

**“FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD”: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
LAUSANNE COVENANT IN THE LIGHT OF THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS
FROM PROTESTANT METHODIST THEOLOGIAN,
JOSÉ MÍGUEZ BONINO**

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of
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DECLARATION

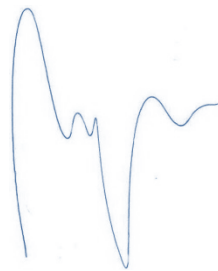
I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Theology (Theology and Development) in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination at any other University.

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ABSTRACT

This study sets out to suggest a theological and methodological framework that assists the evangelical movement in Africa, and in Zambia in particular, to engage its missionary task with greater effectiveness. The study is located within the radical evangelical theological tradition. In this regard, firstly, the study posits that the evangelical movement has a heritage of sociopolitical engagement that can be traced back to its origins in the great evangelical awakening of the eighteenth century. Secondly, the study posits that the evangelical movement abandoned its heritage of socio-political engagement during the first thirty years of the twentieth century due to a number of seemingly unrelated factors that, nevertheless, worked in concert. Thirdly, the study posits that during the third quarter of the twentieth century, evangelicalism engaged in a process through which it inadvertently began to recover its heritage of socio-political engagement. This process began with the International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne, Switzerland in July 1974 (Lausanne 1974). It was an inadvertent recovery in that Lausanne 1974 did not set out to recover the lost heritage of evangelical socio-political engagement, but to plan strategically and to encourage evangelicals in the task of worldwide evangelism. However, during the proceedings of Lausanne 1974, a group of radical evangelicals became dissatisfied with the *Lausanne Covenant's* proviso on the question of socio-political engagement, in its 'two-mandate' approach to the missionary task of the church.

This study however, argues that though the Lausanne movement has become a rallying point and the *Lausanne Covenant* its expression of evangelical unity and purpose, it falls short of providing an adequate theological and methodological framework for evangelical sociopolitical engagement in Africa. The study posits that with key insights from José Míguez Bonino's theological and methodological works: socio-analytic mediation, hermeneutic mediation and practical mediation, evangelicals in Africa, and in Zambia in particular, will be enabled to engage in its missionary task with greater effectiveness. When these missional tools from Míguez Bonino are engaged, evangelicals in Africa will be equipped to engage a process of missional reflection on the contextual reality and thus engage effectively in missional activities.

Employing these key insights from Míguez Bonino, the study argues for a process that will free evangelicalism in Africa from the Northern American and European 'theological imperialism' that prevented the development of its own theology and missiology. The study further argues that such a process, as will assist evangelicalism in Africa to free itself from such influence, will invariably lead evangelicalism in Africa to develop a theology and missiology that will be more responsive to the African context.

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Soli Deo Gloria!

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my two dear friends who have gone to be with the Lord they so dearly loved and served with fervent devotion: Dr Simon Mphuka and Prof Steve De Gruchy. Each, in his own sphere of work, laboured tirelessly to bring to light the whole gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world, seeking, to the glory of God, to make it a more humane world.

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ACRONYMS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AEA	Association of Evangelicals in Africa
AEAM	Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar
Article 5	Article 5 in the <i>Lausanne Covenant</i> on Christian Social Responsibility
Berlin 1966	World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin in 1966
BGEA	Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Chicago 1973	Evangelicals and Social Concern congress in Chicago in 1973
CRESR	Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility
EFMA	Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies
Iguassu 1999	International Missiological Consultation in Iguassu, Brazil in 1999
Lausanne 1974	International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne in 1974
MMD	Movement for Multi-party Democracy
Pattaya 1980	Consultation on World Evangelisation in Pattaya, Thailand in 1980
WCC	World Council of Churches
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
Wheaton 1966	World Congress on Evangelism in Wheaton in 1966
Wheaton 1983	The Church in Response to Human Need congress in Wheaton in 1983

Chapter One

Introduction

Since the International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974 (Lausanne 1974), the theological perspective within the evangelical movement on the question of whether Christians ought to engage in social issues has not been adequately addressed. Though at Lausanne 1974, evangelicals made significant progress hitherto the status quo that attained in evangelicalism. Edward Dayton, in observing the significance of Lausanne 1974 on the evangelical mindset on the issue of Christian social responsibility, notes the following,

In the eight years between Berlin and Lausanne, there was tremendous movement in the evangelical part of Christ's Church ... Lausanne was intended to be a congress of those involved in trying to reach the world; but the Holy Spirit was also enlivening the minds of men and women to expand our understanding of what it meant to evangelise. The Lausanne Covenant greatly broadens our worldviews. We were called to see that the task of evangelisation was not confined to the sharing of information about Jesus. There was a life to be lived. We saw the need for the broad redemption of the world in all its aspects ... The year of Lausanne — 1974 — might also be described as the watershed year in Western evangelicals' interest in social concerns.¹

Prior to Lausanne 1974, the evangelicals were polarised by the question of the importance of evangelism and social responsibility. The vast majority subscribed to a position that only evangelism should be considered a priority. Billy Graham, in expressing his expectations and hopes for the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin in 1966 (Berlin 1966), wrote,

This cause of evangelism to which I have dedicated my life is now suffering from confusion. There is confusion about evangelism among both its enemies and its friends. The enemies of biblical evangelism — which demands a personal confrontation with the claims of Jesus Christ — are keeping the name but substituting another practice. The 'new' evangelism says soul winning is passé. It wants to apply Christian principles to the social order. Its proponents want to make the prodigal son comfortable, happy and prosperous in the far country without leading him back to the Father.²

The polarisation Graham's words elicited was representative of the whole debate at the time. That a middle ground position would have to be sought to bridge the two disparate notions

¹ Edward Dayton, "Social Transformation: The Mission of God", in *The Church in Response to Human Need*, eds. Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p.53.

² Billy Graham, "What We Expect at the Berlin Congress", in *World Vision Magazine* 10.9 (1966), p.6.

was either a minority viewpoint or altogether non-existent. One of the reports following Berlin 1966 included these comments,

... most of those who spoke during the early sessions were against an overemphasis of concern for social issues by Churches [then] ... Some publications in America had predicted before [Berlin 1966] that the meeting would turn into a debate between evangelism and social action proponents ... But such a debate never materialised, primarily because social action was not given much of a platform.³

Clearly the debate among evangelicals — even at Berlin 1966 — was weighed against any form of socio-political engagement in the Church's mission in the world. Around the same time, Norman W. Berg,⁴ as president of the Lutheran Free Conference, stated that the mission of the Church was the “salvation of souls”, not “the redemption of society” as the latter “will be a natural by-product of the preaching of the gospel”. Concerned Presbyterians were attempting to return the Presbyterian Church in the southern part of the United States to the basic purpose of “leading unsaved souls to Christ in opposition to Church leaders who [favoured] a greater involvement in social issues.”⁵ Even the Southern Baptist Convention in the United States was not exempt. ‘Baptists United for Spiritual Revival’ coalesced around “a common concern over the tendencies of certain elements in the North Carolina Convention to lead us away from scriptural authority and basic evangelism towards theological liberalism and social activism”.⁶

The same concern was apparent among evangelicals in other nations. The European Baptist Federation met in 1967 with 2,000 delegates in Vienna, Switzerland, and the meeting was described in these words,

Tensions between those who emphasised the preaching of the gospel in the formal sense and those who heavily stress Christian social work were evident, as in every denomination.⁷

Lausanne 1974 therefore, developed the discourse further on the question of Christian socio-political engagement within the evangelical movement, not only in the West, but the global movement as a whole. However, prior even to Lausanne 1974, some evangelicals had already begun to urge for a greater evangelical Christian socio-political engagement. For example, in 1967 Vernon C. Grounds delivered lectures in which he called upon his fellow evangelicals to

³ “Evangelicals Demonstrate Unity on Urgency of World Evangelism”, in *Home Missions* (Southern Baptist Convention) 38.9 (1967), pp.21-22.

⁴ “Church's Role Spiritual, Not Social, Free Conference Told”, in *The Lutheran Layman*, 37.8 (1966), p.6.

⁵ “Split Among Presbyterians Seen”, in *Milwaukee Journal* (December 1968), p.4.

⁶ “North Carolina Baptists Organize”, in *Newsletter: The Evangelical Christian Education Foundation* (December 1970), p.2.

⁷ Lawrence C Bowser, “Baptist of Europe Hear a call to Abandon Longstanding Traditions”, in *Crusader* 24.11 (1969), p.15.

bring social activism into their evangelistic work.⁸ But this was not necessarily a common position among evangelicals. What made Grounds' call to evangelicals significant is that, as Ronald J. Sider points out,

... that was back when Jerry Falwell was still condemning Martin Luther King's political engagement with the claim that Christ calls us to preach the Gospel, *not* affect politics. That was back when many of evangelicalism's most visible voices still understood persons as primarily souls to be saved rather than body-soul beings made for community and needing God's total salvation.⁹

In other words, as noted above, it was during a time when it was not fashionable for evangelicals to engage in socio-political issues. By and large, evangelicals had taken a stance that was opposed to any form of socio-political engagement. Consequently, one risked much by espousing a theological position which was perceived by fellow evangelicals as being anti-evangelical. As already noted above, in the Baptist debate in America, socio-political engagement was being equated with espousing theological liberalism among evangelicals. Evangelicalism had evidently adopted a dualistic worldview which created a dichotomy between matters spiritual and those considered secular.¹⁰ The convention was to lay emphasis on matters spiritual and disparage those considered as merely secular. These 'secular' matters included social, economic, cultural and political issues. Evangelism — that is, the exclusive proclamation of the gospel message — was, therefore, considered to be the chief means of solving problems of a social nature, without engaging directly with them.¹¹

Until what is now termed, the "Great Reversal",¹² evangelicals had been engaged in socio-political issues. The term 'Great Reversal', a coinage of Timothy L. Smith,¹³ has reference to the withdrawal of evangelicals in general from any form of engagement in socio-political issues in society. This 'withdrawal' took place from approximately 1910 until the 1930s.¹⁴ This withdrawal was not necessarily the result of a single event, but rather a cumulative process of seemingly unrelated events.¹⁵ This study discusses some of these events in more detail later.

⁸ Vernon C. Grounds, "Evangelism and Social Responsibility." Online:

<http://www.denverseminary.edu/media/evangelicalism-and-social-responsibility.pdf>. Accessed: 13 July 2008.

⁹ Ronald J. Sider, "Foreword", in *Evangelicalism and Social Responsibility*. By Vernon C. Grounds Online: <http://www.denverseminary.edu/media/evangelicalism-and-social-responsibility.pdf>. Accessed: 13 July 2008.

¹⁰ David O Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern* (London: Scripture Union, 1973), p14

¹¹ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.21.

¹² Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.30.

¹³ John Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today: Your Influence is Vital in Today's Turbulent World*. Seventh edition, (London: Fleming H. Revell, 1998), p.6

¹⁴ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.30.

¹⁵ See Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, pp.28-43, and Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, pp.6-8.

However, the repercussions of these events on the general evangelical psyche was that they precipitated an abjuration of any form of socio-political engagement and activity in which until then, they had been actively involved: hence, the appellation ‘Great Reversal’.

Kathleen Heasman documents how evangelicals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the early part of the twentieth century were significantly involved in socio-political action.¹⁶ Heasman points out a number of areas of social concern that evangelicals were noted for. These included the securing of legislation against the slave trade, reforming of the criminal justice system, improving labour conditions in factories and industries and the care for orphaned children in a society requiring social transformation.¹⁷

However, as noted above, since the ‘Great Reversal’, evangelicals in general had withdrawn from any form of socio-political engagement. Their focus became the exclusive proclamation of the gospel message for the salvation of the “souls” of people. Harold E. Pruitt observes that during the 1960s, Billy Graham and other evangelical leaders planned to continue the momentum for world evangelisation with two congresses that were interspaced by a mere five months: the Wheaton Congress on Evangelism (Wheaton 1966) and Berlin 1966. This process was to continue through to Lausanne 1974.¹⁸

Nevertheless, it was at Lausanne 1974 that the dimension of Christian social responsibility was reluctantly accepted into worldwide evangelical discourse on the mission of the Church. As a result of the ensuing conversation, Article 5 on ‘Christian social responsibility’ was written and included in the *Lausanne Covenant* (see Appendix 1). It was clear from the incorporation of Article 5, that a growing number of evangelicals were beginning to note that evangelical withdrawal from socio-political engagement needed to be challenged and corrected. However, in response to presentations from three Latin American evangelicals, namely Samuel Escobar, Carlos René Padilla, and Orlando E. Costas,¹⁹ a group of about two hundred radically-minded delegates met together on the sidelines of the official Lausanne 1974 gathering, and drew up a document called ‘Response to Lausanne’ published in the official volume of papers as

¹⁶ Kathleen Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of their Social Work in the Victorian Era* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), p.12.

¹⁷ See Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action*, pp.13-15 and Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, pp.2-6.

¹⁸ Harold Edward Pruitt, “Some Mission Societies since Lausanne 1974,” unpublished MTh Thesis. University of South Africa (23 May 2007), pp.34-35.

¹⁹ Ross Langmead, *The Word made Flesh: Towards an Incarnational Theology* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004), p.90.

