

From Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment:
Towards a More Effective Response from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's
Global Mission to Mechanistic Dehumanization

by

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

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I arrived in South Africa with no conscious desire to pursue additional postgraduate studies. However, I quickly recognized that Theology & Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal was a wonderful fit, and this initial impulse was confirmed repeatedly (and enthusiastically) with each passing year. As a North American who was graciously hosted in the southern hemisphere for nearly a decade, I remain especially honored to be associated with a *truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past.*

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KEY CONCEPTS

Anesthetic (Mission as Anesthetic): A type of medical treatment that is applied to alleviate pain (analgesia), ease tension (sedate), produce drowsiness (hypnosis), generate absent-mindedness (amnesia), or to make one unconscious for general anesthesia.¹ Anesthetics are most commonly offered by an expert (anesthesiologist or anesthetist) in order to provoke or preserve a state of anesthesia. This study employs *Mission as Anesthetic* as a metaphor to illustrate certain defects in Christian missionary practice across the globe.

Advocacy: An attempt to influence outcomes to enhance the fullness of life. The etymological roots of advocacy (*ad + vocare*, “to call to”) suggest organized efforts and actions meant to authorize and implement legislation, laws, and various forms of public policy.² In contrast to “self-advocacy”³ this study focuses on advocacy aimed at more communal outcomes, such as engagement in the decision making of social institutions, transformation of power relationships, and pursuit of sustainable livelihoods.⁴

Mission as Accompaniment: A theology of mission that promotes journeying together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality. Accompaniment, which is found in the New Testament expression of *koinonia*, is rooted in the God-human relationship in which God accompanies humankind in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.⁵ *Mission as Accompaniment* builds upon formerly held formations of mission, and in doing so, guides mission into a “relational mode”⁶ among global companions that implies “proximity to the walking companion” and “accepting the invitation to accompany the other”.⁷

¹ WebMD, “Topic Overview: Intravenous Anesthetic” (January, 2010) <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/intravenous-iv-anesthetics-topic-overview>.

² Lisa VeneKlasen and Valerie Miller, *A New Weave of Power, People, and Politics: An action guide for policy and citizen participation* (Oklahoma, USA: World Neighbors), 22.

³ Loring C. Brinckerhoff, “Developing Effective Self-Advocacy Skills in College-Bound Students with Learning Disabilities,” *Intervention in School and Clinic* (Vol. 29, No. 4: March, 1994), 229-237.

⁴ David Cohen, *Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide* (Connecticut, USA: Kumarian Press, Inc., 2001), 8.

⁵ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), *Global Mission in the 21st Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God’s Mission* (Chicago: ELCA, 1999), 5.

⁶ Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993); Jerry Aaker, *Partners with the Poor: An Emerging Approach to Relief and Development* (New York: Friendship Press, 1993).

⁷ Rafael Malpica Padilla, “Accompaniment as an Alternative Model for the Practice of Mission,” *Trinity Seminary Review*: Summer/Fall 2008. Volume 29, No: 2 (Trinity Lutheran Seminary: Columbus, Ohio), 88.

Ubuntu: An African concept that affirms the interdependence of humanity for the application, advancement, and actualization of the potential to be persons in community.⁸ While Ubuntu often expresses that “a person is a person through other persons,” Ubuntu also recognizes that “a person only remains healthy in a holistic sense by living in harmony with the whole creation”.⁹ The ecological and economic implications of Ubuntu are that “to be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them”.¹⁰ Ubuntu implies “peaceful co-existence with minerals, plants, and animals”.¹¹

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is one of the largest Christian denominations in North America, with nearly four million members organized in approximately 10,000 congregations. The ELCA Global Mission cultivates the ELCA’s engagement with the world. Alongside its various global companions, the ELCA Global Mission sponsors the service of over 240 ELCA missionaries in more than 40 countries, facilitates companion synod relationships, offers educational funding, and seeks to embody pioneering methods for participation in God’s mission around the world.

Mechanistic Dehumanization: As described by Nick Haslam, “...the objectifying denial of essentially human attributes to people toward whom the person feels psychologically distant and socially unrelated. It is often accompanied by indifference, a lack of empathy, an abstract and deindividuated view of others that indicates an implicit horizontal separation from self, and a tendency to explain the other’s behavior in nonintentional, causal terms”.¹²

The Olive Agenda: As first articulated by Steve de Gruchy, the Olive Agenda uses a theological metaphor – the olive – that transcends the duality between the “green” environmental agenda and “brown” poverty agenda that has undermined religious and

⁸ Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2010), 3-4

⁹ Bénédet Bujo, “Ecology and Ethical Responsibility from an African Perspective”, in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Ed.), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 281.

¹⁰ Mogobe B. Ramose, “Ecology through Ubuntu”, in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Ed.), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 308.

¹¹ Bujo, 281.

¹² Nick Haslam, “Dehumanization: An Integrative View”, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, (2006, Vol. 10, No. 3.), 262.

political dialogue for numerous decades. An Olive Agenda unites and engages that which political and religious dialogue too often ignores and divides: Earth, environment, employment, households, nourishment, wellbeing, food security, impoverishment, Empire, and warfare and recognizes that while both brown and green agendas are essentially right, taken in isolation “each is tragically wrong”.¹³

Neoliberalism: A theoretical conception that seeks to liberate entrepreneurial freedoms and skills through a framework committed to “strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade”.¹⁴ The primary function of government is to establish and empower structures suitable to achieve such an agenda. Since government does not possess enough insight to critique market indicators, government involvement in financial markets must be radically limited. If it is not limited, influential political lobbies will eventually mislead and prejudice state intervention (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit. The world has experienced a forceful turn toward neoliberal practices since the 1970s.

Empire: As articulated by Joerg Rieger, “mass concentrations of power that permeate all aspects of life and cannot be controlled by any one actor alone... Empire seeks to extend its control as far as possible; not only geographically, politically, and economically – these factors are commonly recognized – but also intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, culturally, and religiously...”¹⁵ As this study shows, empire tends to establish forms of hierarchical control that exploit and conquer those under its control, which prevents those within its reach from pursuing alternative purposes.

¹³ Steve de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda: First Thoughts on a Metaphorical Theology of Development”, *The Ecumenical Review*: Volume 59, Issue 2-3 (April-July, 2007), 336.

¹⁴ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

¹⁵ Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 2-3.

ABSTRACT

Mechanistic dehumanization is “*the objectifying denial of essentially human attributes to people toward whom the person feels psychologically distant and socially unrelated*” (Haslam, 2006). This condition is a source and sustainer of mass production, an excess of consumption, and the pursuit of unrestrained economic growth, damaging both people and the planet. This study considers how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission can more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization.

Mission as Accompaniment emerges from both Latin American theology and development methodology; it involves “*walking together in solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality*” (ELCA, 1999) and is thus viewed in this study as a suitable starting point for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission response to mechanistic dehumanization.

This study argues that *Mission as Accompaniment* has not yet offered an adequate response to mechanistic dehumanization. It argues further that two additional elements – the African concept of *Ubuntu*, and an *Olive Agenda* – when integrated into *Mission as Accompaniment*, will better equip the ELCA Global Mission to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction¹

Christian global missionary movements began with Christianity itself.² Yet historical longevity should not generate analytical apathy, especially since Christian mission has too often contributed to tragic expressions of dehumanization.³ “Global mission” must be reconsidered in order to promote reconciliation, transformation, and empowerment.⁴ In doing so, I seek to offer a contribution to a distinctive and important body of knowledge that reimagines mission in the postcolonial world.⁵ In doing so, this study aims to provide a more fully developed perspective on *Mission as Accompaniment* that can more effectively resist a particular form of dehumanization, known as *mechanistic dehumanization*.

The sections that follow provide an overview of the context, rationale, motivation, theological considerations, hypothesis, key questions, and objectives for this study.

¹ Throughout the process of this research venture, I simultaneously wrote a number of articles that included my emerging thoughts, many of which originated from this introductory chapter. In specifics, a significant amount of Chapter One in this study was shared with The Southern African Missiological Society’s (SAMS) Annual Congress (2012), and subsequently with “Lutherans Restoring Creation” at the invitation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). See: Brian E. Konkol, “From Anesthetic to Advocate through Accompaniment: Mission with an Olive Agenda in Response to Global Empire” (Unpublished Paper, Presentation to the Southern African Missiological Society Annual Congress, at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, South Africa (January 19, 2012); Brian E. Konkol, “Anesthetics and Advocates Below the Poverty Line” Sojourners’ God’s Politics Blog (April 29, 2013) <https://sojo.net/articles/anesthetics-and-advocates-below-poverty-line>.

² David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1991), 1.

³ R.S. Sugirtharajah (Editor), *The Postcolonial Bible* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Rogata Mshana, “Economic and Ecological Justice: Challenging Mission in the 21st Century”, Desmond van der Water (Editor), *Postcolonial Mission: Power and Partnership in World Christianity*, (California: Sopher Press, 2011), 177.

⁴ Throughout this study the terminology of “global” and “world” as missiological expressions will be employed interchangeably. See: Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 22. The language of “reconciliation, transformation, and empowerment is inspired by: Lutheran World Federation, *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, and Empowerment* (Geneva, Department for Mission and Development, 2004).

⁵ At a time when a growing number of mainline and progressive scholars have turned away from missiological investigation, this study is deeply indebted to the groundbreaking work of Marion Grau. *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society and Subversion* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2011).

1.2 Context and Rationale of Study

*“When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said, ‘Let us pray.’ We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land”.*⁶

An anesthetic is a medical treatment that is applied to alleviate pain (analgesia), ease tension (sedate), produce drowsiness (hypnosis), generate absent-mindedness (amnesia), or to make one unconscious for general anesthesia.⁷ Anesthetics are most commonly offered by an expert (anesthesiologist or anesthetist) in order to provoke or preserve a state of anesthesia. *Mission as Anesthetic* is a striking metaphor to illustrate certain defects in Christian mission as practiced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, whose employment of global mission has sometimes been used to induce various forms of unconsciousness.⁸ This in turn has created substantial openings for those in positions of global authority to more successfully conduct social, financial, emotional, environmental, academic, mental, religious, and spiritual procedures at the expense of local mission companions.⁹

As a U.S. citizen who was hosted in the southern hemisphere for nearly a decade, I receive the metaphor of Mission as Anesthetic as both unnerving and informative.¹⁰ With noteworthy likeness to Karl Marx’s frequently-stated testimonial of religious practice as an opiate of the masses, Mission as Anesthetic strives to temporarily weaken the aches and pains of the life that is with a full concentration on the so-called life to come.¹¹ In doing so, it fails to address or heal the sources of current-day distress or offer means for transformation and empowerment. Mission as Anesthetic helps those in power to exploit and conquer, because it offers temporary pain alleviation, sedation, drowsiness, absent-mindedness, and unconsciousness, and therefore ignores the sources of affliction. As a tool of the oppressor,

⁶ Steven Gish, *Desmond Tutu: A Biography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood: 2004), 101. One must recognize that alternative renditions of this statement exist, which are by no means original to Desmond Tutu.

⁷ WebMD, “Topic Overview: Intravenous Anesthetic” (January, 2010) <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/intravenous-iv-anesthetics-topic-overview>.

⁸ As far as I am aware, *Mission as Anesthetic* as a metaphorical image of missionary engagement is original to this study. If I am mistaken, my apologies are extended to those who deserve credit for its usage. The “particular deficiencies” that inspire *Mission as Anesthetic* will be expressed later in this study.

⁹ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 2-3.

¹⁰ Guyana, South America (2003-2004, 2005-2007) and South Africa (2008-2012).

¹¹ “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people”. Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 127.

Mission as Anesthetic prevents a comprehensive cognizance of reality, and in doing so restricts the prospects of those “under pressure” to see, judge, and act.¹²

1.3 Theoretical Considerations

The following sections will highlight a number of theoretical considerations that will inform this study: Mission as Accompaniment, Mechanistic Dehumanization, the Olive Agenda, and *Ubuntu*.

1.3.1 Mission as Accompaniment

Mission as Accompaniment offers an alternative to *Mission as Anesthetic* and other inadequate conceptions of global missionary engagement. Whereas Mission as Anesthetic seeks to offer sedation in the face of injustice, Mission as Accompaniment raises awareness and calls for a strong commitment of advocacy, conversation, and mutual conversion grounded in solidarity. Mission as Accompaniment serves as the primary theoretical framework for this study.

In 1999 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Division for Global Mission (ELCA-DGM)¹³ approved Mission as Accompaniment¹⁴ through its organizational document *Global Mission in the 21st Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God’s Mission*.¹⁵ Mission as Accompaniment, which finds origins in Latin American liberation theology¹⁶ and

¹² While many speak of “the underprivileged” and/or “at risk” individuals and/or communities, such distinctions too often place blame on the individuals and/or communities themselves, which in turn lead to a lack of critique in regards to the structures that place them in such situations. As a result, this study will utilize “under pressure” to categorize those who are under pressure of meeting basic human needs. See: Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, 34.

¹³ The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Division for Global Mission (ELCA-DGM) would later change its name to Global Mission (GM). This change occurred on February 1, 2006 when the ELCA reorganized and all “divisions” became “units”, and “boards” became “program committees”.

¹⁴ While *Global Mission in the 21st Century* does not use the specific phrase “Mission as Accompaniment”, it will be utilized throughout this research, rather than the term “accompaniment”, which was employed in the original *Global Mission in the 21st Century* document. Among other things, the reason for such an action is the continued debate within the ELCA about whether or not “accompaniment” is a theology for mission, a mission methodology, a missiology, etc. The particular wording of Mission as Accompaniment will be used in this study to honor this ongoing debate, but also to clarify and contribute toward the dialogue.

¹⁵ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), *Global Mission in the 21st Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God’s Mission*, (Chicago: ELCA, 1999).

¹⁶ Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993). While Goizueta’s text was published following the ELCA’s initial

development methodology,¹⁷ was viewed as “walking together in solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality”.¹⁸ Among other things, Mission as Accompaniment called upon the ELCA and its various global companions to:

- 1) Affirm the diversity of viewpoints that exist among churches, 2) Encourage companions to question and analyze priorities and practices of one another, 3) Be transparent and engage in honest and sincere dialogue, 4) Move beyond traditional relationships of the past between North to South and South to South, 5) Involve churches and agencies affected by decisions in decision-making processes, and 6) Acknowledge that churches in both the South and North will be in solidarity with one another in their weaknesses, struggles, and mission.¹⁹

Since its initial adoption, Mission as Accompaniment has served as the key conceptual framework for the ELCA to engage its global church companions.

This study is not my first academic exploration of Mission as Accompaniment, as I completed Masters-level research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the thesis, “*Mission Possible? Power, Truth-Telling, and the Pursuit of Mission as Accompaniment*”.²⁰ With the supervisory guidance of Steve de Gruchy and Gerald West, and the programmatic leadership of Beverly Haddad, the thesis investigated how global mission companionships could overcome power imbalance through Mission as Accompaniment that embodies “walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality for the purpose of converting connections”.²¹ Using James C. Scott’s notion of hidden transcripts and their

discussions surrounding the adoption of mission as accompaniment, it highlights the Latin American theological origins that informed those involved.

¹⁷ While historians, theologians, and countless missionaries have contributed to the development of Mission as Accompaniment through analysis and critique of past activities, Pedro Véliz and his colleagues in the Andean Regional Office of Lutheran World Relief (LWR-ARO) are credited with the original development of accompaniment as a model for practical implementation. As a result of Véliz’s insights, the accompaniment model not only informs operations in the LWR Andean Region, but now guides LWR’s functions across the globe. Pedro Véliz’s colleague, Jerry Aaker, would later highlight the methodology of accompaniment in *Partners with the Poor: An Emerging Approach to Relief and Development* (New York: Friendship Press, 1993).

¹⁸ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

¹⁹ The six points mentioned are found in: ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

²⁰ Brian E. Konkol, *Mission Possible? Power, Truth-Telling, and the Pursuit of Mission as Accompaniment*, (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 2011).

²¹ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 146.

relationship to Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA, the thesis explored the future of global mission, dialogue, and resistance to domination.

The “Mission Possible?” dissertation covered an assortment of theorists and practitioners.²² While this diversity of input led to a thorough study, the review process of “Mission Possible?” showed a need to build upon the foundation provided and further develop the notion of “converting connections” that stemmed from Steve de Gruchy’s “Being Connected: Engaging in Effective World Mission”.²³ Specifically, “Mission Possible?” considered Mission as Accompaniment as a way to “convert connections” from oppression to dignity through interpersonal relationships. However, as Roderick Hewitt offered in his review, there was a strong need for continued in-depth study, as:

...the absence of analysis on economic justice as a key indicator of this accompaniment raises questions...To assume that structures of domination may change because of improved personal relationships between the participants is naïve because the oppression is deeply embedded within the economic structures that benefit the powerful few.²⁴

Participants at the Southern African Missiological Society’s (SAMS) Annual Congress, where I presented a summary of my findings, echoed Hewitt’s suggestions regarding more in-depth structural analysis.²⁵ Buoyed by this feedback, encouragement, and affirmation, I decided to focus more intently on economic systems. This in turn led me to a more focused

²² Some of the more influential were: James R. Cochrane, *Circles of Dignity: Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999); Paul Germond, “Theology, Development and Power: Religious Power and Development Practice”, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 110 (July 2001); William R. Herzog, II, *Jesus, Justice, and the Reign of God: A Ministry of Liberation*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000); Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra River (Editors), *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice, 2004); Kwok Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2005).

²³ Steve De Gruchy, “Being Connected: Engaging in Effective World Mission”, unpublished. (Episcopal Conference: *Everyone, Everywhere*. Baltimore, Maryland: June 2008).

²⁴ As a result of this feedback received from Roderick Hewitt (2011), I explore the following resources: Pamela Brubaker and Rogate Mshana (Editors) *Justice not Greed* (Geneva, WCC Publications, 2010); Ulrich Duchrow, *Global Capitalism: A Confessional Issue for the Churches?* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987); Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London: Allen Lane, 2007); John Cobb, *Sustaining the Common Good: A Christian Perspective on the Global Economy* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1994).

²⁵ Due to the critiques received at the SAMS Annual Congress, I examined the following: John Cavanagh and Jerry Manders (Editors), *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World is Possible. 2nd Edition* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004); Jay McDaniel, *Living from the Center: Spirituality in an Age of Consumerism* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000); E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

advocacy-driven approach within the larger context of Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA Global Mission.

This study will argue that Mission as Accompaniment *in its current form*, while effectively highlighting the need for respectful global companionship between churches, also requires direction and accountability for global companions to unite around key issues. Without this further development, Mission as Accompaniment risks becoming a form of Mission as Anesthetic that merely hides the deep structural sources of pain while failing to take the risks of mutuality necessary for significant correction and sustained rehabilitation.

1.3.2 Mechanistic Dehumanization

Mission as Accompaniment requires a more advocacy-driven approach, with “advocacy” viewed as the attempt to influence outcomes to enhance the fullness of life. In contrast to the relatively new notions of “self-advocacy”²⁶ the advocacy of accompaniment seeks more communal and reciprocal outcomes, such as opportunity to engage in the strategic direction of social organizations and institutions, transformation in the imbalances of influence, and the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods.²⁷ A principal reason that Mission as Accompaniment requires a more focused advocacy-driven approach is the scientifically confirmed reality that the Earth has surpassed its natural resource capacity.²⁸

The current global economic model – a Neoliberal Capitalism driven by the world’s most powerful nations²⁹ – of mass production, over-consumption, and the irresponsible pursuit of unlimited growth, drives the Earth in the direction of substantial and irreversible concentrations of destruction.³⁰ In addition to the worrisome ecological realities, Neoliberal Capitalism also generates colossal levels of economic discrimination and impoverishment,

²⁶ Loring C. Brinkerhoff, “Developing Effective Self-Advocacy Skills in College-Bound Students with Learning Disabilities” *Intervention in School and Clinic* (Vol. 29, No. 4: March, 1994), 229-237.

²⁷ Cohen, 8.

²⁸ Paul Gilding, *The Great Disruption: How the Climate Crisis Will Transform the Global Economy* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 162.

²⁹ John Williamson's "Washington Consensus" is often regarded as the definitive statement of policies advocated by neoliberalism. See: John Williamson, "What Washington Means by Policy Reform" in John Williamson, ed. *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1990).

³⁰ Kristen Dow and Thomas E. Downing, *An Atlas of Climate Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010).

such that the majority of earth's human inhabitants endure the cruel costs while others acquire the pleasing benefits.³¹ These significant challenges underscore the urgent need for Mission as Accompaniment to guide the ELCA and its companions to respond more effectively to Neoliberal Capitalism.

This study argues that *dehumanization* is both a source *and* sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism's presence and persistence. More specifically, *mechanistic dehumanization* as portrayed by Nick Haslam uncovers an outlook that is directly linked with particular social structures – such as Neoliberal Capitalism – that remove the core values of human dignity. As Haslam further claims, *mechanistic dehumanization* contains:

...the objectifying denial of essentially human attributes to people toward whom the person feels psychologically distant and socially unrelated. It is often accompanied by indifference, a lack of empathy, an abstract and deindividuated view of others that indicates an implicit horizontal separation from self, and a tendency to explain the other's behavior in nonintentional, causal terms.³²

In order to further clarify mechanistic dehumanization, Haslam argues that one must first consider the nature and characteristics associated with being human. He proposes that *uniquely human* (UH) characteristics and *human nature* (HN) can be considered as categories to distinguish humanness in relationship to non-humans. UH are characteristics that “define the boundary that separates humans from the related category of animals,” and HN are normative or fundamental characteristics “that are typical of or central to humans”.³³ These categories form a basis for his view on mechanistic dehumanization, which “occurs when the characteristics that constitute [UH and HN] are denied to people”.³⁴ Chapter Two of this study further examines UH and HN as groundwork for Haslam's notions of mechanistic dehumanization, and the key to understanding the context of Neoliberal Capitalism, ecological destruction, inequality, and poverty.

³¹ Gwynee Dyer, *Climate Wars: The Fight for Survival as the World Overheats* (London: Oneworld, 2011).

³² Nick Haslam, 262.

³³ Haslam, 256.

³⁴ Ibid.

Mission as Accompaniment is a useful starting point for responding to mechanistic dehumanization,³⁵ for it has been shown to be a corrective to power imbalances that increase the likelihood of mechanistic dehumanization.³⁶ Mission as Accompaniment can therefore undermine mechanistic dehumanization. Reduced power disparities may also lead to a reduction in ecological destruction, inequality, and poverty. While this study will focus primarily upon the relationship between Mission as Accompaniment and mechanistic dehumanization, it is worth noting that the potential for further study and missiological development surrounding this area of research is both exciting and significant.

1.3.3 Olive Agenda

Insofar as Mission as Accompaniment *in its current form* fails to connect ecology and economics, it can be argued that the ELCA Global Mission does not fully consider the impact of Neoliberal Capitalism upon ecological destruction, inequality, and poverty. In this regard, the insights of Steve de Gruchy in promoting an “Olive Agenda” are fundamentally critical.³⁷ To begin with, de Gruchy provides a theological metaphor – the olive – that rises above the divide between “green” environmental agendas and “brown” poverty agendas that have existed within the ELCA and other church organizations for the past decades.³⁸ In doing so, an Olive Agenda unites and engages that which political and religious dialogue too often ignores and divides: Earth, environment, employment, households, nourishment, wellbeing, food security, impoverishment, Empire, and warfare.³⁹ While an Olive Agenda already contributes to the abundance of scholarship on economics and ecology, it has yet to be utilized for Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA Global Mission. In order to provide Mission as Accompaniment with a greater degree of direction, a remarkable prospect opens

³⁵ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 146.

³⁶ Joris Lammers and Diederik A. Stapel, “Power increases Dehumanization”, *Group Processes Intergroup Relations* (January, 2010, Vol 14, No. 1), 113-126.

³⁷ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 333-345. While some may limit de Gruchy’s “Olive Agenda” to the articles written with the specific vocabulary of “Olive Agenda” in the text, this paper will argue that an Olive Agenda encompasses a wide variety of writings from de Gruchy throughout his academic career.

³⁸ The ELCA has published Social Statements on ecology (<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Environment.aspx>) and economics (<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Economic-Life.aspx>), but has since failed to recognize the connections between the two in a more synthesized effort. As a result, one can persuasively argue that the “green” and “brown” agendas of the ELCA compete for funding, thus making both agendas less effective.

³⁹ Steve de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda: First Thoughts on a Metaphorical Theology of Development”, *The Ecumenical Review*: Volume 59, Issue 2-3 (April-July, 2007), 336.

for the ELCA Global Mission to use an Olive Agenda as a *missiological trajectory* for a more effective response to mechanistic dehumanization.

1.3.4 Ubuntu

In addition to a more focused direction, Mission as Accompaniment also requires an indicator of human accountability in order to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization. In using the phrase “indicator of accountability”, this study seeks a theoretical and humanistic mirror that indicates whether or not the missiological trajectory keeps its (human) practitioners accountable to (and responsible for) the fullness of all life. As inspired by Marion Grau, this study seeks to consider:

...how one might continue to stretch and integrate the wisdom and insight of many more interpreters and interpretive communities, without assimilating, conquering, accessorizing, romanticizing, or instrumentalizing these readings.⁴⁰

Here the African concept of Ubuntu, generally rendered into English as “a person is a person through other persons,”⁴¹ is very fruitful. While it could be argued that Ubuntu has been overused and misused in the African context and beyond,⁴² the notion is relatively unknown globally – and especially within the theological and missiological context of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.⁴³ Furthermore, because Mission as Accompaniment finds its origins within Latin American liberation theology, and because the ELCA is physically located within North America and historically grounded in the European theology of Martin Luther, the notion of Ubuntu provides a much-needed African viewpoint. In total, exploring

⁴⁰ Marion Grau. *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society and Subversion* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2011), 7.

⁴¹ Mluleki Munyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Ed.), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 281.

⁴² Mluleki Michael Ntutuzelo Mnyaka, “Xenophobia as a Response to Foreigners in Post-Apartheid South Africa and Post-Exilic Israel: A Comparative Critique in the Light of the Gospel and Ubuntu Ethical Principles”, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2003).

⁴³ The term “Ubuntu” is becoming known globally on an increasing level, not because of its African philosophical roots, but as an increasingly popular GNU/Linux based computer operating system that is offered to the public free of charge. Ubuntu is sponsored by the UK-based company Canonical Ltd., and is owned by South African entrepreneur Mark Shuttleworth. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.ubuntu.com/>

“the divinity, earth, and its inhabitants, can function as an expansion and corrective to the categories and history” of Mission as Accompaniment.⁴⁴

Much attention has been paid to the anthropological character of Ubuntu; however, recent studies have also shown its ecological and economical relevance.⁴⁵ While Ubuntu expresses that a person is most fully a person through relationships with other people, the concept also recognizes that “a person only remains healthy in a holistic sense by living in harmony with the whole creation”.⁴⁶ The ecological and economic implications of Ubuntu are that “to be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them,”⁴⁷ and incorporates a “peaceful co-existence with minerals, plants, and animals”.⁴⁸ This study will argue that Ubuntu can serve as an effective indicator of accountability alongside the missiological trajectory of an Olive Agenda for Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA.

1.4 Primary Research Question & Overview of Study

With the aforementioned opening thoughts and theoretical considerations in mind, the primary research question for this study is as follows:

How can *Mission as Accompaniment* guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission to respond more effectively alongside its global church companions to mechanistic dehumanization?

In order to address the primary research question, the following chapter of this study will examine and critique the nature and consequences of mechanistic dehumanization, with specific attention given toward its relation to Neoliberal Capitalism, ecological destruction,

⁴⁴ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 7.

⁴⁵ Puleng LenkaBula, “Beyond Anthropocentricity – Botho/Ubuntu and the Quest for Economic and Ecological Justice in Africa”, *Religion and Theology*, (Vol. 16, Numbers 3-4, 2008), 375-394; Munyaradzi Felix Murove, “The Shona concept of Ukama and the process philosophical concept of relatedness, with special reference to the ethical implication of the contemporary neo-liberal economic practices”, Unpublished Masters Thesis, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal, 1999); M.B. Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, (Harare: Mond Books, 1999); J. Maree and L. Mbigi, *Ubuntu: The Spirit of Transformation Management*, (Pretoria: Knowledge Resources, 1995); Barbara Nussbaum, “African culture and Ubuntu: A South African’s reflections in America”, *World Business Academy Perspectives* (17:1, 1999).

⁴⁶ Bujo, 281.

⁴⁷ Ramose, “Ecology through Ubuntu”, 308.

⁴⁸ Bujo, 281.

inequality, and poverty. The purpose of Chapter Two is to explicate mechanistic dehumanization, focusing especially on the work of Nick Haslam.

Chapter Three will examine and critique Mission as Accompaniment in its current form, using *Global Mission in the 21st Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God's Mission* as a foundational resource. *Global Mission in the 21st Century* continues to function as the primary text for policies and procedures of ELCA Global Mission; examining it closely will suggest whether or not this guiding document is poised to help the ELCA respond effectively to mechanistic dehumanization. Chapter Three aims to explicate Mission as Accompaniment to examine its application in the ELCA Global Mission, and using the work of Rafael Malpica Padilla and others, to consider ways to build upon Mission as Accompaniment and shift the focus of ELCA Global Mission's engagement surrounding mechanistic dehumanization.

In Chapter Four, the study will explore Steve de Gruchy's "Olive Agenda" as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment.⁴⁹ In addition to utilizing de Gruchy's portfolio of research and publications that form an Olive Agenda, the chapter will also include research produced by his students, colleagues, and others – both historical and contemporary – that oppose and affirm such thoughts on an Olive Agenda. The purpose of Chapter Four is to further develop an Olive Agenda, consider its available resources, and distinguish its potential appropriation as missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment, so that the ELCA Global Mission may respond more fully to mechanistic dehumanization.

Within Chapter Five, the study examines the concept of Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment. The chapter will give specific attention toward the work of feminist theologian Puleng LenkaBula. The purpose of Chapter Five is to utilize Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, so that the ELCA Global Mission may respond more fully to mechanistic dehumanization. The chapter explores the work of key supporters and critics of Ubuntu, available resources of Ubuntu, and the potential relationship of Ubuntu to an Olive Agenda and Mission as Accompaniment.

⁴⁹ de Gruchy, "An Olive Agenda", 333-345.

Chapter Six provides a response to the primary research question: “*How can Mission as Accompaniment guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission to respond more effectively alongside its global church companions to mechanistic dehumanization?*” And finally, the objective of Chapter Seven is to provide a summary with relevant conclusions, many of which center upon developing a *conversion of connections* through a Conversation/Connection Model.

1.5 Motivation for Study

The recent history of theological exploration has witnessed a marginalization of missiological study.⁵⁰ Over the course of recent decades, numerous people of Christian faith, tormented because of embarrassment and responsibility surrounding the dehumanizing features of missionary history, collectively assume that modern forms of global mission must not push beyond the non-profit service organizations they often sponsor and staff. As a result, there currently appears to be few opportunities to offer a Christian missiology that “gives account to the full complexity of the laments and losses”, the theological paradoxes and economic pressures, as well as the opportunities for what God may be making new.⁵¹ In addition, because of a desire not to replicate “colonial exploitation, the export of Western mores and capitalism, conservative proselytizing, divisive hate speech against sexual minorities, and the preaching of prosperity,” far too many propose a retreat to isolationist tendencies, as if ecclesial seclusion and missionary solitude were a viable and worthwhile solution. The motivation for this study begins, first and foremost, with the conviction that missiology matters, *especially* in the postcolonial world, and there must be ways to reconsider global mission for the sake of reconciliation, transformation, and empowerment.

In order to more effectively shift from *Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment* – an accountable trajectory this study seeks to investigate – one must acknowledge that matters of economics and ecology are clear and important matters of Christian faith. These areas of concern engage the foundation of God’s dreams for the human community and all that exists, as God unfailingly demands the transformation of all systems that are irresponsible and unjust, most notably when there is a negative impact upon the poor

⁵⁰ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 32.

⁵¹ Ibid.

and marginalized. As the conventions, forces, and consequences of Neoliberal Capitalism stand in direct contrast to God's mission, such matters must matter for people of Christian faith, if we are committed to actually practicing what we preach.⁵² Therefore, if Mission as Anesthetic provides an escape from the world, Mission as Accompaniment conjures a call for the human community to engage with and through the world, not merely to temporarily dampen the suffering of the world, but to advocate for longer-term peace-building and equity throughout the world.

A move from *Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment* challenges many throughout the global community of faith and learning, among them:

- Those who have deliberately and strategically misappropriated the Gospel to manipulate others for economic gain;
- Those who argue that matters of faith should not be concerned with matters of ecology and/or economics;
- Those who marginalize or surrender the study of missiology;
- Those who claim that Neoliberal Capitalism is far too large and overpowering to be examined, let alone countered;
- Those who express resistance with mere words, yet continue to receive benefits from the fruits of the exploitative system.⁵³

A move *From Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment* can more effectively empower the prophetic proclamation and courageous resistance currently needed among people of faith. In light of the various economic and ecological challenges facing the world, there is no such thing as neutrality, thus a more focused and accountable engagement is necessary. A movement *From Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission Accompaniment* can incite people of Christian faith – especially within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Global Mission – to more fully engage in God's global mission, proclaim who God is, and more fully witness to how God is present and participating in the world today.

⁵² Lutheran World Federation (LWF), "Engaging Economic Globalization as a Communion: A working paper of the Lutheran World Federation", (Geneva: Department for Theology and Studies, 2001), 25.

⁵³ Ibid.

A shift *From Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment* provides a clear and prophetic call to action for people of faith, yet such a movement also reveals the variety of ways that the long-established boundaries between giver and receiver are drastically smeared and even removed. Along these lines, while the implementation of anesthetics and the engagement of advocacy are often viewed as that which someone does to and/or for someone else, Mission as Accompaniment shows that both are carried out in solidarity, thus all engaged in the companionship are at the same time givers and receivers.⁵⁴ Those who intend to cloud and reduce the worldly awareness of others are in turn decreasingly aware of their own reality, detached from relationships, and in their struggle to dehumanize others are in turn not fully who God first created them to be.⁵⁵ On the other hand, those in the human community who accompany others are, in turn, accompanied by others, more connected as engaged participants in God's global mission, and thus living more fully as recipients of what God first created humankind to be.⁵⁶ As Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote in *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*:

In a real sense all life is inter-related. All persons are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the inter-related structure of reality.⁵⁷

Mission as Accompaniment accepts and engages the “network of mutuality” and “single garment of destiny” that seeks to resist and obstruct any influence or power that aims to dehumanize. In doing so, Mission as Accompaniment affirms that any amount of injustice anywhere is indeed an injustice everywhere, but it does not only pay attention to the negative narratives of mission, nor does it only consider traditional “sending” bodies while in turn disregarding the agency of local companions. Mission as Accompaniment recognizes that the dehumanization of anyone dehumanizes everyone everywhere, it offers a collaborative

⁵⁴ Jonathan Barnes, *Partnership in Christian Mission: A History of the Protestant Missionary Movement*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal: South Africa, 2010).

⁵⁵ “Individuals manifesting qualities of individualism and selfishness, or lack of caring are described as *akanabuntu* (lacking Ubuntu) or *akangomntu, ha se motho* (not a person, not human)”. See: Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 71.

⁵⁶ “The value and dignity of persons is best realized in relationship with others. One cannot be a human being alone, only in community”. Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 68.

⁵⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1994).

alternative to those initiatives that irresponsibly place material wealth above human dignity and ecological fidelity, and in turn aims to undermine all that diminishes the fullness of life that God promises for all that exists.

1.6 Summary

The study that follows this introductory chapter will argue that ecological destruction, inequality, and poverty are massive global issues that must be addressed with urgency and sustained energy. In addition, this research will detail that Neoliberal Capitalism is a systematic source of ecological harm, economic discrimination, and impoverishment. Furthermore, this study will argue that mechanistic dehumanization is both a key source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism. The chapters that follow will both utilize and critique resources found within Mission as Accompaniment in order to develop a more effective response to mechanistic dehumanization. Integrating an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory and Ubuntu as indicator of accountability, I propose to offer a more robust version of Mission as Accompaniment. I expect that this endeavor may provide an effective resource for ELCA Global Mission and its global companions in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

CHAPTER 2: MECHANISTIC DEHUMANIZATION

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One stated that a primary reason for Mission as Accompaniment to develop a more focused direction and indicator of accountability is the scientifically confirmed reality that the Earth has surpassed its natural resource capacity.¹ The human community consumes at a rate that far exceeds the speed that resources can be renewed. While many reasons are given for such an alarming ecological situation, a significant level of research has shown that the current global economic model – a Neoliberal Capitalism driven by the world’s most powerful nations – of mass production, an excess of consumption, and the pursuit of unrestrained economic growth, are key contributors that drive the Earth toward such massive levels of damage.² On top of such disturbing environmental issues, Neoliberal Capitalism also creates massive levels of economic discrimination and extreme impoverishment, with billions of people enduring the painful aftermath while others receiving the profits. This chapter will argue that what Nick Haslam calls “mechanistic dehumanization” is both a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism, therefore Mission as Accompaniment needs to equip and guide the ELCA Global Mission to offer a more life-giving alternative response.

Instead of delving into the massive complexities and existing research surrounding Neoliberal Capitalism and its relationship to ecological destruction, inequality, and poverty, this chapter will focus more specifically on a particular source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism, known as *mechanistic dehumanization*. As described by Nick Haslam, mechanistic dehumanization uncovers a psychological approach that is directly related to systemic processes that strip others of life and dignity.³ While this chapter will offer a brief assessment of Neoliberal Capitalism and build upon previous work surrounding notions of dehumanization, the primary aim is to show mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism. In doing so, this chapter seeks to open a space to further consider Mission as Accompaniment in relationship to mechanistic dehumanization for later chapters of this study.

¹ Paul Gilding, *The Great Disruption: How the Climate Crisis Will Transform the Global Economy* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 162.

² John T. Houghton, *Global Warming: 3rd Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³ Haslam, 252.

2.2 Neoliberalism in the United States of America

In order to articulate the relationship between Neoliberal Capitalism and mechanistic dehumanization (and later appropriate Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization), this section will offer a brief review of Neoliberalism in its modern context in the United States of America (USA). Neoliberalism, which has deep intellectual and historical roots, has evolved and spread through generations of colonialism and slave trades in various locations around the world.⁴ This chapter will focus more specifically on the contemporary economic policies and ideologies of Neoliberalism in the United States of America, and in doing so, consider mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer.

While one can provide a wide range of definitions to best articulate the primary characteristics and aims of Neoliberalism, its essential rules are rather concise:

...liberalize trade and finance, let markets set price (“get prices right”), and inflation (“macroeconomic stability”), privatize. The government should “get out of the way” – hence the population too, insofar as the government is democratic, though the conclusion remains implicit.⁵

When seeking to more fully understand Neoliberal Capitalism, the USA is a justifiable point of focus, as the majority of protests garnered in response to economic globalization have repeatedly condemned the United States for the bulk of Neoliberal Capitalist offenses.⁶ As stated by diplomatic historian Gerald Haines, during the aftermath of the second World War, the United States took charge for the wellbeing of the global economic structure.⁷ While a more extensive review of Neoliberalism would include its historical and intellectual roots over the course of numerous generations and locations, for the purposes of this study

⁴ Pedro Castellano-Masias, “Neoliberal Slavery and the Imperial Connection”, (Unpublished paper presented to the International Critical Management Studies Conference, 2009), 1.

⁵ Noam Chomsky and Robert W. McChesney, *Profit over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999), 19.

⁶ Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe (Editors), *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), 2.

⁷ Chomsky and McChesney, *Profit over People*, 20.

Neoliberalism will be considered from the more focused perspective of a post-Great Depression United States of America.⁸

Neoliberalism in the USA context began in the 1930s with the so-called “Great Depression,” and its impact in the decades since have proven to be nothing short of extraordinary.⁹ Pre-Great Depression capitalism within the USA grew through increased production and decreased wages, and as a result, the economic structure led to widening inequality. The increased inability among families to purchase goods led to an abundance of unconsumed goods.¹⁰ In response to the ensuing crisis, the British economist John Maynard Keynes argued that governments (such as the USA) should seek to become more involved in the regulation of capitalism. The impact of Keynes upon the future of economic structures was – and continues to be – massive.¹¹

Keynes’ argument spearheaded a transformation within mainstream economic thought, as he helped to overturn commonly held assumptions that so-called “free” (unregulated) markets would routinely offer broad-range employment as long as employees were “flexible” in their income needs.¹² Among other things, Keynes argued that through low unemployment, an increase of wages, and a larger consumer demand for basic goods, the government would be able to pledge consistent economic growth and communal wellbeing – a brand of bargain among capital and labor that could prevent future volatility.¹³ While Keynes had numerous critics (partially because he was not a USA citizen, but British),¹⁴ his influence as a voice from an allied nation began to rise steadily as USA citizens grew desperate during the Great Depression.

⁸ A larger-scale history of global capitalism and Neoliberalism can be found at: Ha-Joon Chang, *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism* (New York: Bloomsburg Press, 2008); Michel Beaud, *A History of Capitalism, 1500-2000* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001); Joyce Applebee, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011).
⁹ Jason Hickel, “A Short History of Neoliberalism (And How We Can Fix It),” *New Left Project*, April 9, 2012: http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/a_short_history_of_neoliberalism_and_how_we_can_fix_it

¹⁰ Amity Shlaes, *The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 25.

¹¹ Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes: 1883-1946: Economist, Philosopher, Statesman* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 669.

¹² Shlaes, 32.

¹³ Skidelsky, 536.

¹⁴ Shlaes, 170.

The economic model inspired by Keynes would become known as “embedded liberalism,” a term first used by John Ruggie,¹⁵ seeking to describe a system designed to boost a mixture of “free trade with the freedom for states to enhance their provision of welfare and to regulate their economies to reduce unemployment”.¹⁶ And so, embedded liberalism aimed “to exchange a decent family wage for a productive middle-class workforce that would have the means to consume a mass-produced set of basic commodities”.¹⁷ The core tenets of embedded liberalism were commonly employed following World War II within the USA and Europe because legislators assumed they could assert Keynesian principle to guarantee economic strength and public wellbeing, and thus avoid an additional World War.¹⁸ Allied economic leaders gathered at the Bretton Woods Conference in July of 1944 in order to regulate the international financial structure.¹⁹ The findings of the Bretton Woods Conference facilitated the development of the World Bank²⁰ in 1946 and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)²¹ in 1945. As the participants of the Bretton Woods Conference sought to “design a global monetary system, to be managed by an international body”, its influence remains strong to this day.

According to Jens Steffek, throughout the 1950s and 1960s embedded liberalism provided elevated levels of economic expansion, predominantly in the western world, but also in some developing countries.²² By the early 1970s, however, embedded liberalism faced a crisis of “stagflation,” a term coined in 1965 by British politician Iain Macleod to designate a stage of inflation combined with stagnation, and often leads to a recession.²³ Inflation rates in the USA and Europe increased from about 3% in 1965 to about 12% in 1975. In the years since, economists have debated the reasons.²⁴ Paul Krugman points to two chief factors:²⁵

¹⁵ John Gerard Ruggie, “International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order”. *International Organization* 36, 2 (1982), 195-232.

¹⁶ Jens Steffek, *Embedded Liberalism and Its Critics: Justifying Global Governance in the American Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 41.

¹⁷ Jude C. Hays, *Globalization and the New Politics of Embedded Liberalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), 132.

¹⁸ Steffek, 2.

¹⁹ Ben Steil, *The Battle of Bretton Woods: John Maynard Keynes, Dexter White, and the Making of a New World Order* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), 1.

²⁰ The World Bank, *A Guide to the World Bank* (Washington, DC: World Bank Publications, 2011), 209.

²¹ *The International Monetary Fund: Fact Sheet* (<http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/glance.htm>).

²² Steffek, 61.

²³ It should be noted that some credit North American economist Paul Samuelson with the first usage of the term “stagflation”, yet this study accepts the historical records which show Iain Macleod as the first.

²⁴ Jason Hickel, “A Short History of Neoliberalism (And How We Can Fix It)”, *New Left Project*, April 9, 2012:

First, the various and massive expenses directly associated with the Vietnam War left the USA with a large and unsustainable deficit, which in turn led a number of global investors to release their dollars, which subsequently produced soaring rates of inflation.²⁶ Second, the 1973 oil crisis increased costs and in turn initiated a slow down of economic growth and overall production, which led to stagnation.²⁷ Robert B. Barsky and Kilian Lutz argue instead that stagflation was a direct result of burdensome taxation on the financially affluent and misguided governmental restrictions, asserting that it characterized the inescapable termination of embedded liberalism and validated eliminating the entire structure.²⁸

During the 1970s the notion that wealthy citizens bore an unfair tax burden clearly maintained a significant attraction for the USA's top financial earners. As stated by David Harvey, such earners were seeking a wider variety of methods in order to successfully reclaim their authority and influence.²⁹ In specific terms of the USA, the distribution of domestic earnings that landed with the upper 1% of financial earners dropped from 16% to 8% over the decades following World War II.³⁰ While such a decrease in total share did not hurt the wealthy during periods of economic growth, when the economy stalled during the 1970s their overall affluence and influence started to crumble. As a result, the wealthiest USA citizens desired not only to overturn and remedy the impact of stagflation, but also to utilize the predicament to crush the principles of embedded liberalism itself.³¹

According to Naomi Klein, the wealthiest USA citizens received their desired solution in the so-called "Volcker Shock".³² Paul Volcker, appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1979 as chairman of the USA Federal Reserve, proposed that the best method to stop the economic crisis was to repress inflation through increases in interest rates.³³ Volker also favored a decrease in currency supplies and increased incentives for savings, measures which

http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/a_short_history_of_neoliberalism_and_how_we_can_fix_it.

²⁵ Paul Krugman, *The Conscience of a Liberal* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2009), 122.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Robert B. Barsky and Kilian Lutz, "Do We Really Know That Oil Caused the Great Stagflation? A Monetary Alternative", In *NBER Macroeconomic Annual 2001*, (Editors) Ben S. Bernanke and Kenneth Rogoff (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 137-182.

²⁹ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23.

³⁰ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 16.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2008), 199.

³³ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 23.

in turn led to an increase in the value of USA currency. When President Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, he reappointed Volcker, and Volcker continued to increase the rates of interest from the small single digits to as much as 20%.³⁴ The Volcker Shock eventually led to a USA recession.³⁵ USA unemployment rose over 10% and there was a corresponding decrease in the power of organized labor.³⁶ Labor unions, which had previously served as critical counterweights to the capitalist excesses, decreased dramatically in influence during the Reagan administration.³⁷ The Volcker Shock seemed to cure inflation, but it had a devastating impact on the working class.³⁸

Seeking to alter low rates of inflation was the initial element of Neoliberal Capitalism to be implemented in the early 1980s, the subsequent component was so-called “supply-side economics”.³⁹ President Reagan was convinced that tax breaks for the highest income citizens would boost the economy; the wealthy would invest their money, and benefits would “trickle down” to the rest of society.⁴⁰ Reagan cut the top marginal tax rates and decreased the taxes on maximum capital gains to the lowest rates since the Great Depression.⁴¹ According to Reagan’s former budget director, David Stockman, an additional (and lesser-known) policy from Reagan was the raised payroll taxes on the working class, which was intended to move the US economy closer to a flat tax that could be applied across the economic spectrum.⁴² An additional aspect of Reagan’s Neoliberal policy, according to Stockman, was to relax restrictions placed upon the financial sector.⁴³ When Volcker resisted Reagan’s long-term policy goals of increased deregulation, the President dismissed him and appointed Alan Greenspan in 1987 to push forward the presidential agenda.⁴⁴ Greenspan encouraged the government to cut taxes and privatize Social Security, and was subsequently

³⁴ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 25.

³⁵ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 199.

³⁶ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 25.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 148.

³⁹ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 22.

⁴⁰ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 64-65.

⁴¹ David A. Stockman, *The Triumph of Politics: Why the Regan Revolution Failed* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: PublicAffairs, 2013), 246.

⁴² Stockman, *The Great Deformation*, 103.

⁴³ Stockman, *The Great Deformation*, 177.

⁴⁴ William L. Silber, *Volcker: The Triumph of Persistence* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2012), 262; Joseph B. Treaster, *Paul Volcker: The Making of a Financial Legend* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 183.

retained by a string of leaders from both dominant political parties until 2006.⁴⁵ While critics continue to argue the consequences and legacy of the USA Federal Reserve under the leadership of Greenspan,⁴⁶ some countered that the deregulation he implemented ultimately led to the global financial crisis of 2008.⁴⁷

To summarize the above brief review of Neoliberalism in the USA, one recognizes that as Neoliberal policies were implemented in the USA, social inequality deepened. As FIGURE 1 illustrates, productivity increased steadily yet incomes dropped significantly following the 1973 Volcker Shock, which effectively transferred a greater percentage of income to the most wealthy citizens.⁴⁸ The average Corporate Executive Officer (CEO) wage swelled by 400% in the 1990s while worker earnings rose by approximately 5%, and the federally mandated minimum wage plummeted by over 9%.⁴⁹ FIGURE 2 reveals how the amount of wealth going to the most financially affluent members of society increased at a massive proportion.⁵⁰ Between 1980 and 2000, the share distributed to the top percent elevated from 8% to 18%. According to the USA Census Bureau, the wealthiest five percent of all USA family units increased their annual income by 72.7% between 1980 and 2000, while median family unit incomes remained stagnant, and perhaps most striking, the lowest 20% saw their family unit incomes drop by a staggering 7.4%.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Ravi Batra, *Greenspan's Fraud: How Two Decades of His Policies Have Undermined the Global Economy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Joseph Stiglitz, *Freefall* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), 271.

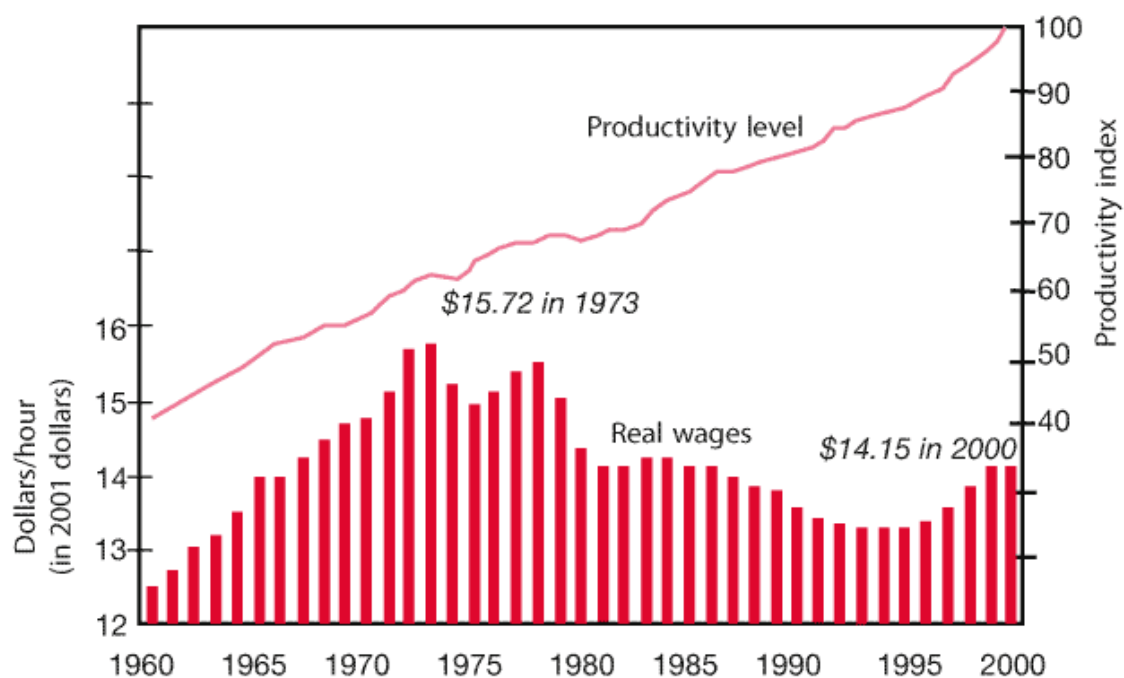
⁴⁸ The graphs provided in the following section are taken from: Hickel, *New Left Project* (April 9, 2012).

⁴⁹ *Executive Excess 2006*, the 13th annual CEO compensation survey from the Institute for Policy Studies and United for a Fair Economy.

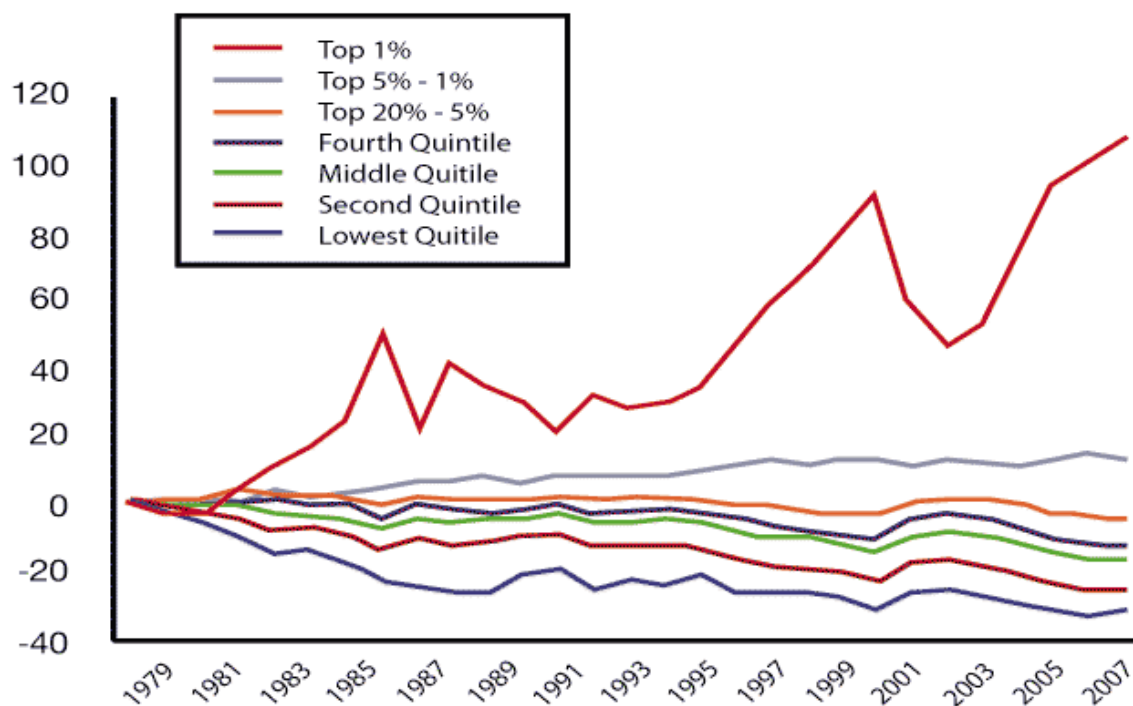
⁵⁰ The graphs provided in the following section are taken from: Jason Hickel, *New Left Project* (April 9, 2012).

⁵¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Historical Income Tables: Families*.

<https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/families/>

FIGURE 1: Real wages and productivity in the US, 1960-2000

Source: R. Pollin, *Contours of Descent* (New York, Verso, 2005).

FIGURE 2: Share of national income, 1979-2008

Source: Mother Jones magazine, based on US Census data

The above graphs offer a significant space for one to effectively critique the promises of Neoliberalism, which will be done more extensively in Chapter Six and Seven of this study. As economist Ha-Joon Chang argued, when the wealthy become increasingly wealthy, such developments do not make more people wealthy, nor does it even spark growth in the economy.⁵² In fact, while supply-side economics advocates for a so-called trickle-down effect, as if a rising tide lifts all boats, the above tables reveal that quite the opposite appears to be more accurate. From the beginning of Neoliberalism in the USA, the industrially revolutionized world witnessed its average per capita growth rate decrease significantly from 3.2% to 2.1%.⁵³ In total, the assortment of statistics seem to confirm that Neoliberal Capitalism has proven unsuccessful as an instrument for economic wellbeing, yet it has worked wonderfully as a standard for monopolizing economic dominance for the most wealthy.⁵⁴

2.3 Neoliberalism and Dehumanization

With the above thoughts and statistics in mind, one wonders how Neoliberalism has remained prominent as a dominant economic structure when its destructive consequences appear so evident. While some cite the power decreases in worker unions, attempts by politicians to distance themselves from socialist policies, and/or the rise of consumerism in North America, others give credit to the growing power of corporate lobbyists in USA politics.⁵⁵ While these examples and explanations are valid to an extent, one can also argue that Neoliberalism has sustained due to its connections with a religious-like adherence, to the point that some conclude that Neoliberalism itself has become a religion that requires a dehumanizing and idolatrous faith in the market itself.⁵⁶

⁵² Ha-Joon Chang. 2007. *Bad Samaritans: The Guilty Secrets of Rich Nations and the Threat to Global Prosperity* (London: Random House), 26.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Hickel, *New Left Project* (April 9, 2012).

⁵⁵ *Bloomberg News*, "Inside Job Problem Beggars more than Disclosure: View", Jan. 18, 2012.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-01-18/-inside-job-problem-begs-more-than-disclosure-view-correct-.html>

⁵⁶ Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, viii.

USA President John F. Kennedy's assertion that "a rising tide lifts all boats" is one of the strongest affirmations of faith that continues to impact the acceptance of Neoliberalism today.⁵⁷ Joerg Rieger writes:

[The idea that "a rising tide lifts all boats"] is one of the foundations of current mainline economics, which assumes that if those on top do better, everybody will be better off in due course. This statement-turned-doctrine, spread around the world by process of globalization, is deeply rooted in the history of the United States, reaching back to the nineteenth century. More than one of the fathers of current mainline economics was convinced that the rising tide was the engine of all progress.⁵⁸

While economic evidence (such as the previously displayed graphs) continues to show that Neoliberalism has not lifted "all boats", Neoliberalism remains firmly in place as the predominant economic structure due in part to its religious-like following. Paul Knitter argues that Neoliberalism in its current form can be understood as a brand of fundamentalist religion, since the tenets of Neoliberalism demand absolute belief "with a trust that looks like blind faith".⁵⁹ Furthermore, Knitter finds traits of religious adherence in Neoliberalism through the authority of the so-called "invisible hand" of the market, which is often perceived as unquestionable, infallible, and the only option viable.⁶⁰ In the particular context of modern economic crisis, the examination of actual economic data in response to such crisis is often sidelined in favor of popular beliefs that lack a suitable level of quantitative analysis. More specifically, it appears that no matter how serious and predictable the economic problem, the mainline economists seem to retain an inexhaustible trust in the steadfastness of unrelenting improvement that will follow recessions and depressions.⁶¹ As Rieger states:

When the floor fell out of the [United States] economy in 2008, for instance, this faith did not necessarily cancel out arguments for the need for economic stimulus and bailouts, but it framed them. Even some of the most ardent defenders of stimulus and

⁵⁷ Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Paul Knitter, "Introduction", in Paul Knitter and Chandra Muzaffar, (Editors) *Subverting Greed: Religious Perspectives on the Global Economy, Faith Meets Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2002), 10.

⁶⁰ The "invisible hand" phrase originated in Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which was first published in 1759.

⁶¹ Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, 7.

bailout never lost faith in the free market... Hope, even in the midst of the most severe economic crises, is thus built on the faith that things will eventually get better and that the reign of free-market economics will be reaffirmed... As a result, economic hope resembles what might be called an otherworldly perspective, which is a perversion of the notion of transcendence.⁶²

While a full analysis of the relationship between Neoliberalism and religious-like faith is not intended here (but will be explored more in Chapters Six and Seven of this study), one can begin to recognize the religious-like devotional zeal that many possess for Neoliberalism. In addition, one can also recognize that such commitment to (or faith in) the market has both dehumanizing sources and consequences. As Rieger states, the market is, for some “the engine of happiness and balance,” and “a god that functions automatically and can be trusted to arrive on the scene whenever help is needed”.⁶³ In other words, a critique of Neoliberalism is not only its negative impact on human welfare, but one can also challenge Neoliberalism on the grounds of idolatry and dehumanization. As a result, it can be argued that an unwavering faith in Neoliberalism is not only misguided, but it – in and of itself – is related to mechanistic dehumanization.

This study argues that Neoliberalism is both sourced and sustained by mechanistic dehumanization. The connection between this ideology and mechanistic dehumanization was first articulated by Cameroonian theologian Engelbert Mveng.⁶⁴ More specifically, Mveng highlighted the critical connections between Neoliberalism and dehumanization through what he called *anthropological poverty*. Mveng stated that the impoverished understanding of anthropology that western societies often export through Neoliberal Capitalism is firmly grounded in control, command and a vicious struggle between death and life.⁶⁵ Therefore, according to Mveng, one cannot escape such an ideological gridlock, as it is difficult to comprehend how such anthropological poverty can be merged with the gospel.⁶⁶

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, 13.

⁶⁴ Engelbert Mveng, “Third World Theology – What Theology? What World?: Evaluation by An African Delegate,” in *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology*, ed. Virginia Fabella and Sergio Torres (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1983).

⁶⁵ Mveng, “Third World Theology”, 220.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

In order to further highlight the nature and seriousness of anthropological poverty, Mveng points to the “church of the poor” and being “directed to the Beatitudes”, yet he further reveals that being impoverished is first and foremost a consequence of deprived anthropological conceptions.⁶⁷ He states:

Of course there is capital, of course there is the class struggle, of course there is the exploitation of human being by human being. And so of course there is a theology of violence, just as there is a theology of the rationality of the state. But for us Africans, the world’s institutionalized poverty has other roots as well, and it is perhaps these other roots that are more serious, more important, and more relevant to the present moment: slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, apartheid, and the universal derision that has always accompanied the “civilized” world’s discourse upon and encounter with Africa – and still accompanies it today.⁶⁸

Following Mveng’s contextualized framing of his argument, he then offered a critical bridge between Neoliberalism and mechanistic dehumanization, that which he deemed *anthropological poverty*:

There is a type of poverty that I call “anthropological poverty”. It consists in despoiling human beings not only of what they have, but of everything that constitutes their being and essence – their identity, history, ethnic roots, language, culture, faith, creativity, dignity, pride, ambitions, right to speak... we could go on indefinitely.⁶⁹

Among other things, Mveng states that anthropological poverty impacts a massive proportion of the global population, not only in so-called developing nations, but also in every corner of the world.⁷⁰ As a result, when such a conception of impoverishment is confronted with the anthropological affirmation of the Gospel, anthropological poverty must then be seen as a direct contradiction to the Gospel. Therefore, anthropological poverty must serve as an important subject for the persistent and dedicated examination of theologians, because

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Mveng, “Third World Theology”, 220-221.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

anthropological poverty empties and vacates “persons of everything that can enable them to recognize Christ as a person”.⁷¹

The conceptions from Mveng are cited because anthropological poverty is a key point of connection between Neoliberalism and mechanistic dehumanization, as will be discussed further in this study. As John Pobee states, “We are, not because we are marketable, but because God affirms us”,⁷² yet as was detailed above, a quasi-religious devotion to the so-called invisible hand of Neoliberalism too often takes priority over the welfare and dignity of human beings.⁷³ The result of such religious adherence to Neoliberalism is an economic system that is both sourced and sustained by dehumanization. As Pobee states:

[In Neoliberalism] there are no longer human beings with gifts, talents, and potential; there are only potential consumers. This reflects an anthropology lower than the biblical affirmation of humanity “in the image and likeness of God”.⁷⁴

The religious-like faith in Neoliberalism requires significant levels of religious-like creedal conformity, to the point that individuals are warned not to critique “the market” (even when factual data and verifiable statistics reveal that they should) at the risk of its God-like “wrath”, even if it leads to anthropological impoverishment.⁷⁵ Robert H. Nelson notes that economists have taken on the role of evangelist priests who warn their adherents not to veer from the path that the market has set forth, as if the consequences of a regulated market would lead to less freedom among citizens.⁷⁶ Along these lines, various organizations have influenced the USA public into believing that their treasured personal liberties can only be delivered through so-called “market freedom”, and that all methods or appearances of government intrusion is predisposed to grow into oppression.⁷⁷ These religiously judgment-like warnings of fidelity to the market, in addition to the statistical evidence that displays the

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² John Pobee, *Research Report 16: The Worship of the Free Market and the Death of the Poor* (Uppsala: Life and Peace Institute, 1994), 31.

