of demons suggest that notions of salvation are more than mere reformism. In this respect, liberation requires a radical break with what obtained before. The Legion narrative in Mark 5 is the most developed expression of Mark’s intention. Without seeking to make the same point, Louise Lawrence argues that ‘the Legion narrative presents a multiple personality that is fragmented and self-destructive: indeed many have read the name as a ‘double-voiced,’ referring to Rome’s military occupation of land.50

(c) Boundary Crossing

Mark Chapter five presents Jesus as crossing boundaries and moving interchangeably between Gentile and Jewish territories. Brian K Blount and Bas MF Van Iersel51 argue that the metaphor of boundary crossing shows how Jesus confronts the human situation in locus imperium. Mark’s narrative not only tells a human story, but it offers a critique on the existing power structure, both religious and political. The scene in Chapter 5 portrays Jesus moving betwixt and between Gentile and Jewish territory, between Decapolis and Capernaum. Jesus movement is between one

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49 Principality and powers is Pauline language not Marcian. In Eph 6:10ff Paul speaks of the triad of evil in its surplus capacity and superhuman and supernatural dimensions in terms of principalities and powers, rulers of this dark world and spiritual wickedness in the heavenly realm. In the Apocalypse the triad is represented as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, Rev 12, 13. In Mark 3 the triad is spoken of as Satan, Beelzebul and demons.


51 Blount and Charles, Preaching Mark and Bas MR Van Iersel Reading Mark trans. W. H. Bisschop (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989) considers the message of the Gospel of Mark to be about boundary crossing is of particular relevance to the African American Church. Van Iersel considers this to be the theme of Mark 4.35 -8.21
place under direct rule by Rome and another place in Galilee, in which the local religious leadership elite were either witting or unwitting collaborators with Roman rule.

The boundary crossing of Jesus goes beyond the physical movement and the crossing of territorial boundaries decided among political forces however, formidable. Jesus also crosses boundaries which are psychological and social and reinforced by religious and social conventions. To make this clear, however, one must pay careful attention to what may be called the subtext in the story.

\(d\) Spirits as a part of Caribbean Cosmology

The language of demon possession or “having unclean spirits” which Mark uses is seeking to give expression to two things about the evil in the world: the first is that evil has an extra-dimension to it. There is a surplus capacity which is super-human if not supernatural. The second is to talk about domination or oppression including domination by imperial forces in the context of principalities and powers or demons, is not meant to be an abstract political discussion. Rather, it is to give expression to or to come to terms with such realities where it gets to the rub. It is to give concreteness to this reality where it matters most. It matters most in terms of its impact on people to diminish the quality of their lives and distort life itself. The narratives are therefore intended to portray the impact on individual human lives in ways that show that evil distorts, diminishes and destroys human life. When power has its way it is unimaginably vicious with its tyranny and cruelty. The grim picture of imperial power conveyed in the stories of demon possession is what power does,
“unrestrained, unregulated, unaccountable, totally self-possessed, arrogant, sacrilegious and idolatrous”\textsuperscript{52} What it does and what it means is, “it has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him.” (Mark 9.22). It also means, “night and day among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones.” Mark attributes to the work of evil spirits both scenes - the father with the epileptic son and the man among the tombs in Gerasa.

Caribbean people have this fascination with spirits for understandable reasons: The majority of the people of the Caribbean are people of African descent. As a part of the African cultural retention no one would be surprised to discover that the African cosmology of the interface and interaction between spirits and human experience has survived in the Caribbean. The fact that the legacy of the trauma of the Middle Passage and of 300 years of enslavement has never been atoned for or cleansed must be taken into account. Caribbean psyche is undeniably shaped by these experiences. Death has been a dominant power in the Caribbean from origin to self-government and up to the present time. Death has been the reality of the indigenous people - the Tainos and Ciboneys - who have been decimated. The Middle Passage was the passage of death; a full third of those who were expropriated from the continent of Africa perished at sea. The rate of homicide in the Caribbean as has been noted above is three times the world average and in Jamaica it is six times average homicide rates around the world. Death is a dominant feature of Caribbean reality. The resort to language of spirits, demons or duppies is an attempt to come to terms with and account for such realities as living in the midst of death. It has also been used from time to time as a way of fighting back or responding to such realities.

\textsuperscript{52} Burchell Taylor, \textit{Saying No to Babylon} (Kingston, Xpress Litho Ltd, 2006) 86
This was certainly the case within the Jamaican context with Tacky’s rebellion and his band of Obeah men, with the legend of Nanny of the Maroons as well as with Voodoo in Haiti. In all of these instances a facility (real or imagined) was called upon to make use of superhuman if ancestral or nether worldly powers to counteract the forces which confronted them.

The image of Legion (if not the name Legion) has been used by the powerful and vested interests throughout the history of the Caribbean to account for anti-establishment figures that have emerged on the scene from time to time and in one place or another. This was the case with Alexander Bedward who was confined to a lunatic asylum with the effect of ensuring the demise of his anti-establishment movement and scattering his followers. The use of the image of legion was, by inference also part of the characterization of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, in Jamaica of the 1920s and 1930s. Garvey died in Britain at age 40, broke and with a broken heart. Rastafari in the heady days of the 1960s was treated as a movement of madmen, miscreants and misfits. Spirits, spiritualists and spiritists are prevalent in the Caribbean. Pentecostalism, Myalism and Pocomania (little madness) are the religion of the masses. It is the case that disempowered people find that the only place in which they have any power, is in their language of power over spirits. It is important to note, therefore, that “Legion” is a double entendre. It is at the same time a signifier of oppression and it is the alienation of one who opposes oppression and is broken in the fight against oppression. Language about spirits becomes language about reality and in response to their reality.

One of the ways to account for Mark’s use of demons or unclean spirits in the Gospel is to speak about power by way of a hidden transcript. An example of a
hidden transcript may be given by referring to the Jamaican folk song, “this long time gal mi neva see you”:

Dis long time gal mi neva see you  
Come mek mi hol’ your hand  
Dis long time Gal mi neva see you  
Come mek wi weel an’ tun  
Peel head John Crow sit up inna tree top  
Eat out the blossom;  
Come mek mi hol’ you hand gal, mek mi hol’ you hand."53

The words are taken on face value but they are about something else. The song was written to welcome the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to Jamaica in 1966 after Jamaica gained political independence in 1962. Her previous visit, the inaugural visit of her reign had been 13 years earlier in 1953. The Jamaican folklorist Miss Lou (Louise Bennett Coverley) wrote the song to welcome the Queen’s visit and in the song, provides the Queen with her assessment of things as they are: “Peel head John Crow sit up inna tree top, eat out the blossom…” the folklorist complains that the social situation of the country since its independence is the same as it was before; the planter and merchant class (which she characterizes as scavengers with receding hair lines) are creaming off the fruits of the economy leaving nothing to the mass of the people to enjoy. The background and context in which the song was written give poignancy and potency to its message, a message that is often lost on those who sing the song.

53 The song was recently recorded by Multi-Phonics LX, a British all white, all male group from Reading University.
It is being contended that in Mark’s Gospel the use of demons, especially in the case of the Legion narrative has a hidden transcript. Legion that is presented has interiorized oppression, ("my name is Legion for we are many") he is tormented, ("crying out among the tombs") and a source of torment ("night and day"), he is out of control and uncontrollable ("no one could bind him anymore not even with a chain. [For] he had often been chained hand and foot but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.") He was dangerous and endangered ("he lived among the tomb") more at home among the dead than among the living.\textsuperscript{54}  

Waetjen makes the following remark about the significance of the name Legion. He says:

As a signifier the name “Legion” seems to bear several layers or levels of meaning. First, it is a Latin military term and links the demoniac to the institution of the Roman army. But what is the nature of the relationship between the two? Most likely it is colonialism! By its economic exploitation and political suppression, its social disruption and systematic denial of all attributes of humanity to its subjugated people, colonialism creates an atmosphere of living death which fosters a systematic breakdown of the human personality.\textsuperscript{55}  

All of the victims of the abuse of power whether by the religious establishment or by Roman oppression, that are the objects of Jesus’ miracle working power in Mark’s Gospel are anonymous.\textsuperscript{56} Their stories are narrated not for their sakes but they are presented as typical of what is found in the context and times in which Jesus ministered in the far flung places of empire. Their reality of oppression,
marginalization and disorientation is the other side of the story of *Pax Romana*; they are the price paid for the *Pax Romana*. Horsely contends that “the Pax Romana enabled imperial Rome to extract goods from the peoples that they had subjugated. Goods were extracted in the form of tributes that were used both to support their military forces, and to pacify the Roman masses with ‘bread and circus’.”

### B. The Message of Mark 5

#### 1) A Stranger in the Midst

A Caribbean reader is struck by the fact that Mark positions Jesus as a stranger in the far flung places of empire. Jesus is always coming and going, never seems to be domiciled in the area. The image of Jesus entering the region of the Gerasenes in the Decapolis and then being deported from that place has rather striking parallels in the Caribbean. The demonization and expulsion or otherwise of those who resist oppression and injustice in Caribbean include the Trelawny Town maroons, and the Kalinago or Black Caribs of St Vincent. Other parallels include those mentioned above, Alexander Bedward, Marcus Garvey whom they exiled, Walter Rodney.

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57 Horsely, *Jesus and Empire*, 20-34, see discussion on Roman imperialism
58 Horsely, *Jesus and Empire*, 34
59 I. E. Kirby and C. L. Martin *The Rise and Fall of the Black Carib (Garifuna)* (Toronto: Cybercom Publishing, 2004) 49 - 50
60 Rupert Lewis, “Jamaican Black Power and Walter Rodney in 1968, A Private Archive”, in *Jamaica Journal*, Institute of Jamaica 130 Anniversary Issue Vol. 32 Nos 1-2 43ff details the story of the October 1968 protest at the University of the West Indies Mona Campus to protest the banning of Walter Rodney a Guyanese National and Professor at the University who had travelled to Montreal to attend a black writers conference. Rodney was deemed by the Government of Jamaica to have been the leader of the Black Power movement and was declared *persona non grata*. The students’ protest moved the following resolution in the wake of Government banning black literature: “The Government of Jamaica has banned all publications by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, *Message to the Black Man* by Elijah Mohammed, and the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*. These are books by conscious blacks following the footsteps of the Hon. Marcus Garvey and speaking against the oppression at the
whom they excluded, declared *persona non grata* (by the Jamaican Government under the watch of Prime Minister Hugh Lawson Shearer, the first distinctly Afro-Jamaican and also the first of Jewish origin, Prime Minister of Jamaica) and Claudius Henry who was imprisoned and whose son was hanged. Each of these insisted on a better life, a more just and equitable society especially to benefit the African majority in the population. The black majority was landless and poor and for generations their blackness was made a curse and a byword. These who sought to empower them and challenge the status quo ante were variously persecuted and rejected.

The Caribbean reader accepts the contextual parallels with the situation in Galilee and Judea to which Jesus went. Like those regions, the people of the Caribbean have experience of disfranchisement, dispossession and disorientation.

This Stranger who comes by boat has turned out to have welcomed parallels with those who have fought for the liberation and selfhood of the people of the Caribbean. On the other hand the history of colonization and the persistence of a thoroughgoing dependence on imports in the Caribbean create inevitable suspicion. The Caribbean must first determine whether or not this Stranger in the midst, this new arrival by boat, can be trusted. To portray Jesus as one from elsewhere given the history and nature of the circumstances of the Caribbean is to risk discrediting Jesus and the Gospel as merely another foreign import of which the region already has an oversupply. Caribbean existence has been defined by the boat. It is the boat that has
effectively brought the Caribbean into being. The present composition of the population all have forebears who were brought to the Caribbean by boat. The overwhelming majority were brought against their will and initially in circumstances that have proven disadvantageous to them. The food (mono-crop agriculture) produced in the Caribbean is exported to the advantage of the North Atlantic. The food (as well as textiles and equipment) consumed by the Caribbean is imported. Tourism has been a staple for many Caribbean economies. Cruise ships bring huge numbers to the region. This use of the boat is both good and bad for the Caribbean. The experts, consultants and policy paradigm as well as the institutional framework of governance in the Caribbean are imported. It has been demonstrably the case that the outcomes of the trading relationships with the centres, of which the Caribbean is periphery, have resulted in the systematic self-impoverishment and under-development of the Caribbean.

Those who provided a sacred canopy for colonization, and defenders of things as they are who have sought to give legitimacy and render the population more docile and gullible originated elsewhere and came to the Caribbean by boat. Both Missionary theology and its more modern counterpart, Gospel culture, have demonstrated superficial commitment to challenging and changing the status quo ante in the Caribbean. Missionary theology, during slavery and colonization, appeared to offer legitimacy for the plunder of the region by the emissaries from the North Atlantic as the will of God. This was not only and always the case. Missionary theology began that way but in time because of the pressure from below and as the international anti-slavery movement gained momentum, some missionaries, notably Baptists, became pivotally involved in the liberation movement. Gospel culture appears to promote consumerism, which inevitably results in a spike in importation of
the goods and services from the North, as the sign of divine blessings. In a word then, the boat has changed the world to the advantage of the North Atlantic and to the disadvantage of places like the Caribbean. The Caribbean is within its rights to be suspicious of this new arrival by boat: it wants to know in particular, whether or not this new arrival is different from other arrivals in the region. How is it to be determined whether or not this most recent arrival by boat is not the latest ideological instrument to forward the dominant agenda of the establishment? Is what he does with what he has found in the region he has entered different in any way from what other arrivals by boat have done to and with the region?

Mark anticipates this question and provides the response in the opening narrative in chapter 5. He uses the inclusio, vv 2 and 18; v 2 “and coming out of the boat,” and v 18, “and going into the boat” to frame the beginning and the end of the narrative. It indicates that between leaving and re-entering the boat Jesus had made a contribution of enormous proportion and significance to the region of Decapolis. This is the message of liberation and transformation that is at the heart of the gospel story. The grace and power of the Kingdom of God in Jesus are brought concretely to bear upon the realities of disfranchisement, disorientation and dehumanization that are a part of the lived experience of people. This bringing to bear of God’s grace and power is to put the people “in their right mind”, make them whole and help them though they were dead to stand on their feet.

(a) The examples of human tragedy

From the point of view of a postcolonial reading of the Mark Chapter 5 it is best to take the three stories together. Together the stories present a picture typical of the human situation in these societies. There is no suggestion of uniformity: only that
these caricatures give the reading of the power relations that typify circumstances where there is a deficit of justice. Legion is present in places like the Caribbean in more than one way. The woman with the issue of blood has many parallels and there are many children at risk in these places.

(b) Men of violence

The experience among Afro-American males and Afro-Brazilian males is the same among Afro-Caribbean males; a disproportionately high percentage of them are men of violence. The most in-depth analysis of the over representation of black males as violent offenders and victims of violence is available in relation to African-American males. It is less available in relation to Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Brazilian males. However the pattern among African American males in general holds true both for Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Brazilian males. In all three jurisdictions there are more black males in prison than in college. In the U.S.A. one out every 21 black males is likely to become a victim of homicide. In the case of the age group cohort 15-24 the homicide rate is 159 per 100,000 of population. This is 15 times the international average. White males have a homicide rate of nine per 100,000 of population. William Oliver argues that the participation of African-American males in incidents of violence is the result both of structural and cultural, hegemonic and

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61 Oliver, William. "Black Males and Violence." Lecture. 66f, Web 11 July 2011. <http://www.dvinstitute.org/conferences/proceedings/1995/william1.pdf>. Responded to by Richard Majors. He cites National data as follows: Mortality data compiled by the National Center for Health Statistics are another major source of data that describe the prevalence of violence among Blacks. In the most recent statistics available, the National Center for Health Statistics reports that in 1992, death rates for homicide were eight times as high for Black males (72.5 per 100,000) as for White males (9.4 per 100,000) and nearly five times as high for Black females (13.9 per 100,000) as for White females (3.0 per 100,000) (1992). The age range of 15 to 24 is the most murder prone. For example, in 1992 the death rate for Black males 15 to 24 years of age (159.9 per 100,000) was nine times greater than the rate for similar age White males (National Center for Health Statistics, 1994). See also, Renato Rosende, "the Heritage of Slavery in Structuring Brazil."
ideological systems. He indicates that it is the inability to navigate the environment in which there is systemic and institutionalized racism as well as the promotions of European racial superiority and African inferiority that results in their disproportionate participation in violence. He argues that Black males have redefined manhood to compensate for feelings of shame, guilt, powerlessness, and a lack of self-esteem. Thus, for many Black males, violence is viewed as the only tool available for achieving respect, status, and power.62

Oliver’s observations are correct but in his analysis better use could have been made of comparative data from other territories. Blacks in Brazil like those in the U.S.A. are an ethnic minority. However, racial discrimination in Brazil is against Brazilian law. This does not prevent discrimination as Afro-Brazilians, like African-American are disproportionately under-represented in the work place. Despite this difference in the degree of the systematic racism, the over-representation of blacks as offenders and victims of violence is a shared reality in Brazil, in the Caribbean and in the U.S.A.. In the Caribbean, blacks are an ethnic majority. However, blacks in the Caribbean share the cultural disorientation of blacks in America. The combination of hegemony and ideology, of the structural and cultural has the effect of derangement, disorientation and dehumanization. Racism, violence, and underperformance as parents, workers or human beings generally are merely the social markers of the loss of the sense of self which results from the interiorization of oppression. It is the new way of saying “my name is Legion for we are many.” What is multiple is not merely the personality it is also the layers and combination of factors that are interacting and intersecting the context at one and the same time.

62 Oliver, “Black Males and Violence”, 75
Matthew's account makes the connection with legion and violence more obvious than Mark's account. In Matthew's account, there are inexplicably two demoniacs. Matthew seems to have a love affair with the number two; he has two blind men in 9.27-31 and weirdest of all two asses in the Palm Sunday triumph. But Matthew says further that the demoniacs were "so fierce that no one could pass that way" (9.28). Nevertheless, the portrayal of legion as a parallel to modern men of violence is not disguised in Mark's account. The more scientific world view might not readily use the language of two thousand demons to explain the man among tombs cutting himself with stones. Other explanations may be proffered, some social, some psychological, some chemically induced, some the product of operant conditioning. Men like Legion whose humanity is distorted, who are demeaned and downright dangerous are a common feature of Caribbean reality. These are men who pose a threat to themselves and to others. They are the dangerous and endangered, ("living among the tombs") terrorized and terrorists, who are in torment and tormenting others, ("crying out night and day") whose primary prey and victims are themselves and those who share social space and social reality with them ("cutting himself with stones"). They have many modern counterparts, and not restricted to the Caribbean alone. For these people, manacles, shackles and chains (arrest and incarceration) pose no inhibition. They are at home in desolate places, they are repeat offenders, the living dead more at home among the dead than among the living. They have many names: recidivists, gunmen, gangsters, dons, drug kingpins, merchants of death, troubled and troublesome, Jihadists, and suicide bombers. They occupy spaces in

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63 Oliver, "Black Males and Violence", 146
Jamaica’s killing fields, among the insurgents in Iraq and the Palestinian Entifada.
They are both oppressed, disempowered and the counter-foil against their oppression.

Violence is a social sickness and a public health crisis. In the Caribbean, Legion,
men of violence are often caricatures of the psychology of public space. I commented
on this in my newspaper column in 2006:

The specter of Jamaican gunmanship is not an isolated
phenomenon, but is a caricature of the psychology of the public space
in Jamaica today. The gunman has been a defining feature of Jamaican
life for more than four decades. So much so that other sections of
Jamaican life have began to mimic their conduct of irrational violence,
overkill and brutishness. ... We do not all have M-16 assault rifles and
9MM pistols but we use what we have against each other with the
overkill and irrationality of gunmen. This is the case when one listens
[to radio] discussions or watches newscasts in the media. ...we spray
the rest of the society with imaginary bullets from an [imaginary] M-16
assault rifle by holding the rest of the society to ransom.

The column also sought to discuss the deep rooted nature of the problem of
violence in the Jamaican society. I argued that crime in Jamaica is a social sickness.

Though we use crime statistics to support our self-flagellation, we are not
statistically as bad as we can be. There are 30,000 homicides in Brazil each year
and 20,000 in Colombia. ... A huge part of the problem of guns originates in the
culture of the inner city [which sees] guns as integral parts of their lives. This
means that when some residents [of inner city communities] go abroad the gifts
they send home to their friends are new guns. This social sickness needs to be
healed. The guns play both an economic and a status-giving role in inner-city
communities.