‘Theology and implications of radical discipleship’.²⁰ This group was referred to as the ‘radical discipleship group’²¹, and since then have come to be known as radical evangelicals.²² Radical evangelicalism is usually considered as the left wing of the worldwide evangelical movement, partly due to, on the one hand, its originating primarily among evangelicals living and working in the Third World, and on the other, its concern for those who are socio-economically poor and disadvantaged in society.²³

Escobar, Padilla and Costas were particularly instrumental in the developing evangelical discourse on Christian socio-political responsibility. They were the principal movers of the position that was critical of the *Lausanne Covenant* in general, and of the ‘Article 5’ on ‘Christian Social Responsibility’ in particular.²⁴ These three differed with the usual evangelical ‘two-mandate’ approach to the mission of the Church, and the consistent ignoring of the effect that the socio-political situation in a given social context ought to have on the presentation of the gospel message.²⁵ The ‘two-mandate’ approach is essentially that approach to the mission of the Church where a dichotomy is created in the understanding and practice of that mission. In this case, there is the mandate to evangelise, and the mandate to engage in socio-political issues. The ‘two-mandate’ approach to missions upholds the priority of evangelism over socio-political engagement.²⁶ This notion was to create the idea that socio-political engagement was merely an optional extra to the mission of the Church. This would invariably prevent evangelicals from taking the social context seriously in their work of missions.

Escobar²⁷ in his presentation at Lausanne 1974 warned against, what he termed as “the dangers of individualism and materialism”, and what he termed, “North American ‘culture Christianity.’” All three theologians challenged the congress about the need for “an integrated

²⁰ “Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship”, *Let the Earth hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, ed. J.D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publication, 1975), pp.1294-1296. The word ‘and’ in the title is present on the contents page but missing in the heading of the article itself.

²¹ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, p.91.

²² *Let the Earth hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, ed. J.D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publication, 1975), p.

²³ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, pp.91, 92.

²⁴ Alan Nichols, *Evangelicals: Report of the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne* (ChristChurch: Continuation Committee, International Congress of World Evangelization, 1975), p.58.

²⁵ Emilio Núñez, “Evangelical Theology and Praxis for Latin America”, *Evangelical Review of Theology* 11 (1987), p.111.

²⁶ Chris Sugden, “Evangelicals and Wholistic Evangelism”, in *Proclaiming Christ in Christ’s way: Studies in Integral Evangelism*, ed. Vinay Samuel and A. Hauser (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1989), p.29.

²⁷ Quoted in Sugden, “Evangelicals and Wholistic Evangelism”, p.29.

approach to mission”.²⁸ The ‘two-mandate’ approach to mission that upheld the ‘priority of evangelism’ over ‘socio-political engagement’ was argued not only to be an inadequate framework in understanding the Church’s mission, but also one that undermined the Church in fulfilling its mission in a holistic way.²⁹

David J. Bosch observes that during Lausanne 1974, many evangelicals, especially those from the Third World, were ready for a paradigm shift in how they conceptualised the mission of the Church in the world.³⁰ He argued that this group was no longer willing to limit the mission of the Church to evangelisation for the salvation of souls without taking seriously the socio-political context.³¹ Indeed, it would appear that Third World evangelicals could identify with what Escobar, Padilla, and Costas were contending for, they themselves having come from that same context.³² Consequently, for many evangelicals, especially, though not exclusively, from the Third World, a paradigm shift began to take place.

An example of this paradigm shift in a key evangelical theologian is that of John Stott who at Berlin 1966 had echoed Graham’s earlier quote above, on the priority and exclusivity of evangelism in the mission of the Church. Then, he had stated,

The commission of the Church is not to reform society, but to preach the gospel. Certainly Christ’s disciples who have embraced the gospel, and who themselves are being transformed by the gospel, are intended to be salt of the earth and light of the world. That is, they are to influence the society in which they live and work by helping arrest its corruption and illumine its darkness. But the primary task of the members of Christ’s Church is to be gospel heralds, not social reformers.³³

However, by 1975 Stott was beginning to acknowledge a shift in his theological position on the mission of the Church and began to take on board the aspect of socio-political engagement.³⁴ In 1975 Stott argued that he now saw,

more clearly that not only the consequences of the commission but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibilities, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus.³⁵

²⁸ Sugden, “Evangelicals and Wholistic Evangelism”, p.30.

²⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991) p.405.

³⁰ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.405.

³¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.405.

³² Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, pp.92-93.

³³ John Stott, “The Great Commission” in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task: World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966*. ed. C.F. Henry and W.S. Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publication, 1967) vol 1, pp.50-51.

³⁴ John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Falcon, 1975), pp.19-24.

³⁵ Stott, *Christian Mission*, p.23.

Among evangelicals in Africa, this paradigm shift, post-Lausanne 1974, is apparent in documents emerging out of the Fourth General Assembly of the *Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar* (AEAM) in Malawi in 1984³⁶ and more recently in the strategic plan document of the *Association of Evangelicals in Africa* (AEA³⁷) Plan 2010–2014.³⁸ In the AEA strategic plan document, the fourth strategic priority enumerates the social, political, economic and cultural challenges facing the Church and society in Africa. The AEA seeks, in this priority, to provide an evangelical platform for evangelicals in Africa to respond effectively to socio-political and economic issues in Africa as integral to missions.³⁹

Clearly, the evangelical debate in many quarters now no longer seeks to justify theologically the need for socio-political engagement. For these evangelicals, the *Lausanne Covenant* and subsequent evangelical congresses on the subject of socio-political engagement had addressed this question adequately.⁴⁰ The challenge however, facing evangelicalism today, has to do with *how* that engagement in socio-political issues should take place in society. This observation is noted by Melvin Tinker who argues that within evangelicalism the “ ... controversy ... is not so much over the question of *whether* Christians should engage in socio-political activity, but *how* that involvement should express itself and upon what theological basis it should proceed.”⁴¹

Discussing this point further, Robert K. Johnstone observes,

*That evangelicals should be involved socially has become a foregone conclusion ... but how and why evangelicals are to involve themselves in society have proven to be more vexing questions. That they are to be involved brings unanimity; how that involvement takes shape and what is its Christian motivation brings only debate.*⁴²

³⁶ See Marini Bodho “The Church and Citizenship” and Samuel Yameogo, “The Church and Social Concern” in *Church in Africa Today and Tomorrow: Proceedings of the A.E.A.M 4th General Assembly, Malawi* (Nairobi: The Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar, 1984), pp.310-324, 328-334.

³⁷ *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa* (AEA), was previously known as *Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar* (AEAM). The AEA is one of the seven regional movements comprising the World Evangelical Alliance. Founded in 1966, it has a membership of 33 national evangelical fellowships (NEFs) across the continent of Africa. It exists to foster Christian unity, provide identity, voice and platform for some 80 million evangelical Christians in Africa. See *Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) Strategic Plan 2010-2014*, p.6. Online: [http://www.aeafira.org/announcement/AEA%20STRATEGIC%20PLAN%202010-2014%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.aeafira.org/announcement/AEA%20STRATEGIC%20PLAN%202010-2014%20(English).pdf). Accessed: 15 June 2010.

³⁸ See *Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, p.14.

³⁹ See *Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, pp.6, 9-10, 14, 18-19.

⁴⁰ Bodho “The Church and Citizenship”, p.321.

⁴¹ Melvin Tinker, *Evangelical Concerns: Rediscovering the Christian Mind on Issues facing the Church Today* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2001), p.140.

⁴² Robert K. Johnstone, *Evangelicals at an Impasse: Biblical Authority in Practice* (?: John Knox Press, 1979), p.79.

The African evangelical theologian, Tite Tiénou, seemingly exasperated by this ongoing and unending debate on how they are to engage socially with society, expressed himself in the following way,

We live in a time of inflation. Besides the monetary kind, there is an inflation of words and meetings. Just as the things we buy cost more and more money, all these words and meetings take up more and more of our time ... let us stop talking and start doing! ... particularly in the area of evangelism and social concern.⁴³

This call by Tiénou to “stop talking and start doing”, particularly as it relates to the area of socio-political engagement, is the primary contention of this study. This study argues that the Lausanne Covenant provides a soundly evangelical theology about Christian socio-political engagement, arguing adequately, albeit in the process developing the notion of a ‘two-fold mandate’. However, this study observes that due to the ‘two-fold mandate’ notion, the Lausanne Covenant is weak in providing an adequate theological and methodological framework for actual socio-political engagement. The relevant clause for this study is Article 5 of the Lausanne Covenant (‘Article 5’), entitled ‘Christian Social Responsibility’. Though ‘Article 5’⁴⁴ acknowledges that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty, it fails to demonstrate just *how* that Christian social responsibility is to be realised in practical terms. It thus fails to provide an adequate theological and methodological framework for that process of socio-political engagement.

For example, in the Republic of Zambia, the evangelical Church is generally apathetic towards its missionary task of socio-political engagement to society. Though the evangelical movement affirms the *Lausanne Covenant*, it would appear that its two-fold approach to missions and its failure to provide an adequate theological and methodological framework for socio-political engagement, has caused the evangelical movement in Zambia to either fail or neglect to engage socio-political issues in Zambian society.⁴⁵

The evangelical movement in Zambia may be accurately designated as constituting mainly missionary-planted churches, and is clearly influenced by American and European evangelicalism. By and large, the Zambian evangelical movement has uncritically adopted a pro-West ideology that is ideologically anti-socialist, and tends towards a neo-liberal and ‘free

⁴³ Tite Tiénou, “Evangelism and Social Transformation,” in *The Church in Response to Human Need*. Ed by Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), p.175.

⁴⁴ Article 5 in The Lausanne Covenant. Online: http://www.parkerfoundation.org/PDFs/lausanne_covenant.pdf. Accessed: 14 May 2008.

⁴⁵ Matt and Polly Newsletter. Online:<http://mattandpolly.files.wordpress.com/2006/10/feb-06-newsletter.pdf> Accessed: 15 August 2010.

market' economic paradigm. It has rendered support to American foreign policy on the world stage, giving diplomatic recognition to Israel over the Palestinian people. The evangelical movement therefore considered the Chiluba regime as God's chosen administration. Notwithstanding its claim of being apolitical, the evangelical movement played a significant role in agitating for the removal of the Kenneth Kaunda regime, which was perceived to be anti-Christian because of its socialist economic model and being favourably inclined to the then Eastern Bloc and other socialist countries. They rendered unfettered and uncritical support to the Chiluba regime.

Isabel Phiri suggests that during the presidency of Frederick J.T. Chiluba in Zambia, it was estimated that "well over 80 percent of the people lived in extreme poverty levels".⁴⁶ A small number of Zambians were getting richer at the expense of the majority of the populace.⁴⁷ Yet Chiluba, an evangelical charismatic Christian⁴⁸, was reported by *The Post* newspaper to have given public funds to help finance the construction of Dan Pule's evangelical charismatic mega-Church, studio and offices.⁴⁹ Despite the prevailing context of extreme poverty, the evangelical Church remained silent during the application of these wrong priorities in the disbursement of public funds.⁵⁰

Though the evangelical movement's theological perspective on Church and State relations, a perspective that was bequeathed to it by an imperialistic evangelicalism, they rendered uncritical support to the Chiluba regime. However, when it came to engaging the government on alleged corruption, mismanagement and the lack of supportive policies that would support the poor and marginalised people in the society, the Church conveniently became apolitical. And so, because the Chiluba regime was favourably aligned to the West, embracing its economic and political ideology on the world stage, the evangelical movement became more aligned to imperialistic predilection. Therefore, aligning itself with the regime, it could not critically engage with it on these allegations, despite calls to do so by civil society organisations

⁴⁶ Isabel Apawo Phiri, "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia: The Christian Nation and Democracy", in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33:4 (2003), p.401.

⁴⁷ Phiri, "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia", p.401.

⁴⁸ Phiri, "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia", p.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Phiri, "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia", p.40

⁵⁰ See Phiri, "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia", p.422; and Peter Henriot, "The Church in the Modern World: The Zambian Experience", pp.6-7. Paper presented at the Conference: The Call to Justice: The Legacy of Gaudium et Spes 40 years later (16-18 March 2005) Vatican City, Rome. Online: Accessed on 24 October 2008.

and other Church bodies such as the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambia Episcopal Conference.⁵¹

This uncritical solidarity with the Chiluba regime on the part of the evangelical Church, made it susceptible to its corrupt influence. At the time, there were many public accusations against evangelicals, especially Pentecostal and Charismatic pastors,⁵² who received the president's 'brown envelopes.'⁵³ The 'brown envelopes' were a form of corruption which Chiluba used to bribe mostly evangelical pastors with money and gifts for their support. It was these 'brown envelopes' as well as his televised propaganda campaigns that delayed significantly the coming to light of much direct evidence of misrule and mismanagement by Chiluba.⁵⁴

The complicity of the evangelical Church contrasted starkly with how the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions in Zambia responded to the Church's missionary task.⁵⁵ For example, in the recent public debate on the removal of the abuse of office offence from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Act, Anglican Bishops urged the Zambian president not to assent to the new bill that sought to remove the offence of abuse of office.⁵⁶ In the Anglican Diocese of eastern Zambia, Bishop William Mchombo, delivering his homily at the centenary service of the Anglican Church in Zambia, and addressing the Zambian president, Rupiah Bwezani Banda, who together with senior government officials, was in attendance, said,

The fight against corruption should not be compromised and neither should we relent. It is in this light that we are concerned with the removal of the abuse of office clause from the ACC Act. We do not in any way imply that public officers cannot engage in income generating activities to supplement on their salaries; far from it. Certainly there are guidelines that allow for such to happen as long as one does not have illicit access to public resources or pecuniary advantage on account of his or her public office. These excesses are well documented year in and year out in the Auditor General's reports. That is why, Your Excellency, we implore you not to consent to the removal of the abuse of office clause from the ACC Act 42 of 1996.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Phiri, "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia" p.422.

⁵² Phiri, "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia" p.422.

⁵³ Christine Munalula, "The Third Term Debate in Zambia." Online:

www.tkenya.org/documents/TIZambiaonChilubasThirdTerm.doc. Accessed 4 October 2008. Munalula, a member of Transparency International (Zambia) presented this paper at the Oasis forum meeting, a conglomeration of civil society organisation in Zambia. The Oasis forum consisted the Zambia Episcopal Conference, the Christian Council of Zambia, Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, Law Association of Zambia, and the Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee. The phrase 'brown envelopes' was reference the monetary "gifts" Chiluba was handing out to those who were in support or campaigning for his third term bid for the presidency.