⁷³ Barbara Rumscheidt, *No Room For Grace: Pastoral Theology and Dehumanization in the Global Economy* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1999), 8.

⁷⁴ Pobee, 28.

⁷⁵ Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, 10.

⁷⁶ Robert H. Nelson, *Economics as Religion: From Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), xv.

⁷⁷ This viewpoint was given significant credibility in the 1970s when the two leaders of Neoliberalism, Frederick Von Hayek and Milton Friedman, were both awarded what is often regarded the Nobel Prize in Economics, called the Sveriges Riksbank Prize.

various and serious pitfalls of the system itself, continues to reveal how mechanistic dehumanization is a crucial ingredient as a source and sustainer of Neoliberalism.

In summary, Neoliberalism and dehumanization are connected, as Neoliberalism uses market value as the primary method to evaluate all aspects of life, which in turn is sourced and sustained by dehumanization. In other words, through Neoliberalism the market is a principal template for all activities and relationships within a society, thus the worth of humanity is evaluated primarily upon the ability to produce and consume goods and services. Therefore, dehumanization can be examined as a *source* of Neoliberalism because Neoliberalism requires the ability to view human beings as parts of an economic mechanism, rather than full human beings.⁷⁸ In addition, dehumanization also appears to *sustain* Neoliberalism, for the system requires some (the wealthy class) to see their individual needs as more important – or more human – than others (the impoverished class) and their needs.⁷⁹ And so, in order to provide a more thorough explanation to such conceptions and connections, the following section will offer an introduction to dehumanization in general, and continue to link a particular form of dehumanization – known as mechanistic dehumanization – with Neoliberalism.

2.4 Dehumanization

In order to better understand the crucial link between Neoliberalism and mechanistic dehumanization, one requires an understanding of dehumanization in its more general form. The first known use of *dehumanization* as a term was first used in 1818,⁸⁰ and from the outset possessed numerous meanings, as it continues to in modern times. For example, some argue that automatic ticket machines in airports *dehumanize* customers by “turning them into cattle”, while others detail how pornography *dehumanizes* women, triathlons *dehumanize*

⁷⁸ While this research will not detail the full history of Neoliberalism, it should be noted that Neoliberalism evolved out of another model of economic globalization that has roots in capitalism and slavery. See: Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 126-134.

⁷⁹ Richard D. Wolff, “Religion and Class” in Joerg Rieger (Editor) *Religion, Theology, and Class: Fresh Engagements after Long Silence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 27-42.

⁸⁰ *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989).

athletes, technology *dehumanizes* education, and prisons *dehumanize* prisoners.⁸¹ As countless examples and explanations of dehumanization exist, one requires a basic introduction to dehumanization. Following such an introduction, this chapter will then consider a specific form of dehumanization, known as mechanistic dehumanization.

An insightful understanding of dehumanization can be found in the groundbreaking work of Herbert C. Kelman, who studied USA soldiers during the Vietnam War. In his search for human justifications of mass violence, Kelman wondered about the circumstances in which ordinary individuals could plot, direct, execute, and excuse such undertakings of brutal aggression.⁸² He recognized three psychological instruments that can reduce the ethical shackles of seemingly regular humans and transform them into agents of warfare: “authorization, routinization, and dehumanization”.⁸³ According to an analysis of Kelman by Peter Holtz and Wolfgang Wagner, while authorization (the formation of hierarchy) and routinization (aggressive habit formation) were clear aspects of armed warfare, the aspect of dehumanization required further examination.⁸⁴ In Kelman’s investigation, dehumanization is to deny others of two primary aspects of human life: “agency and communion”.⁸⁵ Holtz and Wagner further explain that while “agency” makes reference to the employment of personal “free will” and the uniqueness of an individual, “community” takes place when such a person is interrelated and interconnected with other people, and in turn perceive an attachment to – and thus care for – each other.⁸⁶ As a result:

The targets of dehumanization are regarded as lacking good will, as uniform, and as lacking any kind of human emotional attachments and feelings. Typical victims of

⁸¹ David Livingstone Smith, *Less than Human: Why we Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2011), 26. Also, see: A. Opsahl, “Technology Shouldn’t Dehumanize Customer Service,” *Government Technology News*, January 1, 2009; D. Holbrook, *Sex and Dehumanization* (London: Pitman, 1972); N. Dawidoff, “Triathalons Dehumanize,” *Sports Illustrated*, 71 (October 16, 1989), 16; J.P. Driscoll, “Dehumanize at Your Own Risk,” *Educational Technology* no. 18: 34-36; S. Hirsh, “Torture of Abu Ghraib,” *The New Yorker*, May 10, 2004. For more examples, see: A. Montague and F. Matson, *The Dehumanization of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983).

⁸² Herbert C. Kelman, “Violence without moral restraint: Reflections on the dehumanization of victims and victimizers”, *Journal of Social Issues*, Volume 29, Number 4 (1973), 31.

⁸³ Kelman, 38.

⁸⁴ Peter Holtz and Wolfgang Wagner, “Dehumanization, Infrahumanization, and Naturalization”. *The Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology*, edited by Daniel L. Christie (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2011), 317.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

dehumanization are members of distinct racial, religious, ethnic, or political groups, which an aggressor regards as inferior or undesirable.⁸⁷

According to Kelman, understanding dehumanization requires that we reflect more upon conceptions of agency and communion, as such attributes can best articulate what it means to be most fully human. Along these lines, Kelman emphasized that to confer a person with human *identity* is to distinguish such a person as a separate and specific individual that is autonomous and distinct from all others, and is thus qualified for decision-making and capable of living her/his own life on the foundation of her/his own aims and ethics. Furthermore, to render a person with human *community* is to recognize that such a person is part of an interlocking system of individuals who rely upon and care for each other, who affirm individuality and diversity, and who value each other's human rights. According to Kelman, such features (human identity and human community) together compose the primary foundation for human value. As a result, the conception of human worth as a basic necessity has both personal and a communal reference points, and thus asserts that the person has intrinsic worth and that she/he is also esteemed by others.

In order to further explain what makes one fully human, Kelman offers a striking connection to theological principles that are rarely observed by those in his particular field of academic study. More specifically, he articulates dehumanization in light of words found in the Talmud:

Therefore was a single man only first created to teach thee that whosoever destroys a single soul from the children of man, Scripture charges him as though he had destroyed the whole world, and whosoever rescues a single soul from the children of man, Scripture credits him as though he had saved the whole world (Sanhedrin, Chapter 4, Mishnah 5).⁸⁸

The insightful research of Kelman recognizes that authorization, routinization, and dehumanization play a role in the overall deterioration of ethical restrictions that lead to the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

dehumanization of other human beings.⁸⁹ In other words, as a collection of individuals is described wholly in terms of a classification, and when such a classification of people is fully marginalized from the fullness of the human community, then the ethical restraints that prohibit taking their lives are easier to defeat. Those who view others as fully human accept a degree of responsibility for the overall wellbeing of such others, especially when the other is experiencing harm. Therefore, dehumanization is recognized as a crucial concept when trying to understand how people live in community with others.

In the decades since Kelman's groundbreaking study, other researchers have expanded on his work and deepened the understanding of dehumanization. Professor of Philosophy David Livingstone Smith, for example, characterizes dehumanization with four primary matters: First, people are dehumanized when they are not recognized as individuals. Second, dehumanization can be equated with objectification. Third, dehumanization is related to derogatory attitudes toward others. Fourth, dehumanization is accompanied by cruel and/or degrading treatment. In total, Smith concludes that dehumanization is spoken of relatively often, yet it is rarely theorized, thus a significant need exists to further examine dehumanization from various points of view.⁹⁰ As a result, while the following section will not offer a detailed history and/or theoretical construction of dehumanization, it will include a general overview, and will thus offer a foundation to consider mechanistic dehumanization, and eventually link mechanistic dehumanization with Neoliberalism.

Smith argues that dehumanization occurs when people view others not as "un-human", but rather as "sub-human".⁹¹ For example, "sub-humans" are "beings" that lack the "special something" that makes people human beings.⁹² And so, because of this deficit of human-ness, such beings do not command the respect that so-called authentic human beings deserve. As a result, these sub-humans (beings) can be enslaved, tortured, or even exterminated – treated in ways that human beings could not bring themselves to treat those regarded as fellow members of humankind. According to Smith, dehumanization is the understanding that some beings only *appear* human, but beneath the surface, where it really

⁸⁹ Kelman, 38.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Smith, *Less than Human*, 2.

⁹² Ibid.

counts, they are not human at all.⁹³ Therefore, dehumanization is more than a matter of human communication, but it is an important matter of human conception that “comes all too easy for us”, as dehumanization has been a personal and public plague for countless generations, for it serves as a “psychological lubricant” that suspends our restraints and sparks our most damaging urges.⁹⁴ As such, dehumanization permits human beings to perform acts against others that would, under other scenarios, be absolutely inconceivable.

Dehumanization is not merely the obvious and most publicized cases of extreme violence, but dehumanization is far more prevalent, vastly more ancient, and is more profoundly intertwined with the human experience than a constructionist view often allows. While the Nazi Holocaust is the most comprehensively examined historical specimen surrounding the damages of dehumanization (and its repulsiveness continues to test the boundaries of our imagination), the longstanding focus upon the particularity of Nazi Germany can be oddly calming. According to Smith, one may be persuaded to understand the Third Reich as an anomaly of recent history, or the result of a serious type of communal mental disease that was successfully sparked by a small group of madmen who conspired to grasp political control and move a nation to act on their insane motivations.⁹⁵ In addition, it is also tempting to envision that the Germans were (or perhaps continue to be) an exclusively and uniquely punishing and murderous group of people. However, these various judgments are severely erroneous, for what is perhaps most disturbing about the Nazi tragedy is not that the Nazis were crazy monsters, but rather, that they can be constituted as normal and fully functional human beings.

While it may be comforting to believe that only Nazis, slave-owners, manic radicals, and assassins are capable of dehumanizing others, the reality is that all humans are “potential dehumanizers”, in that all humans “are potential objects of dehumanization”.⁹⁶ All human beings possess the capacity to participate in the systemic dehumanization of others, and the harsh reality is that many act upon such opportunities, regardless of whether or not such activity is consciously undertaken. More specifically, because Neoliberalism in the USA can be viewed as a system in which some benefit significantly at the expense of many others, we

⁹³ Smith, *Less than Human*, 5.

⁹⁴ Smith, *Less than Human*, 13.

⁹⁵ Smith, *Less than Human*, 16.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

can begin to argue that Neoliberalism itself is sourced and sustained with dehumanization, which implicates those who support its systemic survival. When an economic system requires that some in the human community are no longer recognized as individuals, but merely parts of an economic machine, and when such people are objectified, are forced to compete tirelessly against others, and are faced with cruel and degrading treatment, one recognizes the fingerprints of dehumanization upon Neoliberal Capitalism.

2.4.1 Western Philosophical Roots of the Concept of Dehumanization

In order to more fully comprehend the notion of dehumanization and its connections with Neoliberalism in the USA, it is critical to consider the philosophical and social underpinnings of the western worldview in which Neoliberalism is firmly grounded.⁹⁷ More specifically, dehumanization as articulated by the likes of Herber Kelman and David Livingstone Smith has roots in a wide variety of theorists, many of which can trace their understanding to Aristotle. As Professor of Philosophy Richard Tarnas states, to comprehend the essential themes of Aristotle's philosophy and cosmology is a requirement for understanding the evolution of western thought and its progression of ideas.⁹⁸ As Tarnas elaborates:

...Aristotle provided a language and logic, a foundation and structure, and, not least, a formidably authoritative opponent – first against Platonism and later against the early modern mind – without which the philosophy, theology, and science of the West could not have developed as they did.⁹⁹

According to Tarnas, Aristotle believed that rationality, or the active intellect (*nous*), was a key indicator of what made someone human.¹⁰⁰ In doing so, one can examine whether or not Aristotle provided an intellectual opening to later theorize the practice of dehumanization within Neoliberalism.¹⁰¹ For example, as Aristotle proclaimed in *Politics*, “As to the exposure

⁹⁷ Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 1991), 1.

⁹⁸ Tarnas, 55.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Tarnas, 60.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

and rearing of children, let there be a law that no deformed child shall live”.¹⁰² Since Aristotle also warned that pregnant women should not be intellectually engaged, as such activity would harm unborn children, one can reason that Aristotle was concerned with the rational, as well as the physical, form of children. In other words, Aristotle claimed that theoretical wisdom contributes to a “chain of being” that has rationality closest to the divine *nous* – a view that has impacted Western thought significantly, especially in later views surrounding dehumanization.¹⁰³

Aristotle’s “Chain of Being” is critical for one to better understand a link between dehumanization and Neoliberalism, for the Chain of Being details a ranked and tiered system of all matters and existence, understood as being ordained directly by the gods.¹⁰⁴ In specifics, the chain starts with the gods and moves “downward” toward “angels, demons, stars”, the “moon, kings, princes, nobles, men, wild animals, domesticated animals, trees, other plants, precious stones, precious metals, and other minerals”.¹⁰⁵ In doing so, each “level” of the Chain of Being possesses a different echelon of value; and thus what is on a “higher” level can, in many ways, justify taking advantage of what is on a “lesser” level. In summary, this study argues that Aristotle provided an opening that leads one to better consider the conception of dehumanization.

In order to properly articulate his “Chain of Being” notion, Aristotle tried to distinguish what actually constituted a human being. In order to accomplish this task of separating humans from non-humans and/or sub-humans, at various points in his writings Aristotle utilized the notion of human “essence”.¹⁰⁶ For Aristotle the “essence” of a human being is the extrinsic “form” into which such a human has grown, yet the “nature” of such a human is a portrayal of its intrinsic form.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, for Aristotle both form and matter are qualified positions, as the portrayal of a form can eventually lead to it being the matter out of which a greater degree of form may emerge. As Tarnas explains:

¹⁰² Aristotle, *Politics and the Constitution of Athens*, Stephen Everson, trans. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 182.

¹⁰³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Martin Ostwald, trans. (New York: Pearson, 1999).

¹⁰⁴ Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

¹⁰⁵ Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu. *Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 289.

¹⁰⁶ Tarnas, 58.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

...the adult is the form of which the child was matter, the child the form of which the embryo was matter, the embryo the form of which the ovum was matter. Every substance is composed of that which is changed (the matter) and that into which it is changed (the form).¹⁰⁸

In light of such thoughts, “matter” in this instance should not be merely interfered as the physical body, which according to Aristotle always retains a relative measure of form. To the contrary, matter is an unspecified and unstipulated sensibility found within human beings that leaves them vulnerable to basic formation. Matter is thus the unreserved property of being human, the so-called opportunity of form, that which form “molds, impels, brings from potentiality to actuality”.¹⁰⁹ Matter then “becomes realized only because of its composition with forms”, as “Form is matter’s actuality, it purposefully completed figuration”.¹¹⁰ Therefore, the entirety of nature is found within such a progression, as nature is ultimately a progression of “this conquest of matter by form”.¹¹¹

As Tarnas’ understanding of Aristotle implies, the “essence of a thing is that which makes it what it is”, thus essence contrasted “with appearance” (how things seem rather than what they are) means that appearances are, so to speak, only skin deep, whereas essence cuts to the core.¹¹² And so, the distinction between essence and appearance from Aristotle is not merely an academic or philosophical matter, but it fundamentally reflects the way humans often perceive one another, which in turn can justify that ways in which humans treat one another.

While one could explore Aristotle’s concept of essence and “Chain of Being” in far greater detail, one can immediately recognize the popularity and influence of Aristotle’s thoughts, which in turn can be applied to better understanding various conceptions of dehumanization. While numerous generations have passed since the time of Aristotle, his “Chain of Being” conception remains influential, as many continue to conclude that every

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

human being is endowed with a human essence, or in other words, an inner core (a soul, spirit, or distinctive genetic signature).¹¹³ For those that share in this Aristotelian affirmation, they are open to the idea that someone can indeed be human even though they do not appear as human. For example, the 19th century Englishman Joseph Carey Merrick was deemed “Elephant Man” due to visible abnormalities so tremendous that he had the appearance of a non-human mammal, even though he was indeed a human being.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, some may find it relatively convincing that a non-human might appear like a genuine human without actually being human. This particular phenomenon of non-humans posing as humans remains a widespread premise in horror and science fiction literature and film, as revealed by the made-for-film versions of the vampire-themed *Twilight* novels by Stephanie Meyer, which consisted of five motion pictures between 2008-2012 and grossed over \$3.3 billion in worldwide receipts.¹¹⁵ While certain *Twilight* characters had human appearances and acted in more or less human ways (apart from certain eccentricities), they were clearly not human on the “inside,” where it most matters.¹¹⁶

With Aristotle’s views on human essence in mind, the “Chain of Being” continues to impact contemporary worldviews, and as will later be shown, understanding the connection of dehumanization and Neoliberalism. While some have not read the work of Aristotle and would not be able to recite the finer details found in the “Chain of Being”, the impact of Aristotle’s intellectual tradition reaches both far and wide, as many also believe that certain beings are of a higher value than others. For the purpose of this study, one recognizes how Aristotle, the “Chain of Being”, and human essence relates to conceptual notions of dehumanization, as the conception of so-called sub-humanity – in which some are determined to be somehow less than human – depends on it. In other words, if something/someone is deemed to not have a human essence, “it” is thus perceived as lower on the Chain of Being. These concepts lend themselves fully to understanding the systematic dehumanization of beings, acts that would never be performed against an equal on the Chain of Being.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Michael Howell and Peter Ford, *The True History of the Elephant Man* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2010).

¹¹⁵ “The Internet Movie Database” <http://www.imdb.com/boxoffice/>

¹¹⁶ Smith, *Less than Human*, 34.

2.4.2 The Chain of Being (continued): Pico

In order to consider the “Chain of Being” – and its relationship with understanding contemporary connections between dehumanization and Neoliberalism – with further depth, one is drawn to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who wrote *Oration on the Dignity of Man* in 1486 and began with a discussion on Aristotle’s “Chain of Being”. In specifics, “Pico” (as he is often called) sought to protect and preserve nearly one thousand philosophical propositions derived from a wide variety of sources. He extended invitations to intellectuals from throughout the region, and in doing so explained the human potential of reverting to a condition that could be considered less than fully human.¹¹⁷

According to Pico, after God finished with creation, God then desired a being that could appreciate all of God’s glorious works.¹¹⁸ However, since God saw there was no room left in the Chain of Being, God then created humankind without a specific placement within the Chain. And so, instead of being fixed in the Chain of Being, humankind was free to learn from and/or imitate any existing creature. While Aristotle had argued for a more fixed human essence, Pico claimed that humans were created with the potential to choose their own particular nature, and thus could move “up” or “down” the Chain of Being depending upon whether or not humans exercised their intellectual capabilities.¹¹⁹

As argued by Pico, God had defined and restricted the core character of all non-human creatures within a system of divine regulations that were implemented through the initial act of creation. Human beings did not receive such non-human restrictions, thus were free to generate the defining features of their own nature. Pico understood human beings as placed “at the very center of the world”, and could thus openly perceive all that the world contained with relative ease.¹²⁰ As being created “neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal”, humans were free to discern their surroundings, shape their own being, and thus transform themselves into form they might most prefer.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, Translated by A. Robert Caponigri (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1956), 7.

¹¹⁸ Tarnas, 214.

¹¹⁹ Tarnas, 215.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

In contrast to Aristotle, Pico argued that humankind has the ability to choose and direct its own level on the Chain of Being through various actions, and this ability of self-determination is uniquely human.¹²² Therefore, some humans will choose to transcend toward God, yet others will sink to the levels of beasts. As Pico wrote, “It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine”.¹²³ With contemporary perspectives of systemic dehumanization in mind, we recognize that rather than being placed by God on a lower level of the Chain of Being, a Pico-inspired view of dehumanization can be viewed as choice-driven transformation from human to subhuman state, caused primarily by sinful behavior.¹²⁴ While this assertion from Pico is remarkably different from that of Aristotle, one recognizes how much of Pico’s views can also lead to a deeper understanding of dehumanization.

While far more could be examined in regards to Pico and the Chain of Being, it is worth stating the relationship between self-determination and divine punishment, as such provides a direction connection to the consideration of modern forms of dehumanization. In other words, if people became sub-human as a result of their sinfulness and other consequences of personal choice, those who were deemed to be more fully human could justifiably persecute them. In other words, those on the receiving end of dehumanization would, in a sense, be getting what they deserve. Once again, one can recognize the historical and philosophical relationship to present day thought surrounding dehumanization and its connection with Neoliberalism.

2.4.3 John Locke

In addition to the thoughts of Aristotle and Pico, one is drawn to briefly consider the perspectives of John Locke, a leader of the Enlightenments age. He wrote one of the most influential discussions on human essence, and thus offers an additional foundation for understanding dehumanization and its link to Neoliberalism. Locke’s 1689 seminal text, *An*

¹²² Among other things, Pico argued that mammals and other worldly creatures entered the world with all they might hope to acquire. In a similar fashion, he asserted that angels and other heavenly beings arrived into the fullness of existence without any need for continued growth or development.

¹²³ Pico, 8.

¹²⁴ Tarnas, 215.

Essay on Human Understanding, argued that human beings have a “real essence” that accounts for their observable properties. In order to make such a claim, Locke distinguishes between “real essence” and “nominal essence”, and while he uses a wide variety of analogies, his most vivid has to do with the properties and observable characteristics of gold.¹²⁵ In specifics, while Locke did not possess the technological advantage of a microscope (and thus did not know of gold’s atomic number, 79), he believed that something in the microscopic structure of gold made it what it is. In other words, the real essence of something – such as gold – was far beyond its observable characteristics.¹²⁶

With his thoughts on the essence of gold, Locke distinguishes between “nominal essence” and “real essence”, which can be related to contemporary conceptions of humankind.¹²⁷ On the one hand, Locke concludes that the real essence of an object is its microstructure of corpuscles, which are not observable, but give rise to observable properties. On the other hand, Locke shows that a nominal essence is a set of qualities that can indeed be observed, as gold might be yellow, shiny, and malleable. As a result, since people observe their reality differently, the nominal essence is subjective, whereas the real essence is, to put simply, what it is.

In light of Locke’s thoughts on the nominal and real essence of gold, he compared such reasoning to conceptions of humankind. In order to illustrate such thoughts, he details a child that tries to classify humankind based upon nominal essence. Locke suggests that “it is probable that [the child’s] idea is just like that picture which the painter makes of the visible appearances joined together” – that is, the child forms a complex idea of what a human is on the basis of the characteristics of the people he or she has observed.¹²⁸ Then, Locke asks the reader to suppose that the child is English, and is thus exposed only to people who are “white or flesh-colour”.¹²⁹ Through such an isolated experience, the child might argue that a person of another shade is not a human, because white is one of the components of the child’s understanding of humans. Through it all, this illustration recognizes, for Locke, that there is

¹²⁵ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited with an Introduction by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 298.

¹²⁶ Locke, 445.

¹²⁷ Locke, 382.

¹²⁸ Locke, 607.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

an “essence” of humankind that sits below the surface of what can be observed, but being human and appearing human are two separate matters.

Locke’s example of gold as an illustration for human essence is helpful in thinking about dehumanization, as it allows one to consider dehumanization from a slightly different viewpoint, especially for the purpose of this study. In other words, in the same way that gold can be counterfeited to make it difficult to detect, it is also possible to dehumanize others based on the assumption that some people are perceived as counterfeit (not genuine) humans. Furthermore, just as counterfeit gold looks like gold (nominal essence), it is not actually gold. In a similar fashion, even if particular people *look* like humans (nominal essence), they are not truly human, thus a justification for their dehumanization. Since gold has served as a traditional symbol for commodity payment, and because this chapter aims to show how Neoliberal Capitalism is related to dehumanization, the connection of (real or counterfeit) gold to (real or counterfeit) humans has much larger implications.

The fictional figures of “zombies” are also helpful when trying to distinguish human essence as Locke explained. While most people would recognize that zombies are mythical creatures and thus not real, they do animate a critical point of connection with an understanding of dehumanization, as such imagined zombies inhabit human bodies without souls; they are shells of human beings, with nothing inside, similar to the lifelike robotic androids that appear often within the realm of science fiction.¹³⁰ We may conceive of such non-human as being similar to human beings down to the last observable element, and act just like humans do, even though they are fully absent of awareness and understanding. Philosopher David Chalmers calls these hypothetical beings “philosophical zombies,” which are distinctive from those presented in Haitian folklore and modern horror and thriller films.¹³¹ As argued by Smith, Chalmer’s understanding reveals that “even highly educated people find it easy to embrace the metaphysical presumption underpinning the psychology of dehumanization”.¹³²

¹³⁰ Josh Miller, *A Zombie’s History of the United States: From the Massacre at Plymouth Rock to the CIA’s Secret War on the Undead* (Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 2011); Theodore Roosevelt, *The Natural History of Zombies*. Edited by Tom Ringdal (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1881).

¹³¹ Smith, *Less than Human*, 101.

¹³² Ibid.

All together, the work of John Locke is significant when trying to consider the nature of dehumanization, especially as this study will later attempt to link a form of dehumanization to Neoliberalism. Among other things, Locke argues that while someone/something might appear to be human, its humanity is something that cannot truly be observed. As a result, one recognizes an opening for “counterfeit humans” that can be exploited systematically by the so-called genuine humans. This justification of dehumanization is key when seeking to develop structures, such as Neoliberal Capitalism, that prioritize the needs of some as being more important than the needs of others.

2.4.4 William Graham Sumner

At the midpoint of the nineteenth century, the new discipline of social anthropology grew through the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim.¹³³ As a result, the concept of dehumanization received a variety of new and important insights, many of which are helpful for linking dehumanization with Neoliberalism. More specifically, the first anthropologists amassed a bizarre and sometimes terrifying collection of narratives from overseas “missionaries, explorers, and soldiers of fortune” traveling beyond Euro-American boundaries, and in turn utilized such (culturally biased) narratives to construct a variety of concepts about “human nature and the evolution of culture”.¹³⁴ Since the anthropologists soon recognized that they could no longer base their new scientific discipline upon a wide variety of unverifiable global tales, during the transition into the twentieth century they began to introduce a variety of new and rigorous methods for gathering data. In doing so, something predictable yet remarkable took place:

When they eventually got up from their plush Victorian armchairs and started observing cultures firsthand, they noticed that people everywhere tended to think of their own culture as superior to everyone else’s.¹³⁵

In the midst of the emergence of social anthropology, in 1907 the Yale social scientist William Graham Sumner introduced and discussed what he called “ethnocentrism”, which

¹³³ Paul A. Erickson and Liam D. Murphy, *A History of Anthropological Theory: Fourth Edition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 51-62.

¹³⁴ Smith, *Less than Human*, 57.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

can now be considered as a conceptual precursor to modern understandings of dehumanization.¹³⁶ As Sumner described it, ethnocentrism is the idea that the ethic assembly that one identifies with is the epicenter of all that exists, and anyone deemed to be outside of such a group is judged in relationship to it. Along these lines, ethnocentric groups cultivate their own dignity and delight, assert themselves as being of the best quality, elevate their ideas and beliefs, and tend to perceive others with both suspicion and scorn.¹³⁷ As ethnographic research became more common, Sumner's claims were verified.¹³⁸

One of the most extravagant expressions of ethnocentrism is the belief that members of one's own culture are the only true human beings. Along these lines, one recognizes a slide into understanding the justification of dehumanization. For example, Sumner illustrates the relationship between ethnocentrism and dehumanization with a number of cases in point:

When the Caribs were asked whence they came, they answered, "We alone are people". The meaning of the name Kiowa is "real or principal people". The Lapps call themselves "men" or "human beings"... The Tunguses call themselves "men". Other are something else – perhaps not defined – but not real men. In myths, the origins of their own tribe is that of the real human race. They do not account for the others.¹³⁹

In the time since original conceptions of ethnocentrism were first developed, the notion is now used to express more general moral disapproval.¹⁴⁰ For example, accusations of ethnocentrism are almost always used to disparage the often narrow-minded Western views of indigenous cultures.¹⁴¹ However, Sumner used ethnocentrism in an explanatory way rather than as an appraisal. While it is indeed accurate that Westerners can display ethnocentric biases toward aboriginal people, one can also show that aboriginal communities can also think of Westerners and members of other aboriginal groups as less than human.¹⁴²

¹³⁶ William G. Sumner, *Folkways: The Study of Mores, Manners, Customs, and Morals* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002), 13.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Jared Diamond, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee* (London: Vintage, 1991), 267.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Donald R. Kinder and Cindy D. Kam, *Us Against Them: Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion* (Chicago Studies in American Politics), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 7-30.

¹⁴¹ Kinder and Kam, 73-104.

¹⁴² Smith, *Less than Human*, 58.

All together, Sumner believed that ethnocentrism was found all over the world, both in modern nation-states as well as in primitive tribes. As he emphasized, each collection of people seems to pronounce themselves as the supervisors of society.¹⁴³ In addition, he stated that groups often view themselves as having the most freedom and intelligence, with others are substandard and enslaved, and such a “patriotic bias” is a harmful distortion that should be countered through suitable schooling.¹⁴⁴ However, in an ironic twist, less than a decade after Sumner offered his thoughts, a frenzy of patriotic bias engulfed the region of Europe and inundated the continent in warfare. As World War I took mass slaughter to an unprecedented level, it left about seventeen million dead (about one million of whom perished due to starvation) and many millions maimed or seriously injured.¹⁴⁵ This human calamity led to an increase of reflective people to consider timely and important questions surrounding war, human nature, and of course, the justification of dehumanization.

2.4.5 John T. MacCurdy

One of the most significant attempts to address the issues of dehumanization was undertaken by Canadian psychiatrist John T. MacCurdy, who published *The Psychology of War* in 1918. For the purpose of linking systematic forms of dehumanization with Neoliberalism, MacCurdy’s thoughts are helpful. As will be shown in Chapter Six and Seven of this study, some perceive Neoliberalism itself as forming a war against both people and the planet.¹⁴⁶ In order to continue building a more comprehensive understanding of dehumanization, MacCurdy’s thoughts are to be explored here.

When the United States joined World War I in 1917, MacCurdy became a member of the American Expeditionary Force, and he visited hospitals in the United Kingdom where shell-shocked soldiers received psychiatric treatment.¹⁴⁷ This formative first-hand experience led MacCurdy to reflect deeply about the psychological dynamics of war, especially the ways in which acts of warfare depend greatly upon group solidarity. As soldiers live in groups that are often covered with powerful ties of community loyalty, he believed such a collective

¹⁴³ Sumner, 9.

¹⁴⁴ Sumner, 14-15.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Henry A. Giroux, *Neoliberalism’s War on Higher Education* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014), 1.

¹⁴⁷ Robert H. Zieger, *America’s Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 57.

devotion made the harsh realities of mass violence more possible.¹⁴⁸ In specifics, MacCurdy wrote about what he deemed to be “perhaps the greatest paradox of human nature”.¹⁴⁹ He expressed that putting self-interests aside for the sake of a larger commitment to others is the “essence of virtue”, yet the equivalent nature of devotion “that makes of a man a benefactor to all mankind can become the direct menace to mankind when focused on a small group”.¹⁵⁰ In recognizing such paradoxical complexity, MacCurdy offers a key insight into the exploration of dehumanization.

While concluding that group loyalty was necessary for acts of warfare, MacCurdy recognized that more research on the subject was required. In specifics, he argued that warfare could not take place unless the members of one group were prepared to kill the members of the other, and such a dilemma raised a significant issue. While taking a human life is made to look relatively easy in films, in real life – according to MacCurdy – the matter is far different, for humans possess strong inhibitions against killing others.¹⁵¹ He therefore wondered how people overcome their ingrained resistance to killing other human beings. In response to such ponderings, MacCurdy hypothesized that the ability to dehumanize is a significant part of the answer. More specifically, he considered generations past in which conflict between communities over territory or belongings required that outsiders were deemed as if they were of alternative species.¹⁵² While advancements in scientific inquiry have since revealed that all members of the human community are bound genetically as *homo sapiens*, it remains unlikely that such awareness is a crucial aspect of our instinctive and intellectual lives, and the consequences of such a disconnect are numerous.¹⁵³ In other words, while it might be rather easy to recognize a similar genetic structure within another mammal, it is a far different and difficult step to understand that the other being is quite like oneself.

In light of MacCurdy’s thoughts, one recognizes that while human beings are participants of a similar species of mammals, such an attentiveness to genetic connectivity does not always calculate deep into the human conscious, as we “have a strong unconscious

¹⁴⁸ John T. MacCurdy, *The Psychology of War* (Boston: John W. Luce and Company, 1918), 40.

¹⁴⁹ MacCurdy, 57.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ MacCurdy, 38-39.

¹⁵² Smith, *Less than Human*, 61.

¹⁵³ MacCurdy, 38-39.

(“automatic”) tendency to think of foreigners as subhuman creatures”.¹⁵⁴ This “gut-level” xenophobic response habitually directs both our attitudes and actions, and thus in times of conflict – whether it is warfare or economic competition – we are given the moral permission to take the life of others “because, deep down, we don’t believe that they are human”.¹⁵⁵ As MacCurdy emphasized, these beliefs are not always conscious, for when tensions are high, the “...unconscious idea that the foreigner belongs to a rival species becomes a conscious belief that he is a pestiferous type of animal”.¹⁵⁶ This insight is critical, for while dehumanization may always exist under the service, in times of conflict the unconscious beliefs turn into conscious action, which in turn has a wide variety of consequences. It is for such reasons that MacCurdy can be credited with “...the first full-blown psychological theory of dehumanization”, which of course, is incredibly useful for the overall aims of this study.¹⁵⁷

2.5 Mechanistic Dehumanization

Based upon a review of MacCurdy, Sumner, Locke, Pico, and Aristotle, one recognizes that dehumanization can be analyzed from an assortment of historical and philosophical viewpoints, each of which contributes towards painting a particular picture of how dehumanization can occur in the modern day era. For the purpose of this study, the various progression of ideas brings forward a groundwork for one concept in particular that is worthy of more focused interest in linking concepts of dehumanization to the realities of Neoliberalism. In specifics, while each of the previously mentioned theorists examines dehumanization in various ways, they collectively move us to consider the systematic dehumanization of some through a particular economic mechanism such as Neoliberalism. Along these lines, for the purpose of displaying the link between conceptions of systemic dehumanization and Neoliberalism, the following section will consider *mechanistic dehumanization* through the research of Nick Haslam, for the work of Haslam most fully explains the ways in which people can be systematically dehumanized through a social mechanism such as Neoliberalism.

¹⁵⁴ Smith, *Less than Human*, 61.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ MacCurdy, 38-39.

¹⁵⁷ Smith, *Less than Human*, 61.

Similar to previously mentioned examinations of more broadly conceived notions of dehumanization, an acceptable conceptualization of mechanistic dehumanization necessitates a strong and sharp grasp of “humanness” – the feature that is blocked when some are recipients of mechanistic dehumanization.¹⁵⁸ Along these lines, Haslam recognizes *uniquely human* (UH) characteristics and *human nature* (HN) as two distinct categories to distinguish “humanness” in relationship to non-humans and/or sub-humans.¹⁵⁹ In specifics, Haslam defines UH as characteristics that “define the boundary that separates humans from the related category of animals”, and HN as normative or fundamental characteristics “that are typical of or central to humans”.¹⁶⁰ The distinction and recognition of UH and HN are critically important in the overall process of understanding mechanistic dehumanization, and later linking mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer of Neoliberalism.

2.5.1 Uniquely Human Characteristics

Uniquely human (UH) characteristics outline and express the border that divides humans from other mammals and associated groupings of creatures.¹⁶¹ While Haslam argues that not enough study has been carried out to consider the characteristics viewed as UH, data assembled by Leyens and others implies that matters of linguistics and communication, higher order cognition, and sophisticated levels of emotion are all critical distinctions.¹⁶² In addition, research by Gosling that focuses on “comparative personality” concludes that “humans are substantially unique in traits involving openness to experience” and conscientiousness.¹⁶³ Also, Demoulin discovered that “emotions judged UH” and “were believed to be morally informative, cognitively saturated, internally caused rather than responsive to the environment, private”, and “emerging late in development”.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, Schwartz and Struch proposed that “prosocial values involving moral sensibility are seen as

¹⁵⁸ Haslam, 252.

¹⁵⁹ Haslam, 256.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² J.Ph. Leyens, A.P. Rodriguez, R.T. Rodriguez, R. Gaunt, P.M. Paladino, and J. Vaes, “Psychological essentialism and the attribution of uniquely human emotions to ingroups and outgroups”, *European Journal of Social Psychology* 31 (2001), 395-411.

¹⁶³ S.D. Gosling, “From mice to men: What can we learn about personality from animal research?” *Psychological Bulletin* 127 (2001), 45–86.

¹⁶⁴ S. Demoulin, J. Ph. Leyens, M.P. Paladino, R.T. Rodriguez, A. P. Rodriguez, J.F. Dovidio, “Dimensions of ‘uniquely’ and ‘non-uniquely’ human emotions”. *Cognition and Emotion* 18 (2004), 71–96.

UH”.¹⁶⁵ Altogether, a general theme emerging within these various findings is that *uniquely human characteristics* (UH) are marked by “cognitive sophistication, culture, refinement, socialization, and internalized moral sensibility”.¹⁶⁶ These matters of distinguishing *uniquely human characteristics* (UH) are of critical importance when trying to define mechanistic dehumanization, and later link mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer of Neoliberalism.

2.5.2 Human Nature

While *uniquely human characteristics* (UH) outline and express the border that divides humans from other mammals and associated groupings of creatures, Haslam argues that being human can also be considered non-comparatively “as the features that are typical and/or central to humans”.¹⁶⁷ Haslam calls such characteristics *human nature* (HN).¹⁶⁸ In other words, features that are commonly or fundamentally human may not be the same as that which distinguishes humans from non-human species. For example, while being in possession of feathers is a fundamental characteristic of birds, it is not a consistent measure for differentiating them from other organisms, just as inquisitiveness may be considered a core trait of being human, yet such qualities are by no means exclusive to the human race.

While Haslam regrets the lack of existing research on UH, he claims even less can be found on that which distinguishes *human nature* (HN). According to Haslam, particular studies have investigated diverse understandings of HN, but a limited number of scholars have sought to describe common understandings.¹⁶⁹ As a result, people are likely to interpret HN in a different way from UH. First, “UH characteristics primarily reflect socialization and culture, whereas HN characteristics would be expected to link humans to the natural world, and their inborn biological dispositions”.¹⁷⁰ Second, HN ought to be standard, and thus representative of a species and predominant within populations and widespread across the

¹⁶⁵ S.H. Schwartz and N. Struch, “Values, stereotypes, and intergroup antagonism”, in D. Bar-Tal, C. F. Grauman, A. W. Kruglanski, & W. Stroebe (Eds.), *Stereotypes and prejudice: Changing Conceptions* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1989), 151-167.

¹⁶⁶ Haslam, 256.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ L.S. Wrightsman, *Assumptions about human nature: Implications for researchers and practitioners*, (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1992).

¹⁷⁰ Haslam, 256.

boundaries of culture. “As UH characteristics reflect social learning and refinement, they might be expected to vary across cultures and differentiate within populations”.¹⁷¹ Overall, as Demoulin and others have shown, what is *uniquely human* (UH) in one location may not correspond to all of humans, thus UH varies across cultures.¹⁷²

2.5.3 Two Corresponding Forms of Dehumanization

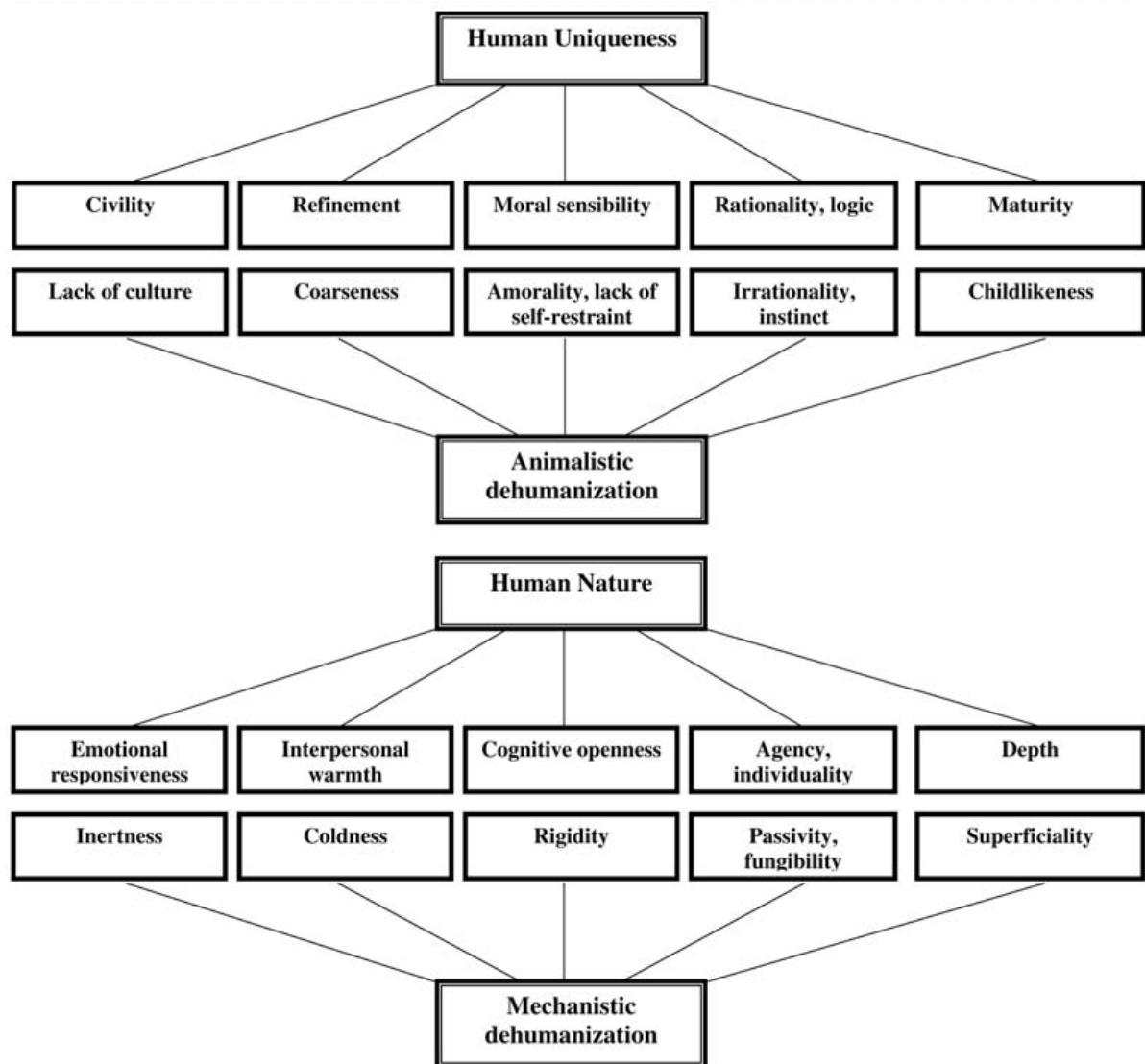
In light of such distinctive aspects of humanness (UH and HN), Haslam argues that two distinctive forms of dehumanization take place when UH or HN is denied to others.¹⁷³ In specifics, Haslam argues that *uniquely human characteristics* (UH) relate to *animalistic* dehumanization, whereas *human nature* (HN) corresponds to *mechanistic* dehumanization, as the following diagram shows:¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Demoulin et al., 71–96.

¹⁷³ Haslam, 257.

¹⁷⁴ The diagram provided is taken from: Haslam, 257.



As detailed in the above diagram, when UH features are refused to others, those on the receiving end of such dehumanization are perceived as lacking in “refinement, civility, moral sensibility, and higher cognition”.¹⁷⁵ In addition, they are perceived as abrasive, unsophisticated, indulgent, and dense. Furthermore, such people are perceived as less cognitively mediated than others, and are thus increasingly motivated by cravings and impulses. As UH features are viewed as emerging farther along in life, their rejection may be linked with an understanding of others as simple, juvenile, or somehow stunted. In a similar fashion, if UH features are considered to possess an ethical element, those who are dehumanized are seen as immoral and/or amoral, or in others words, prone to violate (or completely lacking) a moral code.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

To expand upon the above diagram further, if particular individuals are understood as being deficient in that which distinguishes them from animals (UH), they are thus viewed as animal-like, or sub-human. This “*animalistic* form of dehumanization therefore resembles infra-humanization, but applies broadly to UH characteristics beyond secondary emotions”.¹⁷⁶ All together, this type of dehumanization may include a clear appraisal of humans to animals, and might not be reduced to intergroup contexts.

In contrast to the denial of UH, when HN is denied to others, those on the receiving end of dehumanization are viewed as deficient in “emotion, warmth, cognitive openness, individual agency”, and depth.¹⁷⁷ More specifically, as the dehumanized individual is viewed as lacking in emotion and warmth, such a person will thus also be viewed as inert and cold. As a result, a denial of their curiosity and flexibility (cognitive openness) will give the dehumanized an image of rigidity, and a denial of their “individual agency represents them as interchangeable and passive, their behavior caused (rather than propelled) by personal will”.¹⁷⁸ And so, for the reason that those on the receiving end of such dehumanization are viewed as deprived of certain characteristics, people deprived of HN are characterized in ways that stress artificial characteristics. As a result, this amalgamation of ascribed attributes – unresponsiveness, aloofness, stiffness, and lack of action – embodies a perception of others as an item, object, or form of automation, thus this particular brand of dehumanization can be articulated as *mechanistic* in nature.

Whereas the animalistic brand of dehumanization depends upon an intentional comparison of humans and animals, the mechanistic brand compares humans more closely with machines. In other words, those who compare people to animals seek to degrade and humiliate, yet the mechanistic brand of dehumanization has a unique character, which relates more directly to Neoliberalism. Haslam argues that the mechanistic manner of dehumanization has a far different emotional mark when compared and contrasted to that associated with animalistic dehumanization.¹⁷⁹ As mechanistic dehumanization involves

¹⁷⁶ J. Ph. Levens, B.P. Cortes, S. Demoulin, J.F. Dovidio, S.T. Fiske, R. Gaunt, et al, “Emotional prejudice, essentialism, and nationalism, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 33 (2003), 704-717.

¹⁷⁷ Haslam, 257.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Haslam, 258

hostility and characterizes others as emotionless, mechanical, submissive, and deficient of wisdom, such implies a level of apathy more than repulsion. Consequently, those on the receiving end of mechanistic dehumanization are perceived as missing the sort of independent agency that triggers robust reaction and are more prone to be viewed as “emotionally inert”.¹⁸⁰

In addition to that which is stated above, animalistic dehumanization and mechanistic dehumanization differ in the ways they are presented in the use of language. For example, when the animalistic form of dehumanization is incited; the matter of hierarchical contrast often arises, which is comparable to an understanding of the aforementioned Chain of Being from Aristotle and reflections from David Livingstone Smith. The de-humanized is sub-human or infra-human and is therefore left degraded. Furthermore, a portrayal of others as lacking UH characteristics is understood as placing them as subordinate to others on a rank of development and/or evolution, thus a link with the Chain of Being.

In contrast to animalistic forms of dehumanization, the mechanistic form involves “a sense of horizontal comparison based on a perceived dissimilarity”.¹⁸¹ For that reason, a person who is refused HN is viewed as a *nonhuman* more than *subhuman*. To the extent that “HN represents what is fundamentally and normatively human”, then “those judged to lack it are seen as distant, alien, or foreign”, or as Haslam states, “displaced away rather downward”.¹⁸² With such thoughts in mind, one recognizes the opportunity to relate mechanistic dehumanization more fully with systems and structures that “displace away” members of humankind, and as detailed previously, one can argue that one such system is Neoliberalism.

2.6 Mechanistic Dehumanization and its Relationship to Neoliberal Capitalism

A key element to this study is the assertion that mechanistic dehumanization is a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism. More on this claim needs to be said here,

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ K.D. Locke, “Connecting the horizontal dimension of social comparison with self-worth and self-confidence”. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31 (June, 2005), 795-803.

¹⁸² Haslam, 259.

beginning with the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., offered at the Riverside Church of New York in 1967:

We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-orientated society to a person-orientated society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered.¹⁸³

When economic indicators are given precedence over ethics and principles when making choices about the direction of society, humans lose their dignity as a result of mechanistic dehumanization. More specifically, when economic forces are left unrestrained by a guiding ethical vision, a result is that corporate entities grow in sovereignty yet human beings decrease in their basic human rights. The “corporations are people” movement resulting from the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010) decision of the United States Supreme Court is an indication of this perspective.¹⁸⁴ Corporations can be viewed as people when people are mechanistically dehumanized, as their roles in society are diminished to express only their economic function as producers, consumers, and potential investors. Mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism is therefore observed in three primary ways: workers, consumers and investors.¹⁸⁵

First, the mechanistic dehumanization of workers

The mechanistic dehumanization of workers within Neoliberal Capitalism becomes clear when one recognizes the model that exemplifies its ideal worker: *the worker as machine*. A machine is extremely proficient, unrelenting, trained for timeliness (such as, consistently able to finish assigned tasks within the authorized time-period without deserving

¹⁸³ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence” A Speech to the Riverside Church (New York, New York: April 4, 1967).

¹⁸⁴ *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, No. 08-205, 558 U.S. 310 (2010), was a United States constitutional law case that examined the limitations of campaign finance expenditures by select institutions. The United States Supreme Court, by a vote of 5-4, decided that the First Amendment forbid the federal government from limiting independent political disbursements by nonprofit corporations. The benchmarks expressed by the Supreme Court in this landmark ruling, such as “corporations are people”, have in turn led to additional privileges for a number of for-profit corporations, labor unions and other institutions.

¹⁸⁵ This section is indebted to the excellent work of Laura Rediehs, “From Dehumanization to Rehumanization”, *Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs* (February 14, 2014).
http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/ethics_online/0090

overtime wages), whole-heartedly deferential and obedient, and undisturbed by troublesome mindsets or interfering demands driven by seeking to have life other than work. This is an example of mechanistic dehumanization serving as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism. More specifically, the current model of mechanistic dehumanization can be viewed when comparing human beings with smart technology for contemporary machinery: outdated version are frequently exchanged with up-to-date and “new and improved”, shiny, more attractive looking, and advanced interfaces, all while being more purposeful, proficient, dependable, and accessible in smaller packaging that can do even more than the elder, clunker, less-productive versions. What this all means for human beings in the Neoliberal workforce is that they are consistently and increasingly required to produce more in less time under the consistent threat of replacement, if they cannot meet the increasing demands. Like a household item that can be replaced for a newer, faster, and cheaper model, human beings in Neoliberal Capitalism are viewed in a similar fashion, thus the essence of mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer.

Second, the mechanistic dehumanization of consumers

While much is often said about the so-called personal purchasing power inherent in Neoliberal Capitalism (which is made manifest in phrases such as, “the customer is always right”), consumers are objects of mechanistic dehumanization, as the so-called invisible hand of the marketplace is relatively uninterested in addressing human necessities and longings, but far more interested in offering cheap goods and services than can be purchased by the largest amount of customers. In other words, Neoliberal Capitalism is more concerned with the desires of manufacturing than it is of human beings, and such is manifested by strategically manipulating human anxieties, doubts, and addictions, all in order to increase the level of consumption. This is an example of mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism. When the human community is judged by what it possesses and wears, and our communal value and character is regulated by our material goods, such expresses a vivid example of mechanistic dehumanization. Along such lines, since the most expensive (and exclusive) products are often associated with respected social standing, it in turn creates an aggressive and competitive paradigm that damages the pursuit of community.

While “the customer is always right” continues to be used as a popular slogan to communicate power for individual consumers, the statement is disconnected from reality in Neoliberal Capitalism, which is additional evidence of being sourced and sustained by mechanistic dehumanization.¹⁸⁶ Whereas individual consumers do indeed possess a degree of choice in how they seek to spend (if they are fortunate to possess the disposable income to do so), the reality is that individuals are mostly powerless within the larger context of manufacturing trends. The phenomenon of technological advances, for example, provides a worthwhile insight which will be treated here briefly.

The contemporary reality of frequent technological alterations has dramatically transformed the nature of everyday work. While such changes are often branded as advances, mechanistic dehumanization is present, for power is removed from people and once again put into the hands of the marketplace and so-called market research. For example, the rapid pace of technological obsolescence requires people to “upgrade” with an increasing degree of frequency. For those that choose not to make such technological changes, their machines and methods conflict with the competition of other organizations, as well as the accepted norms within their own institutions. The consistent changes require a significant level of investment, not merely in financial terms, but also in time and energy. With each changes comes with it the time and energy required to apply the new technology into prior routines, and employees are pushed to learn new ways of completing their work. The so-called upgrades promise to be improvements, yet the reality is that many lose a great deal of effectiveness, as an increasing amount of time is utilized toward consistently adjusting to new technologies while also being expected to keep producing at the same level as before. In total, it appears that changes in technology have dictated human behavior, rather than serving human needs and concerns. The customer is not always right, yet the customer often has little choice but to comply, which is additional evidence of mechanistic dehumanization within Neoliberal Capitalism.

Third, the mechanistic dehumanization of investors

Investors within Neoliberal Capitalism are often viewed as those who are most often allowed to remain most fully human, as they gain authority to manage the flow of production,

¹⁸⁶ "The customer is always right" is a statement attributed to innovative retailers such as Harry Gordon Selfridge (1858-1947), John Wanamaker (1838-1922) and Marshall Field (1834-1906).

and through their boosted levels of wealth, receive entrance to a lifestyle that offers more opportunities to avoid the dehumanizing consequences of working and consuming. However, the context and culture of investment in Neoliberal Capitalism also carries with it a significant degree of mechanistic dehumanization. For example, while some investors may be concerned with ethical and principled investing, the leading philosophy is that one invests through Neoliberal Capitalism for the prime purpose of making more money. Within such a philosophy, the primary element for consideration is the probability of a return on one's investment, rather than what the investment itself is actually accomplishing. In other words, *profits are often placed before people, and people are viewed as a means to an end, which is the core of mechanistic dehumanization*. Along these lines, the overall importance of viewing investment as a means of making money in turn makes investors more susceptible to the mechanistic dehumanization of equating wealth and worth. Investors are also predisposed to equate money with power without recognizing the boundaries of that power, or other approaches to more humanizing foundations of power.

To equate wealth with worth is mechanistically dehumanizing most clearly due to the reality that being human is about far more than mere economic standing. However, a more treacherous risk is that wealth also brings communal privileges that both the wealthy and non-wealthy are tempted to conclude that the wealthy deserve. In other words, wealth not only equates to worth, but in Neoliberal Capitalism it appears to link to virtue as well. One can indeed argue that the wealthy do indeed deserve such rights, but only for the reason that all people are deserving of consideration, regard, compassion, security, shelter, opportunity, support, and understanding. Within Neoliberal Capitalism there are numerous ways for people to grow in wealth, and since not all are virtuous in nature, to equate wealth with worth and virtue is a sign of mechanistic dehumanization.

In total, the mechanistic dehumanization of workers, consumers and investors within Neoliberal Capitalism displays a portion of the distinction between mechanistic dehumanization from animalistic dehumanization. While the animalistic form of dehumanization is most represented in the framework of inter-ethnic "antagonism (genocide, racial stereotyping, attitudes toward immigrants)", the mechanistic form is shown through standardization, instrumental productivity, impersonal performance, underlying determinism,

and imposed indifference.¹⁸⁷ These attributes of mechanistic dehumanization relate directly to the previously mentioned notion of *anthropological poverty* as detailed by Englebert Mveng.¹⁸⁸ Within this line of thought one may relate mechanistic dehumanization with Neoliberalism and anthropological poverty, as Neoliberalism functions in ways that deprives humans of their human nature (HN). As characteristics that are common and/or critical to humans determine HN, a structure that removes such features through anthropological poverty could therefore be categorized as directly related with mechanistic dehumanization.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has sketched the recent history of Neoliberalism in the USA, offered a number of historical perspectives on dehumanization, and then posited that a particular form of dehumanization – mechanistic dehumanization – is a source and sustainer of Neoliberalism. In doing so, this chapter introduced the specific relationship between mechanistic dehumanization and Neoliberalism, for Neoliberalism strips away human nature (HN) due to the anthropological poverty that results from viewing human beings as a means to an end within an economic machine. All together, the relationship between Neoliberalism and mechanistic dehumanization is deemed to be more clear, thus an opening is provided to consider how Mission as Accompaniment can serve as a response to such mechanistic dehumanization. For example, while this current chapter has focused mostly on economical, psychological, and philosophical analysis, a wide number of theological questions emerge in response to mechanistic dehumanization and Neoliberalism. Along these lines, the chapter that follows will consider humanness and mechanistic dehumanization from a theological lens, as well as Mission as Accompaniment in its current form, all in order to provide a theological and missiological viewpoint by which mechanistic dehumanization can be more fully examined and countered.

¹⁸⁷ Haslam, 257.

¹⁸⁸ Mveng, 220-221.

CHAPTER 3: MISSION AS ACCOMPANIMENT

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the development of Neoliberalism in the USA, offered several notions of dehumanization in general, and then linked a specific type of dehumanization – mechanistic dehumanization – as a source and sustainer of Neoliberalism. In doing so, the previous chapter offered a space to consider Mission as Accompaniment as a potential response to mechanistic dehumanization. Along these lines, this chapter will examine humanness and mechanistic dehumanization from a theological perspective, and then introduce Mission as Accompaniment as a response to mechanistic dehumanization.

3.2 Being Human: *Imago Dei* and Human Dignity

Nick Haslam recognizes *uniquely human* (UH) characteristics and *human nature* (HN) as two distinct categories to distinguish humanness in relationship to non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans. This chapter offers the *Imago Dei* as that which can introduce such distinctions from a theological perspective. In doing so, the following section will explore *Imago Dei* for the purpose of offering a theological lens to distinguish humanness in relationship to non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans. In doing so, this section will subsequently provide a grounding to more fully consider mechanistic dehumanization from the theological perspective of *Imago Trinitatis*, and thus offer a foundation by which Mission as Accompaniment can be considered as a response to mechanistic dehumanization.

One of the core proclamations of Christian faith is the claim that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, often regarded as the *Imago Dei*.¹ However, although the claim of *Imago Dei* is frequently viewed as central, there are diverse understandings of what exactly reflects God's image in human beings. For example, theologians such as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, and Karl Barth, to name a few, have all examined the *Imago Dei* and drawn an array of conclusions.² In summary, following generations of study and theological exploration, a universal understanding of *Imago Dei*

¹ Isaiah Nengean. *The Imago Dei as the Imago Trinitatis: Jürgen Moltmann's Doctrine of the Image of God* (New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2013), 1.

² Ibid.

does not exist, which is similar to the previously mentioned diversity of studies surrounding what it means to be human.

Due in part to such theological diversity, an expansive examination of *Imago Dei* is not intended here. Nevertheless, one can briefly assert the two most common understandings of *Imago Dei* as “substantive” and “relational”.³ As C. Ben Mitchell notes, the “substantive understanding” steers our comprehension to certain characteristics of human nature (such as rationality) that distinguish humankind from the rest of God’s created order.⁴ The “relational understanding”, then again, interprets human beings as in God’s image “when they live in right relationship to God” by entering into the offering and accepting of service and grace that most embodies “the divine life”.⁵ These two understandings of *Imago Dei* can be adjoined if relational is considered as a reality that can be lost or diminished through sin, and the substantive as fully capable of enduring (though, no doubt, reduced or altered) even in the midst of sin.

A comprehensive exploration of *Imago Dei* is, in and of itself, a massive undertaking that has spanned hundreds of years.⁶ Accordingly, the totality of scholarship on *Imago Dei* is nearly overwhelming, which is amplified in part by the relative lack of biblical references by which *Imago Dei* is based. As stated by J. Richard Middleton, “The paucity of biblical references to the *imago Dei* contributes to a wide diversity of opinion over what it means to be made in God’s image”.⁷ However, since there is such wide-ranging thought surrounding the *Imago Dei*, instead of attempting to provide attention to numerous existing theories, this section will consider a particular thread of thought surrounding *Imago Dei*: the dignity of human beings. The objective is to introduce a theological lens to distinguish humanness in relationship to non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans.

According to Thomas Albert Howard, the nature of human dignity was much discussed during the years following World War II. In turn, theologians paid renewed

³ C. Ben Mitchel, “The Audacity of the Imago Dei: The Legacy and Uncertain Future of Human Dignity” in *Imago Dei: Dignity in Ecumenical Perspective* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 79-111.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Nengean, 1.

⁷ J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 17.

attention to *Imago Dei* as a basis by which human dignity is grounded and expressed.⁸ From the Nazi Holocaust and Nuremberg trials, to the struggle for U.S. civil rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the post-1945 moral-political landscape was – and continues to be – powered by appeals to human dignity, many of which can be traced to *Imago Dei*.⁹ In light of the previously made connection between mechanistic dehumanization and Neoliberalism with anthropological poverty, such attention to *Imago Dei* and human dignity is notable for the overall purpose of this study.

Howard observed that the ethical and intellectual roots of the mainstream human dignity “moral vocabulary” has numerous foundations, yet hardly any would repudiate the reality that it all is beholden to the scriptural, Judeo-Christian conception of humanity as created in the image and likeness of God,¹⁰ found most specifically in Genesis 1:26-27 (NRSV):

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness....”
So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

For people that identify with the Christian faith, regardless of doctrine or ecclesial identity, this understanding of human dignity and esteem has been developed to communicate the irreplaceable value of human beings as displaying a divine imprint.

In addition to the more recent post-World War II history, throughout the narrative of Christianity one finds consistent appeals to *Imago Dei* as a key indicator of human worth and dignity that distinguishes humanness from non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans.¹¹ Nevertheless, just as there are numerous conceptions as to the precise meaning of *Imago Dei*, there exists a mass diversity of ideas about what is meant by human “dignity”, which in turn complicates the overall matter even further. For example, from a western etymological perspective, dignity (*dignitas*) “arguably owed more to classical than to Christian thought”:¹²

⁸ Thomas Albert Howard, *Imago Dei: Dignity in Ecumenical Perspective* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 1.