Gorringe cites examples from his context, and makes the point that criminality
and by extension violence are a function of deeply unjust societies. He says:

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64 Garnett Roper, Roper’s Perspective: “Spraying Society with Imaginary Bullets”, Sunday Herald
Newspaper, June 25 July 1, 2006
65 Roper, “Social Sickness”, Sunday Herald Newspaper, Jan 8-14 2006
Our indifference to the trivial laws signifies a cynicism which betrays the fact that we are deeply unjust societies. Justice is a whole. It cannot be broken into parts without peril. Impartiality and objectivity do not guarantee criminal justice. If we have forgotten justice as a virtue then we have forgotten justice in society, and if we have forgotten that, there can be no criminal justice either.66

What is being posited is not the maleness of violence which is being paralleled to Legion. Jeffrey L. Staley has shown the ways in which legion also implies and includes the experience of oppression and exploitation among women.67 Neither is it simply being asserted that the legion narrative in Mark is capable of application to the struggles for self-actualization and liberation in postcolonial settings. This point has been made from Paul Hollenback to Ched Myers to John D. Crossan and Christopher Burdon.68 The point being made here is that legion does not merely connect demon possession to colonial oppression and exploitation; it also makes the point that the disorientation, disorder, dehumanization and eroding of human dignity that form part of the reality in postcolonial societies like the Caribbean is the function of and in response to this oppression and exploitation. Attempts to come to terms with the nature of colonization and the aftermath of political independence without commitment to the pursuit of social justice for the people by privileging economic development and human development, must confront “Legion”. Legion is a sign of the matters arising:

When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been

chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. (5.2-5)

2. A Saviour Who Has Come

The linguistic references to salvation in Mark are few. In 5.34 “save” (σωζεῖν) is used as synonym for wholeness and good health (“your faith has saved you” (made you well). Elsewhere, the disciples speak of salvation as a synonym for entrance into the Kingdom (10.26). Jesus speaks about salvation as attempts to preserve life (3.4; 8.35). However, the three miracles stories which are the subject of consideration narrate the encounter with the liberating presence of Jesus through whom the grace and power of the Kingdom are brought to bear upon the life distorting experiences of persons in the far flung places of empire. What is conveyed in these accounts are not random and sporadic incidents but a thoroughgoing, systematic and comprehensive response which challenges things as they are in ways that offer hope to people on whose throats the boot of empire was resting. Each story gives an account of the adequacy and appropriateness of the saving encounter with Jesus: the demoniac is “sitting (subdued) clothed and in his right mind.” (15) The woman with the menstrual discharge is told “daughter your faith has made you whole, go in peace and be healed from your affliction.” (34) The dead little girl hears the life-giving words, “damsel, I say to you, arise” and immediately she got up and began to walk around. (42)

Rajkumar makes this comment about the role of synoptic healing stories:

The synoptic healing stories bring to the fore the concerns of the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus. Though not divesting salvation of its eschatological nature, the healing stories validate the historical processes and actions needed for its culmination. These healing stories furnish us with the hermeneutical key by which one can dispense with
all ‘objectivizing rhetoric’ of the eschaton and explore the ethical and concrete translation of the praxis of Jesus in contexts of discrimination, disenfranchisement and marginalization. In short, they give us insights into the nature of ‘Christ-praxis’ or the praxis of Jesus with the implication being that our own praxis should be evolved in close conformity to Jesus praxis.\textsuperscript{69}

The sparseness of verbal references to salvation therefore, is not an absolute indicator of thematic interest. The narratives in Mark are an account of “the gospel of the Jesus Christ the son of God” (1.1). The entire gospel of Mark is, therefore, the story of the saving or liberating encounter with Jesus Christ in responding to the lived experience of the people. Furthermore, the inclusion of the salvific messianic title “Son of God” in Chapter 5 is a linguistic link to the opening words/caption of the Gospel of Mark.\textsuperscript{70}

The notion of salvation is, according to Gorringe, a key element of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{71} According to Gutierrez it is a concept central to the Christian mystery.\textsuperscript{72} What is meant by salvation is the moot point. The contribution of Gutierrez has been influential on Caribbean Theology. The understanding of salvation is both historical and eschatological, personal and structural, spiritual and political, gift and demand and here and not yet here. He says:

Salvation is not something otherworldly, in regard to which the present life is merely a test. Salvation—the communion of men with God and the communion of men among themselves—is something which embraces all human reality, transforms it and leads it to its fullness in Christ: “Thus the center of God’s salvific design is Jesus

\textsuperscript{69} Rajkumar \textit{Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation}, 95
\textsuperscript{70} Of Christ the Son of God, has stronger Manuscript support than omitting the reference to Son of God. The strongest argument against the inclusion of “Son of God” in the caption or opening words of the Gospel is the general of text criticism that the shortest reading is to be preferred and the possibility of scribal expansion. The best mss (B D W) include “Son of God”. This is very strong and also the likelihood that its omission from major mss was due to scribal error. See Bruce Metzger, \textit{A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament} (United Bible Society) 73
\textsuperscript{71} Gorringe, \textit{Creme}, 210
\textsuperscript{72} Gorringe, \textit{Creme}, 149
Christ, who by his death and resurrection transforms the universe and makes it possible for man to reach fulfillment as a human being. This fulfillment embraces every aspect of humanity: body and spirit, individual and society, person and cosmos, time and eternity. Christ the image of the Father and the perfect God-Man, takes on all the dimensions of human existence.\footnote{Gorrin, Crime, 151, 2}

The value of Gutierrez’ definition of salvation lies in its comprehensiveness, encompassing as it does all the themes in the New Testament. The story of salvation in Mark 5 is part for the whole. It is drawing upon the understanding of salvation gained from the Gospel as whole and the Gospel as a part of the entire biblical canon. What makes the insight from this chapter of particular relevance in the present project is that it accounts for the liberating activity of Jesus on behalf of and in relationship to those who are non-persons. Gutierrez asserts that every theology is talk about God.

In the modern secular world the problem has been to find ways to talk about God in relation to non-belief. The question for Latin American Liberation Theology, Caribbean Theology and Asian and African Theology has been how to speak of God on behalf of and in relationship to those who are “non-persons”—that is those whom the prevailing social order does not acknowledge as persons: the poor, the exploited, those systematically and lawfully stripped of their human status, those who hardly know what a human being is.” “What is implied when non-persons are told that they are sons and daughters of God?”

Fundamentally, the Caribbean remains a collection of societies structured on the driving impetus of wealth-accumulation by a dominant ethnic minority, the source of human enslavement. Aloysius Pieris, the doyen of Asian theologians, suggests that God or the Liberative Agent is irreconcilably opposed to mammon or wealth-
accumulation, the source of human enslavement. Pieris suggests, “This same God has made a defense pact—a covenant—with the poor against the agents of mammon, so that the struggle of the poor for their liberation coincides with God’s own salvific action.”

The Legion narrative, in particular, seeks to make a statement against notions of the almightiness and invincibility of the forces of oppression. In the symbolic action taken by Jesus, the forces not only meet their match; they are overmatched and summarily vanquished. Rajkumar points out the strong Christological flavour of the Legion narrative. It commences with the hard to control adopting a subdued posture and falling prostrate at the feet of Jesus - an act tantamount to worship. The chaotic world of spirits come together in surrender to negotiate for their longevity: they entreat Jesus to be allowed to remain in the land and offer the compromise to be allowed to inhabit pigs rather than people. Rajkumar summarizes it as follows:

In a situation of challenge and riposte, while Jesus issues orders (v.8), and permissions, (v.13) which consequently culminates in the destruction of Legion, the Legion bows before Jesus (v.6), adjures Jesus not to torment him (v.7), begs him earnestly not to send him out of the country (v.10) but to send him into the swine (v.12) and ultimately rushes to its self-destruction. By placing the story within the framework of challenge and riposte, the supremacy of Jesus over legion is reinforced.

Recall the story I told in the second chapter about Nanny of the Maroons. A contingent of English soldiers was marching along a narrow path in single file towards Nanny Town in Portland in Jamaica. Unknown to the soldiers, the maroon warriors under the leadership of Nanny lay in ambush. Also unknown to them was

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74 Aloysius Pieris, An Asian theology of Liberation (T & T Clarke Internation, 1988) 120-24
75 Rajkumar Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation, 129
76 Rajkumar Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation, 137
that the path led to a cliff. When they had passed the point of no return, the Maroon
warriors sprung from the trees heavily camouflaged with leaves and branches. The
platoon of soldiers fled in panic only to perish over the precipice. The platoon fled not
because they were overmatched by a superior military force. It was palpably not the
case that the maroon warriors were as well armed. They fled because they were
overcome by folktales of the magical powers of Nanny of the Maroons. The Legion
account is at once symbolic of decisive victory and of utter humiliation.

The picture of salvation which is presented by the three miracle stories is as an
encounter with Jesus through which victory is achieved by disarming, unmasking and
vanquishing the powers of evil. Through this encounter, one comes into the
experience of wholeness and peace which is a life-giving, life enhancing and life
transforming experience. Those who come into this saving, liberating and
transforming encounter are to be shaped by twin duties: the first is to avoid the danger
of complacency and the second is to become change agents for the building of their
community.

(a)  Jesus exposes the residual capacity for resistance and the recalcitrance

       of the powers

The key interpretative idea in the Legion narrative is that the powers have a
residual capacity to resist the agents of liberation and the process of liberation, and
that they are recalcitrant. There is a proverbial “sting in the tail”. This is the
denouement of the dramatic parable. In the resolution, Jesus is asked to leave the
region by the self-appointed gatekeepers of the region. Also, the man from whom the
legion of demons has been exorcised is enjoined by Jesus to remain and to declare the
mercy and goodness of God to him.
As indicated above, Mark, in setting out the Gospel of Jesus the Son of God from the *locus imperium*, is reflecting on the nature of the powers. In this respect, he is similar to the treatment by the Ephesians correspondence and the Apocalypse. In the Apocalypse, the powers are described in language which is a parody of the Trinity, the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet (Revelations 12, 13). Similarly, in the Ephesians correspondence (corresponding) reference is made to principalities and powers (rulers and authorities) rulers of this dark world (global forces) and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm (inter-galactic forces). This is also a parody of the Trinity of God. In Mark 3 there is a triad of forces not dissimilar to the parody in Ephesians and the Apocalypse. They are Satan, Beelzebul and the demons (Mark 3).

In the exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac, and in particular in the denouement of the narrative, three representatives of the powers are betrayed: Legion is the name of the Roman military force stationed in Galilee that has wreaked havoc in the region whenever there have been protestations and rebellions against Roman rule. There is the substantial commercial interest represented by the pig farm with two thousand pigs. There are also representatives of civil society, the cultured despisers. Mark uses linguistic parallels to establish the link between Legion, the vanquished and exorcised forces of evil, and those who came to plead with Jesus to leave the region. The demons pleaded earnestly (*kai parekalai auton polla*) for Jesus not to banish them from the land. The spokespersons and gatekeepers pleaded with (*kai erxanto parakalein auton*) Jesus to leave their region. The narrative sets out the common design between the demonic host (Legion) and the civic and commercial interests. One is cause and the other is complicit. One is vanquished but the other mounts a rearguard action. One is imperial and hegemonic, the other is culture-ideological. One
is the oppression that is defeated in the revolution to bring about liberation, but the other is the counter-revolution to keep imperial interests in their places.

In its own way, the narrative calls attention to the eschatological, the here and not yet here, character of salvation. The simple account of what happens next indicates both that evil is networked and that the struggle for liberation is ongoing. What is seen in the aftermath of the miracle with the rearguard action mounted by those who represent the beneficial interests from the oppression and marginalization of the people opens to the understanding that liberation is not exhausted by political or economic liberation from oppressive structures. There are more and more battles to be fought and foes to be vanquished.

Whatever the language chosen to describe evil with its surplus capacity in its superhuman and supernatural dimensions, sight must not be lost of the complex nature of the struggle against evil to accomplish human liberation and salvation. The vanquished forces have their agents and collaborators. They have their "sting in the tail." Roman imperialism was not merely joined at the hips with the religious establishment; the tentacles reached into business interests and civil society as well. Both commercial and civic interests combined to keep things in their place. Put differently, there are economic, cultural and religious forces that are part of the wheels within the wheel, the glue that hold things together. Even after the Promised Land has been entered and the Jordan crossed, there yet remains a "promised rest for the people of God." (Heb 4.1)

This is the reality to which Caribbean theology responds. It, therefore, has to give account of the fact that there is resilience to the factors and forces that have dominated retarded and distorted the Caribbean through the centuries. They may
have been abolished but they have not been destroyed. As Taylor has pointed out in a presentation to mark the bi-centennial of the abolition of the slave trade in the Caribbean, that while the grand old form of slavery has been abolished, it correlates still persist. He says:

This is so both in its grand old forms and also in newer and more modern correlates in varied forms of domination, oppression, exploitation and deprivation all at the expense of human dignity, rights, destiny and hope. These continue in systemic ways, affecting critical sections of the human family at different times in different places, but for some, at all times and consistently so. This means that abolition of the trade and later forms of the practice do not mean destruction of the reality.  

He contends further that free trade which is one of the modern developments has been to the disadvantage of the Caribbean whose forbears were traded as commodities. The power of the governments from the metropole to impose their wills upon the Caribbean peoples has been replaced by their surrogates in transnational corporations and multilateral lending and donor agencies. In this respect, the articulation of the encounter with and appropriation of the redeeming presence of Christ in its midst must account for old forms and old foes but equally and adroitly unmask their minions and confederates in modern and postmodern guises. In a word, Caribbean Theology must account for and respond to domination as a matter of historical record but also the new configurations of power, with no less oppressive intentions as the new reality of the Caribbean experience.

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(b) Economic forces

The picture in the Legion narrative is compelling. The demoniac makes his home among the tombs and along the mountain side. He is proximate or neighbour to a large pig-farming operation. In his deranged condition there is no evidence that he was a threat to the profit that stood to be made from the pigs. At least, in the determination made by the pig herders and those who appeared to speak for them, there was less to be gained by the exorcism than allowing the demoniac to remain as he had been.

What are the ways in which economic forces continue to act in consort with the agents of oppression and marginalization and continue to act in reactionary and counter-revolutionary ways? The demand for low-tax, high-margin, low wage environment is, like the price of Pax Romana, oppressive and against the interest of the people. Environmental degradation as a result of the cavalier waste disposal practices and the production methods as well as products which are injurious to the environment are forms of further oppression of the poor. The poor are the primary victims of environmental catastrophe which is the matter arising from environmental degradation. Poverty is the enemy of the environment but wealth accumulation does not have a proud record of friendship with the environment either. The absence of social investment (or re-investment) in the community from which businesses extract profits, perpetuates poverty. Social investment is needed in health care, housing, education and training, and training in agri-business and agricultural best practices. As long as mega profits are assured there will be indifference to slum conditions and urban blight in which many live. Business and commercial interests have also supported the use of disinformation in order to frustrate legitimate challenges to
patterns of economic activity that are injurious to the people and the environment. Commercial interests have sought to use the means at their disposal to demonize activists and the heroes and heroines, the champions of the people causes who speak the truth and seek a more just and equal option for the masses. The disinformation and the demonization contribute to the distortion and disorientation of their sense of self among the poor. Business and commercial interests make use of the means of disinformation and demonization as instruments of control in order to make the people more gullible and susceptible to exploitation and oppression.

In the case of the Caribbean, business, commercial and financial interests from origin to globalization have been organized for the systematic impoverishment of the masses. From the pirates and buccaneers, to the planters, the merchants and their heirs and successors in the modern economy, they have not acknowledged the legacy of inequality, disenfranchisement, exploitation and marginalization of the broad mass of the population. Political parties in Government have been bewitched and intimidated by the economic elite so that policies that are aimed at closing the gaps between the rich and poor and generally at achieving economic justice have met their demise in infancy. On the other hand, policies aimed at economic growth but do not give attention to greater equity or to the reduction of unemployment and poverty have been promoted. Those who promote the mainstreaming of the masses and insist on economic justice and empowerment are demonized.

(c) Gate Keepers and Cultured Despisers

In reading Mark 5 (in particular the Legion narrative) from the perspective of the Caribbean it is clear that what is experienced every time boundaries are crossed in the name of peace and salvation, aggression, suspicion and reaction are encountered.
Each of these is on show in the Legion narrative. Jesus is the Agent of Liberation. He crosses the boundaries which are geographical, political, social and religious. The storm at sea (Mark 4.35-41) gives way to the aggression and suspicion on land. The demoniac is a representative of the people (the land) under oppression. Legion (the demon) is a way of speaking of the Roman army as the representative of Roman occupation and, therefore, of political power. The pig farmers and the farm itself call attention to business and commercial interests that stand to benefit from things as they are and therefore that are put at risk by the project of human liberation. In this way, they call attention to the forces of reaction which are always there when we struggle for the people’s liberation.

Who then are those who authorize themselves to speak for the interest of the community by asking Jesus to leave the region? Who were the self-appointed gatekeepers in the Decapolis and Galilee and who are their counterparts in the Caribbean? Who are they who appoint themselves to make pronouncement on what is good for the region and authorizing themselves to take action along the lines that they have advised themselves? Two groups appear to have played a self-appointed role as conservators of interests: they are religion and the media. The role played by religion in the project of colonization in providing a sacred canopy for colonization and the role that sections of the church continue to play in seeking to legitimize the status quo and in reinforcing self-doubt among the African majority is a force of reaction. In the history of the region, not many of those who have led in the pursuit of what is right

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78 A case is not being made for allegorical interpretation of Mark 5. It is simply being suggested that there are parallels between the various actions taken in Mark’s account of this dramatic parable in the Legion story and the lived experience of oppression, especially because of the forces of reaction. The Legion narrative may be used to reflect in the struggle upon the role played by religion and the media, as well as the role played by large investments and business interest. It is often the protection of these vested interest that is the disguise used to keep the people in their misery.
and just for the community have come from the hallowed halls of the religious establishment. Often, it is outsiders and those who are spoken against, that have led the pursuit of what is right and just.

The media, in particular the international media, are the primary instrument of cultural penetration and the reinforcement of negative stereotypes. These stereotypes do very little to enhance the sense of self among the majority poor Afro-Caribbean people. Media practitioners sometimes speak as if they are divine oracles dispensing judgment and determining standards. Often, their guise is the public interest, but on closer examination it is the vested interest by which the media is owned and controlled and the advertising dollar on which they rely that set their agenda. In this way, the media are the “high priest” of international capitalism.

Nathaniel Murrell acknowledges the role played by sections of the Church after emancipation as advocate of public education and economic improvement. He points out that after slavery was abolished the church built schools, hospitals, clinics, and water tanks for the masses of the people in Jamaica. On the other hand, he contends that in the Caribbean at large they played the opposite role. He says:

"[T]he economic and political interests, racial prejudices, and hegemonic ideology of class that guided the interpretation contributed to the legacy of underdevelopment and impoverishment of Caribbean peoples in colonial and postcolonial eras. Under white minority rule, God was viewed through European eyes and the liberating power of the Bible was estranged from the Caribbean people’s true life situation."  

A role of active opposition to the cause of liberation has also been played. The Vatican under Pope John Paul II harassed “liberation theology clergy” in Latin America, some of whom resigned from the Roman Catholic Church. The development of the Santa Fe Document in 1980 was the answer by U.S. President Ronald Reagan to Liberation Theology. According to the document, “the U.S. policy should begin to counter (not react against) liberation theology as it is utilized in Latin America by liberation theology ‘clergy’”\textsuperscript{80}. The document set out a blueprint to nullify and counter what was seen as the proclivity towards Marxism by Liberation Theology. Among the strategies adopted was the sponsorship of fundamentalists and neo-Pentecostal religious groups in the Caribbean and Latin America. Since that time there has been a mushrooming of new religious groups, of the Gospel culture, televangelists, the prosperity gospel and the “miracle on demand” movement. Both Latin American Liberation Theology and Caribbean Theology have had to contend with forces sponsored in order to counter both forms of the theology of liberation.

Caribbean Theology is a theology of resistance, which takes a challenging prophetic stance. In this sense, Caribbean Theology is to be contrasted with the Gospel Culture which has re-emerged with new strategies, respectability and resources. The Gospel Culture has made use of the electronic media and media technology and though it is not homegrown, it has considerable appeal. It is populist and consumerist and has worked in terms of Church growth, defined as increase in membership of local congregations. As Taylor has pointed out, the Gospel Culture represents a theological outlook that is primarily concerned with bringing the individual to make a decision and nurturing such an individual in a way that would

\textsuperscript{80} Phillip Berryman, \textit{Liberation Theology: the essential fact about the revolutionary movement} (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984) 3
preserve the initial commitment. It has a framework of orthodoxy and places value on a personal ethic. However, a theological interest that envisions the role of the Gospel and the Church in engaging the Caribbean reality for fundamental transformation is not an essential part of the enterprise.\(^{81}\)

Taylor acknowledges elements of concern for social welfare and interest in the idea of inculturation and contextuality on the part of this Gospel Culture, but he says, “this… in a large measure would be understood in terms of adaptation for more effective marketability.”\(^{82}\) Caribbean Theology, on the other hand, is providing a theological response to global realities, the effect of which are being felt in the Caribbean with great immediacy and intensity, economically, ecologically and technologically, in ways that have exacerbated old problems and created new ones.\(^{83}\)

The prophetic resistance which is the response of Caribbean Theology, therefore, seeks to unmask the powers, engage the powers and confront the powers with the truth of the Word of God. This is necessarily counter-cultural in relation to the dominant culture and its supportive establishment.

*(d) Jesus commands discipleship and evangelism as citizenship and community building*

Once healed, Legion is told to “go to your house and to your family and proclaim to them what the Lord had done for you and how he has shown you mercy” is enormously significant to the nature of the public theology project. Nothing before had indicated that the demonized man had a home to return to or family. In his

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\(^{82}\) Taylor, “Engendering Theological Relevance”

\(^{83}\) Taylor, “Engendering Theological Relevance”
demonized state he was completely alienated. The command to return home is like demanding the woman who touched Jesus to show herself in the midst of the crowd. Making herself known was about overcoming her self-doubt, and a statement of the rebirth of her self-confidence. It completed the healing from a condition that had affected her mind and inner self as much as it had affected her body and her finances. This is similar to the demonized man. He must return to his community and face those who have known his story of alienation, distortion and self-mutilation. Facing up and owning up to his own people completes his liberation.

There are two separate instructions given in the one response by Jesus. The first is to return to his home and family and the second is to proclaim how the Lord has shown mercy to him. Returning home not only completes the healing but it is the ultimate response to the alienation and disorientation caused by oppression and marginalization. Defiance and rebellion against oppression and indignity had resulted in frustration and the interiorization of anger and oppression. The grace and power of God in Jesus Christ have transformed the once demonized man so that he is clothed and in his right mind. The step of returning home bears witness to the forces that marginalized, oppressed and alienated him, that the myth of their almightiness has been debunked. It is therefore the ultimate response to his alienation.

Taylor argued that the running away of Onesimus from Philemon’s household demonstrates that slavery and oppression cannot be sweetened to make them genuinely acceptable to the human spirit that yearns for the freedom to fulfill its potential. He goes on to point out that the transformation of Onesimus who in the providence of God had a meeting with the Apostle Paul:
He becomes a living testimony to the fact that oppression cannot be made acceptable to the human spirit. The yearning of the human spirit for freedom remains always a challenge to conscience that can become conformable with its absence.\textsuperscript{84}

This story of the Legion is very much like this story. The transformed demoniac becomes a living testimony in Decapolis to the fact that the strong man has been bound and his house plundered. The denouement of the Legion narrative, symbolic action and dramatic parable, defines the nature and context of the project of Caribbean Theology in two ways: in the first place it points the theology in a direction that has to do the thinking about God in the post-Emancipation, post-Exodus, post-liberation environment. It is the aftermath, the matters arising, when Pharaoh has apparently been vanquished and Legion has been defeated, it is between the times that the theology is to be done. It is in the midst of the forces of reaction in their new guises and with new alliances forged that are able both to seduce and to intimidate the agents of liberation that theological discourse is framed. The theological project that seeks to respond to the distortion of self and relationship in the post-Emancipation, postcolonial and post-Independence environment does so in a context in which the new configurations of power are bent in re-installing vanquished demons.