⁵⁴ Phiri, "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia ... " p.422.

⁵⁵ Henriot, "The Church in the Modern World", pp.4-6.

⁵⁶ Ernest Chanda and Collins Phiri, "Anglicans urge Rupiah not to remove Abuse of Office" in *The Post* 1 Nov. 2010, pp.1, 4.

⁵⁷ Chanda and Collins Phiri, "Anglicans urge Rupiah", p.4.

At the same occasion, the Dean of the Anglican Province of Central Africa, Bishop Albert Chanda, in giving his vote of thanks, said,

Your Excellency, we appeal to your conscience to re-look at the Anti Corruption bill and review it. The view of our Church is that the enactment in the ACC Act should be critically reviewed. The concept of good governance should be characterised by transparency and is applicable to all sections of society. And we are hoping as a Church that the bill has not been presented for assent. We pray that according to your powers vested in the law you uphold zero tolerance to corruption by restoring the abuse of office clause. Your Excellency, when we speak as a Church we are not being against government. We speak for the people just as God commanded us.⁵⁸

Both these Church leaders represented a prophetic voice which was seemingly absent among evangelicals who are usually perceived to be on the side of those in society who are alleged to commit socio-economic injustice and engage in the plundering of national resources.⁵⁹

This failure and neglect by the evangelical Church in Zambia is not an isolated case of the lack of a prophetic voice and critical engagement by sectors of the African evangelical Church, as is demonstrated by the experience of ‘concerned evangelicals’ in South Africa, during the last state of emergency under the apartheid regime of South Africa. “Somewhere around September 1985 a group of ‘concerned evangelicals’ met to discuss the crisis in South Africa and how it affected their lives, their faith, and in particular the evangelistic mission which was usually their preoccupation.”⁶⁰ The state of emergency lasted for eight months from July 1985 to March 1986 and during that period “many people were in detention and people were dying at an alarming rate per day in the country. Curfews were applied in some areas and the security forces were storming into schools and arresting even eight-year-olds.”⁶¹ Notwithstanding the atrocious acts by the apartheid regime, all that the “concerned evangelicals” could do was to “agonise about [their] role in the situation” because their “frustration” was that evangelical Churches, groups, and organisations were “almost lost and could not provide prophetic light in the situation ... [and] at the worst most would be supporting the *status quo* instead of being a conscience to the state.”⁶² As a result they recognised that their theology was inadequate “to address the crisis [they and their fellow citizens] were facing,”⁶³ And concluded that it was influenced,

⁵⁸ Chanda and Collins Phiri, “Anglicans urge Rupiah”, p.4.

⁵⁹ Henriot, “The Church in the Modern World”, pp.6-7

⁶⁰ *Evangelical Witness in South Africa: Evangelicals critique their own theology and practice* (Johannesburg: Concerned Evangelicals, 1986), p.1.

⁶¹ *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, p.1.

⁶² *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, pp.1-2.

⁶³ *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, p.2.

... by American and European missionaries with political, social and class interests which were contrary or even hostile to both the spiritual and social needs of [their] people in [South Africa] ... Having realised that there was something wrong with the practice and theology of evangelicals in [South Africa, they] felt God's calling to [them] to rectify this situation for the sake of the gospel of the Lord.⁶⁴

This was a significant moment considering that it was taking place just over a decade after Lausanne 1974 where Article 5 on 'Christian social responsibility' was formulated and incorporated in the Lausanne Covenant. No reference was made to this clause in the discourse of "concerned evangelicals" in South Africa. The impetus to their stance derived from the *Kairos Document*⁶⁵ which forced them to address the *kairos for themselves*, 'the moment of truth, [and] crisis', and so develop a framework for an effective evangelical witness in South Africa.⁶⁶ However, this document itself could be improved with deeper theological insights from Latin American Liberation Theology. It is for this reason that this study proposes that the theological work of José Míguez Bonino, namely *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*⁶⁷ and *Toward a Christian Political Ethics*⁶⁸, can contribute to developing a more adequate theological and methodological framework for socio-political engagement within the tradition of radical evangelical Christianity in Africa.

The focus of this study being the strengthening of 'Article 5' of the *Lausanne Covenant* on 'Christian Social Responsibility' as a theological and methodological framework for evangelical socio-political engagement within the radical evangelical tradition, its choice to engage with the theological work of Míguez Bonino is due to his emphasis is on *doing* theology rather than on systematising it.⁶⁹ The universal dominance of the hermeneutic of language among evangelicals by the European and American evangelicals has to be challenged by a hermeneutic of the deed. Míguez Bonino proposes, that an engaged faith and obedience cannot stand outside or above the world in which they are engaged.⁷⁰ Consequently, this is why, in the effort to enter into doing theology as Míguez Bonino does, we are obligated to dwell on the understanding and

⁶⁴ *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, p.2.

⁶⁵ The *Kairos Document* is a theological statement issued in 1985 by a group of black South African theologians based predominantly in the black township of Soweto, South Africa. The statement challenged the Churches' response to what the authors saw as the vicious policies of the Apartheid state under the State of Emergency declared on 21 July 1985. The *Kairos Document* evoked strong reactions and furious debates not only in South Africa, but world-wide.

⁶⁶ *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, p.2.

⁶⁷ José Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

⁶⁸ José Míguez Bonino, *Toward a Christian Political Ethics*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.

⁶⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.21f

⁷⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.21.

analysis of the world in which it finds its *locus*. This approach to doing theology, as proposed by Míguez Bonino, invariably works at liberating African evangelicalism, and Zambian evangelicalism in particular, from the hermeneutical tradition bequeathed to it by Western evangelicalism.

An Argentinean Methodist Protestant theologian, José Míguez Bonino was one of the leading theologians associated with the Latin American liberation theology movement.⁷¹ However, though closely associated with the liberation theology movement, John Paul Davies argues that Míguez Bonino “cannot be univocally labelled a liberation theologian”, rather he may be considered as one of its “foremost participant-critics in Latin America.”⁷² In other words, as Davies⁷³ observes, Míguez Bonino did not only “contribute to the Liberation Theology discourse” by participating and rendering support, he also “engaged in dialogue with some of the leading proponents by raising difficult questions”. In an interview with Davies, Míguez Bonino describes himself as follows,

I have been variously tagged a conservative, a revolutionary, a Barthian, a liberal, a catholic, a “moderate,” and a liberationist. Probably there is truth in all of these. It is not for me to decide. However, when I do attempt to define myself in my inner most being, what “comes from within” is that I am an *Evangélico*.⁷⁴

However, though Míguez Bonino describes himself as an *evangélico*, it is worth observing that the Spanish word *evangélico* does not carry the same meaning as ‘Evangelical’ in the Anglo-Saxon world. Davies provides this etymological insight to the Spanish word *evangélico*,

Evangélico in Spanish refers to anybody or any tradition influenced directly or indirectly by the Reformation and more or less equivalent to Protestant. This does not mean that the Western ecclesiastical and theological divisions do not exist in Latin America but it does mean that everybody from Pedro Arana Quiróz (b. 1938), who in Anglo-Saxon terms is considered ‘Evangelical’ to Rubém Alves Azevedo (b. 1933), who most certainly would not be thought of in that framework, is referred to as *Evangélico* ... This is not often recognized in translations from the Spanish when *Evangélico* is simply translated *Evangelical*.⁷⁵

⁷¹ John Paul Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness: The Missionary Theology of José Míguez Bonino” PhD Thesis (Utrecht University, 2006), p.1. Online: <http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/dissertations/2006-1201-223353/full.pdf>. Accessed 24 May 2008.

⁷² Quoted in Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.3.

⁷³ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.3.

⁷⁴ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.13.

⁷⁵ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.6.

However, Davies further observes that, in his recent work, “La Teología evangélica y los evangélicos”⁷⁶, Míguez Bonino quotes with approval the classic definition of evangelicalism given by evangelical George M. Marsden, by saying that “probably any Latin American *evangélico* could subscribe to this definition.”⁷⁷

Míguez Bonino’s theological and methodological framework is of significance to this study because of his clear links to evangelicalism. For example, his work, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*, was published after a six-month lecture-tour to the United Kingdom. During this period, Davies says, “... John R.W. Stott, under the influence of Andrew Kirk ... invited [Míguez Bonino] to give the ‘London lectures in contemporary Christianity’, sponsored by the Langham Trust ... The subject was ‘Christians and Marxists: A mutual challenge to Revolution’⁷⁸.”⁷⁹ He observes that the publicity material introduced these lectures as dealing with a dialogue between the Christian and Marxist worldview and on how to respond to the concrete situation.⁸⁰ Davies notes that although the lectures were well received, they nevertheless caused a controversy among the audience: “... a lot of people who attended ‘could not believe their ears’ that Míguez Bonino was advocating Christian cooperation with Marxism.”⁸¹ What is of significance is that it was merely a month after Míguez Bonino’s United Kingdom lecture-tour that the Lausanne 1974 was also held from 16–25 July, 1974.

Davies⁸² observes that Míguez Bonino’s works on “hermeneutics can be subdivided” into those that deal with “theological methodology” and those that deal specifically with “biblical hermeneutics”. These two of his works, besides *Christians and Marxists: The Mutual Challenge to Revolution*, specifically focus on theological methodology.⁸³ Davies further observes that each of these works, in some way were written in a response to the rise of Liberation Theology in Latin America.⁸⁴

This study argues that Míguez Bonino’s theological work can provide that theological and methodological framework that will enhance and contribute to strengthening the ‘Article 5’ of the *Lausanne Covenant* on ‘Christian Social Responsibility’ as a theological and

⁷⁶ Quoted in Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.6.

⁷⁷ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.6.

⁷⁸ These lectures were later published as *Christians and Marxists: The Mutual Challenge to Revolution*. See Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.195.

⁷⁹ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.26.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.26.

⁸¹ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.26.

⁸² Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.44.

⁸³ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.44.

⁸⁴ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.44.

methodological framework for evangelical socio-political engagement within the radical evangelical tradition.

The study proceeds in Chapter Two with the history of evangelicalism in relation to socio-political involvement. In this analysis, the chapter seeks to show the evangelical socio-political debate and the road towards recovering its heritage of socio-political engagement. Chapter Three then focuses on ‘Article 5’ of the *Lausanne Covenant* on ‘Christian social responsibility’. This chapter discusses why the document was produced, who led the process and the identity of the participants and presents the theological background of the participants in the socio-political debate. It further discusses the ‘two-mandate’ approach, looking at its development and final resolution and focuses on the objectives and goals of ‘Article 5’ of the *Lausanne Covenant* in order to show its impact thus far. Chapter Four focuses primarily on the two theological works of Míguez Bonino, namely, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* and *Toward a Christian Political Ethics*. This chapter seeks to outline the key theological and methodological insights that Míguez Bonino offers in his works on the issue of developing an effective evangelical Christian socio-political engagement within the radical evangelical tradition. Chapter Five discusses the engagement of evangelical theology with socio-political activity using key insights from the works of Míguez Bonino. Chapter Six concludes the study and offers a way forward for further research.

Chapter Two

Evangelicals and Social Engagement

2.1 Introduction

Understanding the nature and history of evangelicalism as a movement and its heritage of socio-political engagement in society is important to this study. It is in understanding these facts that we are able to appreciate the emergence of the *Lausanne Covenant* in general, and ‘Article 5’ on ‘Christian Social Responsibility’ in particular. The formulation of ‘Article 5’ marked a significant turnaround for the worldwide evangelical movement in relation to its heritage of socio-political engagement, which it had previously abandoned. Hence, if ‘Article 5’ is to be appreciated in terms of its contribution to the recovery of a socio-political consciousness among evangelicals, understanding who evangelicals are and the diversity that is represented in the worldwide movement, is necessary. Given this understanding, the study will be able to examine the strengths and weaknesses of ‘Article 5’, and propose a theological and methodological framework in strengthening ‘Article 5’ as an effective tool for socio-political engagement within the radical evangelical tradition.

Many of the examples in this chapter are of the evangelical heritage of socio-political engagement in Britain and America because evangelicalism had not yet become a worldwide movement by the time the ‘Great Reversal’ took place. However, as evangelicalism began to take on global significance as a movement, it was characterised by the lack of involvement in socio-political issues. This was so because it was European and American evangelicalism, through global missionary endeavours, that perpetrated this view.

2.2 Who are Evangelicals?

It is generally argued that the evangelical movement is not a theologically homogeneous group, but rather, as J.P. de Vries suggests, a religious disposition.⁸⁵ In other words, De Vries⁸⁶ argues that evangelicalism is not a group that may be defined or identified by a single and unified theological position. He observes that it is rather a group of Christian persons, Churches

⁸⁵ Quoted in Christina Maria Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa: Its History, Organisation, Members, Project, External relations and Message* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Publishing House, 1996), p.23.