⁹ Howard, 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Howard, 3.

¹² Ibid.

for in the classic Roman context *dignitas* was the volume of individual authority that a male inhabitant attained throughout his existence – a notion we might currently connect more with status or reputation.¹³ In total, *dignitas* possesses a “hierarchical, aristocratic connotation” that does breed acceptance for those seeking an egalitarian age.¹⁴

In addition to the above etymological complexities and concerns, conceptions of human dignity are also challenged on the basis of “human exceptionalism” and “speciesism”.¹⁵ More specifically, some argue that human dignity is too often overvalued to the point in which humans fail to comprehend their obligations to animals and the Earth.¹⁶ Furthermore, as Howard indicates:

When moral claims about the human person are made, they are usually made on liberal, broadly Kantian grounds, appealing to rationality, equality, autonomy, freedom, and tolerance. From this perspective, notions of the image of God and human dignity appear somewhat nostalgic, religious residues oddly sedimented in our contemporary moral discourse.¹⁷

The notion of human dignity in general, especially as it is linked to *Imago Dei* in particular, is a target of strong and sustained critique. For example, in response to the U.S. President’s Council on Bioethics’ report,¹⁸ Steven Pinker remarks that human dignity is ultimately an irrelevant “religious concept”, and therefore “a squishy, subjective notion, hardly up to the heavyweight moral demands assigned to it”.¹⁹ In a similar fashion, Ruth Macklin argues that “dignity is a useless concept” and “can be eliminated without any loss of content”.²⁰ In review, both Pinker and Macklin, and others who may share their critique surrounding human dignity, are “more likely to ground [their conceptions of dignity] not in an innate God-given essence... but in human beings’ highly developed capacities for rationality and autonomy”.²¹

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ryder, Richard. “Speciesism Again: the original leaflet”. *Critical Society* 2, (Spring, 2010), 1-2.

¹⁶ Adam Schulman, “Bioethics and the Question of Human Dignity,” in *Human Dignity and Bioethics: Essays Commissioned by the President’s Commission on Bioethics* (Washington, D.C., 2008), 6-7.

¹⁷ Howard, 4.

¹⁸ *Human Dignity and Bioethics: Essays Commissioned by the President’s Council on Bioethics* (2008).

¹⁹ Steven Pinker, “The Stupidity of Dignity,” *The New Republic* (May 28, 2008), 28-31.

²⁰ Ruth Macklin, “Dignity Is a Useless Concept,” *British Medical Journal* 327 (December 20-27, 2003), 1419-1420.

²¹ Howard, 5.

As a result, although *Imago Dei* is widely used as a theological lens to distinguish humanness in relationship to non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans, one also recognizes that *Imago Dei* and human dignity are notions that are by no means universally accepted.

While concepts of *Imago Dei* and human dignity are both under ongoing investigation, both notions remain important for the overall task of providing a theological lens to distinguish humanness in relationship to non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans. In other words, from a theological perspective there are unique rights and responsibilities of being human that are not present for other members of the created order. In contrast to the challenges brought to concepts of both human dignity and *Imago Dei*, Brad Gregory notes that appeals to human rights and dignity can only be genuinely affirmed if “human beings are more than biological matter”.²² Despite the expanding secularization of western societies since World War II,²³ even the recent (and increasingly secular) examination of human dignity and basic human rights relies on preserving to some degree (even without affirming) the understanding that all humans are created in the image of God, a concept that might be grounded in nature “so long as nature was regarded as creation whether overtly recognized as such or not”.²⁴ However, if “nature” is not considered to be “creation”, then there are ultimately no “creatures”, and humans are to be considered just another ordinary mammal that came into being through evolution, no more “endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights” than is any other collection of matter.²⁵

In a similar stream of theological thought, philosopher and ethicist Gilbert Meilaender identifies two ultimate “threats” to the *Imago Dei* as a basis for distinguishing humanness in relationship to non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans: gods and beasts.²⁶ More specifically, since human dignity assigns value to a specific creature, he understood the exploration of human dignity as that which ultimately invites humans to deliberate their role as neither the greatest or the worst sort of being we might be able to envision. As human beings are unique “in-between” brands of creatures that are “lower than gods” and “higher

²² Brad Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 381.

²³ Mary Eberstadt, *How the West Really Lost God: A New Theory of Secularization* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2013), 3.

²⁴ Gregory, 381.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Gilbert Meilaender, *Neither Beast Nor God: The Dignity of the Human Person* (New York: Encounter Books, 2009), 4.

than the beasts”, the vocabulary of human dignity is merely “a placeholder, a shorthand expression for a certain vision of the human”.²⁷ As a result, humans are more than just a collection of physical bodies, yet also far more than a collaboration of minds and spirits, thus humans are “the place where body and spirit meet and are united” in and through “the life of each person”.²⁸ As Augustine writes (with a time-tested phrase that powerfully captures the conception), God created humans as “a kind of mean between angels and beasts”.²⁹

Meilaender argues that a rightly constituted Christian anthropology “views the human person as neither beast nor God, but somewhere in between, invested with the image of the Creator, but still a creature”.³⁰ In other words, Meilaender argued that human life is marked by “characteristic powers and capacities”, yet also “characteristic limits and, even, weaknesses”.³¹ In order to distinguish human dignity from that of non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans, human beings themselves need to “honor and uphold that peculiar, in-between character of human life”.³² In review, Meilaender offers an appropriate summation of that which distinguishes humans from non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans, for he offers a middle ground between the aforementioned concerns of human exceptionalism and that of what can be deemed human depreciation. One can therefore affirm *Imago Dei* from either the substantive or relational understanding, and yet continue to possess a theological basis for understanding that which distinguishes humanness in relationship to non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans.

3.3 Mechanistic Dehumanization in Opposition to the *Imago Trinitatis*

In order for Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization, one must critique mechanistic dehumanization from a theological lens. In pursuit of such aims, the previous section of this chapter helped to determine what distinguishes humanness based upon the *Imago Dei*, which in turn opens a space by which mechanistic dehumanization can be more effectively examined from a theological lens. The following section will examine mechanistic dehumanization from a theological perspective,

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Augustine, *City of God*, Volume 1, Translated by Marcus Dods (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1888), 369.

³⁰ Meilaender, *Neither Beast Nor God*, 4.

³¹ Meilaender, *Neither Beast Nor God*, 5.

³² Ibid.

with particular attention given to a distinctive strand of *Imago Dei*, that which is known as *Imago Trinitatis*.

In light of aforementioned thoughts on *Imago Dei* and human dignity, one recognizes that mechanistic dehumanization is, in many ways, an opponent to that which constitutes humanness from a theological perspective. As *Imago Dei* affirms the dignity of human beings, mechanistic dehumanization is in conflict to such a notion, for mechanistic dehumanization includes – among other things – distance and indifference rather than dignity and distinction. Since mechanistic dehumanization includes “an abstract and deindividuated view of others” and “a tendency to explain the other’s behavior in nonintentional, causal terms”,³³ one recognizes the need for Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization in light of *Imago Dei* and the importance of human dignity.

While *Imago Dei* provides a theological groundwork to distinguish humanness in relationship to non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans, a theological investigation of mechanistic dehumanization leads to a related, yet distinct, theological path. More specifically, for the task at hand one is drawn to the work of Jürgen Moltmann and *Imago Trinitatis* to better investigate mechanistic dehumanization from a theological perspective. More specifically, in making the Doctrine of the Trinity as a foundation for all theologies, Moltmann understood the *Imago Dei* more precisely as the *Imago Trinitatis*. As a result, due to both its relationship to and distinctiveness from *Imago Dei*, the *Imago Trinitatis* from Moltmann will function as an important lens by which mechanistic dehumanization is examined from a theological perspective.

Through his investigation into the theoretical and cultural depths of human dignity, Isaiah Nengean notes that Jürgen Moltmann insists upon the *Imago Dei* as *Imago Trinitatis* because Moltmann “rejects classical theism or monotheism”.³⁴ As Moltmann argues, precise and “strict” classical monotheism requires a theocratic understanding and firm application.³⁵ Therefore, once such a monotheism is introduced into the historical dogma and ritual life of the Christian church, “faith in Christ is threatened”, as “Christ must either recede into the

³³ Haslam, 262.

³⁴ Nengean, 2.

³⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, translated by Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 131.

series of the prophets, giving way to the One God”, or he must vanish “into the One God as one of his manifestations”.³⁶ Therefore, according to Moltmann, the authoritarian conception of strict monotheism “makes theological Christology impossible”, as “the One can neither be parted nor imparted”.³⁷ In total, Moltmann argues that strict monotheism forces us to comprehend God without Christ, and also, to consider Christ without God, which in turn is a threat to the notion of human dignity.

When seeking to understand why Moltmann so fervently distanced himself from classical monotheism and *Imago Dei*, his political atmosphere in Germany appeared to be significantly instrumental. One can therefore argue that a direct experience of dehumanization within Germany provided an interpretive context in which Moltmann developed his theological content of *Imago Trinitatis*. These contextual considerations are deeply informative when viewing mechanistic dehumanization from the theological lens of *Imago Trinitatis*. As Moltmann stated, Adolf Hitler confessed belief in God “the Almighty”, and Hitler’s particular understanding of such an Almighty God was that of an “apathetic deity” who controls all and is controlled by none, who directs everything and grieves over nothing, and can merely speak and give orders and never need to listen or receive.³⁸ As Moltmann so pointedly articulates, “All absolutist rulers in history have taken the stage on the model of this picture of God, from Genghis Khan to Hitler”.³⁹

In contrast to more common understandings of *Imago Dei* that are rooted in classical monotheism, Moltmann offers that “likeness to God means God’s relationship to human beings first of all, and only then, and as a consequence of that, the human being’s relationship to God”.⁴⁰ These thoughts on relationships and connectedness as expressions of God’s divine image provide a striking lens to consider the consequences of mechanistic dehumanization. Moltmann’s understanding of the Biblical narrative reveals that God’s image is not discovered merely in the individual “soul, elevated above the body”, but rather in “men and women in their wholeness,” through their beloved and inherent communities alongside each

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology*, translated by Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 182.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, translated by Margaret Kohl. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 79.

other, are in God's image.⁴¹ This public and personal, social, and relational conception of what it means to be created in the image of God suggests that God is not understood by means of "self-knowledge in the depths of the individual soul", but rather, God is most fully encountered and made known in the relationships of community. Therefore, when it comes to humans as being in the image of God, it is not the private role of individuals to be in relationship with God and thus mirror God's energy and splendor; rather, it is the task of the whole human community.

Moltmann's communal perception of the image of God represents a theological protest to the "individualistic characteristics of the classical theistic understanding of God – His absolute oneness – as well as His image in human beings".⁴² In strong contrast to a more classical understanding, Moltmann posits that it is the entire community of people who actually mirror the image of God on Earth. In other words, the *Imago Trinitatis* reveals that mechanistic dehumanization threatens the notion of human dignity in *Imago Trinitatis* and thus requires a theologically grounded intervention.⁴³ In order to move forward in such a response to mechanistic dehumanization, God is best understood as an involved and intimate "relationship of community," that is multidimensional and multi-leveled.⁴⁴ Such is, according to Moltmann, "the fundamental idea behind non-hierarchical, decentralized, confederate theology", which in turn – for the purpose of this study – creates a significant theological tool in response to mechanistic dehumanization.⁴⁵ Moltmann argues:

If we cease to understand God monotheistically as the one, absolute subject, but instead see him in a Trinitarian sense as the unity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, we can then no longer, either, conceive his relationship to the world he has created as a one-sided relationship of dominion.⁴⁶

Human relationships, through the ultimate model of the God-human relationship, are reflections of the Trinitarian companionship within and between the Creator/Father,

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Nengean, 3.

⁴³ Haslam, 262.

⁴⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, translated by Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Savior/Son, and Advocate/Holy Spirit. As a result, one can argue that what ultimately distinguishes humans from non-humans and/or so-called sub-humans, from a theological perspective informed by the *Imago Trinitatis*, is the particular God-human connection and resulting human-to-human relationship. Along these lines, Moltmann further argues that the inward companionship of the Trinitarian community is embodied in the outward and visible midst of human community, and is thus demonstrated in humans “through creation and redemption”.⁴⁷ This relational correlation of humankind relates to the Trinitarian communion that is fashioned through the communal indwelling of the Creator/Father in the Savior/Son, and of the Savior/Son in the Creator/Father through the Advocate/Holy Spirit.

It is the *relations* in the Trinity which are levels represented on earth through the *imago Trinitatis*, not levels of the Trinitarian *constitution*. Just as three Persons of the Trinity are ‘one’ in a wholly unique way, so, *similarly*, human beings are *imago Trinitatis* in their personal fellowship with one another.⁴⁸

The above thoughts from Moltmann serve as theological grounding to examine mechanistic dehumanization. Among other things, Moltmann argues that “the sociality of the divine life is mirrored in creation through human interaction with one another”, which is a direct contrast to the realities of mechanistic dehumanization.⁴⁹ From the standpoint of examining the notion of human dignity, Nengean concludes that “Moltmann thinks God is not separate or distinct from His people but actually present with His people and shining His image toward eschatological glorification”.⁵⁰ As will be argued repeatedly throughout this study, mechanistic dehumanization is a means by which such presence of God among all people is directly opposed, thus the need for Mission as Accompaniment to effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization becomes more clear and urgent.

3.4 Mission as Accompaniment as a Response to Mechanistic Dehumanization

Mechanistic dehumanization requires a theological response in which the *Imago Trinitatis* plays a key role. First, however, this section will examine the notion of Mission as

⁴⁷ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 241.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Nengean, 4.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Accompaniment. In doing so, this section seeks to consider the contemporary developments of Mission as Accompaniment and examine its strengths and weaknesses as a response toward mechanistic dehumanization.⁵¹ In summary, this section seeks to more fully examine Mission as Accompaniment, consider its appropriation into the ELCA Global Mission, offer ways to build upon Mission as Accompaniment and therefore shift the focus of ELCA Global Mission's engagement in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

3.4.1 Mission as Accompaniment: Origins

Through its planning document, *Global Mission in the 21st Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God's Mission*,⁵² the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) Global Mission articulates the following understanding of accompaniment:

We understand *accompaniment* as walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality. The basis for this *accompaniment*, or what the New Testament calls *koinonia*, is found in the God-human relationship in which God accompanies us in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.⁵³

According to current Executive Director of ELCA Global Mission Rafael Malpica Padilla, the "beginnings" of Mission as Accompaniment took place in 1993 through his inaugural exploration to Latin America as the ELCA Division for Global Mission (ELCA-DGM) area program director.⁵⁴ While ELCA-DGM had already initiated a process intended to increase interdependence and mutuality in global mission, companion churches in Latin America developed a perception of disconnect from their North American counterparts due to significant amounts of miscommunication and various other factors.⁵⁵ Malpica states in reflection upon his visit to Latin America, "I discovered what was well known to many

⁵¹ The following sections of this chapter will build upon previous research in: Brian E. Konkol, *Mission Possible? Power, Truth-Telling, and the Pursuit of Mission as Accompaniment*, (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 2011), 18-62.

⁵² ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*.

⁵³ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

⁵⁴ As stated in the opening chapter of this study, The ELCA Division for Global Mission (DGM) would later change its name to Global Mission (GM). This occurred on February 1, 2006 when the ELCA reorganized and all "divisions" became "units", and "boards" became "program committees".

⁵⁵ Padilla, 87.

Protestant mission agencies in the United States; the feeling of abandonment among the churches in that region”.⁵⁶

The onset of discussions between the ELCA and its global companions in Latin America were initiated in the context of a much larger “time of reassessment” among global church companions.⁵⁷ More specifically, questions and concerns about the use and abuse of economic and ecclesial power led many from across the globe to critique the nature of ongoing relationships between “Global (the churches of the North or Western World, also formerly known as “sending” or “older” churches)” and “World Christianity (the churches of the South and East, formerly known as “receiving” or “younger” churches)”.⁵⁸ For nearly half a century, a growing number of discussions were dedicated toward considering the nature of global companionship, yet much of the dialogue revolved around matters that were mostly internal to the various companion churches, such as the ability to account for financial matters and the sending and supervision of overseas missionaries.⁵⁹ However, the growing and alarming chasm between the wealthy and the poor worldwide – a chasm most observers agreed was due to the functioning of the neoliberal capitalist system – profoundly affected the determination of power dynamics between companion churches. While Western churches such as the ELCA were in a strong position to benefit from such economic inequalities, they were consistently challenged – both internally and externally – to serve in unity and commonality alongside their (less financially secure) global companions. As a result, while negotiations surrounding the appropriation of power had previously dealt mostly with in-house matters, such conversations gradually shifted to matters of larger concern that were external to the church, such as the exercise of “dominating power” within the broader socio-economic contexts in which they existed.⁶⁰ In total, the ELCA Global Mission’s development of Mission as Accompaniment took place at a time when the Global and World churches were challenged, not only to reassess their relationships with each other, but also to reconsider their present and historical relationships to the circumstances and settings in which they served.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Jonathan S. Barnes, *Power and Partnership: A History of the Protestant Mission Movement* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 298.

⁵⁸ Barnes, *Power and Partnership*, 298-299. Barnes explains the terms “Global Christianity” and “World Christianity” on page 1 with reference to: Sanneh, 22.

⁵⁹ Barnes, *Power and Partnership*, 298.

⁶⁰ Barnes, *Power and Partnership*, 298-299.

In the larger context of reassessment surrounding companionship relations around the world, in response to the concerns of Latin American companions, and in continuation of its re-evaluation process, the ELCA Division for Global Mission organized two sessions with companion church bodies in the Latin America region, one in Florianopolis, Brazil, for those in South America, and another in San Jose, Costa Rica, for those in Central America and Mexico.⁶¹ The primary goal of these discussions, which took place in 1995, was for companion churches to gather as equals, share their vision for global mission companionship, and offer personal accounts of what was taking place in their given cultural and ecclesial contexts. The ELCA-DGM representatives in attendance asked companion leaders to communicate how they wished for DGM to assist in their common global mission, and how the ELCA could better receive gifts of companions for ongoing mission in the United States.⁶²

Following these consultations with Latin America companions, a diverse group of partners was formed, consisting of delegates from the Latin America region, ecumenical partners, and ELCA staff. The assembly drafted a proposal for missiological engagement in Latin America. Among other challenges encountered, according to Rev. Malpica, was to find a new standard or structure that could articulate the complexities and completeness of a revised concept of missiological engagement.⁶³ The notion of *accompaniment* eventually emerged as the primary methodological tool for ELCA's engagement in global mission. The concept began as a strategic conception for mission companionship in Latin America and the Caribbean, and eventually culminated in the publication of "*Global Mission in the Twenty First Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God's Mission*", which continues to guide global mission practice in the ELCA to this day.⁶⁴

3.4.2 Origins of Accompaniment as Method

⁶¹ Padilla, 88

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*.

While the practice of Mission as Accompaniment has existed for hundreds of years in various locations around the world,⁶⁵ *the formal articulation of Mission as Accompaniment as a model for mission is a more recent development.* More specifically, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Division for Global Mission (ELCA-DGM) illustrated accompaniment as its model for mission engagement in 1999 with the formal adoption and publication of “*Global Mission in the Twenty-first Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God’s Mission*”. At the date of its release, no other North American denomination had previously articulated Mission as Accompaniment in such a formal and systematic manner, yet it must be noted that the general concept of accompaniment was by no means original to the ELCA.⁶⁶

A significant number of historians, theologians, and countless missionaries have contributed to the development of Mission as Accompaniment through analysis and critique of past missionary activities.⁶⁷ However, Pedro Véliz and his colleagues in the Andean Regional Office of Lutheran World Relief (LWR-ARO) are to be credited with the original development of accompaniment as a model for practical implementation.⁶⁸ As a result of Véliz’s insights, the accompaniment model not only informs work in the Andean Region, but currently guides LWR’s operations across the globe – the methodology of “walking with,” instead of “doing for,” of honoring the “hidden assets and innate knowledge” of communities, and encouraging local individuals “to lift themselves out of poverty”.⁶⁹

In April of 2008, during a celebration of Véliz’s twenty-five years of service with Lutheran World Relief, Jeff Whisenant described accompaniment as “LWR’s single most important approach or methodology”, and “a unique way of working, a profound respect for the knowledge and dignity of our partners and the communities they serve”.⁷⁰ Whisenant,

⁶⁵ Barnes, *Power and Partnership*, 10.

⁶⁶ While the specific vocabulary of “accompaniment” was not utilized in formal documents until the end of the 20th century, various church bodies began to question the roles of so-called “givers” and “receivers” in companionship relations long before. See: Barnes, *Power and Partnership*, 298-359.

⁶⁷ Barnes, *Power and Partnership*, 1-9.

⁶⁸ Véliz joined Lutheran World Relief in 1982 as a project coordinator for the Andean Regional Office in Lima, Peru. He also served in the capacity of regional representative, overseeing programming in Peru, Bolivia and Colombia.

⁶⁹ Lutheran World Relief: Press Release. (April 8, 2008) “LWR Honors Longest-Serving Staff Member: Brings Together Global Staff”, April 8, 2008. <http://www.lwr.org/news/news.asp?LWRnewsDate=4/8/2008>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

who served as LWR's director for Latin America programs from 1993-2009, reflected upon his personal journey alongside Véliz:

To travel to the field with don Pedro and to watch him engage with communities is to understand his profound appreciation for the innate dignity of others... I've seen him engage with impossibly old people to learn from their experience and wisdom. And I've seen him play with children of three years old, to help them imagine themselves far into the future".⁷¹

While accepting public recognition for his numerous and faithful years of service at LWR, Véliz articulated a story that displayed his understanding of accompaniment in practice.⁷² In specifics, Véliz spoke of a farmer, "Mr. Garcia", who tragically lost a sizable portion of his relatively small amount of farmland after it was buried by stones and sludge following a serious earthquake.⁷³ Mr. Garcia sought out advice from Véliz on how to best respond to the tragedy. Véliz responded by asking Mr. Garcia what *he* thought might be most appropriate. "[Mr. Garcia] described the greatest plan I had ever heard for recovering land after such a disaster", Véliz recounted.⁷⁴ As Véliz would later share with his LWR colleagues, the local small farmer knew exactly what he needed to do in response to the tragedy, but because Véliz was an educated engineer, Mr. Garcia felt he needed to check with Véliz. As Véliz would later summarize, "Often, we think that professionals must have all the answers. But every day, we learn something new".⁷⁵

Jerry Aaker, who served with Pedro Véliz as Director of the Lutheran World Relief Andean Region, built upon the accompaniment methodology of Véliz in writing *Partners with the Poor: An Emerging Approach to Relief and Development*.⁷⁶ Among other things, the text from Aaker offered an understanding of relief organizations such as LWR as having a "greater ability to work creatively with people at the grassroots than governments".⁷⁷ As a

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² "A Hunger Hero", Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Hunger Rumblings. "A Hunger Hero", <http://blogs.elca.org/hungerrumblings/2008/04/08/a-hunger-hero/>

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Jerry Aaker, *Partners with the Poor: An Emerging Approach to Relief and Development* (New York: Friendship Press, 1993), 99.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

result of insights developed from local companions and LWR staff such as Véliz, Aaker described how LWR worked on “the accompaniment approach to development cooperation” in the Andean Region. The thoughts from Aaker would eventually lead to the ELCA-DGM construction of Mission as Accompaniment as a methodological tool and hermeneutical key.

In drafting his text, Aaker found that historical relationships between local organizations and international bodies, such as Lutheran World Relief, were too often based upon “donor-recipient” models of development practice.⁷⁸ In some cases, Aaker argued, international organizations preferred to work directly in project areas rather than having to deal with “the hassle” of accompanying indigenous agencies.⁷⁹ As a result, Aaker insisted that “heavy shades of paternalism and inequality” saturate the relationship between partnering organizations.⁸⁰ According to Aaker, a response to imbalanced cooperative relationships was required, thus the introduction of accompaniment as a formal model of engagement for LWR’s work in the Andean Region.

In the later stages of *Partners with the Poor*, Aaker’s chapter titled “Toward a Practice of Accompaniment” cites theological and sociological movements in Latin America that inspired LWR’s adoption and articulation of accompaniment as a methodology.⁸¹ Three of the most important factors were these:

- 1) Pope John XXIII and the Catholic Church’s missionary focus in Latin America, which led to a more “people-centered” clergy whom served alongside the poor.
- 2) The impact of the Second Vatican Council in Rome and the Latin American bishops’ meetings in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968, where some of the initial concepts of liberation theology were formally introduced and bishops pushed the church to consider a “preferential option for the poor”.

⁷⁸ Aaker, 100.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ According to Aaker, the Latin American bishop’s meeting in Medellín, Columbia, in 1968, is considered the event where the church deliberately made a change to take the side of the poor.

- 3) The “irruption of the poor” underway through various political processes throughout Latin America in the 1960’s.⁸²

One could argue that these strong links to Latin America not only influenced LWR, but played a key role in the ELCA-DGM’s adoption of Mission as Accompaniment as its own methodology.

While Mission as Accompaniment was not yet formalized by the ELCA or other denominations, Aaker cited various examples in which accompaniment in practice took place through faith-based service alongside poor and marginalized communities. More specifically, Aaker mentioned a well-known case in El Salvador where martyrdom was the result of accompaniment alongside the oppressed. More specifically, a significant amount of inspiration for accompaniment as a model for LWR’s work was found in the description of four churchwomen who were tortured and assassinated on December 2, 1980. As Melinda Roper, president of the Maryknoll Sisters (the order in which two of the women belonged) wrote, the four women were raped and murdered in El Salvador as participants in a grossly oppressed Church, all of which was deemed as a direct result of their accompaniment alongside the poor and marginalized. As Roper explains, “Maura, Ita, Dorothy, and Jean are remembered as martyrs”, as the “psychological, political and spiritual analyses have given way” to the historical fact that four women accompanied the oppressed citizens of El Salvador were willing to journey alongside others during a period of great personal risk.⁸³ In total, “because they lived as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth”, they “came face to face with the power of evil in its ultimate manifestation of violent death”.⁸⁴

In response to LWR’s social and theological context, and inspired by examples such as the El Salvador martyrs, the Andean Regional Office employed accompaniment to explain its method of engagement alongside companions, both church-based and secular Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The LWR-ARO wanted to “understand specific problems as well as the context in which they arose”, and by making project funding take a

⁸² Fabella, Virginia and Sergio Torres (Editors), *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology* (Papers from the Fifth International Congress of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, 17-29 August 1981, New Delhi, India; New York: Orbis Books).

⁸³ Melinda Roper, “Do this in Remembrance of Me: Discipleship in the Face of Evil” *Sojourners* (December, 1990), 17-18.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

“backseat to empowerment”, they sought to “help grassroots leaders to gain confidence in themselves so they can decide what their own future can be”.⁸⁵ According to Aaker, primary values of the process included: “partnership, process, participation, and priorities – all aimed at people-centered development”.⁸⁶

The message and practice of accompaniment by LWF-ARO, which began in 1979, can now be viewed as groundbreaking. The importance of funding, while remaining crucial, was replaced at the center of LWF-ARO’s development work by values such as: sharing information, communication, education, research, advocacy, and policy analysis. In addition, the support of local empowerment and interpretation of experience to “home donors” was perceived as critical. In its self-reflection, LWF-ARO learned about the realities of the “fine line” between accompaniment and paternalism, as close contact between funders and local project facilitators was often an open invitation to interference.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, through trial and error, practices such as sympathetic listening, engaged questioning, non-directive suggesting, and solidarity in the face of setbacks became an increasing reality. LWF-ARO, through its development of accompaniment, not only provided a helpful outlook to its own organization, but it offered inspiration for other bodies as well. More specifically, through voices such as Aaker, Véliz, and numerous companions within its cooperative of organizations, LWF-ARO would inspire the ELCA-DGM in its own articulation of Mission as Accompaniment.

3.4.3 Accompaniment as a Model for Mission

Introduced at the ELCA Division for Global Mission’s consultation with Latin America companions in 1995, Mission as Accompaniment finds its theological basis in the New Testaments conception of *koinonia*, the bond in which “God accompanies humankind in Jesus Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit”.⁸⁸ As a critique of mission practice of past generations, and in reaction to God’s “walking-alongside” of the human community in Jesus Christ, the Mission as Accompaniment model develops prior conceptions of mission into a “relational mode”, for it implies “proximity to the walking companion” and

⁸⁵ Aaker, 113.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Aaker, 128.

⁸⁸ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

“accepting the invitation to accompany the other”.⁸⁹ The formal planning document, “Mission Strategy for Latin America”, highlighted implications that accompaniment would have for the ELCA and its Latin American companions. Among other things, Mission as Accompaniment would:

- Acknowledge and affirm the assortment of beliefs and opinions that exist within (and because of) the contextual particularities of each companion church.
- Support and inspire companion churches to openly critique and examine the various concerns and actions of one another.
- Embody the best practices of transparency, and in doing so participate in authentic and open discourse.
- Push far past the historical and colonial partnerships of World and Global Churches.
- Include those most impacted by strategic decisions within the strategic decision-making practices.
- Confess that both World and Global Churches will seek to be in harmony with one another in their limitations, mistakes and purpose.⁹⁰

In light of the ongoing and widespread reassessment in global mission companionships, to build upon recommendations provided by Latin America companions and other church leaders around the world, and after considerable reflection in regards to ways in which the ELCA had engaged mission in the past, in 1999 the Division for Global Mission developed “*Global Mission in the Twenty First Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God’s Mission*”. The primary functions of the document were to serve as:

- 1) A guiding statement for ELCA Global Mission leadership as it plans and measures its strategies and policies, and for local staff and overseas missionaries as they interpret and execute strategic agendas.
- 2) A succinct synopsis for companion churches and others in the ELCA (and beyond) that desire a brief explanation of what Global Mission is and how it seeks to function.

⁸⁹ Padilla, 88.

⁹⁰ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), “ELCA Mission Strategy for Latin America”, 9-10, as cited by Padilla, 89.

- 3) An introductory text to plan Bible studies and other congregational education events that deal with the nature of global mission.
- 4) An introductory text to spark intentional conversation surrounding theology and missiology in ELCA-related seminaries and schools.⁹¹

The document introduces “Accompaniment” in the following ways:

- Accompaniment is meant to move far beyond restricted contractual agreements between church companions, as it is a journeying together of church bodies in companionship and in mutual participation in God’s global mission.
- Accompaniment seeks to prioritize people before profit, thus the planning and implementation of programs and distribution of funding should emerge from how companions associate with each other, rather than vice versa.
- Accompaniment is treasured and appreciated on its own account, in addition to that which it produces, as it is meant to be fluid and flexible with no forgone assumptions or conclusions. The church companions are meant to embrace one another, and thus learn from each other, as mutual members of a journey.
- Accompaniment brings its participants into a more intimate relationship with the God made known in Jesus Christ, and in doing so, further enlightens a shared articulation and implementation of global mission.
- Accompaniment creates and sustains a shared sense of admiration and respect among its participants, as the unfortunate historical (colonial) labels of provider and collector are transformed into the reality that each global companion has something to both give and receive.
- Accompaniment creates a sacred space for communal appreciation, as local churches in each particular context are given the chief responsibility and accountability for mission in their particular area.
- Accompaniment is a path by which churches may establish a stronger sense of community alongside other churches in relationship to God.⁹²

⁹¹ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 6.

⁹² Ibid.

3.4.4 Accompaniment: Latin American Influence

Mission as Accompaniment – as practiced by ELCA-DGM (and later, ELCA-GM) – originated from consultation with Latin American companions. As a result, the full significance of Mission as Accompaniment depends on a basic understanding of its meaning of this term in the Spanish language. For example, *Acompañar*, when considered in the context of movement (walking), entails sharing space (closeness) to the companion (who is also in movement), and as a result, acceptance of an invitation to accompany (walk alongside) the other.⁹³ Due in part to this particular meaning, the first ELCA-DGM documents on Mission as Accompaniment intended to convey that mission is not about disengagement and allowing churches to be independent in a disconnected sense. To the contrary, Mission as Accompaniment highlighted interdependence, relationships, closeness, movement, direction, and immersion into the realities of fellow companions – or what would later be articulated as *the other*.

Latin American theologians have exercised a profound influence in the development of Mission as Accompaniment. More specifically, the work of Roberto S. Goizueta in *Caminemos Con Jesus: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* is of critical importance. Although Goizueta's work came after ELCA-DGM's initial development of Mission as Accompaniment, much can be learned from the text (as well as those texts it makes reference to) with regards to Latin American theological roots of Mission as Accompaniment. Through Goizueta's examination of Hispanic/Latino communities and attempts to define Hispanic/Latino theology, he focuses on experiences of exile and how marginalized individuals accompany one another through common faith. In many ways, *Caminemos con Jesús*, (translated into English as "Let us walk with Jesus"), serves as a theological entryway to understanding the Latin American roots of Mission as Accompaniment.

Among other things, Goizueta not only articulates a fresh understanding of theology from a Hispanic/Latino/Latina perspective, but he also calls for theologians to reconsider the ways that theological reflection is carried out. His quotation of Cuban poet and revolutionary

⁹³ Goizueta, 206.

national leader José Martí, who said that *pensar es servir* (“to think is to serve”),⁹⁴ sheds light upon Goizueta’s insistence upon bringing theological reflection out of academic circles and into so-called practical usefulness alongside grass-roots communities. For Goizueta, the implementation of accompaniment cannot take place in intellectual isolation, for it is developed, critiqued, and reformed alongside others in the midst of relationships and bonded communities. As he states, “If the best, most sophisticated scholarship is not placed in the service of our communities, then it will continue to be used against them”.⁹⁵ With these powerful thoughts from Goizueta in mind, one can observe the way in which Mission as Accompaniment requires practical use and ongoing critique in the midst of grass-roots communities.

Throughout Goizueta’s text there exists a strong critique of Western individualistic mindsets and its significant impact upon theology and ministry. For Goizueta, if theology is placed solely in the hands of Western academics, the result will be an increased degree of personalized and privatized notions of both theology and mission. As a result of these realities, Goizueta considers what can take place if theologians of the global south – whom originate from more communal and relationship-based cultures – are more fully heard. More specifically, he argues that within the ideological confines of an individualistic worldview, the clear biblical instruction to build communities that embody divine justice “as a *necessary* implication of our very humanity and creaturality” becomes “literally inconceivable”.⁹⁶ Due in part to the Western individualistic mentality, such a command “will be interpreted as mere *suggestion* that one autonomous individual help other autonomous individuals”⁹⁷ In striking and persuasive fashion, Goizueta argues that when there is no compulsory association among individuals there can be “no necessary ethical-political imperative to love others”.⁹⁸

The act of accompaniment cannot be an action of and for autonomous individuals, for accompaniment – by definition – is a walking *with* others. Accompaniment is a communal action that includes solidarity, empathy, and mutuality. And so, while the value and particularity of each individual remains (for only distinct persons can relate to other distinct

⁹⁴ José Julián Martí Pérez, “Nuestra America,” in José Julián Martí Pérez: *Sus mejores paginas*, Raimundo Lazo (Editor), (Mexico: Editorial Press, 1978), 92.

⁹⁵ Goizueta, 9.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

persons), the full value of one's humanity is most fully affirmed in relationships. As Goizueta affirms, it is "only in and through the concrete act of accompaniment" that people may fully embrace others in mutuality and as companions, "and we are, in turn, loved by them".⁹⁹ Because accompaniment is an action, "or praxis", the process of such accompaniment includes not only being present with one another, or "feeling" with or for another, but also "doing" with another.¹⁰⁰ In light of such powerful considerations, one is reminded that humans are not only to be connected by nature of their common creator, and this connection of humanity should inspire cooperative action through accompaniment in both word and deed.

3.5 Liberation Theology and Accompaniment

In addition to Goizueta's articulation of relational modes of theology, *Caminemos Con Jesus* introduces the impact of liberation theology upon Mission as Accompaniment. As ELCA-DGM conducted its initial consultations with its Latin American interlocutors, it did so in a context informed by liberation theologians including Clodovis and Leonardo Boff, José Míguez Bonino, Orlando Espín, Justo Gonzales, Gustavo Gutiérrez, and others.¹⁰¹ While liberation theology is not a stated requirement for Mission as Accompaniment, an examination of documents arising from ELCA-DGM discussions with Latin American church leaders shows various influences from liberation theology, as well as connections to social teaching surrounding ministry alongside poor and marginalized members of society.¹⁰² As a result, while an exhaustive account of liberation theology is not intended here, some particular themes can reveal theological assertions that influenced initial discussions of Mission as Accompaniment between the ELCA and its Latin American companions.

In Latin America, where liberation theology is believed to have originated, there exists a long history of emancipatory movements from the time of Portuguese and Spanish

⁹⁹ Goizueta, 206.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "...liberation theology is a cultural and ecclesial phenomenon by no means restricted to a few professional theologians. It is a way of thinking that embraces most of the membership of the church, especially in the Third World". Leonardo and Clodovis Boff (Turnbridge Wells, Kent: Burns & Oats, 1987), 11.

¹⁰² Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "ELCA Mission Strategy for Latin America", 9-10, as cited by Padilla, 89.

colonial conquests.¹⁰³ During the last half-century, people of Christian faith have been – and continue to be – at the center of large-scale efforts for liberation and social change in the region. Liberation theology, as it is now known, emerged as a contextual movement in Latin America that sought expression of religious faith through service alongside the poor and working for transformation of unjust social, political, and economic systems.¹⁰⁴ The Liberation theology movement is widely believed to have begun in 1968 as Catholic bishops participated in the Latin American Bishops' Conference in Medellín, Colombia, with the movement's central text, *A Theology of Liberation*, written by Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez, a participant at the Medellín conference.¹⁰⁵ As a primer to the biblical foundations of liberation theology, Gutiérrez writes that the predominant and over-arching themes found in the biblical narrative “mirrors God’s predilection for the weak and abused of human history”¹⁰⁶ In doing so, such a divine preference displays the unmerited grace and undeserved nature of God’s love for humankind. From the account of Cain and Abel to the Beatitudes, for Gutiérrez the biblical message is clear: such scriptural accounts proclaim with power and clarity that God’s preference “for the poor, the hungry, and the suffering is based on God’s unmerited goodness to us”.¹⁰⁷

Gutiérrez and other liberation theologians assert that, if God loves all people, and if God’s outpouring of love is made known throughout history, and if such a history is filled with domination and oppression, then God is compelled to side with the victims. In other words, if God remained neutral in the face of domination and oppression, then God would ultimately prefer the powerful and allow the status quo of inequality to remain. God makes a preferential (not exclusive) option for the poor for the benefit of all society, which means, those engaged in mission and ministry are to place themselves where God is found – that is, alongside the poor and marginalized members of society. To accompany the poor with such a preference is to consciously and spiritually engage in the actions that empower all humans to

¹⁰³ Thia Cooper, *The Reemergence of Liberation Theologies: Models for the 21st Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation, Revised Edition with a New Introduction* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), xxvii.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

be what we all are: “individual persons defined by our *a priori* relationships to others, to humanity, to the universe, and, ultimately, to the Triune (i.e., relational) God”.¹⁰⁸

Introducing Liberation Theology, written by Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, explains that “liberation theology was born when faith confronted the injustice done to the poor”, namely, those who are exploited, underemployed, pushed aside by production processes, and so on.¹⁰⁹ While Christian theologians and preachers had long articulated a need to help the poor and marginalized, liberation theologians took exception to the Marxist notion of religion as an opiate for the people, and in doing so developed a renewed dedication to an active and passionate commitment to liberation. As a result of such developments in liberation theology, followers of Jesus – especially those most firmly placed in situations of oppression – were called not merely to speak about the poor, but to combine reflection and action together in committed service alongside the marginalized.

As Mission as Accompaniment insists on “walking alongside one another in solidarity and mutuality”,¹¹⁰ liberation theology acknowledges the call to be active participants in the liberation of oppressed and marginalized populations *alongside* those who are oppressed and marginalized.¹¹¹ Similar to Goizueta’s proclamation to make theological reflection an act alongside others, one of the central tenets of liberation theology is the acknowledgement of integrating theology into practice. The commitment to action/reflection within liberation theology appears to have made a direct impact upon the development of Mission as Accompaniment; as ELCA-DGM’s initial illustration of accompaniment acknowledges various “levels” in which “walking alongside” is carried out,¹¹² Boff and Boff propose that faith is perceived and acted out on “three levels” (professional, pastoral, and popular).¹¹³ They explained that liberation theology can be perceived from a metaphorical lens as a tree, and those who narrow-mindedly perceive only “professional theologians at work” view only “the branches of the tree”.¹¹⁴ In doing so, such limited observations “fail to see the trunk” of

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Boff and Boff, 3.

¹¹⁰ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

¹¹¹ Cooper, 2.

¹¹² ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 29-34. Included is an account of how “walking together” has an impact upon: 1) ELCA Constituency, 2) Missionaries, 3) Ecumenical Partners, 4) DGM Board, and 5) DGM Staff

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

the tree, which symbolizes the valuable perceptions of lay people and local ministers, “let alone the roots beneath the soil that hold the whole tree – trunk and branches – in place”.¹¹⁵ The roots of liberation theology are the too often unnoticed and unappreciated “practical living and thinking” that take place in countless “base communities living out their faith and thinking it in a liberating key”.¹¹⁶

Salvadorian theologian Jon Sobrino’s *Spirituality of Liberation* reflects on how the act of walking alongside others in a common search for liberation allows for one to be “honest about the real”.¹¹⁷ This process of “honesty” about “the real” can be one of the most challenging aspects for companions who practice Mission as Accompaniment, especially those from the global North whom at times have been (or have at least been silent in the midst of) injustice and oppression. However, even in the midst of challenges which surround being confronted with past and ongoing power abuses, those engaged in the act of Mission as Accompaniment are called to acknowledge where power has indeed been abused, especially when it is part of one’s own history, and move far beyond the longstanding models of relations between churches of the South and North. As Goizueta states, a genuine act of accompaniment cannot take place between “teachers and students, masters and slaves, men and women, rich and poor, Anglo and Hispanic” unless there is a transformation of such unbalanced relational authority.¹¹⁸ If such lopsided power dynamics were to remain the same, then accompaniment is null and void, as “the most visible, influential, and powerful” voices in the mission dialogue will continue to be that of “the wealthy, white, male, Anglo – *de facto*”.¹¹⁹

The influence of liberation theology on Mission as Accompaniment appears to be expressed in numerous ways. For example, instead of allowing North American churches to disengage and allow Latin American churches to fend for themselves, it can be argued that Latin American companions involved in consultation processes with the ELCA expressed a desire for ELCA-DGM to enter into their reality in a way that would bring about liberation for *both* partners. The process of mutual liberation and being “honest about the real” would

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1988), 14-17.

¹¹⁸ Goizueta, 181.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

include: the affirmation of diversity, the ability to question and critique the priorities and procedures of companion churches, transparency in honest and sincere dialogue, mutual decision making processes, and solidarity in the midst of weaknesses and struggle.¹²⁰ While specific and overt terms of liberation theology are not explicitly used, the relationship and impact is evident, and the impact for Mission as Accompaniment remains.

3.6 Accompaniment: Theological Lens

From its outset, Mission as Accompaniment was intended not as a new theology, but rather, a “new theological understanding of mission methodology” built upon the “foundations of biblical and theological reflection critically engaged with experiential knowledge (wisdom)”.¹²¹ As was highlighted previously, the practical embodiment of various elements found within Mission as Accompaniment could be readily observed, not only within a wide variety of faith-based organizations across the world, but also across past generations. Nevertheless, the formal articulation and publication of Mission as Accompaniment is a more recent historical phenomenon. The LWR-ARO formulated accompaniment into its primary model of institutional operation, and the subsequent and distinctive role of ELCA-DGM was to articulate and promote accompaniment as a methodological tool for mission and a hermeneutical key. In doing so, the overall aim of ELCA-DGM was to develop the concept theologically and in the particular realm of missiology. With these ideas in mind, the following sections illustrate how Mission as Accompaniment is understood from an assortment of theological lenses.

3.6.1 *Koinonia*

A theological foundation for the ELCA Global Mission understanding of Mission as Accompaniment is found in *koinonia*.¹²² Often deemed as “communion by intimate participation”,¹²³ *koinonia* is primarily located through the bond in which God embraces humankind in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.¹²⁴ The term *koinonia* is found nineteen

¹²⁰ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, “Strategy for Engagement in Latin America and the Caribbean”, as cited by Padilla, 89.

¹²¹ Robert Smith, “Reflections on Accompaniment” (Unpublished document, 2009), 1.

¹²² ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

¹²³ NAS *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries* (1981, 1998).

¹²⁴ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

times in most versions of the Greek New Testament, and is commonly translated into English terms such as: fellowship, sharing, participation, and contribution. The first appearance of *koinonia* in the Greek New Testament is discovered within Acts 2:42-47 (NIV), which offers an account of life experienced among early Christians in Jerusalem:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship (*koinonia*), to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The New Testament also uses the term to describe the fellowship that exists at the Lord's Supper. For example, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (NIV):

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation (*koinonia*) in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

While more exhaustive studies into the multiple dimensions of *koinonia* are found elsewhere, for the purpose of this study it is worth mentioning that *koinonia* is not solely something ones *does* but also signifies a *state of being*. Similar to that which is expressed in the Acts 2 account of early Christian community, accompaniment entails activities such as sharing and “movement” with the other, but it also includes a sense of belonging and spiritual connectedness which comes through respect and mutuality. Those who have become “God's people” by faith are joined at the deepest level, an expression of *koinonia* is experienced with God and one another, thus is also carried out in action.

In addition to the above-mentioned communal understanding of *koinonia*, its reference to the Lord's Supper also possesses a direct implication for Mission as Accompaniment. The term "accompaniment" is derived from the Latin "*ad cum panis*", which is expressed through English as "*to go with bread*". Consequently, to be engaged in the act of Mission as Accompaniment means to journey alongside others "with bread" to share and sustain life in communion with one another.¹²⁵ In Jesus' interaction with the two travelers on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:15-34), it was only *after* they participated in the breaking of bread that Christ was recognized, and in doing so, the disciples accepted a more profound recognition of themselves, and returned to Jerusalem full of purpose. As bread also possesses sacramental implications as the body of Christ, it can be argued that in Luke 24 Jesus was actually sharing *himself* with his disciples and called them to do likewise. Through the example of Jesus, those who seek to accompany are thus called to share of themselves, share Jesus, and be present in both word and deed.

3.7 The Mission of the Triune God

The theological doctrine of the Trinity also has significant implications for the mutual and relational character of Mission as Accompaniment. In the words of *Mission in Context*, a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) document that provides contribution to the comprehension and implementation of mission, the Triune God is in mission "for others; namely, the whole of humankind, the world, and the entire creation".¹²⁶ As God the Creator/Father, Savior/Son, and Advocate/Holy Spirit, the Triune God functions as a missionary community, "empowering and accompanying the One who is sent, the beloved, to impact the world with transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment".¹²⁷ On behalf of the enduring mission of God, the Creator and the Advocate mutually send the Savior out into the world, the Creator and Savior mutually receive the Advocate, and the Savior and Advocate expose the brilliance of the Creator to the ends of the Earth. This relational and mutual missionary sending is a key characteristic of the Trinity, as the missionary character of the Triune God is both nurturing and equipping; it reaches out for and with others, and accepts others with the vulnerable love that unites the Triune God and the human community.

¹²⁵ Chingondole, Samuel and Crystal Hall. "Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness: Statement of Theological Intent", (Unpublished document presented to Annual General Meeting, 2009), 6-7.

¹²⁶ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 24.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

As mentioned earlier in connection with *Imago Trinitatis*, the doctrine of the Triune God expresses Christians' conviction of the relational nature of life, and as a result calls for the Church to engage in mission that creates and sustains a sense of well-being where members of the human community live in right relationships with God, themselves, and all that exists. Those called to participate in God's mission are sent-out to be companions with God, empowered for mission-centered vocation in the world.¹²⁸ The following sections highlight the Mission of the Triune God in three parts, each of which proves to be the key in understanding Mission as Accompaniment.

3.7.1 The Mission of God as Creator¹²⁹

A faithful vision of God's mission asserts a powerful bond between God and the created world; God did not merely create, but "God accompanies the creation by being present and in relationship with it, even when it is marred by sin and rebellion".¹³⁰ In "the beginning" (Genesis 1:1) as well as the present day and age, God journeys alongside humankind and all of creation, as all was created with love and grace and seen as "good" (Genesis 1:31). As cooperative agents made in the *Imago Trinitatis* for God's mission in and through the world, the responsibility of being a "created co-creator" is intricately connected with human dignity, and thus affirms the value God places upon all life.¹³¹

The Mission of God begins with and through the divine act of creation. As a result, our human participation in God's mission and our "being in creation" are intimately and continually interlaced as "Creation's life and God's life are entwined".¹³² The mission of such a compassionate and creating God, through the Holy Spirit, therefore encompasses the entirety of the created order into a never-ending outpouring of grace. The human community, as created beings, is called by God to move far beyond our restrictive human-centered approaches and embody practices of mission that communicate reconciled relations with all of creation.

¹²⁸ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 7.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 24.

¹³² WCC, "Together towards Life", 10.

While the created world consists of suffering and pain as a result of sin and the misuse of power which results, God's act of creation includes the gracious promise that God will make all things new. In other words, God will bring about a reversal of "the powers" and pour out abundant life for the created world. God the Creator thus calls people to participate in the mission of creation, as "transformation and justice, forgiveness and reconciliation, healing and empowerment, are the signs of the future of the world with God".¹³³ Those in participation alongside God can, in their own particular context, strengthen these reassuring markers in many bold and creative methods. As a result, one is called to reconsider how power is used in relationship to both humankind and the created world, in order to more faithfully utilize natural resources and advocate for life-giving systems and practices in all corners of the globe.

3.7.2 The Mission of God in and through Jesus¹³⁴

Christians affirm that God is incarnated as Jesus of Nazareth.¹³⁵ As "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" in Jesus, he is "God's accompanying nature made visible in humankind".¹³⁶ Jesus provides a model as to how God's mission should be carried out. While the powers of evil and death threaten to take life away, the incarnated God is on a life-giving mission, so that humankind may receive life, and have it abundantly. As a result, Jesus' ministry is in direct conflict with powers that threaten to limit and destroy the creation that God had intended for good.

Jesus started his earthy ministry by declaring that to be supplied with the Holy Spirit is to participate in the liberation of the oppressed (Luke 4:18ff). In doing so, Jesus went about realizing such a mission by preferring to be alongside the most disregarded of his day, "not out of paternalistic charity but because their situations testified to the sinfulness of the world and their yearnings for life pointed to God's purposes".¹³⁷ As a result, Jesus accepts and connects with those deemed to be most oppressed that are placed on the pressured margins of

¹³³ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 25.

¹³⁴ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 7.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ WCC, "Together towards Life", 15.

mainstream society, all in order to challenge and change that what rejects the fullness of life. In order to carry out such a mission alongside the Triune God, participants in mission are called to revolutionize the societies and structures that spark and support gross levels of impoverishment, privilege, and dehumanization, and in doing so confront all that manipulates or terminates both people and the Earth. Therefore, missionary practice in the example of Jesus requires an intentional comprehension of the convolutions and complexities of political, economic and religious power and privilege, and therefore, an understanding of international systems and indigenous cultural particularities. While Christian missionary movements have too often been fathomed and fashioned in ways that refuse to embody God's full embrace of those repeatedly relegated to the margins, God's mission invites the modern-day church to re-envision and revolutionize the act of mission as a sacred vocation of accompaniment to struggle for a human community where the fullness of life is accessible for all.

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is God's reaffirmation and endorsement of life in its fullness, a sacred marker of hopefulness in a world stained by destruction, and a verification of God's way of mission in the world through Jesus. "The way of the cross is God's powerful way" of rejecting oppression and violence, walking alongside those who suffer and bear their sins on the cross, and stands as an act of "solidarity with the excluded and oppressed, as well as a way of protest against oppression".¹³⁸ The resurrection of Jesus, from the perspective of mission, is thus the most transformative event in history. Resurrection opens a new reality, as the entire created order opens with life-giving possibilities. The path of resurrection is the path of transformation and empowerment for those engaged in mission.

3.7.3 The Mission of God by the Holy Spirit¹³⁹

When the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus' followers gathered in Jerusalem, the Church of Jesus was instituted, and its mission to accompany all of humankind in "the way" of Jesus was set into motion (Acts 2).¹⁴⁰ The Holy Spirit accompanied the new and diverse Christian community with power (Acts 2:8), providing a variety of gifts for ministry (1 Corinthians 12), as well as courage for mission (Acts 4:23-32). The early Church was called to strengthen its fellowship, equip and empower one another, and give their lives in order to

¹³⁸ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 25.

¹³⁹ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 8.

¹⁴⁰ Acts 9:2, 19:9, 19:23, 24:14 (NRSV).

serve as God's instruments in sharing the new life described by Jesus. As was the case in early movements of the Church, the Holy Spirit continues to call, send, and enable God's people for the sake of all creation, irrespective of gender, age, race, socio-economic status, and nationality.

The Holy Spirit is the infusion of wisdom (Isaiah 11:3; Ephesians 1:17) that directs mission participants toward a pursuit of all truth (John 16:13). As a result, the Holy Spirit encourages the promotion of diverse cultures and various acts of creativity, as such humility and boldness are essential ingredients for mission, all in order to recognize, affirm, and collaborate alongside the assortment of faithful and wise people in every society and of all religious and philosophical traditions. One must acknowledge that missionary activity possesses a tragically regrettable history that is too often filled with strong links to colonialism and dehumanization. Furthermore, missionary ventures have too often vilified local cultures and refused to affirm the faithfulness and intelligence of local people. With such a regrettable past in mind, one affirms that a faithful participation in God's mission leads to an affirmation of local wisdom and cultures, as such particularities are life-affirming gifts from God's Spirit.¹⁴¹

The community of Jesus' followers constitutes those who engage in mission through a rhythm of repentance and forgiveness, as well as "gathering and sending".¹⁴² Through the work of the Holy Spirit, imperfect humans who participate within an imperfect Church are able to become means by which God carries out God's mission in and through the world. The church gathers for revitalization and preparation, and is thus empowered and sent to be God's incarnate mission of life in the world. As the Lutheran World Federation's Department for Mission and Development stated, "Through the gospel, the Holy Spirit calls people to repentance, faith, and new life. It is the Spirit who gathers into one body a new family, a diversity of human beings, breaking the barriers of class, race, gender, and culture".¹⁴³ As a result, the community of faith gathered in God's mission continues to seek ways in which all are recipients of dignity, respect, justice, and love.

¹⁴¹ WCC, "Together towards Life", 12.

¹⁴² ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 8.

¹⁴³ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 25.

3.8 Accompaniment in Light of Global Lutheran Trends

The above-mentioned theological foundations for the ELCA Global Mission understanding of Mission as Accompaniment were crafted alongside companion church leaders. In a similar fashion, the global expression of the Lutheran Church continues to contribute toward developments in mission and theological insights surrounding global church companionship. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which was founded in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, currently has 140 member churches in 79 countries around the world, representing over 68.5 million Lutheran Christians. In order to coordinate mission efforts and articulate emerging trends in mission, the LWF's Department for Mission and Development (DMD) helps arrange consultations, as well as organizes publications to be dispersed and discussed amongst member churches. With such efforts in mind, the Department for Mission and Development through the Lutheran World Federation has made significant contributions toward the current understanding of Mission as Accompaniment.

In 1988, seven years before ELCA-DGM's consultations with Latin America church leaders (that eventually led to the formal development and public articulation of Mission as Accompaniment in 1999), The Lutheran World Federation produced *Together in Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission*. Among other things, the document articulated a "holistic understanding of mission" and promoted local churches as "the witness" that transports the mission of God "across different spheres" and boundaries.¹⁴⁴ According to the LWF, such boundaries and spheres included "religious, ideological, sociological, political, economic, geographic, and demographic".¹⁴⁵ More specifically, the document from LWF stated that in order to faithfully overcome such limitations the "integral" parts of "the mission of the church" include the declaration of God's Good News in Jesus, inviting others to believe in Jesus and join communities of faith, and involvement in peace-building and justice-seeking in response to all that enslaves and dehumanizes.¹⁴⁶ In total, the LWF argued that such missionary activities "point to the reality of the Reign of God" and to its ultimate culmination at the "fulfillment of history".¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Lutheran World Federation (LWF), "Together in Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission" (Geneva: Department for Mission and Development, 1988), 8.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

The LWF Consultation on “Churches in Mission”, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1998, was also determined to contribute toward a more holistic understanding of mission as a part of an overall Lutheran identity.¹⁴⁸ More precisely, the gathering in Nairobi argued that mission must encompass “proclamation, service, and advocacy for justice”.¹⁴⁹ In doing so, “mission as proclamation” includes a commitment by people of Christian faith to share and interpret the Good News of Jesus in and through their particular context, as a means by which God’s actions and presence may be more fully discovered.¹⁵⁰ In addition, “mission as service” sought to emphasize the diaconal aspects of faith communities that are “active in love” and thus striving for the enablement and emancipation of those most under pressure in society.¹⁵¹ And finally, mission as “advocacy for justice” designated the church’s prophetic presence and participation in the public forum to lift up “the dignity of human life, both as individual and as community” in addition to an amplified consciousness of justice that encompasses the “economic, social and ecological spheres”.¹⁵²

The understanding of God’s mission as holistic, and the Church’s call to participate more fully within it, were further developed at the Eighth and Ninth Lutheran World Federation Assemblies in Curitiba (1990), Hong Kong (1997), and also the Tenth in Winnipeg (2003). More specifically, the 2003 gathering stated that involvement in God’s mission involves “three interrelated dimensions, diakonia, proclamation, and dialogue”, which were deemed to be fundamental aspects for the “mission of the church”.¹⁵³ The statement from Winnipeg in 2003 marked the ongoing development and articulation of mission from a Lutheran perspective, and in turn, pointed toward additional collaboration for the future.

The 1998 Nairobi consultation called for a deeper understanding of the missional church, as well as increased attention to the ongoing challenges faced in the twenty first century. As a result, in the year 2000 a team was constructed in order to revise the 1998

¹⁴⁸ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 7.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 6.

document *Together in Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission*.¹⁵⁴

The group consisted of representatives of LWF member churches in its seven regions, mission departments and societies, and related development agencies.¹⁵⁵ As recounted in *Together in Mission*, five individuals functioned as a primary committee to take charge for the construction of a new document on mission.¹⁵⁶ A “mission encounter” that took place in Berlin, Germany, in March of 2001 between theologians, mission personnel, and ecumenical companions brought a profusion of both direction and inspiration, and a first draft was completed in 2002.¹⁵⁷ Following revisions by various companion churches around the globe, a final draft was completed and approved by the LWF in 2004. On behalf of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Mission and Development, *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* was published with great excitement and expectation. The purpose of the document was primarily twofold:

- To assist Lutheran communities of faith around the world to become more genuinely mindful of God’s mission, and in doing so, consider the particular position of the church as an important part of such mission.
- To spark Lutheran communities of faith in their examination and endorsement of mission policies and practices in their particular cultural contexts.¹⁵⁸

The groundbreaking 2004 text from LWF engaged the church and its associated organizations at a wide variety of institutional levels (such as national, synodical and congregational) to reconsider their opportunities and responsibilities for mission, and also to encourage their various ventures to seek new methods of interpreting their current and later participation as members in God’s mission.

In an attempt to build upon the above mentioned goals, *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* drew inspiration from the story in Luke 24 of Jesus’ encounter with his disciples on the road to Emmaus. The document was subsequently divided into three primary sections with numerous sub-sections: Contexts of Mission,

¹⁵⁴ Lutheran World Federation (LWF), “Together in Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission” (Geneva: Department for Mission and Development, 1988).

¹⁵⁵ LWF, “Together in Mission”, 5.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 7.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Theologies of Mission, and Practices of Mission. For the sake of examining Mission as Accompaniment more fully, the following sections of this study will include a brief overview of these three sub-sections of *Mission in Context* from LWF (including corresponding scriptural references) on Contexts, Theologies, and Practices.

3.8.1 Contexts of Mission

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" (Luke 24:13-19, NRSV).

The first aspect of Mission as Accompaniment, as taken from Luke 24, is the act of listening and observing the context into which one is engaged. As Jesus' ministry took place within a specific social setting, "God's mission always takes place in particular social, economic, political, religious, and cultural contexts".¹⁵⁹ While the context of mission in the 21st century is quite different from Jesus' time and setting, God continues to journey alongside humankind in ways that bring about transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment. As a result, the task of Mission as Accompaniment calls for faithful consideration of context through listening, learning, and observing because "It is a cooperative venture" that includes "dialogue, listening and speaking, acting, and observing, giving and receiving".¹⁶⁰

3.8.2 Theologies of Mission

Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer

¹⁵⁹ LWF, "Together in Mission", 10.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures (Luke 24:25-27, NRSV).

Following an opportunity to consider a given context, the second aspect of Mission as Accompaniment, as taken from Luke 24, is the act of interpretation in light of Scripture. As Jesus utilized Scripture to frame the experience of those walking the road to Emmaus, Mission as Accompaniment calls for the Bible to be the foundation for all the Church’s work in and through the world. While biblical texts may be interpreted differently based upon social settings, a foundational message remains: the Good News that Jesus set free humankind and is the source of transformation.¹⁶¹ The Bible allows for the sustaining of faith – and the empowerment to be faithful to the Word and set free for engaging in mission.

3.8.3 Practices of Mission

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:28-35, NRSV).*

Following an examination of the context and interpretation of Scripture, Mission as Accompaniment moves into the important step of sustained action. While examination and interpretation are in and of themselves “actions”, the Church is called to be sent out as a faithful expression of the God’s mission, to participate in the in-breaking of God’s presence

¹⁶¹ Simon S. Lee, *Jesus’ Transfiguration and the Believers’ Transformation: A Study of the Transfiguration and Its Development in Early Christian Writings* (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009). 49.

in Jesus. As was the case in Luke 24, a key aspect to the Church's mission practice is that it takes place in community, and not as isolated individuals or separate church bodies. Mission as Accompaniment serves as a reminder that mission engagement is the role of the entire church. As the two responded to Jesus' presence in community, the Church is called to do the same, and thus inspire, listen, and learn for ongoing contextual mission engagement.

In total, the LWF document *Mission in Context* highlights various shifts that have taken place within the Lutheran World Federation over the course of its history. While the Fourth General Assembly (Helsinki) in 1963 considered mission solely as conversion from unbelief to faith, from 1977 (Dar es Salaam) until present day the practice of mission has been considered in a more holistic manner.¹⁶² As a result of ongoing changes in mission interpretation and implementation around the world, through *Mission in Context* the LWF published a resource to equip different ministry agents within the Lutheran Church to reconsider mission within their own contexts. In addition, it was hoped that member churches could reflect upon theology as a way to be empowered into mission practice that is transforming, reconciling, and empowering.