Secondly, the theological project accepts the Caribbean no longer as exile but as homeland. The transformed demoniac returns home in the way ancient Israel returned from exile in Babylon. It is in this post-exilic context that the deeds of mercy and grace in the pursuit of justice are most urgently to be elaborated and demonstrated. Those who have been liberated and transformed have a duty to the places and contexts where Legion still has dominion and where interest that have benefited from

oppression are still determined to maintain the status quo ante. Discipleship and evangelism in the context of the instruction to the transformed man to return home take on a duty to the community. This gives Christian citizenship a renewed activism. This transformed man cannot keep silent and cannot ignore the oppression that had kept him alienated, in chains and shackles. The project, therefore, is to make home for those whose home was hitherto among the tombs. This is what is meant by making the Caribbean a just and responsible society.

Conclusion

This exercise has been an illustration of Caribbean liberation hermeneutics, reading the text in the light of the lived experience of the people, of marginalization, disorientation, distortion of identity and dehumanization in solidarity and in hope. Mark 5 has been chosen because it is central to the anti-establishment character of the Gospel of Mark and because it brings together features of lived experience in the far flung places in the Roman Empire, in particular in Galilee that parallel the lived experience of the people of the post-colonial Caribbean. The alienated man, exploited woman and child whose future is at risk are dominant features of Caribbean reality.

It has been demonstrated that the Gospel writer makes use of the miracle stories in ways that unmask the nature of power and the ways in which Jesus brought the grace and power of the Kingdom to bear upon the lives of those on whose throats the boot of power was resting. The miracle stories in Mark 5 brought attention to bear upon Roman imperialism and its collaborators, the Jewish religious establishment. They do so in ways that do not limit the focus to political and religious power alone. Rather, the Legion narrative in particular calls attention to power that is unaccountable and unregulated, cruel and tyrannical, utterly self-absorbed and
idolatrous. It brings attention to bear on the self-distorting and self-rejecting outcomes of oppression. The demoniac calls attention to alienation that results in the self-mutilating violence and loss of the sense of place that are a part of the lived experience both in Galilee then and the Caribbean now. In the Legion narrative Jesus is presented as an outsider, a stranger who does not seek to become the agent of the dominant ideology. Rather he confronts, disarms and vanquishes the power of the powerful. The liberating action of Jesus not only expels the demons, the source of his alienation but renews the sense of place for the man in his community. In so doing, it calls attention to the nature of the challenge in taking one’s place in the community. It is the community in which there are interests that are determined to preserve the status quo ante if not also to re-impose the dominance of the vanquished forces. These forces do not necessarily have the ugliness of demons. They play key roles in the community and take the guise of securing the interest of the community. What gives them away is the stand they take towards Jesus at whose hand a profound liberation, indeed, the breaking of the stranglehold of oppression has been accomplished. This defines them, it unmasks them, but it also makes the nature of the challenge of the creation of a just and responsible society unambiguous and unmistakable.
Chapter Five

The Makings of Caribbean Theology: Its Emergence and Challenge

Having set out the exegetical basis for a new Caribbean theology in the previous chapter, I want in this one to outline the key developments for such a theology. It is reasonable to assert that the Ecumenical Consultation in Chaguaramas, Trinidad in 1971 was the start the deliberate process of the Caribbean church taking responsibility for its theological self-understanding. I shall trace developments from that point and identify the major thinkers and the ways in which their contribution shaped Caribbean Theology. I reflect upon some watershed events which I consider symbolic and catalytic at one and the same time and which represent important points of departure to bring the people of the Caribbean to a covenant making before God. At the same time, there has been a noticeable decline in theological output and influences on the broad Caribbean agenda over the last two decades of the 20th Century a period in which neo-colonialist influences appeared even more than before to take a hold of the Caribbean. Lewin Williams calls the 1980s the lost decade.¹ It has been a period of the muting of the prophetic voices. Having outlined this history, I identify the problem of idolatry. The problem of the region has been shown to be the interiorization of oppression. This has led to the distortion of identity. This distorted sense of itself has made the region susceptible to idolatry in which it assimilates the values and assumptions of those who had been its masters.


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The use of the metaphor of exile and the resonant symbol of Babylon implies the problem of identity. However, I suggest in this chapter that the problem is not only one generated by external influences but also represents the choices and decisions made by the Caribbean people. I argue that it is an interiorization of oppression and adopting of the values and assumptions of its erstwhile masters that has led to the arrested development in Caribbean Theology and Caribbean selfhood.

*The Ecumenical Consultation for Development in Chaguaramas, Trinidad*

The watershed event for Caribbean Theology was an Ecumenical Consultation for Development held in 1971 in Chaguaramas Trinidad, presided over by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kingston, Samuel Carter, and including some 25 church gatherings from 16 regional territories. The stated objectives were: 1) to witness to the will and the determination of the churches to carry their share of responsibility in the process of human fulfillment, as well as social and economic development. 2) To study under the direction of experts in various fields (theology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and politics) the problems and possibilities of development of one Caribbean people. 3) To define ways of expressing Caribbean participation in and commitment to the development of the Caribbean in terms of human freedom and

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2 Caribbean Ecumenical Consultation for Development (Official Report) “Called To Be”, (Barbados: Island Press, 1971) 1. Others in attendance included: Juan Montalvo and Edmundo Desueza (Dominican Republic), David Chaplain (WCC), Idris Hammid (Trinidad), John Grace (Barbados), Robert Cuthbert (CADEC) and Representatives from SODEPAX and the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace
justice. 4) To plan strategies of ecumenical action for these ends in co-operation with national programmes, international agencies and institutions.  

In addition to this Consultation, two other developments were important. First, the creation of the United Theological College of the University of the West Indies (UTC) in 1967 as a self-conscious Ecumenical Caribbean Theological institution was a pivotal development. Edmund Davis reflects on 80 years of Theological Education in the region, but in so doing affords not even a footnote on the other colleges that already existed in 1967, Jamaica Theological Seminary (JTS) (1960-) and Jamaica Bible College (JBC) (1935) somewhat earlier. He contends that “the myth of the superiority of western civilization seems to have been thoroughly internalized by many educated blacks”. “During this period (1838-1903), Afro-Jamaicans were regarded as subjects of the British empire to be civilized according to the new secular notion of positivism and social Darwinism. Their struggle for social justice, for better land utilization policy, for political representation and ethno-cultural identity reflects an emerging nationalism in an imperialist setting.”  

Davis is correct in pointing out the innovative character of the particular ecumenical arrangements which spawned UTC in which participating communions jointly finance and manage the institution. Neither JTS nor JBC has taken a self-conscious and deliberately ecumenical or regional approach to the management and financing of their institutions.  

Both JTS and JBC are regional in an opportunistic rather than institutional manner. It is tribute

4 Edmund Davies, Theological Education in a Multi-Ethnic Society: the United Theological College of the West Indies and its Four Antecedent Institutions (1841-1966) (Netherland Bokencentrum, 1999) 39  
5 Both Jamaica Theological Seminary (JTS) and Jamaica Bible College (JBC) have interpreted their mandates in terms of preserving the evangelical tradition and in that respect have not interpreted it to mean to take theological responsibility for the Caribbean region, except to train evangelical thinkers in the region.
to the record of UTC that all its presidents have contributed to the development of Caribbean Theology and some have come to be identified as significant Caribbean Theologians.

The other important developments were the creation of the Caribbean Conference of Churches and in particular the Caribbean Contact Newspaper. The CCC precipitated the Consultation in Chaguaramas and the Caribbean Contact Newspaper facilitated an intellectual hegemony of regional thinkers including theologians while it lasted.

1. The search for identity and commitment to the task of conscientization

Two years after the Ecumenical Consultation in Chaguaramas, the Treaty of Chaguaramas was signed by Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago and brought into existence CARICOM. The least that could be said about the two meetings in Chaguaramas, one by the Church leaders (1971) and the other by the political leaders of the region (1973), is that there was a coincidence of interests. It may also be argued however that the Ecumenical Consultation anticipated, if it did not precipitate, the region’s move to integration. For example, the Ecumenical Consultation noted that:

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6 Chaguaramas was the location of the short-lived West Indies Federation (1958-62) which ended when Jamaica pulled out of the Federation after a referendum in 1962 in which the Jamaican electorate voted against the West Indies Federation. The signing of the Treaty in 1973 brought the Caribbean Common Market CARICOM and replaced CARIFTA. This gave effect and institutional character to the movement towards regional integration. http://www.chagdev.com/Pages/Chag-History-Chag%20TreatyCaricom.html
The Caribbean must develop its own life-style, goals, and structure, suited to the potential and needs of its own people and land. This process requires a fundamental liberation from imposed and imported values and power which currently determine the direction of development in the region.\textsuperscript{7}

It says further in respect to economic priorities and structures:

[They] require a fundamental redirection for Caribbean-determined development which emphasizes personal and humanizing values. The Consultation rejected the current direction of economic development, based on the pattern of the metropolitan nations. This pattern is currently increasing disparities in wealth and the misuse of resources, thereby also increasing the alienation of Caribbean people from each other and from their God-given environment. This was no call to rapid economic growth.\textsuperscript{8}

It can be seen here that Caribbean Theology is not simply received theology with a Caribbean accent, decorated in Caribbean colours or spiced with Caribbean flavours, or even set to Caribbean rhythms. Rather, it is theology that seeks to reflect on the lived experiences of the people of the Caribbean in ways that deepen their sense of self, sense of place as well as sense the possibilities under God for human flourishing in the region in which they find themselves.

\textit{(a) The Call for Justice and Liberation}

The call that came from the Chaguarumas consultation was for the Christian Churches of the Caribbean to be dynamically involved in the process of Caribbean development, which meant a call to justice and liberation as imperatives of the Christian Gospel. It also called for the Christian Churches to participate in the “Search for Caribbean Identity” and to further the conscientization of the people of

\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Called to Be}, 3
\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Called to Be}, 4
the Caribbean. Roy Neehall asserts that “God’s project of liberation continues in the appearance of a Saviour. God becomes incarnate in a poor man, Jesus, who interprets his mission in terms of total liberation.” (c.f. Luke 4.18, 19) He contends that liberation movements fight for change in unjust structures but sometimes create their own law and order and are just as repressive in controlling dissension. It is impossible for justice to prevail socially without just men and women. “The judgment of the Gospel is no less applicable to the company of liberators than it is to powerful oppressors.”

(b) A Call to join in the pursuit of Caribbean Identity

S. S. Ramphal prefers to speak about a “Search for West Indian Identity” rather than a “Search for Caribbean Identity.” The search for identity, he says, is the demand for political unity, economic integration and the urgent demand for social and economic change. This is a demand for social equality and for economic justice. He argues that the demand arises out of the disaffection with our established order and out of resentment of its many inequities. He says it is a demand we must be prepared to meet and we are capable of meeting effectively, but one which poses a challenge to nationhood. Ramphal questions why we should search for identity at all. He asks: “If the criteria for national identity were to be set down it, would not the people and States of the West Indies fulfill them all save only in respect of nationhood itself?”

He contends that “to all except ourselves we are one people dispersed throughout the

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10 Neehall, “the Call is Proclaimed, Justice, Liberation and the Christian Gospel”, 22
11 Neehall, “the Call is Proclaimed, Justice, Liberation and the Christian Gospel”, 22
12 S. S. Ramphal, “The Search for Caribbean Identity” in Called to Be 24
13 Ramphal, “The Search for Caribbean Identity” 25,26
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islands and on the mainland States with little more to justify our several labels than the merest accent often recognizable only among ourselves."\(^{14}\) Caribbean identity is natural and is bound up with our common destiny. He asks, "What is it that denies us that overarching identity ... that Welsh and Scot and English have found in the United Kingdom?"\(^{15}\) In this regard Ramphal repudiates what he calls "separatism" in the region as demonstrated in the rejection of the West Indian Federation.\(^{16}\) He argues that the rejection of Federation was not merely a decision against regionalism or a rejection of Caribbean identity, but an agonizing decision for self-determination on an island basis which, while declining consummation of a regional identity through political union, nonetheless specifically avoided repudiation of that identity.\(^{17}\)

Self-determination and political independence convey to nation states the veneer and trappings of equal international status but the modus operandi of the international system empties them of practical content. Ramphal asserts,

Political independence is a shibboleth without economic strength and economic independence, and that equality of status even in the United Nation organizations, is more formal than real save on those rare occasions when important issues are decided not by consensus of the major powers but by votes of the Assembly—and even then small States vote under peril of reprisals.\(^{18}\)

The issue also relates to those Caribbean States that have not attained political independence but which have "Associated Status" and have been provided a bridge

\(^{14}\) Ramphal, "The Search for Caribbean Identity", 24

\(^{15}\) Ramphal, "The Search for Caribbean Identity", 25

\(^{16}\) In 1962 Jamaica voted against the West Indies Federation, the headquarters for which was located in Chagaramas, Trinidad in response to which Eric Williams of Trinidad said about Norman Manley's (of Jamaica) gamble, "1 (one) from '10' (ten) leaves '0' (zero) not '9.' (nine) 25

\(^{17}\) Called to Be 25.

\(^{18}\) Called to Be
between colonialism and self-determination. The mere "loin cloth of political independence" is not sufficient, according to Ramphal, to help them navigate the jungle of international politics. The central issue, therefore, is for the Caribbean to seek collective strength through political unity. This does not have to be in the form of Federation. The issue has to do with control of Caribbean resources, whether beneath the soil or below the waters adjacent to our coasts, and its right to be more than primary producers for the industrial societies of the world. It also has to do with access to world markets in terms that account for the ecological debt owed to the people of the Caribbean on account of years of exploitation and unfair trade and in ways that seek to redress the legacy of underdevelopment. The open question is finding a mechanism for decision-making in dealing with the non-Caribbean world that reside in a single regional entity that optimizes the chances of the region to respond to the demand for employment and a better quality of life for all its citizens. Caribbean identity therefore has to rest on a regional base of social equality and economic justice leading to regional development. Ramphall warns that this will be and has been resisted both by blind reactionaries and blinkered revolutionaries.

Finally, Ramphall called on the Church in the region to speak out on the side of change and suggests that "for too long the image of the Church in the Caribbean has been as an instrumentality to the establishment." He says, "as the Church begins to

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19 These include, among others the British and US Virgin Islands, the Dutch Antilles, Puerto Rico, Anguilla, Martinique, Guadeloupe and others who are departments of or depend on the metropolis.
20 Called to Be 64.
21 Called to Be 26
put down its indigenous roots the need to change that image becomes even more urgent.\(^{22}\)

In the four decades that have elapsed since Ramphall made his call, the progress towards regional integration, especially in terms of economic integration, has been slow and faltering. While political unity and collective action without seeking political union have taken some steps forward, by themselves they do not exhaust the notion of Caribbean identity. The affirmation of Caribbean culture, memorializing the struggles of our forebears towards freedom and Caribbean selfhood and building of regional institutions are also ingredients of Caribbean identity. The most enduring symbols of Caribbean unity and identity have been the University of the West Indies and the West Indies cricket team. It is also essential to complete the progress towards the establishment of a Caribbean Court of Justice in its final appellate jurisdiction. Such a court would be an opportunity to “end the judicial surveillance from London” and to create the institutional framework for the maturation of a Caribbean jurisprudence.

\((c)\) The Call for Conscientization

Conscientization is making clear the intrinsic correlation between conquering oneself, becoming more oneself, and making the world more human. In philosophical terms the inter-subjectivity of consciences is the progressive conscientization of man.\(^{23}\) The task of conscientization recognizes that “Man”, that is, a human person, can be “made a thing”, dehumanized. The more the society becomes alienating or dehumanizing the more the critical powers of individuals remain on the surface of

\(^{22}\) Called to Be 65
\(^{23}\) Roque Adams “Conscientization”, in Called to Be 27-30, 79f
social phenomena. Citizens are converted to "children who cannot speak but whose thoughts are expressed by others, by elite groups which are not integrated into the society, but juxtaposed to it. Roque Adames says the following:

...individuals become objects, are handled and manipulated. The reaction of the society is one of conformity, inferiority and underestimation of self in the presence of those who "speak" for it; the reaction is that of mimic, motionless, gregarious, dumb, subservient, eager to display with the same ease foolish optimism or profound depression: it is an inert and puppet society.²⁴

Adames says that the truly revolutionary moment in life comes when the community develops self-confidence in its own values and the complex of being an appendage disappears. It is conscientization that breaks the vertical relationship in the social structures, which is the immediate root of alienation and creates a process of genuine freedom.²⁵

The demand to seek conscientization arises out of the conviction of the radical incompatibility between demands of the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ, at the same time, an unjust and alienated society. The value placed on human persons as the image of God and objects of Christ’s love in solidarity with the poor in Jesus’ incarnation spurs the church to protest against any deterioration of the human condition. The church, therefore, is called upon to place itself at the centre of the process of developing a heightened inter-subjectivity of consciousness of the individual concerning the person’s self, neighbor and situationality. The Church is called as a servant community to anticipate, advocate, approximate and exemplify the righteousness and justice of God and demand no less from the society. This is the

²⁴ Adames "Conscientization", 28
²⁵ Adames "Conscientization", 28
basis of freedom and this is the basis for attempting to approximate the eschatological ideal in the lived experience of the people.

2. The key figures of Caribbean Theology

Idris Hamid emerged as the early evangelist of Caribbean Theology after the Chaguaramas Consultation. His work, *In Search of New Perspectives* concludes that the history of the Christian Faith as it came to the Caribbean was distorted and a truncated one.26 He accuses this theology of creating a false dichotomy between body and spirit, giving priority to the soul over the physical needs, promoting an individualistic gospel that sets man apart from his brother and giving a false eschatology and a false hope—an opiate. These interpretations and emphases were handy tools of domination and colonialism. The interest of colonial masters was favoured by the truncated and distorted Christian Faith: they did not want to see spiritual freedom as relating to political and other freedoms. To care for the body as for the soul would have involved a change in policies and led to poor economics. The individualism and sectarianism were spiritual counterparts of the colonial policy to divide and rule. The stress on the future hope was geared to detract from any attempt to change the present condition or correct present injustices.27 Hamid, in his path-breaking work, *Troubling of the Waters*, sees the project of Caribbean Theology as part of the new self-awareness of the Caribbean peoples.28 He speaks of a new self-

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26 Idris Hamid, *In Search of New Perspectives*, (Caribbean Ecumenical Consultation for Development, Bridgetown Barbados) 6
27 Hamid, *In Search of New Perspectives*, 6
28 Idris Hamid, Ed., *Troubling of the Waters*, A Collection of papers and responses presented at two Conferences on Creative Theological Reflection held in Jamaica on the 3rd and 4th May and in Trinidad on the 28th-30th May 1973, Rahaman Printery Ltd San Fernando Trinidad, 6
understanding and a disaster for structures of spirituality not resonant with Caribbean experience and intuition

Hamid, therefore, called for a new theological orientation, which was to look at Caribbean historical experiences and the future to which God has called the region. He argues that God called people to take responsibility for their future. "Our past is a defuturised past." Hopelessness reigned. Hamid says,

Not only were we robbed of our future, we were robbed of our past. It is scarred and denigrated. Our rich cultural heritages were labeled as uncivilized. In our schools we were further inflicted with a denigration of our past. In our religious training, one is hard put to find any attempt to see God operating in our former cultures and in our Caribbean history.

He argues further that God has been experienced as an outsider. "He is not a God in our history and of our destiny. In fact He has not been the God for us, but the God against us." In his view, the accent of the new theology was to be on the humanity of man (sic). He cited the humanness of the Deuteronomic laws, too often overlooked, the prophetic cry for justice and the coming of God in human form. All these, he argues, are abundant evidence of the God's thrust for the humanization of man and his/her communities. This humanism should become incarnate in the total life of the Caribbean. In the new theology community must be central. According to Hamid, "This means that structures of society which put brother against brother, which see the neighbour as the competitor and a rival instead of a brother and a partner, which strive on competition instead of co-operation must be rejected." He also suggests that a

29 Hamid, Troubling of the Waters,
30 Hamid, In Search of New Perspectives, 7
31 Hamid, In Search of New Perspectives, 8
32 Hamid, In Search of New Perspectives, 9
33 Hamid, In Search of New Perspectives, 9
fresh understanding of the Incarnation would be a breakdown of the dividing wall between the material and spiritual, the profane and the sacred, the body and the spirit. He says further, "When God became fully man in Jesus, He made sacred every area of our existence." 34 In that respect Hamid also warns against moralism and docetism. 35

The Chaguaramas Consultation had taken place against the background of the Black Power protests in the 1960s in the U.S.A. In Trinidad and Tobago one such protest had poured black paint on the figure of Jesus on the crucifix. According to Hamid, the pouring of black paint on the figure of Jesus was rage against a symbol of the institution of a church in which colonialism still reigned. It was also at the same time a deep, despairing and symbolic cry for a Jesus who would identify with and deliver the underprivileged. 36

Horace Russell, a historian and one of the earliest graduates from Oxford University to enter the Christian ministry in the Caribbean, returned to the Caribbean in the 1950s to pastor and to teach. He is acknowledged as influential over many who have become Caribbean Theologians. As the first Presidents of UTCWI, he wrote the important essay, "The Emergence of the ‘Christian Black’ Concept: the Making of a Stereotype". 37 In that essay Russell traces developments from March 4, 1823 when William Wilberforce, the celebrated parliamentarian, introduced a petition from the Quakers requesting the complete abolition of slavery on humanitarian grounds. The developments upon which he reflects climaxed with the period of 1940 when political ferment and labour unrest gave birth to the political and trade union movements in the

34 Hamid, In Search of New Perspectives, 10
35 Caribbean Contact, "Voices from the Past," April 1982
36 Hamid, In Search of New Perspectives, 12

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region and eventually to universal adult suffrage. The former signaled the beginning of the end of the world of slavery and the security and protection enjoyed by the planters. The latter gave effect to the attempts to create a new person. Hyacinth Booth, who describes Russell as a bridge between our theological past and our theological present, questions what she sees as the unfortunate neglect of the struggles of black women by his choice of reference to Caribbean Man, and ask what about Woman? She contends that “in the discussion on Caribbean Man, the emphasis was on ‘man’ as male. In the discussion, there was the suggestion that because of her sexuality black women did not experience to the same extent the negative evaluation meted out to black men.” She protests, “I am not sure that I understand the point that was being made here.”