⁸⁶ Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, pp.22-23.

and organisations which, though embracing a diversity of theological positions, are nevertheless united in their conviction of the gospel, the good news of God in Jesus Christ reconciling humanity to God. Hence, Christina Breman's observation that it is not easy to give a single definition of an evangelical or of the worldwide evangelical movement, "a movement that differs from continent to continent and from country to country."⁸⁷ Klass Runia observes "it is practically impossible to put this large, worldwide movement neatly into compartments."⁸⁸ Runia⁸⁹ further points out that the worldwide evangelical movement is "not only too large, but also too pluriform", arguing that there are not "enough colours of the rainbow" to confer to its each constituent member. Hence, he concludes that although they have a lot in common, they are too varied to be classified precisely.⁹⁰

Mark Noll argues in a similar vein, when he points out that,

"Evangelicalism" is not, and never has been, a "-ism" like other Christian isms — for example, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Presbyterianism, Anglicanism, or even Pentecostalism ... Rather, "evangelicalism" has always been made up of shifting movements, temporary alliances, and the lengthened shadows of individuals. All discussions of evangelicalism, therefore, are always both descriptions of the way things really are as well as efforts within our own minds to provide some order for a multifaceted complex set of impulses and organisations.⁹¹

This may also be noted from the way evangelicals themselves articulate their self-identity. For example, John Stott writes,

In seeking to define what it means to be evangelical, it is inevitable that we begin with the gospel. For both the theology (evangelicalism) and our activity (evangelism) derive their meaning for the good news (the evangel).⁹²

Thus, it is significant to observe how evangelicals themselves define their self-identity. Tiénoú defines an evangelical as "one devoted to all the Good News of Jesus Christ as the entirety of God's special revelation, which is the whole Bible."⁹³ John Stackhouse writes, "Evangelicals prize the classic good news of God being in Christ reconciling the world to [God]."⁹⁴ Therefore, as it may be noted, the word 'evangelical' is a derivative of the word

⁸⁷ Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, pp.22-23.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, p.25.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, p.25.

⁹⁰ Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, p.25.

⁹¹ Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), p.8.

⁹² John Stott, *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1999), p.29.

⁹³ Tite Tiénoú, *The Theological Task of the Church in Africa*, second edition (Achimota: African Christian Press, 1990), p.9.

⁹⁴ John G. Stackhouse, *Evangelical Landscapes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002), p.48.

‘evangel’, which means ‘gospel’ or ‘good news’⁹⁵, hence giving evangelicalism its self-identity. The gospel message of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ is therefore central in defining how evangelicals understand themselves. Notwithstanding the diverse character of evangelicalism, Runia⁹⁶ suggests three major factors which evangelicals have in common as a way of defining the movement: (1) The view that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God. (2) The personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the work of the rebirth by Holy Spirit. (3) The emphasis on the evangelistic and missionary task of all believers.

It has been suggested by some historians⁹⁷ that the notion ‘evangelical’ must first be applied to the movement that arose from the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thomas More referred to the protagonists of the Reformation as “*Evangelicalles*” in 1531.⁹⁸ Hence the use of the notion ‘evangelical’, by some historians and in parts of continental Europe as a synonym for Protestantism.⁹⁹ Consequently, Alistair McGrath¹⁰⁰ argues that the word was used for a spiritual movement in “the 1520s among the Italian aristocratic laity” which placed an emphasis on the matter of “personal salvation”. However, Clive Calver and Rob Warner argue that the notion evangelical predates the Reformation, stating that,

The root word was first used in the early Church as the Latin adjective ‘*evangelicus*’. In the fourth century, Augustine used it to declare that ‘the blood of the Christians is, as it were, the seed of the fruit of the Gospel’ (*semen fructum evangelicorum*).¹⁰¹

Notwithstanding this, evangelical writers have generally claimed that the movement “... was based firmly upon the principles of the Reformation, remaining true to them when others ... looked [at them and lost] sight of them.”¹⁰² In this sense, evangelicals claim they are the true heirs of the Reformation.¹⁰³ Whatever validity there may be in this claim, an understanding of the Reformation origins of evangelicalism is essential to an understanding of its character and development as a movement. Hence, Anthony Balcomb’s statement that identifies the evangelical movement as “... that brand of Christianity that emerged from the Pietist branch of

⁹⁵ Derek J. Tidball, *Who are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of the Modern Movements* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), p.11.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, pp.26-27.

⁹⁷ R.T. Jones, *The Great Reformation* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1985) and G. Rupp, *Religion in England, 1688-1791* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.121, 125.

⁹⁸ Quoted in G.R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (London: APOLLOS, 1951), p.40.

⁹⁹ Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party*, p.43.

¹⁰⁰ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 1996), pp.483-484

¹⁰¹ Cliver Calver and Rob Warner, *Together We Stand* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996), p.17.

¹⁰² Peter Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth: A Creative Proposal for a Postmodernism Age* (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1998), p.12.

¹⁰³ Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth*, p.12.

the Reformed tradition, whose emphasis was on salvation through personal encounter with the risen Christ.”¹⁰⁴

Nonetheless, it must also be noted that as a modern movement, evangelicalism started in the eighteenth century with the spiritual awakening, also referred to as the Great Evangelical Revival.¹⁰⁵ This evangelical spiritual awakening can be traced back to the 1730s with Howell Harris in Wales, Jonathan Edwards in Massachusetts, George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, in England, following at the end of the decade.¹⁰⁶ David Bebbington¹⁰⁷ observes that the ordinary meaning of the notion evangelical in Britain, as late as the eighteenth century, was “of the gospel message” in a non-sectarian sense. For example, in Scotland there was a reluctance to apply the word ‘evangelical’ to any particular Christian group, “since by implication those outside the group would be branded as ‘not of the gospel’.”¹⁰⁸ Be that as it may, other designations such as Calvinism or Methodism were also used, especially by critics of evangelicalism.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, Bebbington¹¹⁰ provides a detailed discussion of the identity of the evangelical movement during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He suggests an outline of four distinctive marks of what it meant to be evangelical then. These are, *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in social effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.¹¹¹ This fourfold description, Bebbington argues, forms what he has termed a “quadrilateral of priorities”¹¹² that was the essence of evangelicalism in Britain.

With this fourfold description of the evangelical character and its theological identity, Bebbington provides an understanding of evangelicalism as it always reached across the various Protestant denominations. Derek Tidball observes that Bebbington’s fourfold description of

¹⁰⁴ Anthony O. Balcomb, “Left, Right and Centre: Evangelicals and the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa,” in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 118 (March 2004), p.146.

¹⁰⁵ Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth*, p.13.

¹⁰⁶ Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth*, p.13.

¹⁰⁷ David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p.1.

¹⁰⁸ H.M. Wellwood, *Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine* (Edinburgh: ????, 1982), p.203.

¹⁰⁹ Joseph Milner, “On Evangelical Religion”, in *The Works of Joseph Milner*, ed. I. Milner, Vol. 8 (London: Wake Forest University Press, 1976), p.199.

¹¹⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp.2-17.

¹¹¹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp.2-3.

¹¹² Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p.3.

evangelicalism met with a “ready response from across the spectrum of evangelicals worldwide” and has since established itself as “near to a consensus as we might ever expect to reach.”¹¹³

2.3 Evangelical Diversity

The evangelical movement, like most religious movements, has never been “monochrome.”¹¹⁴ It is a movement with much diversity in its composition. From its early beginnings, Peter Hicks observes that the evangelical movement included “Calvinists and Arminians”, “confessionalists and non-confessionalists”, “Baptists and Paedobaptists”, and so on.¹¹⁵ However, Paul Gifford argues that for the exclusion of what he terms “Pentecostal-like”¹¹⁶ Churches and organisations, on the premise that their emphasis is unlike that of evangelicalism. Gifford argues that to describe ‘Pentecostal-like’ Churches and organisations within evangelicalism would be misleading: “It is misleading to describe this Christianity as evangelical, for even basic evangelicalism — if we take Bebbington’s four: biblicism, crucicentrism, conversion and activism — has been transformed out of all recognition, even if the words are preserved.”¹¹⁷ In other words, the theological teachings that presently undergird the ‘Pentecostal-like’ Churches and organisations, are either a distortion or repudiation of basic historical evangelicalism, if Bebbington’s fourfold description of evangelicalism is to be accepted.

However, when one considers the international evangelical scene, these so-called ‘Pentecostal-like’ Churches and organisations are included in the membership of the worldwide evangelical body, the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF).¹¹⁸ The Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA) has been active in the Missions Commission of WEF. In its membership it has “ ... Reformed, Presbyterian, Lutheran, missions with an Anglican background, and Baptist, running from the Southern Baptists to the Conservative Baptists. It has several Pentecostal agencies among its members, the old-line Pentecostals as well as the new

¹¹³ Tidball, *Who are the Evangelicals*, p.14.

¹¹⁴ Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth*, p.14

¹¹⁵ Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth*, p.14.

¹¹⁶ Paul Gifford, “Trajectories in African Christianity”, in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 8.4 (November 2008), p.280.

¹¹⁷ Gifford, “Trajectories in African Christianity”, p.284.

¹¹⁸ See Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, pp.10-12.

Charismatic missions.”¹¹⁹ This is also the case in Africa where the so-called ‘Pentecostal-like’ Churches form part of the membership of the continental evangelical body, the AEA.¹²⁰

Notwithstanding Gifford’s reservations, this study recognises as its prime definition of evangelicalism the singular aspect that defines the character of this worldwide movement; its emphasis on the gospel message and salvation through personal encounter with the risen Christ.¹²¹ This study thus recognises Pentecostal-like Churches and organisation as part of the worldwide evangelical movement.

All the same, of significance to this study is a necessary understanding of radical evangelicalism. As noted in the introduction to this study, this group arose at Lausanne 1974 where they were referred to as ‘the radical discipleship group’.¹²² It is important to understand whether they conform to this general definition of evangelicalism and how they define themselves in relation to the broader evangelical movement. Wes Michaelson suggest that radical evangelicalism is essentially “a recovery, from a critical evangelical framework, of the social dimensions of the gospel”.¹²³ In other words, as Ross Langmead argues, it expects to see both personal and social changes taking place as the kingdom of God which begins in the here and now.¹²⁴

Costas places “the lordship of Christ” at the centre of his definition where he states that radical evangelicalism,

implies an understanding of the Lordship of Christ from the specific angle of radical evangelical Christianity, which seeks to derive its knowledge of Christ from the witness of the canonical Scriptures, through the hermeneutical mediation of exegesis, historical studies and the social sciences, motivated by a personal encounter with him and verified in the life of radical discipleship amid the struggles of history.¹²⁵

Ched Myers, writing on radical evangelicalism, writes that “[Christian] discipleship is not an otherworldly journey but a following of Jesus in the vicissitudes of history”.¹²⁶ In other words, radical evangelicalism is a biblically-oriented perspective of Christian discipleship

¹¹⁹ Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, p.11.

¹²⁰ Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, pp.10-11.

¹²¹ Balcomb, “Left, Right and Centre”, p.146.

¹²² Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, p.92.

¹²³ Wes Michaelson, “Evangelicalism and Radical Discipleship”, in *Evangelicalism and Anabaptism*, ed. C. Norman Kraus (Scottsdale: Herald, 1979), p.75-76.

¹²⁴ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, p.96.

¹²⁵ Orlando E Costas, “A Radical Evangelical contribution from Latin America”, in *Christ’s Lordship and Religious Pluralism*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F Stransky (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1981), p.134.

¹²⁶ Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), p.106.

involving the whole of life, in a way that allows for biblical and socio-political insights to be integrated.¹²⁷

2.4 The Evangelical Heritage of Social Concern

The evangelical movement has a heritage of socio-political engagement that goes back to its beginnings as a movement. However, given the limited scope of this study, only a few examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will be dealt with. These two centuries immediately preceded what has now come to be termed as the ‘Great Reversal’. It appears to be an established fact by historians that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not only in Britain and America, but also through evangelical missionary agencies in the Third World, the proclamation of gospel of Jesus Christ was also accompanied by an equal effort and concern for social reform.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, sometime during the first thirty years of the twentieth century, a major paradigm shift took place among evangelicals and was characterised by a general repudiation of any socio-political engagement that had hitherto characterised the evangelical movement.¹²⁹

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, following the Evangelical Revival, there was widespread socio-political activity among the evangelicals.¹³⁰ Stott observes,

The Evangelical Revival, which stirred both continents, is not to be thought of only in terms of preaching of the gospel and the converting of sinners to Christ; it also led to widespread philanthropy, and profoundly affected society on both sides of the Atlantic.¹³¹

Eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe and North America provides many examples of evangelical involvement in socio-political issues that faced society on both sides of the Atlantic that validate this assertion,¹³² and do substantiate Bebbington’s second feature of evangelicalism, namely, the ‘activism’ referred to above.

The first example of evangelical socio-political activism is William Carey, an evangelical missionary to India. Carey, a Northamptonshire Baptist who in 1793 went to Serampore in India

¹²⁷ Orlando E Costas, *Liberating News: A Theology of Contextual Evangelization* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1989), p.11.

¹²⁸ See George Smith, *Short History of Christian Missions*. Eighth edition (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, ???), pp.157-244.

¹²⁹ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.6.

¹³⁰ Smith, *Short History of Christian*, p.159.

¹³¹ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.2.

¹³² See Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action*, pp.13-15, Smith, *Short History of Christian*, pp.158-197 and Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, pp.2-6.

was the first missionary of the newly constituted “Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen”¹³³. He is usually considered “the architect of modern missions.”¹³⁴ When Carey arrived in India, women were far below men in most areas of culture and education, and were victims of social and cultural deprivation. Ruth Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi quote W.W. Hunter who noted, “When Carey landed in India, Hinduism was in full vigour — its customs, traditions, institutions and laws all unchanged. The country was practically untouched by any regenerative influence whatsoever. He had to encounter in its worst forms all strength of the Hindu system.”¹³⁵ Mangalwadi and Mangalwadi discuss and list a number of these social and cultural practices that oppressed Indian woman. The practices of “infanticide and the burning of widows were widespread”, being rooted as they were in religious teaching and customs.¹³⁶

In 1794, near Malda, Carey had his first horrifying cultural experience. He found the remains of an infant devoured by white ants after having been offered as a sacrifice. Carey could never be content after this with the mere proclamation of the gospel message of Jesus Christ.¹³⁷ He felt obligated to struggle to save the lives of infants who faced this religious practice of infanticide. Mangalwadi and Mangalwadi give an example of this religious practice,

Every winter at the Sagar *mela* (where the sea and the river Hooghly meet), children were pushed down the mud-banks into the sea either to drown or to be devoured by crocodiles, all in fulfilment of vows their mothers had made. This was looked upon as a most holy sacrifice; giving to Mother Ganges the fruit of their bodies for the sins of their souls.¹³⁸

As Carey’s concern for these victims of religious customs became known, he was commissioned by the Governor General to inquire into the numbers, nature and reasons for the practice of infanticide. Carey took up this assignment “with great readiness” and his report to the Governor General resulted in the practice “being outlawed”.¹³⁹

S. Pearce Carey, Carey’s biographer writes,

Yet Carey pitied more than blamed their superstition and servility ... he would often say, came of long subservience, making him the keener to preach to these dull, passive captives. They had been so drilled to regard Brahmins as ‘sort of half-divinities’, that

¹³³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.280.