3.8.4 Mission as Accompaniment and the Lutheran World Federation: Connections

While theological documents are unique in their own right, there exist numerous connections between *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment*, and the ELCA-DGM document which introduces Mission as Accompaniment, *Global Mission in the 21st Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God's Mission*. While *Mission in Context* does not specifically mention Mission as Accompaniment, the concept is indirectly mentioned on repeated occasions, and in doing so, the overall purpose of journeying alongside others through mutuality and solidarity is implied at various points. These correlations are important to highlight. For example, the LWF document presents a "biblical model for mission" which, among other things, offers the Emmaus road encounter of Luke 24:13-49 as a standard that articulates and informs "a *hermeneutical spiral approach* to mission", a method that is considered to appreciate the interaction of (and conflicts between) contexts, theology, and practice.¹⁶³ While by no means a perfect and clear model for every

¹⁶² LWF, *Mission in Context*, 61.

¹⁶³ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 8.

time and place, the road to Emmaus account of Luke's Gospel was deemed to be "the best model, at this time, to convey the understanding of mission as *accompaniment*."¹⁶⁴

In a fashion quite similar to the LWF understanding, *Global Mission in the 21st Century* also makes repeated references to Luke 24:13-35 as a foundational biblical text that can be appropriated to best understand Mission as Accompaniment. For example, *Global Mission in the 21st Century* introduces the road to Emmaus account by showing that accompaniment "literally means *walking together* side by side".¹⁶⁵ More specifically, by showing the strong biblical roots of Mission as Accompaniment found in Luke 24:13-35, the Global Mission document considered various aspects of the narrative that offers examples of accompaniment that are critical for participants engaged in God's mission, such as: the disciples as people in motion on the road to Emmaus; the mysterious stranger who both accompanies and is accompanied; the open and critical discussion and interpretation of scripture; the open offering of fellowship and hospitality in the form of physical sustenance; and of course, the disclosure of God through the risen Jesus in the breaking of bread.¹⁶⁶ In total, the Global Mission document argues that Luke 24 reveals "we walk with each other in a journey where the presence of God is revealed to us, as God in Christ accompanies us in the fellowship of word and table".¹⁶⁷

In addition to similar Biblical references that point to Mission as Accompaniment, *Mission in Context* highlights additional and important aspects of accompaniment. Specifically, the text from LWF addresses the important global conversation in regards to historical and contemporary methods of partnership and accompaniment.¹⁶⁸ Like the ELCA-DMG call for solidarity and mutuality, *Mission in Context* also calls for companion churches around the globe to move far past the traditional giver/sender relationships of North and South.¹⁶⁹ In doing so, because of "the increasing complexity of today's contexts of mission", the LWF observes that an accompaniment model for global mission companionship is perhaps more critical now than any generation before.¹⁷⁰ As a result, the LWF called for

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 12.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 45.

¹⁶⁹ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 25.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

innovative methods and models of mission companionship that best embody joint involvement and distribution of responsibility.

The commitment to transform longstanding imbalances of power expressed by ELCA-DGM is an integral aspect of Mission as Accompaniment, especially in its stated desire to empower companion churches to be self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting. These “Three Self’s”, which were first articulated in the mid-1800s by Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, played a central role in ELCA-DGM’s understanding of accompaniment. In addition to the first three, ELCA-GM added “self-articulating”, which originates from Justo Gonzalez in *Manana*,¹⁷¹ to express a commitment to assist partner Churches in their right to self-interpretation and theology.

Similar to that which was pronounced by the LWF, in order to build upon the priority of transforming traditional relationships between churches of the North and South, *Global Mission in the 21st Century* acknowledges the real and perceived harms of power dynamics and the need to intentionally assist in the transformation of relationships for faithful companionship in global mission.¹⁷² More specifically, the ELCA argued that Mission as Accompaniment possesses the capacity to create “a radical shift in power” within contemporary international relations, as the solidarity of a shared journey requires an equitable contribution of decision-making authority and allocation of resources.¹⁷³ In doing so, Mission as Accompaniment demands that former (colonial-minded) missionary traditions be confronted so that those in longstanding positions of power are firmly called to authentically listen for alternative understandings of mission and lived experience. In doing so, Mission as Accompaniment is meant spark and sustain open and honest speech, intentional and humble listening, and a genuine consultation about how companions might journey together as participants in God’s mission.¹⁷⁴

In addition to the above mentioned connections between the ELCA-DGM’s expression of accompaniment and that of mission stated by the LWF, perhaps the most

¹⁷¹ Gonzales, Justo. *Manana* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1990).

¹⁷² ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 12.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

striking reference to Mission as Accompaniment found in *Mission in Context* appears in its concluding remarks about using “the Emmaus road model of mission as being on a journey together, as accompaniment”.¹⁷⁵ In its conclusion, the LWF invited Lutheran communities of faith and other companion church bodies to more fully participate in ways that ponders their particular experiences in mission. While not stated explicitly, through the use of such accompaniment-embodiment words the Lutheran World Federation appears to have approved of Mission as Accompaniment as expressed by the ELCA-DGM, as *Mission in Context* expresses one of the primary functions of the accompaniment model: the need for ongoing reflection. In the spirit of “*Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda est*” (“a reforming church must continue to reform”),¹⁷⁶ LWF recognized that accompaniment requires continued self-reflection and analysis alongside global partners, and in doing so, LWF seems to have embraced the reality the Mission as Accompaniment affirmation that current understandings of mission are not permanent, and thus, continual assessment and evaluation was required.

While the ELCA-DGM document also expresses a need for ongoing evaluation, what makes its particular expression unique is that it more intentionally calls for the Mission as Accompaniment process to be involved in the evaluation of accompaniment. In a sense, the accompaniment model will, according to the ELCA, be the best way to determine whether or not the overall effectiveness of accompaniment was embodied and achieved. As *Global Mission in the 21st Century* states, “by its very essence, accompaniment assumes a process”, and the “companions are on the road together, learning along the way”.¹⁷⁷ Through an unpredictable journey of such communal engagement, Mission as Accompaniment is meant to adopt a shared understanding and respect among companion churches in which all have something to both give and receive. Therefore, Mission as Accompaniment implies an assessment process of movement together where community is both a means and an end, and thus may be its own best method of evaluation. As the document goes on to state, the ELCA is called to engage in “a process that invites companion churches to share in the evaluation” of its programs “and the ongoing revision of the criteria used to evaluate” all that it does.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ LWF, *Mission in Context*, 61.

¹⁷⁶ While the source of this phrase has been debated for numerous years, it appears to have been first articulated by Dutch Reformed Theologian Jodocus von Lodenstein (1620-1677).

¹⁷⁷ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 29.

¹⁷⁸ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 35.

In review, the development of Mission as Accompaniment that took place between the ELCA and its Latin American companions seems to have made a direct impact upon the global trend in mission later developed by The Lutheran World Federation. To state that LWF was led by the ELCA development of accompaniment may be a stretch, yet it would appear that accompaniment took hold in a way in which it was eventually embraced by the global Lutheran body. As a result, the ideal of “walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality” evolved as a model that was considered by the entire Lutheran global community.

3.8.5 Mission as Accompaniment in Response to Mechanistic Dehumanization

A key characteristic of Mission as Accompaniment is its continual evaluation in conversation with the global companions who are most involved within – and thus impacted by – the accompaniment journey. Mission as Accompaniment is to be critiqued and considered on a consistent basis. In doing so, the primary research question of this overall study emerges once again:

How can Mission as Accompaniment guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission to respond more effectively alongside its global church companions to mechanistic dehumanization?

In order to consider where the current understanding of Mission as Accompaniment is to move toward, one is compelled to pause and consider more practical examples of where it has been. In doing so, rather than condemning the acts of others, I will consider some of my own actions as one who has served as longer-term mission personnel of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission. The following is a personal narrative that will help to highlight the need for Mission as Accompaniment to move past its current understanding.

3.8.5.1 A Personal Narrative¹⁷⁹

My reflections on the current expression of Mission as Accompaniment in relationship to mechanistic dehumanization spark reflection upon my first year of ordained ministry (2005), when I received a call to serve as Director of the Lutheran Camp and Retreat Centre (LCRC) in Skeldon, Guyana, through what was then known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Division for Global Mission. On top of my leadership role as the pastor of four congregations in the Emmanuel Lutheran Parish (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana), my particular responsibilities with the LCRC offered a valuable learning opportunity for the study of missiological trajectories, as we hosted numerous "mission trip" groups from a diversity of Christian denominations across North America. My role as a foreign guest in Guyana and also local host of such groups offered a complex and significant degree of exposure to mission theology and practices, and in doing so provided a worthwhile source to reflect upon themes such as mechanistic dehumanization that impact Mission as Accompaniment.

One of the first goals during my period of service in Guyana was to strategically institute a structure of financial wellbeing and sustainability for the LCRC. In doing so, although we urged an assortment of institutions from within Guyana to make use of LCRC resources and services, we soon realized that international groups from North America and Europe had the capacity to offer far more in monetary resources, and were thus viewed as key to assist with our facility upkeep and local staff compensation. As a result, North American and European mission organizations were strategically targeted for our fundraising goals. With such aims in mind, we corresponded with numerous faith communities and non-profit organizations in North America and Europe, and after repeatedly revealing what we had to offer at the LCRC in the Republic of Guyana, within a relatively brief amount of time we began to accept a diverse assortment of overseas visitors hoping to lead mission-trips on the east coast of Guyana. The plan seemed to be working.

¹⁷⁹ A version of this personal narrative was shared in Brian E. Konkol, "Mission as Conversion of Connections", in *Living on the Edge: Essays in Honour of Steve de Gruchy, Activist & Theologian*; Edited by James R. Cochrane, Elias Bongmba, Isabel Phiri, and Des van der Water (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publications, 2013), 284-302.

Following my first year of ordained ministry in Skeldon, the LCRC appeared to be on the verge of a massive monetary development. More specifically, we accepted a mission-trip application from a respected North American faith community that pledged to discern a long-term financial collaboration. Due to such an exciting financial opportunity, we at the LCRC sought to guarantee that these guests experienced a pleasurable and powerful mission-trip experience, thus we organized and planned to the best of our cooperative capacity. The chief aim of the visiting North American faith community was to construct a home for a family deemed to be in need, but they also sought to run a number of small-group Bible Studies and larger-scale community worship services. While I developed a number of initial concerns about the proposed schedule and was nervous about the lack of mutuality between hosts and guests in designing the mission plans, my concerns remained private, and the LCRC eventually contracted to host the incoming foreign group with food, shelter, worship space, meals, local communication, etc. When the visitors from North America eventually arrived in Guyana, a location for building was selected by their leadership, they also chose a particular family to obtain the new house, and of course, the Bible study and community worship services were organized, scheduled and promoted. In the midst of it all, those of us with the LCRC seemed to be extremely confident, for together we hoped that our work would pay off financially in the long term.

When the visiting North American mission-trip group arrived in Guyana, it was evident from the beginning that they possessed significant levels of motivation and were dedicated to completing the home within their allotted (one week) time frame. While the equatorial heat was far more punishing than anything they had previously experienced in North America, the group worked diligently and passionately, as they rose early in the morning and continued into the late evening, stopping for food and water at brief moments in the midst of it all. While we witnessed a small number of marginal holdups and obstacles, the steady construction was astonishing, the home was completed on time, and the mission-trip visitors appeared to depart Skeldon with a significant degree of triumph due to their accomplishment and success. Furthermore, it also appeared that local Guyanese hosts within the LCRC and adjacent community were pleased with the experience, we were certain that our dazzling reputation would be communicated throughout North America, we anticipated more mission-trip bookings far into the future, and in doing so, we were confident that the financial wellbeing of the LCRC was in good hands.

During the time period immediately following the North American home-construction mission-trip, I started to hear of irritation and protest within the Skeldon community, and I resolved to learn more through some reliable confidants within the Emmanuel Lutheran Parish. More specifically, after a significant amount of conversation among members of the Lutheran faith community, I discovered that a large number of community members were disillusioned and frustrated because of the recent mission-trip experience, and there was a growing amount of conflict in our community as a result. For example, I discovered that many did not believe that the most deserving family had been chosen to receive the new home. In total, in what had initially seemed to be a resounding success, I increasingly learned that the North American mission-trip experience was by no means a faithful application of the core principles of Mission as Accompaniment.

In addition to frustrations surrounding the planning and implementation of the mission trip, I discovered that members of the North American group gave away some of their tools and “extra” funds during their final day in Skeldon, which created a great deal of frustration and tension amongst those who were not present to receive.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, a growing degree of resentment emerged because the mission-trip participants did not hire local workers or sub-contractors to consult for developing and implementing the plans. As a final point, due to the fact that the North American group was so motivated to complete the project on time, the local community members felt as if their guests had no interest in forming relationships or even spiritual fellowship, as the small-group Bible studies and community worship service never occurred, as the group needed more time to complete the home project. In summary, the construction process in Guyana was deemed to be more of a priority than the people of Guyana, as the majority of interaction between hosts and guests was about getting a task completed, as if local hosts were merely a means to an end for the visitors.

In addition to the criticism directed at the mission-trip visitors, as time passed I discovered that my own judgment was increasingly (and justifiably) criticized. Although the

¹⁸⁰ While USA dollars could be exchanged into Guyanese dollars at an exchange of approximately US\$1-GUY200, it was extremely difficult to exchange Guyanese dollars back into USA dollars upon departure from Guyana. As a result, it was quite common for USA groups to offer their “left-over” cash to a variety of Guyanese during the final hours of their visit, as the local currency would be essentially without worth when in the USA. As one might imagine, numerous local community members in Skeldon were quite cognisant of this reality, and would thus congregate around the LCRC during such departure times, not only for the sake of hospitality, but I presume, to receive funds that were available.

residents of Skeldon appeared to welcome the commitment of international guests to Guyana, and my foreign networking seemed to be perceived as a valuable asset, I was informed that it was an error in judgment to bring foreigners to Guyana in order to “do mission” to the Guyanese. While I perceived myself as being open and inclusive when making decisions that impacted the local community, *I now conclude that I was guilty of mechanistic dehumanization, as I was using local people as a means to a financial end.* My intentions were distinct from my impact. The people of Skeldon sought to be participants in God’s mission, but I was absorbed with financial growth, and in doing so offered mission-trip experiences “for hire” for foreign guests of my home nation. My (well intentioned) obsession with economic growth led to a severe and dehumanizing impact: The people of Guyana were viewed merely as cogs in a larger economic machine, rather than participants in God’s mission and beloved Children of God. As a result, the overall venture was grossly deficient in solidarity, mutuality and reciprocity. In retrospect I was convinced that I was merely seeing where the Mission as Accompaniment journey would lead, but in reality I – as a perceived powerful North American – was doing mission for (and mission “on”) Guyana rather than participating with the people of Guyana. The Lutherans that I was called to serve alongside, as well as the surrounding community, were viewed as a means to an end, all for the sake of growing the financial stability and sustainability of the LCRC. The entire experience, even as I reflect upon it over a decade later, remains both informative and convicting. The open-ended nature of Mission as Accompaniment was overtaken by my economic desires, my good intentions resulted in a dehumanizing impact, and what emerged was the recognition that Mission as Accompaniment requires more focused direction.

3.8.5.2 From Reflection to Practice

In light of the above personal narrative, and being mindful of the primary research question that guides and informs the contents of this study, one recognizes that Mission as Accompaniment – despite its limitations – does indeed embody positive attributes surrounding mutuality and respectful forms of global church companionship.¹⁸¹ In doing so, Mission as Accompaniment does indeed provide a solid foundation for mechanistic dehumanization to be effectively countered by the ELCA Global Mission. More specifically, Mission as Accompaniment recognizes that all in the human community are intimately and

¹⁸¹ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 146.

intricately connected as being created in the *Imago Trinitatis*, thus global companionship is to function in ways that not only brings alertness to mechanistic dehumanization, but it strives to faithfully connect with all of creation in ways that bring the fullness of life. Through such an embodiment of Mission as Accompaniment, confidence with (and trust among) global companions can be initiated and grown, and the result is reconciliation, transformation and empowerment on the basis of mutuality and respect.

While Mission as Accompaniment clearly offers a solid foundation for the ELCA Global Mission to effectively respond to mechanistic globalization, Mission as Accompaniment *in its current form* falls short, in my judgment. The continually expressed idea that accompaniment should be entirely open-ended in nature is significantly problematic. Mission as Accompaniment in its current form implies neutrality and equality in partnership, and in doing so is naïve in recognizing the complexity of power dynamics and inherent agendas within such accompaniment. Partnership for the sake of partnership will ultimately move in the direction of those with the most power within such a partnership. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a more advocacy-driven Mission as Accompaniment in order for the ELCA Global Mission to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization, as partnership for the sake of partnership is not sufficient for the task at hand. In being more “advocacy-driven”, Mission as Accompaniment will commit to the pursuit of influencing outcomes to directly impact the fullness of life, such as: entrance and expression in the decision making of various social institutions (both inside and outside the realm of church structures), transformation of power relationships (both inside and outside church structures), and overall improvement toward the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods.¹⁸² This commitment to advocacy is not present within the current understanding of Mission as Accompaniment.

Although Mission as Accompaniment (as presently understood by the ELCA Global Mission) can surely be commended for its faithful move away from prior (colonial) conceptions of global mission, one must continue to explore and appraise such commitments in light of the harsh realities of Neoliberal Capitalism, as well as its source and sustainer, mechanistic dehumanization. For example, because Mission as Accompaniment currently takes place within the larger global context of Neoliberal Capitalism, one must call into question *where* and/or *to what* global companions are actually journeying together towards?

¹⁸² Cohen, 8.

Who makes such decisions? How are such decisions made? In other words, what is the essential aim of Mission as Accompaniment within a larger context of Neoliberal Capitalism and mechanistic dehumanization? What is the purpose of Mission as Accompaniment in the midst of it all, especially when respective church bodies are deeply connected with (and directly dependent upon) economic systems and structures that contribute to dehumanization?

While Mission as Accompaniment in its current form seems to imply that journeying together in and of itself is the goal (for transformation takes place within the process), those on the receiving end of mechanistic dehumanization as a result of Neoliberal Capitalism may not be willing to participate in such an ill-defined venture. Why should those on the receiving end of mechanistic dehumanization (who often do not benefit from Neoliberal Capitalism) agree to journey alongside those that do benefit without a focused advocacy-driven direction? In other words, why journey together “if companions are merely walking in circles?”¹⁸³ Among other things, for Mission as Accompaniment to guide the ELCA Global Mission to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization, what may be required is a mutual and focused advocacy-driven agreement *from the start* of the accompaniment journey that is meant to accurately detail what the shared purpose of the journey may be. In other words, if the powerful simply state, “let us walk together, trust the Holy Spirit, and see what happens”, it is likely that (for good reason) those on lower rungs of power will not be keen participants, and due to such a lack of trust, would not genuinely participate and clandestinely (and rightfully) resist the accompaniment process each step of the way.¹⁸⁴

With the above questions and critiques in mind, while Mission as Accompaniment highlights the need for respectful global companionship between churches, it lacks a focused and accountable advocacy-driven direction for the global companions to unite around key issues. Therefore, Mission as Accompaniment risks becoming a form of *Mission as Anesthetic* that merely hides the deep and (mechanistic) dehumanizing structural sources of pain while failing to take the steps necessary for significant correction and sustained rehabilitation. In light of previous analysis, this study recognizes the need to expand Mission as Accompaniment beyond its current understanding within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission, and in order to create a more effective accompaniment of

¹⁸³ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 151.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

church companions, Mission as Accompaniment must include a more effective response to mechanistic dehumanization.

Mission as Accompaniment hinges upon the formation of relationships and a process of mutuality and solidarity alongside others. While such priorities are laudable, Mission as Accompaniment repeatedly implies that the journey in and of itself is the goal of Mission as Accompaniment.¹⁸⁵ In other words, the process of Mission as Accompaniment is too often viewed as the destination of Mission as Accompaniment. While such mutuality and open-ended adherence to relationship building is commendable, one also recognizes that Mission as Accompaniment requires a more focused and accountable direction for companions to be in mutuality and solidarity. If this commitment to accountability fails to take place, then the dominant will remain in control of those with lesser power. And so, a gaping hole within Mission as Accompaniment is its lack of direction and/or a destination of accountability, because companionship for the mere sake of companionship is not companionship.¹⁸⁶

Mission as Accompaniment must develop a more focused advocacy-driven direction in response to a particular source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism, which this study has deemed to be mechanistic dehumanization. As was stated in the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWMS) 2013 mission statement, “*Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*”, the challenges for mission companions are significant, as we are “living in a world in which faith in mammon threatens the credibility of the gospel”.¹⁸⁷ Consequently, “market ideology” is growing and spreading the false belief that Neoliberal Capitalism will somehow solve any and all problems through constant economic growth.¹⁸⁸ This popular ideology poses a direct and serious danger, not only to our global economic lives, but also to the religious practices and spiritual wellbeing of all people, and not only to humans, but to all of God’s creation. And so, important and urgent questions emerge, such as:

How can we proclaim the good news and values of God’s kingdom in the global market or win over the spirit of the market? What kind of missional action can the

¹⁸⁵ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 6.

¹⁸⁶ Barnes, *Power and Partnership*, 405-423.

¹⁸⁷ WCC, “Together toward Life”, 6.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

church take in the midst of economic and ecological injustice and crisis on a global scale?¹⁸⁹

These important questions from the World Council of Churches force us to recognize that, despite the warning of Jesus that one cannot serve both God and mammon, the dominant policy of unlimited growth through Neoliberal Capitalism is an ideology that arrogantly asserts to be without improvement or substitute. It requires total devotion and thus a boundless supply of sacrifices from both people and the planet. In doing so, Neoliberal Capitalism “makes the false promise that it can save the world through creation of wealth and prosperity”, and in doing so declares total power over all of life and thus demands steadfast faithfulness, “which amount to idolatry”.¹⁹⁰ As a result, Mission as Accompaniment currently takes place within a “global system of mammon” that guards the boundless accumulation of financial affluence for the elite through an limitless mistreatment of the poor. Therefore, because “this tower of greed is threatening the whole household of God”, Mission as Accompaniment must recognize that the “reign of God is in direct opposition to the empire of mammon”.¹⁹¹

Since Mission as Accompaniment takes place in the context of mechanistic dehumanization, it requires a more accountable and focused direction for companions in mission to rally around their common causes and shared priorities. As “God’s purpose for the world is not to create another world, but to re-create what God has already created in love and wisdom”,¹⁹² Mission as Accompaniment must possess a deeper “understanding of the complexities of power dynamics, global systems and structures, and local contextual realities”.¹⁹³ Should Mission as Accompaniment move in such an accountable and advocacy-driven direction, then it could assist global companions to build a world in which the fullness of life is a reality for all.

In regards to a more focused and accountable direction for Mission as Accompaniment, one must take into account the previous introduction of mechanistic

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ WCC, “Together toward Life”, 13.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

dehumanization as defined by Nick Haslam, for such serves as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism. In specifics, mechanistic dehumanization is “the objectifying denial of essentially human attributes to people toward whom the person feels psychologically distant and socially unrelated”.¹⁹⁴ As a result, such mechanistic dehumanization is often associated with a general sense of apathy toward others, a lack of compassion for others, a conceptual perception of others that designates an implied departure from oneself, and an inclination to describe the behavior of others in generalized and degrading terms.¹⁹⁵

With the connection between Neoliberal Capitalism and mechanistic dehumanization in mind, one recognizes an opportunity for Mission as Accompaniment to more fully respond. More specifically, as Mission as Accompaniment intends solidarity and mutuality among companions, it serves as a potential corrective to the indifference, apathy, and other characteristics found in mechanistic dehumanization. With the emphasis upon equity, shared resources, and overall fairness in relationships found in Mission as Accompaniment, it provides a resource by which the ELCA Global Mission can more effectively counter a wide range of issues. However, what Mission as Accompaniment (in its current form) fails to recognize is the core reasons for why mechanistic dehumanization exists. For example, what sociological factors create the psychological distance and perceptions of social disconnect that relate to mechanistic dehumanization? In addition, what factors create emotional and intellectual indifference, lack of empathy, and/or an abstract and de-individuated view of others? In order for Mission as Accompaniment to respond to mechanistic dehumanization, it must answer such important questions.

3.9 Summary

This chapter argued that mechanistic dehumanization stands in direct contrast to human dignity as expressed in the *Imago Trinitatis*, and Mission as Accompaniment possesses numerous resources in order to respond to mechanistic dehumanization. However, this chapter also showed that Mission as Accompaniment requires a more intentional recognition and examination of the forces that mechanistically dehumanize. Therefore, the following chapters will provide Mission as Accompaniment with a missiological trajectory

¹⁹⁴ Haslam, 262.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

and indicator of accountability to ensure a more accountable and focused advocacy-driven response to mechanistic dehumanization. The next chapter will examine an Olive Agenda, and the subsequent chapter will focus upon the concept of Ubuntu. All together, such considerations will provide considerable value for Mission as Accompaniment, which in turn will provide Mission as Accompaniment with a more accountable and focused response to mechanistic dehumanization for the ELCA Global Mission.

CHAPTER 4: THE OLIVE AGENDA

4.1 Introduction

As highlighted in the previous chapter of this study, while Mission as Accompaniment has a great deal to offer, the paradigm requires further development and focus to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization. Mission as Accompaniment fails to fully recognize the context into which such accompaniment takes place,¹ thus it can be argued that the ELCA Global Mission cannot fully consider the full impact of mechanistic dehumanization. The efforts of Steve de Gruchy in promoting an “Olive Agenda” is significant for equipping Mission as Accompaniment for the task at hand.² In other words, an Olive Agenda helps to provide a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively function in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

For the task at hand, this chapter will consider a theological metaphor – the olive – that rises above the division that involves “green” environmental agendas and “brown” poverty agendas, a duality that has existed in the ELCA Global Mission through Mission as Accompaniment over the past decades.³ As Chapter Two showed the connection between economics, ecology, and mechanistic dehumanization, the Olive Agenda offers an indispensable metaphor that unites and engages that which political and religious dialogue too often ignores and divides: Earth, environment, employment, households, nourishment, wellbeing, food security, impoverishment, Empire, and warfare.⁴ While an Olive Agenda has already added much to existing research on ecology and poverty, its implication for Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA have yet to be explored. As a result, this chapter will consider the Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment in order to guide the ELCA Global Mission in a more effective response to mechanistic dehumanization.

¹ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 18-62.

² de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 333-345.

³ The ELCA has published Social Statements on ecology (<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Environment.aspx>) and economics (<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Economic-Life.aspx>), but this study argues that it has failed to fully recognize the connections between the two.

⁴ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 336.

4.2 The Olive Agenda: An Introduction

The Olive Agenda of Steve de Gruchy is firmly grounded in the affirmation that although Neoliberal Capitalism – called the “Big Economy” by Larry Rasmussen⁵ – has delivered certain benefits for contemporary livelihoods, its defective promotion of unrestrained production, unrestricted consumption, and indefinite growth stands in direct opposition to “the Great Economy”, an expression coined by Wendell Berry.⁶ Rasmussen argues that the current post-industrialization economic patterns are untenable, as such boundless production, consumption, and growth does not adhere to the confines of the Earth’s natural renewal patterns.⁷ As he argues, “the Bottom Line below the Bottom Line” is that if we fail to affirm that economics and ecology are ultimately following the same rules, “we are in deep doodoo”, as “eco/nomics is the only way possible”.⁸

Rasmussen’s perspective on the Big Economy and Great Economy is firmly in sync with de Gruchy and others who argue that far too many place matters of ecology and economics in distinct (and contentious) classifications, as highlighting one is too often perceived as ideological infidelity to the other.⁹ More specifically, while societies of prior generations repeatedly acknowledged the requirement to engage economic life that coordinates with ecological restrictions, the modern trend of Neoliberal Capitalism has revealed itself as treacherous within this vital and delicate economic and ecological bond. The consequence of such a break between the Big Economy and Great Economy is a growing level of economic discrimination, increases in extreme impoverishment, and a planet that can no longer tolerate its reckless punishment on behalf of humankind.¹⁰ Nevertheless, in the face of various destructive outcomes that stem from Neoliberal Capitalism, its powerful protagonists continue to disseminate fabrications surrounding its inclusive advantages, promoting an erroneous trust in so-called trickle-down policies and deceitful choices between

⁵ Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).

⁶ Wendell Berry & Norman Wirzba, *The Art of Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2002), 219-235.

⁷ Rasmussen, *Earth Community*, 112.

⁸ Ibid. The use of the term “Bottom Line” is borrowed by Rasmussen from Thomas Berry, and “eco/nomics” from William Ashworth.

⁹ Andrew Warmback, *Constructing an Oikothology: The Environment, Poverty, and The Church in South Africa*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 2005), 5.

¹⁰ Diakonia Council of Churches, *Oikos Journey*, (Durban, South Africa), 16. Available at: <http://www.diakonia.org.za/dmdocuments/OikosA5e.pdf>

the prioritization of poverty eradication or ecological sustainability.¹¹ An Olive Agenda is a indispensable addition for the response to such an expression of mechanistic dehumanization, because it relocates the theological agenda far beyond a misguided competition between the brown and green agendas, and in doing so empowers Mission as Accompaniment to seek environmental health while also decreasing poverty and financial inequality across the globe.

4.3 *Oikos* Theology

In order to equip Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda for the purpose of responding to mechanistic dehumanization, one must first examine the theological characteristics and foundations of the Olive Agenda as initially communicated by Steve de Gruchy. In doing so, the first step of exploring the Olive Agenda is to consider *oikos* theology, as *oikos* theology is the primary theological framework by which the Olive Agenda was first constructed by Steve de Gruchy.¹² More specifically, by highlighting the theological groundwork in which it was first constructed, one can then more effectively equip Mission as Accompaniment with the Olive Agenda for the purpose of responding to mechanistic dehumanization. Therefore, the following section will highlight *oikos* theology and consider the ways in which an Olive Agenda was first built upon it.

In order to provide a general understanding of *oikos* theology, the first task is to introduce *oikos* from a historical context. One of de Gruchy's students, Andrew Warmback, explained that the fundamental connotation of *oikos* in common Greek and Hellenistic tradition is that of "house" or "dwelling", and is typically associated with interpretations of "domestic affairs", "wealth", "possessions", as well as "family", or "family property".¹³ Furthermore, in both the Septuagint and the New Testament a utilization of the expression "house of God" is quite widespread in making mention of the temple, which also often represented a variety of references to the at-large community.¹⁴ As Warmback elaborates upon the important work of Loux and Nida, *oikos* might also be best characterized in the particular sphere of "constructions" with the sub-sphere of "buildings" as "a building

¹¹ Oreskes and Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, 169-215.

¹² de Gruchy, "An Olive Agenda", 333.

¹³ Warmback, 180.

¹⁴ Ibid.

consisting of one or more rooms and normally serving as a dwelling place”.¹⁵ Therefore, it is repeatedly accepted that a reference to the *oikos* may also take into account public structures such as the temple.¹⁶ As a term of affinity or kinship, *oikos* could also represent the “family” or “household”, or also that of “lineage” or “family line”.¹⁷ Furthermore, under the particular domain that considers material property, belongings and proprietorship, *oikos* may come to signify “possessions associated with a house or household”, “property, possessions”.¹⁸

By exploring *oikos* from a historical context and then utilizing it as a contemporary theological framework, the metaphor of *oikos* has, according to Ernst Conradie, “been widely used to develop an integrated understanding of the social agenda of the church”.¹⁹ Among other things, the *oikos* metaphor shows a concern for the wellbeing of all forms of life (not only human life), grounded in the core principle that the entire household is claimed by God and is thus accountable to values and practices of God’s economy.²⁰ Warmback observes that the use of the *oikos* metaphor to express the relationship between the environment and poverty is by no means new,²¹ yet the term *oikothology* was first coined by Warmback as a theology which is based on the *oikos* metaphor and expresses a deep concern for the natural environment as well as people, especially for the full eradication of poverty.²² As Warmback states, the concept of home or house is “fundamental to an *oikothology*”, for the vision of our created earth as a “household of God” is applied to consider how the world must be observed and interpreted as a vessel of equipping and empowering humankind, in order to more fully comprehend the communion between a commitment for the environment and the extinction of impoverishment. In sum, *oikothology* helps to conquer the so-called “green divide”.²³

Oikothology rests on the conviction that “all have a home” and “all are equally valued”; both the wellbeing of the environment and the opportunity of humankind to steward

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ernst Conradie, *Christianity and Ecological Theology: Resources for Further Research* (Stellenbosch, South Africa: SUN PReSS, 2006), 17.

²⁰ Conradie, *Christianity and Ecological Theology*, 16.

²¹ World Council of Churches, “Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE): A Background Document” (Geneva: WCC, 2005).

²² Warmback, 7.

²³ Warmback, 181.

such environmental resources are to be taken seriously.²⁴ As “a home embraces the material as well as the non material”, in such an *oikos* there is support and compassion, affirmation of being welcomed, nourishment and encouragement.²⁵ A home denotes familial associations of connectedness and mutuality, an absence of opposition and domination; it also involves kinship and conflict resolution, completeness, unity, affection, sacrifice, philanthropy, and hospitality. As all that lives ultimately resides in the same home, all within the home ultimately need each other, and *oikos* as symbolism integrates the primary aspects of what composes the environment, and it reaches the center of ecological issues by dealing with both ecology and the economics.

While building upon the important theological work of Conradie and others,²⁶ Andrew Warmback was the first to move toward constructing an innovative systematic *oikothology*, yet he also recognized the theoretical gaps and ongoing work that needed to be done.²⁷ Along these lines, Cyprian Obiora Alokwa built upon Warmback’s work of constructing an *oikothology*, offered an assessment and critique of Warmback, and thus confirmed the need for such continued development. According to Alokwa, *oikothology* is not absence of limitations and flaws, for among other things “within the African context [*oikothology*] is not fully accessible to African Christianity”, as it is “laden with western terminology”, which is quite comparable to various other ecological and economical expressions and theories.²⁸ As Alokwa correctly states, *oikothology* from Warmback lacks “the African cultural orientation and terminology (proverbs and idioms)” to effectively communicate the primary matters that *oikothology* seeks to consider amongst Africans.²⁹ Furthermore, because *oikothology* is grounded in the theoretical work of mostly white and European scholars, its overall appeal and approachability to African Christians remains in question. In the words of Alokwa, such thoughts are not meant to be a criticism of Warmback himself, but rather a challenge to others – especially Africans – to take up the task of relating *oikothology* to African cultures.³⁰

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Warmback, 253-292.

²⁷ Warmback, 251.

²⁸ Cyprian Obiora Alokwa, *The Anglican Church, Environment and Poverty: Constructing a Nigerian Indigenous Oikothology*, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 2009), 268.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

In addition to the need to use an African orientation (which will be addressed in the next chapter of this study through the exploration of Ubuntu), the work of Alokwu in constructing a “Nigerian Indigenous *Oikothology*” also offers key insights that relate to the relationship between Neoliberal Capitalism and mechanistic dehumanization. More specifically, Alokwu states that *oikothology* should not only be aware of the relatedness of all in the household of God, but *oikothology* requires a full recognition of the alienation currently existing as a result of economic structures. More specifically, Alokwu argues that the primary function of *oikothology* in the current context of “economic chaos” that repeatedly “marginalizes and excludes the weaker members of the *oikos*” is to pursue non-conforming and revolutionary economic structures that would ensure both fairness and sustainable livelihoods.³¹ Along these lines, Alokwu argues that such an alternative economic structure would be grounded in the inclusive affirmation of what it means to be fully human, which would in turn ensure that economics are not “treated as a final goal but rather as a means toward an end.”³²

According to Alokwu, the *oikos* metaphor is a notion that keeps asking: “How can this Earth, with all the injustices, poverty, hunger, and sufferings of different kinds, possibly be ‘home for all’?”³³ More specifically, Alokwu states that “the reality of poverty and injustice in our global *oikos* does not arise from the lack of resources in the *oikos*”, but rather, from “a deliberate and willful violation of the rule of home management (*oikos-nomos*)”.³⁴ As a result, one recognizes the theoretical space (which will be explored later in this Chapter) for an Olive Agenda, as the Olive Agenda moves *oikothology* from a theological affirmation into a missiological trajectory.

When attempting to more fully grasp the development of *oikothology* as a basis for an Olive Agenda, one must also recognize the important contributions of Ernst Conradie, as Conradie’s ecological theology provided a significant level of groundwork for Warmback and Alokwu to begin the construction of an *oikothology*. More specifically, Conradie understood ecological theology as an endeavor to reclaim the ecological knowledge in the Christian tradition to counter the various pressures and prejudices facing the environment,

³¹ Alokwu, 272.

³² Ibid.

³³ Alokwu, 269.

³⁴ Ibid.

and also the opportunity to explore, remember, reform, and revitalize Christianity in response to the various questions offered by the current ecological emergency.³⁵ Conradie has argued that “ecological theology should not be reduced to environmental ethics as a sub-discipline of Christian ethics”, but rather “an ecological ethos” that “touches on virtually all aspects of life and has implications for all ethical sub-disciplines”.³⁶ In summary, by introducing a number of developments for ecological theology, Conradie provided an avenue by which *oikothology* could more fully develop and lay groundwork for an Olive Agenda.

While a full analysis of Conradie’s ecological theology is not intended here, it is important to note its strong relationship with the development of an *oikothology*, and as a result, the Olive Agenda. In addition, as this chapter seeks to expand Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda for the sake of responding more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization, it is also worth noting that Conradie understood anthropology to lie at the root of his ecological theology. As Conradie states, the current ecological emergency requires a pressing examination of the too-often toxic interaction “between humanity and nature, or, more precisely, on the place of humanity within the earth community”.³⁷ In light of the previous chapter’s theological exploration of mechanistic dehumanization and that which distinguishes humanness, Conradie argues that humanness means – among other things – to grasp the “sense of place” of humanity within the larger earth community.³⁸ As Conradie argues, all of human life is currently “at home on earth”, as the earth is the “one and only God-given home”, thus all “belong to the earth”.³⁹ He continues:

It is a simple fact of life that we have emerged here, on this planet. We are adapted to life here. We are not fit to live anywhere else. We are not tourists here. We are residents. This recognition suggests an ecological ethos: we should allow the whole household of God to flourish.⁴⁰

³⁵ Ernst Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology: At Home on Earth?* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 1.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology*, 1.

³⁸ Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology*, 4.

³⁹ Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology*, 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Conradie consistently roots his ecological theology in an anthropology that highlights the Earth as the God-given home of humanity. In doing so, Conradie has advocated for the responsibility of humanity to express “a concern for the well-being of all forms of life in this one household of God,” which includes a “comprehensive sense of justice which can respond to both economic injustice and ecological degradation”.⁴¹ This strong connection of ecological theology, anthropology, and justice is critical; it is the ground on which *oikothology* and an Olive Agenda flourish.

Conradie states that his development of an anthropologically-rooted justice-focused ecological theology was by no means new, as it was grounded in the previous work of numerous others who made such important connections.⁴² For example, Sallie McFague argued that being “at home on the Earth” means that human beings must resist the seductions of economical and ecology conformity, as we are called to view the earth with alternative lenses, “not anthropocentrically, not in a utilitarian way, not in terms of dualistic hierarchies, not in parochial terms”.⁴³ In doing so, McFague argues, we must ensure a consciousness of “belonging to the earth”, of developing a place with it, and in doing so, “loving it more than we ever thought possible”.⁴⁴

In addition, by understanding humans as being “in” but not “of” this world, Anna Peterson wrote *Being Human* with a chapter “In and of the world”,⁴⁵ the title of David Barnhill’s multicultural anthology was *At Home on the Earth*,⁴⁶ while David Toolan explored being *At Home in the Cosmos*.⁴⁷ All of these theorists provide important contributions to the realm of ecological theology. Altogether, Conradie built his ecological theology upon the extensive and excellent work of numerous others, and in turn, many others – including Steve de Gruchy – built upon the work of Conradie.

⁴¹ Conradie, *Christianity and Ecological Theology*, 17.

⁴² Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology*, 6.

⁴³ Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 111.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Anna L. Peterson, *Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 185-212.

⁴⁶ David Barnhill, *At Home on the Earth: Becoming Native to Our Place: A Multicultural Anthology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

⁴⁷ David Toolan, *At Home in the Cosmos* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003).

While a full investigation of *oikothology* is not intended here, one can briefly note Conradie's summary of its most glaring strengths and weaknesses, in addition to his considerations surrounding those who may best receive it. More specifically, in regards to the most notable strengths of *oikothology*, Conradie observes that it will most likely entice those who value the awareness and acceptance of "homeliness", but also those who have for one reason or another been excluded or removed from a home, such as those displaced due to climate change, those impacted by the tragedies of homelessness, or others that may have been removed from their homes for lack of financial payment, they are victims of sex trafficking, are under the pressures of domestic violence, and all who have not discovered a space where they can fully be at home (regardless of where they find themselves on the socio-economic scale).⁴⁸ In addition, *oikothology* may apply most effectively to the immeasurable number of fragile biological species whose natural environment has been occupied and destroyed for the benefit of narrow human profit. In total, while many do not feel at home on earth, *oikothology* may assuage the hunger of Christian's to know that everything God has created may discover an enduring home in the household of God.

While mentioning a wide variety of strengths, Conradie also states some current and serious limitations surrounding the development of *oikothology*, for as he argues, in ways similar to all metaphors, the theological topic containing the household of God has clear restrictions. As Conradie further explains, because any household is a "social construction", *oikothology* can be manipulated to assist the misguided agendas of the most powerful, and in doing so serve the priorities of tightfisted and abusive parents, the promulgation of predetermined "family values", the exploitation of slave labor, the traditional and oppressive relegation of women and children to the home, or the "domestication of emancipatory struggles".⁴⁹ Therefore, all who seek to employ *oikothology* must be prompted to recall that a wide variety of authoritarians have sought to represent themselves as valuing the family, and in modern and industrialized nations the impact of the household is often confined to the realm of the private. As a result, since intentions often differ from impact, the use of the *oikos* metaphor may inadvertently support the disregarding and privatization of religious commitments in the public realm.

⁴⁸ Conradie, *Christianity and Ecological Theology*, 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

In review, while a full exploration of *oikothology* is not the purpose of this chapter or overall study, for the focus of this chapter it is important to note those who have influenced *oikothology* and how *oikothology* influences others, especially Steve de Gruchy. More specifically, those such as Sallie McFague, Ernst Conradie, Andrew Warmback, and Cyprian Obiora Alokwa have helped to develop *oikothology* to a place by which it is under closer examination and development, which in turn led to the construction of an Olive Agenda by Steve de Gruchy. Along these lines, one can further show the relationship between *oikothology* and de Gruchy's Olive Agenda by exploring three important words that all possess *oikos* as a root: economics (*oikos-nomos*), ecology (*oikos-logos*), and ecumenical (*oikoumene*). In doing so, one can show more fully how an Olive Agenda grew out of *oikothology*, and as a result, the ways in which an Olive Agenda can be applied as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment and a response to mechanistic dehumanization.

4.3.1 *Oikos* and Economics, Ecology, and Ecumenism

In trying to more fully understand the Olive Agenda as shared by Steve de Gruchy, in addition to the above general overview of *oikothology* one must also recognize that *oikos* is the root for three significant words: economics, ecology and ecumenism. In doing so, one affirms that *oikothology* – and therefore, the Olive Agenda – points toward the interconnectedness of the church, God's creation, and the pursuit of economic justice. While each term (economics, ecology, and ecumenism) is used by different theologians and practitioners in diverse ways, one is moved to consider the general relationship of *oikos* to economics, ecology, and ecumenism, for such relatedness is a key indicator of the overall development and direction of the Olive Agenda as a trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment in its response to mechanistic dehumanization.

Within the notion of *oikos* is a strong etymological link between economics, ecology, and ecumenism. For example, "ecology" is a combination of two Greek words, *oikos* and *logos*, which provides deep insights for its intended meaning and contemporary significance. *Oikos* means "house or home", and *logos* makes reference to "logic" or "wisdom". In this sense, ecology may therefore be understood as a study of the wisdom of one's house or home. In other words, ecology is meant to examine the multifaceted connectedness and relationships

that contribute toward life in the household. In turn, ecology could also be understood to indicate the totality of resources, living things, and all the supporting systems available to the ecosystem. As David Edwards remarks, the term ecology was likely devised in 1866 by Ernst Haeckel, the German Darwinian, and it “always refers to the whole”, for ecology is associated with the Greek term *oikos*, which (as was expressed earlier in this chapter) represents “house”.⁵⁰ In doing so, ecology makes strong reference to “the household of living creatures”, the communion of all that exists on the planet, with all of the structures and systems that cooperatively support the sustainable sustenance of all life.⁵¹ Edwards further elaborates in stating that ecology is “connected with communities, with systems and with interrelationships”, as the basic concept of ecological study is that “land is a community”.⁵² Edwards considered the important work of Aldo Leopold, who argued through both word and deed that humanity misuses the earth because we think of it as product that we own, but as we learn to understand the earth as a community for us all to justly participate within, we in turn learn to cooperate alongside it with both compassion and integrity.⁵³

In comparison to the study of ecology, an examination of economics combines *oikos* and *nomos*, which signify the laws or rules of the household. Larry Rasmussen suggests that economics implies “knowing how things work and arranging these ‘home systems’-ecosystems”, in order for the basic physical necessities of life to be achieved and continued.⁵⁴ In light of such connections between *oikos* and *nomos*, economics may also be viewed as “house rules” – rules that, as Sallie McFague states, have “to do with the just division of basic resources among all the members of the family of life”.⁵⁵ As result, one heeds the critical economical responsibility of awareness offered by Joerg Rieger, who argued that the primary inquiry for an encounter of religious practice and economic systems is whether or not we as a society have misguided our dependence upon erroneous influences and commands.⁵⁶ In what can be viewed as a critical conception in the relationship between religion and economics, Rieger insists that not only should our critical investigations be considered along

⁵⁰ Denis Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1995), 2.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Rasmussen, *Earth Community*, 91.

⁵⁵ Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 72.

⁵⁶ Rieger, *No Rising Tide*, 5.

the lines of theory, but also in regards to the practical costs of modern day religion and economics – and especially in regards to the consistent and expanding dissimilarities of wealthy and impoverished, which in turn exclude an increasing number of people from the fullness of life.⁵⁷

In addition to the aforementioned thoughts on ecology and economics, *oikos* is also the root of *oikoumene*, which can be understood as the whole inhabited world. In this particular research context of exploring *oikos* as grounding for the Olive Agenda, it is worthwhile to recognize that *oikoumene* is not exclusively limited to the Christian Church as the so-called household of God, but the *oikoumene* is far broader and more inclusive. As Konrad Raiser observes, *oikoumene*, appropriately contemplated as “the one household of life” produced and sustained by God the Creator, extends far beyond the relatively limited existence of human life, and includes the entire created order.⁵⁸ In doing so, the term reminds humankind that the details of our human history are intimately bound together with the stories of all that exists, which in turn means human life is unable to continue unless it properly relates to others in the household that are found in its natural environment.

In light of such critical thoughts brought forward by Raiser, one begins to see the important link among the study of economics, ecology, and ecumenism. In addition, one notes that such unified terminology carries with it a significant degree of theological value for the Olive Agenda. For example, because the wonders and realities of creation are ultimately expressed through *oikos* as an enormous and open household, and because economics, ecology and ecumenics all reveal a similar origin and orientation, the practice of *oikos*-grounded economics should ultimately signify the need to provide for all in the household as a basic standard of stewarding the household well.⁵⁹ Furthermore, economics seems to connote a meaning of theological significance, for one of the common theological illustrations for stewarding the created order to wellbeing is the “unfolding drama of the divine economy”, which indicates that one of the marks of such an economy is that of “shared abundance”.⁶⁰ Moreover, as “ecumenics” expresses a means by which all residents of

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Konrad Raiser, *Ecumenism in Transition: A Paradigm shift in the Ecumenical Movement?* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 85-88.

⁵⁹ Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology*, 7.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

the household are regarded as a single family unit, humankind is thus united with all of creation, and in doing so fosters the full solidarity of the “family”.⁶¹ In addition, because “ecology” is viewed as an awareness and understanding of the methodical and mutual dependency upon which the wellbeing of the household is contingent upon, one then affirms that if the English linguistic tradition had embraced the Greek term for “steward (*oikonomos*)”, it is possible that western societies might be more inclined to acknowledge “the steward as the trustee, the caretaker of creation imagined as *oikos*”.⁶²

Due to its theological significance, the direct relevance of *oikos* into the Olive Agenda is valuable in its ability to integrate the entire created order as a connected and sacred entity. In other words, *oikos* is utilized in the Olive Agenda to capture the necessity of a comprehensive notion of justice that is capable of addressing economic and ecological exploitation for the sake of the entire inhabited earth. As expressed by John Cobb, people of Christian faith for the most part tend to affirm that the earth is claimed by God, and thus to destroy the earth is sinful, implying that we are compelled as a matter of faith to structure our economic systems in order to meet basic human necessities without damaging the planet beyond repair.⁶³ Along these lines, people of Christian faith for the most part also tend to affirm that our interactions and relationship alongside each other rank no less as significant as the production and consumption of commodities, meaning that humanity must discover methods of addressing human needs in ways that do not that do not destroy our human relationships and societies.⁶⁴ Cobb rightly argues that if we are “persons-in-communities” instead of “individuals-in-markets”, the ultimate aim of our economic agenda must be the edification of our communities instead of unlimited growth for the marketplace.⁶⁵

In a similar train of thought to Cobb, Douglas Meeks remarks that connecting economy, ecology, and ecumenism sheds light upon a number of significant and challenging questions. These connections and resulting inquiries are deeply substantial in the development of an Olive Agenda as a trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization. For example, because economy, ecology and ecumenism are

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Cobb, *Sustaining the Common Good*, 10.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

related, the chief inquiry into economics becomes whether or not all in the household receive what is required to live. Then, the interrogation of ecology centers around whether or not the environment is given its God-given rights or is it forced to dissent by perishing, thereby ending the presence of human beings? And finally, the demands surrounding *oikoumene* become whether or not the whole inhabited world will become reciprocally livable by all peoples, and of course, will all people be empowered to exist and flourish in the world as their home? In total, due to the deep and important connections of economy, ecology and ecumenism, such critical questions show how the “integrity of God’s righteousness and of human justice holds these three concerns together as mutually interdependence”.⁶⁶

In review, the above overview connects *oikos* as the root for economics, ecology, and ecumenism. In doing so, one is provided with a better understanding of *oikothology* in general, and in turn, may consider the more specific foundation by which the Olive Agenda was initially expressed by Steve de Gruchy. As a result, the following section will introduce the Olive Agenda more fully, and in turn, express how the Olive Agenda can equip Mission as Accompaniment for a more effective response from the ELCA Global Mission to mechanistic dehumanization.

4.4 Introducing the Olive Agenda as a Missiological Trajectory

In building upon the link of *oikos* with the study of economics, ecology, and ecumenism, Steve de Gruchy introduced an Olive Agenda to address the multitude of theological and developmental concerns created by, what he called the “brown and green agendas”.⁶⁷ As indicated previously, de Gruchy understood the brown agenda as being concerned with poverty and the green agenda as concerning environmentalism. In addition, de Gruchy identified the brown agenda as being an objective of those in the global south and the green agenda as that most often promoted by those in the global north. Altogether, for Steve de Gruchy the green and brown agendas represent the ongoing debate on the relationship between economics and ecology.⁶⁸ As a result, the Olive Agenda is meant to address the overall problem of harmony and correspondence, as de Gruchy states “the choice

⁶⁶ M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 33-34.

⁶⁷ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 339.

⁶⁸ Alokwa, 261.

between brown and green agendas is not an either/or, but very definitely a both/and, and it is the blending of the both that we bring to the foreground when we speak of the need for an olive agenda”.⁶⁹ The Olive Agenda from Steve de Gruchy seeks to transcend the theological and developmental duality between the green and brown agendas, and in doing so, provide a more comprehensive theological and developmental framework to respond to more effectively to economic and ecological issues.

In order to more fully understand the Olive Agenda and incorporate it into Mission as Accompaniment for a more effective response to mechanistic dehumanization, it is important to consider the missiological elements of the Olive Agenda. Along these lines, since this study seeks to apply the Olive Agenda into Mission as Accompaniment as a missiological trajectory, it is important to explore Steve de Gruchy’s missiological understanding, which relates directly to the Olive Agenda. These thoughts help to show the core missiological elements of the Olive Agenda, which will later be helpful for the incorporation of the Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment.

As stated by Roderick Hewitt, Steve de Gruchy possessed and expressed a deep commitment to missiological theory and practice, and such priorities must be explored when trying to more fully understand the Olive Agenda.⁷⁰ Hewitt points out that through the final ten years of his life de Gruchy deliberately and effectively grew increasingly missiological in his viewpoints and actions.⁷¹ In doing so, while his particular scholastic area within the School of Religion and Theology (SORAT) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), was placed within the realm of Theology and Development, de Gruchy’s “theological orientation was fundamentally rooted in missiological perspectives”.⁷² As Hewitt researched, de Gruchy authored thirty-three academic pieces on the association of “the bible, mission and development between 2001 and 2009”.⁷³ In doing so, within such important writing Steve de Gruchy sought, among other things, to prophetically address an international readership for the sake of pushing the missiological agenda from that of “conservative maintenance

⁶⁹ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 338.

⁷⁰ Roderick Hewitt, “Re-Interpreting Development through Mission Praxis” in *Living on the Edge: Essays in Honour of Steve de Gruchy, Activist & Theologian*; Edited by James R. Cochrane, Elias Bongmba, Isabel Phiri, and Des van der Water (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publications, 2013), 201-215.

⁷¹ Hewitt, 202.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

orientated” conceptions and programs to a robust and fullness-of-life expression that addressed “theology and development, ecology and economic justice”.⁷⁴

Hewitt summarized that de Gruchy was deeply involved in mission organizations and missiological research.⁷⁵ These missiological commitments cannot be ignored when exploring the Olive Agenda. For example, prior to his term at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), de Gruchy served as Director of the Moffat Mission at Kuruman, in the Northern Province of South Africa (1994-2000), the site for the celebrated work of the London Missionary Society in Southern Africa. Following his appointment to UKZN, de Gruchy served as a theological advisor to the Council for World Mission (CWM), for in addition to writing articles for *Inside Out* (a bi-monthly magazine of the CWM), he facilitated a CWM Trustee meeting as Chaplain and Bible Study leader. In addition, at the 2007 Singapore meeting that reflected on the CWM Theological Statement, de Gruchy served as a key contributor. In addition, during his six-month sabbatical in 2006, de Gruchy became CWM resident scholar and researched CWM’s missional developments since 1977. He wrote the document: “Changing Biblical Motivations for Mission Reflections on the Council for World Mission, 1977-2000” and another text that recognized and examined all of the key theological statements produced by the CWM. His final work for the CWM came in the editorial guidance that he gave to the 2011 text *Post-Colonial Mission: Power and Partnership in World Christianity* that was published in his honor. In summary, as was argued by Hewitt,⁷⁶ Steve de Gruchy possessed a strong missiological formation. As a result, this study concludes that missiological values were permeated throughout de Gruchy’s writing and work, including the formation of the Olive Agenda.

When exploring the missiological elements of the Olive Agenda, one begins with the notion that the Olive Agenda is grounded in the connectedness of the household of God (*oikos*). In other words, whereas mission endeavors of prior generations often sought to produce connections with others around the world, Steve de Gruchy argues that mission requires an acknowledgment that global companions are already connected in various ways and means long before such individuals have an opportunity to meet in person.⁷⁷ As de

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The following paragraph relies upon Hewitt, 202.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 202.

⁷⁷ Steve de Gruchy, “Being Connected”, 1.

Gruchy states, people are “connected” as a matter of “fact” and “faith”, thus the pursuit of mission is to “function” in ways that transform connections into relations that faithfully reflect the nature of Jesus’ commitment to solidarity and respect.⁷⁸ In light of what de Gruchy articulates surrounding an Olive Agenda,⁷⁹ and because of de Gruchy’s commitment to effective world mission,⁸⁰ such concepts surrounding connectedness and mission require more detailed attention in order to show the missiological elements of the Olive Agenda.

De Gruchy states that people around the world are connected as a matter of fact.⁸¹ Whereas prior generations did not possess global media networks, rapid global travel, or the wonders of the worldwide web, the *oikoumene* of our current era is connected as a matter of fact in ways different from any other before it. However, de Gruchy argues that these connections run “deeper”, for people are also connected as a matter of fact through “global events and global happenings”.⁸² Whether it is massive proceedings like the soccer World Cup or Olympic Games, or widespread tussles that capture multinational attention, there is a profound sense of global connectedness that seems to cross national boundaries.

While numerous global connections in the *oikoumene* involve positive feelings and good intentions, de Gruchy emphasizes that the reality of a globalized world in the 21st century is that connections “run deeper” as a result of the “global economy, global market, and global way of production, distribution, consumption, and waste”.⁸³ According to de Gruchy, local communities are intricately intertwined with others through *oikos-nomos* and *oikos-logos* in manners like no generation before, as one can marvel at how materials may be “mined in Africa” and subsequently “taken to Europe” and later “manufactured utilizing components that are added from Asia”, and eventually “sold on the North American market” through the efforts of “people from Latin America”.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Steve de Gruchy, “Being Connected: Engaging in Effective World Mission”, (unpublished document). *Episcopal Conference: “Everyone, Everywhere”* (Baltimore, Maryland: June 5, 2008).

⁷⁹ It is worth noting that Steve de Gruchy produced an Olive Agenda at roughly the same point in time as his thoughts on effective world mission to the Episcopal Conference. As this study will continue to show, the Olive Agenda and its relevance for effective world mission do, according to de Gruchy, go hand in hand.

⁸⁰ Steve de Gruchy’s keynote address at the Episcopal Conference in June of 2008, “Being Connected: Engaging in Effective World Mission”, revealed his ongoing thoughts surrounding the core elements of effective world mission.

⁸¹ de Gruchy, “Being Connected”, 1.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ de Gruchy, “Being Connected”, 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Through such realizations, it becomes increasingly clear that the worldwide connections of the 21st century *oikoumene* are not “benign”, and the “global village” is not in a “romantic valley on a green hillside”.⁸⁵ To the contrary:

This is a village that has a chief, a headmen, and favoured families, and poor families, and women who collect the water and the firewood, and beggars living on the scraps on the edge of the town; and lepers who aren’t allowed in town. And the price of having a stall in the market is too high for some families to trade their goods.⁸⁶

In the contemporary *oikoumene*, people around the world are elaborately and intricately connected as a matter of fact through *oikos-nomos* (ecology) and *oikos-logos* (economics), yet as de Gruchy highlights above, these connections are by no means impartial, but rather, imperial. Whereas some have access to the above-mentioned resources, others are outwardly severed from the rest of the world as a result of geographical location and lack of resources.⁸⁷ As a quick examination of global economic data confirms, the gap between rich and poor is increasing, and some would argue that it is precisely because of our multi-national connections that the financial wealthy are able to exploit the poor in able to obtain such massive wealth.⁸⁸ And so, while people are connected in the *oikoumene*, they are also in some ways disconnected as a result of such *oikos-nomos* and *oikos-logos* connections.

While much can be said about unjust connections within the 21st century, such one-sided acts of exploitation are by no means original to the current day and age.⁸⁹ De Gruchy notes that such “skewed” connections are rooted in hundreds of years of colonial conquest, and the current global situation is a result of past activity.⁹⁰ Whereas previous ventures included Christian exclusion of Muslims from Spain and journeys of “discovery” to the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific, these connections were the “forerunners to slavery, colonialism, and globalization”.⁹¹ The various connections, in many ways, were the reasons

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 27.

⁸⁸ Sachs, 28.

⁸⁹ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1.

⁹⁰ Steve de Gruchy, “Being Connected”, 3.

⁹¹ Burbank and Cooper, 117-139.

for such exploitation, and it is similar connections that continue to shape the current global context.

Due to the consequences of historical circumstance and ongoing abuses of imperial power (some of which will be explored in Chapter Six of this study), the connections which shape the current global village are often partial and discriminatory, for they are “shot with power and privilege”, and often empower the most dominant to flourish to the detriment of the poor and marginalized.⁹² While all people are indeed connected by fact, there are clear winners and losers as a result of such connections. As a result, while breaking or overturning the expansion of globalization may prove to be unmanageable, the charge of missionary activity in the world is to be engaged with intentional actions that seek to transform global connections so that all may benefit in the household of God.

Those who participate in missionary endeavors should, as a matter of *faith*, according to de Gruchy, become concerned with the numerous gross injustices that shape the 21st century global village. Therefore, Christian mission cannot ignore the realities of power abuse, as followers of Jesus are called into relationships with others through their intimate connectedness.⁹³ As a result, the missionary activity of the church around the world must be one that accompanies those on the receiving end of mechanistic dehumanization, for as God chose to be connected to the world in a more intimate way through the incarnation of Jesus, those engaged in global mission, created in the *Imago Trinitatis*, are called to accompany throughout the struggles and hopes of daily human life.

De Gruchy notes that the Latin root for religion, “*re-ligare*”, means to “re-connect”.⁹⁴ Through the affirmation of such terms, and in light of the previously noted thoughts on connectedness, one may content that the mission of God through the Christian religion should be perceived and applied in a way that re-connects people around the world to God and to one another. As a result, instead of allowing mechanistic dehumanization to divide people on the basis of ethnicity, gender, social status, citizenship, or even system of belief, Christian Mission as Accompaniment must hold connectedness as a matter of *fact* and *faith* together, and respond by re-shaping such connections from those of exploitation into those which

⁹² Burbank and Cooper, 413.

⁹³ Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12 (NRSV).

⁹⁴ de Gruchy, “Being Connected”, 6.

reflect mutual dignity and promote fullness of life. As de Gruchy repeatedly expressed, the whole inhabited earth is connected not only as a matter of fact, but also as a declaration of faith. Mission as Accompaniment must seek to hold both fact and faith together. If Mission as Accompaniment were to abandon its attention to the hard facts of the world, then “we will drift off into some make-believe land in which we fail to recognize the reality of this world, and its pyramids of power”.⁹⁵ De Gruchy claims that far too many missiological ventures reside in such an ignorant place, and the ensuing missionary work merely encourages the further abuse of power.⁹⁶ On the other hand, if Mission as Accompaniment were to abandon its attention to its core affirmation of Christian faith, then “we will slide into pits of despair and cynicism, fully aware of the reality of the world, but having no vision of an alternative”.⁹⁷ De Gruchy argues that far too many advocates, volunteers, and relief agents occupy such apathetic space, thus in total, Mission as Accompaniment must hold both fact and faith together.

For the pursuit of Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization, connectedness as a matter of both fact and faith needs to be closely linked and mutually appreciated, for those whom wish to accompany must function in a way that brings awareness to global injustice, and as a result strive to convert such connections into ones that resist exploitation and instead serve alongside one another for righteousness and equality throughout the world. As such activity takes place, trust between global companions can be built, and the result is reconciled and restored relationships, converted connections, and situations first created as a result of domination are replaced settings shaped by mutuality and respect.

As will be discussed more in the final chapter of this research, one can argue that Steve de Gruchy understood the Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory by which “connections” could be “converted”.⁹⁸ Whereas global mission movements of past generations often sought conversion through altering a specific system of personal belief into that of the Christian faith, an Olive Agenda seeks conversion in a much different manner. In other words, with the connections of fact and faith in mind, the missiological trajectory of an

⁹⁵ de Gruchy, “Being Connected”, 10.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 146-161.