In that essay, Russell relied on The Wretched of the Earth, the work of Frantz Fanon (a Martiniquian who was a Christian black). Fanon says:

But if we want humanity to advance further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries ... for Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity. We must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.

Russell pointed out that no one in the Caribbean wanted a revolution from below. It was the hard fact of the imminence of insurrection or revolution that dictated the pace of emancipation. Therefore, abolitionists and churchmen sought to replace the planters’ view of the African with the more romantic symbol baptized with Christian

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meaning. The planters' stereotypical view of the African was 'Quashie', characterized by evasiveness, laziness, caprice, childishness or childlikeness and lack of judgment. Russell argues that there is a masculine quality to this stereotype described by Orlando Patterson. He says that despite their ill-treatment and degradation black women retained what the man could not retain—'some of her social status.' "The black woman was the 'womb' and as such was mother and the harbinger of the future." There was a scarcity of women in Jamaican slave society. There were few white women and only one in every six imports from Africa was female. The woman was exploited by white men, headmen and Africans. She was the master's object of pleasure, seldom his companion. On the other hand, according to Russell, the literature describes her as possessing magical powers which made her irresistible to men and powers she obtained from the Obeah man. This was not entirely the same for coloured women. "She was feared given the norms of the plantocracy i.e. by birth she belonged to it, her colour identified her with the slave population, a fact reinforced by law and prejudice. The coloured woman was at one and the same time a symbol of freedom and of betrayal.

The idea of a new Caribbean man/person ought to include, therefore, the notion of the rejection of this rivalry between man and woman and between shades of oppression. It is also to reject the idea of the black man of the fallen noble savage.

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40 Russell, "Emergence of the 'Christian Black' Concept: The Making of a Stereotype," 4
44 The phrase "black women" typically refers to women of darker hue who are unmistakably African in that sense. "Coloured women" refers to women, usually of mixed parentage, between the white planter and African woman (typically an enslaved woman). In other places the names are more nuanced for example mulatto. In modern Jamaican vernacular, she is often referred to as a browning.
Most fundamentally, this new Caribbean person must reject the idea of his new humanity as imitation of Europe. Fanon has put it this way:

Humanity is waiting for something other from us than such an imitation, which would almost be an obscene caricature. If we want to turn Africa into a New Europe or America into a new Europe then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted of us.\(^{45}\)

Both notions of Caribbean Theology promoted by Hamid and Russell have proven to be influential. William Watty and Ashley Smith in their contribution to Caribbean Theology have continued the focus of criticism on received theology and on the challenge of Caribbean identity. Watty defines Caribbean Theology as an inward odyssey into the peculiar heritage, predicament and destiny of the Caribbean people.\(^{46}\) It is to be done by the Caribbean people themselves but cannot merely be the exchanging of an obsolete theology for one which happens to be universally in vogue. Rather, it requires a radical questioning of the presuppositions which have underwritten the whole theological exercise.\(^{47}\) Caribbean Theology, he argues, must begin with “a critical examination of the theology which has so far been received in order to liberate and re-orient the Caribbean mind for the task. This is a re-orientation which has to do as much with methodology as with content.”\(^{48}\) Here we see that the call for distinctive voice is defined as the task of a proper Caribbean Theology.\(^{49}\) He focuses on the opportunity that the Caribbean presents to the Christian theological project in that it is a brand new civilization.


\(^{47}\) Watty, *From Shore to Shore*.

\(^{48}\) Watty, *From Shore to Shore*, ix.

Ashley Smith argues that the received theology of the Caribbean tacitly sides with the oppressors. Thus the idea of God needs to be liberated.\textsuperscript{50} Caribbean Theology seeks to save that which is authentic in Christianity from the scandal of elitism and eurocentrism.\textsuperscript{51} Smith sees no difference between, at the same time, the pro-status-quo- ethos of the traditional denominations among Protestants, and the new line evangelicals. “The theology of mainline churches is patently dominical; and the theology of the less established churches is at least latently so.”\textsuperscript{52} Smith offers the following as the aim of Caribbean Theology:

Caribbean theology aims at producing a new Caribbean person with a more healthy (sic) self-concept. This Caribbean person will have a more positive approach to self-development and community development; will be less susceptible to the high-powered sales techniques of the exploiting business enterprises of the North; will be more capable of maintaining a rational approach to marital and sexual responsibility; will be more productive at the workplace, feeling less alienated from the productive system; will be more capable of partnership on a global scale, having a greater sense of assurance in interacting with peoples of other regions and other cultural, political and economic orientations.\textsuperscript{53, 54}

He focuses somewhat more on the Church taking root in Caribbean soil and defining Caribbean identity. He has been critical of what he calls the ‘embougeoisment’ of Christianity. He argues that the world of the today’s exponent of biblical Christian truth is vastly different from the world of the biblical writers. According to him, almost invariably the exponent of theological truth represents the elite of both society and the church. He suggests that the interpreter is often upper-

\textsuperscript{50} Ashley Smith, Emerging from Innocence, 12
\textsuperscript{51} Smith, Emerging from Innocence 11
\textsuperscript{52} Smith, Emerging from Innocence, 11, Smith means by “dominical”, the theology of rulers, or the theology from above. It stresses things like obedience, which promotes submission and acquiescence to instructions, because it is God who says so.”
\textsuperscript{53} Smith, Emerging from Innocence, 13
middle class, and has been socialized in the Anglo-Saxon cultural milieu of Western Europe and North America.\textsuperscript{54} Smith did not make the call but implied that a new hermeneutic was required.

Robert Moore puts Caribbean Theology within a framework of the whole of Christian history. He speaks of a theology of absorption, a theology of imposition and the theology of imitation. Absorption relates to the first great age of Christian experience coinciding with Christianity becoming \textit{religio lícita} of the Roman Empire and taking on the cosmic presuppositions of the Greco Roman world. Imposition relates to the second age of Christian expansion when Christianity became the religion of Europe and Europe eventually colonized large parts of the world. By the 18th Century Christianity, according to Moore, was a religion of robust self-confidence, rooted in two continents, Europe (for which the world was its oyster) and the North American continent, that is, the United States of America (which treated Latin America as its backyard). What Moore refers to as the theology of imitation is the child of the theology of imposition. The theology which was bequeathed to places like the Caribbean was a mechanistic exercise “playing with concepts, bandying distinctions and refinements, teasing abstractions with abstractions, but not a discipline possessed of an existential urgency born of the pressures of their own society.”\textsuperscript{55} By contrast, he contends that Caribbean Theology is a \textit{theology of exploration} of the relationship between God and Caribbean person. Such a theology raises the issue of identity. According to Moore, “It is necessary for Caribbean Man (sic) to do more exploration of himself his environment and the forces which have

\textsuperscript{55} Robert Moore, “Historical basis of Theological Reflection”, in Hamid, \textit{Troubling of the Waters}, 41.
given that environment their peculiar structure, in other words his history."\textsuperscript{56} Caribbean theology requires "a peculiar search for identity in a largely ancestorless society."\textsuperscript{57} Furthermore, and in tune with my account in chapter two, the "experience of naked subordination in slavery and indenture and the more subtle subordination in the post emancipation period of colonialism must inform a theological search with an insight into the dangers of certain kinds of social structure and personal relationships."\textsuperscript{58} Finally, Moore argues that the theology of exploration requires a \textit{theology of integration}. He says the fusion and fission which characterize Caribbean society should point Caribbean theologians in the direction of integration. Advocating an inclusive approach to both culture of the dominant group and folk culture, Moore says:

\begin{quote}
What this folk culture lacked in identity, it made up for in durability. For a very long time it did not have the exposition of savants but it certainly evoked the enthusiasm of devotees. This is not surprising: it is after all a part of the psychic structure of large numbers of West Indian peasants and working class people, as well as of those of the upper classes though they often refuse to admit it, and it expresses itself in dance, drumming, spirit-possession, and the rituals which precede or follow what the anthropologists call "the rites of passage."\textsuperscript{59}
\end{quote}

Lewin Williams roots Caribbean Theology in \textit{eschatology and hope}. The greatest obstacle to liberation in his view is the continuing problem of domination and powerlessness. William states, "This affirmation of domination is not only by suffering people who have become too tired and whipped to resist, but also by those

\textsuperscript{56} Moore, "Historical Basis of Theological Reflection," 42
\textsuperscript{57} Moore, "Historical Basis of Theological Reflection," 43
\textsuperscript{58} Moore, "Historical Basis of Theological Reflection," 43
\textsuperscript{59} Moore, "Historical Basis of Theological Reflection," 44,5
who have become compromised clients of systems of selfishness and greed.  

Williams conclude that “if nowhere else, in the area of eschatology in Caribbean
Theology there has to be a special reasoning to the idea of hope.” Hope is “the
ability and will to struggle, and eschatology realized is in the struggle itself toward the
dismantling of the structures of oppression to the reality of shared participation in a
world God has created for all.”

Kortright Davis takes a narrowly ecclesial approach to the subject of Caribbean
Theology and suggests that its immediate use was the empowerment of women and
the training of clergy for churches within the region. The ordination of women and
the appropriate training of the clergy to serve the church and to respond to the
complex and peculiar social issues confronted in the pastorate in the region have been
milestones along the way. Over time, Caribbean Theology has taken a wider remit; it
is what Taylor calls the Caribbean taking theological responsibility for itself and what
Russell calls the creating of a new Caribbean person. Edmund Davis sees Caribbean
Theology as an emotive phrase, a slogan of vindication, a concept that is driving us
toward establishing the “value of Caribbean religion and culture.” He worries that
Caribbean Theology would become too narrow in focus and concern and therefore
urges cautious use of the term. Kortright Davis, however, argues that Edmund Davis’
fear is unfounded “since he ignores the basic fact that the Caribbean is itself an open
society and that religious trends and theological ideas—like other trends and ideas

60 Lewin Williams, Caribbean Theology, (New York: Peter Lang, 2002) 15
61 Williams, Caribbean Theology, 16
62 Hamid, Troubling of the Waters, 166,7
63 Smith, Emerging from Innocence, 90-4
64 Horace Russell who is the author of the idea used the term a “new Caribbean man” but has been
taken to task by Hyacinth Booth who contributed to a festschrift in Russell’s honour for insensitivity to
Caribbean Womanhood. Caribbean Person is therefore the preferred term.
65 Edmund Davis, Roots and Blossoms 25 (Bridgetown, Cedar Press 1977)
enjoy voluminous trade in both directions. If there is any fear for Caribbean intellectual enterprise, it is in the other direction of being too broad rather than too narrow.\textsuperscript{66}  

Burchell Taylor, whose work synthesizes the contribution of other Caribbean Theologians, contends that it may be seen as a theology \textit{existing in fragments}. “It has to be located and identified in bits and pieces here and there, articles, reports on conferences, consultations and edited collection of essays and a limited number of full-scale works such as ones by Noel Erskine, Kortright Davis, Ashley Smith, William Watty, Edmund Davis.”\textsuperscript{67} The absence of a large body of literature does not mean that theology is not being done. It is done in preaching, testimonies, storytelling, music, art and drama and folk-lore of the people at different levels in the teeth of the powerful cultural penetration being encountered in the region from the global media. The theology is unrefined, yet reflective of resilience and of insights emerging out of practical living constantly shaped by reflection on the lived experience in the light of Scripture.  

Devon Dick, in an essay titled “The Failure of Caribbean Theology”, suggests that the name “Emancipation Theology” should be preferred. “Caribbean theology fails because it locates itself in geography rather that in a theme/quality/value”. The term is nebulous and can mean all things to different persons.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{66} Kortright Davis, \textit{Emancipation Still Coming}, 94
\textsuperscript{68} Devon Dick, “The Failure of Caribbean Theology” (unpublished). Dick made the presentation as a part of 2010 forum titled “Kairos Moment in Caribbean Theology”.

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Taylor, without responding specifically to Dick, indicates that the relevance of Caribbean Theology lies in its roots. He contends that long before it came to any coherent articulation and self-conscious expression, Caribbean Theology emerged in an antecedent form. It did so in the manner and form in which the oppressed, enslaved and exploited people of the region responded to and reflected on the harsh realities to which they were subjected. They did so on the basis of their faith-commitment and in the light of their interpretation, understanding and appropriation of the message of Scripture. The Caribbean people operated with their own hidden transcripts, inspired by their own reflection on their experience in the light of their own intuitive as well as critical understanding of the Scriptures. This served not only as the basis of their survival but as the basis of their engagement in and appropriation of what made for liberation. Taylor says:

The effectiveness and enduring relevance of Caribbean Theology finds its roots in its early beginnings as a theology of protest and resistance aimed at emancipatory accomplishments. Therein also lies its prophetic orientation along with its public significance. It is all of this that undergirds its rooted relevance.

On this account, Caribbean Theology is based on the natural dynamic movement and process as opposed to the constructs and systems of received theology which were presented as normative of the Caribbean people. Caribbean Theology is done with a sense of “historical continuity, critical consciousness of and responsiveness to the cultural realities.” It also has a commitment to creating practical alternatives and transformative possibilities. In all of this, economic poverty is the key issue. This

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70 Taylor, “The Relevance of Caribbean Theology,” 8  
71 Taylor, “The Relevance of Caribbean Theology, 8
includes a culture of resistance by the poor, a quest for authentic self-identity and self-understanding and dynamic expression of creative potential. For Taylor, therefore, the process of doing Caribbean Theology is undertaken intuitively, imaginatively and reflectively in the light of the Scriptures with openness to the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit.  

I contend that the idea of Emancipatory Theology is inadequate in several ways: first the metaphor of the exodus (captured in the idea of emancipation) only reflects a part of the lived experience of the Caribbean. I prefer the biblical metaphor of the exile as more applicable. Exile is also a compelling metaphor because it picks up on the experience of being colonized. The Caribbean is the new identity forged for a people who are perpetually alien and strangers.

Second, emancipation only reflects the experience of some of the people of the Caribbean. To be fair, it reflects the experience of the majority and is central to the selfhood of the Caribbean, because the Afro-Caribbean majority and those who were their oppressors in the service of total liberation require a coming to terms with the experience of enslavement and the matters arising. However, there are also substantial minorities, including those Kalinago people that survived the genocide of indigenous peoples in the region, and those whose forebears were indentured labourers (Chinese and Indians), whose stories are not captured by the metaphor of emancipation. The metaphor also fails to account for the genocide of the indigenous people of the Caribbean. Thirdly, it obscures the main agenda of Caribbean Theology which I contend is the issue of Caribbean identity and Caribbean selfhood. All the

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72 Taylor, “The Relevance of Caribbean Theology” 10
people of the Caribbean, including the heirs and successors of the former planters and slave owners, as well as the indentured labourers and those few surviving Kalinago whose forebears have lived in the Caribbean in perpetuity, along with the sons and daughters of the enslaved African that have forged their emancipation, have a crisis of identity. Caribbean Theology, which is the project of the postcolonial people of the Caribbean taking responsibility for themselves in terms of forging their self-awareness, self-development, self-reliance, self-authentication and the creation of a new Caribbean society and a new Caribbean person, must necessarily include all its peoples.

The Babylonish Captivity of the Church

At the start of the decade of the 1980s an important lecture was delivered by Burchell Taylor on “The Babylonish Captivity of the Church.” Its significance was the completeness of the analysis, though it continued in the vein of critique of received/missionary theology of the church. It was also the first to introduce the metaphor of “Babylon” and therefore the notion of “exile” in Caribbean Theology.

Taylor defined Church as “the Collective Christian Presence variously expressed in, and identified with, ecumenical collocations, doctrinal and confessional alignments, denominational and other institutional bodies and structure, and hierarchical or leading figures.” He acknowledged his indebtedness to Martin Luther, who used the full title, “the Babylonish Captivity of the Church.” Luther used it in dealing with what he considered to be the corruption of the sacramental practice

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of the Church. Babylon is used by Taylor to paint a picture of “domination, stupefaction and seduction by the allurements of a way of life and the power and influence of organized society: Babylon is a moral, political and cultural reality, as such it is corrupting, domineering and enticing.” It is, therefore, the tendencies that Taylor seeks to invoke in using the adjective Babylonish. He emphasizes the fact that the captivity is not by compulsion but by accommodation and complicity. It is an ideological captivity and captivity by imitation. He says that even where “there are points of tension between the Church and the various expressions of the establishment, there is no real attempt at captivity by compulsion or persecution.” At any rate, Taylor does not believe that enforced captivity that is confined to physical conditions and allied factors can break the spirit, win commitment or distort the mission. Taylor argues, ironically, that, it is the absence of tension between the Church and the status quo in the region, the almost totally peaceful co-existence the Church enjoys, that is a clear sign of the Babylonish captivity of the Church. The Church has allowed itself to voluntarily stray into captivity by yielding to the temptation to conform. The fact that the Church must exist and operate in a society whose values do not naturally coincide with its own puts a pressure on the Church to conform. The Church’s tendency to sacralize good order, harmony and stability and their underpinnings at the expense at which they have been achieved has only strengthened the tendency to compromise.

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74 Taylor, “The Babylonish Captivity of the Church,” 4
75 Taylor, “The Babylonish Captivity of the Church,” 4
76 Taylor, “The Babylonish Captivity of the Church,”
77 Taylor, “The Babylonish Captivity of the Church,” 10
78 Taylor, “The Babylonish Captivity of the Church,”
79 Taylor, “The Babylonish Captivity of the Church,” 12
In his analysis, Taylor did not see the issues and challenges of Caribbean Theology in terms of blaming the past and critiquing received theology. An element of that is inevitable and justifiable but he was concerned more with what the Church is and how it operates, whatever its antecedents. Taylor's contribution, therefore, as a Caribbean Theologian has been significant in at least three ways: First, he has contributed the key metaphor of the Exile and made use of the biblical notions of Babylon. As we saw in the second chapter the Babylon metaphor also represents one of the ways in which Rastafarianism, which was the first to give prominence to the notion of Babylon as the resonant cultural symbol, anticipated Caribbean Theology. Taylor has two major works that further the exegesis on the Babylon motif. The first, *The Church Taking Sides*, deals with the letters to the seven churches in Asia in the book of Revelation. The other is *Saying No to Babylon* which is on the book of Daniel.

Secondly, Taylor has been paradigm setting in terms of being communal and pastoral in his theologizing. He has located his role in the community as the pastor of Bethel Baptist Church from 1970. In the more than 40 years of pastoral ministry, Bethel has functioned as a basic ecclesial community. In his own words, Taylor describes Bethel as "a ministry in the making." He says, "there is an open-endedness, provisionality and interim sense about all that has been accomplished, despite appearances to the contrary."  

This is accounted for by an abiding sense of the limitless possibilities of any ministry that has been entrusted by God in Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit. There is a dynamism that goes hand

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in hand with both the concept and reality of ministry that visions of the 'not yet' that has always extends and modifies the 'already.'

Both these books of Taylor came out of his weekly bible studies with the Bethel congregation. The patterns of ministry that have been developed by the Church during the last 40 years have been paradigmatic. These have included interventions that are aimed at complementing and supplementing what is available to the needy through the provisions by the State. There have also been those ministries which are innovations that are aimed at approximating the ideals with a commitment to holism. The Church is located in the heart of the city's busiest commercial area and faces all the challenge of urban ministries. It has developed holistic healing centres with medical clinics, pharmacies, counseling centres. In addition there have been centres for adult literacy programme, and a programme targeting street boys. Beyond what is done at the physical location of the church, there have been initiatives aimed at community development and empowerment in inner city communities in the city. The Bethel Steel Orchestra and Emancipation Lecture Series betray their Caribbean cultural self-consciousness.

The Bethel paradigm has been influential in bench marking and stimulating other programmes of ministries among churches in various Christian denominations. Programmes of ministry emerged as were required by the needs of the community in order to place the gospel at the cross roads of human experience. Chaplaincy programmes and programmes for inmates, ex-offenders as well as members of the

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81 Taylor, "A Ministry in the Making" 49
82 My own pastoral experience in inner Kingston (1977-97) and Portmore (1999-2009) has been greatly influenced by the Bethel paradigm. I sought in those places to at once and the same time approximate the ideal with various innovations with ministries to minorities, the disabled and the aged and drop outs of the educational system, and to advocate for those who have been left out and left behind.
uniformed services have been developed. Churches have also assumed roles in
naming, confronting and pastoring the powers. These ministries and programmes are
the praxis, the reflection upon which has informed the hermeneutics. Taylor's praxis
located Caribbean Theology within the Church as a servant community and gave it its
mantra as responding to the lived experience of the people.

Thirdly, as we can see, Taylor's contribution has been deliberately exegetical.
The void left by the absence of colloquium consultations, seminars and festschriffts,
has been filled with sermons, papers and basic ecclesial reflection upon the text in the
light of engagement with the lived experience of the people.

In summary therefore I contend that identity is the key distinguishing issue of
Caribbean theology and that the central metaphor is not exodus, but exile. The exile of
Israel in Babylon was a defining period for what was to become of the nation of Israel
in the post-exilic dispensation. It is anachronistic to talk of nationalism as emerging,
but we can speak of a strong sense of renewed identity. Could this be the case for the
Caribbean? I argue that it is because Caribbean reality is shaped in relation, reaction
and response to imperial hegemony and ideology. The theme of Babylon runs through
the Caribbean; it was central to the thought of Marcus Garvey, it is used by Rastafari,
and now provides Caribbean Theology with a symbolic delegitimization of those
Western values and institutions that historically have exercised control over the
masses of the African Diaspora. The view is that referring to Western values and
institutions as Babylon implies that the Caribbean has never been allowed to settle
down and develop in its own economic interest and in the interest of its people. From
the sixteenth century onwards it was organized in the interests of Europe. Indeed, this
is still the case because so-called "free trade," has been to the disadvantage of the
Caribbean. Free trade has hardly been fair trade as far as the Caribbean is concerned. The power of the governments from the metropole to impose their wills upon the Caribbean peoples has been replaced by their surrogates in transnational corporations and multilateral lending and donor agencies. The terms of trade and the loan-conditionality imposed by these surrogates are no less onerous, burdensome or stringent than the decrees and edicts from the British monarch and Parliament during Crown Colony Government.