¹³⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.280.

¹³⁵ Ruth Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration of India*. Third edition. (Mussoorie: Nivedit Good Books Distributors, 1997), pp.11-12.

¹³⁶ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.11.

¹³⁷ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, pp.15-16.

¹³⁸ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.16.

¹³⁹ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.16

they attributed even the spot on the sun and moon and sea's saltiness to [Brahmins'] vexed potent curses.¹⁴⁰

Another socio-religious practice that Carey confronted in India was that of widow burning known as *sati*. When the much older husbands died, their widows were subjected to a plight, because “they were perceived as bad omen that had brought about the deaths of their husband ... It was believed that a widow had eaten her husband”.¹⁴¹ The widows who were not victims “of *sati* had to live a life of austerity.”¹⁴² In 1802, Lord Wellesley asked Carey to institute an enquiry into *sati*. Carey sent out people who investigated carefully the cases of *sati* in “the thirty-mile radius of Calcutta and they discovered the ‘damning’ total of four hundred and thirty eight widow-burnings, ‘ ... the toll of a single year’s superstition, cruelty and waste’.”¹⁴³ Armed with these facts Carey implored the government to ban the practice of *sati*. “Tragically for Indian widows, Lord Wellesley had to leave India before he could take action, and his successors were unwilling to interfere with the religious sentiments of the people. The legal prohibition of *sati* was stalled for yet another quarter of a century.”¹⁴⁴ Carey decided to use other means in his response to this refusal of the government and the continuing practice of *sati*. He did not respond by merely continuing with his preaching, for he reasoned that to do so would only strengthen the socio-religious status quo.¹⁴⁵ Instead, he not only prophetically denounced the practice, but also educated the people. He researched on the practice and wrote extensively and persuasively against it. It was his article in his newspaper, *Friend of India*, which became “the central document for debate on *sati*, in and outside the British Parliament.”¹⁴⁶ These examples of Carey illustrate the fact that as an evangelical, Carey he did not consider his socio-political engagement with society and the governing authority to be inimical to his missionary endeavours in India.¹⁴⁷

Another example of evangelical social activism is William Wilberforce, an evangelical politician. Wilberforce and his group of Christian politicians were committed with corresponding eagerness to proclaiming the gospel message to suffering humanity as to engaging in social reformation.¹⁴⁸ Stott writes, “The most famous among them were Granville Sharp, Thomas

¹⁴⁰ S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey: The Father of Modern Missions* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), pp.63-64.

¹⁴¹ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.16

¹⁴² Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.17.

¹⁴³ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.20.

¹⁴⁴ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.20.

¹⁴⁵ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.20.

¹⁴⁶ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.20.

¹⁴⁷ Mangalwadi and Vishal Mangalwadi, *William Carey and the Regeneration*, p.21.

¹⁴⁸ Ernest Marshall Howse, *Saints in Politics: the ‘Clapham Sect’ and the Growth of Freedom* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), pp.26-27.

Clarkson, James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay, Charles Grant, John Shore (Lord Teignmouth), Thomas Babington, Henry Thornton, and of course their guiding light, William Wilberforce.”¹⁴⁹ They were known as the “... ‘Clapham Sect’, although in Parliament and in the press they were mocked as ‘the Saints’.”¹⁵⁰ Most of them belonged to the Clapham Parish Church, in Clapham “at that time a village three miles south of London”.¹⁵¹

The plight and suffering of the African slaves brought this group together. Stott points out that three days before his death, John Wesley wrote to Wilberforce to assure him that “God has raised him up for his ‘glorious enterprise’ and to urge him not to be weary of well doing ...”¹⁵² This goes to show that even for Wesley the evangelical preacher, socio-political engagement was not opposed to the work of evangelism. It is largely to the Clapham Sect — under the leadership of Wilberforce — that recognition belongs for “the settlement of free slaves in Sierra Leone (1787), the abolition of the trade itself (1807), the registration of slaves in the colonies (1820), which put an end to slave smuggling, and finally their emancipation (1833).”¹⁵³

In addition to the slavery question, Wilberforce and the ‘Clapham Sect’ were also involved in penal and parliamentary reforms, promotion of popular education, campaigning for British obligation to its colonies, factory legislation reforms and the spread of the gospel.¹⁵⁴ They also campaigned against “duelling, gambling, drunkenness, immorality and cruel animal sports. And throughout they were directed and motivated by their strong evangelical faith.”¹⁵⁵ Georgina Battiscombe writing on Anthony Ashley Cooper, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury concerning the ‘Clapham Sect’ makes a significant observation concerning evangelicals, “... most of the great philanthropic movements of the century have sprung from the Evangelicals.”¹⁵⁶

A further example of an evangelical social activist is Charles Haddon Spurgeon, an evangelical Church minister who was pastor of a Baptist congregation, the Metropolitan Tabernacle.¹⁵⁷ Erroll Hulse says, “Anyone visiting the Metropolitan Tabernacle during the last century would be left in no doubt about the message of salvation and the way of justification by faith, but the Church’s many ministries of compassion would leave that person in no doubt that

¹⁴⁹ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians*, p.3.

¹⁵⁰ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians*, p.3.

¹⁵¹ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians*, p.3.

¹⁵² Quoted in Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians*, pp.3-4.

¹⁵³ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians*, p.4.

¹⁵⁴ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians*, p.4.

¹⁵⁵ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians*, p.4.

¹⁵⁶ Georgina Battiscombe, *Shaftesbury: A Biography of the Seventh Earl 1801-1885* (London: Constable, 1974), p.334.

¹⁵⁷ David Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social Concern”, in *A Marvelous Ministry: How the All-round Ministry of C.H. Spurgeon Speaks to Us Today*, eds. Tim Curnow, et al (Ligonier: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993), p.

Christ now cares through his people.”¹⁵⁸ David Kingdon, observes, “In C.H. Spurgeon, the preacher and the man of social action were one. The social action flowed from the compassion for people which was so marked a feature of his preaching.” Commenting on the social activities of the Roman Catholic Church in relieving the poor with material aid, Spurgeon preached a sermon in 1862,

I would that we who have a purer faith, could remember a little more the intimate connection between the body and the soul. Go to the poor man [sic] and tell him of the bread of heaven, but first give him the bread of earth, for how shall he hear you with a starving body? Talk to him of the robe of Jesus’ righteousness, but you will do it all the better when you have provided a garment with which he may cover his nakedness. It seems as idle tale to a poor man if you talk to him of spiritual things and cruelly refuse to help him as to temporals. Sympathy thus expressed may be a mighty instrument for good.¹⁵⁹

Social concern was not merely an individual affair for Spurgeon. He organised and challenged his Church to take up social action as part of their Christian duty.¹⁶⁰ The membership of Metropolitan Tabernacle was over five thousand,¹⁶¹ and the danger of so many members would have been to be content to occupy a seat on Sundays and do little else. Spurgeon was well aware of this danger and counteracted this by challenging every person who joined the Church by saying,

Every member who joins my Church is expected to do something for his fellow creatures ... In many cases the idea never seems to have struck them that this was an essential part of Christian duty. It makes them think of what they can do and in most cases they profess their readiness to do whatever I think would be most useful.¹⁶²

Spurgeon was not only the initiator of organisations but also supported many charitable works begun by others. He often spoke at the Ragged School Union, whose schools were set up to provide basic education for the children of the poor in society.¹⁶³ He was president of the ‘Female Servants’ Home Society’, which had four hostels accommodating about a hundred servants,¹⁶⁴ and frequently spoke in support of hospitals and on behalf of societies which campaigned for shorter hours for shop assistants.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ Erroll Hulse, “Spurgeon Speaks Today”, in *A Marvelous Ministry: How the All-round Ministry of C.H. Spurgeon Speaks to Us Today*, eds. Tim Curnow, et al (Ligonier: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993), p.7.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social”, pp.91-92.

¹⁶⁰ Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social,” p.93.

¹⁶¹ Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social,” p.93.

¹⁶² Quoted in Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social”, p.103.

¹⁶³ Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social,” pp.106-107.

¹⁶⁴ Hulse, “Spurgeon Speaks Today”, p.9.

¹⁶⁵ Hulse, “Spurgeon Speaks Today”, p.11.

However, Spurgeon faced opposition from fellow evangelicals, who charged him of “preaching the social gospel.”¹⁶⁶ It is worth noting that this was towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the debate, on whether Christians were to engage in socio-political issues, had just begun. But in defending his socio-political activities and those of his Church, in a sermon Spurgeon argued,

There are certain persons in the world who will not allow the preacher to speak about anything but those doctrinal statements concerning the way of salvation which are known as the “gospel” ... We do not stand in awe of such criticism, for we clearly perceive that our Lord Jesus Christ himself would very frequently have come under it. Read the Sermon on the Mount and judge whether certain people would be content to hear the like of it preached to them on the Sabbath.¹⁶⁷

David N. Duke, a neo-Marxist, criticized Spurgeon for only preaching a message of individual regeneration and therefore being narrow and individualistic in scope.¹⁶⁸ However, what Duke failed to take into consideration was the wide-ranging influence Spurgeon exerted in the socio-political sphere of the nation. Among other activities, Spurgeon spoke out against the assumed airs of the wealthy and their expectation of deference from the poor.¹⁶⁹

Thus, this history, and especially social history in Britain and America, particularly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the period preceding the ‘Great Reversal’, reveal that evangelical Christianity played a significant role in both social reconstruction and social welfare. Evangelical Christians worked together with others toward the abolition of the slave trade, the humane treatment of the mentally ill, prison reform, and the improvement of working conditions for workers in industry.¹⁷⁰ They recognised the needs of the poor, marginalised and vulnerable of society, understanding that their Christian duty required that they engage socially for the welfare of humanity.

From the three examples of some of the prominent evangelicals of the time discussed above, it is clear that evangelicals were engaged in socio-political action during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Much of this work took place through evangelical missionary agencies in Africa and Asia.¹⁷¹ This work included health centres that began to address the health challenges faced by local people and education centres where literacy classes were conducted.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social”, p.105.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social”, p.107.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social”, p.108.

¹⁶⁹ Kingdon, “Spurgeon and his Social”, pp.108-109.

¹⁷⁰ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, pp.28-30.

¹⁷¹ Bodho “The Church and Citizenship”, pp.317-318.

¹⁷² Bodho “The Church and Citizenship”, pp.318.

These social activities followed naturally as a part of their understanding of the two-fold nature of the mission of the Church in the world, namely, evangelism and social action.

Notwithstanding the testimony of extensive socio-political engagement among evangelicals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a significant paradigm shift took place during the first half of the twentieth century, particularly during the decade following the First World War.¹⁷³ From about 1910 until the 1930s this significant theological shift in the position of evangelicals on socio-political engagement occurred.¹⁷⁴ This is what is now referred to as the ‘Great Reversal’. For example, the Nazarenes who had been strongly sympathetic to the labour movement became antipathetic towards it after World War 1. Their “social welfare work suffered from steadily increasing neglect,” observes Moberg.¹⁷⁵ Concerned Presbyterians in 1969 were attempting to return the Presbyterian Church in the USA to its basic purpose of “leading unsaved souls to Christ” as opposed to church leaders who favoured a greater social involvement.¹⁷⁶ Moberg further observes that similar controversies were found among the United Methodists, Disciples of Christ, Roman Catholics, United Church of Christ, and virtually every major denomination.¹⁷⁷ The Southern Baptist Convention was not exempt; Baptists United for Spiritual Revival were united by “a common concern over the tendencies of certain elements in the North Carolina Convention to lead us away from scriptural authority and basic evangelism, towards theological liberalism and social activism.”¹⁷⁸ Other evangelical groups, such as the Lutherans and Pentecostals to mention but a few, also abandoned this heritage.¹⁷⁹

The same concern is apparent in other nations. Carl Henry observes that the 1969 meeting of the European Baptist Federation, which had 2,000 delegates in Vienna, was described in these words,

Tensions between those who emphasize the preaching of the gospel in the formal sense and those who heavily stress Christian social work were evident, as in every denomination.¹⁸⁰

This mood was even further entrenched among evangelicals in Africa, with the support rendered by the World Council of Churches towards programmes combating racism, to the

¹⁷³ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.29.

¹⁷⁴ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.30.

¹⁷⁵ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, pp.30-31.

¹⁷⁶ Hans Mol, *Christianity in Chains: A Sociologist's Interpretation of the Churches' Dilemma in a Secular World* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Ltd, 1969), p.17.

¹⁷⁷ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.18.

¹⁷⁸ Edward C Lehman quoted in Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.18.

¹⁷⁹ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, pp.17-18

¹⁸⁰ Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p.23.

struggle for independence across the Third World, to liberation movements which were engaged in guerilla activities, and avowedly communist in ideology.¹⁸¹ It was becoming apparent that the evangelical withdrawal from socio-political engagement with society was taking on an ideological leaning that was biased and aligned toward with the Euro-American imperialistic ideological framework that was increasingly becoming anti-socialism. Socialism was being identified as a global threat to religious freedom, economic and political freedom.