Olive Agenda does not seek to convert mass quantities of people from so-called false religions to that of Christianity (nor does it seek to promote North American forms of Christianity within churches throughout the southern hemisphere). To the contrary, the missiological trajectory of an Olive Agenda is the promotion and support of new forms of re-connections that function in ways that value the contextual particularities of each culture. In other words, the focus of conversion within an Olive Agenda is not necessarily the individuals who accompany one another, but rather, it is the *connection* shared between those engaged in accompaniment and their common relationship with God. With this being said, it can be argued that the overall purpose of an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory is the conversion of connections, which is why such a notion will be explored in more detail in the final chapter of this study.

4.4.1 The Olive Agenda: Further Developments

For the sake of clarity and reiteration, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization. Along these lines, the Olive Agenda from Steve de Gruchy is able to serve in such a capacity, for among other possibilities, it “proposes a theological engagement with a metaphor that could transcend the duality between the ‘green’ environmental agenda and the ‘brown’ poverty agenda that has disabled development discourse for the past twenty years”.⁹⁹ More specifically, because the mixture of green and brown leads to an Olive Agenda, Mission as Accompaniment receives an indispensable metaphor that unites and engages that which political and religious dialogue too often ignores and divides: Earth, environment, employment, households, nourishment, wellbeing, food security, impoverishment, Empire, and warfare.¹⁰⁰ In summary, bringing together the brown and green agendas, the Olive Agenda from Steve de Gruchy provides a missiological trajectory that enables Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization.

While the previous sections of this chapter outlined some theological and missiological groundwork for the Olive Agenda, one recognizes that the Olive Agenda itself

⁹⁹ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 333.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

is remarkably underdeveloped. More specifically, Steve de Gruchy's self-proclaimed "first thoughts" on an Olive Agenda remained relatively unconsidered due to his tragic and unexpected death in 2010.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, the scarcity of officially published material from de Gruchy on the Olive Agenda is by no means an excuse to not explore the matter further, but in fact, the significant gap in the body of knowledge surrounding the Olive Agenda provides an opportunity to push de Gruchy's ideas forward. Along these lines, the following sections will examine and develop de Gruchy's Olive Agenda from the basis of methodology and content, and in doing so, explore the Olive Agenda further as a trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment.

4.4.2 The Olive Agenda: Research Methodology

To understand the Olive Agenda more fully requires a grasp of the research methodology by which it was first developed. Along these lines, Steve de Gruchy introduced and established his Olive Agenda based upon his understanding of the "See-Judge-Act" research methodology.¹⁰² As a result, this section will show how the method itself had a direct influence upon the overall construction of an Olive Agenda, as this particular line of investigative inquiry is helpful for exploring how the Olive Agenda can better serve as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment.

According to Gerald West and others, Joseph Cardijn first pioneered the *See-Judge-Act* methodology in the early twentieth century.¹⁰³ While the particular methods of Cardijn were clearly valued by de Gruchy, one can argue that de Gruchy developed the Olive Agenda with a methodological approach that combined See-Judge-Act¹⁰⁴ with Paulo Freire's popular education model that embodies a "Circle of Praxis".¹⁰⁵ In total, as the strength of what is

¹⁰¹ Steve De Gruchy, "An Olive Agenda: First Thoughts on a Metaphorical Theology of Development" *The Ecumenical Review* (Volume 59, Issue 2-4, April-July 2007).

¹⁰² Steve De Gruchy, "See-Judge-Act: Putting Faith into Action. A hand-book for Christian groups engaged in social transformation" (Unpublished Booklet, Undated).

¹⁰³ Gerald West (Editor), *Reading Other-Wise: Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading with their Communities* (Atlanta, Georgia: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 138; Alejandro F. Botta and Pablo R. Andiañach, *The Bible and Hermeneutics of Liberation* (Atlanta, Georgia: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 30; Manuel A. Vásquez, *The Brazilian Popular Church and the Crisis of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 26; Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 9.

¹⁰⁴ de Gruchy, "See-Judge-Act", 3.

¹⁰⁵ Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*, (New York: Continuum Publishing Group, 2000).

found through research is often determined by how it was found,¹⁰⁶ it is worth exploring and interpreting de Gruchy's use of the Circle of Praxis model – through the lenses of the Luke 24 “Road to Emmaus” text that Mission as Accompaniment is grounded within – in order to better understand the content of Steve de Gruchy's Olive Agenda.

Steve de Gruchy's personal articulation of the Circle of Praxis model is helpful for seeking to understand the means by which the Olive Agenda was first constructed, for among other things, as an expression of “See-Judge-Act” the Circle of Praxis offers “a disciplined model for Christians to engage in social transformation”.¹⁰⁷ Along these lines, one can argue that the Olive Agenda realizes a popular education approach similar to the expression of Mission as Accompaniment found in the 24th Chapter of Luke's Gospel, often known as the “Road to Emmaus” narrative.¹⁰⁸ In particular, the Olive Agenda appears to be based upon the See-Judge-Act model and Paulo Freire's “Circle of Praxis” of See (*Ver*), Think (*Pensar*), Act (*Actuar*), Evaluate (*Evaluar*), and Celebrate (*Celebrar*). Therefore, as a primary aim of the Olive Agenda is to encourage a focused engagement with the Circle of Praxis, and because this study seeks to integrate an Olive Agenda into Mission as Accompaniment, the process will be explored in more detail below.

To See. For the two on their way to Emmaus as articulated in Luke 24, they had the opportunity to “see” what recently took place in Jerusalem: the tragic death of Jesus by way of crucifixion, oppression and persecution waged against Jesus' followers from the powers of Empire, numerous death threats, etc. In the modern-day context of economics and ecology, participants in an Olive Agenda are empowered to “see” through alternative lenses, and in doing so observe the evidence of ecological destruction and economic inequality. Along these lines, as Jesus' followers were inspired to “see” what had happened in their particular religious, political, and social context, those engaged in an Olive Agenda will also participate in an agenda that allows them to attentively and intentionally “see” the realities of the world that surrounds them.

¹⁰⁶ Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners* (London: SAGE Publications, 2011), 23.

¹⁰⁷ de Gruchy, “See-Judge-Act”, 3.

¹⁰⁸ I first presented these emerging thoughts on the “Circle of Praxis” to Zion Lutheran Church in Superior, Wisconsin (USA). The congregational leadership subsequently published the contents of my presentation in *The Messenger* (February, 2011), which can be accessed at: <http://www.zionsuperior.org/pdf/newsletter-2011-02.pdf?>

To Think. When the stranger interrupted the two travelers on their way to Emmaus, together they opened the Scriptures and in turn were encouraged to “think” in new ways. The newly introduced guest intentionally identifies Moses (the renowned emancipator of the people of God) and the prophets (many of whom were repeatedly oppressed and harassed for their faithfulness). In doing so, the stranger identifies himself (Jesus) as being historically aligned with the tradition of liberation and prophetic witness. As the two on the Road to Emmaus were provided with such an alternative understanding, an Olive Agenda provides a framework that inspires thoughtful and ethical examination of their modern day context. Throughout such an endeavor, those engaged in an Olive Agenda can “think” by investigating possibilities that more faithfully concentrate on service to the common good instead of self-interests and profit that harm both people and the planet.

To Act. As the two journeyed toward Emmaus they “acted” through hospitality and a turn in direction, as they encouraged the stranger (Jesus) to remain with them and break bread together. Although such an invitation was customary due to cultural practices of the era, one must recognize that such hospitality was also a tremendous gamble due to all that just happened in Jerusalem. In spite of the various possible risks, the two were inspired and acted, and thus changed course. In a similar fashion, those who participate in an Olive Agenda take risks and act in order to welcome Jesus into their midst, and in doing so, change the course of their economic and ecological behavior. By “seeing” their reality in a new light, and by “thinking” about the complexities that surround them, those engaged in an Olive Agenda can turn around from familiar and preconceived paths, act in companionship with others, and in doing so respond to the ecological and economic dangers of the modern day era.

To Evaluate. The two that started on the Emmaus road entered into the process of “evaluation” after Jesus broke bread alongside them and vanished from their sight. They pondered, “...were not our hearts burning within us as he spoke with us on the road?” It was not until they “took a step back” and “evaluated” the experience that they recognized what had taken place within and around them. As a result, the disciples rushed back to Jerusalem to rejoin the community they had left just days before. While little had changed in Jerusalem, *they* had changed dramatically, for they were so transformed by their encounter with the crucified and risen Christ that the danger did not seem as important as the continuation of the

movement they had abandoned out of fear. In a similar fashion, a priority of the Olive Agenda is that, through the process of accompaniment alongside global companions, participants may experience “hearts burn” within them, so that they – disciples of this day and age – will also be transformed, and their joint actions will inspire and ignite others.

To Celebrate. While Jesus’ death brought great sadness and despair for the original disciples, within a matter of days “good news” broke of the resurrection, and after first-hand experiences of the Risen Lord, the disciples gathered often with fellow believers to celebrate the reality of Christ’s presence alongside them. While Olive Agenda participants will also experience hardship and pain during the course of their participations, the celebration of Christ’s presence continues in this day and age. The awareness and appreciation of this reality provides participants with comfort and inspiration to carry-on faithfully and fruitfully alongside their companions.

In review, the Olive Agenda methodology can be viewed through the lenses of Mission as Accompaniment as it follows the disciples on the Road to Emmaus in Luke 24. As a result, one recognizes that the combination of *See-Judge-Act* with Paulo Freire’s Circle of Praxis was not only the methodological framework by which the Olive Agenda was developed, but it also serves as a significant factor in de Gruchy’s overall motivation to construct an Olive Agenda:

[de Gruchy] brought together his heritage as a white South African nurtured within an apartheid history to impact on his theology of resistance. His experience of systemic oppression shaped his intellectual and theological perspectives. He was white according to South Africa racial identity but he was black in terms of understanding the struggles and sufferings of people who have been victims of the evil system. This emboldened his capacity to engage in prophetic witness because he bore the scars of solidarity with the oppressed.¹⁰⁹

As articulated by Hewitt in the quotation above, Steve de Gruchy possessed a particular life experience grounded in truth-telling that facilitates the fullness of life for all.¹¹⁰ As a result,

¹⁰⁹ Hewitt, 205.

¹¹⁰ Hewitt, 204.

his theological exploration included input from a wide variety of liberation-orientated sources,¹¹¹ and the Olive Agenda was a product of reflection and response in order to create something new. In specifics, while de Gruchy lamented the disconnection between economics and ecology, his experience of faith significantly altered his assumptions, and he thus gained an increased level of motivation to reflect upon what had been learned in order to create a new situation and experience. Altogether, Steve de Gruchy was not merely interested formulating an Olive Agenda, but through the method of See-Judge-Act, he also sought to transform the world through it.

4.4.3 The Olive Agenda as a Missiological Trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment

In blending together the brown and green agendas through the “Circle of Praxis”, Steve de Gruchy opens the door for an Olive Agenda that “characterizes the two dominant trends of social regeneration, namely, poverty and environment”.¹¹² In doing so, the olive itself became far more than a color; as de Gruchy states, it becomes “the defining metaphor of a missiological agenda”.¹¹³ Along these lines, the following section will reiterate ten features that allow the olive to serve as a imaginative metaphor, and in doing so, will consider briefly how each can make the Olive Agenda suitable as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

First, as a color, the olive helps to integrate the brown and green agendas

As stated by de Gruchy, the first function of the olive agenda is that, as a particular color, olive blends together brown and green.¹¹⁴ In doing so, the integration of brown and green agendas into an olive agenda shows that both brown and green are essential, but neither brown nor green is adequate on its own. In light of previous thoughts surrounding *oikos*, one is reminded that the brown agenda of poverty and economics (*oikos-nomos*) and the green agenda of environmentalism and ecology (*oikos-logos*) can only be effective if they both form part of the same Olive Agenda for the whole inhabited world (*oikoumene*).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 340.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 339.

Second, as a texture, the olive draws us to our earthly context.

By utilizing the Circle of Praxis research methodology, Steve de Gruchy began exploring the Olive Agenda due to his particular life experience. In doing so, de Gruchy showed that “Olive is a particular Southern African texture”.¹¹⁵ In order to reveal that the olive metaphor – and in turn an Olive Agenda – was by no means “escapist” in the *Mission as Anesthetic* mode (which will be explored more in depth in Chapter Six), he believed the olive drew people toward “our Earth, the land, our country”.¹¹⁶ Therefore, in order to draw people toward their earthly context, the olive is a physical reminder that the Olive Agenda is pursued in the service of life on Earth.

Third, the olive points us to issues of food security.

In addition to its function as a particular color, the olive is – of course – a fruit. As stated by de Gruchy, this etymological link of color and fruit enables the physical olive to serve as an indicator of food security.¹¹⁷ As shown in de Gruchy’s work on issues of food and development,¹¹⁸ matters of food security are, similar the color olive, fully inclusive of both poverty and the environment. In doing so, the olive serves as a reminder that one of the most serious emergencies of impoverishment is not a deficiency in financial resources, but rather, the harsh reality of malnutrition and the deprivation of adequate food resources. In a similar fashion, one of the most serious emergencies facing the natural environment is a deficiency in the planet’s capability to harvest an adequate amount of food. The olive as a physical object of food, which is raised in an assortment of ecological and cultural circumstances, brings such an important component to the forefront.¹¹⁹

Fourth, the olive branch is a symbol of peace.

¹¹⁵ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 340.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Steve de Gruchy, “Biotechnology as ‘cultural invasion’: Theological reflections on food sovereignty and community building in Africa” in *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion, and Theology in Southern Africa*. Vol 82 (2003), 82-93.

¹¹⁹ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 340.

The olive branch has long been interpreted as a symbol of peace, and as stated by de Gruchy, such references have a strong impact for the Olive Agenda:

In the first instance, the biblical reference to the dove returning to Noah with the olive branch (Genesis 8:11) points us to the way in which human evil and injustice (Genesis 6:5, 12, 13) are held together with the ecological crisis of the flood (Genesis 6:17); and of course it is the Noahic covenant that is so explicitly an ecological covenant – one that is not just with humans, but with all living things (Genesis 9:10, 12, 15).¹²⁰

With such Biblical sources in mind, one is reminded that the olive branch as a symbol of peace is rooted in the Hebrew tradition of *shalom*, which has both economic and ecological implications, both of which are key for an Olive Agenda.¹²¹ As a result, the “cry for peace must be searched in the pain of those vanquished” as a result of our economic and ecological predicament.¹²²

Fifth, the olive draws us into a plurality of cultures and religions

As the olive branch signifies a commitment to peace, so does the olive itself – as a crop that humans cultivate – transcends the difficult rifts of cultures and convictions.¹²³ While native to Asia Minor, the olive later dispersed throughout the Mediterranean region due to various emerging societies and commercial pathways.¹²⁴ In addition, the olive is treasured in worldviews rooted in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.¹²⁵ More specifically, some scholars of Judaism interpret the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden as the olive, and the Romans held the olive to be “the first of all trees”.¹²⁶ Furthermore, one can note that Athens was so “named because the goddess Athena gave the Greeks an olive tree, the offspring of which is said to

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Randy Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 1-24.

¹²² Nestor O. Miguez, “Go in Peace” A Bible Study on John 14:27-31 for the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly (July 15, 2013). Found at: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/bible-studies/go-in-peace>

¹²³ Manuel Lima, *The Book of Trees: Visualizing Branches of Knowledge* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2014), 16.

¹²⁴ Kevin Starr and Judith Taylor, *The Olive in California: History of an Immigrant Tree* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2001), 2.

¹²⁵ Starr and Taylor, 3.

¹²⁶ Howard Schwartz, *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 402.

still be growing in the Acropolis”.¹²⁷ The olive – and therefore an Olive Agenda – possesses the capacity to unite people of various cultures and religions.

Sixth, as a tree, the olive points to life itself.

The olive tree not only represents life from a biblical perspective, but the olive embodies the fullness of life itself.¹²⁸ The symbolism of the olive tree as life is rooted in physical actuality, as the olive tree serves as, among other things, a source of nutrition, lodging, household devices, tables and chairs, water vessels, paper, firewood, medical treatment, and numerous other important examples.¹²⁹ One recognizes that the gift of life is fully dependent upon the health of trees, which may explain why trees appear at the end of John’s vision in Revelation 22.¹³⁰ As a result, similar to the aforementioned matters of food security, matters of deforestation concern both economics and ecology, and is thus a critical aspect of the overall olive agenda.

Seventh, the olive tree holds before us inter-generational sustainability

By noting the ancient nature of the olive tree, we also recognize its durability. The trees found throughout the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem are approximately 2,000 years in age, and “even they are not the oldest specimens”.¹³¹ In addition, it is not uncommon to find millennia-old olive trees in the Mediterranean area, and while they are relative fresh arrivals to other parts of the world, even outside of the Mediterranean “they have a reputation for survival”.¹³² With such thoughts in mind, one recognizes that olive trees outlive human beings, our structures, our markets, our imperial agendas, and our communities.¹³³ As a result, the olive trees should foster a sense of humility, “and remind us that while the Big Economy is driven by the desire to tame life for short-term gain, the Great economy works by sustaining life through the generations”.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ Starr and Taylor, 1.

¹²⁸ Lima, 16.

¹²⁹ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 342.

¹³⁰ Rasmussen, *Earth Community*, 195-207, 208-219.

¹³¹ Mort Rosenblum, *Olives: The Life and Lore of a Noble Fruit* (New York: North Point Press, 1996), 6.

¹³² Rosenblum, 7.

¹³³ Rachel Sussman, *The Oldest Living Things in the World* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 134.

¹³⁴ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 342.

Eighth, the olive is rooted in popular struggles

In light of how significant the olive tree and fruit functions within contemporary society, one is not stunned to hear of the various ways in which the wellbeing of many people directly depends upon the wellbeing of olives. Despite the wide variety of harsh struggles within and around Jerusalem, many local residents are determined to remain firmly on their land, due in part to the profound emotional and transcendent bonds they have with the Earth.¹³⁵ For example, a particular expression of such a strong connection is found in the “Tree of the Bedawi”, which is thought to be the oldest remaining olive tree in the Jerusalem area.¹³⁶ Described as “ancient, gnarled and massive”, the tree has remained an inspirational fixture near a naturally flowing mineral spring at Al Walaja for over 5,000 years.¹³⁷ Among other things, it is widely believed that a prophet planted the Tree of Bedawi, and therefore a significant amount of folklore encases its current presence. More specifically, with each passing year most of its crop is distributed to those in need as a manifestation of community harmony and benevolence, and also to encourage a fruitful yield the subsequent rotation. In sum, the Tree of Bedawi exists as an expression of faith and persistence for its surrounding residents, as its maturity and strength denotes their time-honored relationship with the land, and its defiant steadfastness inspires their dedication to remain. Sadly, one of the strategic priorities of the Israeli occupation of Palestine is to terminate olive groves that are thousands of years old, with the agenda of breaking a powerful symbol of both the spiritual and the economic livelihood of the Palestinian people.¹³⁸ Therefore, the popular struggle of resistance, as shown in Palestine, is integral to the overall purposes of an olive agenda.

Ninth, olive oil contributes to health

The Great Economy imagined by an Olive Agenda is a vigorous economy, not merely for the sake of profit, but for all living things in all places. According to Orey, “The olive has been part of health and cleanliness” of peoples for thousands of years, “with olive oil

¹³⁵ Alice Gray, “Injustice and Deceit in Ahmad Valley” in *The East Jerusalem YMCA*, Vol. 3, No. 8 (Summer 2004), 21.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, *The One-State Condition: Occupation and Democracy in Israel/Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 72, 79, 145.

contributing to the beneficial diet of the cultures of Asia Minor and the southern Mediterranean".¹³⁹ In addition, "for centuries olive oil has served as a cleansing and cosmetic agent, and still today soap is made from the oil".¹⁴⁰ The Olive Agenda is concerned with matters both of public and personal health.

Tenth, the Olive is a biblical symbol

In biblical times the olive tree was praised as the most valuable and versatile tree.¹⁴¹ As a result, it is not surprising that oil is mentioned 191 times in the Bible; seven of these times refer particularly to olive oil, but in 147 of the references to oil, olive oil can be inferred by the reader.¹⁴² As David Stewart rightly remarks, perhaps the most memorable and beloved mention of olive oil and its extraordinary capacity to restore is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan, who is recorded as assisting a stricken and mugged stranger.¹⁴³ As the narrative reveals, the "cure-all" for healing the wounds is simply the application of oil and wine.¹⁴⁴ In addition the Good Samaritan, one should note that images of the Promised Land contain references to a location of "olive trees and honey" (Deuteronomy 8:8), and olive trees "figure in Nehemiah's efforts at reconstruction" (8:15); the olive tree symbolizes new life (Psalm 128:3, Jeremiah 11:16, Zechariah 4:11), and is used to describe the bond of the Gentiles to the chosen people of God in Romans 11.¹⁴⁵ In addition, as mentioned previously, Olive Trees emerge with intensity alongside Jesus (Revelation 11:4), and of course, the Mount of Olives plays a prominent role throughout Jesus' life.¹⁴⁶ While would could list numerous additional examples, what is recognized is that the Bible has numerous connections with the olive. As a result, one can find a deep historical connection between the Bible and an Olive Agenda.

In review, the ten features that suggest the olive as an imaginative metaphor shows, among other things, how the Olive Agenda can function as a missiological trajectory for

¹³⁹ Cal Orey, *The Healing Powers of Olive Oil: A Complete Guide to Nature's Liquid Gold* (New York: Kensington Books, 2008), 16.

¹⁴⁰ Orey, 18.

¹⁴¹ David Stewart, *Healing Oils of the Bible* (Marble Hill, MO: Care Publications, 2003), 97.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ de Gruchy, "An Olive Agenda", 343.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

Mission as Accompaniment.¹⁴⁷ In doing so, olive becomes more than a mere color, but “the defining metaphor of a missiological agenda”.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, for the purposes of this overall study, in order for Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization, the Olive Agenda can serve as the primary missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment.

4.4.4 Incorporating the Olive Agenda as a Missiological Trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment: Lessons from Dr. Paul Farmer

While Mission as Accompaniment has a great deal to offer in response to mechanistic dehumanization, Mission as Accompaniment requires further development to respond more effectively. Because, as I have argued, Mission as Accompaniment fails to fully identify the context in which such accompaniment takes place, the ELCA Global Mission cannot fully consider the impact of mechanistic dehumanization on the accompaniment journey.¹⁴⁹ As a result, Steve de Gruchy’s Olive Agenda holds significant and enduring value for equipping Mission as Accompaniment for the overall task at hand. In other words, an Olive Agenda helps to provide a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment to more fully respond to mechanistic dehumanization.

In order to more effectively implement the Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment, one looks to the important work of Harvard University Professor Paul Farmer, as Farmer provides important insights into accompaniment as a response to dehumanization.¹⁵⁰ More specifically, Farmer embraces the open-endedness of accompaniment *while also promoting a particular agenda in response to dehumanization*. In Farmer’s specific case, his agenda is social change through public health in poor and marginalized communities around the globe. Farmer recognizes that accompaniment is important for both the moral and effective visioning and implementation of such a public health agenda. As a result, the following section will briefly trace Paul Farmer’s articulation and implementation of accompaniment; as such insights are critical when seeking to

¹⁴⁷ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 341.

¹⁴⁸ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 340.

¹⁴⁹ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 18-62.

¹⁵⁰ Dr. Paul Edward Farmer currently serves as the Kolokotronis University Professor at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

implement an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

The development of Paul Farmer's thoughts on – and implementation of – accompaniment can be found in his biography, published in 2003 and written by Tracy Kidder under the title *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*.¹⁵¹ The highly regarded text followed the numerous achievements of Partners in Health, a groundbreaking health organization that Farmer co-founded. As shared in the narrative, Partners in Health was partially responsible for numerous developmental initiatives in Haiti, largely due to Farmer's embodiment of an accompaniment methodology alongside rural and impoverished local communities. Following the publication of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Paul Farmer would grow in global influence, and in doing so continue to articulate the ways in which a more just world could be made more possible.

In addition to *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Kidder, in 2003 Paul Farmer published his own text, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*, where he combined his experiences as a physician and anthropologist to consider structural injustice and basic human rights.¹⁵² While Farmer does not specifically name and consider matters of dehumanization and theology, for the purposes of this research one can see numerous theoretical similarities, as Farmer points out that matters of human suffering and death are directly caused by issues of structural violence. More specifically, Farmer traces preventable disease in Haiti and other developing countries to matters of so-called “cost-effective” choices made by the World Health Organization.

In review, throughout *Pathologies of Power* Paul Farmer argues that power imbalances generate many forms of “quiet brutality”, and such inequalities inhibit those in poverty from receiving the prospects they require to experience life in its fullness.¹⁵³ As a result, the “pathologies of power” take their brutal toll, including a toll on human life. As articulated by Farmer, those who deny the link between structural violence and human life

¹⁵¹ Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* (New York: Random House, 2003).

¹⁵² Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

¹⁵³ Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*, xvi.

only serve the interests of the powerful. As a result, according to Farmer a massive modification of approach is required for those in positions of power, as the totality of systems and structures – and not just individual hearts and minds – must be reformed if the world is truly to change for the better.

Following years of growing notoriety for Paul Farmer, in 2010 came the Haitian earthquake and the destruction of much of the capital city and also a great deal of what Partners in Health helped to build. This tragedy in many validated the title of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, for “beyond each mountain range there is another; or, stated differently, as you solve one problem, another presents itself”.¹⁵⁴ As a result, Farmer began to reflect more intentionally and publically upon his work in *Pathologies of Power* and consider methodological solutions by which long term goals could be achieved. In doing so, Farmer re-connected with his Roman Catholic theological upbringing, reconsidered Liberation Theology, and in doing so began to more formally articulate his thoughts on accompaniment from a theological and developmental framework. For the purposes of this study, Farmer’s evolution into a more developed articulation of accompaniment is invaluable.

When Farmer addressed the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University for their 2011 Commencement, he recognized that what was happening in the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake was an important lesson about the arena that he thought he knew most about. More specifically, in discussing that which he learned and relearned during the initial post-earthquake years, he stated that “[all of the lessons] turn about the notion of accompaniment”.¹⁵⁵ In striking fashion, during his commencement address Farmer used the French noun “*accompagneur*” (one who accompanies) seven times, the verb “accompany” eight times, and the noun “accompaniment” thirty-seven times. Although Farmer had attempted to embody the accompaniment methodology for several years through Partners in Health, it was only after the Haitian earthquake of 2010 that he reflected upon it in a more systematic manner, to the point that he spoke of accompaniment fifty-two times during his 2011 speech at Harvard.

¹⁵⁴ Staughton Lynd, *Accompanying: Pathways to Social Change* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012), 2.

¹⁵⁵ Paul Farmer, “Accompaniment as Policy” *Commencement Address to the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University* (May 25, 2011). <http://www.lessonsfromhaiti.org/press-and-media/transcripts/accompaniment-as-policy/>

As Paul Farmer entered accompaniment more fully into his vocabulary, especially in his 2011 address at Harvard, one may echo the question of the Quaker peace activist Staughton Lynd who openly wondered,¹⁵⁶ “What did Farmer mean by these fifty-two words?” For the purposes of this study, one notes that for Farmer, the word accompaniment is “an elastic one”, in that “it means what you’d imagine, and more”, for to “accompany someone is to go somewhere with him or her, to break bread together, to be present on a journey with a beginning and an end”¹⁵⁷ More specifically, Farmer argues that within the genuine process of accompaniment there is a significant degree of unknown and vulnerability, as one is compelled to accompany others with a level of bold encouragement for the journey wherever it may lead and regardless of how long it may take. Farmer openly contends that the act of accompaniment is far more than “sticking with a task until it’s deemed completed by the person or people being accompanied, rather than by the *accompagnateur*”.¹⁵⁸ For accompaniment to occur, mutuality is essential.

The totality of Farmer’s Harvard Commencement address consists of illustrations of accompaniment from his rich and varied experience. One such illustration has to do with a certain area by Port-au-Prince (the capital city of Haiti) that had been classified as a potential resettlement location for earthquake victims. More specifically, although a multitude of so-called specialists (architects and urban planners) made plans for the location, not a single one of them bothered to visit the site in person. If accompaniment had actually occurred, they would have observed the site firsthand, spoke with local leaders, and in doing so learned that the location was in the center of a flood area, thus any building placed there would be destroyed during the yearly rainy season. The overall lesson, according to Farmer, is “the necessity of physical proximity to accompaniment”.¹⁵⁹ In borrowing from other texts surrounding Liberation Theology, Farmer affirmed that the Latin root of “accompaniment” makes reference to being together (“*com*”) in breaking bread (“*panis*”), face to face.¹⁶⁰ For accompaniment to occur, proximity is essential.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Lynd, 2.

¹⁵⁷ Paul Farmer, “Accompaniment as Policy”.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ When considering the specific nature of proximity, one must note that the situation in Haiti is incredibly complex. According to the United States Institute for Peace, there are nearly 10,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in Haiti, yet far too many are unaligned with local government priorities, which in turn has a disastrous impact on local communities. In sum, proximity may be essential to accompaniment, but it

The address from Farmer is a key insight and contribution for the overall work of this study on Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization. Not only does Farmer embrace the open-endedness and mystery of accompaniment, *but he also recognizes his particular agenda within the overall journey of accompaniment*. In doing so, we notice a major contribution to the pursuit of Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization. Those who accompany can be open to the journey and have an agenda for which direction they hope the journey may lead. Accompaniment is not a choice between open-endedness and agenda-driven, as both can exist. In other words, contrary to current explanations of Mission as Accompaniment within the ELCA Global Mission, those who engage in such accompaniment should not attempt to leave their agenda(s) hidden, as an open and explicit admission and promotion of such agendas on the accompaniment journey lead not only to a more genuine journey, but as Farmer shows, a more fruitful one.

The above mentioned thoughts from Paul Farmer on accompaniment would further develop, to the point that he would contribute to a pioneering text for the purpose of this study, *In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez*.¹⁶² Among other things, Farmer connected theological reflection and public health implementation through his chapter titled “Reimagining Accompaniment: A Doctor’s Tribute to Gustavo Gutiérrez”.¹⁶³ In doing so, Farmer wrote about his theological grounding and its continued significance for his work, as theologies of liberation continue to be “an inexhaustible font of inspiration”.¹⁶⁴ As Farmer strongly viewed the spirituality associated with liberation theology, “at the very least, aspirational”, he concluded that – through the combination of liberation theology and accompaniment – most any individual could aim to confront modern-day poverty and “remember that we live in one world, not three”.¹⁶⁵ The current understanding of Mission as Accompaniment within the ELCA Global Mission can benefit greatly due to such an integration of theory and practice.

must be partnered with mutuality. See, “Haiti: A Republic of NGOs” (April, 2010) <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PB%2023%20Haiti%20a%20Republic%20of%20NGOs.pdf>

¹⁶² Michael Griffin and Jennie Weiss Block (Editors), *In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013).

¹⁶³ Paul Farmer, “Reimagining Accompaniment: A Doctor’s Tribute to Gustavo Gutiérrez”, in Michael Griffin and Jennie Weiss Block (Editors), *In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 15-26.

¹⁶⁴ Paul Farmer, “Reimagining Accompaniment”, 19.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

In response to such thoughts above, one notes that Paul Farmer's journey into deeper reflection on accompaniment is, in many ways, quite similar to the path taken by the ELCA. The ELCA developed Mission as Accompaniment through reflection alongside Latin American companions, who in turn were influenced by Liberation Theology. In a similar yet complimentary way, Paul Farmer came to accompaniment through reflection alongside liberation theologians from a public health standpoint. Altogether, while Paul Farmer and Partners in Health embraced modes of accompaniment through a journey much different from the ELCA, they ended up in a remarkably similar place, which is insightful for the overall work of this study.

In review, the above experiences and insights from Paul Farmer confirm that Mission as Accompaniment can effectively function through the tension of open-endedness and being agenda driven. In other words, Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda should not be viewed or practiced as companions journeying together simply for the sake of being together, but it requires the recognition of modern day struggles and complications, recognizing the misdeeds and anomalies of dominance and resistance, and the bold willingness to address such matters while journeying together toward a particular agenda-driven goal.¹⁶⁶ As stated by Steve Reifenberg, to visualize and implement accompaniment in such ways requires companions to recognize and reinforce a process of organization that embodies solidarity with the marginalized, associates with civic institutions rather than simply work in solitude, make local priorities a standard of achievement; empower others, and launch "learning loops" that put into practical action what all learn together through the accompaniment journey.¹⁶⁷ More specifically, to be open-ended and agenda driven shows that authentic accompaniment refuses to privilege specialized skill over cohesion and harmony, and it also embraces a commitment to engage all that may appear to be overwhelming issues. In doing so, such accompaniment necessitates both teamwork and personal initiative, strategy and spontaneity, confidence and modesty, and countless other paradoxes that can introduce fresh energy and direction into various forms of missiological and developmental ventures around the world.

¹⁶⁶ Steve Reifenberg, "Afterword", in Michael Griffin and Jennie Weiss Block (Eds.), *"In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez"* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 19.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

4.5 Summary

To practice Mission as Accompaniment with a more focused direction transforms the question of “how do we help them?” into the assertion of “We’re in this together”.¹⁶⁸ In doing so, Mission as Accompaniment must ask the important question of what exactly “this” is. This chapter argues that the “this” is an Olive Agenda, for Mission as Accompaniment can exist within the tension and paradox of an open-ended future and intentional agenda. There can exist mystery and intention, ambiguity and purpose, vagueness and goals. In fact, one can argue that such paradox is not only possible within Mission as Accompaniment, but in order to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization, such paradox is a must.

An Olive Agenda offers important insight into the “this” aspect of the “We’re in this together” element of Mission as Accompaniment, but this study argues that more is required to better understand the “We’re”. Along these lines, this study asserts that a missiological trajectory must be accompanied with an indicator of accountability, for direction without distinctiveness can prove to be problematic. In other words, mission is not merely about the agenda, but it is also about distinguishing the humanity of those involved. In light of the specific focus of this study in seeking a response to mechanistic dehumanization, one searches for additional resources to consider what it means to be humans in mission together. The following chapter will provide additional insights along such a line of inquiry.

In total, the previous chapter of this study examined Mission as Accompaniment and argued that it required a more focused direction in order to guide the ELCA Global Mission to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization. This chapter argued that Steve de Gruchy’s Olive Agenda provides a missiological trajectory by which such direction for Mission as Accompaniment can be provided. However, in addition to requiring a missiological trajectory, this chapter also revealed – through the work of Cyprian Obiora Alokwu and others, that Mission as Accompaniment requires an additional indicator of accountability to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization. As a result, the following chapter will take up the African philosophy of Ubuntu, and will propose that it can provide an indicator of accountability that Mission as Accompaniment requires.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5: UBUNTU

5.1 Introduction

In order for Mission as Accompaniment to guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Global Mission to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization, Mission as Accompaniment requires both a missiological trajectory and an indicator of accountability. To speak of an indicator of accountability is to recognize that setting a missiological trajectory is challenging in a complicated and connected world. As the quantity of concerns that are included in making such decisions increase, it becomes progressively more challenging to gather all the information needed in order to make suitable conclusions. In the case of Mission as Accompaniment, a shared decision making process brings with it a significant degree of uncertainty as to how diverse influences should be considered when setting a trajectory, thus an indicator of human accountability is increasingly important. For the sake of responding to mechanistic dehumanization, such a guiding ethical vision can include – and also go beyond – the specific realm of Christian theological discourse, as this study seeks to stretch and integrate the intelligence and understanding of diverse communities, and do so without falling to the temptations of assimilating, dominating, simplifying, or romanticizing such forms of knowing.¹ With such potential complications in mind, the need remains to include an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

In the previous chapter the Olive Agenda was offered as a missiological trajectory, but in doing so, it recognized that Mission as Accompaniment not only needed a more focused direction, but it also required an indicator of accountability in order to best regard the human dignity of its participants. This chapter will propose such an indicator of accountability using the African concept of Ubuntu, generally rendered as “a person is a person through other persons”.² While some argue (with admitted persuasiveness) that

¹ “In such intercultural hermeneutic encounters in mission, registering other forms of knowing the divinity, earth, and its inhabitants, can function as an expansion and corrective to the categories and history of ‘Western’ hermeneutics. We will aim here to think towards a coalitional Christian hermeneutics, aiding in overcoming the powers of empire and its blowback, reconsidering how we might think of encountering *God/Divine/Sacred* today, with the best of wisdom from a variety of cultural traditions”. Marion Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 7.

² Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 281.

Ubuntu has been overused and/or misused in the African context and beyond,³ the understanding of Ubuntu continues to be quite unfamiliar around the world – especially within the ELCA, thus the continued utilization of Ubuntu for this particular venture is deemed both fitting and important. As Mission as Accompaniment receives many of its theological grounding from Latin America, and because the ELCA is geographically placed within the USA and is ecclesiastically grounded in Western Europe, the concept of Ubuntu offers Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA Global Mission with a much-needed African indicator of accountability in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

In regards to the potential use of Ubuntu as an effective indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, while much intellectual consideration has focused upon the notion of Ubuntu as it relates specifically to humanness,⁴ continued investigation has also argued for its ecological and economical priorities,⁵ and thus an overall integration of anthropology, ecology and economics is of direct use for the application of Ubuntu and an Olive Agenda for Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA. While Ubuntu expresses that a person is a person because of relationships with other people, Ubuntu also recognizes that such relationships extended beyond humanity and call for harmonious relationships with all of creation.⁶ As a result, the economic and ecological implications of Ubuntu call for a human community that is not only accountable to itself, but perceives humankind as living in harmony with all the created order.⁷ When seeking to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization, this chapter will argue that, with an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory, the African concept of Ubuntu can serve as a valuable indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA.

³ Elza Venter, “The Notion of Ubuntu and Communalism in African Educational Discourse” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 23 (March 2004, 2-3, 149).

⁴ Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Editor), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009).

⁵ Puleng LenkaBula, “Beyond Anthropocentricity – Botho/Ubuntu and the Quest for Economic and Ecological Justice in Africa”, *Religion and Theology*, (Vol. 16, Numbers 3-4, 2008), 375-394; Munyaradzi Felix Murove, “The Shona concept of Ukama and the process philosophical concept of relatedness, with special reference to the ethical implication of the contemporary neo-liberal economic practices”, Unpublished Masters Thesis, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal, 1999); M.B. Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, (Harare: Mond Books, 1999); J. Maree and L. Mbigi, *Ubuntu: The Spirit of Transformation Management*, (Pretoria: Knowledge Resources, 1995); Barbara Nussbaum, “African culture and Ubuntu: A South African’s reflections in America”, *World Business Academy Perspectives* (17:1, 1999).

⁶ Bujo, 281.

⁷ Ibid.

5.2 Ubuntu: An Introduction

In order to better understand Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, one must first consider the ideological roots of Ubuntu. More specifically, in striking contrast to materialist and dualistic viewpoints found often in the western world, Ubuntu arises from an ideology in which the universe is not composed of things, but rather, a number of forces that are interacting with other forces.⁸ In the words of Michael Battle, those with a westernized worldview will likely discover that Ubuntu, with its African conception of personhood – “a strange word with perhaps an even stranger meaning...Imagine a fish trying to understand what it means to be wet, when all it has ever known is life in the water”.⁹ As Augustine Shutte elaborates, Ubuntu confronts those who are accustomed to perceiving themselves as individuals (such as westerners), as Ubuntu is grounded in an understanding of the universe as a comprehensive field of force in which all that exists is both the emphasis and manifestation of cooperating forces.¹⁰ The various forces of Ubuntu are widespread, for are by no means perceived as merely material or mystical, as they are found in feelings and thoughts as well as in physiques and internal organs.

The African cleric and scholar Gabriel Setiloane expresses a similar connection of Ubuntu and universal forces when he explained that human beings are like “electric wires” that radiate power and vitality in an assortment of dynamic directions.¹¹ This Ubuntu-expressing power that is radiated outward is known as “*seriti*”, which according to Setiloane, is like a glow or glimmer that surrounds human beings, and thus around the human person exists an imperceptible silhouette or haze or vapor that forms like “a magnetic or radar field”.¹² In total, *seriti* provides “into the traffic or weltering pool of life in community” the distinctiveness of all things, for although some may erroneously perceive the source of Ubuntu as inside the human body, the reality is that such a source is found outside and beyond.¹³

⁸ Augustine Shutte, “Ubuntu as the Ethical Vision”, in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Ed.), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 90.

⁹ Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2010), 1.

¹⁰ Shutte, 90.

¹¹ G.M. Setiloane, *African Theology: An Introduction* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986), 13

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

In stark contrast to both materialism and dualism, Ubuntu is grounded in the affirmation that the “forces that make the universe are life, living energy and forces of life”.¹⁴ This Ubuntu notion of life can power and influence the mind, body and spirit, and as a result, Ubuntu applies to all that exists. As Shuttle elaborates, “stones are alive as well as animals”, yet stones are not equal to animals, as the critical differentiation is that animals possess a greater amount of life force than stones, and also, human beings have far more to distribute than other mammals.¹⁵ From such an Ubuntu perspective, this overarching force of life is therefore the guiding influence and is thus the essential reality for all of creation. As a result, the entire created universe may be observed as a categorized and guided organization of various life forces, which ultimately springs from the foundation of all life forces, God. From such an Ubuntu perspective, the strongest life forces are found in the ancestors who have passed on to the afterlife to dwell alongside God, as well as the leaders of clans and households, yet weakest are mammals, plants, and various other physical items. In such a life force structure, the placement of humankind is in the “middleplace”, which makes us “open to both stronger and weaker forces on either side”.¹⁶ As articulated by Shuttle, one can best understand such an image as “a spherical universal of life force” with God as the persistently present foundation at the heart of the sphere, and as one shifts away from the heart to the outer edges, one then engages “wider, concentric spheres of force, from ancestors and chiefs, through ordinary people, to animals, rivers and the things of nature in the outermost sphere”.¹⁷

In light of such thoughts on an Ubuntu conception of universal reality, one then recognizes that although there are an assortment of African cultures and contexts, there are discernible commonalities to be found within their value systems, beliefs and even practices.¹⁸ Upon further review of such ideological unity, one begins to recognize that which can be deemed as a unifying African worldview. As shared by Mluleki Munyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi, perhaps the most abiding principle of this unifying African worldview – grounded in the above-mentioned ideology – is Ubuntu.¹⁹ More specifically, Ubuntu exists as

¹⁴ Shuttle, 90.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ronald Nicolson, *Persons in Community: African Ethics in a Global Culture* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 116.

¹⁹ Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 63.

a traditional understanding and basis for living that has for numerous generations equipped and empowered the indigenous residents of South Africa, in specific, and throughout the African continent in general. The terminology of Ubuntu is recognized and utilized in nearly all African dialects found in South Africa, as Ubuntu is from IsiNguni; in TshiVenda it is *Uhuthu*, in Sotho it is *Botho*, and in XiTsonga the term is expressed as *Vumunhi*.²⁰

As offered by Munyaka and Motlhabi, *ubuntu* is, in many ways, a worldview that unites people of diverse worldviews. Along these lines, as shared by Nkonko Kamwangamalu, the concept of Ubuntu is found not only in South Africa, but also within an assortment of traditional African dialects, though not always with a similar or recognizable name.²¹ For example, one recognizes that Ubuntu has numerous variations in a wide diversity of African linguistic expressions, such as *gimuntu* in kiKongo and giKwese (Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola), *umuntu* in xiTsonga and shiTswa (Mozambique), *bumuntu* in kiSukuma and kiHaya (Tanzania), *umundu* in Kikuyu and *umuntu* in Kimeru (Kenya), and *bomoto* from Bobangi (Democratic Republic of Congo).²²

Due in part to such linguistic connections offered by Kamwangamalu, Godwin Sogolo shares that Ubuntu continues to exist as a collection of time-tested and entrenched values that influence the customary practices of living for numerous Africans.²³ In other words, Ubuntu has become a concept that illustrates a connecting assortment of goals in which many Africans both consider and pursue.²⁴ Johann Broodryk states that Ubuntu is the “whole complex of traditional behavior” that has been slowly and steadily advanced and inherited by each successive generation of humanity and is thus received by each passing generation.²⁵ In doing so, such customs have been verbally conveyed from mentors to mentees over extended periods, and amazingly, where rarely placed into written formats.²⁶

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ M.N. Kamwangamalu “Ubuntu in South Africa: A sociolinguistic perspective to a Pan-African concept” *Critical Arts* 13 (1999), 24-41.

²² Ibid.

²³ G. Sogolo. *Foundations of African Philosophy: A Definitive Analysis of Conceptual Issues in African Thought* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1993), 119.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ J. Broodryk, “Ubuntuism as a world-view to order society”, (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1997).

²⁶ Ibid.

According to Puleng Lenkabula, Ubuntu explains “personhood and humaneness”, as it “expresses the ontology of people and their identity”.²⁷ Along these lines, Ubuntu offers a model by which communities “participate in the duty of promoting and preserving life”.²⁸ Therefore, while there is far more on the subject to consider, for the sake of introductions one notes that Ubuntu expresses a “world view found in diverse forms in many societies throughout Africa...more specifically among the Bantu languages of the East, Central and South Africa”.²⁹ In doing so, Ubuntu is expressed in the saying “*motho ke motho ka batho ba bang*”, which translates to the understanding that “a person is a person through other persons”.³⁰ With such an overview in mind, the section that follows will consider how such a worldview as Ubuntu may be incorporated into Mission as Accompaniment to assist in its overall response to mechanistic dehumanization.

5.2.1 Introduction of Ubuntu as an Indicator of Accountability for Mission as Accompaniment

When seeking to utilize Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, an initial task concerns the importance of linguistic and cultural translation. As indicated at the onset of this chapter, Mission as Accompaniment as practiced and articulated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requires a much-needed African viewpoint in response to mechanistic dehumanization. However, when seeking to implement Ubuntu into Mission as Accompaniment, a number of challenges surrounding such an incorporation emerge. More specifically, according to Desmond Tutu, as quoted by Russel Botman, Ubuntu is a term and concept “difficult to translate into occidental languages”.³¹ As a result, Mission as Accompaniment requires an ability to decode and decipher Ubuntu into an indicator of accountability. As Russel Botman clarifies, Ubuntu is “about the essence of being human”, thus it communicates that the entirety of humankind is inseparably fastened to

²⁷ Puleng Lenkabula, *Bioprospecting and Intellectual Property Rights on African Plant Commons and Knowledge: A New Form of Colonization Viewed from an Ethical Perspective* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of South Africa, 2006), 158-169.

²⁸ Leonard Chuwa, *African Indigenous Ethics in Global Bioethics: Interpreting Ubuntu* (New York: Springer, 2014), 26.

²⁹ Timothy Murithi, “Practical Peacemaking Wisdom from Africa: Reflections on Ubuntu” *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 1, No.4 (June 2006), 25-34.

³⁰ Moeketsi Letseka, “In Defense of Ubuntu” *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 31, No 1 (2012), 47.

³¹ Russel H. Botman, “The *Oikos* in a Global Economic Era: A South African Comment”.
http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-6/chapter_x.htm

and for each other.³² Therefore, to be human in the spirit of Ubuntu means to be given a sacred place in a “community or a network of life-forces”, for Ubuntu articulates personhood as “being-with-others”, and in turn recommends what being with others denotes or involves, and therefore motivates humans to be vulnerable to and for others, to teach and be taught in the context of community.³³

The meaning and essence of Ubuntu is by no means strictly anthropocentric, but rather, Ubuntu includes relationships that encompass human beings and all of creation.³⁴ Therefore, in order for Ubuntu to serve as an effective indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, the first task is to recognize that such conceptions of personhood and connectivity found within Ubuntu can be difficult for westerners to comprehend, due in part to common westernized cultural conceptions surrounding individualism and personal autonomy.³⁵ As Augustine Shutte explains, the most common Western worldviews have often taught humans to see the self as that which is reserved and concealed within our physical bodies.³⁶ While Westerners may not consider the self as literally inside the body, the reality is that because so many in the West consider themselves as merely physical matter, it in turn regulates the manner by which the self is viewed and related alongside others members of creation. In striking contrast, the African view is remarkably different, as the self is viewed as external to the physical body, thus near and available to all in the spirit of community. Such is the case because the self from an African viewpoint is the outcome and manifestation of the various life forces affecting it. Which means, the human person from an African view is not a “thing”, but the summation of a totality of interrelating forces and influences, which in turn leads humans to view themselves as “outside, in our appearance, our acts and relationship, and in the environment that surrounds us”, for such are the “manifestations of the life forces that make us”.³⁷

As Michael Battle elaborates further, to comprehend Ubuntu requires both a resistance to common westernized notions of personhood, “such as the consumer”, and an acceptance of the Bantu ontology that offers an intellectual and cultural openness to the

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Lenkabula, *Bioprospecting and Intellectual Property Rights*, 159.

³⁵ L. Robert Kohls, “The Values Americans Live By” (Meridian House International, Washington, D.C. 1984).

³⁶ Shutte, 90.

³⁷ Ibid.

conception of Ubuntu.³⁸ Furthermore, Puleng Lenkabula suggests that such an inclusive notion of Ubuntu – as articulated above by Shutte – is contrary to westernized Christian religious individualism, where God creates individually and exclusively. In contrast, Ubuntu sees the Genesis creation narrative as one in which “God created humanity in relationship” as an act of community and inclusion.³⁹ Therefore, Ubuntu reveals that to be human is to be both interpersonal and accommodating, as all people ultimately reside in the midst of a network of relationships and a call to cooperative efforts.⁴⁰ Along these lines, according to Ubuntu all people are made and molded not merely by personal choices, but more through the ongoing realities of historic, social, hereditary, physical, communal, and political arrangements. As a result, the varieties of human relationships that are grounded in Ubuntu are not to be viewed as “mechanical ones”, for they do not tolerate the “competitive individualization” that too often injures the worth of being human.⁴¹ In total, through Ubuntu the worth of humanity arises from the link of associations, connections, and relationships that stem from being persons in the context of a larger human community, and thus cannot (and must not) be condensed to competitive and private egos.

In light of such critical insights mentioned above, one recognizes that Ubuntu must be translated into the westernized ideological context of Mission as Accompaniment, and such begins to be accomplished by showing that all of humanity is bound into relationships with the entire created order.⁴² More specifically for the task of this particular research endeavor, in order for Ubuntu to be utilized for Mission as Accompaniment as an effective response of the ELCA Global Mission to mechanistic dehumanization, one must confront common westernized perceptions and reconsider both personhood and community. For example, Shutte argues that while it may seem counterintuitive (given the criticism of individualism in westernized worldviews), one may best learn to absorb the Ubuntu conception of community if such persons are more willing to envisage communities as a single human person.⁴³ Moreover, because each person is directly linked with the community, not merely as “part to the whole”, but as “a person is related to themselves” then each particular person within a

³⁸ Battle, 4.

³⁹ Lenkabula, *Bioprospecting and Intellectual Property Rights*, 159.

⁴⁰ Botman, “The *Oikos* in a Global Economic Era”.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Lesley Le Grange, “Ubuntu, ukama, environment and moral education” *Journal of Moral Education*, 31 (2012, 3), 329.

⁴³ Shutte, 94.

larger community views the community itself as they might view themselves, “as one with them in character and identity.”⁴⁴ As a result of such alteration of orientation, each individual may learn to perceive other community members as additional selves, which in turn leaves less opportunity for alienation among the person and the community, as all associations and communications between personal members and the public in its entirety remain “fully personal”.⁴⁵

In order to further connect notions of personhood and community, Michael Battle elaborates that Ubuntu can be viewed as “the interdependence of persons for the exercise, development, and fulfillment of their potential to be both individuals and community”.⁴⁶ To highlight such an understanding of Ubuntu, some argue that extended families are viewed as significant in many African communities, because among other things, through the extended family a person is more able to experience the fullness of life, not merely through those connected through biology or genetics, associations, or matrimony, but marriage, “but through humanity itself”, understood as a single human family that one enters at the moment of birth and in which no person is thus ever to be considered a stranger.⁴⁷ In light of such conceptions of communal and personal connectivity, in order for Ubuntu to serve as an effective indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization, those within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will need to reassess and reconsider common western worldviews, and in doing so, commit to the utilization of Ubuntu as a way to show the relational nature of Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization. While challenges emerge when seeking to implement such an incorporation, the benefits of such integration abound, as will be shown in this chapter.

Mission as Accompaniment can benefit greatly through its use of Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability in response to mechanistic dehumanization. As stated by Makhudu and quoted by Kanwangamalu, Ubuntu is a method and mode of thinking that “reflects the African heritage, tradition, culture and customs, beliefs, value systems and the extended

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Battle, 3-4.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

family structures”.⁴⁸ As a result, Mission as Accompaniment can embody such an African worldview, for as Ramose argues, Ubuntu is a concept and lifestyle that expresses esteem, sympathy and concern for others, as Ubuntu is “the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of Bantu-speaking people”.⁴⁹ Lenkabula elaborates upon such thoughts from Ramose and concludes that possessing Ubuntu is an indicator of wisdom and understanding in realms such as political science, theology, and the study of law, as Ubuntu is the capacity to consider all that one encounters with esteem and in turn grant the dignity to others that one would wish to have granted unto themselves.⁵⁰ As Desmond Tutu repeatedly recognized, a person that has Ubuntu is both vulnerable and accessible for the sake of others, and in doing so encourages all others and refuses to be suspicious of whether or not others may be capable or decent, for the person with Ubuntu is secure in trusting that they are members of a larger community and all are weakened when any others are disgraced, exploited or marginalized.⁵¹

The concept of Ubuntu carries with it the values of respect, human relationships, compassion and caring for other human beings as well as the wellbeing of the earth. *Ubuntu* underlies a spirituality of mutual support and the recognition of the humanity of each person. As stated by Jack Whitehead, Ubuntu effectively communicates a philosophy and concept of human life as a vital aspect of communicating a shared obligation to maintain the fullness of life for all.⁵² In doing so, the totality of human significance and sacredness of life is by no means grounded in the individual person, but rather, found within “social, cultural and spiritual criteria”, thus wealth is meant to be distributed on the primary value of fairness amongst and within various generations.⁵³ As a result of such insights, Ubuntu therefore becomes a guiding principle for more peaceful social interactions, for the conception of Ubuntu illuminates the acute significance of peace-building due to the critical values of mutuality, hospitality and a longstanding awareness of (and commitment to) a shared future

⁴⁸ Nkonko Kamwangamalu, “Ubuntu in South Africa: A Sociolinguistic Perspective to a Pan-African Concept”, *Critical Arts Journal*. 13, (1999, 2), 24-41.

⁴⁹ Magobe B. Ramose, “An African Perspective on Justice and Race”. *Forum for Intercultural Philosophy*. (2001). <http://them.polylog.org/3/frm-en.htm>

⁵⁰ Lenkabula, *Bioprospecting and Intellectual Property Rights*, 159-160.

⁵¹ Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 31.

⁵² Jack Whitehead, “Ubuntu, The Loving Eye of an Ecological Feminism, Post-Colonial Practice and Influencing the Education of Social Formations”. <http://www.bath.ac.uk> (Accessed, November of 2012).

⁵³ Ibid.

among all people.⁵⁴ Therefore, Ubuntu offers a structure of values for granting and receiving confession and forgiveness, a justification for surrendering the impulse of retribution in exchange for previous harms, and perhaps most of all, a vision for communities and their leaders on how to govern and implement policy that may best promote transformation, reconciliation and empowerment. In total, the notion of Ubuntu has the power to reimagine a wide variety of efforts to transform conflict, cultivate wisdom, build peace, and heal our broken societies.

The implications of such peace-building affirmations are numerous and profound, for although Ubuntu-grounded societies are by no means without violence and conflict, Ubuntu does indeed provide a variety of conflict transformation and reconciliation methods that can function as critical foundations for upholding right relationships within a given community. More specifically, since the conception of Ubuntu inspires an elevated importance for community relationships, and due to the reality that building constructive interactions was viewed as a communal venture in which all were invested, a particular instance of conflict was viewed not merely as an instance of inquisitiveness in regards to the experience of a fellow citizens. But rather, in an authentic manner an evolving situation of conflict is owned by the entire community. As a result, according to the peacebuilding and conflict transformation nature of Ubuntu, each participant in a given community is clearly joined to any and all of the parties involved within a given conflict, regardless if they identify as sufferers or offenders. Therefore, if all members of the community are prepared to affirm the values of Ubuntu, then all may either grasp the consciousness of having been offended, or perhaps obtain an awareness of culpability for the harm that was first performed. Due in part to this Ubuntu connection, an offender thus changes his or her entire community into a contesting community, which in turn means that if one person is harmed, then such a person may rely upon the community to assist in the process of restoration, because in the spirit of Ubuntu the entire community was harmed and thus requires reconciliation.

In summary, if Mission as Accompaniment seeks to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization, then the incorporation of Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability allows for Mission as Accompaniment to recognize what it actually means to

⁵⁴ Tim Murithi, *The Ethics of Peacebuilding: Edinburgh Studies in World Ethics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 151.

be more fully human and in community. The missiological implication of such personal and public affirmations is profound, for the oppressed and oppressors of society, as Desmond Tutu observed, "...in the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanized as well".⁵⁵ Therefore, in order to continue to display how Ubuntu can best be utilized for this overall research venture, the following section will express some elements of Ubuntu that can best serve Mission as Accompaniment as a response to mechanistic dehumanization.

5.3 Key Elements of Ubuntu as an Indicator of Accountability for Mission as Accompaniment

The following discussion proposes some key elements that will allow Ubuntu to serve as an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment in its response to mechanistic dehumanization. While the sections that follow are by no means an exhaustive account, they seek to make more specific connections between Ubuntu and Mission as Accompaniment. The overall purpose is to provide an indicator of accountability that will allow Mission as Accompaniment to more fully consider what it means to be human and in community when seeking to respond most effectively to mechanistic dehumanization.

5.3.1 Ubuntu and Being Human

In order for Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization, Mission as Accompaniment must possess a clearer understanding of what it actually means to be human. Here, Ubuntu can play a critical role, for the importance of Ubuntu in distinguishing being human is affirmed by the statement that to be human (*umntu*) is to "affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form".⁵⁶ In striking contrast to mechanistic dehumanization, a respect for both similarity and difference in other persons is paramount to the Ubuntu conception of personhood (*umntu*), as Ubuntu affirms human individuality in a particular way.⁵⁷ With such

⁵⁵ Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

⁵⁶ Dirk Louw, "Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other" (1997).

<http://www.safrika.info/news/ubuntu.htm>

⁵⁷ Tanya Barben, *Umntu Ngumntu Ngabantu* ("A person is a person because of other persons"): the ethos of the precolonial Xhosa-speaking people as presented in fact and young adults fiction" *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa*; Vol. 60, Issue ½ (January-June, 2006), 4.

introductory thoughts in mind, the section that follows will consider more fully how Ubuntu distinguishes being human, and in doing so, will seek to assist Mission as Accompaniment in its response to mechanistic dehumanization.

While Ubuntu affirms that persons are “individuals”, one must clearly note that Ubuntu differs from traditional Western conceptions of individuality, where the individual self is regarded as independent and autonomous by virtue of being a rational being.⁵⁸ For example, the human individual, when expressed in the classic René Descartes statement “I think therefore I am”,⁵⁹ centralizes rationality and distances other ways and modes of being, including the affective domains.⁶⁰ The *cogito ergo sum* conception of Descartes is in direct contrast to Ubuntu, due in part to the understanding that, according to Ubuntu, human beings are far more than rationality. Rather, humans comprise of “a network of the cognitive, affective and other domains that enable them to be fully human, including the social, political, religious and economic contexts and systems which inform and shape their lives”.⁶¹ To be human through the lenses of Ubuntu is to be human with others, which in turn provides a striking contribution to Mission as Accompaniment in its response to mechanistic dehumanization.

In contrast to Nick Haslam’s conceptions of human identity cited in Chapter Two of this study,⁶² the conception of the human self through Ubuntu is far different from dominant western perceptions of what an individual actually is.⁶³ For example, in dominant western discourse the notion of individuality often depicts “an impetuous competitiveness” as the desires of the individual “rule supreme, and society or others are regarded as nothing but means to individual ends”.⁶⁴ In contrast to such dominant western views, the individual according to Ubuntu is construed as a rational and emotional being whose life and decisions

⁵⁸ Stanley B. Klein, “A Self to Remember: A Cognitive Neuropsychological Perspective on How Self Creates Memory and Memory Creates Self”, found in Constantine Sedikides and Marilynn B. Brewer (Editors), *Individual Self, Relational Self, Collective Self* (Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2002), 37-38.

⁵⁹ René Descartes’ original phrase, *je pense, donc je suis* (French pronunciation: [ʒə pɑ̃s dɔ̃k ʒə sɥi]), appeared in his *Discourse on the Method* (1637), which was published in the French language (instead of Latin) to engage a far broader reach. He used the Latin *cogito ergo sum* in the later *Principles of Philosophy* (1644).

⁶⁰ Klein, “A Self to Remember”, 37-38.

⁶¹ Lenkabula, *Bioprospecting and Intellectual Property Rights*, 164.

⁶² Haslam, 252-264.

⁶³ Elza Venter, “The Notion of Ubuntu and Communalism in African Educational Discourse” *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Volume 23, Issue 2-3, (March, 2004), 149.

⁶⁴ R. Khoza, *African Humanism* (Ekhaya Promotions: Diepkloof Extension SA, 1994).

ought to be considered in light of their impact on the society and the earth.⁶⁵ In this sense, while the individual retains his or her independence, she/he ultimately is dependent, in that her/his fullness of being is bound to that of their society and the earth.⁶⁶ Ubuntu thus stands in conflict with the Cartesian thoughts of individualism in which an individual can be pondered without thereby necessarily pondering the existence of others. As the Cartesian-based human being exists as detached and autonomous in relation to the rest of a group or organization, the remaining members of such a group are little more than “an added extra to a pre-existent and self-sufficient being”.⁶⁷ This in turn means that such a “modernistic” and “atomistic” conception of being human is the foundation of Cartesian-based individualism, for it embellishes the independent characteristics of the human experience to the damage of common and communal traits.⁶⁸

A similar point surrounding individuality and the human experience is expressed by Russel Botman, who argued that all people are “a web of interactions, a network of operative relationships” and are thus molded by historic, social, hereditary, physical, communal, and political arrangements.⁶⁹ As a result, human relationships are by no means mechanistic, as they do not permit aggressive individualism that might destroy the value of being human. Therefore, the value of the human person arises from a systematic linkage of relations, “from being in community”, and thus cannot be condensed or cheapened into an exclusive, cutthroat and unattached personality.⁷⁰

By way of comparison to Rene Descartes and the most dominant western views, Ubuntu defines the “individual in terms of her/his relationships with others...the individual signifies a plurality of personalities corresponding to a multiplicity of relationships in which the individual...stands”.⁷¹ Therefore, one can further argue that an individual from the lens of Ubuntu is both rational and emotional, for the individual thinks of themselves in relation to

⁶⁵ Clifford G. Christians, “Ubuntu and communitarianism in media ethics” *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* (Volume 25, Issue 2, 2004), 235-256.