The use of the theme of Babylon also provides epistemological lenses in the struggle for identity, cultural freedom, dignity, and in the effort to make sense of life and the biblical text. Babylon is a way of coming to terms with the alienation which results in the denigration of things African, and in a blunting of the desire for freedom and equality. One of the outcomes of this theme is to speak about salvation in less otherworldly terms and to give it concreteness in terms of the lived experience of the people.\textsuperscript{83} The Caribbean is an existence in the periphery of Babylon in many ways among which the most important truth is the absence of a truly Caribbean narrative. The Caribbean is an open society in which the influences, patterns and paradigms from the metropole are as free flowing as the trade winds and currents. Often the discourse, narrative and responses on offer in the name of the Caribbean leave the people of the region with the feeling of Isaac when he said “voice is the voice of Jacob but the hands are the hands of Esau.”\textsuperscript{84} This, then, is the issue to which Caribbean theology has to respond. It is to take theological responsibility for the Caribbean in ways that demonstrate and elucidate Caribbean identity. By taking

\textsuperscript{83} See discussion by Oral Thomas, \textit{Biblical Resistance Hermeneutics}, 37-48
\textsuperscript{84} Gen 27:22
theological responsibility for itself, the Caribbean gives agency to the people of the Caribbean, especially to the Christian church in the region, to further the enterprise of human liberation and social transformation so that the Caribbean may become a just and responsible society.

3. The legacy of resistance and the importance of folk culture.

In the second chapter I detailed the long and varied history of resistance in the Caribbean which I understand as a primary expression of this theological faith.

(a) Resistance has been historically a protest of the humanity of Afro-Caribbean people against the imposition of dehumanizing circumstances as well as the categorization of being sub-human.

As I have already shown, resistance was not restricted to physical violence alone but included the preservation of Obeah and Myal. The retention of their African cultural items, forms and values in the face of both legislative and conventional attempts to delegitimize and render as inferior things African was an affirmation of their humanity. The role played by the African cultural retention, religion, dance, drumming, and communication with spirits in spurring and underpinning the struggle of the enslaved African to gain freedom makes the case for multi-cultural and multi-textual approach and rejects the notion of the inherent superiority of the cultures of the North Atlantic. The role of folk culture in providing a form of resistance in the situation of domination is well documented. ‘Brother Anancy’ in the Caribbean fits

85 Brother Anancy is a mythical folk character who by cunning and wit escapes punishment and overcomes challenges, by outwitting self-evidently more capable and well-positioned opponent to his advantage and to their chagrin.
well with what James Scott calls the "hidden transcript." The following summary provided by West is helpful:

The ‘Public transcript,’ where it is not positively misleading, is unlikely to tell the whole story about power relations. It is frequently in the interest of both parties to tacitly conspire in misrepresentation. So social analysis which focuses on the public transcript, as most social analysis does, is focusing on the formal relations between the powerful and the weak, but it is not attempting to read, interpret, and understand the often fugitive political conduct of subordinate groups. A focus on the hidden transcript, where it is accessible in the rumours, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes and theatre of the poor and marginalized, or the more public infrapolitics of popular culture, reveals forms of resistance and defiance.

Chattel slavery and its companion mythology inculcated notions of the African as sub-human and African culture as superstitious and necessarily inferior. They were the twin assaults on the sense of self of the Afro-Caribbean people. What is undeniable is that within Caribbean culture the African cultural retention refused to be delegitimized or to disappear. Cultural icons, like Marcus Garvey, and Bob Marley as well as the Mighty Sparrow and David Rudder raised the African sense of self by lyrical genius and artistic prowess. Movements like Etu, Kumina, Burru, Gomby, Jonkunnu, Myal, Poccomania, Revivalism, Voodoo, Rastafari and Pentecostalism preserved indigenous culture and in that respect resisted the complete domination of one people by another. In particular, the idea of communication with spirits which Pentecostalism has made to become communication with the Holy Spirit is an important African cultural retention. The ecstatic dance of Myal which has been

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87 West, “The Bible and the Poor”
taken up by Pentecostalism, trance or being slain in the Spirit was a part of the coping skills of a people that faced overwhelming odds and oppressive, ruthless and arrogant power.

The suggestion that Pentecostalism has been a force of resistance is disputed. In general, the view of the theology of much of the religious presence in the Caribbean is that it is a “Coca Cola Theology,” the bottling is done in the region but the formula and ingredients are imported from elsewhere. However, the point that is being made refers to the contribution of Pentecostalism sociologically. Pentecostalism in the Caribbean is to be distinguished from the neo-Pentecostalism or the Charismatic movement, much of which is middle class. Pentecostalism in the Caribbean, however, is a grass roots movement and shares many of the features of Myalism and Revivalism which were its historical antecedents. The idea of trance and visions and communication with the spirit, employing spiritual languages, predated Pentecostalism in its present form. It is also the case that the religious movement among the rural peasantry, as well as the urban poor, has provided the frame of community network to facilitate small and micro business activities. Seventh Day Adventism, which in its cultural ethos is more North American, has also served to deepen the small business network among the rural and urban poor.

The theological significance of all of this is twofold: First, it makes a statement about the residual humanity or the image of God in all peoples. Traditional theology has taken a largely speculative approach to the question of what is the image of God in persons. It has defined rationality or the capacity for worship variously as the essence of the image of God. However, Caribbean Theology has been challenged to come to a determination of what the image of God in human beings might mean. The
insight from its own history requires an understanding of the image of God in human person to mean the rejection by all persons of “un-freedom” and inequality. The human spirit, true to its nature, left to itself, thrives on freedom and will not accept “un-freedom.” Human beings everywhere and in every race and ethnicity will reject the notion of their inequality and the curtailment of their freedom. This is innate and it is indomitable. The African was brought to the Caribbean stripped of his/her dignity, his/her family and his/her power. He/she was oppressed by overwhelming force and there was universal approval for the power used against him/her in the way that it was and still he/she resisted. Every organ of the state was at the disposal of those who enslaved him/her; military, law and financial resources. He/she was stripped of every option and every instrument of power. But still he/she resisted. He/she ran away when there was nowhere to run to; he/she built his/her house in the wilderness. Animals may be chained and domesticated, defanged and tamed but the human spirit cannot be tamed. Humans will never accept “un-freedom” and inequality, because a person is made in the image and likeness of God. Freedom is therefore the essence of the human spirit.

The idea first enunciated by Garvey, echoing Haile Selassie I, and sung by Marley, “emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds,” is a function of faith in our full humanity. It is not self liberation as a form of works righteousness; it is the rough equivalent of “rise take up your bed and walk.” Or “go your way and sin no more less a worst thing come upon you.” It means that enslavement is incompatible with humanity and therefore the self-affirmation is the rejection of enslavement and exclusion as a function of the image of God in persons.

89 John 5.8,14; Mark 2.5, 8-12
The second point is that every culture preserves the option of the knowledge of the will of God. This is a rejection, or at least an abridgement, of the Calvinist doctrine of total depravity, double predestination and generational curse. The curse of Ham that some theologies have used to condemn the African people to a life of servitude is challenged by the history of Caribbean. Long before the missionaries came to the understanding and with the understanding that slavery was an offence to the will of God, the non-religious Maroons resisted it. The alliance between rebellion and religion was first forged with Obeah and Myal in the Tacky rebellion that resisted slavery. It was the African cultural retention that first succoured and supported the enslaved. I grant that the Gospel and the Christian Scriptures are a more formidable ally in the struggle for liberation but I suggest that African cultural retention in the Caribbean and African culture in general are no less reliable than the culture from anywhere else as a source of natural revelation.

The historical record indicates that it is those who had the Gospel who created chattel slavery and imposed it on unsuspecting peoples of Africa, and in the name of God and Christ plundered the Caribbean. This is not to say that the Gospel is not needed in every culture and every place. It merely forms the basis for the rejection of the marriage between Gospel and western domination over other cultures. It insists that evangelism requires incarnation and evangelization requires fraternization. The important point is that the proclamation of the Gospel and obedience and faith in response to the Gospel must not be made to become Western. To be made a disciple is not the same as to become North American or European. The affirmation of the culture of the region, especially and including African cultural retention, is absolutely compatible with obedience and faith. It is also worth noting that the Caribbean culture that was spawned in resistance has through reggae music given to the world a
language of resistance against domination and injustice. The message of the Gospel using the potent vehicle of protest that reggae music has become can have enormous impact in conditions of poverty and oppression. Not only ought the Caribbean person be true to himself/herself and his/her cultural heritage to be the outcome of the Gospel proclamation, but the legacy and culture of the Caribbean are an important world resource for the message of the Gospel.

(b) Resistance has also been the result of an understanding of divine righteousness and in fulfilment of the sense of covenant obligations in the face of oppression, marginalization and disfranchisement.

Norman K Gottwald argues that Early Israel was an anti-imperial community and that “the anti-imperial origin of Israel is the single most important factor in the astonishing survival of the Jews under centuries of foreign domination, social isolation, and religious persecution.” Gottwald makes his assertions in a work edited by Richard A Horsely In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance. This work confirms the view of Caribbean Theology that the Bible is a book of resistance best understood from the underside of history. The resistance ethos which has defined the Caribbean liberation hermeneutic and has been the antecedent to Caribbean Theology is the result reader response approach to Scripture. Sharpe, Bogle and Gordon led resistance movements that were founded on their understanding of the Bible. Both Gottwald and Horsely recognize the

91 Gottwald, “Early Israel as an Anti-Imperial Community”
pervasiveness and importance of the resistance motif in the Bible as a whole. Gottwald traces it in the history of Israel and makes the following observation:

These glaring parallels in the effects of ancient and modern political economics on subject peoples help to explain why Bible readers in third world countries and among the working class in the West are often much quicker to grasp the stark realities of biblical economics than those of us in the more protected economic environments where inequities and hardships are masked and often denied. This also helps to explain why relatively uneducated third-world peasants and workers can grasp the claims and economic justice as advanced in Latin American, South African, and related liberation theologies. In stark contrast, these liberating theologies, palpable to the poor, continue to baffle a large number of first-world intellectuals who live in denial about the economic and social suffering imposed by the wielders of wealth and power in today’s world.92

Gottwald concludes that the Exodus was a metaphor for Israel’s anti-imperial origin, that the structure of Israelite society was anti-hierarchical, communitarian and therefore anti-imperial and finally that the cult of Yahweh was anti-imperial.93 Horsely concentrates on Jesus and his mission and asserts that the Gospels do not present Jesus as a politically neutral figure but rather that “opposition to and by Roman imperial rule was evident in the narratives of his birth as well as his death; in his exorcisms as well as his proclamation of the Kingdom of God; in his mission in Galilee as well as in his confrontation with the Jerusalem rulers.”94 It is reasonable to assert therefore that Jesus’ ministry in the Gospel narratives was positioned over against, if not directly in response to, Roman imperialism.

Caribbean Theology has had a promising beginning with a legacy of the pressure from below in which the under-class resisted their domination by oppressive systems

92 Gottwald, “Early Israel as an Anti-Imperial Community”, 11,12
93 Gottwald, “Early Israel as an Anti-Imperial Community”, 15-23
94 Horsely ed. In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance,
(slavery and colonization) and marginalization (landlessness, unemployment and limited access to justice). In the last two decades or so, however, it has sputtered. This has been due to factors both within and outside the church. The internal factors have to do with the dominance of the evangelical/fundamentalist view that “the church should steer clear of politics, people’s cry and that religion and politics do not mix.” 95 The external factor may have something to do with the demise of socialism.

4. The approach of the different denominations.

Throughout the history of the church the relationship with the powers that be has been problematic, and this is no less so in the Caribbean. In a socio-historical analysis of the Caribbean Conferences of Churches, Robert Cuthbert divides the religious presence in the region historically into four groups.

The first group comprised those churches which were the official religion of the state. In Spanish and French colonies it was the Roman Catholic Church. In British colonies it was the Anglican Church while the Reformed tradition prevailed in Dutch colonies. The results of this can be seen, for instance, in 1685 in the Code Noir, the French King ruled that “all public observances of religion other than Catholic, Apostolic and Roman shall be forbidden” and “all slaves in our islands shall be baptized and instructed in the Catholic religion”. 96 In the mid-17th Century in Barbados however, the interpretation among Anglicans was that English law did not

95 John Stott, New Issues Facing Christians Today, 14, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1999) Stott is merely indicating that this is a dominant view, not that this is his own view.

96 Robert W. M. Cuthbert, Ecumenism and Development: A Socio-historical Analysis of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, (Bridgetown Barbados, 1986), 16
allow a slave (sic) to be made a Christian.  

The primary constituents of these state churches were therefore the planters.

The second group developed from the work of nonconformist sects which included Quakers, Moravians, Methodists, Baptists Presbyterians and Congregationalists. These sects came to the Caribbean with a focus on the enslaved rather than the planters. In order to reach the enslaved some of these groups became chaplains to the plantations and thereby represented the establishment. As Cuthbert has pointed out the staff turn-over among these missionaries was high because many succumbed to tropical diseases. It is to these nonconformists that credit has been given for the abolitionist movement in England. The enslaved members of this section of the church were among those who planned uprisings and rebellion in the prayer and class meetings.

The third group comprises sects of largely North American origin. These include, Pentecostals, Christian (Plymouth) Brethren, Church of the Open Bible, Church of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Church of the Nazarene and Church of Christ. These groups are boundary keepers, pre-occupied with matters related to Christian identity. They emphasize the Christian fundamentals including Biblical inerrancy, bodily resurrection and conscious suffering of non-believers in Hell. The presence of this group of churches in the Caribbean has been a phenomenon since the

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97 Cuthbert, Ecumenism and Development, 16
98 Cuthbert, Ecumenism and Development, 17
twentieth century. It has however become the largest group in terms of number of churches, and total number of congregants.\textsuperscript{99}

The fourth group includes a wide body of religious activity known as folk religion. It is among this group that important features of African survivals which gave the people at the base of the society in the Caribbean a sense of identity have been preserved. African linguistic forms, folk myths, music, dances, some culinary habits, drumming, manipulation of spirits, kinship pattern and saving arrangements vital to the self-worth and self-identity of the masses have survived among the people and in some instances have been syncretized with European traditions. These folk religious groups were never part of the official, established or missionary sects. These groups include Pocomania, Revivalists and Convince in Jamaica, Shouters and Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad, Jordanites in Guyana and Independent Baptists in other islands. Rastafari which has drawn upon elements of these groups would fall in this category. In the post 1970s period starting in Jamaica and extending to the rest of the Caribbean elements of folk religion and the African cultural retention have permeated to varying the degree all religious activities in the Christian community.\textsuperscript{100}

5. The continuing search for identity: catalytic symbols

Slavery was finally abolished as a result of the courageous resistance of our ancestors to an evil system, but the proclamation of Emancipation was neither authored nor delivered by any leader of their choice. Today we the elected representatives of the people have framed this proclamation ourselves. It commemorates the triumph of the indomitable will of our forebears and commits us for all times to

\textsuperscript{99} Cuthbert, Ecumenism and Development
\textsuperscript{100} Cuthbert, Ecumenism and Development, 18

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ensure that their rich legacy is never squandered by this or any future generations.\textsuperscript{101}

The foregoing proclamation was made by P.J. Patterson Prime Minister of Jamaica on July 29, 1997 at a Joint Sitting of the Houses of Parliament. At that sitting of the Jamaican Parliament the final seal of approval was given “to restore the celebration of Emancipation Day to its place of pre-eminence on the national calendar as the most important anniversary.”\textsuperscript{102} As Patterson said in making the declaration, “the freedom of each human being is the precursor without which no nation, whatever its constitutional guise, can enjoy sovereign independence in its truest sense.”\textsuperscript{103} This proclamation is one in the complex of three events that took place over a five year period. Two of them took place in Jamaica and one in the Eastern Caribbean. I argue that these events, taken together, have been catalytic symbols in the flowering of a sense of self among the Caribbean people. I argue further that Caribbean Theology must take account of these events as the end of a long gestation period. The period of ferment in which for the first time the Caribbean began to take theological responsibility for itself was a part of the gestation. The proclamation by Patterson and the complex of events of which it was a part, are a signal of the need for articulation of, and commitment to, the project of settling legacy issues in seeking to build a just and responsible society in the Caribbean. This calls for a covenant making before God and all the people which is the fitting response to these catalytic and symbolic events.

\textsuperscript{101} P J Patterson, “An Address by Rt. Hon P J Patterson QC MP to the Joint-Sitting of Parliament, July 1997, 1. Patterson as Prime Minister of Jamaica has been recognized as an outstanding figure in CARICOM and remains one of the most regarded trans-Caribbean figures. While he is speaking here for Jamaica, what he says would also be significant in relation to the rest of the Caribbean.

\textsuperscript{102} Patterson, “An Address to the Joint-Sitting of Parliament” 2

\textsuperscript{103} Patterson, “An Address to the Joint-Sitting of Parliament” 2
When Jamaica gained political Independence in 1962, the two great high points of Jamaica’s history, Emancipation (1838) and Independence were celebrated as one on the first Monday of August each year. As noted by Patterson, over time, because of the absence of specific focus on liberation from enslavement, the enormity of the contribution of the freedom fighters has been steadily eroded by apathy and indifference. He observed, that “no worthy national spirit can be built on the basis where those who fought to win our most prized possession, Freedom, are numbered among those who have no memorial and who perished as though they had not been.” \(^{104}\) The erosion of the national spirit through apathy and indifference has produced a society in which there is a social hierarchy of colour and class, there is inequality, poverty and self-mutilating violence and there is an over-valuation and a dependence on the goods, services, systems and paradigms from elsewhere. In this context the restoration of Emancipation Day celebration is to be taken together with the Recommendations of the Nettleford Committee on National Symbols and Observances, \(^{105}\) both of which were followed in July 2002 by the Opening of Emancipation Park. Together a counter-point is being made about the quality of what it is to be Jamaican given the rich legacy and the resource it offers to build a truly just society.

\(^{104}\) The Report on National Symbol and National Observances was the work of a committee set up by the Parliament in 1996 chaired by Professor Rex Nettleford. The broad based consultations which were carried out by the Committee were in response to the observation made in Parliament by Patterson the year before, in which he said: “the price we pay for social alienation especially of our young men, for turning our backs upon our culture and for not harnessing the talents of our people is not just poverty and crime, serious as they are.”
The Nettleford Report, which launched the process of which the restoration of Emancipation Day celebration and the opening of Emancipation Park (with the Emancipation Statue) are the fulcrum, drew upon legacy of this struggle for self-hood and especially upon the words of National Hero Norman Washington Manley in 1938 where he said:

All efforts will be wasted unless the masses are steadily taken along a path in which they feel more and more, that this place is their home and that is their destiny. They will then do more for it, more work, more effort, more thinking, more sacrifice, more discipline, more honesty, than by any measure you can bring to this Country.\textsuperscript{106}

The Report also drew upon the words of Marcus Garvey spoken in 1937 in Menelik Hall in Nova Scotia, in his call “to emancipate themselves from mental slavery which was the legacy of earlier centuries of dehumanization and indecent acts against the human spirit.”\textsuperscript{107} Garvey went on to assure his listeners that they alone had to preside over their liberation in a spirit of self-reliance, self-respect and pride. Four decades later, as noted earlier, Robert Nesta (Bob) Marley echoed these words in his \textit{Redemption Song}.\textsuperscript{108}

One of the key recommendations made by the Report was to change the meaning given to the “Black” in the Jamaican flag. The Jamaican Flag has the colours black, green and gold. Hitherto “black” symbolized hardships. There was no intention to change the Flag only to change what was connoted by the colour “black”. The Report says:

\textsuperscript{107} Patterson, “Statement to Parliament, Report on National Symbols and National Observances” 3
\textsuperscript{108} Patterson, “Statement to Parliament, Report on National Symbols and National Observances” 4

the Report specifically alludes to the words of Garvey, Manley and Marley.
The symbolism of the colour black, however, remains contentious. Its signification of hardships overcome and to be overcome, is said to be disagreeable, contemptuous of black people (who constitute the majority of the Jamaican population), denigratory of things African and perpetuates the use of the term “black” as signifier of all things negative—as in Black Friday, blackmail and the Oxford Dictionary meaning given as “deadly, sinister, wicked, hateful...threatening” and “implying disgraceful.”

The Report recommended that “black” be taken as the signifier of “resilience” and “strength”.

*Emancipation Park*

Emancipation Park is located on seven acres in the heart of Kingston’s business district in New Kingston. It is a garden which can facilitate outdoor events. At the entrance to the park are giant sculptures of two unmistakably African figures. The bronze monument depicts an 11-foot-tall black male figure accompanied by a black female figure, 10 feet tall. Both are portrayed naked and the figures are thigh-deep in a pool of water, arms by their sides with faces uplifted to the sky. The base of the monument is inscribed with the words “None but ourselves can free our minds.”

As noted in chapter two, the public responses were largely negative and filled with passion against the monument. This was rich with irony. The controversy surrounded the appropriateness or inappropriateness of nude black figures depicting emancipation. The passion against the nude African male and female was not unrelated to the self-contempt and self-rejection that are characteristic of attitude of the majority black population. What was missed was the opportunity to have a straightforward discussion of the race factor. The role of the arts in highlighting the

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contradictoriness of the Jamaican situation has been refreshing. The poets and artistes frequently have been the prophets highlighting the contradictions, heightening the consciousness and expanding the imagination.