2.5 Reasons Why Evangelicals Abandoned Their Heritage of Social Concern

A combination of factors worked together to cause evangelicals to turn away from socio-political activities and concentrate their energies exclusively on the activity of gospel proclamation for the salvation of souls. Although Moberg¹⁸² does investigate some of the reasons that led to the evangelical great reversal, he does not attempt a thorough analysis of the origins of the evangelical renunciation of any engagement with socio-political issues. However, Stott¹⁸³ discusses these factors extensively.

2.5.1 Rise of Theological Liberalism

The first factor was the controversy raised by theological liberalism which, at the turn of the twentieth century, was affecting the Churches in Europe and America.¹⁸⁴ Evangelicals felt the need to defend their understanding of historic biblical Christianity against what they perceived as attack by theological liberalism. Stott observes that it was during this same period that a “series of twelve small books entitled *The Fundamentals* were published in the United States, from which the term ‘fundamentalism’ arose.”¹⁸⁵ This series became the rallying point for many evangelicals in their ‘fight’ against the challenge posed by theological liberalism. Since social action was seemingly increasingly being associated with theological liberalism, the evangelical preoccupation with defending their understanding of historic biblical Christianity drew them away from activities that involved socio-political action.¹⁸⁶ Prior to the rise of

¹⁸¹ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.19.

¹⁸² Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, pp.34-38.

¹⁸³ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, pp.6-8

¹⁸⁴ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.6.

¹⁸⁵ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.6.

¹⁸⁶ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.6.

theological liberalism, evangelicalism had been engaged in socio-political activities, as already discussed above.

2.5.2 Rise of the ‘Social Gospel’

As a consequence of the first factor, evangelicals reacted against what was termed the ‘social gospel’ within theological liberalism which had developed because of the socio-economic situation.¹⁸⁷ Stott¹⁸⁸ observes that one of the pioneers of the ‘social gospel’ was a liberal theologian, Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist minister in New York City. He had come to witness the oppressive nature of poverty on the poor in society. This experience invariably informed his understanding of the gospel message and resulted in his formulating the notion of the ‘social gospel’.¹⁸⁹ He articulated his argument in the following way: “It is not a matter of getting individuals into heaven, but transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven.”¹⁹⁰ He further argued that the “essential purpose of Christianity [was to] transform human society into the Kingdom of God by regenerating all human relationships.”¹⁹¹

A.C. Dixon, who edited *The Fundamentals* series beginning 1909, was also noted for his attack upon the ‘Social Gospel’ movement.¹⁹² Brenda M. Meehan points out that during his Boston pastorate that began in 1901, Dixon’s Church managed an “endowment of a million dollars”, the purpose from it was to be used in response to social concerns in the parish. To begin with,

it seemed to him like common sense that if they fed the hungry, paid their rent, and gave them a good doctor and medicine, it would be good preparation for preaching the gospel to them. But when, at the end of three years, Dixon realized that soul-winning did not follow body healing, he decided to ‘dispense with the whole business and get back to first principles.’ ... He learned that it ‘is immensely easier to reach a man’s body through his soul, than his soul through his body.’¹⁹³

Consequently, Dixon¹⁹⁴ began to challenge on the one hand a “false evangelism, which hoped to save society in bulk by means of humanitarian work”, insisting on the other that society

¹⁸⁷ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.6.

¹⁸⁸ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, pp.6-7.

¹⁸⁹ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.7.

¹⁹⁰ Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p.65.

¹⁹¹ Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. xiii.

¹⁹² Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.31.

¹⁹³ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.32.

¹⁹⁴ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.32.

could only be “saved through true evangelism, the divine act of making individuals truly Christian.”

2.5.3 The First World War

The third factor that caused evangelical alienation to social action was the widespread disillusionment and pessimism that followed the First World War, and its attendant exposure of human evil.¹⁹⁵ Moberg observes that earlier evangelical social programmes had failed and humanity and society appeared to be beyond reformation.¹⁹⁶ The First World War thus caused many evangelicals to become disillusioned with the necessity of engaging in socio-political action. Stott argues that the biblical doctrines of original sin and human depravity should have provided the necessary understanding to evangelicals for the exposure of human evil during the First World War.¹⁹⁷ But, as he further observes, “... between the wars there was no evangelical leader to articulate the providence and common grace of God as grounds for persevering hope. Historic reformed Christianity was in eclipse.”¹⁹⁸

2.5.4 Spread of Pre-millennial Eschatology

The fourth factor that contributed to evangelical withdrawal from social engagement was the spread of the pre-millennial theological understanding of eschatology among evangelicals.¹⁹⁹ This eschatological system essentially portrays the present evil world as beyond improvement or redemption, and predicts instead further deterioration until the *parousia*,²⁰⁰ when Jesus Christ will then establish his millennial reign on earth.²⁰¹ The argument was that if the present world was going to get worse, and if only the *parousia* was what will put it right, there was no point in trying to reform society socially.²⁰² Charles Y. Glock and others²⁰³ argue that the rejection of

¹⁹⁵ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.8.

¹⁹⁶ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.32.

¹⁹⁷ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.8.

¹⁹⁸ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.8.

¹⁹⁹ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.8.

²⁰⁰ “*Parousia*”, from the Greek word that refers to the ‘Second Coming of Jesus Christ’ to set up His kingdom. See George E. Ladd, “Eschatology,” in *The New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D. Douglas (London: InterVarsity Press, 1972), p.390.

²⁰¹ Ladd, “Eschatology”, p.390.

²⁰² Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.8.

²⁰³ Charles Y. Glock, Benjamin B. Ringer and Earl R. Babbie, *To Comfort and to Challenge: A Dilemma of the Contemporary Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp.210-212.

the world, the attempt to escape from its challenges, and a message emphasising that the despised of this world shall reign in Christ's millennial Kingdom, merely lent credence to Karl Marx's axiom that 'religion is the opiate of the people'.

Dwight L. Moody²⁰⁴ responding to postmillennialists who were arguing that a "golden age of society was right around the corner", called this argument "rank heresy", for to him, the world was a "wrecked vessel", needing the "gospel message alone". Being a pre-millennialist, Moody was convinced that the conditions in the world would deteriorate until "the Second Coming of Christ to establish his spiritual reign" on earth. Consequently, Christians were to set their affections in the heavenly direction. The necessities of life, like "home, food, clothes, health, and financial security", would only follow those who would faithfully aspire to "first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness". Moody therefore concludes, poverty would therefore be "overcome when diligence would replace indolence".²⁰⁵

2.5.5 Identification of Christianity with Middle-class culture

The fifth factor for evangelical abandonment of social engagement was the spread of Christianity among the middle-class.²⁰⁶ Moberg, summarising the American sociological findings reported by Milton Rokeach in 1969, states,

The general picture that emerges from the results presented ... is that those who place a high value on *salvation* are conservative, anxious to maintain the *status quo*, unsympathetic or indifferent to the plight of the black and the poor ... Considered all together, the data suggest a portrait of the religious-minded as a person having a self-centred preoccupation with saving his own soul, an other-worldly orientation, coupled with indifference toward or even a tacit endorsement of a social system that would perpetuate social inequality and injustice.²⁰⁷

The words of Charles Hodge, a representative of 'Princeton Theology',²⁰⁸ may be considered as illustrative of the conservative social views of the Christian middle-class. Hodge argued, " ... we have preserved the integrity and unity of the Church, made it the great conservative body of truth, moderation, and liberty of conscience in our country."²⁰⁹ This position pitted Hodge and the Princeton school against those who were advocating for the

²⁰⁴ Quoted in Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.32-33.

²⁰⁵ Quoted in Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, pp.36.

²⁰⁶ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.8.

²⁰⁷ Quoted in Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.56.

²⁰⁸ This theology is so called because it held sway at Princeton Theological Seminary from its founding in 1812 until the twentieth-century split that produced Westminster Theological Seminary. See, Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976), pp.128-135.

²⁰⁹ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.129.

abolition of slaveholding and trading. Arguing against the abolitionists who urged civil disobedience of the fugitive slave laws, Hodge stated that the abolitionists were,

... a small minority of the people. They have never included in their ranks either the controlling intellect or moral feeling at the North. Their fundamental principle is anti-scriptural and therefore irreligious. They assume that slaveholding is sinful. This doctrine is the life of the sect. It has no power over those who reject that principle, and therefore it has not gained ascendancy over those whose faith is governed by the word of God ... Both political despotism and domestic slavery, belong in morals to the *adiaphora*, to things indifferent.²¹⁰

Dayton observes that Hodge did insist that slaveholders follow certain biblical norms that would moderate the extremes of slavery.²¹¹ He also hinted that over a long period of time, education and moral training of slaves might so elevate them that emancipation would be appropriate.²¹² Moreover, when emancipation did come, Hodge supported it.²¹³ However, the point to note here is how Hodge's position, and by inference that of the Princeton school, functioned in the pro-slavery debate. Hodge's writings, observes Dayton, were employed, not only against the abolitionists, but also as a defence for slavery as such.²¹⁴ These arguments were published, for example, in *Cotton Is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments*, a major southern America publication in defence of American slavery.²¹⁵ Billy Sunday, an evangelical preacher argued that the purpose of Christianity was to save souls, not society; equating the 'social gospel' to socialism. He added the strong assumption that the American way of life was a goal to be sought by all Christians.²¹⁶ Moberg tells of the controversy and protest that Rokeach's report caused due to an alleged faulty research methodology.²¹⁷ However, he adds that "altogether to ignore these findings and conclusions would be a serious mistake"²¹⁸.

Although some evangelicals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Carey and Wilberforce, were engaged in social activities against social injustice, American evangelicalism was acquiescing to the oppression and exploitation of humanity. It took no action against these evils, nor even protested against them: Christianity was becoming identified with the middle-class subculture.²¹⁹

²¹⁰ Quoted in Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.129.

²¹¹ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.129.

²¹² Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.130.

²¹³ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.131.

²¹⁴ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.129.

²¹⁵ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.130.

²¹⁶ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.33.

²¹⁷ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, pp.53-57.

²¹⁸ Quoted in Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, p.56.

²¹⁹ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.8.

2.6 Conclusion

The evangelical movement, has, from its inception been engaged in socio-political issues in society. Notwithstanding that evangelicalism is a diverse movement, from a historical perspective it has been shown that, for evangelicalism, socio-political engagement was critical to the conception of the church's missions in the world evangelical from the beginning. Consequently, it is apparent that its 'Great Reversal' was due to a reactivity and a protective response to the challenges it began to confront prior to and during the period between 1910 and the 1930s. A recovery of this evangelical socio-political heritage is, therefore, essential to the recovery of historic evangelicalism as defined by historians like Bebbington.

In the next chapter, this study discusses the initiatives by some evangelicals as they attempted to recover this lost evangelical socio-political heritage. The study, in the next chapter, also outlines the genesis of these initiatives leading to the Lausanne Congress of 1974 and the Covenant that emerged out of this gathering.

Chapter Three

Recovering the Heritage of Evangelical Social Responsibility

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, it became clear that until the first thirty years of the twentieth century, evangelicals had been involved in socio-political action. However, during the decade following World War 1, evangelicalism underwent what has been termed “the Great Reversal.”²²⁰ Evangelicals began to view engaging in any form of socio-political activity as akin to being anti-evangelical, liberal and socialist.²²¹ However, since then some evangelical theologians²²² have attempted to recover a theology of socio-political engagement although most still adopted the ‘two-mandate’ approach to evangelism.

In this chapter, the study focuses on the events that were a build up to the crafting of the *Lausanne Covenant* in general and the formulation of ‘Article 5’ of the *Lausanne Covenant* on ‘Christian social responsibility’ in particular. It discusses why the document was produced, who led the process and the identity of the participants and presents the theological background of the participants regarding the socio-political debate. It further discusses the ‘two-mandate’ approach, looking at its development and final resolution and focuses on the objectives and goals of ‘Article 5’ of the *Lausanne Covenant* in order to show its impact thus far.

3.2 Initiatives leading to Lausanne 1974

Efiong Utuk²²³ observes that the 1960s saw new developments among evangelicals which led to modifications in their views of mission, evangelism and social action, which some have argued now run parallel to those of the ecumenical movement. Bosch²²⁴ observes that Lausanne 1974 was preceded by three evangelical movements following the Second World War. In the

²²⁰ Quoted in Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.6.

²²¹ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.8.

²²² See *Evangelicals and Development: Towards a Theology of Social Change*. Ed. Ronald Sider. Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd, 1981.

²²³ Efiong S. Utuk, “From Wheaton to Lausanne: The Road to Modification of Contemporary Evangelical Mission Theology” in *Missiology: An International Review*, (Vol. XIV, No.2, April 1986), p.207.

²²⁴ David J. Bosch, “Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission” in *Towards the 21st Century in Christian Mission*, ed. James M Phillips and Robert T Coote (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p.177.

first place, there was the renewal of mass evangelistic rallies that reached public notice with Billy Graham in Los Angeles 1949.²²⁵ These rallies put in evidence the fact that in North America and Western Europe there was a new awareness of spiritual needs, and a religious vacuum that was not being filled by the routine life of institutionalised Christianity.²²⁶ In the second place, there was a renewal of evangelical scholarship in Biblical studies and theological reflection, following a renewal of evangelical university life in Europe and especially Great Britain.²²⁷ Then thirdly, there were the evangelical Churches and movements that had emerged around the world, connected to Protestant missionary work of the pre- and post- Second World War successions of missionary fervour and activity from North America and Western Europe.²²⁸ Escobar²²⁹ suggests that these “independent ‘faith missions’ played a significant role in this emergence, representing a new generation that threw itself with great vigour into the task of planting Churches, translating Scripture and reaching the peoples of the Third World through evangelism.”