⁶⁶ Louw, “Ubuntu”, (1997).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Russel Botman, “The Oikos in a Global Economic Era: A South African Comment” <http://www.cryp.org>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Louw, “Ubuntu”, (1997).

“other human beings and other creatures of the earth”.⁷² It could be concluded, therefore, that Ubuntu is not merely that which determines human identity, but also a value system that empowers communities to measure their humanness and their relationship with each other and the earth.⁷³

Through an Ubuntu worldview, personhood is the basis, center and end of everything; *izinto* (all other things) only make sense in relation to persons.⁷⁴ In other words, through Ubuntu all “persons are recognized, accepted, valued and respected for their own sake, regardless of their social status, gender or race”.⁷⁵ Steve Biko articulated that through Ubuntu a person is the cornerstone of society, thus people are valuable in and of themselves; “not just his welfare, not his material wellbeing but just man himself with all his ramifications”.⁷⁶

According to an Ubuntu worldview, all people have *isidima* (dignity), which makes a person worthy of respect and value.⁷⁷ In light of such connections to dignity, one recognizes why Ubuntu is useful in response to mechanistic dehumanization. *Isidima* through Ubuntu stems from the understanding that a person is made by the divine regardless of whether or not such an affirmation is articulated in direct religious expression, and it is also understood that the gift of a living existence is the greatest “gift of God to humanity”.⁷⁸ Therefore, anything that may undermine, hurt, threaten or destroy another person is not acceptable, as it all impacts the groundwork of a civilization, the human person. The human is thus far more than a numeric value, but rather, to be human is to be treasured beyond any standard modes of evaluation. Along these lines, regardless of whether or not a human is aware of their inherent value, all people should be granted with their due amount of dignity. The dignity given to each person from all people, complemented with intentional and ethical actions, is viewed as essential, as it all indicates an acknowledgment of human dignity in all others. This acknowledgement is communicated perhaps most noticeably in the isiZulu expression of

⁷² Clifford G. Christians, “Ubuntu and communitarianism in media ethics” *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* (Volume 25, Issue 2, 2004), 241.

⁷³ Erasmus D. Prinsloo, “Ubuntu Culture and Participatory Management” in Pieter Hendrik Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux (Editors), *The African Philosophy Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 41-42.

⁷⁴ Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 66.

⁷⁵ Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like*, edited by A.A. Stubbs (London: The Bowerdean Press, 1978), 46.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ L.L. Pato “Being fully human: From the perspective of African culture and spirituality” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 97: (1997), 55.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

welcome, *sawubona* (“we see you – we acknowledge your presence, your humanity”).⁷⁹ This greeting of human affirmation and esteem, which is grounded in the worldview of Ubuntu, is made manifest in the manner by which people interact, speak, listen, and display hospitality and civility to and for each other. In total, through such grounding in Ubuntu, people are recognized and regarded as equals by virtue of their shared humanity.

In light of such thoughts on personal value and recognition, one recognizes that Ubuntu communicates that people should recognize and treat others as equals and with respect. This Ubuntu imperative to display respect for others becomes evident should someone undermine or damage another. If such harm were to take place, others may intervene by asserting and reminding the perpetrator that the victim *ungumntu* (is a person).⁸⁰ When in consideration of the overall task of responses to mechanistic dehumanization, such intervention with an appeal to human dignity is noteworthy. For example, a victim of dehumanization may respond in an unswerving manner by claiming *ndingumntu nam* (I, too, am a human being or a person).⁸¹ If the dehumanizer is able to recognize human dignity, such a person may be motivated to refrain from the thoughts and actions that led to such dehumanization in the first place. The overall priority is to ensure that people are more aware of this shared sense of human dignity, which carries with it subsequent esteem, honor and significance that must be affirmed, treasured and appreciated, for no people are either greater or lesser in the community. Through the recognition of such values, one can view that the dignity of a person remains regardless of such a person’s rank or status in everyday life, thus a particular person’s value as a human is consistently affirmed as no greater or less when in comparison to all others. Along such lines, Ubuntu is antagonistic to all that is deemed to be destructive to anyone, as Ubuntu empowers the respect for all others, as what is deemed to be critically imperative is not merely the person but the person’s value and inherent worth.

Ubuntu is a key contributor for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization because Ubuntu appeals directly to the importance of basic human value and sacred identity. As Mokgethi Motlhabi remarks, Ubuntu not only expresses

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 66.

⁸¹ Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 66-67.

a high-level of worth for human life, but also that human life is of the highest worth.⁸² The South African activist Steve Biko affirmed a belief in the “inherent goodness of man”, thus all people are to be enjoyed for the simple fact that such people exist, for we honor our shared existence “not as an unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition” but as conscious and intentional act of God intended to create a communion of sisters and brothers “jointly involved in the quest for a composite answer to the varied problems of life”.⁸³ Therefore, in all that we think and do, according to Biko, we must put humankind in the place of our top priority.⁸⁴ One can consequently argue that Biko conceived of the human person as possessing dignity throughout life and beyond, as he states: “There was no hell in our religion. We believed in the inherent goodness of man – hence we took it for granted that all people at death joined the community of saints and therefore merited our respect”.⁸⁵

Umuntu (a person) thus constitutes the basis from which Ubuntu (a person is a person through other persons) can best be understood.⁸⁶ A person (*umuntu*) is the basis of all Ubuntu.⁸⁷ As an expression of such behavior, Ubuntu is therefore “cultural ethos, a spirituality, which is not necessarily better or superior, or for that matter inferior to those of other people, but from which others can learn and improve their understanding of one another”.⁸⁸ Therefore, for the sake of incorporating Ubuntu for Mission as Accompaniment, one recognizes Ubuntu as core of what it means to be human, for Ubuntu incorporates generosity, compassion, and the ability to sacrifice in order to bring life for others.⁸⁹ This implies that Ubuntu is the foundation, the “inner state, orientation, and good disposition that motivates, challenges and makes one perceive, having feelings and act in a humane way

⁸² Mokgethi Motlhabi, “The Concept of morality in African tradition”. In: *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares: Essays in Honor of Archbishop Mpilo Desmond Tutu*, by (Editors) B. Thlagale and I. Mosala, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 94.

⁸³ Biko, 46.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Mluleki Munyaka and Mokegethi Motlhabi, “The African Concept of Ubuntu/Botho and its Socio-Moral Significance” *Black Theology*, Volume 3, Issue 2 (July 2005), 215-237.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ L.L. Pato “Being fully human: From the perspective of African culture and spirituality” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 97 (1997), 53.

⁸⁹ Desmond Tutu, as quoted in Henk van den Heuvel, Mzamo Mangaliso, and Lisa van de Bunt (Editors), *Prophecies and Protests: Ubuntu in Global Management*, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Publishers, 2007), 45.

toward others”.⁹⁰ *Ubuntu* is a way of life that seeks to promote, manifest and realize “harmonious relations in society”.⁹¹ Therefore, *Ubuntu* encompasses positive human qualities and empowers people to be more fully human, as *Ubuntu* incites actions of embrace and efforts to generate peace, both personally and publically.

5.3.2 Ubuntu and Community

In order for Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization, not only must Mission as Accompaniment consider what it means to be human, but Mission as Accompaniment must also possess a more distinct articulation of what it actually means to be in community. The challenge of such an endeavor is significant, as the concept of a specific person serving as the solitary determinant of what can be deemed as right or wrong requires a significant degree of examination. Along these lines, from a theoretical perspective an individualistic conception can at times appear justified and helpful, yet it also creates a situation in which a common good is difficult to imagine. Among other things, the affirmation of *Ubuntu* is meant to put sensible limits upon the realities of individual human desire, for ultimately, an aim of this research is to consider circumstances where the attraction to individualism becomes decreasingly attractive and alternative manners of being engaged in community can better prosper and grow. *Ubuntu* can help such resistance to individualism and turn people to live as community in a more sensible manner.

In light of such thoughts, one recognizes that – contrary to common western views (which one must continually recall, has directly influenced the current understanding of Mission as Accompaniment within the ELCA Global Mission) – a community is the context and content for the living out of *Ubuntu*. As a result, the value and dignity of being human is most fully materialized and realized while being in relationship with others in/as a community.⁹² In more direct terms, from the foundation of *Ubuntu* one simply cannot be human in isolation, but a human can only be most human in the context of being in/of community, for an individual is ultimately “a communal being”, thus “inseparable” from –

⁹⁰ Mluleki Munyaka, *Xenophobia as a Response to Foreigners in Post-Apartheid South Africa and Post-Exilic Israel: A Comparative Critique in the Light of the Gospel and Ubuntu Ethical Principles* (Unpublished DTh Thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2003), 145.

⁹¹ Mnyaka, *Xenophobia as a Response to Foreigners in Post-Apartheid South Africa and Post-Exilic Israel*, 144.

⁹² Elza Venter, “The Notion of *Ubuntu* and Communalism in African Educational Discourse” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* (March 2004, Volume 23, Issue 2-3), 149-160.

“and incomplete without” – others in community.⁹³ As the Kenyan-born religious philosopher and writer John Mbiti explains, only in being aware of other people does a person learn to be aware of their own sense of being, and thus, their own responsibilities, opportunities and responsibilities for themselves and others.⁹⁴ When someone experiences pain, such a person does not do so in solitude, but within the entire human community. In a similar fashion, when one person celebrates, such a person does not celebrate alone, but with others from a wide variation of circumstances and eras. In total, what takes place to all happens to the one, as the so-called singular person recognizes that “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am”.⁹⁵ This Ubuntu understanding is a vital affirmation in comprehending the African view of humankind.

As offered by Mbiti, the “I am, because we are” understanding leads to a recognition that all humans are not only formed by community, but all humans – through an intricate balance of retaining their distinctiveness – also belong to community.⁹⁶ As Puleng LenkaBula explains, a human being is a human “being-with-others”.⁹⁷ In the context of utilizing Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, such a sense of being and belonging is critical to the overall response to mechanistic dehumanization. As Munyaka and Motlhabi rightly explain, it is within and through the setting of a human community that an individual person within it is most able to recognize and realize oneself as a full person, as the development of a particular person takes place in the context of a larger community.⁹⁸ Contrary to those that may wish to take credit for their personal development, through the grounding of Ubuntu a person can only grow as a person through the accompaniment, impact and involvement of others. Therefore, one can only comprehend or realize their potential and personality, or even a certain degree of identity, while in relationship to the greater community in which one resides.

⁹³ John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New Hampshire, USA: Reed Publishing, 1969), 108-109.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ronald Nicolson, *Persons in Community: African Ethics in a Global Culture* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 10.

⁹⁷ LenkaBula, Puleng. “Beyond Anthropocentricity”, 379.

⁹⁸ Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 70.

In the context of Ubuntu, “I am, because we are” recognizes that one belongs to a community through various formal and informal relationships.⁹⁹ However, one must recognize that Ubuntu, with all of its positive attributes, is not always as inclusive as intended.¹⁰⁰ In other words, Ubuntu can be a source and sustainer of division and discrimination.¹⁰¹ Setiloane states that Ubuntu is far less “romantic” than is too often considered, as there is a significant degree of “realpolitik in it”, for Ubuntu can be about seducing an opponent or possible adversary into the community instead of allowing such a person to dwell on the fringes and in turn create a significant degree of trouble (which is reminiscent of the common phrase, “Keep your friends close, and keep your enemies closer”).¹⁰² When comprehended from an inclusive lens, the conception of Ubuntu has the potential to reach far across a wide variety of “intra and intercommunity divisions, whether political, religious, or other”, yet when it is limited to the boundaries of familial and traditional divisions, then Ubuntu can be “as vicious as any other nationalistic exclusivity”.¹⁰³ When recognized with a compassionate viewpoint, Ubuntu leads one to recognize that one cannot restrict others who authentically wish to join such a community, assuming that a person is able and willing to receive the opportunities and responsibilities that are imparted in belonging to such a community. Along these lines, Ubuntu places conversation and deliberation at the core of what is meant as being a human, for it incorporates a concept of the future that wishes to move far past far too common realities of marginalization and hostility.

In light of such thoughts from Setiloane, one recognizes that Ubuntu has the potential to be applied either inclusively or exclusively. In other words, according to this particular worldview, people and communities decide the limits of the “we are” group within which they (“I am”) apply Ubuntu.¹⁰⁴ The choice is not only about whether or not to embrace Ubuntu, but it is actually more about where and when one applies limits of this notion. Along

⁹⁹ Kai Kresse, “African Humanism and a Case Study from the Swahili Coast” in Claus Dierksmeier, Wolfgang Amann, Ernst Von Kimakowitz, Heiko Spitzeck and Michael Pirson (Editors) *Humanistic Ethics in the Age of Globality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 250.

¹⁰⁰ P. Enslin and K. Horsthemke, “Can ubuntu provide a model for citizenship education in African democracies? *Comparative Education*, Volume 40, Number 4 (2004), 545-558.

¹⁰¹ Elina Hankela, *Ubuntu, Migration and Ministry: Being Human in a Johannesburg Church* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2014), 282.

¹⁰² In conversation with Charles Villa-Vicencio (January, 2004), found in Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Walk with us and Listen: Political Reconciliation in Africa* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 113.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Johan Cilliers, “In Search of Meaning Between Ubuntu and Into: Perspectives on Preaching in Post-Apartheid South Africa” (Paper delivered at the eight international conference of *Societas Homiletica*, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, July 2008).

these lines, some have considered the erosion of Ubuntu as a historical process.¹⁰⁵ As Elina Hankela argues, although Ubuntu once served as a primary organizer of communal values and in doing so contrasted the various ills of imperialism, apartheid and hyper-urbanization, all of these historical realities have contributed toward what Biko called the “process of bastardisation” for Ubuntu, or the degradation of Ubuntu as a legitimate and durable community value.¹⁰⁶ From a slightly different perspective, the ongoing destruction of Ubuntu can be viewed as a natural and predictable outcome of the destruction of so-called traditional culture, since recent centuries (and especially recent years) have encompassed the challenge, misuses, and abuses of indigenous African culture. The argument that Ubuntu is currently on the decline assumes that Ubuntu was not just an accepted ethical conception but also a value that was commonly lived-out in a wide variety of traditional communities. Along these lines, a growing number of people have critically examined the potentially disturbing impact of Ubuntu in regards to certain manners of segregational rejection, such as the more recent xenophobic uprisings in South Africa.¹⁰⁷ While some have grown to understand such xenophobic violence as a “disconnect between rhetoric and reality”,¹⁰⁸ and yet others as a loss of Ubuntu,¹⁰⁹ others have since argued that Ubuntu itself may be a cause of discrimination and violence, and thus Ubuntu may have reached its end.¹¹⁰

While far more could be stated in regards to the potentially harmful aspects of Ubuntu, this chapter wishes to introduce that Ubuntu can – and has – been abused. In total, the worldview of Ubuntu recognizes that a person is incomplete without others, as a human

¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Chinomona and Eugene Tafadzwa Maziriri, “Examining the Phenomenon of Xenophobia as Experienced by African Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Johannesburg, South Africa: Intensifying the Spirit of ‘Ubuntu’” *International Journal of Research in Business Studies and Management*, Volume 2, Issue 6 (June 2015), 20-31.

¹⁰⁶ Hankela, 281.

¹⁰⁷ Mluleki Michael Ntutuzelo Munyaka, “Xenophobia as a response to foreigners in post-apartheid South Africa and post-exilic Israel: a comparative critique in the light of the gospel and Ubuntu ethical principles” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of South Africa, 2003), 158.

¹⁰⁸ Chris Kabwato, “The disconnect between ubuntu and reality: is this simply xenophobia?” *Rhodes Journalism Review*, Issue 28 (September, 2008), 20-21.

¹⁰⁹ Mojalefa Lehlohonolo Johannes Koenane, “Xenophobic attacks in South Africa: an ethical response – Have we lost the underlying spirit of Ubuntu?” *International Journal of Science Commerce and Humanities* Volume 1, No. 6. (September 2013), 106-111.

¹¹⁰ For an excellent dialogue on the usefulness of ubuntu, see the following: Bernard Matolino and Wenceslaus Kwindigwi, “The End of Ubuntu” *South African Journal of Philosophy*. Volume 32, Issue 2 (2013); Thaddeus Metz, “Just the beginning for ubuntu: reply to Matolino and Kwindigwi” *South African Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 33, No. 1 (2014), 65-72; Bernard Matolino, “A response to Metz’s reply on the end of ubuntu” *South African Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 34, No 2 (2015), 214-225.

needs others humans to be most fully human.¹¹¹ As a result, when viewed as an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, one recognizes that a global community is far more than a diverse collection of individuals who just so happen to dwell together in a so-called global village, but according to Ubuntu, a global community is a collection of diverse and distinct people that are joined together by a variety of relational unions, through nature and/or nurture, who in turn perceive themselves principally as participants of the community and holding a set of mutual concerns, aims and core values.¹¹² The idea of such mutual concerns and core values is critically important for a sufficient formation of a global community, for such an idea is the primary definition of what entails community, for it is the idea of mutual concerns, aims and core values that distinguishes a global human community from a simple group of miscellaneous individuals. In other words, participants in a global human community seek to embody and share their aims and core values, and in doing so, possess bonds that are both rational and conceptual, and thus possess strong connections to their aims and values, and are in turn prepared to further cherish them, seek them and even defend them when so challenged.

In light of such thoughts, through Ubuntu individuals may consider themselves as vital members of the larger communal context.¹¹³ In other words, people are socialized to conceive of themselves as intimately and intricately joined with all others, thus a person who does not belong to, or has not been made part of, the community is thus considered a danger.¹¹⁴ This belonging does not provide wholeness but also gives one a sense of identity and security, and in turn leaves little room for narrow individualism. According to Metz and Gale, “It is in a community that an individual is able to realize himself or herself as a person”,¹¹⁵ for as Eze remarks, the personal development of particular individuals “happens in community”,¹¹⁶ for “only through cooperation, influence and contribution of others”, can one understand and bring to fulfillment “one’s own personality”.¹¹⁷ Drucilla Cornell remarks

¹¹¹ Adriaan van Klinken, *Transforming Masculinities in African Christianity* (Farnham, Surrey, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 158.

¹¹² Coetzee, P.H. and A.P.J. Roux (Editors). *The African Philosophy Reader* (London, Routledge, 1998), 320.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ T. Metz and J. Gale, “The African Ethic of Ubuntu/Botho” Implications for Research on Morality’, *Journal of Moral Education* 39:3 (2010), 275.

¹¹⁶ Michael Onyebuchi Eze, “Ubuntu: a communitarian response to liberal individualism?” Unpublished PhD Dissertation (Pretoria, South Africa: University of Pretoria, 2006).

¹¹⁷ Steve de Gruchy, Nico Koopman, And Sytse Strijboos (Editors) *From Our Side: Emerging Perspectives on Development and Ethics* (Pretoria, South Africa: Unisa Press, 2008), 135.

that one is capable of considering their identity solely in relation to the community in which one dwells within.¹¹⁸ Augustine Shutte, when speaking about the African conception of humanity, confirms this affirmation when he claims that humanity simply cannot be self-discovered or self-developed by personal and/or individual motivation.¹¹⁹ To the contrary, one can only embody or embrace their full capacity of being human when remaining in relationship with others members of humankind, for it is being and doing with others that empower both socially and morally, as authentic relationships imply the embrace of particular approaches and abilities that are inherent in learning to be human with others.¹²⁰

Perhaps the “crucial distinction” between Ubuntu and westernized conceptions is that in the African notion of being human it is “the community which defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory”.¹²¹ Along such lines of thinking, Desmond Tutu does not merely adhere to African conceptualizations of community or Western rugged individualism, but rather he goes further and makes theological claims of how community form individuals. For example, in a striking call to community, Tutu claims that to be human means to be vulnerable, open-minded, and gracious, and in doing so be “moved to cry, to pray, to be silent, and to let the Spirit inside us pray with groanings that cannot be put into words”.¹²² In doing so, according to Tutu, we learn to embrace others as “God’s stand-ins”, created in the *Imago Trinitatis*, they are precious, for they “have their names engraved on God’s palms, the hairs of their heads are numbered, and God knows them, these nonentities, these anonymous one who are killed and nobody seems to care”.¹²³

Mission as Accompaniment is directly related to the connections of a global human community, therefore the ability to consider Ubuntu is worthwhile for its overall commitment

¹¹⁸ Drucilla Cornell, *Law and Revolution in South Africa: uBuntu, Dignity, and the Struggle for Constitutional Transformation* (Bronx, New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 107-176.

¹¹⁹ Augustine Shutte is quoted in the following: Connor, B.F. and P.B. Decock and P.J. Hartin, *Becoming a Creative Local Church: Theological Reflections on the Patoral Plan* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), 189.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ifeanyi A. Menkiti, “Person and Community in African Traditional Thought” In *African Philosophy, an Introduction*, edited by Richard Wright (Lanham, Maryland: University of America Press, 1984), 172. See also: Placide Tempierls, *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Africaine, 1959), 101; William Abraham, *The Mind of Africa* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 20-21.

¹²² Desmond Tutu as quoted in Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2010), 39

¹²³ Ibid.

to responding to mechanistic dehumanization. In doing so, the following section will consider the more specific connections between Ubuntu and mechanistic dehumanization, an Olive Agenda and Mission as Accompaniment.

5.3.3 Ubuntu and Mechanistic Dehumanization

In order to serve as an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, one must consider how Ubuntu relates more directly with matters of mechanistic dehumanization, so that Mission as Accompaniment may in turn guide the ELCA Global Mission to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization. In specifics, mechanistic dehumanization is frequently associated with apathy, a general disregard for others, removed and isolated perceptions of others that reveals an implied relational estrangement, and an inclination to interpret the actions of others in irresponsible terms.¹²⁴ When examining the various connections between Ubuntu and mechanistic dehumanization, one is immediately drawn toward the notion of human autonomy.¹²⁵ More specifically, in the previous sections of this chapter it was shown how Ubuntu points to an interdependence that exists among all people, which in turns stands in direct contrast to the psychological distance and social unrelatedness of mechanistic dehumanization. In recognizing such Ubuntu connections, once again one recognizes how Ubuntu offers theoretical tools that are in stark contrast to more western understandings of being human. For example, in the dominant western view, an autonomous person “acts freely by definition”.¹²⁶ For such a reason, an autonomous person acts in response to a given situation only and if that person is provided with suitable rationale for wishing to commit to such an act (and therefore, is not provided with any alternatives rationale for wishing to commit to an alternative act). Along these lines, the autonomous person has been provided with suitable rationale to act only if the person chooses to acts in agreement with their specific and best interests, for such “ultimate interests derive from what

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ While one might also consider matters of “self-determination”, for the sake of this study I will consider autonomy, for autonomy is an individual’s capacity for self-determination, thus more appropriate to examine for the purpose of this section. See: Stefan Wolff and Marc Weller, “Self-determination and autonomy: A conceptual introduction”, in *Autonomy, Self-governance and Conflict Resolution: Innovative approaches to institutional design in divided societies*, edited by March Weller and Stefan Wolff (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

¹²⁶ Martin Hollis, *Models of Man: Philosophical Thoughts on Social Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 101.

he essentially is”.¹²⁷ In making such claims, what an autonomous person essential is depends in part upon what is necessary to being that specific person.

With this explanation of autonomy in mind, one recognizes that such a western conception is quite exclusivist in nature, and in turn provides a fertile breeding ground for the difference and distance associated with mechanistic dehumanization.¹²⁸ An autonomous person, from the dominant western view, is independent and in turn acts for and from his or her own self interest and therefore trusts his or her personal opinions and conclusions.¹²⁹ In the context of Ubuntu, however, autonomy is understood and practiced in relation to the overall wellbeing of the large community, in that autonomy is tied to the particular function that the community has assigned to the individual.¹³⁰ In total, Ubuntu is sourced and sustained based upon the needs and desires of the collective, and because of its more communal conception of autonomy, thus stands in direct opposition to that which is required for mechanistic dehumanization.

Within the context of Ubuntu, people are considered to be connected, and thus other people are more difficult to mechanistically dehumanize.¹³¹ More specifically, people are expected to be in relationships with one another, not merely in the daily routines of life, but especially during times of conflict when the need for one another becomes more severe.¹³² Through Ubuntu, persons in need should be able to rely on others, and therefore, when some are in need others are socially required to play their part in contributing to their good and that of society. According to Megan Shore, those individuals that exhibit “qualities of individualism and selfishness do not escape scrutiny or go unnoticed”.¹³³ Such egocentric

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Jerome B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 393-394, 413-418.

¹²⁹ Tim Kasser, “Capitalism and Autonomy” in Velery I. Chirkov, Richard M. Ryan and Kennon M. Sheldon (Editors) *Human Autonomy in Cross-Cultural Context: Perspectives on the Psychology of Agency, Freedom, and Well-Being* (New York: Springer, 2011), 191-206.

¹³⁰ Stephanie Dietrich, “Mercy and Truth Are Met Together; Righteousness and Peace Have Kissed Each Other (Psalm 85:10): Biblical and Systematic Theological Perspectives on Diakonia as Advocacy and Fight for Justice” in Stephanie Dietrich, Knud Jorgensen, Kari Karsrud Korslien and Kjell Nordstokke (Editors), *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), 19.

¹³¹ Brock Bastian, Jolanda Jetten, and Nick Haslam, “An Interpersonal Perspective on Dehumanization” in Paul G. Bain, Jeroen Vaes, and Jacques-Philippe Leyens, *Humanness and Dehumanization* (New York: Psychology Press, 2014), 205.

¹³² Megan Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Burlington, Virginia: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 160.

¹³³ Shore, 157.

individuals are described as *akanabuntu* (lacking Ubuntu) or *akangomntu*, or *ha se motho* (not a person, not human).¹³⁴ Admittedly, these statements of condemnation are powerful, as Mluleki Munyaka and Mokgethi Motlhabi argue, such condemnation and judgment surrounding a lack of Ubuntu is to be viewed as the “derecognition” of the other person’s core humanity, thus such charges serve as a method of exposing and expressing a severe degree of disapproval in response to unethical actions or selfish thoughts.¹³⁵ More specifically, the use of statements of criticism such as *ha se motho* by no means indicate that a particular person no longer exists, but rather, that the person in question has misplaced their Ubuntu and lost their core values of being human. In more radical terms, Ubuntu can be “lost completely” through “one’s anti-community behavior”, and in such extremely circumnates the core community values of compassion and cooperation, which are widely esteemed as vital for the fullness of life in community, are thus perceived as lost.¹³⁶ Therefore, the charges of selfish and greedy behaviors and thoughts (which as was shown in Chapter Two, are frequently celebrated elements of Neoliberal Capitalism) are viewed not merely as an error in contributing to the overall health of both the person and existing community, but more seriously as producing injury, sorrow and suffering at the expense of others, thus such acts are condemned as expressions of treacherous features that are corrosive to the community and thus detrimental for its performance and overall health.

As shown by Munyaka and Motlhabi above, when the community displays displeasure in response to individualism and selfishness, the community in turn acts as a collective disciplinarian in order to protect and promote Ubuntu. The static nature of Ubuntu, and thus personhood, is informative in the context of mechanistic dehumanization, as Ubuntu can range in its inclusivity and exclusivity, not merely on the perceptions of some, but on personal behavior. In a sense, Ubuntu provides a framework by which humanity is judged, which in turn makes a form of dehumanization possible. As Elavie Ndura, Apollinaire Bangayimbaga and Vincent Bandeda offer, the Kirundi expression of *Ubuntu birhavwa* (“Ubuntu is earned”), recognizes that a person must cultivate and demonstrate clear characteristics of Ubuntu in order to receive esteem and status from other participants in the

¹³⁴ Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 71.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

greater community.¹³⁷ From this perspective it is not enough to have Ubuntu, but one must show their Ubuntu publically in order to receive the expressions of Ubuntu more fully from others. Thus explains how, from a traditional African viewpoint, a young man is raised for the sake of developing into *umushingantahe* (or wise man), and thus deserving of such a community distinction. In a similar fashion, a young girl is brought up to grow into *umupfasoni* (or wise woman), and fitting of such a designation. Therefore, to be labeled and admired as *umushingantahe* or *umupfasoni*, both females and males are required to display the beliefs and characteristics entrenched in an Ubuntu understanding.

Along these lines, Munyaka and Motlhabi argue that the statements *akangomntu* and *akanabuntu* demonstrate that it is community that defines a person and determines whether or not the person has the desired standard of humanity (in the moral sense) or not.¹³⁸ As a result, a person may have inherent human dignity, yet a significant aspect of being a person is to possess thoughts and ethical principles that positively influence the wellbeing of others.¹³⁹ Therefore, in the context of Ubuntu, to call a person *akangomntu* may appear to be a form of dehumanization, but it is not, for such a statement is to say that a person lacks the inner state of being that feels sympathy for others.¹⁴⁰ From the perspective of Ubuntu, personal identity is directly related to how one relates with others, which in turn allows for opportunities of self-dehumanization.

While Ubuntu provides a framework for communal judgment and disdain, it is ultimately a philosophy of acceptance and concern that incorporates compassion and reconciliation.¹⁴¹ As Anna Floerke Scheid explains, when a person is unable to satisfy Ubuntu through any inhumane behavior directed either inwardly or outwardly, the collective has the potential to reconcile the disobedient person through compassion and mercy.¹⁴² Through such acts of grace and kindness, Ubuntu in turn possess a large degree of confidence

¹³⁷ Elavie Ndura, Apollinaire Bangayimbaga, and Vincent Bandeda, "Reclaiming Ubuntu through Multicultural Education: A Foundation for Peacemaking in the African Great Lakes Region" in Susan Allen Nan, Zachariah Cherian Mampilly, and Andrea Bartoli (Editors) *Peacemaking: From Practice to Theory* (Oxford, England: Praeger, 2011), 301.

¹³⁸ Munyaka and Motlhabi, "Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance", 71.

¹³⁹ Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Walk with Us and Listen: Political Reconciliation in Africa* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 114.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Ikechukwu Osuji, *African Traditional Medicine: Autonomy and Informed Consent* (New York: Springer, 2014), 133.

¹⁴¹ Anna Floerke Scheid, *Just Revolution: A Christian Ethic of Political Resistance and Social Transformation* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 116.

¹⁴² Ibid.

that such mistaken people will turn away from their inhumane acts and return to more virtuous relationship with their surrounding community members. In total, in the spirit of Ubuntu, “to continue to treat as human one who has, through his/her own inhumanity, violated Ubuntu is itself an extremely powerful act of humanness”.¹⁴³

Ubuntu-grounded forgiveness is not only personal, but also has a large impact on the wider community, for it is through the acts of compassion and restoration that victims of inhumane acts declare their Ubuntu in the presence of those who first dishonored it. Such a powerful declaration of human dignity is intended in part to neutralize any likelihood of continued and violent confrontation. In a manner quite similar to social methods of reconciliation, such actions seek to conclude any sequences of vengeance and fury, for the victimized claim, “By forgiving you, I demonstrated that I am human, invested with ubuntu and you must not violate my humanity through violence”.¹⁴⁴ Through such powerful acts of forgiveness and declarations of value, those on the receiving end of harm affirm the human dignity of both themselves and the offender. Through the act of bringing human dignity to the offender, those who are victims deconstruct the offender as decreasingly intimidating and in turn remove the power that such offenders may possess “over them – perhaps even in the victims’ memories”.¹⁴⁵ Through such acts of grace and restoration the offended help to incorporate offenders back into the fullness of the community, and in doing so, actively and intentionally assist in reducing the likelihood of future harm by empowering others to more fully commit to public restoration.

In light of such models of forgiveness and reconciliation, one recognizes that the process of asserting Ubuntu humanizes both victim and perpetrator, which in turn provides an excellent resource as Mission as Accompaniment seeks to guide ELCA Global Mission respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization. From this standpoint, according to Coetzee and Roux, the opportunities and responsibilities for persons and communities are astounding, since there is no necessity to hold any amount of strain concerning the personal and public since it is conceivable for a person to openly sacrifice her/his personal desires for the sake of the larger community.¹⁴⁶ However, in sacrificing such individual yearnings, one

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ P.H. Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux (Editors). *The African Philosophy Reader* (London, Routledge, 1998), 6.

can also be convinced that the collective will not renounce the individual and that personal health will be a priority of the community. As Coetzee and Roux argue, with Ubuntu it becomes “a life of give and take” as the collective is grounded on conceptions of an inherent and longstanding bond amount its participants.¹⁴⁷

Although some may be judgmentally termed as *akanabuntu* or *akangomntu* (being without humanity or not human) based upon their misguided actions, such judgment and condemnation does excommunicate one from the larger community. To lack Ubuntu is therefore not to be considered dehumanization in the westernized sense, for as Le Grange writes, it is critically important to delineate between “humanness (Ubuntu)” and “humanism (the Enlightenment idea of what it means to be human)”.¹⁴⁸ For example, the reaction of humanism to the larger consideration of what entails being human regularly considers the “essence or nature” of the human being and not on the Ubuntu affirmation of being human in the world (the existence of the human being in the world).¹⁴⁹ According to Le Grange, the innate difficulties with concentrating on what entails being human (the essence of a human being) is that such a focus eventually unwraps the potential for distinguishing humans in manners that allow for others to be consider as non-human or less then human. For example, the 20th century German-Jewish holocaust and the South Africa system of Apartheid reminds us of such consequences, but due in part to the impact of such misguided brands of humanism, all people possess the capacity to dehumanize.

Through Ubuntu one recognizes that regardless of whether or not a person has committed acts of wrongdoing, the person in question continues to be fully deserving of kind and equitable dealings, simply because the person is a person.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, Ubuntu provides a lens by which mechanistic dehumanization can be evaluated, and also prevented, which in turn makes it a useful resource Mission as Accompaniment.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Lesley Le Grange, “Ubuntu/Both as Ecophilosophy and Ecosophy” *Journal of Human Ecology*, Volume 49, Number 3 (2015), 305.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ S. Netshitomboni, *Ubuntu: Fundamental Constitutional Value and Interpretive Aid* (Pretoria, University of South Africa Press, 1998).

5.3.4 Ubuntu and Mission as Accompaniment

In addition to its direct relationship to mechanistic dehumanization, Ubuntu also sheds light on the principles and practices of Mission as Accompaniment. For the overall purpose of this study, such insights are worthwhile, as Ubuntu provides a variety of insights into how global church companions may journey together response to mechanistic dehumanization.¹⁵¹ The following sections will consider how Ubuntu can best inform Mission as Accompaniment.

Mission as Accompaniment calls upon the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its companions to:

- Acknowledge and affirm the assortment of beliefs and opinions that exist within (and because of) the contextual particularities of each companion church.
- Support and inspire companion churches to openly critique and examine the various concerns and actions of one another.
- Embody the best practices of transparency, and in doing so participate in authentic and open discourse.
- Push far past the historical and colonial partnerships of World and Global Churches.
- Include those most impacted by strategic decisions within the strategic decision-making practices.
- Confess that both World and Global Churches will seek to be in harmony with one another in their limitations, mistakes and purpose.¹⁵²

In light of such commitments, when seeking to relate Mission as Accompaniment with Ubuntu, one matter that deserves more specific attention is the response to conflict that naturally arises in the accompaniment process. More specifically, Ubuntu can provide Mission as Accompaniment with a suitable framework to engage and resolve conflict, which is especially helpful while responding to mechanistic dehumanization. As shared by Timothy Murithi, Ubuntu offers a “value system” for offering and accepting compassion, and in doing so provides a justification for forfeiting the impulse of vengeance for past oppression, and

¹⁵¹ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

¹⁵² Ibid.

thus provides motivation by offering standards for communities on how to best stimulate harmony.¹⁵³ In total, Ubuntu has the ability to “culturally re-inform” a wide variety of peace-building efforts for the sake of conflict transformation.¹⁵⁴ While the core values expressed through Ubuntu are by no means unique (as they may be observed and examined in a wide variety of forms in diverse settings and cultural customs),¹⁵⁵ an enduring examination and repeated assessment of Ubuntu can serve to re-articulate and re-prioritize the basic and vital unity of human life. In doing so, Ubuntu stimulates mindsets and core values that are grounded in the fair distribution of resources and on assistance and partnership in cultivating wisdom and discovering solutions in the midst of shared issues. Therefore, when examined in light of the economic and ecological connections associated with mechanistic dehumanization, an emphasis on conflict resolution for Mission as Accompaniment through Ubuntu is a worthy pursuit.

The principles of Ubuntu have a long history of translation into principles and processes that bear a strong resemblance to Mission as Accompaniment.¹⁵⁶ As shared by Nomonde Masina, those considered “Ubuntu societies” maintained accompaniment-like “conflict resolution and reconciliation mechanisms” that “served as institutions for maintaining law and order within society”.¹⁵⁷ According to Mbigi and Maree these accompaniment-like “mechanisms pre-dated colonialism and continue to exist and function today”.¹⁵⁸ As was shown earlier in this chapter, such Ubuntu-societies “place a high value on communal life, and maintaining positive relations within the society is a collective task in which everyone is involved”.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, a conflict among community companions belongs to the whole community, as “to be out of harmony is regarded as harmful to the well-being and survival of the whole”.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Murithi, “Practical Peacemaking”, 29.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, “Conflict Resolution, Culture and Religion: Toward a Training Model for Interreligious Peacebuilding” *Journal of Peace Research*, 38, 6 (2001), 685-704.

¹⁵⁷ Nomonde Masina, “Xhosa Practices of Ubuntu for South Africa” in William Zartman, (Editor), *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts: African Conflict “Medicine”* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 169.

¹⁵⁸ John Mbigi and J. Maree, *Ubuntu: The Spirit of African Transformation Management* (Randburg, South Africa: Knowledge Resources. 1995).

¹⁵⁹ Masina, 170.

¹⁶⁰ Masina, 169.

According to the notion of Ubuntu, in times of conflict each member of a community is linked to each of the conflicted, “be they victims or perpetrators”.¹⁶¹ Therefore, when all are able to acknowledge the shared conflict, then all bear “responsibility for the wrong that has been committed”.¹⁶² Due in part to this communal bond, an Ubuntu-transgressing individual thus changes the entire community into an Ubuntu-transgressing community.¹⁶³ As shared by Nomonde Masina, just as a quarreling person changes the community into a quarreling community, when someone is harmed, such a person may rely upon the community to help heal what has taken place, as the entire community has been harmed.¹⁶⁴ In review, one may recognize such undercurrents of communal character and their bearing on conflict throughout the global community.

As stated by Murithi, those considered Ubuntu-societies established structures for transforming conflict and encouraging forgiveness and reconciliation in order to transform prior damages and sustain communal unity and peace.¹⁶⁵ More specifically, Murithi offers the following principles, all of which relate directly to Mission as Accompaniment:

- The significance of open and inclusive involvement in the peacebuilding endeavor, since group harmony is reinforced if community members actively participate in developing a more peaceful society;
- The value of comforting those who suffer and empowering the offenders, as they all engage the challenging endeavor of peacebuilding, and the goal is to restore all into the fullness of the community;
- The importance of recognizing blame and repentance, and offering compassion and pardon as a means by which the restoration of community can be achieved;
- The value of repeatedly pointing to the indispensable harmony and connectedness of the full human community, as articulated through Ubuntu, and seeking to embody that

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Masina, 177.

¹⁶³ Peter Ikechukwu Osuji, *African Traditional Medicine: Autonomy and Informed Consent* (New York: Springer, 2014), 133.

¹⁶⁴ Masina, 171.

¹⁶⁵ Timothy Murithi, “African Approaches to Building Peace and Social Solidarity” *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2006), 16.

which these values promote, such as: compassion, fair distribution of resources, and seeking to embody an ethic of mutuality to settle shared issues.¹⁶⁶

In order to practice such principles, consensus building is as a key element of Ubuntu, and also (not coincidentally), Mission as Accompaniment. Murithi argues that regardless of the exact type of difference or quarrel, the transformation of conflict through Ubuntu might happen on a wide variety of levels, such as: the immediate kin, larger community, among members of a specific racial or tribal group, or perhaps even among diverse ethnic associations positioned within a close geographic area.¹⁶⁷ Murithi states that within the particular cultural setting of Ubuntu communities in South Africa, specifically within the Xhosa, conflicts might be transformed through a social mechanism often known as the “Inkundla/Lekgotla”, which functions as a communal arbitration and restoration conference.¹⁶⁸ This mechanism provides an important insights.

The Inkundla/Lekgotla conference was public in nature, to the degree that the collective community was occupied at an assortment of echelons, all in order to discover resolutions to an issue that was perceived as a hazard and risk to the overall cohesion of the larger community. The widely accepted norm was for the venture to be facilitated through a “Council of Elders and the Chief or, if the disputes were larger, by the King himself”.¹⁶⁹ The overall method of establishing the specific nature of any offense, and then discovering a mode of solution, often comprised of family members related to the offender and offended, including children and women. The conflict transformation method thus created an open space for participants in the community to express their opinions and to publically make their views heard, which in turn allowed for the community at large to be more fully involved in the healing process. More specifically, the various participants in the community had the authority to pose questions to the offended, offenders and bystanders, as well as offer advice to the Council of Elders on potential solution. In receiving a large degree of information from a diversity of sources, the Council of Elders in its function as arbitrator thus held an analytical role and thus served as advisors to the Chief. Through the various opportunities of listening to (and learning from) the diverse points of the community participants, the Council of Elders might counsel the Chief on how to create situations that could best promote

¹⁶⁶ Murithi, “African Approaches”, 23.

¹⁶⁷ Murithi, “Practical Peacemaking”, 30-31.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

solutions for restoration and healing among the wounded individuals, and thus preserve the larger purpose of promoting the solidarity and harmony of the overall community.

In regards to the actual Inkundla/Lekgotla process, it typically included the following primary steps:

- First, following an investigative process in which the interpretations of offenders, offended and bystanders were received, the offenders (if determined to be guilty of wrongdoing) would be subsequently urged by the Council and other community members in the Inkundla/Lekgotla conference, to admit culpability and responsibility for all that had taken place.
- Second, following an admission of guilty, offenders would be urged to display authentic remorse and to then show how they will turn away from such actions.
- Third, the confessed offenders would be urged to seek absolution, and in doing so, the offended would be urged to express compassion for the healing of community.
- Fourth, when most imaginable and through the guidance of the Council of Elders, offenders might be sentenced to offer a suitable degree of reparations in response to the pain that their actions has caused, not only to the offended, but to the community at large.¹⁷⁰

This above mentioned example of Ubuntu in conflict transformation is considered with attention, for such a process is insightful for Mission as Accompaniment. As groups – such as global church companions – often experience conflict, such companions can be encouraged through Ubuntu “to embrace co-existence and to work towards healing”,¹⁷¹ and thus contribute towards the restoration of harmony within the global community.

The Ubuntu conflict resolution process should not be viewed as perfect or uncomplicated, as there are numerous occasions of opposition and tension while proceeding through the assortment of steps in the overall practice, thus it by no means should be romanticized. Mission as Accompaniment can also be described in such ways. Those that are traditionally on the giving end of oppression often wish to move onward, and those on the

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

receiving end may be hesitant to forgive. However, the wisdom of this Ubuntu process for Mission as Accompaniment lies in:

...the recognition that it is not possible to build a healthy community unless past wrongs are acknowledged and brought into the open so that the truth of what happened can be determined and social trust renewed through a process of forgiveness and reconciliation. A community in which there is no trust is ultimately not viable and gradually begins to tear itself apart.¹⁷²

Ubuntu provides an effective approach to peacebuilding and the resolution of conflict, and in doing so, offers some important lessons for Mission as Accompaniment in its response to mechanistic dehumanization. Along these lines, one recognizes that such conflict resolution requires transformation, and in turn draws us toward the use of resources and the distribution of wealth.¹⁷³ As a result, the following section will consider the ways that *ubuntu* can relate directly to the Olive Agenda, as both are in turn utilized for Mission as Accompaniment to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization.

5.3.5 *Ubuntu* and Steve de Gruchy's Olive Agenda

In addition to showing the direct connections of Ubuntu and mechanistic dehumanization, and also the relationship between Ubuntu and Mission as Accompaniment, one is also compelled to examine additional links between Ubuntu and the Olive Agenda. Because Mission as Accompaniment requires a missiological trajectory in the Olive Agenda, but also an indicator of accountability in Ubuntu, it is important to consider the important link between an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu. In order to do so, one is drawn to the research of the African feminist ethicist Puleng LenkaBula, whose work – in conversation with others – will be considered below in more detail.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Susan Collin Marks, "Ubuntu, Spirit of Africa: Example for the World," in *Watching the Wind: Conflict Resolution during South Africa's Transition to Democracy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2000).

¹⁷⁴ Puleng LenkaBula, "Botho/Ubuntu and Justice as Resources for Activism Towards a Just and Sustainable Economy in South Africa and Africa" *An Occasional Paper Commissioned by the Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Justice (ESSET)*. (Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation: Marshalltown, South Africa: 2006); Puleng LenkaBula, "Economic globalisation, ecumenical theologies and ethics of justice in the twenty-first century" *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* Volume 38, Issue 1 (2010),

When relating an Olive Agenda with Ubuntu, one recognizes how LenkaBula argues that anthropocentric interpretations of Ubuntu limit its potential for “the fullness of life, and the affirmation of the integrity of creation, wholeness and wellbeing”.¹⁷⁵ In doing so, LenkaBula suggests that “when the expanded and creative interpretation of [Ubuntu] which acknowledges its socio-economic, political, and ecological scope or horizon is utilized, it has the potential to become a resource, principle and norm for prevailing over ecological degradation and economic discrimination in the world today.”¹⁷⁶ LenkaBula therefore perceives Ubuntu as “a vibrant, vital and ecologically and economically viable principle and norm for the wellbeing of humanity and the integrity of creation”.¹⁷⁷ One should thus consider an Olive Agenda in conversation with LenkaBula’s understanding of Ubuntu, in order for Mission as Accompaniment to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization.

According to LenkaBula, the concept of Ubuntu has been severely limited due to its predominately anthropocentric description, as Ubuntu has too often been communicated as an fundamentally inevitable union of humans to the detriment of an ecological element.¹⁷⁸ More specifically, the components of Ubuntu that “attend to its cosmological inflections” are more often than not removed in most research that considers the notion, but such components are vital in properly understanding Ubuntu.¹⁷⁹ LenkaBula explains that the “cosmological inflections” of Ubuntu are usually most observable through the explanations of human identity when such people relate their identity with other creatures while designating their “clan names or totems”.¹⁸⁰ In order to articulate the deep meaning of Ubuntu, it is critically important to establish not only aptitude to promote “human economic wellbeing, but also economic and ecological justice”, because Ubuntu is a notion and principle that embraces a diversity of relations between human beings and all the members of God’s creation.¹⁸¹

99-120; Puleng LenkaBula, “Beyond Anthropocentricity – Botho/Ubuntu and the Quest for Economic and Ecological Justice in Africa” *Religion and Theology*, Volume 15, Issue 3 (2008), 375-394.

¹⁷⁵ LenkaBula, “Beyond Anthropocentricity”, 375.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ LenkaBula, “Botho/Ubuntu and Justice as Resources”, 28.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

In light of such thoughts from LenkaBula, one recognizes that the human dignity of all people is preferably communicated in and through their innate connections with “other human beings, the earth and the web of life on the earth and beyond”.¹⁸² In contrast to Penny Enslin and Kai Horsthemke who argue that Ubuntu is indeed “specieist” in nature (for placing a disproportionate level of emphasis on the human species),¹⁸³ the connectively with Ubuntu and an Olive Agenda is evident, as the Olive Agenda unites and engages that which political and religions dialogue too often ignores and divides: Earth, environment, employment, households, nourishment, wellbeing, food security, impoverishment, Empire, and warfare.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, in spite of those who wish to conceive of Ubuntu in its narrow form, Ubuntu can indeed relate far beyond its anthropological understanding.¹⁸⁵ Ubuntu seeks to pronounce an inclusive vision of life as an essential element of economics and ecology that leads to a collective commitment to create and sustain the fullness of life.¹⁸⁶ Through the affirmation of Ubuntu, human dignity is thus envisioned as being grounded in communal, cultural and even divine benchmarks, thus the gifts provided by the Earth are intended to be fairly distributed on the basis of justice within and beyond past and future generations.

In light of such thoughts above, and being mindful of their consistency with an Olive Agenda, one notices how key elements associated with Ubuntu need to be more fully developed, especially in light of economic and ecological injustice bred by Neoliberal Capitalism. For example, since Ubuntu intends to be the personification of equity and fairness in the overall behavior of communities, as well as within organizations and governments that shape policies that guide societies, in the contemporary setting of Neoliberal Capitalism “which results in the conquest of every fact of life in order to yield profit”, Ubuntu can be appropriated as a protest to the selfish and idolatrous rationality of greed and oppression that is embedded in the management of the multinational corporations that employ systems that destroy the earth.¹⁸⁷ LenkaBula argues that Ubuntu is directly related to the pursuit of justice, and is thus in agreement with Magobe Ramose, who argues

¹⁸² LenkaBula, “Botho/Ubuntu and Justice as Resources”, 29.

¹⁸³ Penny Enslin and Kai Horsthemke, “Can Ubuntu provide a Model for Citizenship Education in African Democracies? *Proceedings of the 9th Biennial Conference of the International Network of Philosophers of Education*, 4-7 August, Universidead Complutense, Madrid, 2004.

¹⁸⁴ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 348.

¹⁸⁵ Moeketsi Letseka, “In Defense of Ubuntu” *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 31, No 1 (2012), 47.

¹⁸⁶ Jack Whitehead, “Ubuntu, The Loving Eye of an Ecological Feminism, Post-Colonial Practice and Influencing the Education of Social Formations” (<http://www.bath.ac.uk>) Accessed on July 7, 2015 in Puleng LenkaBula, “Botho/Ubuntu and Justice as Resources”, 29.

¹⁸⁷ LenkaBula, “Beyond Anthropocentricity”, 388.

that justice is “consistent with the metaphysics of Ubuntu which consists of a triadic structure of the living, the living dead (supernatural forces) and the yet to be born”.¹⁸⁸ As a result, Ubuntu contributes to Mission as Accompaniment in its relationship to an Olive Agenda, for Ubuntu and the Olive Agenda are ultimately about justice for all.

In order to consider the connections between an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu even further, one recalls the Olive Agenda’s theological grounding in *oikothology*. As shared earlier in this study, what is fundamentally critical for an overall understanding of *oikothology* is the notion of a home or house.¹⁸⁹ From such a basic standpoint, through *oikothology* the Household of God is applied as an image to best articulate how God’s creation can be perceived as a vessel of assisting humankind to better consider the connection between a commitment for a sustainable planet and the extermination of impoverishment. In total, the development of *oikothology* helps to bridge a divide between economics and ecology, and thus the important connections between Ubuntu and *oikothology* are evident. More specifically, both Ubuntu and *oikothology* shows that all people have a home and are equally valued due to their common connections. As a result, one can argue that both Ubuntu and *oikothology* recognize that the wellbeing of human beings and the entirety of God’s creation must be taken seriously, for being a home is to embrace all that there is within such a home. In a household there is the physical edifice as well as the spiritual and communal support of compassion, affirmation of inclusion, nourishment and provision. As a result, being in a household suggest associations of interdependence and reciprocation that are without competition and domination, thus the household is about kinship and restoration, wellbeing, being connected, compassion, service, kindness, and hospitality. As both *oikothology* and Ubuntu repeatedly express, all that exists on earth shares the same home, for we all need each other, thus we must consider the essential elements of what leads to a healthy ecosystem, and thus dig into the core of what currently creates our economic hardships, and thus deal with economic systems that stand in the way of solutions.

If the earth is in all and is thus a part of all, as both Ubuntu and *oikothology* would lead us to understand, then the destruction of earth – and anyone who dwells on it – is ultimately the destruction of everything. Lesley Le Grange states that our global concerns

¹⁸⁸ Ramose, “An African Perspective on Justice and Race” <http://them.polylog.org/3/fm-en.htm>.

¹⁸⁹ Warmback, 181.

surrounding economics and ecology “transcend national boundaries” yet the impact is clearly “felt locally” because “their effects impact on the livelihoods of local communities”.¹⁹⁰ In an attempt to propose Ubuntu as “ecophilosophy” and “ecosophy”, Le Grange argues that our reactions to ecological disasters (such as an oil spill) must not merely be focused on the immediate relief responses such as cleaning the impacted area and washing the most effected and vulnerable organisms.¹⁹¹ While such immediate relief actions are indeed important and commendable, Ubuntu as ecophilosophy compels humankind to understand the long-standing systematic and underlying economic structures that made such a spill more likely, and in doing so, consider why some powerful actors will do all in their power to ensure that such systems remain firmly in place. Along these lines, Ubuntu recognizes that there is a massive political element in regards to those who possess the authority to make decisions on matters that impact the livelihoods of human beings and the wellbeing of the household of God. Moreover, because legislative agendas, ecological regulations, economic goals and the overall participation of people as citizens all carry with them a tremendous impact upon both people and the planet, Ubuntu therefore calls upon people to be in full communion with the planet by critically engaging in issues and taking action in respect of environmental and economic issues (such as oil spills). Furthermore, Ubuntu recognizes that there is a “social dimensions of how people live together”, in that regardless of what took place to create a situation of hardship, the conflict is to be transformed, for the sake of life in its fullness, both for people and the planet.¹⁹² Therefore, in light of such important thoughts from Le Grange, Ubuntu can encourage and inspire people to take care of themselves, to take care of each other, and the *oikos*, the Household of God.

With the connectivity of Ubuntu and *oikotheology* in mind, it is important also to note that Ubuntu (in ways similar to *oikotheology*) calls attention to the importance of life-giving and respectful relationships among human beings and the earth.¹⁹³ In doing so, the logic of Ubuntu is helpful for ecological and economic justice and serves “as an alternative to the

¹⁹⁰ Le Grange, “Ubuntu/Both as Ecophilosophy and Ecosophy”, 301-308.

¹⁹¹ Le Grange, “Ubuntu/Both as Ecophilosophy and Ecosophy”, 301.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Munyaradzi Felix Murove, “The Incarnation of Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism in Post-Colonial African Economic Discourse”, in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Editor), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 221.

destructive ways in which humans relate to the earth and creation”.¹⁹⁴ More specifically, through Ubuntu there is a declaration that how we treat others reflects our own “identities, and in many cases, manifests through the interwoven fabric of social, economic and political relationships to eventually impact upon us all”.¹⁹⁵ LenkaBula argues that one of the most significant components of Ubuntu is its consistent means of highlighting a justification for hospitality and equitable connections between human beings and all of God’s creation.¹⁹⁶ More specifically, the unique proclamation of Ubuntu from (and for) an African perspective is that “relationships must be under-girded by justice”.¹⁹⁷ Along such important lines of expression, Ubuntu therefore conveys a code of esteem and thus the circumvention of mistreatment and oppression of all others. Ubuntu perceives other people not merely as means to achieve ends (which has been shown earlier, is a primary attribute of mechanistic dehumanization), but rather, Ubuntu shows that all are valued and sacred “ends in themselves”, thus the condition that relations and associations cannot be grounded in various forms of corruption and manipulation.¹⁹⁸

One notices how Ubuntu has strong potential to provide important insights relevant to the creation of “guidelines for societies and their governments” to establish policies and legislation that promote such ecological and economical justice.¹⁹⁹ As Munyaradzi Mawere shared, Ubuntu can indeed serve as a social and political “remedy” to current ecological crisis around the world.²⁰⁰ In doing so, Ubuntu understood in such a manner entails relationships that promote “harmonious participation in an inclusive cosmic process directed toward the good in nature and history”.²⁰¹ As Gessler Muxe Nkondo argues, *ubuntu* can indeed connect with political power and democracy.²⁰² This important point will be explored more in

¹⁹⁴ Munyaradzi Felix Murove, “An African environmental ethic based on the concepts of ukama and ubuntu” in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Editor), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 315-331.

¹⁹⁵ Munyaka and Motlhabi, “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance”, 63.

¹⁹⁶ LenkaBula, *Bioprospecting and Intellectual Property Rights*, 167.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Barbara Nussbaum, “Ubuntu: Reflections of a South African on Our Common Humanity” *Reflections*, Volume 4, Number 4 (2003).

²⁰⁰ Munyaradzi Mawere, *Environmental Conservation through Ubuntu and Other Emerging Perspectives* (Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2013), 81.

²⁰¹ Peter W. Bakken, J. Ronald Engel and Joan G. Engel, *Ecology, Justice and Christian Faith: A Critical Guide to the Literature* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995), 23.

²⁰² Gessler Muxe Nkondo, “Ubuntu as public policy in South Africa: A conceptual framework, *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies – Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity* (Volume 2, Issue 1, 2007), 88-100.

Chapters Six and Seven of this study, with specific attention to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI).

When in consideration of economics systems that bear on ecological matters, Ubuntu is an invaluable resource for the promotion of non-discriminatory distribution of resources in that it empowers the conception and advancement of the esteem for all others.²⁰³ In doing so, Ubuntu is central to the sustenance of the environment in African communities and beyond, for as Murove argues, “Africa yet possesses in its own traditional culture the roots of an ethical paradigm to solve the current environmental crisis”.²⁰⁴ Through the embrace of Ubuntu, one recognizes a principle of coalitions among human beings within a greater community to which they have their place and to God’s creation in which all within such a community dearly depend. As Murove further expresses, Ubuntu is about “relatedness”, which in turn indicates that being human is dependent upon being related with and more others, not merely with those presently alive, but also “through past and future generations”.²⁰⁵ As a result, when Ubuntu is more fully embraced as a formational ethic, it offers a stance that views personal health, wellness, and wellbeing as totally related to our ongoing reliance upon all that is, especially that which is placed in our “immediate environment on which all humanity depends”.²⁰⁶ If Ubuntu were to be further developed as an environmental principle for the present day world of Neoliberal Capitalism and mechanistic dehumanization, it would motivate people from all corners of the world to rectify pollution and environmental destruction, for the sake of all that exists in the Household of God.

Within the ecological and economical discussions surrounding an Olive Agenda, Ubuntu can function as a guiding ethical vision in the protection and conservation of life. Furthermore, Ubuntu can act as a guide in the formulation of constructive human participation in ecological activities, and preservation “of other creatures, such as plants, animals, rivers, mountains” and so on.²⁰⁷ In doing so, not only does Ubuntu ensure freedom

²⁰³ Murove, “The Incarnation of Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic”, 230-233.

²⁰⁴ Murove, “An African environmental ethic”, 315-316.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Martin H. Prozesky, “Well-fed Animals and Starving Babies: Environmental and Developmental Challenges from Process and African Perspectives”, in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Editor), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 301.

of individual people, but also ensures that all life on earth is preserved. This process leads to the understanding and embrace of Ubuntu as seeking justice and thus “an essential condition for the exercise of freedom, not only because free action presupposes life and health, but because nature provides meaningful content for choice in the sense of freedom”.²⁰⁸

In ways similar to an Olive Agenda, one must note that Ubuntu also emphasizes inter-generational aspects of sustainable economics and ecology. More specifically, Ubuntu recognizes that the resources of the earth ought to be used in such a way that the generations to come will also be sustained by them. This multi-generational element of Ubuntu honors the sacred union between humankind and the Earth, as Ubuntu promotes the idea of beneficial and peaceful companionship based on fairness and communal assessments in regards to land and resource use. When communities are put under pressure due to economic might, Ubuntu can facilitate consciousness coupled with action to seek methods of overcoming such threats. In doing so, Ubuntu can offer norms and principles for such overcoming, so that – in ways similar to an Olive Agenda – may effectively limit that which limits life in its fullness.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the various ways that Ubuntu serves as an effective indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment. From notions of personhood and community, and also in direct conversation with Mission as Accompaniment, mechanistic dehumanization and the Olive Agenda, one recognizes the various ways that Ubuntu provides an effective framework by which those who participate in Mission as Accompaniment can see the interconnectedness of – and responsibility for – all of life. For the sake of responding to mechanistic dehumanization, such Ubuntu-inspired connections with all of creation are critical, for they prevent against the separation and alienation required for mechanistic dehumanization.

This chapter has also argued that Ubuntu is not a foreigner to Mission as Accompaniment, but more of a distant relative being rediscovered after periods of estrangement. As a result, the function of Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability is not as

²⁰⁸ Bakken et al., 20.

protective “side rails” keeping Mission as Accompaniment from falling off the road, but rather, Ubuntu is a methodological DNA test, to help Mission as Accompaniment remain accountable to – and mindful of – Ubuntu, a resource that is engrained in its very being. Therefore, Mission as Accompaniment is, and perhaps always has been, an extension of Ubuntu, and a more effective response to mechanistic dehumanization is a natural consequence of its rediscovery and intentional implementation.

CHAPTER 6: TOWARDS A RESPONSE TO MECHANISTIC DEHUMANIZATION

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapters of this study have discussed, among other things, how ecological destruction, inequality, and poverty are massive global issues that must be addressed with theological urgency and missiological energy. In addition, I have argued that Neoliberal Capitalism is a systematic source of environmental harm, economic discrimination, and impoverishment. Furthermore, this study proposes that mechanistic dehumanization is both a key source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism. Through the conviction that Mission as Accompaniment can develop a more effective response to mechanistic dehumanization, I have proposed the integration of an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory and Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability. This chapter will further address the primary research question of whether or not what has been proposed may indeed provide an effective resource for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Global Mission and its global companions in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

6.1.1 Review of Research Methodology

At this point in the research venture it is deemed important to return to its guiding methodology, a variation of *See-Judge-Act*, known more specifically as *Experience-Exploration-Reflection-Response-New Situation/Experience*. By reviewing the research methodology that directed and shaped the previous chapters of examination, one can better examine the primary insights that emerge through an engagement with the primary research question:

How can *Mission as Accompaniment* guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Global Mission to respond more effectively alongside its global church companions to mechanistic dehumanization?

In regards to the research methodology that informs this study, the *See-Judge-Act* methodology was first pioneered by the Belgian Priest Joseph Cardijn in the early twentieth

century.¹ While the methods of Cardijn are valuable in various ways, for use in this study I have utilized the methodological insights of Laurie Green, who considered *See-Judge-Act* in terms of *Experience-Exploration-Reflection-Response-New Situation/Experience*.² The *See-Judge-Act* methodology – in broad terms – recognizes my prejudices, partialities, and predispositions as a researcher, and thus, the impossibility of total objectivity, impartiality, or even neutrality. However, an awareness of my particular biases through *Experience-Exploration-Reflection-Response-New Situation/Experience* raises an appreciation for my unique life experiences, and thus an opportunity emerges to more effectively explore and reflect, and therefore provide a more balanced and valuable response that produces a new situation and life-giving experience.

The work of Laurie Green is especially helpful for this particular research venture, for among other things, Green constructs an accessible line of inquiry that offers insights into the living process of experience, reflection, and action. Green draws upon liberation theologians and grassroots educators, and recognizes that theology and experience are tested within a particular context.³ In other words, the starting point for theological examination is the situation where a person, a community, or a group encounters the world. As a result, it is in response to a particular life situation that a theologian brings suspicion and questions as to why a situation exists, why it fails to produce life as God intends, and how change may be created and sustained through practical action. All in all, the *Experience-Exploration-Reflection-Response* methodology from Laurie Green seeks a *new situation/experience*, which in turn requires ongoing probing and analysis. Therefore, the investigation of Mission as Accompaniment through *Experience-Exploration-Reflection-Response-New Situation/Experience* is not about seeking to apply a pre-determined result into various contexts, but rather, it is a methodological process that recognizes the existence of diverse

¹ Gerald West (Ed.), *Reading Other-Wise: Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading with their Communities* (Atlanta, Georgia: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 138; Alejandro F. Botta and Pablo R. Andiñach, *The Bible and Hermeneutics of Liberation* (Atlanta, Georgia: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 30; Manuel A. Vásquez, *The Brazilian Popular Church and the Crisis of Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 26, Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 9.

² Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology*, (New York: Continuum Publishing Group, 2009).

³ Leonardo Boff, the liberation theologian from Brazil, says of *Let's Do Theology*: "This is a book of authentic liberation theology set within the English-speaking context: it takes instances of human experience, analyses them, reflects theologically and proposes practical ideas for transformation. It invites you to do theology, without disparaging the great tradition. I enthusiastically recommend this significant book". *Let's Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology*, (New York: Continuum Publishing Group, 2009), Backcover.

results in various contextual realities, thus the journey within a particular context helps to reveal new understandings and responses to life circumstances.

On account of the above-mentioned thoughts from Green, I recognize that *Experience-Exploration-Reflection-Response-New Situation/Experience* is not only the methodological framework for this research, but it also serves as a significant factor in my overall motivation to propose the research venture in the first place. As someone raised within a relatively moderate theological context in North America and has since served in South America and Southern Africa within communities that often embrace postcolonial and liberation-based theologies, my *experience* has been various and diverse. As a result, my theological *exploration* has included input from an assortment of challenging sources. This particular study is among other things, an opportunity to *reflect* upon these ventures, *respond*, and thus create a *new situation/experience* that seeks life as God intends. While far too many in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America appear to be unaware of the link concerning mechanistic dehumanization and Neoliberal Capitalism, environmental harm, economic discrimination, and impoverishment, my personal experiences in the southern hemisphere have significantly altered my previous assumptions, and thus I have gained an increased level of motivation to reflect upon what I have learned over the past years and create a new situation and experience. And so, while Neoliberal Capitalism may provide material wealth for those within the ELCA, the system has proven to be sourced and sustained by mechanistic dehumanization, thus I have recognized a critical responsibility to explore *Mission as Accompaniment* in a way that considers the interconnectedness of life and dignity of all that God has created. Altogether, while the research topic is clearly of personal interest, my experience has shown that it is also of great need as churches across the globe – especially those within North America – need to consider what God is doing in and through the world, and how the Mission of God offers reconciliation, transformation, and empowerment.

The following sections of this chapter will consider the *Experience-Exploration-Reflection-Response-New Situation/Experience* methodology of Laurie Green, and in doing so probe the primary research question of this study.

6.2 Experience: The Empire of Neoliberal Capitalism

While being raised in rural central Wisconsin and educated within the Midwest region of the United States, I was experienced as a contributor to global Empire, but for an assortment of reasons, I did not realize what Empire was until my years of living and learning outside the borders of my home nation. As the context of my experience changed, so did the content of my theology. Among other things, I considered the unique and powerful position of the United States in the world today, and in doing so, learned more about the extreme financial wealth created by multinational corporations and their leaders, and their dehumanizing exploits in the global economy and processes of globalization. I learned of the dark underside of empire, especially when it manifests itself in both hard and soft warfare. I learned how I was a clear contributor, both intentionally and unintentionally. In total, through my experience I learned that, what there was some debate as to whether the United States indeed qualifies as a “Postcolonial Empire”,⁴ it seemed that our current status as one was resoundingly clear.⁵

The phrase “postcolonial empire” seems like an oxymoron, as imperial movements are typically associated with traditional forms of colonialism.⁶ As a result, when seeking to consider the nature of a postcolonial empire, one must begin with recognizing the critical difference between colonialism as a chronological experience and the continuing methods of empire construction. For example, because post colonialism as a term of history makes reference to the conclusion of colonial structures, the preceding definition of colonialism therefore reflects a specific system in which colonies are administered and openly ruled by colonialist nation states. As a result, to speak of the postcolonial is to articulate a period of history after the so-called colonial area, which included mostly westernized nations taking control over a number of colonies around the world. With such thoughts in mind, one can surely recognize that explicit colonial governance has now concluded in most circumstances, and thus the extinction of the powerful colonial empires.

⁴ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 272.

⁵ David Harvey, *The New Imperialism: Clarendon Lectures in Geography and Environmental Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6.

⁶ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 272.

The practice of constructing empires has not concluded, as there currently exist different methods of forming and applying imperial power. For example, while a detailed history of United States exceptionalism and imperialism is not intended here, one recognizes that practical examples of US empire-building abound, as one need not look any further than the repeated United States military invasions of Iraq and the growing economic desire to control oil reserves in the Middle East.⁷ One can argue (rather convincingly) that the best method for the United States to dominate its growing economic opposition and protect its power was to manage the “price, conditions, and distribution” of the present-day critical resource (oil) that their most fierce competitors rely upon (“And what better way to [protect US economic power] than to use the one line of force where the US remains all-powerful – military might”).⁸ In total, classic forms of imperialism have evolved, as hard-handed colonial governance has given way to financial and cultural pressures that function without consideration or supervision and also without much exposure. For example, in most circumstances the mainstream news media in the United States (which dominates much of the global media flow)⁹ does not focus on such imperial flows of dominance, except for the most grotesque circumstances.¹⁰ Moreover, in the cases when such instances are indeed reported, the popular masses rarely notice or react, let alone resist or revolt.¹¹ Furthermore, such imperial agendas are hidden so well and have worked so effectively in recent decades that many argue whether or not the United States, which remains the most dominant nation-state on the planet, can even be considered a postcolonial empire.¹²

As I learned more about such thoughts and realities surrounding postcolonial empire and the US placement as a global superpower, I began to recognize that living in the context of such imperial motivations (and being a means by which such imperial motivations were achieved) posed new challenges for my conceptions of a faithful missiological outlook.¹³ In doing so, I learned that although an assortment of views exist about how to best consider the

⁷ See: Matthew Fraser, *Weapons of Mass Deception: Soft Power and America Empire* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005); Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of Empire* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000); Sidney Lens, *The Forging of the American Empire: From the Revolution to Vietnam, A History of U.S. Imperialism* (London: Pluto Press, 2003).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Oliver Boyd-Barrett, *Communications Media, Globalization, and Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 272.

¹¹ Fraser, 14.

¹² Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 272.

¹³ Richard D. Wolff, “Religion and Class” in Joerg Rieger (Editor) *Religion, Theology, and Class: Fresh Engagements after Long Silence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 28.

complexion of Empire,¹⁴ I came to appreciate the following expression from Joerg Rieger as an underpinning for further theological and missiological examination:

Empire, in sum, has to do with mass concentrations of power that permeate all aspects of life and cannot be controlled by any one actor alone... Empire seeks to extend its control as far as possible; not only geographically, politically, and economically – these factors are commonly recognized – but also intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, culturally, and religiously... The problem with empire has to do with forms of top-down control that are established on the backs of the empire's subjects and that do not allow those within its reach to pursue alternative purposes.¹⁵

I came to recognize that experiential indicators of a modern-day Empire are observable in a variety of settings, yet they exist most vividly within the presence and persistence of Neoliberal Capitalism.¹⁶ This is now my *experience*, as both a contributor and benefactor, and now as an imperfect resister. While a more intentional description of Neoliberal Capitalism took place in Chapter Two of this study, and far more extensive studies on the topic are found elsewhere,¹⁷ one recognizes that Neoliberal Capitalism has become a tool of the postcolonial empire, as it strategically aims to resettle authority of the global economic scheme from public to private sector, through the pronouncement that the changeover would bring about an increasingly proficient public service and empower the economic wellbeing for all of Earth's inhabitants.¹⁸ While its promises are both profound and plenty, the reality of Neoliberal Capitalism has led to monopolies of dominance, enabling multinational and transnational corporations – driven by quarterly revenues and usually unaccountable to a body of democratic voters – to exploit their robust fiscal power to bully elected leaders and their

¹⁴ Anthony Pagden, *Peoples and Empires: A Short History of European Migration, exploration, and Conquest from Greece to the Present* (New York: Modern Library, 2001); Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Wes Avram (Editor), *Anxious About Empire: Theological Essays on the New Global Realities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2004); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 2-3.

¹⁶ Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, 355-408.

¹⁷ Larry Neal and Jeffrey G. Williamson (Editors), *The Cambridge History of Capitalism: Two Volume Set* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011); Michel Beaud, *A History of Capitalism, 1500-2000* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002).

¹⁸ Noam Chomsky, *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999), 7-8.

governments into so-called free trade plans for the continual surge of goods, capital, and manufacturing.¹⁹ Although these initiatives have led to an accumulation of massive affluence for a select few, the allocation of costs and benefits have proven to be grossly lopsided, and the present-day global community of seven billion is largely governed by a small group of billionaires.²⁰ Rieger's definition of Empire is therefore a justifiable fit for the collective consequences of Neoliberal Capitalism, as the small yet powerful group that aims to increase their power strives to guarantee that the human community is left with no viable alternatives.

As for the additional costs of Postcolonial Empire, a growing consensus of study reveals that Neoliberal Capitalism drives the Earth towards ecological damage.²¹ Massive levels of manufacturing, unlimited consumption, and the irresponsible search for unrestrained growth in GDP has shoved the Earth far beyond its ability to regenerate.²² Once again, this is my *experience*, as both a contributor and benefactor, and now as an imperfect resister. In addition to these alarming ecological realities, Neoliberal Capitalism also creates colossal and increasing levels of economic discrimination and impoverishment, to the point that the far majority of global citizens suffer the brutal costs while a small and powerful minority enjoys the joyous benefits.²³ Due to these consistent and escalating issues, this study argues that Neoliberal Capitalism ultimately produces and props-up a postcolonial empire.

6.3 Exploration: Mechanistic Dehumanization

The *experience* of a Postcolonial Empire led this study into an *exploration* of mechanistic dehumanization. More specifically, mechanistic dehumanization was explored as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism, yet to extend such exploration even further

¹⁹ Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 1-20.

²⁰ Deborah Hardoon, "Wealth: Having it all and Wanting More" *Oxfam Issue Briefing* (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 2015).

²¹ Adrian Parr, *The Wrath of Capital: Neoliberalism and Climate Change Politics* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2013), 8.

²² James Hansen, *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009); Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, (Editors) Martin L. Parry, Osvaldo F. Canziani, Jean P. Palutikof, Paul J. van der Linden, and Claire E. Hanson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); James Lovelock, *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning* (New York: Basic Books, 2009); and Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 1989).

²³ Richard Heinberg, *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality* (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2011), 37

for the purpose of this study, one recognizes that Neoliberal Capitalism views humankind merely as a “means to an end” in the pursuit of gains in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a frequently utilized measurement that is used to gauge standards of living. For the sake of exploring mechanistic dehumanization and the potential response from ELCA Global Mission, the contrast of GDP to Mission as Accompaniment – with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu – will be considered below.

6.3.1 Gross Domestic Product

Gross Domestic Product is a widely utilized tool to measure the economic vitality of a nation and measure its standard of living.²⁴ As the manner by which GDP is calculated is mostly agreed upon across the world, GDP is thus commonly employed as a method by which the consumption and production of different nations can be compared and contrasted with greater precision.²⁵ As annual rates of inflation are taken into account within the measurement of GDP, such common characteristics allows for a smooth assessment of present GDP amounts with those of preceding time periods.²⁶ As a result, the GDP of a given country can be assessed as a ratio that is relative to previous years or quarters, which in turn means that GDP can be followed over extended periods of time and utilized to gauge a nation’s progression or regression, as well as in defining whether or not an economy is in recession or depression.

As expressed by Lorenzo Fioramoni, GDP basically computes “the value of goods and services produced in a given time period, generally every three months”.²⁷ In doing so, GDP evaluates production by way of market prices and can be illustrated with the subsequent formulation:

$$GDP = consumption + investment + government spending + exports - imports^{28}$$

²⁴ Lorenzo Fioramoni, *Gross Domestic Problem: The Politics Behind the World’s Most Powerful Number* (London: Zed Books, 2013), 4.

²⁵ Diane Coyle, *GDP: A Brief But Affectionate History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 61.

²⁶ Fioramoni, 4.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Fioramoni, 6.

According to the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (CMEPSP),²⁹ the apparatus of Gross Domestic Product first came into being through a 1937 testimony to the United States Congress in reaction to the Great Depression after Russian economist Simon Kuznets imagined a new method of economic evaluation.³⁰ During the time before Kuznets developed his methods, the preeminent system of measurement was the Gross National Product (GNP). While GNP was widely regarded, GNP was eventually set aside, as GNP sought to evaluate the productivity of a nation's inhabitants irrespective of their locations, whereas GDP evaluates production with specific geographical location in mind.³¹ After the Bretton Woods conference in 1944 (which was highlighted as an forerunner to Neoliberal Capitalism in Chapter Two of this study), it is by no means surprising that GDP was widely accepted over and above GNP as the means by which national economic health was measured.³²

As was further reported by the CMEPSP, not long after the implementation of GDP in the 1930s did some start to critique the blind trust of economists and legislators.³³ For example, during the 1950s a growing number of theorists detected an irresponsible predisposition of consent to GDP as an all-encompassing measurement of national failure or progress, as GDP did not account for matters such as wellbeing, meaning, pleasure, and other factors that constitute a holistic sense of being human. More specifically, those in opposition to GDP as the sole indicator of progress noted the critical difference between economic growth and social growth. However, those in power (such as Arthur Okun, who helped lead President John F. Kennedy's Council of Economic Advisers) were resolute in the affirmation that GDP was the supreme gauge of economic accomplishment, for he argued that each increase in GDP would lead to a parallel decrease in unemployment.

Despite the continued acceptance of GDP as a marker for social health, this study argues that measuring the wellbeing of a society solely through Gross Domestic Product is

²⁹ The Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (CMEPSP) was a commission of inquiry created by the government of France in 2008, which was led by Joseph E. Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi. Among other things, the commission considered how the wellbeing of a country could be calculated without depending upon GDP. The final report was published in September of 2009.

³⁰ Joseph E Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, *Mismeasuring our Lives: Why GDP Doesn't Add Up* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 23.

³¹ Zachary Karabell, *The Leading Indicators: A Short History of the Numbers That Rule Our World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 73.

³² Stiglitz et al., 23.

³³ Ibid.

directly related to mechanistic dehumanization. As a result, because the global community cannot properly change unless it transforms the commonly accepted ways that it measures its economic and social performance, such matters are deeply important, especially since such change has not taken place.³⁴ The global community continues to hold onto GDP, and for years the GDP measurement communicated strong economic growth as a victory over scarcity, until it was later revealed that such GDP growth was destroying more than it was building. As was so powerfully articulated by former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, “we have built a cult of the [GDP] data, and we are now enclosed within. The enormous consequences of what we have done are beginning to dawn on us”.³⁵ In other words, perhaps the global community is beginning to experience the tangible impact of mechanistic dehumanization through the measurement of GDP.

One may characterize Neoliberal Capitalism as a source and sustainer for the experience of postcolonial empire, mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism, and therefore GDP becomes a means by which the entire system remains firmly in place. As a result, this overall *exploration* into mechanistic dehumanization recognizes that humans are unlikely to change their practice of dehumanization unless society changes the dehumanizing ways in which we measure social progress. Insofar as GDP seems to define human value by the “the value of goods and services produced in a given time period”,³⁶ it contributes significantly to dehumanization. The ELCA Global Mission might usefully explore the ways in which GDP serves as a tool of mechanistic dehumanization, and in doing so, advocate for alternative ways to help devise more life-giving means by which society can be evaluated. This proposal of an alternate to GDP will be explored later in this study.

6.4 Reflection: Mission as Accompaniment

In light of the *experience* of Postcolonial Empire and *exploration* of mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism, this study recognizes Mission as Accompaniment as a valuable theoretical framework for *reflection*. As an

³⁴ Karabell, 185.

³⁵ Nicolas Sarkozy, “Forward”, in Joseph E Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, *Mismeasuring our Lives: Why GDP Doesn’t Add Up* (New York: The New Press, 2010), xv.

³⁶ Fioramoni, 4.

appraisal of former and current missionary theologies and methodologies, Mission as Accompaniment considers and develops formerly practiced conceptions of global mission, and in doing so, guides mission into a “relational mode” among global companions.³⁷ Mission as Accompaniment embraces numerous strains of Liberation Theology from Latin America,³⁸ and also fits within the classification of Postcolonial Mission due to its re-navigation and re-negotiation of authority between church companions around the world.³⁹ In doing so, due to the experience of Postcolonial Empire through Neoliberal Capitalism and subsequent exploration of mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer, Mission as Accompaniment provided a significant framework for reflection, and as a result, was shown to possess the capacity to address mechanistic dehumanization.

The notion of “accompaniment” provides a firm grounding to respond to mechanistic dehumanization, for among other things, it stems from the Latin “*ad cum panis*” which renders into English as “to go with bread”. In light of such linguistic and classical connotations, those who participate in Mission as Accompaniment journey “with bread”, or from a theological and missiological perspective, aim to both distribute and accept the provisions for the fullness of life in connection with God, the human community, and all that God has created. This accompaniment-grounded notion of shared sustenance stands in direct contrast to mechanistic dehumanization. Therefore, one can affirm that within and through the sharing and receiving of sustenance by way of Mission as Accompaniment, the alienation fueled by mechanistic dehumanization can be torn down and the solidarity of humanity can be attained, for the sake of the world.

Mission as Accompaniment is a suitable a conception for responding to mechanistic dehumanization because the disproportionate distribution of power intensifies the chances of mechanistic dehumanization,⁴⁰ and Mission as Accompaniment has been endorsed as a constructive counteractive to such discrepancies in power.⁴¹ Mission as Accompaniment consists of communal exchange and the manifestation of solidarity through restored

³⁷ Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993); Jerry Aaker, *Partners with the Poor: An Emerging Approach to Relief and Development*, (New York: Friendship Press, 1993).

³⁸ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 30.

³⁹ Desmond van der Water (Editor), *Postcolonial Mission: Power and Partnership in World Christianity*, (California: Sopher Press, 2011).

⁴⁰ Lammers and Stapel, 113-126.

⁴¹ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 147.

relationships. In doing so, Mission as Accompaniment leads toward a considerable decline in power inequality, thus a reasonable outcome in a decrease in mechanistic dehumanization. Even though this study acknowledges the hazards of sweeping statements and assertions within such a missiological succession, the possible results of Mission as Accompaniment are substantial and worthy of extended exploration. If the chances of mechanistic dehumanization decrease due to reductions in power inequality, then resistance to postcolonial empire and Neoliberal Capitalism may grow, and thus a decrease of environmental harm, economic discrimination, and impoverishment. In total, Mission as Accompaniment is considered as an appropriate and stimulating framework for reflection in response to mechanistic dehumanization.

6.5 Response: Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu

While Mission as Accompaniment has a significant capacity to address mechanistic dehumanization, *in its current form* the conception needs added resources for a more accountable and focused response. Since Mission as Accompaniment is rightly critiqued for its privation of attention to particular social and political matters, an impending outcome was estimated to be journeying together in mission for the mere purpose of being together, which in turn may produce mission partnership without purpose, and the subsequent subjugation of those traditionally on the receiving end of domination. Therefore, because Mission as Accompaniment is intended to address power imbalance, it was asserted that it requires more focus and accountability – through the use of an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu – that can be applied directly for a more effective response from ELCA Global Mission to mechanistic dehumanization.

6.5.1. Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda

One of the tangible approaches for an Olive Agenda to guide Mission as Accompaniment through a response from ELCA Global Mission to mechanistic dehumanization is to help provide an alternative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Since the utilization of GDP as a sole indicator of both economic and social progress can be viewed as a form of mechanistic dehumanization, the promotion of an Olive Agenda that mixes the green agenda of environmentalism with the brown agenda of poverty alleviation can be

received as a strong lens to critique GDP and consider possible alternatives. As stated by the CMEPSP, one of the reasons that the economic crisis at the start of the 21st century took place is because the measurement systems that were widely accepted and utilized were both narrow and inadequate.⁴² In other words, the brown agenda of poverty alleviation is not properly addressed through GDP. In addition, the CMEPSP also noted that even prior to the global economic crisis, numerous citizens expressed their urgent warnings about the destruction of the environment, and in doing so, argued that governments provided a misleading account of social progress, in that such leaders took credit for the “goods” being produced, but not the “bads”.⁴³ In doing so, one can affirm that the green agenda of environmental accountability is not properly considered by GDP, as it fails to include an acceptable measurement of environmental sustainability. As a result, the Olive Agenda of Steve de Gruchy shows that one must move far beyond GDP, for if nations take a broader view than GDP and consider the brown and green agendas as one, then some critical information will be compiled and alternative measurements required.

An Olive Agenda can dramatically alter the ways by which communities determine their overall wellbeing, and therefore, how Mission as Accompaniment might properly function alongside global companions. For example, it is repeatedly affirmed that elected representatives are instructed to help guide the collective direction of the electorate in which they represent, and such is conducted through policymaking, tax collection, or a wide variety of institutional payments.⁴⁴ However, the Olive Agenda reframes what exactly is intended through such leadership guidance, as numerous elected leaders in the US and beyond are simply told to increase GDP.⁴⁵ However, in addition to raising GDP, such representatives are also required to attend to various aspects to promote the fullness of life, which includes poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability. Such a green agenda and brown agenda often seem to conflict in such policy initiatives, as attending to social and ecological objectives too often appears in conflict with the pursuit of economic objectives merely measured by GDP. In striking contrast, the Olive Agenda reveals that economics is not an end unto itself (nor are human beings to be a means to an end), but economics – as *oikos*-

⁴² Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya K. Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, “The measurement of economic performance and social progress revisited: Reflections and Overview” (2009) <hal-01069384>, 4.

⁴³ Stiglitz et al., “The measurement of economic performance”, 6.

⁴⁴ Stiglitz et al., “The measurement of economic performance”, 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

nomos – is meant to coincide with ecology (*oikos-logos*) for a quality of life in the entire household of God (*oikos*). And so, if GDP as a measurement suggests that advocating for greater quality of life might have an adversarial impact on the economy, then the primary issue may be the measurements.

The Olive Agenda informs Mission as Accompaniment in that, if global companions of ELCA Global Mission are encouraged to increase their national GDP as a form of so-called development or social progress, then all will be engaging in actions that may currently, or will surely in generations to come, be disastrous for the overall fullness of life. As indicated by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya K. Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, this “is especially the case if our metrics do not take account of sustainability, if current consumption puts in jeopardy, for instance, future living standards”.⁴⁶ When the brown agenda of poverty alleviation and green agenda of environmental sustainability are not merged into an Olive Agenda, the exhaustion of ecological resources will continue, and the obliteration of the natural environment for the sake of unlimited economic growth will continue. As a result, those particular wealthy nations that currently measure and cherish GDP are “robbing” the future, as they deplete the resources they inherited from past generations without endowing the earnings for the sake of the generations to come.⁴⁷

The *oikoumene* is currently at risk because the *oikos-logos* and *oikos-nomos* seem to be at odds, and the result is a steady release of toxic fumes that leads to global warming and its calamitous consequences, especially for those in the developing world. In addition, the gap between the wealthy and impoverished continues to expand with each passing year, with little sign of improvement on the horizon. In total, one recognizes that the global community has not accompanied one another – or the Earth – in a just or sustainable manner. It is unmistakably impossible for the world to endure its current abuse if existing designs of mass-production and over-consumption continue. However, those who control the postcolonial empire claim that such ecological priorities would have economic costs. Here, the Olive Agenda is critically important, for it exposes the metrics of GDP as faulty, and in doing so provides a trajectory for Mission as Accompaniment to guide the ELCA Global Mission to

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Stiglitz et al., “The measurement of economic performance”, 9.

respond to mechanistic dehumanization, by showing that people are far more than what they produce and consume, and thus a new way of perusing the fullness of life is needed.

6.5.2 Mission as Accompaniment with Ubuntu

Mission as Accompaniment not only required an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory, but also an additional indicator of accountability. More specifically, *Mission as Accompaniment* not only needed to know where to go (missiological trajectory), but it needed to be mindful of what it is (indicator of accountability). While particular opponents assert that Ubuntu has been overused and abused in the African context and beyond, the notion of Ubuntu continues to be unfamiliar and underutilized around the world – particularly within the ELCA Global Mission. As a result, the ongoing appropriation of Ubuntu is deemed to be worthwhile. On the whole, Ubuntu is postulated as a “a distant relative” of *Mission as Accompaniment*, as Ubuntu was always present within *Mission as Accompaniment*, yet needed a reintroduction for a more effective response for ELCA Global Mission to mechanistic dehumanization.

6.5.2.1 Genuine Progress Indicator

In order to consider the potential and appropriation of Ubuntu as an effective indicator of accountability for *Mission as Accompaniment*, one is compelled to move from the theoretical into the more tangible. Along these lines, one can argue that Ubuntu helps to highlight alternative and more holistic forms of social assessment than the widely utilized GDP. The Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), which highlights the connectivity and interdependence inherent in the conception of Ubuntu, is an important and alternative analytical resource for the overall aims of this study. As a result, this section will explore GPI as being informed by Ubuntu and guided by the Olive Agenda, to serve as an analytical resource for *Mission as Accompaniment* as the ELCA Global Mission seeks to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) tool of development has failed as an appropriate measure of human welfare. For several decades an assortment of respected economists have recognized that GDP has deep-seated inadequacies, for in the words of William Nordhaus

and James Tobin, “GDP is not a measure of welfare”.⁴⁸ The GDP is merely a gross calculation of all that is produced within a given country, regardless of whether or not such goods and services are helpful for the overall development of society. Along such lines, in his now groundbreaking 1934 proclamation to the United States Congress, the chief designer of GDP, Simon Kuznets, openly (and in retrospect, shockingly) remarked that the total wellbeing “of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measurement of national income”.⁴⁹ In spite of such forewarnings from the primary engineer of GDP, the economic rubric remains firmly in place as the predominant indicator by which national progress is both sought and measured.

As an indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, Ubuntu stands in direct contrast to the use of GDP as an indicator of societal health. While Ubuntu expresses “a person is a person through other persons”, it also strongly affirms that such a person must live in harmony with all of God’s creation.⁵⁰ The implication for Mission as Accompaniment is therefore to acknowledge one’s own humanity by affirming the humanity of others, and on such grounds, create compassionate relationships alongside them,⁵¹ which includes a harmonious interdependence with animals, vegetation, and all that exists.⁵² Therefore, from the perspective of Ubuntu and Mission as Accompaniment, GDP must be replaced with an indicator of genuine wellbeing, since GDP continues to form the basis for important public policy decisions, and in turn impacts initiatives of North American church bodies.⁵³ The Genuine Progress Indicator, in the spirit of Ubuntu, may be a positive move forward.

In regards to how the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) is currently calculated, it begins with the identical “personal consumption data” that the GDP is based upon, but the GPI then expresses several crucial differences and additions.⁵⁴ The GPI calculates for elements such as income allocation, but it also evaluates aspects such as the importance of

⁴⁸ William Nordhaus and James Tobin, “Is Growth Obsolete?” in Milton Moss, ed., *The Measurement of Economic and Social Performance, Studies in Income and Wealth*, Vol. 38 (National Bureau of Economic Research, 1973), 513.

⁴⁹ Simon Kuznets, *National Income, 1929-1932*. Senate document no. 124, 73d Congress, 2d session (1934).

⁵⁰ Bujo, 281.

⁵¹ Mogobe B. Ramose, “Ecology through Ubuntu”, in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Editor), *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 308.

⁵² Bujo, 281.

⁵³ John Talberth, Clifford Cobb, and Noah Slaterry, “The Genuine Progress Indicator 2006: A Tool for Sustainable Development” (Oakland, CA: Redefining Progress, 2006), 2.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

home-based work and volunteer community service, and subsequently deducts measurements such as the expenditures associated with criminality and environmental contamination. In total, due to the reality that GDP and GPI are both calculated in fiscal expressions, they are ripe for being compared and contrasted.

Because the GDP calculates “the value of goods and services produced in a given time period”, it appraises production by way of market prices and can be illustrated with the following calculation:⁵⁵

$$GDP = consumption + investment + government\ spending + exports - imports$$

In striking contrast to the relative simplicity and ideological confinement of the GDP, the GPI takes into account far more factors, which will be listed at length and briefly introduced here:⁵⁶

- *Personal Consumption.* Similar to the ways in which GDP is calculated, personal consumption expenditure statistics are received from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis.⁵⁷
- *Income Distribution Index:* The GPI accounts for inequality of income by way of subtracting personal consumption expenditures of personal consumption (point listed above) by the sum total of inequality that exists in a particular twelve-month cycle, and does so using the Gini⁵⁸ and income distribution indices (IDI).⁵⁹
- *Weighted Personal Consumption:* This particular dimension is determined when expenditures associated with personal consumption are divided by the income distribution index, and then multiplied by 100.

⁵⁵ Fioramoni, 6.

⁵⁶ The following factors of GPI are taken from: John Talberth, Clifford Cobb, and Noah Slattery, “The Genuine Progress Indicator 2006: A Tool for Sustainable Development” (Oakland, CA: Redefining Progress, 2006), 8-20.

⁵⁷ The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) from the U.S. Department of Commerce (www.bea.gov) provides critical economic data – including GDP – of the US. The stated mission is to “promote a better understanding of the U.S. economy by providing the most timely, relevant, and accurate economic data in an objective and cost-effective manner”.

⁵⁸ The Gini Index was first developed by Corrado Gini, an Italian statistician and sociologist, which was published in his 1912 paper, “Variability and Mutuability”.

⁵⁹ The IDI measures the comparative alterations in the Gini index.

- *Value of Household Work and Parenting:* As the myriad of duties accomplished in households is just as indispensable (if not more) than work that is completed in office buildings, manufacturing plants and retail stores (but is left unaccounted for by GDP), the GPI concluded that such contributions are valuable and thus essential to consider and measure.
- *Value of Higher Education:* Since the achievement of higher education provides a wide range of contributions for communities, such is deemed to be a critical calculation for the GPI.
- *Value of Volunteer Work:* One of the common-sense realities of modern life is that some of the most critical work in communities does not include the payment of wages, yet such contributions are left unaccounted for by GDP, thus the GPI aims to rectify such an error by approximating the amount of volunteer hours in a twelve-month cycle, and in doing so, provide a monetary assessment upon such critical service to the larger society.
- *Services of Consumer Durables:* The household funds that are expended on durable items, such as vehicles and kitchen equipment, is not an accurate assessment of the real value that purchasers fully obtain. More specifically, in addition to the initial payment, it is also important to consider the lifespan and durability of the item, which the GPI seeks to do.
- *Services of Highways and Streets:* The yearly assessment of services based upon the usage of thoroughfares and motorways is taken from the Bureau of Economic Analysis data on the net stock of federal, state, and local government agencies.
- *Cost of Crime:* The GPI depends upon the Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Survey's annual evaluations of the cost of crime to victims, in specific relationship to their real disbursements, or the estimated value of lost goods or property.⁶⁰ The GPI recognizes that total financial consequences of crime are undervalued due to the nonexistence of approximations surrounding more intangible costs, such as psychological trauma and lost employment opportunities, both for offenders and the offended.

⁶⁰ The Bureau of Justice Statistics is from the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Department of Justice, with a stated mission "To collect, analyze, publish, and disseminate information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. These data are critical to federal, state, and local policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both effective and evenhanded". (www.bjs.gov).

- *Loss of Leisure Time:* The GDP fosters the unfortunate deception that the US is growing wealthier, yet the reality is that people must work longer and harder in order to manufacture, purchase, and repay interest on growing household debt. The GPI recognizes that a more precise indication of the actual development of a society should take into account the loss of leisure and quality time with loved ones that is inherent with the increased levels of labor output.
- *Cost of Underemployment:* While underemployment is often far more difficult to calculate and estimate than the more concrete realities of unemployment, the GPI seeks to take such important matters into account based upon data from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI)⁶¹ and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).⁶²
- *Cost of Consumer Durables:* Acquired from the National Income and Products Account,⁶³ this measurement expresses the tangible payments on consumer durables that are a negative adjustment in the GPI, which is calculated in order to prevent double counting the value of their services (above).
- *Cost of Commuting:* While commuting to and from work is often viewed as an “unsatisfying and sometimes frustrating experience” within the US and other nations,⁶⁴ the GDP calculates such commutes as an overall gain to society, due in part to the financial exchanges requires for such travel. The GPI, on the other hand, adjusts this inadequacy of GDP by calculating the costs of commuting as a negative to society; as such time and energy invested in commuting could be reinvested with loved ones, at leisure, or even at work.
- *Cost of Household Pollution Abatement:* One of the numerous expenditures that environmental pollution enforces upon households is the rising cost for apparatus such as oxygen and water filtration systems. These “defensive expenditures”⁶⁵ do not

⁶¹ The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank created in 1986 in order to incorporate the needs of low and middle income workers in economic policy decisions. The stated mission of the EPI is to “inform and empower individuals to seek solutions that ensure broadly shared prosperity and opportunity” (www.epi.org).

⁶² The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is within the U.S. Department of Labor, with it stated mission to “collect, analyze, and disseminate essential economic information to support public and private decision-making. As an independent statistical agency, BLS serves its diverse user communities by providing products and services that are objective, timely, accurate, and relevant”. (www.bls.gov).

⁶³ The National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) are part of the national accounts of the United States, and are produced by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce. (www.bea.gov/national).

⁶⁴ Talberth et al., 12.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

enrich the overall health of US households, as they simply counterweigh the risks of environmental pollution that are imposed due to economic activity.

- *Cost of Automobile Accidents:* The physical and mental impairment, in addition to the financial losses, that all take place due to automobile accidents epitomizes a significant consequence of economic growth and an increase in traffic. In contrast to GDP, the GPI utilizes casualty and grievance data from the National Safety Council.⁶⁶
- *Cost of Water Pollution:* While GDP does not calculate matters of water quality, the GPI recognizes the significant costs associated with water contamination that results from reductions in healthy water properties.
- *Cost of Air Pollution:* The yearly financial consequences of putting toxins into the atmosphere remain a standard sample of ecological expenditures that lie external to the current limitations of the GDP. The GPI, on the other hand, takes such important ecological factors into account when examining the overall health of a society.
- *Cost of Noise Pollution:* While the US and other nations currently possess a wide range of noise pollution policies, there are no authorized records of its range or gravity. The GDP does not take such matters into account. The GPI, to the contrary, seeks to correct such an important matter and consider the impact of the auditory environment.
- *Loss of Wetlands:* When a wetland is consumed or filled (through so-called “development”) the GDP rises due to the increased production of the area, yet such a reduction of services from the damaged wetland remain unaccounted for. The GPI remedies this miscalculation of GDP by approximating the value of the services that are lost when wetlands are adapted for the sake of economic gain.
- *Loss of Farmlands:* The reduction of natural and/or human-constructed farmland produces expenses to both current and subsequent age groups through vanished services. By extinguishing and reducing such areas of farmland, society in turn squanders a fundamental ecosystem. In addition, the destruction of farmland leads to an increase of flooding, worsening quality of water, and overall deprivation and elimination of wildlife territory.
- *Loss of Primary Forests and Damage from Logging Roads:* Whenever indigenous or primary forest area is harvested for lumber, transformed into corporate tree estates, or

⁶⁶ “The National Safety Council saves lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy” (www.ncs.org).

dissipated to construct a highway, the forests lose a wide variety of capabilities for future generations. The GPI accounts measure this loss.

- *Depletion of Nonrenewable Energy Resources:* The exhaustion of irreplaceable energy resources is a massive expense that is transferred to communities of the future, which in turn means that such actions should be accounted for in the present. The GPI takes such present and future expenses into account by analyzing the costs of how such energy sources can be replaced.
- *Carbon Dioxide Emissions Damage:* While few scientists disagree with the facts of climate change, the economic and ecological impact is not measured by GDP. The GPI seeks to deal with such an oversight of GDP by calculating the costs associated with the careless distribution of carbon emissions.
- *Cost of Ozone Depletion:* In light of the potentially apocalyptic impact on all systems of life, the GPI incorporates a cost indicator that takes into account the economic expenditures linked with the exhaustion of the ozone layer. To do so, it uses data from the Alternative Fluorocarbons Environmental Acceptability Study, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the United Nations Environmental Program.
- *Net Capital Investment:* The GPI calculates a variety of alterations in the stock of capital (or net capital growth) by adding the quantity of fresh capital stock (increases in net stock of private nonresidential fixed reproducible capital) and subtracting the capital requirement, which is the quantity needed to preserve the identical amount of capital per worker.
- *Net Foreign Borrowing:* The economic sustainability of a particular nation is impacted when it depends upon foreign funding to finance its current levels of expenditures.⁶⁷ The GPI takes such factors into account.

In review, the above characteristics that form the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) were first created as a comprehensive means to gauge variations in economic wellbeing “with a single, aggregate index”.⁶⁸ Since GDP evolves around the primacy of independence and personal profit,⁶⁹ it is inevitably in conflict with the principles of Ubuntu, yet the GPI allows for a far

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Talberth et al., 28.

⁶⁹ Munyaradzi Felix Murove, “The Incarnation of Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism in Post-Colonial African Economic Discourse”, in Munyaradzi Felix Murove (Editor), *African Ethics: An*

closer alignment with both Ubuntu and an Olive Agenda. In specifics, the GPI begins with the household as the “basic building block of a nation’s welfare”, and thus initiates its interpretive venture with the measurement of personal consumption expenditures.⁷⁰

Furthermore, the GPI considers the various benefits to society associated with actions such as childrearing, housekeeping, philanthropic work and dedication to higher education, as well as the benefits that result due to “household capital and public infrastructure”.⁷¹ Because Ubuntu and an Olive Agenda prioritize subsistence rather than over-accumulation, it recognizes the harm in economic systems that do not benefit all.⁷² Along these lines, the GPI accounts for the various expenditures connected with environmental destruction, increases in work hours (reductions of leisure periods), vehicle calamities, devastation or demolition of natural resources, foreign indebtedness and overall depletion of assets. In sum, while by no means a perfect calculation, nor by any means fully aligned with Ubuntu or an Olive Agenda, the GPI is a guide that endeavors to calculate the communal wellbeing of a society, which makes the GPI more closely aligned with the priorities of Ubuntu and an Olive Agenda when compared with the use of GDP.

An analysis of the GPI data (shown visually in the graph below) shows that while the United States economy grew gradually since the midpoint of the 20th century (according to GDP), the national wellbeing (according to GPI) seems to have hit its highest point in the late 1970s and has deteriorated ever since. The so-called advantages of economic growth have been eliminated by the various expenditures connected with income injustice, loss of time and energy dedicated on “non-market activities”, and the rise of environmental degradation.⁷³ As was highlighted repeatedly in Chapter Two of this study, the 1970’s witnessed the rise of Neoliberal Capitalism and impact of mechanistic dehumanization, which in turn reveals the overall importance of the need for Mission as Accompaniment to assist the ELCA Global Mission in a response.

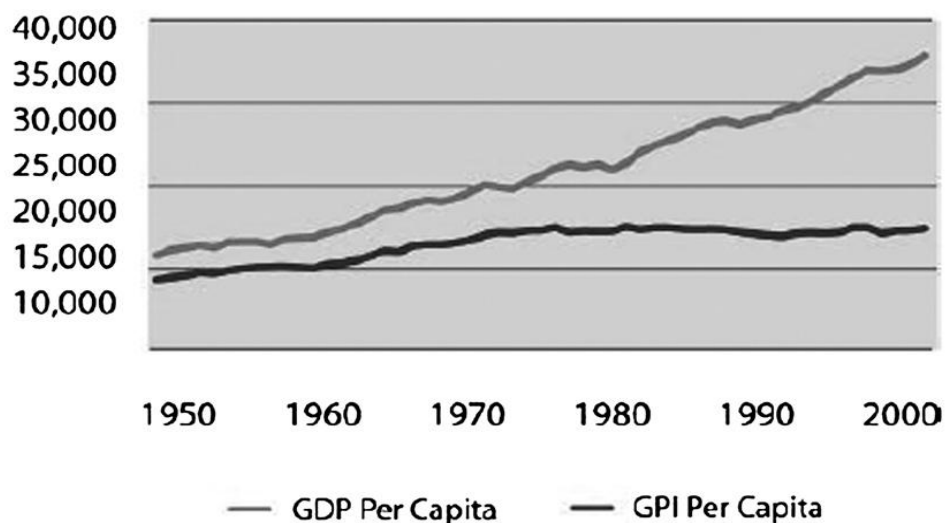
Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009), 230-233.

⁷⁰ Talberth et al., 28.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Murove, “The Incarnation of Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism in Post-Colonial African Economic Discourse”, 233.

⁷³ Talberth et al., 28.



This study argues that the values of Ubuntu, such as group consideration, respect, human dignity, and harmony should be manifested through economic and ecological life. The measurement of GDP fails to analyse such priorities, yet the GPI more closely recognizes the holistic nature of the created world. Along these lines, the GPI can be viewed as a tangible expression of Ubuntu due in part to the relationship of Ubuntu to *Ukama*, an ethic of “holism” from the Shona language that further connected Ubuntu with an Olive Agenda through its incorporation into Mission as Accompaniment.⁷⁴ In order to provide greater depth to the relationship between Ubuntu and the GPI, a brief introduction to *Ukama* must be provided at this point in this study.

Ukama is a term deriving from the Shona language that affirms relatedness and a worldview of interdependence.⁷⁵ From a grammatical perspective, *Ukama* is classified as an adjective that assembles as *U + kama*. “*Kama*”, which is a Shona verb signifying the milking of a goat or cow, affirms the conception of proximity and warmth, which in turn shows how *Ukama* means to be relational or existing as close members of a family bond. Along these lines, one must note that in Shona, as is also the case in numerous other African languages, the connotations associated with *Ukama* are by no means limited to marriage or bloodlines,

⁷⁴ Murove, “The Shona concept of *Ukama* and the process philosophical concept of relatedness, with special reference to the ethical implication of the contemporary neo-liberal economic practices” (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Natal: Pietermaritzburg, 1999), 1.

⁷⁵ Murove, “An African environmental ethic”, 316.

as all are *hama* (related).⁷⁶ Therefore, according to Felix Murove, Ukama can be understood as:

...holistic in the sense that my wellbeing as an individual has its ontological meaning in relationship to my fellow human-beings, those that are still alive, ancestors, God and the environment.⁷⁷

Murove contends that Ubuntu and Ukama are closely related, but Ukama is distinctive for being more all-encompassing in nature, as Ubuntu is a particular form of Ukama.⁷⁸ In contrast to the humanistic expressions of Ubuntu, the notion of Ukama extends to the totality of relational bonds, not merely in the current moment, but also with past and future generations and all that exists in the created order.⁷⁹ This commitment to unity in Ukama appreciates that “human interrelationship within society is a microcosm of the rationality within the universe”.⁸⁰ Michael Gelfand argues that such a loyalty to harmony through Ukama is grounded in respect for the ancestors, which in turn leads to the endurance of values and ethical priorities.⁸¹ This foundation of multigenerational accord is critical when relating Ukama to Ubuntu, Ubuntu to an Olive Agenda, and an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu to GPI through Mission as Accompaniment, because Ukama – which Ubuntu expresses – embodies the solidarity of future, present and past generations.

The commitment of multigenerational unity through Ubuntu and Ukama leads to the relatedness of humanity to the natural world.⁸² For such reasons Ukama can be perceived as an ethical anchor for economic and ecological togetherness. As LenkaBula states:

...no person is complete in him/herself; s/he is fully human in as far as s/he remains a part of the web of life, including creation and the earth.⁸³

⁷⁶ Michael Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to their Religion* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1976), 34.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Murove, “An African environmental ethic”, 316.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Michael Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona: Survival Values of an African Culture* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1973).

⁸² Henri Philippe Junod, *Bantu Heritage* (Johannesburg: Hortors Limited, 1939), 112.

⁸³ LenkaBula, “Beyond anthropocentrism”, 378.

Ukama affirms that the fullness of human life is dependent upon economic and ecological life, which in turn offers a practical basis for such holistic commitments to be systematized and evaluated. The GPI provides a tool by which Ukama and Ubuntu can be more authentically expressed through an Olive Agenda and Mission as Accompaniment. The ways in which Ubuntu and Ukama honor the ancestors involves a sense in which future, current, and past generations are all a part of the economic and ecological community. In addition, the essential relatedness of all that exists embraces that all is ultimately related. These holistic priorities are strongly related to GPI because, among other things, ecological damage by way of economic irresponsibility can damage society for numerous generations. In addition, because Ukama embraces the connectivity of all, then all has value, and the GPI seeks to more comprehensively honor such value when in comparison to the GDP. Furthermore, to understand Ubuntu as an expression of Ukama removes the anthropocentric temptation of Ubuntu, and thus caring for humankind is by no means at odds with a commitment to care for all. The GPI clearly expresses such commitments in a way that GDP does not.

While Ubuntu has its detractors, for this research venture Ubuntu holds great value as an effective indicator of accountability for Mission as Accompaniment, especially when seeking to form alternatives to GDP as a response to mechanistic dehumanization. From notions of being human in the context of community, and also in conversation with the particularities of Mission as Accompaniment, mechanistic dehumanization and the Olive Agenda, Ubuntu provides a strong framework by which those who participate in Mission as Accompaniment can view the interdependence of – and thus accountability to – all of life. In other words, Ubuntu reminds Mission as Accompaniment of what it is, and in doing so, considers what society can further become. Therefore, for the sake of responding to mechanistic dehumanization, such Ubuntu-inspired connection with all of creation – and the indicator of accountability for all of creation – is deemed to be critical, for it all prevents against the separations required for mechanistic dehumanization.

6.6 New Experience/Situation: From Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment

In order to more fully consider the important “new experience/situation” aspect of Laurie Green’s research methodology, we return to the onset of this study, when *anesthetic*

was first introduced as a metaphor for particular forms of global mission. In returning to this introductory notion, and in light of the repeated use of metaphor through this research venture, one must briefly frame the implications of employing metaphorical theology, and in doing so, consider the particular notion of *Mission as Anesthetic* before affirming its corrective, *Mission as Accompaniment*.

6.6.1 Introducing a Metaphorical Theology

According to M.H. Abrams, the human community utilizes metaphors on a repeated basis, not merely in the particular scholarly realm of theology, but in order to express something about the matters of daily life that we understand relatively little about.⁸⁴ In more simple terms, when we use a metaphor “we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction”.⁸⁵ This dynamic and intentional interaction allows us to appropriate “conventional wisdom associated with one context” to function as the “screen or grid” by “which we see the other context”:

Suppose I look at the night sky through a piece of heavily smoked glass on which certain lines have been left clear. Then I shall see only the stars that can be made to lie on the lines previously prepared upon the screen, and the stars I do see will be seen as organized by the screen’s structure. We can think of metaphor as such a screen and the system of “associated commonplaces” of the focal word as the network of lines upon the screen. We can say that the principal subject is “seen through” the metaphorical expression – or, if we prefer, that the principal subject is “projected upon” the field of the subsidiary subject.⁸⁶

When God’s mission is called “anesthetic” (or “accompaniment”) we utilize the “commonplaces” associated with the term anesthetic (or the term accompaniment) as the “smoked glass by which we perceive” particular notions of God’s mission.⁸⁷ As a result, to

⁸⁴ M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 31-32.

⁸⁵ I.A. Richard, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 93.

⁸⁶ Max Black, “Metaphor” in Mark Johnson (Editor) *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), 75.

⁸⁷ Sallie McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2000), 44.

state that metaphors are emotionally charged becomes quite clear, for among other things, the emotions and assumptions we might possess about anesthetics (or accompaniment) influence the subsequent emotions and assumptions we may develop about missionary ventures, and vice versa.

The use of metaphor is not merely about playing to emotions, but metaphors are intended to have a cognitive function as well, and thus the matter of utilizing metaphor for theological and missiological research and discovery becomes far more complex.⁸⁸ As Simone Weil so provocatively considered, there both is a God and there is also no God, and through the utilization of metaphor, both statements can be true.⁸⁹ For example, on the one hand there is a God in the idea that “love is no illusion”, but on the other hand, there is no God because there are no words that can accurately explain who God is.⁹⁰

In light of such powerful thoughts from Weil, one wonders what we can possibly learn about the “principle subject” of God’s mission through the use of metaphors, whether it is Mission as Anesthetic or Mission as Accompaniment. This study argues that, despite the various challenges at hand, we can surely learn a good deal. For example, to state Mission as Anesthetic appears to be a claim with no credentials, “yet what we know is the conventional wisdom associated with the subsidiary subject”, or as Max Black says, “the principal subject is ‘projected upon’ the field of the subsidiary subject”.⁹¹ From this point of view, “the use of metaphor seems to belong more in the realm of faith and hope than in the realm of knowledge”.⁹²

As stated by Ian Ramsey, metaphor arises in the “moment of insight”, yet the totality of our knowledge that precedes the metaphor is both immature and puzzling, and thus “it is only in and through” the use of metaphor “that we can speak of it at all”.⁹³ This is an essential point from Ramsey, as it suggests that “knowledge” through metaphor is a highly hazardous,

⁸⁸ Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1982), 1.

⁸⁹ Simone Weil, *Waiting for God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 32.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Max Black, “Metaphor”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, N.S. Vol. 55, (1954-1955), 288.

⁹² McFague, *Speaking in Parables*, 44.

⁹³ Ian Ramsey, *Models and Mystery* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 19.

ambiguous, and non-destined venture – an emotional and cognitive exercise of desperation.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the risk and open-endedness associated with the use of metaphors leads us to recognize that numerous metaphors are quite essential, as the metaphors used can reinforce, equalize, and clarify each other. For example, if one is to make reference to Mission as Anesthetic, then one could also use metaphors such as painkiller, tranquilizer, or sedation, though not stimulant, upper or jolt. Along such lines, the associated “commonplaces” of the first three (painkiller, tranquilizer and sedation) seem to match, but they do not seem to match with the “conventional wisdom attached to the latter set of metaphors” (stimulant, upper and jolt).⁹⁵ While irony and paradoxical inclusiveness are also often present in the use of metaphors, “sentimentality is not the signature of an authentic metaphorical pattern”.⁹⁶

Although the use of metaphor is both relatively unclear and uncertain, to employ such methods should not be deemed as disposable, as one must tolerate the un-destined feature, especially in the realm of theology and mission, as there is no direct method to address the principle subject of God. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, noted that even the person who speaks the most about God is “dumb”, and our only alternatives to such dumbness are to speak in “halting, inadequate words or to remain silent”.⁹⁷ While some have fallen on the side of silence in order to avoid the halting and inadequate words, the attempts to articulate who God is and what God does through global mission have not subsided, as Sallie McFague writes, “The Judeo-Christian tradition, more than many other religious traditions, has chosen not to remain silent”.⁹⁸

While there is far more to consider in regards to the general use of metaphor for this research venture, one recognizes their importance and complexity. In doing so, this study offers five ways that a metaphorical theology can be affirmed.⁹⁹ The specific use of theological metaphor is critical for the expression of *Mission as Anesthetic*, and of course, for the overall pursuits of this study on *Mission as Accompaniment* as a response to mechanistic dehumanization.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ McFague, *Speaking in Parables*, 44-45.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 1.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ The six categories are provided in Steve de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 333-345.

First, a metaphorical theology affirms that our potential for affection, wellbeing, and renewal is grounded in narratives, images, and representation, and not only systemic classifications and academic contemplation.¹⁰⁰ Therefore metaphorical theology is narrative in that we are “connected to ourselves, to other people, and to life in the past, present and future”.¹⁰¹ As a result, the employment of narrative for the sake of theology and missiology transcends the common dualistic notions of body and spirit, and in turn roots us in a present context.¹⁰² As Michael Goldberg states that religious convictions “which are at the heart of theological reflection depend on narrative for their intelligibility and significance”.¹⁰³

Second, a metaphorical theology – as the designation leads us to presume – intentionally considers a particular and “significant event, image or symbol as a defining metaphor” around which all others are investigated.¹⁰⁴ As a result, one can argue that the realm of Christian mission and theology is – by its very definition – a collection of metaphorical theologies, as the Bible itself is filled with metaphors, and in turn, theologians across the generations have employed metaphorical language to express their conceptions of God and God’s mission. As a result, one recognizes that all language about God is ultimately a human construction, and in turn, misses the exact theological and missiological mark. More specifically, since metaphors apply terms and expressions fitting to a particular setting yet utilized in a separate situation, the reality is that no metaphor can be universally applied, especially when in consideration of the nature and action of God. For example, to speak of God as “Mother” is not to directly classify God with the specific realm of mothers, but the usage of such a metaphor communicates a comprehension of God in relationship to a few of the common attributes related to mothering. One can therefore state with metaphorical confidence that “God is not mother”, “God is/is not mother”, or even “God as mother” (which highlights the relational character of metaphors, in that God can be illustrated in the

¹⁰⁰ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 338.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1991), 12.

¹⁰³ Ibid. In seeking to make his point further, Goldberg writes: “That claim is certainly at the core of two recent theological works: *Diving Deep and Surfacing* by the feminist writer Carol P. Christ and *God of the Oppressed* by the black thinker James H. Cone. While Christ argues that women, lacking stories truly expressive of their own experience, have simultaneously lacked an authentic way to understand themselves, the world, and the “great powers” of the university, Cone maintains that many theological accounts of such themes as oppression, liberation, and God’s activity in human life have been inadequate, owing to their failure to attend sufficiently to the biblical stories of the Exodus and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What support do these two theologians bring to justify their assertions, and how strong is it?”

¹⁰⁴ McFague, *Models of God*, 22.

capability, charisma, or function of a mother). In total, the “constructive character of metaphor is self-evident”, since the suitable, exact, or predominant setting for using the title of mother is clearly “not the divine”.¹⁰⁵ With such thoughts from McFague in mind, one recognizes that the use of metaphors for theology and missiology affirm not only the gift of human experience, but also affirm that people of each era must seek to do the work of theology and missiology with the language and resources of their particular time and place.

Third, the work of Christian mission and theology in particular proposes that the use of metaphor embraces the rich and related “allegorical method”, a tradition of interpretation dating back to early Christianity, in which the Bible was considered to possess “deeper meanings and connections to broader themes”.¹⁰⁶ More specifically, while metaphors and allegories may seem like the same device, they have distinct differences in regards to their definitions, use and application.¹⁰⁷ For example, while a metaphor is a phrase employed to make a particular comparison, an allegory tends to extend a metaphor, and in doing so “involves a shift from a consciously apprehended metaphorical blend to a consciously apprehended fictional situation”.¹⁰⁸ In summary, the use of metaphor is a part of a larger allegorical tradition, yet metaphor is distinctive, for it carries a particular message and meaning that tends to be far more accessible than the employment of allegory.

Fourth, a metaphorical theology is useful for it seek to communicate beyond the restrictions of specifically Biblical metaphors. In light of the previous usage of Ubuntu and an Olive Agenda for Mission as Accompaniment response to mechanistic dehumanization, one recognizes that various ways that metaphor can speak to the entirety of humanity, regardless of religious tradition or philosophical worldview. While such a commitment to reach beyond the confines of the Christian community does mean a negation of Christian orientation, it does signify an intentional and clear affirmation of God’s mission toward the entire world rather than only the Christian church.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Joel Rosenberg, *King and Kin: Political allegory in the Hebrew Bible* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Philip Rollinson, *Classical theories of allegory and Christian culture. Vol. 3.* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1981); Gerald Bostock, “Allegory and the Interpretation of the Bible in Origen”. *Literature and Theology* (1987): 39-53; Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, *The literary guide to the Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁷ Peter Crisp, “Between extended metaphor and allegory: is blending enough?” *Language and Literature* 17, No. 4 (2008), 291-308.

¹⁰⁸ Crisp, 291.

Fifth, a metaphorical theology can be considered to be a postmodern theology.¹⁰⁹ In striking contrast to fundamentalism, the employment of metaphorical theology does not intend to appraise or counter modernity with the intellectual tools of the modern age, but rather, metaphorical theology desires to utilize the tools of postmodernity, such as “circles and pictures, suggestive connections, and hesitant leaps of cognitive imagination”.¹¹⁰ As articulated by Kevin Vanhoozer, while conceptions of postmodernity are remarkably varied, what is generally agreed upon is that postmodern theology rejects the postulates of the modern era.¹¹¹ With such modern affirmations in mind, one recognizes that the use of a metaphorical theology rejects the clear conclusions of modernity, and in doing so, provides a useful tool for the overall aims of this research venture.

6.6.2. Mission as Anesthetic and the Postcolonial Empire of Economism

With the above thoughts surrounding the use of a metaphorical theology in mind, and in order to consider *Mission as Accompaniment* as an effective response to mechanistic dehumanization, we must continue to investigate *Mission as Anesthetic* as being complicit to the reality of mechanistic dehumanization. More specifically, when in consideration of mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism and Postcolonial Empire, this section seeks to examine the nature of Postcolonial Empire in light of the contemporary religion of “Economism”, for it is in making such connections between Empire, Economism, and *Mission as Anesthetic* that one is better able to understand potential responses from Mission as Accompaniment.

¹⁰⁹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “Theology and the condition of postmodernity: a report on knowledge (of God)”, in Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Editor), *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3. See also: Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998); Graham Ward (Editor), *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004); Frederic B. Burnham (Editor), *Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralistic World* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1989); Terrence W. Tilley (Editor), *Postmodern Theologies: The Challenge of Religious Diversity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005).

¹¹⁰ de Gruchy, “An Olive Agenda”, 339.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

While Joel J. Kassiola first used the specific terminology of “Economism” in 1990,¹¹² and it was employed later by Paul Ekins and Manfred Max-Neef in 1992,¹¹³ for this study we turn primarily to John B. Cobb, whose theological work on the subject is of special significance for this overall venture. Along these lines, in his explanation of Economism, Cobb articulately and profoundly states that economic objectives control nations around the world, and furthermore, that economic considerations now regulate how such overall objectives are engaged and achieved.¹¹⁴ Consequently, it is increasingly common for the general public to assume that a commitment to such economic goals and priorities are “simply the rational, natural way to be”, or even a standard view of inevitability when humans are set free from their various beliefs and opinions.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, Economism is a plague, because allowing economics to govern humanity suggests a philosophy that is remarkably bizarre, and the reality is that it has been affirmed only in the near past. From a “humanistic” viewpoint, the supremacy of economic concerns is in direct conflict with longstanding values; from a “naturalistic” standpoint it disregards the value of nature and points to its devastation; from a “communitarian” point of view it restricts the communal dimension of human identity; from a “democratic” standpoint it implicates the damage of popular independence; and of course, from a Christian perspective its functions are “idolatrous worship of mammon”.¹¹⁶

In what can be described as groundbreaking in nature, Cobb names “Economism” as the most common religion of the United States imperial machine, and in doing so, offers a profound introduction to its consequences:

This culture is “economistic”, and the spirit and ideology that move it constitute “economism”. Economism functions today as our shared religion.¹¹⁷

As warned by Cobb, the global community that Economism is currently controlling and manufacturing is, to say the least, “increasingly disturbing”.¹¹⁸ For example, those placed

¹¹² Joel J. Kassiola, *The Death of Industrial Civilization: The Limits to Economic Growth and the Repoliticization of Advanced Industrial Society* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 57.

¹¹³ Paul Ekins and Manfred Max-Neef (Editors), *Real-Life Economics* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4.

¹¹⁴ John B. Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism: A Theological Critique of the World Bank* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

firmly in the social context of Economism are by no means encouraged to dedicate any thoughtful critique in the direction of Economism, thus an alarming minority is left to investigate its essential doctrines, as such economic analysis is often bequeathed to the so-called experts. Instead of critical scrutiny and subsequent visions for a different way of living, the mass populace under the realm of Economism devotes their time and energy into the never-ended competition of what is often and negatively described as the rat race. For the sake of boosting GDP through the purchase of goods and services, such actions are thought to make life most worthwhile, as the common expression of Economism is through consumerism.

If Economism is indeed the most dominant and imperial religion of our time, then it is clearly worthy of closer examination, especially in light of its connections to Neoliberal Capitalism, Postcolonial Empire, and of course, mechanistic dehumanization. While a comprehensive examination of Economism is not fully intended here, what is important at this point is to offer the notion of Economism in light of its relationship to mechanistic dehumanization and the unending pursuit of growth in GDP. If one can argue that Economism is indeed the dominant religion of our time, then mechanistic dehumanization is a source and sustainer of such a religion, and *Mission as Anesthetic* is a theological and missiological vehicle that keeps Economism spreading and GDP growing, in the name of Jesus, to the ends of the Earth.

In general terms, then, Economism is the belief that society should be organized primarily for the sake of economic growth.¹¹⁹ Therefore, in a relationship similar to Neoliberal Capitalism, mechanistic dehumanization can be viewed as a source and sustainer of the religion of Economism, as Economism reduces human beings into human resources, and in doing so deprives people of that which makes them most fully human.¹²⁰ In effect, the religion of Economism makes humans a simple and expendable part of a larger economic machine, which is – by definition – mechanistic dehumanization. Therefore, in the face of such mechanistic dehumanization, those who intentionally promote or blindly accept the religion of Economism assume that economic growth is ultimately beneficial for all human

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, 6.

¹²⁰ Andrew Crane, "Modern Slavery as a Management Practice: Exploring the Conditions and Capabilities for Human Exploitation" *Academy of Management Review* 38, no. 1 (2013), 49-69.

beings, regardless of the conclusive data that consistently shows otherwise.¹²¹ As a result, the active and passive adherents of Economism subordinate all matters – both spiritual and secular – to that of economic growth, as religious-like faith and missionary zeal is placed in such a larger plan.

If Economism is indeed religious in nature, as John B. Cobb asserts, then a faithful commitment to Economism encourages people to confess that economic growth will directly and effectively solve all problems, to the point that the so-called invisible hand of the marketplace comes to be viewed as God.¹²² Among the claims of Economism is that economic growth will end poverty, stop class conflict, eliminate population growth, lead to protecting the environment, generate full employment, and provide the resources for pursuing our most important values.¹²³ While not all economic advocates make such broad and bold claims, in its purest and extreme form Economism discourages the direct pursuit of other aims – such as environmental stewardship - if such efforts slow economic growth.

Neoliberal Capitalism is the primary ideology and guiding force of Economism.¹²⁴ As a result, while economic adherents may have diverse ideas about how to best pursue economic growth, Neoliberal Capitalism clearly constitutes the overwhelmingly dominant ideology of economic faith.¹²⁵ In doing so, while particular individuals may be more or less consciously economic as a matter of degree, all of humanity feels its mechanistically dehumanizing effects, as the supporters of Economism defend the subordination all structures in society to the service of economic growth, as such is the best method of serving the welfare of humanity. In many ways, one could properly name Neoliberal Capitalism a foundational creed within the religion of Economism, with mechanistic dehumanization as a source and sustainer.

¹²¹ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, 6.