Despite the musings and misgivings however, the welcome and use of the Park by members of the public including all social classes have been overwhelming. The significance and importance of Emancipation celebration/Park have been the deliberateness on the part of the State to come to terms with the need to memorialize the struggles of the Jamaican people and to regard the celebration of those struggles as a resource for the progress of the nation. It is a fact that there was some resistance from fundamentalist groups that found the nudity of the sculptures offensive. However, it is also the case that it is within the Christian churches that the annual emancipation celebration has taken deepest roots. Emancipation Park in its brief history has been a meeting place for all social classes within Jamaica. It is, therefore, inclusive of all the social classes and in that way participates in the reality that it symbolizes. Emancipation and the ongoing struggle for self-liberation are rightly seen as the doings of God which are marvelous in our eyes. The fact that this series of events beginning in 1997 and climaxing in 2002 were the initiative of the State \textit{qua} the State is a fitting reversal of what began in 1762 when African cultural and religious retentions, including drumming, dancing and religious and quasi-religious activities were made illegal. This action to memorialize the resistance and mainstream the African majority is the necessary counter-point and response. I suggest, therefore, that the complex of events could serve the purpose as a kind of covenant renewal of a people that under God have come to terms with their past and have pledged a way forward in partnership for the pursuit of a just and responsible society.
(b) The Installation of Joseph Chatoyer as National Hero

St Vincent and the Grenadines was the last country in the English speaking Caribbean to be colonized. It was eventually conquered by the British in 1763 and the conquest was completed in 1795 after the death of Joseph Chatoyer, Paramount Chief of the Kalinago (Carib). St Vincent gained independence in 1979 and installed Joseph Chatoyer as National Hero in 2002. Adrian Fraser observes that a National Hero is a national role model and symbol. "The declaration of National Hero (s) is part of the process of reconstructing our history and defining our identity." He sees the need to replace British symbols and hero (s) with symbols and heroes of their own. He argues that "the symbols with which we identified were British. Independence therefore, demanded that we create our own hero (s), persons who can act as national role models and inspire our people by their feats and by what motivated them and by the conditions under which they did what they did." In recommending Chatoyer, Fraser comments as follows:

Chatoyer’s significance to the history of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines lies in the fact that he can be considered the father of Independence. He struggled to prevent European penetration and to maintain the sovereignty of this country and later on to recover its independence. He died in this struggle. Therein lies his claim to fame. But it was even more than that because he was one of this country’s outstanding leaders and possessed the will, determination and strength that this country needs in its fight even against different enemies and obstacles. Chatoyer was human and would have had his shortcomings, but he stands tall and strong and is a fitting symbol of this country’s struggles and strength. As we look for role models Chatoyer has much to offer. He lived in different times long ago but we are connected with the past and today is shaped by what went on before.113

111 Adrian Fraser, Chatoyer (Chatawae) National Hero of St Vincent and the Grenadines, (Vincent: Galaxy Print, 2002) 9
112 Fraser, Chatoyer
113 Fraser, Chatoyer,
The Kalinago people in St Vincent, of which Chatoyer was Paramount Chief, are not distinguished by anything that is known about their religion. Like the Maroons that resisted British colonization and enslavement in Jamaica, the promptings for their resistance lie in the human spirit. The stock from which the people of the Caribbean are drawn is the stuff of resistance, born of the human spirit. The fight by the Kalinago and the Maroons against their oppression demonstrates Taylor’s observation that oppression and enslavement cannot be sweetened to become acceptable to the human spirit. Therefore, the installation of Chatoyer as National Hero in St Vincent and the Grenadines, the restoration of Emancipation Day as a national holiday and the opening of Emancipation Park in Jamaica are in celebration of the triumph of the human spirit in the Caribbean.

6. The retreat of Caribbean Theology

Despite all of this in the last two decades Caribbean Theology has been virtually in retreat, idiosyncratic, sporadic and inward looking. The paucity of output and engagement has coincided with a deepening of the distortion of identity, seen among other things in the expansion of incidents of self-mutilating and irrational violence.

There are, no doubt, factors that are external both to the Caribbean and to the Church in the Caribbean that have contributed to this retreat of Caribbean Theology. However, it seems to me that it is idolatry rather than anything else that has deepened in the region and has muted this emancipatory imagination and this drive towards selfhood in terms of building a just and responsible society. In this respect, the reality in the Caribbean is to be accounted for not merely in terms of a legacy of inequality in

114 Burchell Taylor, “Voice from the Voiceless,” in Howard Gregory, Caribbean Theology

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socially stratified society in which some are privileged and others are marginalized; and not merely in terms of learned and reinforced self-contempt among the African majority, but particularly because of values which have been internalized. These values are from the metropolitan centres of which the Caribbean is the periphery. These are the values of those who in pursuit of their interest have both dominated and distorted life in the Caribbean.

The history of Israel described in the Old Testament Scriptures provides abundant parallels to this moment in Caribbean history. The three watershed events the Exodus, the Wilderness and the Exile provide metaphors which are useful prisms through which to reflect upon the lived experience of the Caribbean. Each of these metaphors has resonance with the lived experience of the Caribbean. The Exodus is paralleled to Emancipation which is a watershed event in the Caribbean. Emancipation was the goal post toward which the African majority struggled and strained every tissue and every nerve. According to Kortright Davis in *Emancipation Still Coming* it remains a matter arising. And, according to Garvey and Marley, it is the overarching imperative for the full freedom of Caribbean people. They must “emancipate themselves from mental slavery because none but themselves can free their minds.” In this respect, the metaphor of the Exodus is overarching in respect of Caribbean Theology as a historical reference which defines the character of Caribbean people by their history of resistance and the struggle to be faithful to the heritage bequeathed by their forefathers and foremothers to complete their emancipation.

I have argued, however, that the metaphor which best describes the lived experience of the Caribbean is that of the Exile. The people of the Caribbean are a people in exile making their exile into their homeland. The domination and seduction
of Babylon in relation to ancient Israel have been the lot and reality of the Caribbean not merely during slavery and colonization but also and conceivably more so during self-government, political independence, neo-liberalism and globalization. Put differently, throughout the history of the region, the influence, nay rather, the interference and interests of the metropole have been determinative. From Crown Colony to multi-laterals and transnational corporations, the free market doctrine and the ethos of globalization have distorted and destroyed what is in the interest of the Caribbean. The Caribbean Theology project is in response to the challenge to name and unmask, to confront and vanquish the powers, by the finger of God. The theology must “pastor the powers”\textsuperscript{115} and in Taylor’s words by \textit{Saying No To Babylon}.

Between the Exodus and the Exile and after the Exile in the OT history of Israel, Israel crossed the wilderness. It is in the wilderness wanderings that the challenge of completing the process of their emancipation and the prospect of building a just and responsible society became most apparent. The wilderness is valuable as a prism and metaphor of the lived experience of the Caribbean not as a place but as a mindset. Three stories from the wilderness betray the lived experience of the Caribbean for this project. Two are drawn from the post-exodus account Exodus 32, (gods of gold 32.31) and Numbers 11.4ff, (graveyards of craving). The other is drawn from Isaiah 44.6ff, (factory of idols).\textsuperscript{116}


\textsuperscript{116} I am relying on the interpretation of Isa 40 and beyond as post-exilic and at the hand of Deutero-Isaiah. The arguments advanced by Walter Bruegmann, \textit{An Introduction to the Old Testament: the Canon and Christian Imagination}, (London: John Knox Press, London, 2003) 166-76 are accepted by me for the purposes of this treatment of Isaiah 44.
(a) Graveyards of Craving

“If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna” (Number 11.4b, 5, 6). These words are to be read with words from the antecedent in Exodus 16.3: “the Israelites said to them, ‘if only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.’”

These words betray an undervaluing of freedom and a reductionism in the value the people place on themselves. Idolatry is the relativizing of the gains made in the name of God and Christ. It leads to an undervaluing of freedom and a devaluing of self. This undervaluing of their freedom and devaluing of self, makes people gullible, manipulable and susceptible to the machinations of power. When they serve these gods therefore the people reduce themselves to their bellies and their appetite. This is a shared experience of the people that live with deficits and need. It was also the lot of the people of Galilee and Judea that thronged the earthly ministry of Jesus. Jesus challenged them not to treat him as ‘bread and fish Messiah.’ “Do not work for food which spoils but for what endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval” (John 6.27). The demand for meat in the wilderness, therefore betrays a special vulnerability and temptation of oppressed peoples. It is easy for them to value their bellies more than their freedom.

On the other hand by the outcome described, the narrative in the wilderness wanderings makes it plain that a politics that exploits and manipulates the
vulnerability of the oppressed class is moribund. The narrative locates this manipulation of the people’s vulnerability in a place it calls, Kibroth Hattaavah “graveyard of craving.” The culture of political clientelism which has thrived in some places in the Caribbean is based on the reductionist view of the people of the region. There is little faith in the capacity of the people to handle the truth about their society and about themselves. The politics of the region often set itself no greater objective than to expand the availability of consumer items from the metropole. The political culture in the region has not developed around a respect and a regard for the sensibility of the people. It is felt that the people can be manipulated by political favours and bought by the political spoils. Often this withholding of the truth from the people is out of fear that the people may take matters in their own hands. This politics, therefore, is in the service of the vested interests to which the politics class is beholden.

Religion also has not been faultless in this regard. Religion has replaced the ‘bread and fish’ messiah of political clientelism with the ‘wonder working’ messiah of religious manipulation. The televangelists and miracle moguls of recent vintage which have been a steady diet for the Caribbean exploit the gullibility of the masses with a brand of religion that can take them nowhere. An entire culture of religion and evangelization has developed around the idea that people are gullible and that therefore all they need is “bread and circus.” The record of the book of Numbers and the example of Israel in the wilderness make it plain that religious and political manipulation of the vulnerability of people will not inure to human flourishing.

The people deserve to be treated with respect. Their intelligence must be respected, and their dignity protected. The ‘bread and circus’ ideology and bread and
fish messianism therefore keep people where they are. It keeps things as they are. It offers to the people a defuturized past. The graveyard of craving is therefore a challenge to the politics of the Caribbean, especially in places like Jamaica. In Jamaica the two party political system, as has been noted in chapter two, has been something of a poisoned chalice. This is because it has operated on the least common denominator, by exploiting the gullibility of the masses. In this regard the one political party has nullified the other without inuring to human flourishing in the region. People must not be led belly first, but head and heart first.

The pastoral letters from the Bishops of the French Caribbean have sought to emphasize the value of the principle of “Subsidiarity” which requires decisions to be made at the level of the local community in the political and governance process.\textsuperscript{117} It assumes a capacity on the part of persons at the level of the local community to be able to act in their own interest and to take responsibility for their environment. However, the graveyard of cravings provides an opportunity to reflect not only on the gullibility of oppressed peoples, but also on the fact that there are narrow vested interests that are organized in order to take advantage of the gullibility of the masses. Those who support the principle of Subsidiarity are duty bound, therefore, to seek to

\textsuperscript{117} In May 1993, four bishops of the French Caribbean wrote a pastoral letter entitled “To Build a Common Destiny, To Foster Political Growth” arguing for the application of the principle of subsidiarity in the French Caribbean. The letter was unpublished and merely circulated among Roman Catholic parishes across the Caribbean. They wrote against the backdrop of new economic activities arising from the emerging Single Market of the 1990s and the subsequent need for an acknowledgement of the political, cultural and social differences between the Caribbean and their European partners of the E.E.C. According to them, these differences could be tempered through the embrace and implementation of the principle of subsidiarity. This principle entails the belief that communities ought to be empowered to control whatever they can by themselves without consulting higher authority. It emphasizes decision-making and management at the local level and in so doing allocates responsibility to the community and particularly the individual. Their letter therefore appealed to the public to take up their civic duty and to play a more active role in the upkeep and management of their communities by accepting their responsibility as political actors.
conscientize, that is, to raise the consciousness of the masses so that they will be less susceptible to the machinations and manipulation by such vested interests.

**(b) Gods of Gold**

“Gods of Gold” is the way Moses described to Yahweh what he saw when to his horror and disappointment he found the people he had left behind at the foot of Sinai in revelry around the “golden calf” (Ex 32.31). The “golden calf” was made by Aaron in response to Israel’s demand; “Come make us gods who will go before us” (v 1). When Aaron made the idol and cast it in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with his tool, he declared; “these are your gods, Israel, who brought you out of Egypt” (4). Kibroth Hattaavah, “graveyards of craving,” raises the question of prioritization by the political economy. When people are put at the centre of the political economy are they put there as props and pawns to be manipulated and exploited? Do the political economies of the Caribbean have an enlightened view of citizenship, of the humanity and dignity of their people? Are the outcomes being pursued ones which are geared towards the enhancement of the humanity and the dignity of the Caribbean people? The conclusion of Caribbean Theology reflecting upon the lived experience of the people in the light of the word of God is that people are being manipulated and exploited, treated as props and pawns; they are being fed a diet of bread and circuses. To go forward therefore, a transvaluation of the value of the humanity and dignity of all the people of the Caribbean must inform the political economy. “People of the Caribbean” refers to the residue of the indigenous people, Kalinago, the Maroons, the sons and daughters of the former enslaved, those who came as indentured labourers, the descendants of the planters and pirates, those who were stateless and came to the Caribbean as merchants and the recent imports from the great North that have been
creolized. All are one Caribbean people and must be valued as citizens and stakeholders.

“Gods of gold” raises on the other hand the question of the nature of leadership and exposes the pressure that is brought to bear upon leadership. “Gods of gold” are the product of fetishization. The golden calf is fashioned from jewelry taken from Egypt. Some of these pieces of jewelry were given; others were stolen; and few pieces were earned in Egypt. The shape of a calf anticipates the gods of the fertility cult of Canaan. It is an early antecedent to the religion of Baal Mel Cart whose symbol was the “Bull.” The “golden calf” at one and the same time was looking back to Egypt and looking ahead to Canaan. Its substance was from Egypt and its form was from Canaan. It is therefore a pressure on leadership to be conformists, “mimic men.” The norms, paradigms, and ethos seem always to be imported from elsewhere.

The pressure on the Caribbean to define its own ethos in conformity to the metropolis of Europe and North American is historical, economic, cultural and religious. The Caribbean was fashioned in the image and likeness of Europe shaped in the interest of the North. Its mono-crop agriculture was aimed at sweetening the tables of Europe rather than feeding the people of the Caribbean. In economic and political terms there is an intellectual hegemony over the Caribbean, from Bretton Woods and the Washington Consensus, to neo-Liberalism and globalization that has been determinative of the economic policies pursued in the region. The Caribbean has been lured into a debt trap which Trinidad and Tobago have escaped. Their debt to

\[118\] Of I Kings 12.25-33 Jeroboam makes two golden calves and said to the people “here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt” (v 29).

\[119\] V.S. Naipaul, The Mimic Men (London: Deutsch 1967) the reference is borrowed from the title of that work.

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GDP ratio does not exceed 25 per cent of GDP compared to Jamaica which has a debt to GDP ratio of 130 per cent of GDP. The Caribbean was shaped as a region of imports and it has been made to remain a net importer of all things.

International media organizations, cable TV and the internet have also come to exert overwhelming influence on the region. The cultural penetration by the North in the Caribbean has been heightened, deepened and unmitigated since the advent of the digital age and with the expansion of the telecommunications infrastructure in the region. If there was a risk of invisibility before it has been made worse. The people of the Caribbean are growing up with an image of themselves in the eyes of others. They are coming to doubt whether they have any narrative of their own, or that they merely exist in the “shadow of empire”. Religion has lagged behind the Caribbean self-consciousness of the rest of the region. The church continues to consume a diet of everything imported, including liturgy, books, songs and missions agenda. Taylor asserts:

Self-liberation will be realized when there is a discovery of the real prophetic vision of the Church in and for the region, a vision that will be helped greatly if the Church shakes off what might be its greatest captivity, that is its Theological Captivity.\textsuperscript{120}

Despite the influences from without which put a pressure on the Caribbean to conform and therefore to fetishize things from the North Atlantic, the real concern is with the pressure from within. After all, the account of “gods of gold” in the Exodus narrative is located neither in Egypt nor in Canaan, but in the wilderness. It is about pressure that comes not from the Pharaoh in Egypt but from the pharaoh that Israel

\textsuperscript{120} Taylor, “Babylonish Captivity of the Church,” 16

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takes along with them. It is not from Babylon in the plain of Susa, but the Babylon in our hearts that holds us captive.

The pressure from within also speaks to the tendency for the Church in the region to produce its own persecutors. Taylor observes “that theological and doctrinal matters are invariably not the primary grounds and basis of the Church’s warring against itself, of the character assassinations, the labeling of leaders and groups by what are considered discrediting labels and the encouragement of the development of parallel groups to stand in opposition and gain official recognition and patronage.” Such internal persecution of one section of the Church against another is the product of ideological orientation and a value system and is not related to anything theological. The offer of official recognition and patronage makes the Church susceptible to “divide and rule” by dominant interests.

This is what makes the struggle for selfhood and the commitment to build a just and responsible society challenging. The liberator, Moses, smashes the ‘gods of gold’ but it is one thing to restrict access to the trinkets, trappings and trophies that are fetishized; it is another thing to expunge the valorization of them from the hearts of the people. The matter of the raising of the consciousness of the people about these idols is ongoing. There is a “dip and fall back” to this struggle. Progress is not made in a straight line. It is rather like climbing a mountain, sometimes one has to go down in order to go up. For example, Watty demands that theology respond to threat of re-colonization. For him Rastafari, Black Theology and Latin American Liberation Theology are sources of the threat of re-colonization. He is particularly harsh in his

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121 Taylor, “Babylonish Captivity of the Church,” 11
criticism of Rastafari about which he says; “the repatriation-theme of Rastafari is as
delusory as is their deification of Haile Selassie. It is escapist, reactionary and
alienating. Its only difference from the typical colonial mentality is that Africa is
substituted for Europe.”122 What is ironic is that Rastafari is itself a response to the
threat of re-colonization. The black man in the nineteen fifties and sixties had not
found a homeland in the Caribbean. Africa in that context for Rastafari was not so
much a location but a self-affirmation. In this respect, the analysis provided by Watty
is simplistic and a complete mischaracterization.

When there is fetishization of the produce and products from elsewhere
especially from among the holders and wielders of power, self-empowering and ideas
of self-reliance are rejected out of hand. The people of the soil look down upon
themselves and those who share social reality and social location with themselves.
They pay scant regard to their own achievements and doubt the nobility of their
forebears. It is not possible to regard one’s own history with pride and the struggle of
one’s forebear with a sense of satisfaction when one fetishizes the trophies, trinkets
and trappings of the dominant elite. This has been the tragedy of the Caribbean up to
the present. The accent, the image, the goods, the innovations from Europe and
America are valorized and the people of the Caribbean become their clients and
consumers if not also their clones. This remains the case even when Europe and the
people from elsewhere are fascinated with Caribbean accent, image, carriage and
bearing, our poetic imagination and athletic prowess. Caribbean people feel exoticized
without being able to see themselves as their equals.

122 Watty, From Shore to Shore, 23
Gods of gold is a narrative that shows the pressure faced by leadership to conform to the model followed elsewhere and to supply the goods which others elsewhere are producing and consuming. The narrative also shows an alternative type of leadership. In Moses is another type of leadership on offer. He lacks the haughtiness and self-interestedness that often bedevil political leadership. He is a person that has come into contact with Ultimate Concern, Ultimate Reality and Ultimate Goodness and that encounter informs his perspective on the lived experience of the people. He is consumed with developing a sustainable ethic to define the ethos of life in the community, committed to love of God and neighbour. Moses sees his own leadership as one in solidarity with the people always expressing compassion for the people. This is the leadership that was being replaced by the golden calf. Moses represents the leadership that smashes the gods of gold. This is the kind of leadership that Caribbean Theology must seek to nurture and encourage as well as seek to exemplify within its own context.

(c) Factory of Idols

The Prophet of the Exile in Isaiah 40-55 is concerned with the issue of Israel’s identity. Matters of identity would be paramount for a people who face the risk of absorption by the dominant culture. Walter Bruegemann argues that Isaiah 40-55 is best understood as a divine response to the Book of Lamentations’ deep grief over the destruction of Jerusalem. He contends that it intends to evoke displaced Israel out of

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123 The term is drawing upon Paul Tillich’s “Depth of Existence” who said, “The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth is God. That depth is what the word God means. And if that word does not have much meaning for you, translate it, and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of your being, of your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without any reservation.”
accommodation to Babylon, to move Israel back to its distinctive identity. The Prophet, whether delivering his oracles from the edge of exile before or after, would have been seized by the challenge for Israel to reclaim and maintain their distinctiveness as the people of God. The recurring refrain is “He who formed you in the womb.” Israel’s identity is bound up with its origin by the hand of God and from the wombs of history. Yahweh is Israel’s only Saviour. It is against this background of a people in search of who they are after the exile that the Prophet delivers the oracle about the factory of idols. He mocks them by exposing the folly of their idolatry:

“He cuts down cedars ... It is used for fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal; he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He warms himself and says ‘Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.’ From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays and says, ‘Save me! You are my god.’”

The caricature provided by the Prophet exaggerates the point to emphasize the folly of idolatry which lies in knowing that God is yet living as if there is no God (Ps 14.1ff). The idols in focus by the Prophet are not of “wood” or “metal”. They are mental. It is the life that is utterly self-absorbed and self-sufficient that is in view. It is a life in which self is the ‘ultimate concern’. The Prophet says, “such people feed on ashes, a deluded heart misleads them; they cannot save themselves, or say, ‘is not this thing in my right hand a lie?’”

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124 Walter Bruegemann, Out of Babylon, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 64
125 Isa 44.2, 24, 49.5 See also 43.1
126 Is. 43.1-13
127 Is. 44.14-17
128 Is. 44.20
The socio-historic background that is presumed for this oracle is not dissimilar to the wilderness to which allusions have already been made. In the wilderness Israel having been liberated from slavery in Pharaoh’s Egypt faced the uncharted sands of becoming a people. The project before them was to build a covenant community of citizens of the commonwealth of Israel. In the wide open space of the wilderness there was neither certainty nor security. They were lost with no clear blueprint to follow. The idea of forging a community of faith committed to a vigorous egalitarianism did not seem to them to provide the guarantees and security that they sought. It is my view that both Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic History in the Old Testament make the point. The community of Israel defined its life that derived from the cult of Yahweh as a community of equals. This equality was to be reinforced and safeguarded by provisions such as the Jubilee provisions, the provisions about harvesting, leaving the borders of the field for the widows, orphans, and aliens, and the restriction placed on the monarchy in the exercise of its power and accumulation of wealth.\textsuperscript{129} What is seen in the wilderness is the account of “gods of gold and graveyards of craving” as well as what is seen in the Prophet of the exile, “factory of idols” are the repudiation of this ethic and ethos in favour of the ethos and ethic from elsewhere. Israel repudiated the ideals of covenant in order to fit in with life of the nations by which it was surrounded. In particular, it was the pursuit of wealth and consumption for their own sakes and the idea of self-sufficiency in which the self is the ‘ultimate concern’ that consumed, distorted and distracted them. It is to make finite things or persons our ultimate concern that constitutes idolatry. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is “Ultimate Concern.”