However, the first congress on the Church’s worldwide mission was called in 1966 at Wheaton, Illinois.²³⁰ With almost a 1,000 participants coming from 71 countries, the Congress on World Mission of the Church (Wheaton 1966) was a significant effort into rethinking the mission of the Church globally.²³¹ Melvin Tinker argues that this congress was called in “a conscious reaction against the direction in which the [World Council of Churches] was moving.”²³² The *Wheaton Declaration* was regarded by some as “a thoroughly conservative statement from a conservative source.”²³³ The *Wheaton Declaration*, however, acknowledged that “we are guilty of unscriptural isolation from the world that too often keeps us from honestly facing and coping with its concerns”²³⁴ It also confessed the “failure to apply scriptural principles to such problems as racism, war, population explosion, poverty, family disintegration, social revolution, and communism”, and urged “all evangelicals to stand openly and firmly for racial equality, human freedom, and all forms of social justice throughout the world”.²³⁵

²²⁵ Bosch, “Reflections on Biblical Models”, p.178.

²²⁶ Bosch, “Reflections on Biblical Models”, p.178.

²²⁷ Bosch, “Reflections on Biblical Models”, p.178.

²²⁸ Bosch, “Reflections on Biblical Models”, p.178.

²²⁹ Quoted in Bosch, “Reflections on Biblical Models”, p.178.

²³⁰ Donald Gill, “They Played it Safe in Wheaton” in *World Vision Magazine* 10 (June 1966), p.29.

²³¹ Gill, “They Played it Safe in Wheaton”, p.30

²³² Melvin Tinker, *Evangelical Concerns: Rediscovering the Christian mind on issues facing the Church today* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2001), p.47.

²³³ Gill, “They Played it Safe in Wheaton”, p.31.

²³⁴ “The Wheaton Declaration”, in *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* 2 (Summer 1966), p.234.

²³⁵ “The Wheaton Declaration”, pp.234-235.

Notwithstanding the efforts, though inadvertently, towards the recovery of the evangelical social heritage, there remained a struggle among the larger part of the evangelical constituency to maintain the great reversal status quo. Gill²³⁶ observes that the congress provided four guidelines to approaching social action: Firstly, it noted that any programme of social concern must point men to the central message of redemption through the blood of Christ not away from it. Secondly, expressions of social concern must provide an opportunity for spoken witness to Christ recognised the incompleteness of non-verbal witness. Thirdly, efforts must not arouse unrealistic and unscriptural expectations; the reality of sin and the Second Coming of Christ were not to be minimised. Then fourthly, the desire to do good in the name of Christ should not lead to wasteful competition with secular agencies.

Notwithstanding, clearly, a new attitude with regard to the Church's social responsibility to the world was emerging into evangelicalism. This new concern, Padilla observes, was related to the contribution of a number of participants from the Third World.²³⁷ Harold Lindsell notes that "their recommendations weighed heavily in determining the final shape of the declaration."²³⁸ Padilla further notes that this helps to explain how such a document could come out of a mission conference held in the United States at a time when evangelicalism in that country was simply not interested in social change or social activism.²³⁹

The next significant international congress, separated by a mere five months from Wheaton 1966, was (Berlin 1966). It met under the theme, 'One Race, One Gospel, One Task'.²⁴⁰ Arthur Johnston observes that despite participation from 100 countries, the congress was "predominantly Western in organisation and expression."²⁴¹ Graham, when giving the key note address, reasserted his position on the primary role of the Church, namely, the proclamation of the gospel message for the conversion of people to Christ. This he argued would in turn impact the other areas of humankind's needs, like social, economic, political, etc. The proclamation of the gospel for the conversion of people was considered the primary purpose of the Church in society.²⁴² Consequently, Graham set the basic agenda of the congress organisers and no advance was made towards a more comprehensive concept of mission. As noted above, it was the same

²³⁶ Gill, "They Played it Safe in Wheaton", pp.29-30.

²³⁷ Quoted in Gill, "They Played it safe in Wheaton", p.35.

²³⁸ Harlod Lindsell, *Christianity Today* 10 (29 April 1966), p.795

²³⁹ Quoted in Gill, "They Played it safe in Wheaton", p.37.

²⁴⁰ "Introduction" in C.F.H. Henry and W.S. Mooneyham, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task: World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), vol 1 p.3.

²⁴¹ Arthur P. Johnston, *The Battle for World Evangelism* (Wheaton: Tyndale Publishers, 1978), p.158.

²⁴² Billy Graham, "Why the Berlin Congress", in *Christianity Today* 11 (11 November 1966), p. 133.

position Stott took at Berlin 1966.

In later years, Stott was to change his position, but the point is that this was the stance taken by the majority of evangelicals at Berlin 1966.²⁴³ However, it would seem that already at Berlin 1966 seeds were sown which were later to germinate an approach to socio-political involvement which would mark a significant change of direction for evangelicals. As Paul Rees said,

If the mission of the Church is narrow, the witness of the believing community is broad. The evangelistic mission is to proclaim 'Christ crucified' as the 'one mediator' of our salvation. But the confirming witness of believers is one in which they stand related to the whole life and to the total fabric of society. Here they bear witness both to the mercy of God's forgiveness and the judgements of God's justice. Nothing human is alien to their interests and, so far as their testimony and influence are concerned, Jesus Christ is Lord of all.²⁴⁴

More significant were the follow-up regional congresses sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA).²⁴⁵ Padilla observes that at all of them, "with surprising regularity, speakers brought up the question of Christian social involvement as an issue intimately related to evangelism"²⁴⁶

Padilla notes that "a sensitive social conscience is an essential ingredient of integral mission and a milestone in the awakening of the evangelical social conscience in the United States was the Thanksgiving Workshop on 'Evangelicals and Social Concern' held in Chicago, 1973 (Chicago 1973)."²⁴⁷ The *Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern* was welcomed by many evangelicals who saw in it evidence that evangelicals were transcending the traditional dichotomy between evangelism and socio-political responsibility.²⁴⁸

3.3 Lausanne 1974

Internationally, the next major development was *Lausanne 1974*, which Rachel Tingle claims produced a 'paradigm shift' in evangelical thinking.²⁴⁹ The 'shift' was toward holistic

²⁴³ Stott, "The Great Commission", p.51.

²⁴⁴ Paul S Rees, "Evangelism and Social Concern" in C.F.H. Henry and W.S. Mooneyham, *One Race, One Gospel, One Task: World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), vol 1 p.308.

²⁴⁵ Johnston, *The Battle for World*, p.143.

²⁴⁶ Carlos René Padilla, *How Evangelicals Endorsed Social Responsibility* (Bramcote: Grove Publications, 1985), p.113.

²⁴⁷ Padilla, *How Evangelicals Endorsed*, p.121.

²⁴⁸ Padilla, *How Evangelicals Endorsed*, p.121.

²⁴⁹ Rachel Tingle, "Evangelical Social Action Today: road to Recovery or Road to Ruin?" in *The Anglican Evangelical Crises*. ed Melvin Tinker (Christian Focus Publications, 1995), p.196.

mission.²⁵⁰ Padilla observes that “with all [the antecedents], no one should have been surprised that [Lausanne 1974] would turn out to be a definitive step in affirming integral mission as the mission of the Church.”²⁵¹ In view of the significant impact that Lausanne 1974 left on the life and mission of the worldwide evangelical movement, it may be considered, as Padilla suggests, as “the most important worldwide evangelical gathering of the twentieth century”.²⁵² It became a catalyst for evangelism and a matrix for theological reflection on issues that were placed on the evangelical missionary agenda.²⁵³

Lausanne 1974 met from 16 to 25 July 1974 in Lausanne, Switzerland. It was a gathering in the Swiss Alps of some 2,700 participants and guests from over 150 nations and 135 Protestant denominations for ten days of discussion, fellowship, worship and prayer.²⁵⁴ Rudie van Heerden states that Lausanne 1974 achieved “an unprecedented diversity of nationalities, ethnicities, ages, occupations and denominational affiliations. In fact, TIME magazine described [Lausanne 1974] as ‘a formidable forum, possibly the widest-ranging meeting of Christians ever held’”.²⁵⁵

Billy Graham desired to gather the leaders of evangelical Protestant Christians together for strategic planning and inspiration to complete the Great Commission. One hundred and sixty-four evangelical leaders gathered at Graham’s invitation and served as the formal governing authority of Lausanne 1974.²⁵⁶ A thirty-one-member Planning Committee chaired by Sydney Anglican Bishop A. Jack Dain, was charged with formulating the congress guideline.²⁵⁷

The Lausanne Committee states,

Contributing to the long-term impact of the Congress were the consultations held in 1973 on how best to continue the Congress’s goals after the meeting. From these meetings came the first plans for the Lausanne Continuation Committee (LCC), which was established as the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) in 1976The function of the LCWE was to serve as an international catalyst, clearinghouse, information center, and motivational source for evangelization throughout the world. Although not intended to be simply a reaction to the World Council of Churches (WCC), it did serve as an evangelical counterpart to the ecumenical WCC by establishing and

²⁵⁰ The notion ‘holistic mission’ is used synonymously with that of ‘integral mission’; ‘wholistic mission’

²⁵¹ Padilla, *How Evangelicals Endorsed*, p.137.

²⁵² Padilla, *How Evangelicals Endorsed*, p.143.

²⁵³ Padilla, *How Evangelicals Endorsed*, p.145.

²⁵⁴ See “The Lausanne Movement: Global Conversation About the Lausanne Movement”, p.2. WoomaNet Special Feature, February 2010. Online: <http://www.wooma.net/Documents/WoomaNetSpecFeature.pdf>. Accessed 26 October 2010.

²⁵⁵ “The Lausanne Movement: Global”, p.2.

²⁵⁶ C. Rene Padilla, “Introduction,” in *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant*. Ed. C. Rene Padilla (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976), p.10

²⁵⁷ Padilla, “Introduction”, p.10.

fostering an international network of evangelical leaders, as well as periodically sponsoring conferences and consultations. During its history, a periodic topic of discussion was its relationship to the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), and whether or not to merge with the WEF, whose goals and function were similar.²⁵⁸

From the planning stages of the congress to the close, Lausanne 1974 was marked by participation, and participants sent in requests for subjects to be discussed, as may be evidenced in the wide range of topics included.²⁵⁹ Plenary papers of the congress were sent in advance to participants and they in turn sent their questions, observations and criticisms to the speaker involved.²⁶⁰ This participation continued at the congress in what were called “National Strategy and Theology Study papers”, where each participant was involved in these groups and the fruit of “these extended discussions followed each paper.”²⁶¹

The dominant theme of the congress was evangelism. Pruitt observes that the theme of evangelism, and in particular world evangelism, was to be the main theme of Lausanne 1974.²⁶² From Lausanne 1974’s inception the organisers planned to continue the momentum, which had begun with the two earlier international congresses: Wheaton 1966 and Berlin 1966.²⁶³ Padilla reports that the congress “issued a very significant statement on evangelism which was personally signed by a high percentage of the participants at the end of the Congress ...”.²⁶⁴ That statement has come to be known as the *Lausanne Covenant*. Since the congress, it has become a rallying point for evangelical Christianity around the world.²⁶⁵

Lausanne 1974 became a watershed event that was to define evangelicals theologically, particularly with regard to the relationship between evangelism and socio-political engagement as part of the mission of the Church in the world. However, as noted above, ‘evangelism’ still was the dominant theme of Lausanne 1974, as evangelicals continued to conceptualise the mission of the Church. Lausanne 1974 just began the process of recovering the Christian social responsibility by trying to theologise the mission of the Church. Though having introduced the issue of Christian social responsibility into the worldwide evangelical discourse, Lausanne 1974 however, by advancing a ‘two-mandate’ approach to mission, created a position

²⁵⁸ “Lausanne Committee.” Online: <http://www.community.gospelcom.net/Brix?pageID=147000>
Accessed 14 May 2008.

²⁵⁹ Donald Hoke and Paul Little, “Introduction” *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization Lausanne, Switzerland* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publication, 1975), p.vii.

²⁶⁰ Hoke and Paul Little, “Introduction”, p.vii.

²⁶¹ Hoke and Paul Little, “Introduction”, p.vii.

²⁶² Pruitt, “Some Mission Societies”, p.34.

²⁶³ Pruitt, “Some Mission Societies”, pp.34-35.

²⁶⁴ Padilla, “Introduction”, p.9.

²⁶⁵ Padilla, “Introduction”, p.9.

that was to render Christian social responsibility as a mere peripheral issue in the wider understanding of the Church's mission in society. The 'two-mandate' approach to mission, it may even be argued, was advanced to mitigate the advancements from the Third World evangelicals who had begun to agitate, at the preliminary level of drafting the Covenant, for a more holistic approach to mission. It would therefore be argued that Western evangelicalism ideological support for conservative politics that were ideologically anti-communist was again taking precedence over the expressed concerns of Third World evangelicalism.

At Lausanne 1974, radical evangelicals responded to the proceedings that they felt were headed down a far too conservative position, and wanted to issue a clarion call for a more holistic approach to the mission of the Church. They entitled their document 'Response to Lausanne', which was published in the official volume of papers as 'Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship'.²⁶⁶ Langmead observes that Stott, who was the chair of the Covenant drafting committee, only received a draft of the radical evangelicals' manifesto on the final evening of the conference, "too late to incorporate some of its sentiments into the Covenant. But [Stott] said on stage on the last day that he agreed with it".²⁶⁷

3.4 The Lausanne Covenant

The *Lausanne Covenant*²⁶⁸ is an evangelical statement on mission that covers a wide range of themes and shows that evangelicals were redefining their understanding of the Church's mission in the world and attempting to adopt a more holistic approach.²⁶⁹ It took shape through a series of drafts that were worked on several months before the convening of the congress in Lausanne.²⁷⁰ James D. Douglas prepared the first draft "on the basis of the main papers to be discussed at the Congress", and submitted that draft to "a panel of consultants".²⁷¹ Having revised that first draft in the light of comments received from the consultants, a second draft was then submitted to a drafting committee made up of five members: John Stott, James D. Douglas,

²⁶⁶ "Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship", in *Let the Earth hear his Voice: International Congress on World Evangelisation, Lausanne, Switzerland*, ed J.D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), pp.1294-1296. The word 'and' in the title is present on the contents page but missing in the heading of the article itself.