¹²² Paul Oslington, "God and the Market: Adam Smith's Invisible Hand" *Journal of Business Ethics* 108, no. 4 (2012), 429-438. See also: Brenden Long, "Adam Smith and Adam's sin" PhD diss., PhD Thesis, Faculty of Theology, University of Cambridge, 2002; E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (London: Blond and Briggs, 1973); Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Evil: Love as Ecological Vocation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013); Larry Rasmussen, *Earth-honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹²³ John B. Cobb, "Liberation Theology and the Global Economy" in Joerg Rieger (Editor) *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 35-37.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, 6.

With such thoughts on Economism in mind, one notes that *Mission as Anesthetic* is a missiologological trajectory that fuels what can be deemed as the religious Empire of Economism. As Jane Collier and Rafael Esteban conclude, “there is a close relationship” between the Christian church and Economism, thus such a connection between *Mission as Anesthetic* and Economism with mechanistic dehumanization is not difficult to make.¹²⁶ To make such a point of relationship even further, Collier and Esteban argue that Christianity has not only served Economism, but Christianity actually functioned as an “architect” of Economism.¹²⁷ In particular, it was the extreme certitude of Christianity’s sole ownership of God and redemption, combined with its logic of worldwide mission conceived of as a battle against the darkness of evil that combined to buttress the legend of scientific knowledge as “ultimate objective truth”.¹²⁸ The expansion of scientific authority, propped-up with the framework of religious certainty, helped to provide near unanimous backing for the colonial extension of Western nations as an obligation to ensure so-called progress. More specifically, it was the religious milieu of the combat of evil that helped form a tradition of subjugation, rivalry, and achievement. Furthermore, the hierarchy-informed and undemocratic interpretation of the use of sacred authority in ecclesial systems assisted in offering a model of operation for subsequent organizations and corporations. And of course, it was the supremacy of humankind over and against the rest of God’s creation, through the misinterpreted direction to subdue the earth that led westernized cultures into a mindset that justified the mistreatment and manipulation of Earth’s inhabitants and natural resources so representative of industrialization.¹²⁹

One recognizes that particular forms of missionary engagement, which here I have named *Mission as Anesthetic*, relate with – and contribute to – the religious Empire of Economism. As Collier and Esteban express, “both the church and Economism play similar power games”.¹³⁰ For example, both church and Economism employ their “missions” from situations of authority that is obtained through monetary accumulation and societal supremacy that is converted into financial and communal imperialism, and therefore

¹²⁶ Jane Collier and Rafael Esteban, *From Complicity to Encounter: The Church and the Culture of Economism* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1998), 45.

¹²⁷ Collier and Esteban, 47.

¹²⁸ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, 1.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Collier and Esteban, 61.

“exercised by an authoritarian male class”.¹³¹ The authority of the church and Economism is both based upon the entitled assurance to overpower the global community as an obligation to enlighten or to transform. However, the aspirations of cultural and economic subjugation often produced a fierce conversion and dissolution of the community’s impact, and thus can be prolonged simply by exerting significant amount of social power. In short, although the dominant coalition of Christianity and economistic agendas were troubled in various periods and were not always deliberate, the partnership has frequently been perceived by those on the receiving end of oppressions at “complementary sides of the expansionism of the Christian West”.¹³² Therefore, one can safely argue that the cooperation of religion and imperialism is by no means a fairytale constructed by critics of the Christian faith, but it remains as a disappointing historical reality for Christianity.

In brief summation on this particular line of inquiry from Collier and Esteban, one should not be surprised with the present relationship between Economism and *Mission as Anesthetic*, because at its core, Economism is the latest expression of a long-standing relationship between Empire, mechanistic dehumanization and the Christian Church. Therefore, the need to pause and recognize the overall severity of the task at hand for Mission as Accompaniment becomes evident. As M. Douglas Meeks considers in his work on the church and economy, one wonders if it is possible within the context of Economism for the “Household of Jesus Christ can be formed in North American society”.¹³³ More specifically, given the current authority of GDP and overall emergence of Economism as a dominant religious practice in the US and beyond, one wonders as to whether or not Christianity can make any degree of positive difference in generating circumstances of fairness and harmony in North American society and the global community. Meeks recognizes these as important matters to consider because the economistic logic that currently governs the realm of civil service, economic policy, mass media, and the development of new technology are so powerful that the time and space that can be engaged by Christianity is becoming “frightfully meager”, and without the support of a beloved community administered through the values of grace and peace “we cannot speak realistically of liberation in a Christian sense”.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ M. Douglas Meeks, “Economy and the Future of Liberation Theology” in Joerg Rieger (Editor) *Liberating the Future: God, Mammon and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 45.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

In order for Mission as Accompaniment to serve as a means by which “the Household of Jesus Christ” can “make any difference in creating conditions of justice and peace in North American society and the global community”, it needs to recognize the seriousness and sternness of the task at hand, and in doing so, resist Mission as Anesthetic and more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization. More specifically, Mission as Accompaniment must be considered in light of a longstanding relationship between religious empire and Economism, which dates back to the onset of what many believe to be the starting point of modern-day Christianity. In light of such concerns, the following section will consider the longstanding historical legacy of Empire and Economism, so that Mission as Accompaniment can best respond to mechanistic dehumanization in the larger context of Christianity.

6.7 Religious Empire and Economism

One should not be surprised with the current connections between Christianity and Economism, for such a marriage between church and imperial forces of economic power have existed for numerous generations.¹³⁵ From a missiological perspective, Jonathan Bonk shares how such longstanding connections have impacted the more recent history of global missionary engagement, in that “material and economic abundance has been a hallmark of the *modus operandi* of Western missionaries throughout the past two centuries”.¹³⁶ In sharp contrast to their missionary ancestors who served immediately after the death of Jesus (often described as martyrs and constant subjects of persecution), more recent missionaries from Western nations have, with a short list of notable exemptions, demonstrated accelerating amounts of economic and material privilege far beyond the populations among whom they have served.¹³⁷ The contemporary Western-based missionary movement is “utterly and fatally dependent upon the accouterments of affluence”, which should be of no surprise, due in part to the social and ecclesial “womb” within which such a missionary movement was nurtured and the economic setting that continues to fuel it.¹³⁸ Since numerous missionary movements were “born and bred in the economic abundance of the West”, the personality,

¹³⁵ Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money: Revised and Expanded* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 17-36.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

attitudes, principles, obsessions, and approaches of missionaries have been innately and profoundly impacted.¹³⁹ In having such influence, a culture of Economism produces the need for an abundance of materials, which in turn has achieved an extensive sway over citizens of western societies, which in turn employs an overwhelming influence upon the nature of each member within such a society, including those sent into distant lands as global missionaries. In total, numerous western societies can be observed as a brand of “clinical mania in which the craving for material rewards in an economy of superabundance is a fatal addiction for which there is no known cure”.¹⁴⁰ While some Western missionaries have seriously attempted to counteract its ethically and socially delirious implications, far too many fall victims to it, and in doing so spread such values far and wide.

While others, such as Jonathan S. Barnes,¹⁴¹ have considered the historical narrative of such missionary engagement in relationship to partnership and power, this study merely seeks to show that a missiological relationship with Economism is rooted not only in the relatively recent global missionary movement, but far longer. More specifically, while an extensive study of Christian history by no means intended here,¹⁴² a brief review of the imperial legacy of Christianity as a whole is required in order to more adequately understand the current and deeply imbedded connections between Christianity, *Mission as Anesthetic* and Economism with mechanistic dehumanization. In order to pursue such aims, we will briefly consider the legacy of Constantine, who ruled as Emperor over the Roman Empire from 305-337.

When Emperor Constantine announced his conversion to Christianity in 312 A.D.,¹⁴³ and subsequently reversed his predecessor Diocletian’s edict of 303 A.D. that formally outlawed the practice of Christianity, Constantine set in motion an imperial era of Christianity that, in many ways, continues to this day.¹⁴⁴ One must consider such history

¹³⁹ Bonk, 17-18.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Jonathan S. Barnes, *Power and Partnership: A History of the Protestant Missionary Movement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013).

¹⁴² For further study into the imperial legacy of Christianity, see: Rieger, *Christ and Empire*.

¹⁴³ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 71.

¹⁴⁴ It must be noted that various accounts of the “Constantinianization” of the Christian Church too often oversimplify, as if the Church had been pure and spiritual until Constantine. Such accounts grossly overlook the connections of church and empire long before Constantine. While this study will indeed focus more specifically on Constantine, one must note a larger narrative and deeper complexity, as the heritage of the church had been

when seeking to understand the current relationship of Christianity, *Mission as Anesthetic* and Economism with mechanistic dehumanization. With Constantine's action in 312 A.D. the brutal persecution of the Christian movement came to an abrupt end.¹⁴⁵ The newfound development of religious freedom was, of course, a fortunate occurrence for Christians of the era, because it finally afforded them the security of official legitimacy and freedom from persecution.¹⁴⁶ However, in what can only be described as historically ironic, the seemingly positive development for Christians began a cycle of Christian distortion that has never quite subsided.

When seeking to review the connectivity of Christianity, mission, Empire, and mechanistic dehumanization, one first recognizes how Constantine confused imperial domination with the mission of God.¹⁴⁷ For example, it was Constantine who imported into Christianity his imperial title of *pontifex maximus*, that is, "chief priest" of Roman civil religion. In doing so, Constantine spoke of himself as being "a bishop appointed by God over those outside [the church]", and despite his lack of theological training, he exercised power over the structures and creeds within the church.¹⁴⁸ As the self-declared and appointment "chief priest", Constantine recognized that in order to keep economic power "he would need more powerful aid than any army could supply",¹⁴⁹ thus the twisted combination of religion and economics for the sake of imperial domination. The church has never quite recovered.

While Constantine provided an immediate and positive impact for many Christians in regards to physical safety, the various problems caused by the Roman Empire's endorsement of Christianity now seem to mirror the questionable and calculated conversion of Constantine himself. For example, Constantine established the *agentes in rebus* ("doers of things"), a group of fixers, informers, and enforcers who were the ancient equivalent of a secret police.¹⁵⁰ As A.N. Wilson states, Constantine's reign over both church and state, guided by his desire to function as supreme ruler in the mold of a monotheistic god, led to "the first

shaped by the intersections with empire from its early days. See: Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003).

¹⁴⁵ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, I.27-28, 79-81.

¹⁴⁶ Obery Hendricks, *The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus' Teaching and How they Have been Corrupted* (New York: Three Leaves, 2007), 87.

¹⁴⁷ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 71.

¹⁴⁸ Eusebius, 161.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ John Noël Dillon, *The Justice of Constantine: Law, Communication, and Control* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 113.

totalitarian state in history”.¹⁵¹ This Christian emperor had members of his own family murdered for the sake of preserving power, and despite his religious claims and fourteen years of leadership of the Church, Constantine never received the sacrament of Holy Communion.¹⁵² In addition, Constantine was not baptized until a few hours before his death in 327, and quite suspiciously, his so-called “Christian” vision in 312 A.D. was not his first of the divine nature, as he had once claimed to have received a vision of the pagan god Apollo.¹⁵³

As narrated by Eusebius,¹⁵⁴ Constantine’s contemporary and historian who unmasked much of what was hidden from public view, the consistent propaganda which trumpeted the legitimacy of Constantine’s faith and his devotion to the Church of Christ masked an oppressive tyrant with unchecked imperial drive who used Christianity to serve his personal objectives, and in turn guided Christianity in a direction that corresponded with his views of and desires for the world.¹⁵⁵ The corresponding public relations campaign ignored and euphemized Constantine’s indiscretions, his vengeance, and his diversity of policies that brought death in the supposed name of life.¹⁵⁶ In addition, the strategically crafted public imperial transcript made incredible claims, perhaps none more grandiose than the belief that Jesus took the side of Constantine in 312 A.D. and beyond.

This study argues that although much has happened since the fourth century (and to recount such history requires attention to significant complexity), the legacy of Constantine’s imperial domination over Christianity lingers within the modern day global missionary movement, especially after the Industrial Revolution, which must be treated briefly here.¹⁵⁷ With the Christian Church soaked in generations of Constantine’s particular brand of Christianity, an ecclesial reality in which some call “Constantiniansim”,¹⁵⁸ the church was culturally and politically ripe to embrace the religion of Economism through the various

¹⁵¹ A.N. Wilson, *Paul: The Mind of the Apostle* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 9.

¹⁵² Hendricks, 88.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

¹⁵⁵ Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 148.

¹⁵⁶ Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 245-260.

¹⁵⁷ Peter N. Stearns, *The Industrial Revolution in World History: Fourth Edition* (Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2013).

¹⁵⁸ Stanley Hauerwas, *The Work of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 63-64.

developments associated with the industrial revolution, a new brand of imperialism.¹⁵⁹ However, like Constantine himself, the modern day “economistic movement” needed to validate its marriage with both the Church and secular society, and as John Cobb writes, the religion of Economism provided a “self-justifying account of history” through which the Church was sufficiently seduced.¹⁶⁰

According to the self-justifying account of history most often provided by Economism, the far majority of human history includes people as living near the bottom threshold of existence. As a result, a considerable amount of people functioned as peasants and thus manufactured slightly more than what was required for their own survival, and any amount of extra they did happen to yield was acquired by the “political-military-priestly elite”.¹⁶¹ When ecological and economic circumstances were advantageous, the overall population would tend to increase and flourish, but in times of climate or social difficulties, many would struggle or even perish. However, according to the self-justifying narrative of economism, the great transformation in prosperity and quality of life took place during the advent of the Industrial Revolution, which empowered laborers to produce more than they individually required for survival.¹⁶² While the elite classes originally acquired the excesses, over the course of time such surpluses were reinvested in order to grow the rates of production even further. In a relatively brief span of time, the overall production grew at such a rate that excess goods were available for all people, which in turn led the way for a speedy increase in the overall quality of life for the mass population. In total, for the first time in human history, most citizens were allowed to exist at a level far above mere existence and endurance, which in turn guaranteed a standard of living that had previously been reserved for a few. Furthermore, all that took place in the industrially revolutionized nations is now happening globally, thus the importance of ongoing growth for the global economy.

The above self-justifying account of history is provided in order to highlight a false narrative at the heart of Economism, in that, just as Constantine demanded authority over the operations of his Empire (and was willing to eliminate his opponents to do so), through

¹⁵⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: The Birth of the Industrial Revolution* (New York: The New Press, 1999).

¹⁶⁰ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, 30.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

Economism the authority is given to the so-called invisible hand of the marketplace, and in turn, the governing authorities of Neoliberal Capitalism (and the consequences of resistance can be deadly).¹⁶³ In total, while far more can be stated along this line of comparative inquiry, what one begins to recognize is that both Constantine and Economism function as imperial and religious forces, and in both instances, the Church and its missionary movements are impacted and influenced with great significance.

In regards to the Postcolonial Empire of Economism in a “new imperial age” of Neoliberal Capitalism,¹⁶⁴ one recognizes that Economism seeks to create a global market that can develop only as national boundaries – and thus, the Christian Churches found within them – cease to inhibit the flow of goods and capital. This is, by definition, a Postcolonial Empire, and the basic rules are concise: loosen commerce and finance regulations; allow so-called “free” markets to set the price; permit inflation to privatize; and ensure that any government does all that it can to encourage such standards.¹⁶⁵ In ways quite similar to Constantine’s desire to grasp imperial authority, Economism – through its governing agents¹⁶⁶ – seeks to take hold of the global human community through the global economy, so that the primary role of government is to equip and empower so-called competition among the economic actors, both local and global, and to provide that which enables businesses to prosper through maximized profit. In other words, Economism seeks to ordain the market itself as *pontifex maximus*, with all organizations and affiliations ordained to serve and worship economic growth.¹⁶⁷ As a result, in order to achieve and sustain such domination, Economism is sourced and sustained with mechanistic dehumanization.

The dominant religion of Economism is directly related to mechanistic dehumanization, and thus requires attention from Mission as Accompaniment. As has been highlighted in this section, Economism determines the value of human beings exclusively in relationship to their productive and consumptive relationship to the market, which stands in direct contrast to the *Imago Trinitatis*. As expressed by Steve de Gruchy, in various nations

¹⁶³ Noam Chomsky, *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999), 22.

¹⁶⁴ Chomsky, 20.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ “From Economics to Economism: The Rise of Market Worship” in Howard Brody, *The Golden Calf: Economism and American Policy* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011), 36-58.

across the world far too many people simply do not have a place in the market.¹⁶⁸ As a result, what results is a marginalized class of the rejected, which in turn provides an utterly lopsided degree of illness, aggression, and the disparaging use of illegal narcotics.¹⁶⁹ The destructive practices of a few that are placed on such margins are sensationalized, which in turn leads to the loss of support from the majority of society, their cooperative future is endangered, and what increases alongside GDP is a significant and oppressive chasm between those who participate in the market and those who are left on its margins.¹⁷⁰ In regards to the global community, one understands that the GDP-measured economic growth fostered by Economism is often received as unfair and abusive from the perspective of the poor (both in the so-called first and third worlds), as small plots of land are stolen for the sake of more efficient production of agribusiness, the poor are repeatedly displaced for the sake of large-scale development, their labor organizations are weakened or destroyed in order to keep wages low, and their wildlife is destroyed and sold for profit.¹⁷¹ While some resist such dehumanization, the power of Economism – supported by wealthy nations – continues to dominate those in its path.

6.8 Summary

In response to the primary research question of this study, this chapter considered the *experience* of the empire of Neoliberal Capitalism, the *exploration* of mechanistic dehumanization, the response of Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu, and finally, the *new experience/situation* of moving from Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment. This chapter considered matters of Economism, Gross Domestic Product, and the Genuine Progress Indicator, and in doing so introduced some tangible ways that the ELCA Global Mission may respond to mechanistic dehumanization through Mission as Accompaniment. The chapter that follows will explore the nature of advocacy and its relationship to Mission as Accompaniment, for the sake of offering conclusions in response to the findings of this study.

¹⁶⁸ de Gruchy, “Being Connected”, 1.

¹⁶⁹ Cobb, *The Earthist Challenge to Economism*, 30.

¹⁷⁰ de Gruchy, “Being Connected”, 1.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

Through the research methodology of *Experience-Exploration-Reflection-Response-New Situation/Experience*, this study considers the *experience* of the Postcolonial Empire as Neoliberal Capitalism, it *explores* such an experience through the conception of mechanistic dehumanization and its relationship to the religion of Economism, *reflects* upon Mission as Accompaniment as a response to mechanistic dehumanization, *responds* to mechanistic dehumanization with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu fixed into Mission as Accompaniment, and in turn, seeks to create a *new situation/experience* by moving from Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment, with particular attention given to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI). With such a review of this study in mind, we turn to the conclusion of this research and a final engagement with the primary research question:

How can *Mission as Accompaniment* guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Global Mission to respond more effectively alongside its global church companions to mechanistic dehumanization?

In order to best respond to this primary research question, we will consider the important notions of *advocacy* and *being connected*. More specifically, because mechanistic dehumanization requires and breeds both separation and alienation, Mission as Accompaniment must not only seek out connection in general terms, but strive for an intentional connection through a particular method of advocacy and for a particular missiological purpose. Therefore, the notion of being connected through a priority of advocacy will be considered in this chapter, as such is critically important for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Global Mission to more effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization.

7.2 Accompaniment and Advocacy

The ELCA Global Mission views “accompaniment” as “walking together in solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality”.¹ The notion of “advocacy”, however, is a distinct priority that requires specific attention and more intentional strategies. For example, advocacy is the intentional pursuit of influencing outcomes to directly impact the fullness of life, as the etymological roots of the term (*ad + vocare*, “to call to”) provide an understanding that often consists of organized efforts and actions meant to authorize and implement legislation, laws, and various forms of public policy.² In contrast to the notion of “self-advocacy” that receives a great deal of attention in North America,³ the advocacy considered in this chapter – and overall study – seeks to shape more longer-term social conclusions, such as: mutual entrance and reciprocated expression in the decision making of social institutions, transformation of power relationships, and overall improvement toward the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods.⁴ With the primary research question in mind, one needs to explore advocacy more in depth, compare and contrast it with existing notions of accompaniment, and explore how one can move from *Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment*, for the sake of a more effective response from ELCA Global Mission to mechanistic dehumanization.

An advocacy-driven direction for Mission as Accompaniment, with the Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory and Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability, takes the form of *resistance* to mechanistic dehumanization. This conception of advocacy as resistance will be explored in this chapter.⁵ In the spirit of the Lutheran theological tradition in which it is grounded, one can argue that Mission as Accompaniment was originally designed for the sake of *reformation*. More specifically, Mission as Accompaniment first recognized that longstanding models of mission needed to be critiqued and reconsidered, and in doing so, revised missionary methods needed to be proposed, and therefore, more effective and faithful strategies for global mission companionship were made known and put into practice. From its public beginning in 1999, Mission as Accompaniment has been committed to *reform*, not

¹ ELCA, *Global Mission in the 21st Century*, 5.

² VeneKlasen and Miller, 22.

³ Brinckerhoff, 229-237.

⁴ Cohen, 8.

⁵ The following section is significantly inspired by: John B. Cobb, “Forward”, in John B. Cobb (Editor), *Resistance: The New Role of Progressive Christians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), xi-xiii.

only for the sake of global companionship, but also for the sake of the world in its entirety. In doing so, the architects of Mission as Accompaniment and its ongoing practitioners considered what the world currently is, and of course, what it could or should be. This study affirms the value of such ventures.

While Mission as Accompaniment can be affirmed for its commitment to the reformation of global missionary practices and the global community as a whole, there are moments in history when an oppressive and vicious system of mechanistic dehumanization is so dominant and engrained that *reform* is no longer enough, and therefore, people of faith can no longer retreat into submission in order to achieve the modest improvements that might actually be in reach. When such extreme situations are the harsh reality in various parts of the world, the result is sometimes that of violent rebellion, and one must note that numerous people of faith affirm such ventures of protest. While such aggressive and violent forms of resistance may seem to be the best course of action for some in the midst of their specific circumstances, such a method is not intended to be explored here, for this study argues that Mission as Accompaniment seeks resistance through non-violent means of advocacy.

Contrary to the self-justifying account of Economism, the global community is moving down a dreadful path of destruction. From income inequality to ecological destruction, the promotion of Neoliberal Capitalism has been sourced and sustained by a mechanistic dehumanization that has reduced the value of human life through the steady and forced practices of production and consumption. Whereas communities were previously concerned with “encouraging good citizenship”, in the current state of affairs we are mostly focused upon providing efficient and low-cost “workers for the market”.⁶ In addition, rather than a prevalent and sustained commitment to a common good, our global community is increasingly damaged by the corporate intention to accomplish competitive profit through the global marketplace. Whereas many formal institutions of democracy remain in place, the level of civic participation and public discourse continues to decline, and the result is a public opinion mostly controlled by the dominant few.⁷ As a result, while reform within society continues to take place, the broader and larger move toward destruction seems overpowering.

⁶ Cobb, *Resistance*, x.

⁷ Ibid.

A wide range of international economic strategies have been implemented in order to increase the prosperity and power of those that are already prosperous and powerful. This Neoliberal Capitalist system is in direct conflict with the Olive Agenda and Ubuntu, for the consolidation of wealth not only devastates human life but also destroys the ecological systems that have provided for such lives throughout countless generations. While GDP measures the global community as growing in wealth and prosperity, the GPI reveals that most nations are increasingly unable to offer the fullness of life for the majority of their citizens. The Neoliberal Capitalist system that currently dominates the world is severely flawed, for it leads to the destruction of our global community, as life for the far majority of the world is filled with struggle and pressure. The growing impact surrounding climate change will only increase such global destruction.

In the profound and accurate words of John B. Cobb, for human civilization to intentionally and effectively arrange the entire world with a system that ultimately destroys people and the planet, “is strictly and literally insane”.⁸ However, the most influential actors of our world – multinational corporate leaders who do not have to answer to the general population – work in such ways and show no signs of slowing down. Due in part to the self-justifying account of history as told by the supporters of Economism, there are few in society that confront such dreadful priorities, due in part because such an imposing form of Empire ensures that no other way is deemed to be possible. As a result, far too many merely resign themselves to the consequences of the imperial and mechanistically dehumanizing system, in the hopes that they might find a way to live off the economic scraps in the midst of it all.⁹

One is compelled to wonder how the ELCA Global Mission can possibly respond when mechanistic dehumanization is a source and sustainer of a system that has such devastating consequences that seem far beyond the possibility of reform. This study argues that Mission as Accompaniment was originally fashioned for the sake of reformation, but with an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory and Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability, it must now seek a more focused and advocacy-driven *resistance* to mechanistic dehumanization. This study argues that mechanistic dehumanization cannot be *reformed*, but rather, it must be *resisted*, which in turn impacts the ways and means by which

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

the ELCA Global Mission responds with a more advocacy-focused direction alongside its global companions. The Olive Agenda provides a trajectory and Ubuntu offers human accountability, all for the sake of resisting all that destroys life in its fullness, which this study has determined to be mechanistic dehumanization.

When viewed through the lenses of *advocacy as resistance*, we learn to view the history of the Christian Church with alternative lenses. More specifically, there were few Christians who sought to *reform* the Constantinian brand of Christianity, yet there were indeed some who sought to *resist*.¹⁰ More specifically, some people of faith observed that the rules and priorities of the Constantinian church were unequivocally opposed to the teaching of Jesus. As a result, during such difficult times these people of faith viewed advocacy through resistance as a faithful attempt to accompany one another in the face of their particular struggles.¹¹ In a similar fashion, the communities of faith that were empowered by the Apostle Paul were also – in their most faithful moments (which was not always the case) – agents of advocacy and accompaniment through resistance.¹² Along these lines, while Paul did not directly seek to eliminate the custom of slavery in the Roman Empire, in the community of Christian faith slaves were valued with the full dignity of being created in the image of God.¹³ Furthermore, Paul did not directly attempt to upend gender injustice throughout the imperial kingdom, yet within the Church women could and did assume positions of authority. Likewise, Paul did not directly seek to end human impoverishment, but within the Christian faith communities the most vulnerable and marginalized were clearly and compassionately provided for with sustained assistance. And perhaps most dramatically, while Paul did not seek to directly and forcefully overthrow the authority of Caesar, his proclamation of Jesus as “Son of God” was a deliberate and courageous resistance to Caesar’s highest title, which in turn was “calculated treason” by Paul for the sake of a better world.¹⁴ With such a powerful witness of resistance in mind, for the ELCA Global Mission to respond more effectively to mechanistic dehumanization, Mission as Accompaniment should be articulated and practiced as calculated treason to the postcolonial empire of Economism.

¹⁰ Hendricks, 87.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 24-68.

¹³ Cobb, *Resistance*, x.

¹⁴ John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus’ Apostle Opposed Rome’s Empire with God’s Kingdom* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 11.

In regards to potential critique toward the resistance as advocacy method for Mission as Accompaniment, in addition to those who wish to respond to oppression with violent revolution (as was briefly noted above), some insist that the church should simply focus upon its internal sacredness and not concern itself with impact to society.¹⁵ While there is much to be heard from such a witness, and there is far more to be considered outside the realm of this particular study, the proposal of advocacy as resistance for Mission as Accompaniment has a number of distinct differences from the model of Christian retreat from the world, some of which will be explored here in brief:

- *Advocacy as Resistance is Resourceful:* When people of faith can recognize opportunities for action that can lead to an immediate and worthwhile outcome, they are by all means called – as a matter of faith – to seek it. For example, if people of faith can exterminate mechanistic dehumanization in a brief and swift action, then by all means the ELCA Global Mission should take advantage of such an opportunity. Nevertheless, advocacy as resistance shows that one can live within the world and not conform to it, thus it can engage a sacred pattern of nonconformity alongside public and political engagement.
- *Advocacy as Resistance seeks Coalitions:* In the spirit of Mission as Accompaniment, those who seek to advocate through resistance will actively seek to form coalitions with others who can help inspire and activate global change. With an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory and Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability, even in the midst of resistance to the mainstream values of Economism, people of faith can accompany those who share such desire for opposition in order to create a new world.
- *Advocacy through Resistance is Engagement:* While those who advocate through resistance might condemn the overriding streams of dominant society, such resistance is by no means to be viewed as a withdrawal from the world. To the contrary, to resist is a particular form of engagement for Mission as Accompaniment in the world, not merely for the welfare of the church, but for the sake of the world. While such countercultural commitments may be criticized as unrealistic or even blatantly ignored by mainstream society, such engagement resists the imperial urge of not expressing any alternatives, as there is a different way to live in the world.

¹⁵ Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Williamson, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989).

With all of the above thoughts in mind, this study argues that a move from anesthetic to advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment does not aim to *reform* mechanistic dehumanization, but to *resist* it. In doing so, Mission as Accompaniment guides the ELCA Global Mission to consider the various ways that people and places are connected in the world, and in doing so, discern which connections are to be *resisted* and therefore, which need to be *converted*. Along these lines, the following section will consider a method of resistance that can help to channel Mission as Accompaniment so that ELCA Global Mission may effectively respond to mechanistic dehumanization.

7.3 Advocacy, Resistance, and Circumambulation

To view advocacy as resistance sparks a number of important questions. More specifically, one wonders how it can actually take place in response to mechanistic dehumanization. Is such a method of resistance merely about standing one's ground, or being on the continual defense? How is this genuine advocacy? How does actual transformation take place in the midst of such resistance? If structural and systemic change is not effectively and actively sought, then will not the object of resistance grow, and in turn prove to be increasingly difficult to resist over the course of time? These questions are indeed viable, and in response, advocacy as resistance can be explored through the compelling notion of *circumambulation*, which this study views as compatible with Mission as Accompaniment.

In *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, Marion Grau provides a critical insight into a crucial practice, known as *circumambulation*, that is vital when seeking to move *From Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment*.¹⁶ More specifically, Grau argues that the edges and borders of empires are “zones of interaction” and “fields of negation”, rather than simple and static barriers.¹⁷ In seeking to integrate circumambulation into Mission as Accompaniment, one recognizes that advocacy as resistance is by no means mundane, isolationist, or passive, but such accompaniment seeks out the various vulnerable borders of

¹⁶ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 2.

¹⁷ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 5. When speaking of “zones of interaction”, Grau makes reference to: Peter S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered People Shaped Roman Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 126. The notion of “fields of negotiation” offered by Grau comes from Michael Nausner, “Homeland as Borderland,” in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, Postcolonial Theologies (St. Louis, MI: Chalice, 2004), 123.

empire, as such boundaries are often far more penetrable than frequently imagined. As Grau explains, circumambulation is:

....a circling of the barriers, breaches, beachheads, and brambles where messages are encoded and decoded, divine visions and missions translated and transferred, fools and missionaries, soldiers and merchants trade relics, tools, literacy, theology, and money.¹⁸

The practice of circumambulation, from the Latin *circum* (around) + *ambulātus* (to walk), is often known as the “act of moving around a sacred object or idol”.¹⁹ The custom can be observed in a number of diverse situations and observances around the world, many of which are religious in nature. For example, Catholic priests might circumambulate an altar with a thurible of incense, and sacred shrines are often circumambulated as a spiritual discipline.²⁰ During the Hajj and Umrah, Muslims are compelled to circumambulate the Kaaba seven times, as such an act is understood to display the harmony of believers in worship.²¹ Furthermore, in numerous Hindu temples there are walkways for circumambulation, through which worshipers journey to the interior sanctuary where the deity is cherished.²² Also, in Zen Buddhism there is the tradition of *kinhim*, a walking meditation that occurs between lengthy episodes of sitting contemplation, known as *zazen*.²³ All told, circumambulation includes a wide variety of practices, ranging from the spiritual to the secular, thus an opportunity emerges to consider the notion in new ways for the missiological purposes of this study.²⁴

When seeking to mix circumambulation with Mission as Accompaniment, one recognizes that the accompaniment journey continually encounters a wide variety of borders, barriers, and boundaries. The borders often include various forms of biblical interpretation,

¹⁸ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 2.

¹⁹ John Bower (Editor), *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 224.

²⁰ Albertus Bogus Lakhani, *Muslim and Catholic Pilgrimage Practices* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 158.

²¹ F.E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 57.

²² George Michel, *The Hindu Temple* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 66.

²³ Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (Editors), *Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 256.

²⁴ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 3.

cultural appropriation, and strategic priorities, as missionary endeavors are filled with opportunities for misunderstanding and misappropriation. For the purpose of this study, mechanistic dehumanization is viewed as a significant boundary to Mission as Accompaniment, as this form of dehumanization attempts to “restrict, channel, and order the itineraries” of missionary endeavors that take place in the context of Neoliberal Capitalism.²⁵ While the postcolonial empire of Economism, which is sourced and sustained by mechanistic dehumanization, seeks to “permeate all aspects of life”, “extend its control as far as possible”, and restrict all alternatives,²⁶ such imperial boundaries are inevitably insecure. As history has repeatedly revealed, the boundaries of empire are frequently (and perhaps unescapably) overcome,²⁷ thus one recognizes that Mission as Accompaniment, with an Olive Agenda as a missiological trajectory and Ubuntu as an indicator of accountability, can practice advocacy through resistance by circling and navigating the current imperial boundaries.

For the purpose of this study, *circumambulation is a missiological tactic of advocacy as resistance that can be applied to Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization*. In doing so, such advocacy as resistance recognizes that Neoliberal Capitalism can be countered, the borders of a postcolonial empire can be penetrated, and new forms of knowing God and being human can emerge through an effective response to mechanistic dehumanization. As “Jesus’ public career can be seen as a kind of circumambulation, traveling under imperial conditions, in occupied land”,²⁸ then Mission as Accompaniment can interact with – and engage – the imperial territory:

These fluid liminal zones where Christian mission and empire interact compound the territory that interests us here. The human-divine Christ, trickster figure that embodies and thereby holds together in powerful the paradoxes of human flesh and divine substance, can be found at many of these crossroads.²⁹

While far more can be explored in regards to the precise nature of such circumambulation, at this point it is worth introducing its relationship to Mission as Accompaniment for the

²⁵ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 4.

²⁶ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 2-3.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 12.

²⁹ Ibid.

purpose of this study. More specifically, rather than viewing Mission as Accompaniment as a neatly planned straight-line or linear journey, such can be viewed as a form of circumambulation in which the borders of mechanistic dehumanization are creatively explored and subversively penetrated. In doing so, such missiological circumambulation allows for global companions to journey together in ways that are both intentional and open, planned and inadvertent, purposeful and fortuitous, and intended and accidental. Mission as Accompaniment can inherit the best of its prior manifestations, and also receive the new insights from an ongoing journey, with the overarching conviction that such constitutes participation in the Mission of God:

Where loud voices seek to dominate, we are called to be voices that seek to transform fear and anxiety about economic stability, ethnic identity, national boundaries, and the distribution of opportunities. We are to resist radicalized religious sentiments when they foster a culture of fear, and to speak an alternative to them. Speaking with many voices opens up many resolute clusters of an un/known God.³⁰

In order to further highlight the matter of advocacy as resistance through Mission as Accompaniment, one is drawn to reconsider the nature of being connected as a matter of fact, faith, and function. By viewing such connections through the lenses of circumambulation, one can more fully explore the ways in which the borders of mechanistic dehumanization can be more effectively circled and resisted, and as a result, consider Economism, Anthropological Poverty, Neoliberal Capitalism, and Postcolonial Empire.

7.4 Being Connected as a Matter of Fact

Mission as Accompaniment recognizes that the Household of God (*oikos*) consists of numerous connections as a matter of *fact*. These connections take place across and around the various borders and boundaries of mechanistic dehumanization. More specifically, the entire inhabited earth (*oikoumene*) is connected by fact, both through economics (*oikos-nomos*) and ecology (*oikos-logos*). However, due to the Postcolonial Empire of Neoliberal Capitalism and its corresponding religion of Economism, the worldwide connections of modern day life are filled with ripples of destruction. Due in part to “*the objectifying denial of essentially human*

³⁰ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 25.

attributes to people toward whom the person feels psychologically distant and socially unrelated”, and because of the “indifference, a lack of empathy, an abstract and deindividuated view of others that indicates an implicit horizontal separation from self, and a tendency to explain the other’s behavior in nonintentional, causal terms”,³¹ the harsh realities of the global village are sourced and sustained by mechanistic dehumanization. Through the practice of circumambulation as a tactic of advocacy as resistance, Mission as Accompaniment can empower global companions to circle such connections, examine them, and in doing so, begin to consider methods and means of entrance and transformation.

7.5 Being Connected as a Matter of Faith

The distorted connections of Neoliberal Capitalism that are sourced and sustained by mechanistic dehumanization deny “essentially human attributes”,³² and in doing so reject the critical theological notion of *Imago Trinitatis* that grounds the dignity of all life in the Household of God. As Jürgen Moltmann writes, “Just as three Persons of the Trinity are ‘one’ in a wholly unique way, so, similarly, human beings are *imago Trinitatis* in their personal fellowship with one another”.³³ *Imago Trinitatis* recognizes that people are connected as a matter of faith, and in doing so theologically grounds and guides Mission as Accompaniment in its response to mechanistic dehumanization. As God chose to be intimately connected with the world through the incarnation of Jesus, and because it is in God’s Trinitarian nature to be connected, those engaged in global mission are called to accompany others – as a matter of Christian faith – throughout the interconnected struggles and hopes of daily life. As a result, instead of allowing global connections to breed the “psychological distance” and “social unrelatedness” that mechanistic dehumanization requires,³⁴ Mission as Accompaniment is meant to hold connectedness as a matter of *fact* and *faith* together, and respond by *converting* connections from those of mechanistic dehumanization into those which reflect “harmony with the whole creation”.³⁵

³¹ Haslam, 262.

³² Ibid.

³³ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 241.

³⁴ Haslam, 262.

³⁵ Bujo, 281.

By considering a *conversion of connections through advocacy as resistance*, this study proposes a shift in the longstanding processes and goals of global mission activity through the ELCA. Whereas missionaries of prior generations sought the conversion of a particular individual through the alteration of a specific system of belief, Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu in response to mechanistic dehumanization seeks conversion in a far different manner. More specifically, with the circumambulation of fact and conviction of Christian faith in mind, the task of Mission as Accompaniment is not necessarily the conversion of particular person, but rather, *a conversion of the connection that binds people together*. In other words, the Good News of the Gospel shared through Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu is the advocacy of resistance against mechanistic dehumanization. Therefore, as a conviction of being connected by faith, the focus of conversion within Mission as Accompaniment is not the individuals who accompany one another, but rather, it is the *connection* – shown through an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu – that is shared between all that exists. With this being said, it can be argued that, to move from Anesthetic to Advocacy through Mission as Accompaniment, as this research seeks to investigate, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Global Mission must circumambulate the borders and boundaries of mechanistic dehumanization in order to spark and sustain a conversion of connections*.

7.6 Being Connected as a Matter of Function

In light of being connected by both fact and faith, *Mission as Accompaniment* seeks to function in a way to *convert connections* in response to a mechanistic dehumanization. More specifically, when global companions recognize each other's humanity (Ubuntu), and ensure that the rules of God's household are in companionship with the wisdom of God's household (Olive Agenda), *Mission as Accompaniment* provides an effective response to mechanistic dehumanization. By circumambulating the perceived limits and alleged edges of mechanistic dehumanization, Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu directly counters the indifference and horizontal separation of mechanistic dehumanization. In doing so, such a movement from Anesthetic to Advocacy through Accompaniment requires a conversation of the connections that mechanistically dehumanize, and thus, an update and expansion of previous research into Mission as Accompaniment.

7.7 The Connection/Conversation Model: Updated and Expanded³⁶

My previous research into Mission as Accompaniment led to preliminary thoughts surrounding a “Conversion/Connection” model for Mission as Accompaniment.³⁷ More specifically, my prior examination of Mission as Accompaniment sought to investigate how global mission companionships could overcome power imbalance. With a primary focus placed upon James C. Scott’s notion of hidden transcripts and their relationship to Mission as Accompaniment and the ELCA, the exploration brought forth a variety of concepts surrounding the future of global mission, dialogue, and ongoing resistance to domination. This study seeks to build upon such previous examination.

While my earlier assessments of Mission as Accompaniment have proven to be fruitful, the results revealed a glaring need to build upon its foundation. In specifics, previous research considered how Mission as Accompaniment would alter relationships from oppression to dignity through more equitable interpersonal relationships. However, there was a strong need for continued in-depth study, as the lack of analysis surrounding economic indicators – and their impact upon ecological realities – raised serious questions. As a result of such important feedback, this current study returned to the notion of Mission as Accompaniment, but did so in response to previous critique, and thus carries a more focused and accountable advocacy-driven approach.

My previous exploration into Mission as Accompaniment concluded that the primary method of transforming connections was to alter the way in which people converse with each other.³⁸ Through a search into the power differences imbedded within the use of “public transcripts” and “hidden transcripts” in global mission companionships,³⁹ the research concluded that, “When companions are able to bring their hidden transcripts to the surface and speak truth to one another without fear of punishment, the voices which have

³⁶ While in the proposal stage of this research process, I subsequently shared thoughts on “Converting Connections” as an invited tribute to Steve de Gruchy upon his tragic and unexpected death, as his influence remains substantial. As some of the thoughts developed at that time are utilized for work on this research, please see: Brian E. Konkol “Mission as Conversion of Connections”, in *Living on the Edge: Essays in Honour of Steve de Gruchy, Activist & Theologian*; Edited by James R. Coachrane, Elias Bongmba, Isabel Phiri, and Des van der Water (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publications, 2013), 284-302.

³⁷ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 158.

³⁸ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 154.

³⁹ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

traditionally been silenced will be given a genuine opportunity to be heard and valued”.⁴⁰ More specifically, when those in positions of authority are equipped and empowered to pay attention and listen and those on the receiving end of domination are properly heard, through a more authentic companionship there is more genuine conversation, and a communal embrace of accompaniment is the outcome.⁴¹ As a result, the accompaniment journey could spearhead new and bold initiatives about how to more effectively participate within God’s global mission of transformation, reconciliation and empowerment.⁴²

The previous research into Mission as Accompaniment concluded that, when people are able to speak truth to one another (and listen to truth from one another), power imbalance moves toward correction, the following step is the *restoration of relationships*, and in turn, *oppressive systems are transformed*. More specifically, it was argued that arrangements of control and oppression persist due to the interruptions of equitable relationships.⁴³ When global companions are characterized and simplified as belonging to specific groups, it in turn becomes far easier for particular people and organizations to systematically dominate. However, when personal relationships are built and developed, “no longer are people merely black, women, poor, homo-sexual, etc., but they are Children of God whom are worthy of divine value as sharers of a common creator”.⁴⁴ In review, my previous research into Mission as Accompaniment concluded that, when conversations are transformed, relationships are restored, and in turn, oppressive systems are altered into that which brings life in its fullness. In summary, I concluded that such a restoration of relationships and transformation of systems is the result transforming the ways people are connected.

While this current research by no means seeks to discard my own prior endeavors, the previously developed notion of connectivity clearly required more depth and comprehensive examination in light of newly discovered knowledge. In specifics, the notion of “conversation” should not merely be considered as verbal communication as prior research implies, but as James C. Scott himself recognized, a *conversation* can include “a whole range of practices”, and therefore an opportunity to update and expand the notion of “converting

⁴⁰ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 154.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Konkol, *Mission Possible*, 156.

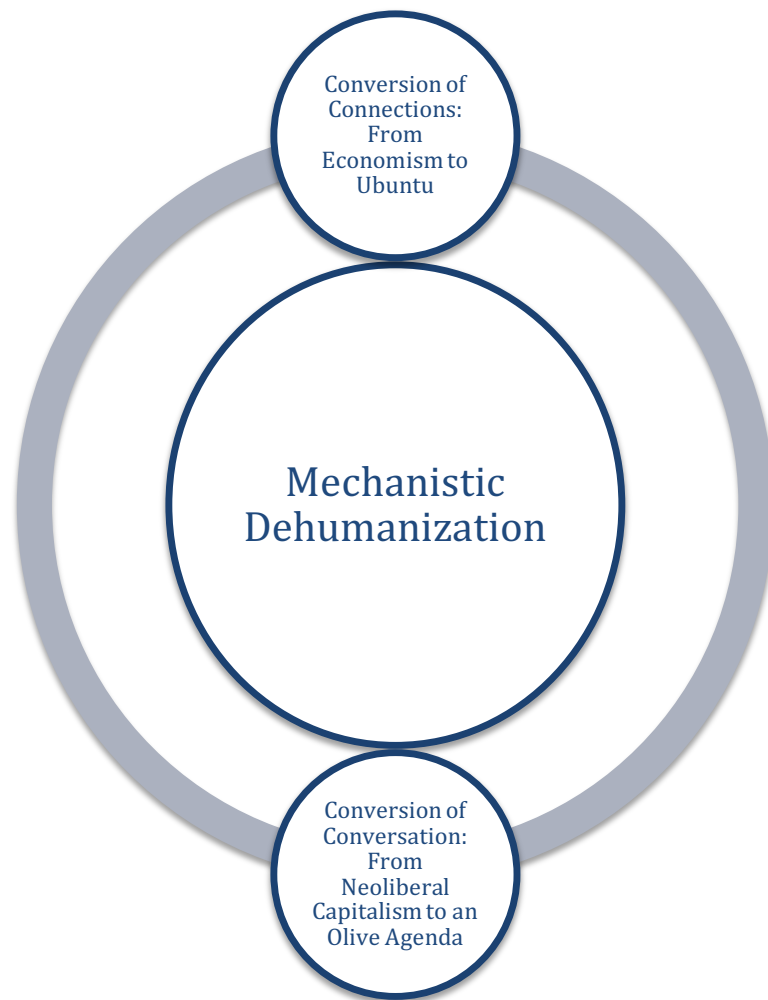
⁴⁴ Ibid.

connections” emerges.⁴⁵ Along these lines, one can expand the notion of “conversation” to include the “rules of the household” that shape economic activity, and in turn, the structures and systems that mold and guide such rules. In other words, to “convert a conversation” is not merely about “truth-telling” through verbal communication as previous research into Mission as Accompaniment points towards. But rather, to “convert a conversation” can be expanded to consider the totality of ways and means by which people interact in the Household of God. As a result, to convert connections by converting conversations, when expanded to consider “the rules of the connections” (*oikos-nomos*) and “wisdom of the connections” (*oikos-logos*) for the sake of “living in harmony with the whole creation” (Ubuntu),⁴⁶ can bring about a far more effective response to mechanistic dehumanization.

With such an expanded view of connections and conversation in mind, the conversion of conversations can thus be considered as a conversion of Neoliberal Capitalism into an Olive Agenda, and also, a conversion of connections can be considered from Economism into Ubuntu. With the circumambulation of mechanistic dehumanization as a tactic of advocacy as resistance, such a conversion is the work of Mission as Accompaniment. When a connection is converted from Neoliberal Capitalism into an Olive Agenda, the result are rules of the household (*oikos-nomos*) that match the wisdom of the household (*oikos-logos*). To the contrary, when Neoliberal Capitalism is propagated and in turn spreads, not only does ecological and economic injustice continue, but it leads to the reality of Economism. With such thoughts in mind, the *circumambulation* of mechanistic dehumanization with *conversation* and *connections* serve as a connective cycle of advocacy as resistance for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization. When mechanistic dehumanization is circumambulated, then Mission as Accompaniment with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu can penetrate its permeable borders, which in turn continues to shape and re-shape global connections through the decrease of mechanistic dehumanization. This cyclical process for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization is highlighted in the diagram below.

⁴⁵ Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Residence*, 14.

⁴⁶ Bujo, 281.



The above diagram illustrates the missiological tactic of circumambulation that surrounds mechanistic dehumanization, the connectivity of conversations and connections, and in turn, the linkage of Neoliberal Capitalism, an Olive Agenda, Economism and Ubuntu. In doing so, the image suggests the ways in which the borders and boundaries of mechanistic dehumanization are indeed “fluid liminal zones where Christian mission and empire interact”.⁴⁷ As a result, the specific points that *Conversion of Conversation* and the *Conversion of Connection* touch the borders of mechanistic dehumanization are critical, as such areas become the places of contact and missionary spaces of compromise, concession, and confrontation.⁴⁸ As a result, the borders and barriers of mechanistic dehumanization

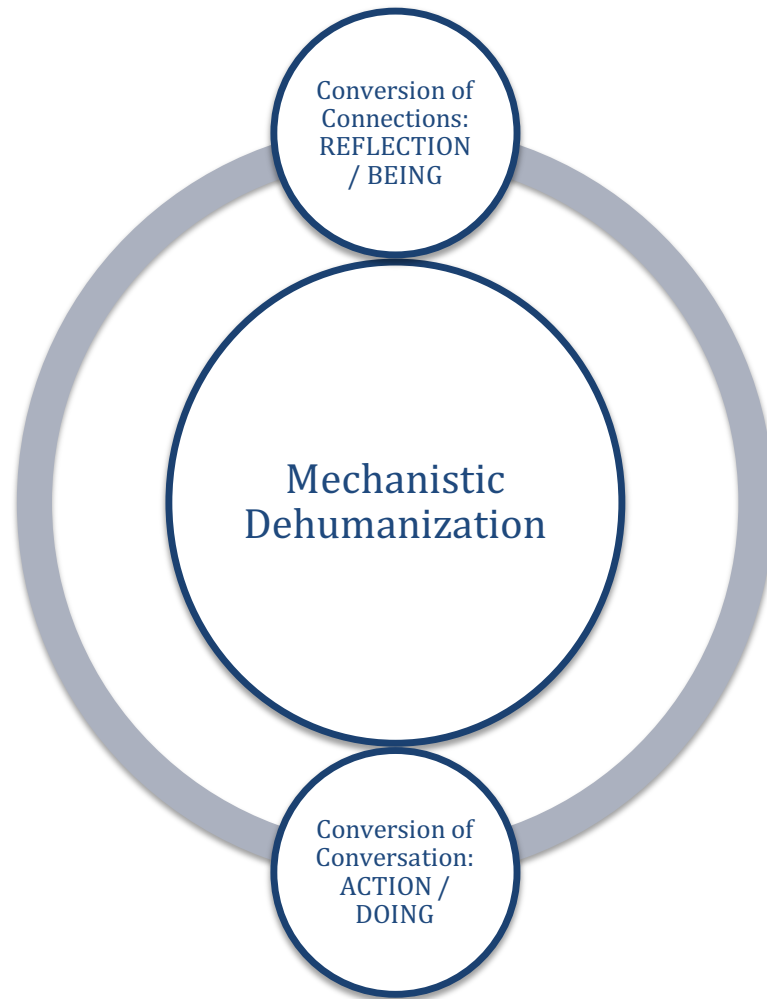
⁴⁷ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 12.

⁴⁸ Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony*, 5.

become places that both resist and embrace missiological ventures, as such areas generate creative and unfolding structures of conversation and connection, and in doing so, the walls that once seemed impenetrable are seen as more porous than first imagined.

Through a continued observation of the above diagram, one notices that the two conceptions of *conversation* and *connection* are not only strongly linked, but in many ways model an “action and reflection” missiology that incorporates – in the spirit of Steve de Gruchy’s conception of *See-Judge-Act* – both “being” and “doing”. More specifically, when the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission considers the nature of global “connections” (reflection/being), the reality of Neoliberal Capitalism and Economism shapes the ways in which conversations take place (action/doing). As “conversations” proceed, continual reflection upon the changing nature of global “connections” takes place, which continue to impact the nature of the “conversation”. The reflection/being and action/doing emphasis (shown in the diagram below) affirms Rieger’s thoughts that mission is not simply about the conversation of others, but “the conversion of the missionary self”.⁴⁹ Mission as Accompaniment, through such a commitment to action and reflection, allows for more genuine mutuality and exchange, it empowers the agency of all that participate, and in doing so provides opportunities for all to be made new.

⁴⁹ Joerg Reiger, “Theology and Mission Between Neocolonialism and Postcolonialism” *Mission Studies* 21.2, (2004), 222.

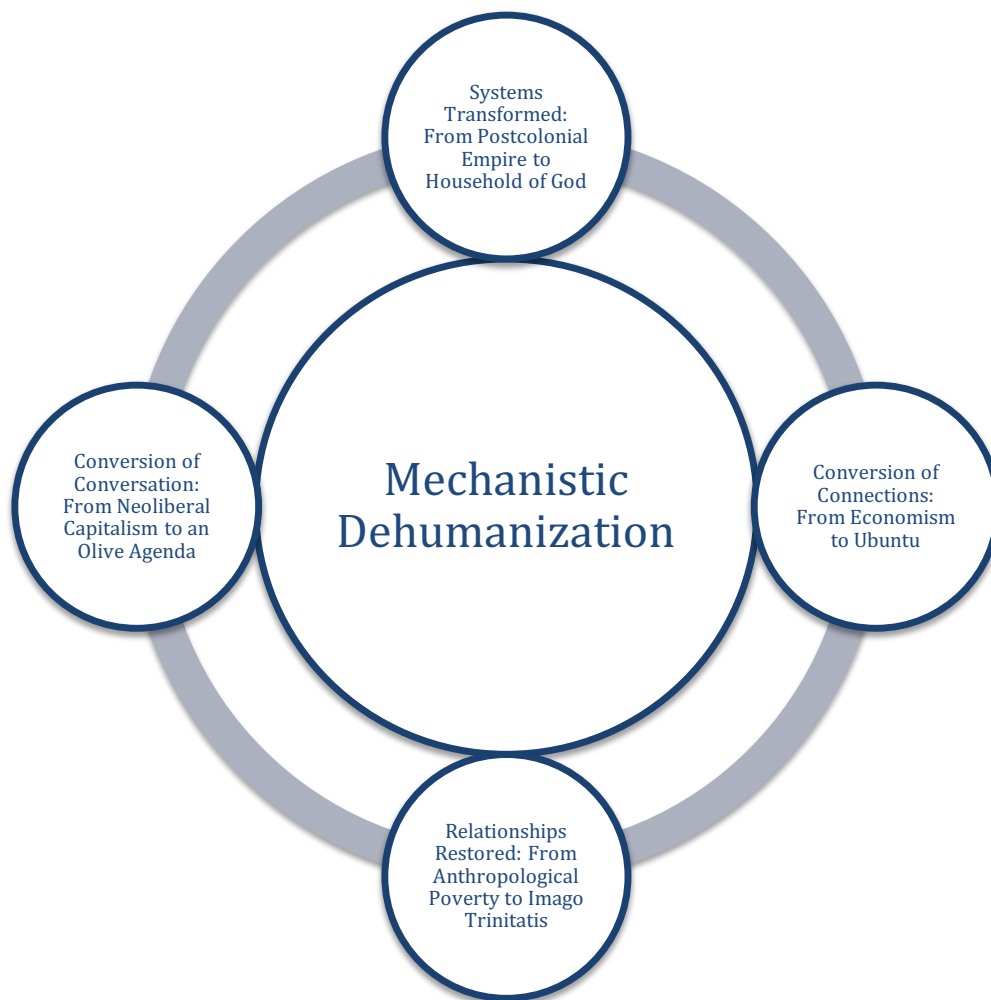


The Conversation/Connection model, while clearly modest, is by no means naïve. While the “connection” aspect was highlighted earlier in this section (fact, faith and function), the term “conversation” requires further explanation. For the purpose of this Conversation/Connection Model for Mission as Accompaniment in response to mechanistic dehumanization, “conversation” may include verbal discourse, but due to the newly discovered knowledge found in the chapters of this study, such a model for mission must incorporate “conversation” through non-verbal action, and perhaps most of all, the intentional and unintentional ways in which people interact through the rules and wisdom of the Household of God.⁵⁰ As a result, the term “conversation” in this model represents the entirety of how people relate to one another on an economic (*oikos-logos*) and ecological (*oikos-*

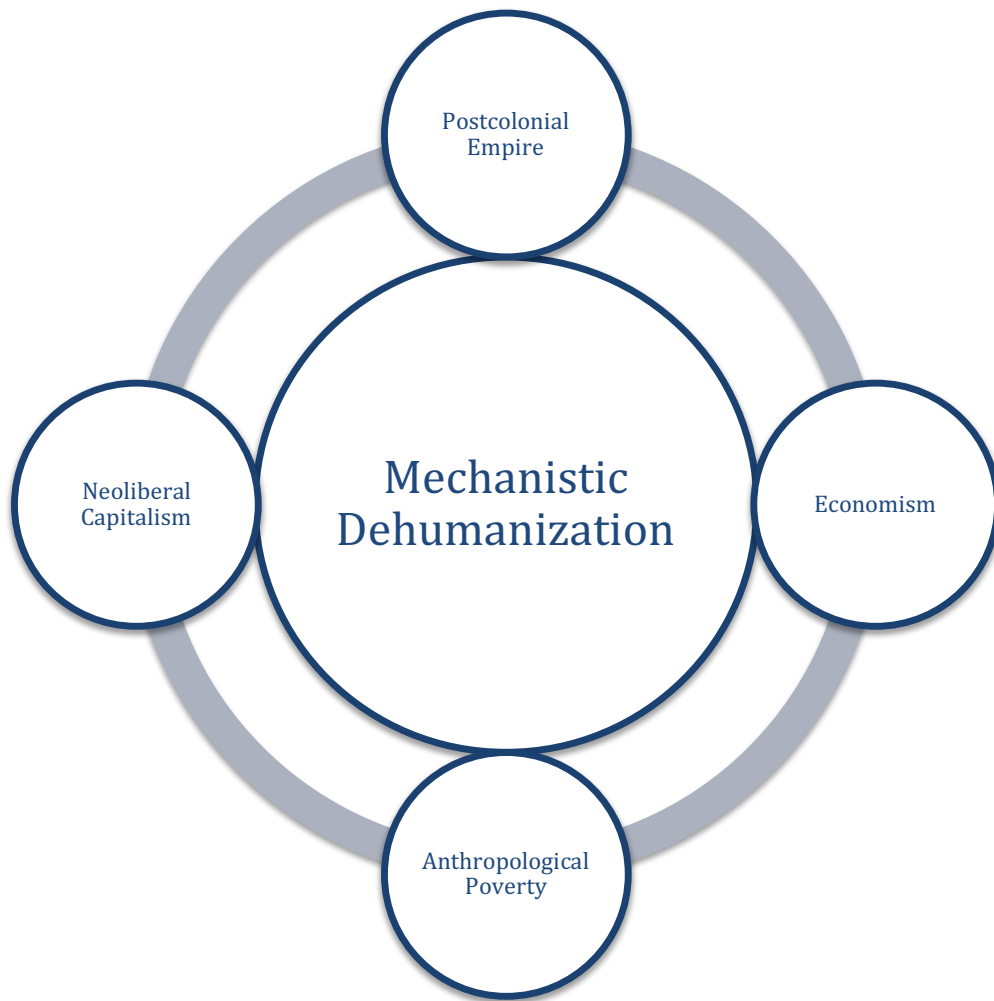
⁵⁰ As stated previously, the usage of “conversation” terminology is similar to what James C. Scott titled as “transcripts”, which is a complete record of both verbal and non-verbal acts. See: Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 2.

nomos) level. In other words, there will always be both “connection” and “conversation” between global companions, but Mission as Accompaniment seeks to ensure that such connections and conversations embody an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu, rather than Economism and Neoliberal Capitalism.

In addition to the nature of “conversation” in the midst of Mission as Accompaniment, an additional factor worthy of explanation is the impact of restoring relationships and transforming oppressive systems. When “conversations” are converted from Neoliberal Capitalism to an Olive Agenda, it then leads to a restoration of relationships (From anthropological poverty to *Imago Trinitatis*), which in turn contributes to a transformation of Postcolonial Empire into a Household of God. In a similar manner (and yet additional paradox), when connections are converted, it also leads to the same positive impact upon relationships and systems. As a result, in many ways, the Conversation/Connection model (updated and illustrated below) symbolizes the momentum that can be generated when conversation and connections are transformed to more fully reflect Jesus’ commitment to mutual dignity and respect.



In a striking contrast to the process of missionary activity highlighted in the diagram directly above, one can also notice the negative momentum (illustrated below) that results when conversation and connections are not converted through a Mission as Accompaniment. Conversations shaped by Neoliberal Capitalism lead to connections formed by Economism, which in turn contributes to the support and maintenance of Postcolonial Empire and Anthropological Poverty. In a similar manner (and once again, an additional paradox), when connections remain oppressive, it also leads to a similar influence upon relationships and systems. As illustrated below, the Conversation/Connection model expresses the momentum that can be generated when conversation and connections are *not* transformed in ways that more fully reflect mutual dignity and respect.



In the updated and expanded Conversation/Connection Model, “conversation” through an Olive Agenda leads to more faithful connections through Ubuntu, and vice versa. The negative momentum of Economism, Postcolonial Empire, and Neoliberal Capitalism is thus slowed-down, stopped, and reversed, all through a circumambulation of mechanistic dehumanization and engagement with its boundaries and borders. As a result, in order for connections to be converted through Mission as Accompaniment, conversations must be shaped in ways that honor the ways in which all are connected in the Household of God and the *Imago Trinitatis*, and in turn, live into such connectivity with an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu. In doing so, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Global Mission can effectively respond to the realities of mechanistic dehumanization.

7.8 Summary and Conclusion

This study has argued that Neoliberal Capitalism is a effective and efficient instrument of Postcolonial Empire, for the current rules of the household seek to “consolidate mass concentrations of power that permeate all aspects of life”, form “top-down control” on “the backs of empire’s subjects” and deny the pursuit of “alternative purposes”.⁵¹ Furthermore, it has argued that mechanistic dehumanization is a source and sustainer of Neoliberal Capitalism and the *Mission as Anesthetic* that promotes the religion of Economism, for the denial of the *Imago Trinitatis* within others leads to anthropological poverty, which in turn sparks a rationalization of apathy and disparity required for mechanistic dehumanization. *Mission as Accompaniment* responds to the indifference and horizontal separation of mechanistic dehumanization through a commitment to journeying together in mutuality and solidarity. However, this study concludes that simple and open journeying together is not enough, for such open-endedness ultimately embraces the priorities of those with the most power. Therefore, to provide a more accountable journey and focused direction, an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu are needed within *Mission as Accompaniment*. This trajectory and indicator of accountability allow for a more faithful and fruitful participation in God’s mission, which utilizes circumambulations as a tactic for advocacy as resistance.

This study argues repeatedly that the consequences of mechanistic dehumanization are massive, thus the call of urgency for more faithful missiological conversation, economic association, and ecological connection. This study affirms the need to move far beyond *Mission as Anesthetic* and other deficient forms of missionary engagement that depletes worldly consciousness and breeds the religion of Economism. As the Christian tradition “includes safeguards designed to prevent and correct the accumulation of unjust power and the misuse and abuse of creation”,⁵² this study challenges the tight grip and idolatrous myths that result from mechanistic dehumanization, and thus supports coalitions of resistance and creative alternatives. As a promise to engage in God’s global mission affirms and appreciates the multifaceted connectedness of all that God has created, the sacred relationship of the human community and the Earth must be appraised, the task of serving as God’s stewards of the creation is to be investigated, and the holy responsibility that humankind has to God, the

⁵¹ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 2-3.

⁵² Diakonia Council of Churches, *Oikos Journey*, (Durban, South Africa), 28.
<http://www.diakonia.org.za/dmdocuments/OikosA5e.pdf>

Earth, and one another is to be more fully treasured and restored. The outcome of this missiological journey, a movement from *Anesthetic to Advocacy through Accompaniment* in God's Mission, will aim to embody – through the “Conversation/Connection Model” – an Olive Agenda and Ubuntu, and in doing so, more faithfully embody who God is, model what God does, and embrace who God's people are called to be.

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