The threat of idolatry is something that the Caribbean shares with the historic people of God. It was what faced them in the wilderness after the Exodus and both during and in the aftermath of the exile in Babylon. Taylor argues that the threat and reality of idolatry is the reason Rome in the book of Revelation is referred to metaphorically as Babylon (Rev 13.3,6ff; 17.1-5; 18.3). He argues that Babylon is inseparable from idolatry.\textsuperscript{139} The temptation to idolatry is the single most pervasive threat to the faithfulness of the people of God.

The idolatry of the emerging society and economy in the Caribbean lies in this fact: They have copied the form and substance of those who had been their masters and made the possession and consumption of the goods, styles and lifestyles of their former masters their Ultimate Concern. The Protestant ethic of hard work and diligent attention to duty in Isa 44, with craftsmen, blacksmiths, artisans and peasants produce the fruit of idolatry. They do so because their ethic makes self its ultimate concern. There is with this ethic an abstraction from a sense of community. The oracle shows, by omission, a lack of a sense of the collective in the idolater. Every reference is in the first person singular. In this regard it is the same for the Caribbean. Everything that has been sold to the Caribbean tells the people of the Caribbean that they can ignore the historical legacy of inequity and justice denied for the majority of its people; providing the Caribbean finds the right formula, or forges the right alliances and works hard and diligent enough, the Caribbean will pull itself up by its own boot straps. It will flourish and prosper. In other words, the Caribbean can ignore the duty to neighbour and still flourish and prosper. The history of the Caribbean has shown that this has not worked because it cannot work. The fruits of the economic models

\textsuperscript{139} Taylor, \textit{Saying No to Babylon}, 52
and social arrangements it has pursued, without addressing inherited imbalances, are there for all to see: these include social dysfunction in family life, extremely high incidents of interpersonal violence, and experience of social exclusion. When the God and Father or our Lord Jesus Christ is Ultimate Concern, the poor, the neglected, the spoken against and the condemned will take on a renewed significance in the political economy. Righteousness and justice will be the watchword of the society.

The post Exodus and the post Exile tendencies outlined above are present in the modern day Caribbean in forms that threaten to reverse the emancipatory impulse. The persistence of the re-colonizing or neo-colonizing threats takes root in this idol worshipping tendency. The consumerist, fetishizing, valorizing approaches to the things from the metropole are taking greater and deeper root in the Caribbean at the expense a heightened sense of self and therefore blunting the impetus for building just and responsible societies in the region. Prophetic insight born of a prophetic imagination is required to name these things for what they are. It is in the public square where these idol worshipping tendencies are most apparent, therefore, it is the public square that the prophetic insight and imagination are required.

Conclusion

Caribbean Theology has both a legacy and an opportunity in the Caribbean to participate in the building of a just and responsible society. There is a legacy of struggle, protest and resistance that has created the Caribbean such as it is. This is the same legacy that has been the impetus and foundation for Caribbean Theology. At the outset, the struggle was for liberation and emancipation. While there are neo-colonialists influences and forces threatening always to re-enslave and re-colonize the Caribbean, in the main it is not so much liberation which is its primary challenge at
this time in the Caribbean. The challenge is to respond to the Babylonish forces that are idolatrous, arrogant, unaccountable and unrestrained. These forces bear upon the lived experience of the people in ways that distort their sense of who they are and deny them justice.

The collective Christian presence in the Caribbean has hardly ever been unequivocal and united in its mission in respect of the lived experience of the people. There were those among the churches that provided a sacred canopy for oppression, slavery and the delegitimization of folk and African culture. They imposed the form and substance from elsewhere in ways that distort the sense of self of the people of the Caribbean. Caribbean Theology emerged with a clear mandate and mission from the broader church community: it was to seek for liberation, pursue the identity of the Caribbean and raise the consciousness of the people of the region.

In the pursuit of that mission and in the face of the forces that are aligned against it, Caribbean Theology has proceeded with halting steps. Those that have their agenda set elsewhere and preach a truncated gospel have gained majority following. Their success in terms of popular following has been intimidating in some respects for Caribbean Theology and Caribbean theologians. As a consequence, voices have been muted and inhibited in recent decades. This popularized version of the Gospel insists that religion and politics do not mix. They do so even while betraying a clear ideological agenda and while being aligned to the ideological right. The agenda of this section of the church, to the extent that it claims any ideology at all, has been therefore boundary keeping and catering to those of the household of faith. In the context, however, the idolatry and self-distorting influences are taking hold of the people’s consciousness. There is a fetishizing and valorizing of the goods and ideas
from elsewhere to the detriment of the development and maturation of the people of
the region as well as to the neglect of the pursuit of what is just and right. Also, at the
same time, it has been made clear by reason of historical development that minority
voices of those who have sought to lead the charge for justice and equality and
Caribbean selfhood have made and are making modest gains. These modest gains
have been made in terms of developments in the public domain within the Caribbean.

What is called for, therefore, is for the church to rally itself, not so much for
liberation but for the establishment of a just and responsibility society. In order to do
this the Church has to accept the public domain and the public square, the community
as the sphere of its action. In the midst of the exile in Babylon, that in some respects
the Caribbean has been, the people of the Caribbean have to be determined to assert
their own identity, institution and agenda to make the Caribbean homeland rather than
exile. This, therefore, calls for a public theology. It is to set out the broad parameters
and priorities of such a public theology to which I now turn to a summary of some
core tenets that have emerged from Caribbean Theology and to set a list of priority for
the Caribbean Public Theology project as well as to discuss the role that the church
ought to play in building a just and responsible society.
Chapter Six

The Public Theology: Priorities of Caribbean Theology

In Chapter One I sought to make a case for a contextual theology, a “doing” of theology, and to assert that the Caribbean context is an important point of departure for theological reflection. In Chapter Two I set out the context for a Caribbean Theology which I argued should be understood historically in terms of resistance against slavery and inequality and today in terms of persistent poverty with resultant high incidence of violence. This context necessarily shapes Caribbean Theology. In the third chapter, I argue that identity is the key problematic of the Caribbean people. In response to this, in the first place, Caribbean Theology has utilized multi-disciplinary sources, in particular cultural studies, as a resource in developing an understanding of Caribbean society. Secondly, a Caribbean liberation hermeneutic has been developed, the interaction between text and experience. Chapter Four uses the Legion narrative in Mark Chapter Five as lens to reflect upon the Caribbean. It reflects upon the problem of violence as the loss of a sense of self and as interiorization of oppression. It is also used to reflect upon the recalcitrant nature of the forces that have dominated and distorted life for the people of the Caribbean.

In the previous chapter, chapter five, I set out the historical circumstances out of which Caribbean Theology has developed as a self-conscious and deliberate movement. I also highlight the nature of the challenge that faces the society and the church at this time. I argue that what has blunted the emancipatory thrust is the problem of idolatry. The problem to which Caribbean Theology responds is not atheism but idolatry.
It remains therefore in this sixth and final chapter to set out some key tenets of Caribbean Theology that have emerged so far, having regard to the central thrust of the Caribbean Theology movement. Finally, I suggest some priority areas with which the church imagined by this theology engages itself and the society as a whole, as it seeks to be part of the building of a just and responsible society. Though the Caribbean represents many island states, I speak of society rather than societies. I do so for two reasons: the first is that, as we saw in comments of Ramphal quoted in the previous chapter, the Caribbean is one society separated by the merest accent often distinguishable only by citizens of the Caribbean. The second is that a just and responsible society means the same thing for all societies. There is a borderlessness to what is envisioned in building a just and responsible society.

What has been achieved is a doing of Caribbean Theology rather than merely giving justification for a theology or critiquing received theology. This theology has sought to carefully reflect upon the issues of the Caribbean context. The issue of context to which it has responded is the problem of identity. This problem of identity has resulted from the interiorization of oppression. The distortion of the self, its sense of being one people, with a narrative of its own and the right to develop in its own interest and for the interest of its people, has caused the region to be susceptible to the values and assumptions of the metropolis. The people of the region have fetishized, valorized and idolized the goods, services, models, paradigms and ethos of the metropolis. Their value is to be determined by the degree to which they approximate achievements in the metropolitan centres and certain interests that are served in keeping with the trajectory of the dominant culture.
In response to the problem of identity which manifests itself in terms of idolatry, I have identified a reading strategy. I am suggesting that the problem to which Caribbean Theology responds, the reading strategy which it adopts, the historical legacy upon which it has been founded, and the antecedent form in which it existed, require a Caribbean Theology which is a public theology. Before setting out some priorities of such a public theology in the context of the Caribbean, I summarize certain core tenets of Caribbean Theology as they have emerged among the thinkers.

**Key Tenets in Caribbean Theology**

In response to the call to pursue and exemplify liberation and justice, Caribbean identity and conscientization of the masses, Caribbean theology has developed around some key themes. Dick has identified equality and justice as the key themes of the Native Baptists, the movement to which Sharpe, Bogle and Gordon belonged and which is acknowledged to have laid the foundation upon which Caribbean Theology has sought to build.\(^1\) Taylor has suggested that the key themes include: education for liberation and transformation, advocacy, protest, welfare, healing and empowerment.\(^2\) The following is not an exhaustive list of the themes, but I consider them to be the core values around which the theology has emerged and continues to evolve:

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\(^1\) Dick, *The Cross and the Machete*, 142-66

\(^2\) Burchell Taylor, "The Legacy of Sam Sharpe: Church and Community", The Sam Sharpe Conference (Oxford: Regents Park College, April, 2010)1-16
Resistance against injustice, idolatry and seductive snares in faithfulness to God

Resistance is important theologically in the Caribbean context in two respects. The first is what I have argued in the second chapter, that resistance has been both pivotal to the identity of the Caribbean people and foundational to the Caribbean Theology project. The struggle for Caribbean identity is praxis upon which Caribbean Theology reflects. The second is that theologically, the theme of resistance is relevant, as I have indicated from the beginning of this thesis, in a context of oppression and marginalization in the Caribbean, in the shadow of empire (Babylon). We have already asserted that the Babylon metaphor is a metaphor of idolatry. Idolatry represents the most persistent threat to faithfulness among God’s people. We are therefore called upon to resist idolatry.

When Sam Sharpe had his bold idea for the enslaved to “assert their claim to liberty,” he challenged his fellow enslaved saying, “My brethren, let us be men! If we do not stand up boldly for ourselves and take freedom then buckras will put us out to the muzzles of their guns, and shoot them like pigeons.”

Sharpe, Bogle and Gordon are foundational figures who have set the example, Their understanding of what was right and good for the society was not shared by the masters and power elite. In order to remain faithful to the project of freedom and justice for the people, they stood their ground and fought the good fight and so were made to pay the ultimate price by the sacrifice of their lives. Sharpe believed that the

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3 Dick, The Cross and the Machete, 106 cites Henry Bleby, Scenes in the Caribbean Sea: Being Sketches from a Missionary’s Notebook (London, 1854) 17, 19

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right to be free was inalienable. His opinion was not shared by the Anti-slavery Society. Dick points out that among the 10 evils of slavery listed by the Anti-slavery society in 1833, none of them had to do with fundamental right to freedom as an inalienable right. The evils enumerated include: neglect of moral and religious instruction to slaves, profanation of Sabbath, barbarity of punishment, licentious treatment of female slaves, discouragement given to marriage, perversion of laws, separation of families by sale, rejection of evidence given by slaves, difficulties put in the way of slaves obtaining their freedom and the uncertainty of holding liberty when it is secured.4

However, Sharpe held the view that all persons were born free and equal. He knew that slavery was not in accordance with the law of love and justice given by the Son of God.5 This is why he led the resistance for the enslaved to stop working until they received a wage. This protest resulted in the death by hanging of Sam Sharpe at the hand of the Jamaican state. In the developing history after emancipation, both Paul Bogle and George William Gordon, defined as the ring leaders of the Native Baptist War, known in Jamaican history as the Morant Bay Rebellion, were hanged.6 Bogle and Gordon were Native Baptist leaders and persons of deep faith. It is their faith which led them to protest the harsh and unjust circumstances of the masses. The death of these three, (all of whom have been made national heroes in Jamaica) represents the payment of the ultimate price for faithfulness to the Testimony of Jesus (Rev 12.11; 17) and therefore martyrdom. When Sam Sharpe declared, “I would rather hang on yonder gallows than live in slavery”, it was not a fatalistic or a

4 Dick, The Cross and the Machete 107 cites Clark Memorials of Baptist Missionaries in Jamaica, Including a Sketch of the Labours of the Early Religious Instructors, (London, 1869) 109 - 10,
5 Dick, The Cross and the Machete
6 Dick, The Cross and the Machete 1-43
for which it is prepared to grant official patronage and protective rights. This is the trap into which the people of God in many places, including the Caribbean, have fallen.⁹

The challenge of non-conformity in the face of the seductive influence of power, privilege and protection is an abiding challenge. It is the new holiness code, which calls for a distinctiveness over against what belongs to Babylon.

1) God as Father Son and Holy Spirit and Lord of history

Native Baptists, who, in some respects, provide the kernel which evolved into Caribbean Theology, see God as God Almighty, on whom they rely in times of need. The God of the Native Baptists and also Caribbean Theology is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is God who “possesses” or indwells individuals through God’s Holy Spirit. The dominant and most discussed ideas about God that emerge in the prayers and testimonies within the communities of faith are of a God who is in touch with and involved in human affairs. It is God, the sovereign Lord of history, who has brought the Caribbean into being. It is God who has made human beings in his own image and likeness, who is the God of justice, on whom we rely in the lived experience of the people, where justice is denied or delayed. This idea of God as the God of justice as asserted in Isa. 30.18, “the Lord is the God of justice: blessed are all they who wait for him,” was a pre-occupation of Bogle and Gordon.¹⁰ It is before this God that all human persons are equal.

⁹ Taylor, Saying No to Babylon
¹⁰ Dick, The Cross and the Machete 149
Within Caribbean churches, worship, prayers, hymn singing and the generous use of the book of Psalms have remained a staple. The Caribbean church is a worshipping and praying community. Taylor argues that there is an understanding of worship that is subversive.\textsuperscript{11} This is to say that persons of faith are conscious of the fact that the source of their authority and legitimacy arises from elsewhere other than what is promoted by the dominant culture. Especially in the context where faithfulness to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who empowers and enables through His Holy Spirit, requires resistance to the idolatrous demands of the dominant culture, worship is counter-cultural and subversive.

God has revealed God-self through God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures bear witness to this revelation or self-disclosure of God-self. God speaks to God’s people through God’s word. The bible is, becomes and contains the word of God. The bible is at once an article of faith and an analogy of experience. It is a matter of record that after Emancipation the planters were compensated with 20 million pounds for the loss of their property (the enslaved) and the newly emancipated were given 50,000 bibles. The bible has remained central to the life of the community after Emancipation. Caribbean Theology has built upon this reader response approach to Scripture of the former enslaved and then emancipated a fledgling people. Caribbean Theology is a narrative theology which reads scripture in the light of the lived experience of the people. Scripture is normative; it is bread for the journey of life. It is to be studied, believed and obeyed.

\textsuperscript{11} Taylor, \textit{Saying No to Babylon} 51-55
2) Jesus incarnate in the poor, embodying the love of God, vanquishing the powers through His cross and saving by His blood and His Resurrection

The incarnation of Jesus Christ weaves a constant thread through Caribbean Theology. Jesus is incarnate in the poor man, the cane cutter, the enslaved, the indentured labourer and the martyr who is killed taking a stand for justice and righteousness. The incarnation-life, ministry-death and resurrection are taken together as a complex of events in solidarity with the oppressed. This does not exhaust their meaning and use in Caribbean Theology. Part of the indication of how much remains to be done is the failure to date for Caribbean Theology to articulate a comprehensive Christology. There are working assumptions that betray that Christology but not a comprehensive Christology.

Lewin Williams’ essay, “Liberation Theology Examines Traditional Theories of the Atonement”, argues that sin is the negation of being. Sin, in this respect, on the part of the oppressed, is the failure to affirm that which God has confirmed in being. Liberation is the scheme between the Suffering Servant and the suffering people. This means that Caribbean Theology shares with Latin American Liberation Theology the idea that the cross in the sacrifice of Christ has its high point of exaltation, that is the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He says:

Herein lies not only the “on behalf of” principle but also the “empowerment to” principle. Here an eschatological dimension emerges. Liberation means also that God in Christ empowered the powerless to fight for their liberation. In this eschatological dimension, therefore, there is an existentialism that moves away from the “by and by” syndrome. The future reaches back to touch the
present where every day’s ability to fight is a battle won on the part of the poor.  

In this respect in the Atonement there is both a suffering and a victory principle. The once-for-all-ness of the Atonement is concerned with its efficacy rather than the process of the Atonement. "Hence it can be seen how the suffering class could be the pleroma of the Suffering One while also sharing the victory of the exalted one."  

The lingering influence of Caribbean folk religions has a residual effect on Caribbean Christology. In this respect "blood" and "spirit" are multivalent symbols. "The blood of Jesus covers his people," means that it provides forgiveness for their sins and trespasses. It is also evocative of the Passover narratives in Exodus 12 and 13 in which the blood of the lamb provided insulation and protection from the plague of the death of the firstborn. In Christ, therefore, there is both a defensive shield and an effective weapon of victory. George Mulrain argues that "belief in spirits" can connote not merely an acceptance of the reality of spirits, but a dependence upon these spirits for support and guidance in the affairs of life."  

He argues further that intellectual acceptance of a belief in spirits is compatible with belongingness to Christ. The belief in spirits is the function of the merger of the African and Amerindian cosmologies. It is also not unrelated to the fact of the disempowerment of the masses. The belief in and resort to spirits are ways of seeking for resources to cope with and counter the overwhelming challenges of the lived experiences. The language of spirits is also a hidden transcript over against the public transcript.

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12 Lewin Williams “Liberation Theology Examines Traditional Theories of the Atonement,” CJRS Vol. 19 No. 1 April 1998, 3-12
13 Williams “Liberation Theology Examines Traditional Theories of the Atonement,” 12
14 Williams “Liberation Theology Examines Traditional Theories of the Atonement,” 12
15 George Mulrain, “Baptism and Belief in Spirits,” CJRS, Vol. 7 No. 1 April 1986, 34
16 Mulrain, “Baptism and Belief in Spirits,” 35
Christological themes in Caribbean Theology have strong apocalyptic overtones. Jesus is presented as the one who confronts, unmasks and vanquishes principalities and powers. "Principalities and powers" are a way of speaking about hegemonic, ideological, political, economic, cultural, religious and social forces of the dominant power. There is concreteness to them; they are the wheels within the wheels of things as they are, the glue that holds things together. The image of Babylon, with its idolatrous, oppressive and yet seductive sway, is a way of speaking about these principalities and powers. The lot of exile is the lot and reality of the people of God who struggle against these forces in the lived experience. The earthly dimensions of these forces, or what is visible, do not exhaust these forces; there is an invisible hand behind them. They are networked to the far reaches of galaxies. These are the forces that are vanquished when Jesus "casts out Satan by the finger of God." (Luke 11.14-23) These are the forces over which victory is achieved fully, finally and forever in the cross, resurrection and enthronement of Jesus. Yet, these are the recalcitrant forces with which the people of faith struggle in their pursuit of justice, freedom and equality. This is the reason Jesus is the Liberator. He accomplishes a salvation for his people; this salvation is here and not yet here. It is approximated but not exhausted in their experience of liberation and their project to build a just and responsible society in which the grace and power of God are mediated. Through Jesus they come to know who they really are. They were excluded and spoken against, condemned and neglected, but in Christ they have become a people for God's own possession. (1 Peter 2.2-10, see also Gal. 3.28)
3) *The Church as the basic ecclesial community, a servant and a prophetic community*

To be a servant community means that the Church sees the community as the sphere of action in response to the need for the practice of righteousness and justice in the interest of all the inhabitants of the community. This action by the Church is prompted by the example of Christ and love of neighbour. The Church takes action in the community and for the sake of the community, particularly in relation to those who are vulnerable to becoming the victims of the unrighteousness and injustice and those who are actually the victims in the worst way.¹⁷ This is why sections of the Church and some of the enslaved themselves fought against slavery and fought to bring about emancipation. As I indicated in the previous chapter, the pursuit of justice and equality is the most fundamental duty of the Church in the community. Equality is derived from the commitment to justice for all. Justice and righteousness are fundamentally communicable attributes of God. The knowledge of God is the encounter of his grace and power in demonstrating his righteousness and goodness (Exod. 33.12-23). This justice and equality are liberating and have a bearing on all aspects of the life of the community and the individual in community. It is this pursuit of justice and equality that bring about the liberation and the experience of *shalom*. In this way the church seeks the welfare of the city and provides an enriched sense of citizenship.

In pursuit of justice and equality in the community, the Church is required necessarily to take practical action in the community. These actions have a word and

¹⁷ Taylor, “Legacy,” 3
deed component to them. The Church must both embody and interpret what is possible by way of righteousness and justice. This calls for a commitment to education for liberation and transformation. Allusion has been made to the above in speaking about of conscientization. It is to offer teaching or engage in education that is based on one’s faith commitment and understanding of the bible, with a keen awareness of the issues and challenges of the society, set in proper perspectives, in the light of God’s standards of justice and equality. Taylor puts it this way,

It aimed at raising the people’s consciousness, sharpening their awareness, prompting self-reflection, as well as reflection on the realities of life which they had to contend with on a daily basis. This was done largely in the light of the Scriptures read through their own eyes and or listened to from their own location in the scheme of things.18

The church therefore has a duty to inject itself into the debate about all that bears upon human welfare in the society, in order to clarify the moral and ethical considerations are of paramount importance.

The practical action taken by the church in community in pursuit of justice and equality seeks to bring God’s grace, wisdom and power to bear upon the situation and challenge. It does so in seeking the outcome of justice and equality and in a manner that seeks to approximate the eschatological ideal. This calls for the church to engage in advocacy and protest. Advocacy and protest are brought together because they are the twin action that strengthens the church in the face of inaction, neglect or abuse of power. Advocacy and protest are particularly important when exercised on behalf of those who cannot represent themselves. When people’s welfare and well-being are put at risk, others are put at a disadvantage and there is delay and cynicism in taking the

18 Taylor, “Legacy,” 7

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action that justice and righteousness demand, the church is called upon in
collaboration with others to advocate and to protest. It is in the practical action taken
in the community in pursuit of justice and equality, educating for liberation and
transformation and in advocating and taking protest action on behalf of the voiceless,
disadvantaged, neglected and abused that the church authenticates itself and its
message in the community. In all of this, the church remains committed to the pursuit
of human welfare, wholeness and empowerment.

The Caribbean Theology project, rightly defined, is a Public Theology project.
This has been the burden of my thinking and my proposal. Of course, this has not
always been made evident as it ought to have been, by efforts that have been engaged
with the project over time. Yet, as I have sought to show, it is an inevitable outcome
of the nature of project as a reflection on the lived experience of the people in the
Caribbean, with its particular contextual realities.

The issues of freedom, justice and equality, in pursuit of which the mothers and
fathers of the Caribbean resisted, were matters of the public square. A public theology
is also the matter arising from reading strategies which we have called Caribbean
liberation hermeneutics. The issues of context are paramount and form the lenses
through which scripture is reflected upon. This therefore requires a broad
engagement with Caribbean society as a whole to bring the grace and power of the
Kingdom of God to bear upon the lived experience of the people. This chapter
identifies three priorities for the Church in this Caribbean Public Theology project.
Historical Project

Ivan Petrella has argued that liberation theology has lost its distinctive mark because it has no historical projects to relate to God’s reign.¹⁹ I am asserting here that though Caribbean Theology has some kinship with Latin American Liberation Theology, this criticism cannot be successfully launched at Caribbean Theology. Caribbean Theology accepts as valid the 1974 assertion cited by Petrella that liberation theology’s special topic is the ‘relations between an historical practice of liberation and eschatological salvation.’²⁰ However, valid or invalid the criticism of Latin American Liberation Theology may be, from its antecedent form when the enslaved rejected their enslavement and rebelled in protest against the denial of freedom, Caribbean theology has been wedded to the historical project. One of the undeniable and sustained distinctive marks of the Caribbean Theology Project has been its strong historical and socio-cultural orientation. This is further reinforced by its primary ecclesial framework and background where it invariably takes its basic shape and form in preaching and Bible study. Along with the academy that brings the needed analytical, technical and integral dimensions to the project, the academy prevents the project from becoming parochial and ecclesial grounding, prevents it from becoming abstract and theoretical. This strengthens the public profile and its confessional and evangelical nature is preserved in the process.

²⁰ He points out that José Comblin condemns the replacement of “liberation” with “life”, and that José Miguez Bonino concedes that present day liberation theology is closer to German political theology than it is to early liberation theology that criticized an exclusive reliance on negative critique. Cp.cit. p.111
²¹ Petrella, The Future of Liberation Theology, 110, cites Claude Geffre and Gustavo Gutierrez (eds), The Mystical and Political Dimensions of the Christian Faith, 8 (Herder and Herder, New York, 1974)
Caribbean Public Theology

One of the reasons that the Caribbean Theology project has been seen as suffering from a kind of arrested development over a period of time can very well be related to the absence of its being self-consciously perceived as a public theology. As a public theology, Caribbean Theology would have given greater breadth, depth and urgency to its public relevance. As a public theology, it would accept the public square and the public domain not merely as a domain of witness, but as a sphere of the life and influence of the church. This frees the church from the temptation of navel gazing and boundary maintenance which has pre-occupied sections of the Caribbean Church. A Public Theology calls the church to pastor the powers, confront the powers and unmask the powers at one and the same time that it seeks to pastor the membership of the congregation or parish. A public theology would of necessity cause the church to recover its role as public chaplain.

Another factor that would have contributed to its unfulfilled potential as a public theology would have been a reluctance or failure on the part of exponents to explore more rigorously the reading strategies employed in relation to the Scriptures, in particular, along lines referred to as “Caribbean Liberation Hermeneutics” in the work. The emancipatory impact of this latter on readers and hearers, is undeniable, which in turn strengthens the public witness of the Theology. In this regard, the potential for more fruitful work remains vast.

Caribbean Theology is therefore true to the dictum advanced by Karl Barth, that theology cannot with integrity avoid operating in the public realm. Barth suggests
rather that theology comes to the public square to make a distinctive contribution as theology not simply or exclusively as ethics. As such he suggests that theology should be rigorous and disturbing, calling for transformation, repentance and a new order. In this way, theology is concerned with the wholeness of life as a consequence of the belief in the universal lordship of Jesus Christ.

The rooting of Caribbean theology in a history of resistance also means that it is situated inevitably in the public domain, and that it has to resist domestication and privatization. It rejects what Duncan Forrester calls the values and assumption of post-Enlightenment bourgeois society that would restrict its remit to the realm of the subjective and “spiritual.” It also refuses a merely symbolic or ritualistic role in the society. As an attempt to reflect on the praxis of the whole people of God, it does not seek to provide a sacred canopy for the actions of the ruling elite. The church comes to the public square to offer itself in solidarity with the people. Theology insists that the humanity of the people must be protected and their dignity respected.

The mission of the church in the public square from a Caribbean Theology point of view, is shaped by the understanding of the mission of the disciples articulated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon begins with a description of the Christian disciples (in the Beatitudes) and then discusses the implications and conduct which follow. Between the description and the exposition, Jesus makes a bridge in Matthew 5.13-16, by employing two metaphors from ordinary life in order to set out

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21 Karl Barth, Church and State, (London: 1939) cited by Duncan B. Forrester, Beliefs, Values and Policies in a Secular Age (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 6-14
22 Duncan B. Forrester, Beliefs, Values and Policies in a Secular Age (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 6-14
23 Forrester, Beliefs, Values and Policies p.10
the nature and character of the approach of the Christian disciples collectively to their context. He says:

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. 14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The choice of the metaphors of light and salt from ordinary life means that what is contemplated is not so much concerned with the church in its official and special function. It is what concerns the ordinary member and characterises the overall impact of the witness of the Church in its context. As salt and light the Church seeks to exemplify, embody and express the beatitudes within the context in which it finds itself, to be characterized by the following: (a) Christian disciples are called upon to provide an identifiable presence, (b) to make an invaluable difference and (c) to be a dependable influence. These are the things that are being called for by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and when I say that Caribbean Theology is public theology these are the things that are in view. I am not merely suggesting a role for the church in the Caribbean because of anything peculiar to the Caribbean. Rather, I am suggesting that to serve the context in which it has taken root, the church must give of itself and must be itself. The presence, difference and influence are the result of giving itself and being itself. Salt and light can only have an identifiable presence, make an invaluable difference and be a dependable influence if they are themselves and if they give of themselves. It is as salt functioning as salt and light doing what light does that its presence, difference and influence is felt. It is theology true to itself and giving of itself that is to be a theology in the public square engaged in the public
domain. Such a theology must help to frame a discourse about restraining evil and about pastoring the powers in the context in which the church finds itself.

What are the mechanisms through which this public theology can be done? And what specifically, in the context of Caribbean, are its priorities and its focus? Essentially, the church’s task is to anticipate the Kingdom of God on earth. In general, that means three types of ministries: exorcism, iconoclasm and holism. Those ministries are exercised through the churches congregational life, through the church as a forum for moral discourse and through the church’s public chaplaincy.

First, exorcism in the Caribbean means identifying, naming, unmasking, confronting and vanquishing the forces that in their various guises and manifestations deny the people their fair share. I am aware of the triumphalism implied by speaking about the public theology response of the Christian witness to the powers as exorcism. Contending with the powers is preferred by some, on the basis that it implies an ongoing struggle. There is no denying that the struggle is ongoing and, as we have asserted in chapter four, there is a recalcitrant nature to the powers against which the Church struggle. Nevertheless, it is in the context of a legion narrative in Mark 5 that we see the counter-revolutionary action, or what we called “the sting in the tail” of these powers. Therefore, the use of exorcism is not meant to imply that the victory is final. It is not the vanquishing as the unmasking that I regard as the primary prophetic responsibility of the theological project.

The principalities and powers that are to be disarmed and exorcised are the forces that are at work in the society. Those forces are the economic, commercial and financial interests that operate in the market place. They are also forces that are political, governmental and those that play official and quasi-official roles, including
the state security apparatus. Still other forces are cultural, civil and religious, including the media that form parts of the establishment and are kith and kin with the ruling elite. These forces combine to function as the principalities and powers, the wheels within the wheels, and the triumvirate of evil that was identified in chapter four. There is often a failure to make the connection between the deeds of those who operate at these levels and the lot and reality with which the people contend. The church is called upon to name these forces and to unmask them by its witness and life. Naming the forces means putting their actions and their interests in perspective, in relation to the impact that their actions and their interests stand to have in diminishing, distorting and undermining human life. The church, in naming and unmasking these powers, must struggle against them. This means that the church must be prepared to stand up to them. It must speak to them for itself, it must speak to them on behalf of the nation and in particular, and on behalf of the poor, the voiceless and the victims. The church must respect and honour the civil, political and economic interests and authorities in Caribbean society. It must regard them as established by God to perform the role God ordained them to perform. They are ministering spirits (Heb. 1.4), established by God, and they must be held accountable to their divine role and responsibility. In all its dealings with the powers, the church treats the powers with honour and respect because the powers, (that is the established authorities) are God’s servants whether they recognize it or not (Rom. 13.1-7). In this regard, the church must expose the powers to the wisdom of God and, therefore, call them to a higher standard of conduct and achievement on behalf of the people.24

24 Forrester, Beliefs, Values and Policies
Exorcism is the ministry of the visible presence of the Church. It is when Jesus came out of the water, before he had spoken a word or performed any deed that legion identified him as a threat and a source of torment. It is the identifiable presence of the church, being the church, being true to the example of its Lord and faithful to its calling that lays the foundation for confronting, unmasking and pastoring the powers. At the same time, the ministry of exorcism demands the church to speak the truth to power in the public square where resources are squandered and victims are made of people. The church is called upon to name things as they are. It is called upon to identify the alliances and to make the connection between the actions taken by the powerful and its dehumanizing, life-diminishing, life-distorting and life-destroying effect on people. This exorcism will be resisted by the alliances of forces that are networked, organized and well-resourced. Yet, the church must be confident that the light of truth will set them to flight. Even so, the struggle is not over and the victory is not won when the dehumanizing and oppressive forces are vanquished._There is a residual capacity to them, they are determined to re-entrench the control and dominion. This is the task that is on going and from which the faithful dare not flinch.

Second, iconoclasm\textsuperscript{25} is the duty of the church to itself and to the people of the land. The witness and ministry of the church are in response to the constant danger of idolatry, therefore the church must seek to break the idols. The church has a duty to the rulers, but it also has a duty to the people. The duty to the people is the persistent fight against idolatry. Idolatry is what gives Babylon its seductive lure. The church

\textsuperscript{25} Iconoclasm is being used figuratively to speak about the smashing of values, assumptions and images held sacred by the society. This is a way of speaking about dismantling the apparatus of idolatry in the society.
must demystify the powers by weaning people from the fetishes they offer. The
church’s task is to challenge the values which are consumerist and give pride of place
to wealth accumulation as the driving impetus. This is the worship of mammon. To
break images the church must be counter-cultural. It must challenge the dominant
ethos with its values and assumptions and it must promote the values of the Kingdom
of God in the public square.

In the struggle against idolatry, the church must begin with itself. Idolatry is a
persistent temptation for the church no less than it is for any one else. It is easy to
make the church into its own god. It is easy to make sacred things ends in themselves
so that there is a loss of value of the human person and a diluted commitment to
pursuit of justice for the marginalized and the excluded. In the fight against idolatry,
the church must have a clarified sense of God’s goodness, and equally a concept of
the common good.

In that respect, the church in the region must call the people of the Caribbean to
new values that are Kingdom values. It is by the rejection of the values of those that
have been its masters that the church stands the best chance of responding to the
opportunities provided by history. As I have shown in the previous chapter, the
Caribbean has made itself the clients and in some respects the clones of the
metropolitan centres. It is held captive by its appetite for the goods and services that
originate in those places and has not developed the faith in itself or the capacity to add
value to its own indigenous products. The church can challenge those values and
offer the values of the Kingdom in the midst of Caribbean society. The anxiety to
pursue the lifestyles of the metropolis constantly displayed before the eyes of people
of the region, has diluted the capacity to seek a fair deal for the disadvantaged and
marginalized. Given the limited output in terms of national production, the emphasis ought to be placed on access to public goods of health, education, and a basic standard of living. This may mean limited access to the high value goods that are affordable only by few. At the same time, the duty to God’s creation ought to assist the development of an ethic of stewardship of the resources of nature and of mother earth itself. The church must resist prodigality with the same passion that it resists promiscuity.

Environmental degradation and its consequences on the Caribbean is the outcome of values of prodigality and greed. It is in the transvaluation of values that the church has the best opportunity of saving mother earth and ensuring a viable future for places like the Caribbean. The assumptions of social Darwinism and the demand for hierarchical social stratification have cost the Caribbean dearly. The experiment with inequality, with its income disparities, class and colour discrimination has failed. The human spirit which yearns for freedom, peace and justice has triumphed and the people of the Caribbean are the testament of that fact. The church must challenge the remaining vestiges of inequality in the Caribbean. The congregational life of the church must be a microcosm of the equality that is possible. It must also, by its prophetic witness, safeguard the interest of minorities. Fundamentally it must challenge the idolatry which loves things and uses people. The church must lead the way by placing human beings at the centre, by loving people and using things.

The watchword must be faith in the dignity and humanity of the people of the land. In this respect, the church must lead the way in the pursuit of a just peace. The World Council of Church in the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica that marked the end of the decade to overcome violence, defined
the just peace as: peace in the community, peace among the peoples, peace with the earth and peace in the market place. It is the pursuit of a just peace for the Caribbean that must guide the church in challenging the values and assumptions of the dominant ethos in the Caribbean.

Third, the duty of the church in the public square in the Caribbean requires holism. Holism describes what is required of the church in relation to the Caribbean as a whole: the incarnation of the church in the region begins with its Caribbean Theology. The first duty of holism is ecumenism. The church in the Caribbean must overcome its own disunity. In the public interest it must build upon the gains made of the experiments in ecumenism, including the partnerships for theological education. The inherited differences from places of origin have not inhibited ministries of evangelism and fellowship for joint enterprises. However, the church cannot call for oneness in the Caribbean while it remains divided.

Holism also requires a commitment to the project of Caribbean unity. This includes unity among the peoples with a history of colonization washed by the Caribbean Sea and some by the Atlantic Ocean. There is no reason to perpetuate the inherited divisions which are the markers of the history of colonization. The hope and future of the Caribbean as well as the global South lie in the new partnerships created by new centres of trade and commerce. The monopoly of the North must be broken, for the sake of the poor and the displaced peoples of the South. Therefore this holism which is committed to ecumenism is concerned with the destiny of the human family as a whole.

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The church, therefore, must show its own commitment to the Caribbean and its faith in the equality of the people of the region to their brothers and sisters everywhere. As such, the church must commit itself to giving a voice to the voiceless and a place to the excluded. This means in the Caribbean that it must help the Kalinago people tell the wonderful things of God in their own language. It must begin to make use in its liturgy of the demonized and delegitimized items from the African cultural retention. The ministry and liturgy of the Church must not merely use the language, culture and cultural arts of the region; it must take root among the people and respond to the lived experience of the people.

The Caribbean no longer affords a religion that limits itself to only a part of human life and existence. In this respect, compartmentalization, domestication and privatization of its theology and its message must be rejected and exceeded. Holism requires that the Christian citizen both, lay and clergy, be fully immersed and fully engaged in the society. The Christian citizen of the Caribbean must heed Jeremiah’s instruction given to the exile in Babylon:

Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 29:5–9; NIV)

In the Caribbean, sight is often lost of what is the common good or the national interest. This is something that the church in its un-self-interestedness can secure. This is what it means to seek the welfare of the city, to secure the interest of the
marginalized. In this way, therefore, the church will have an identifiable present, make a discernable difference and be a reliable influence. The church will be a place where those whose sense of self was distorted will be clothed and in their right mind, telling what the Lord has done for them. They will go in peace because they have been made whole by faith and though they were dead they will stand on their feet again.

The church is well positioned to speak the language of covenant to the people of the Caribbean. The people of the Caribbean were *Lo’Ammi* who have become the people for God’s own possession. In this way, the Caribbean people may develop a faith in their inherent value as a people no less than any other people anywhere. The narrative and discourse of the people deserve to be told. The tradition and culture, the folk parables and tales have value. The church therefore must self-consciously cause the people not to hang their harps on willows but to sing a new song, in what is less and less “a strange land.”27

Holism is also in response to the fracturing of self-confidence that has deepened in a context of social stratification and social exclusion. Oppression and self-hate have been internalized. A healing of the attitude to ourselves and those that both look like us and share the experiences of deficits and struggle with us must be experienced through the grace and power of God which have been manifested through Jesus Christ. The Church must be a friend of justice. It must stand in solidarity with the victims of injustice and it must strengthen the courage of those who are prepared to bear witness against the habit of self-mutilating violence. It must call the society to

27 Psalm 137
account for the violence for which no atonement has been made. In a word, the church must lead the way in seeking to build just and responsible societies in the Caribbean region.

The problem of identity to which Caribbean Theology responds does not require a silver bullet. It requires faithfulness to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has given us good news. This good news brought hope to the people in the far flung places of the Roman Empire that Jesus encountered in regions of Judea and Galilee. It was good news to them because through the encounter with Jesus the grace and power of the Kingdom of God were brought to bear upon their lived experience. The disorientation and despair that were the lot and reality of the people of Galilee and Judea are similar to the lot and reality of the people of the Caribbean.

The church, in developing a Caribbean Theology, has the opportunity and challenge to bring healing and hope to the people of the Caribbean. If it is faithful to its mission it stands to be pivotally a part of shaping a new people on behalf of the entire human family from which the people of the Caribbean are drawn. This sense of self will lead to *shalom*. A people set free and at peace with themselves will be to the continued benefit of human development in the region and the wider human family.
Conclusion

The assertion that Caribbean Theology is Public Theology merely introduces the task to be undertaken. The Caribbean is exile which is increasingly being made a homeland for the peoples of the Caribbean. As it is, there is persistent poverty, inequality, distortion of identity and there are the entrails and residue of a long history of Babylonish captivity and the political hegemony of the North Atlantic.

I have argued that, inequality, the crisis of identity and Babylonish Captivity represent an existential challenge that must inform the theological agenda, but it is not the whole story of the Caribbean. The people of the Caribbean have defied and belied their own contextual realities. They have done so both by their resistance against injustice in the face of impossible odds, and by their over performance on the international stage when and where they have had the opportunity to do so. The Caribbean Theology project is built upon the antecedent movement of resistance by the African majority who rejected their enslavement. It is this pressure from below by the faith and indomitability of the people of the land that has created much of what is worthwhile in the Caribbean.

The powers that be decimated the indigenous people, the Tainos, Ciboneys and Kalinago and organised the Caribbean as a laboratory to carry out an experiment in human inequality. The Caribbean survives as it is in defiance of that experiment. At every turn it was resisted. Now, slavery has been overcome and indentureship has been abandoned, but still the gap between the rich and poor is deepening. Poverty, dysfunctionality in the family and irrational violence persist.
I have argued that Caribbean Theology must build upon the quest for justice which guided the struggle of our forebears in the Caribbean. Their emancipatory imagination was buttressed by their reading of the Scriptures. The God they encountered in the Scripture is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of righteousness and justice. The Bible is a book of the people. As people come to the text of Scripture from engagement with their context, analogies of the grace and power of God being brought to bear upon their lived experience will become available to them.

The miracle stories in Mark Chapter 5 were used to illustrate the fact that the world of Roman domination in Galilee and Judea to which Jesus brought the message of the Kingdom of God was very similar to the lived experience of the people of the Caribbean. The story of the Gospel is that Jesus came to that world as the agent of liberation and disarmed and vanquished principalities and powers by the grace and power of the Kingdom of God. Importantly, as with Decapolis, so with the Caribbean, the Legion narrative offers the insight that the real struggle begins not so much before, but after the event of emancipation. It is when Legion is exorcised, and the power of the powerful is challenged that the wheels within the wheels and the glue that holds things together are exposed. It is then that the hidden alliances are exposed and the full fury of the recalcitrant and tyrannical cruelty becomes unsubtle. It is this, therefore, that sets out the framework of the Caribbean Theology project in the Caribbean with the residual inequality, crisis of identity and captivity.
I have argued that the Church in the Caribbean needs to be itself and to give itself. Through the congregational life of the Church, it must provide an identifiable presence, make a discernable difference and become a reliable influence. It must also become a forum for moral discourse which is open to the public and engages the issues of the wider public. In pursuit of the agenda of justice and equality, the church must seek to approximate the ideal and remain a place of advocacy and protest. Caribbean Theology does not therefore envisage a church which is turned upon itself, naval gazing or pre-occupied with matters to do with boundary maintenance. Caribbean Theology seeks to place the Gospel at the crossroads of human experience in the public square.

The triple tasks of the Caribbean Public Theology project are exorcism, iconoclasm and holism. The challenge of confronting idolatry is the most pernicious and the most persistent. It is especially demanding because the Caribbean public theologian is no less vulnerable to the dangers of idolatry than is any one else. This is why there is an openness, tentativeness and open-endedness to the Caribbean Public Theology project. The project is fraught with dangers and difficulties, but the urgency and opportunity for serious and conscientious engagement are also compelling. As I have pointed out, there are some catalytic and symbolic developments, which mean that “they that are with us” may be more than they that are against us. At any rate, it means that this is a time for covenant making before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has promised to be with us to the end of the age. At this time of covenant making before God Caribbean Theology must raise an “Ebenezer” (Up to now the Lord has helped us. I Sam. 7.12); this stone of God’s planting shall ever endure.
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