²⁶⁷ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, p.98.

²⁶⁸ "The Lausanne Covenant." in *Let the Earth hear his Voice: International Congress on World Evangelisation, Lausanne, Switzerland*, ed J.D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), pp

²⁶⁹ Padilla, "Introduction", p.10.

²⁷⁰ Padilla, "Introduction", p.8.

²⁷¹ Padilla, "Introduction", p.10.

Samuel Escobar, Leighton Ford and Hudson Armerding.²⁷² It may be noted that, apart from Escobar, the rest of the drafting committee was composed by men coming from the Western world. The committee lacked voices from Africa and Asia. For a conference of this magnitude, it would have been wiser to have a wider representation from the regions that were invited to participate. Further revisions were made to the Covenant document by the drafting committee, and the resultant third draft was presented to the participants during the congress.²⁷³ Invitations were made, from either individuals or groups, for comments and suggestions to the draft document.²⁷⁴ “Hundreds of amendments were suggested and a number of them were then incorporated into the final draft.”²⁷⁵ The final draft was a document that reflected the general opinion and outlook of the participants to the congress.

Concerning the layout of the *Lausanne Covenant*, Pruitt²⁷⁶ notes that the Covenant can be viewed as a document comprising an introduction, fifteen major articles of agreement, and a conclusion. It consists of six major themes of Christian thought and practice: ‘the authority of Scripture’, ‘the nature of evangelism’, ‘Christian social responsibility’, ‘the urgency of world missions’, ‘the problem of culture’, and ‘spiritual warfare’. However, Pruitt observes that of these six themes, it was that of ‘the authority of Scripture’, ‘the nature of evangelism’, and ‘Christian social responsibility’ that generated controversy during the plenary sessions at Lausanne 1974.²⁷⁷

3.5 Article 5 of the *Lausanne Covenant*

The respective article under consideration in this study, from the Lausanne Covenant, is ‘Article 5’ entitled ‘Christian Social Responsibility’, and it is here quoted in full:

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all men [sic]. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social

²⁷² Padilla, “Introduction”, p.10.

²⁷³ Padilla, “Introduction”, p.10.

²⁷⁴ Padilla, “Introduction”, p.10.

²⁷⁵ Padilla, “Introduction”, p.10.

²⁷⁶ Pruitt, “Some Mission Societies”, p.37.

²⁷⁷ Pruitt, “Some Mission Societies”, p.37.

action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.²⁷⁸

Though Gill²⁷⁹ observes that evangelism was the dominant theme of Lausanne 1974, the theological issue that seemed to have “captured the attention of most participants” and “provoked many intense discussions” was the relationship between evangelism and socio-political engagement. Though the socio-political issue was raised at Berlin 1966, Gill points out that it was not adequately discussed. Gill²⁸⁰ observes that, as at that time, many evangelicals still viewed socio-political engagement “an enemy of biblical evangelism” and was therefore “to be avoided at all costs”. Lausanne 1974 was indeed a watershed conference that significantly marked a turning point in evangelical theological thinking on the theme of socio-political engagement.

The *modus operandi* of both Lausanne 1974 and the Covenant it produced was in terms of ‘the two-mandate’ approach to mission that upheld the ‘priority of evangelism’ over socio-political engagement.²⁸¹ It was this theological conceptualisation of Church mission that underpinned the formulation of ‘Article 5’ of the *Lausanne Covenant*,

... evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ.

By separating the activities of evangelism and socio-political engagement, the Covenant created a ‘two-mandate’ approach to mission.²⁸² This invariably weakened ‘Article 5’ as a theological framework for evangelical socio-political engagement. The resultant dichotomy created a controversy in evangelical understanding of the mission of the Church in the world.²⁸³ Bosch argues,

²⁷⁸ Article 5 “The Lausanne Covenant.” Online: http://www.parkerfoundation.org/PDFs/lausanne_covenant.pdf. Accessed 14 May 2008.

²⁷⁹ Gill, “Christian Social Responsibility”, p.89.

²⁸⁰ Gill, “Christian Social Responsibility”, p.90.

²⁸¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.405.

²⁸² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.403.

²⁸³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.404.

The moment one regards mission as consisting of two separate components one has, in principle, conceded that each of the two has a life of its own. One is then by implication saying that it is possible to have evangelism without a social dimension and Christian social involvement without an evangelistic dimension. What is more, if one suggests that one component is primary and the other secondary, one implies that the one is essential, the other optional. This is precisely what happened.²⁸⁴

Though ‘Article 5’ was taking on board the aspect of socio-political engagement, the earlier ‘one-mandate’ approach — *sola euangelismos*²⁸⁵ — the ‘two-mandate’ approach was still problematic to understanding the mission of the Church.²⁸⁶

The *Lausanne Covenant* was a conservative evangelical statement on the primacy of evangelism.²⁸⁷ It said, “Although reconciliation with [humankind] is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty”.²⁸⁸ Put simply, this was a “both/and, with one not more important than the other” position.²⁸⁹

Escobar understood mission in a more holistic way. He argued that “there is no such thing as a separate individual gospel and a separate social gospel. There is only one gospel — a redeemed [humanity] in a redeemed society”²⁹⁰ Langmead observes that Escobar grounded his position in the life and teaching of Jesus, who not only brought a message but bore it in his life.²⁹¹ Escobar argued, “We are called as a community, in Paul’s words, to be living letters (1 Corinthians 3:1–3) ... We are called to be a sign pointing towards the kingdom of God.”²⁹²

As observed above, about two hundred radically minded participants at Lausanne 1974 allied themselves with a communiqué now called ‘Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship’.²⁹³ This statement was in response to presentations from Escobar, Padilla and Costas.²⁹⁴ The radical evangelical movement, though a worldwide movement, draws most of its

²⁸⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.405.

²⁸⁵ Latin for ‘evangelism only’, quoted in Efiang S. Utuk, “From Wheaton to Lausanne: The Road to Modification to Contemporary Evangelical Mission Theology” in *Missiology: An International Review* (Vol. XIV, No.2, April 1986), p.208.

²⁸⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.405.

²⁸⁷ Article 6 of “The Lausanne Covenant”, in *Let the Earth hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland*, ed. J.D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publication, 1975), p

²⁸⁸ Article 5 of “The Lausanne Covenant”, pp.2-3.

²⁸⁹ John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian: An Urgent Plea for Double Listening* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), p.339.

²⁹⁰ Samuel Escobar, “Evangelism and Man’s Search for Freedom, Justice and Fulfillment”, p.305, in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelisation Lausanne, Switzerland*, ed. J.D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publication, 1975).

²⁹¹ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, pp.99-100.

²⁹² Escobar, “Evangelism and Man’s Search”, pp.309, 312.

²⁹³ “Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship”, pp.1294-1296.

²⁹⁴ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, p.90.

adherents are from the Third World, and is usually considered as the left wing of the worldwide evangelical movement, partly due to its origin and its concern for the poor.²⁹⁵ Their response states, among other things, that,

... there is no biblical dichotomy between the word spoken and the word made visible in the lives of God's people. Men will look as they listen and what they see must be at one with what they hear ... There are times when our communication may be by attitude and action only, and times when the spoken word will stand alone: but we must repudiate as demonic the attempt to drive a wedge between evangelism and social concern.²⁹⁶

Its vision is that God's good news in Jesus Christ is "of liberation, of restoration, of wholeness, and of salvation that is personal, social, global, and cosmic. Jesus is Lord!"²⁹⁷ It said, "We must allow God to make visible in the new humanity the quality of life that reflects Christ and demonstrate his reign."²⁹⁸

Chris Sugden reports that the papers presented by Escobar, Padilla and Costas differed from the usual evangelical 'two-mandate' approach to evangelism, which consistently ignored the effect of context on the presentation of the gospel.²⁹⁹ Instead, they warned of the "dangers of individualism, materialism and North American 'culture Christianity'"³⁰⁰. They challenged the congress on the need for an integrated approach to mission.³⁰¹ These three Latin American evangelicals, and many others, particularly from the Third World, had come to realise that the 'two-mandate' approach to the mission of the Church was problematic and advocated for a holistic approach. Padilla is reported to have aroused a lot of reaction in advance of Lausanne 1974, through a positional paper circulated in advance. Nichols³⁰² reports how "[hundreds] of Congress participants" replied with either "astonishment or sadness at his 'savage' attack on American Christianity" as disseminated through various "American mission agencies in Latin America." One such participant said that Padilla's description of American Christianity was "so patently a caricature as to create static that cannot but block the transmission of many insights which people attending the conference will need."³⁰³ Another participant in agreement with Padilla's position said, "What America is sharing with the world today is a parody of

²⁹⁵ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, p.91.

²⁹⁶ Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.406.

²⁹⁷ "Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship", p.1295.

²⁹⁸ "Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship", p.1295.

²⁹⁹ Chris Sugden, "Evangelicals and Wholistic Evangelism", in *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way: Studies in Integral Evangelism*, ed. Vinay Samuel and A. Hauser (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1989), p.28.

³⁰⁰ Sugden, "Evangelicals and Wholistic Evangelism", p.29.

³⁰¹ Sugden, "Evangelicals and Wholistic Evangelism", p.30.

³⁰² Nichols, *Evangelicals*, p.62.

³⁰³ Quoted in Nichols, *Evangelicals*, p.62.

Christianity, tied to a materialistic philosophy and a truncated theology.”³⁰⁴

Escobar argued in his plenary paper:

I think that the first and powerful answer to the social and political needs of men [sic], to the search for freedom, justice and fulfilment, is given by Jesus in his own work and in the Church. Jesus takes seriously the problems of poverty, power relationships, which are essentially the problems which cause social and political maladjustment and injustice ... [The] heart which has been made free with the freedom of Christ cannot be indifferent to the human longings for deliverance from economic, political or social oppression. And that is what many expect from the one who evangelises. Not that he says, “I come to announce to you a spiritual freedom and because of that I do not care about your social, economic or political oppression. [Rather] I am with you in your search for a way out, and I can show you a deeper and most decisive deliverance that may help you also to find a better way out of your social and political oppression.”³⁰⁵

Bosch, observes that during Lausanne 1974, many evangelicals, especially those from the Third World, were ready for the paradigm shift in how they conceptualised the mission of the Church in the world.³⁰⁶ They were no longer willing to limit it to mere evangelisation for the salvation of souls without taking the context seriously.³⁰⁷ However, this may not have just been merely unwillingness to go along on the part of Third World evangelicalism. They were clearly realising that their counterparts from North America and Western Europe not willing to recognise that socio-political engagement was an equal and legitimate component of what constituted the gospel message and the mission of the church in the world. Having come from a socio-economic context that demanded engagement with the people, evangelicals from the Third World, could no longer share the ideology of their counterparts from the West, as may be observed from the presentations by Escobar, Padilla and Costas. This therefore, gave rise to the Radical Discipleship group. Indeed, it would appear that Third World evangelicals were now identifying with what these three Latin American evangelicals were contending for. Consequently, for most evangelicals, especially, though not exclusively, from the Third World, there was a paradigm shift, away from the brand of evangelicalism that was being exported from America and Western Europe through the mission agencies working in the Third World.

3.6 Conclusion

It may be observed that though Article 5 of the *Lausanne Covenant* provides a soundly

³⁰⁴ Quoted in Nichols, *Evangelicals*, p.62.

³⁰⁵ Quoted in Nichols, *Evangelicals*, pp.60, 61.

³⁰⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.405.

³⁰⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.405.

evangelical theology *about* Christian social responsibility and has certain commendable strengths that may be noted, especially when read together with the *Wheaton 1983 Statement*. However, it has certain weaknesses and thus does not provide an adequate theological and methodological framework for socio-political engagement.

This study proposes that the theological work of José Míguez Bonino can contribute to developing an adequate theological and methodological framework for socio-political engagement among evangelical Christianity. It also proposes that Míguez Bonino's theological work provides a theological and methodological framework that will enhance the practical value of 'Article 5' of the *Lausanne Covenant* on 'Christian Social Responsibility'. This is the discussion of the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Faith Seeking Effectiveness: José Míguez Bonino

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines José Míguez Bonino's theological methodology of socio-political engagement. It does so for the purpose of strengthening the missionary activity within the radical evangelical tradition. These insights will be gleaned through the specific works of Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* and *Toward a Christian Political Ethics*. *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* was translated in Spanish as *La Fe en busca de la eficacia*, which is translated as 'Faith seeking effectiveness'.³⁰⁸ The Spanish title provides the author's own perspective of his work. He was chiefly seeking to provide a theological and critical framework or process by which the Church may engage efficaciously in its socio-political responsibility. In these works, Míguez Bonino points out that theology is both affected by the context in which it arises and must respond to that context.³⁰⁹ In other words, the cultural, social, political, economic and religious context of an emerging theology will invariably influence that theology.

Míguez Bonino's theology is described by Davies as "*fides quaerens efficacitatem* — faith seeking effectiveness, and not as *fides quaerens intellectum* — faith seeking understanding"³¹⁰. He further describes Míguez Bonino's theology, which he categorises as a "missionary theology"³¹¹, in the following words:

[It] is a theological and critical reflection upon the Church's missionary responsibility at a given time and in a given place. It starts with the present praxis, questions the validity of that praxis in the light of biblical and theological thought, and then projects forward to examine how this should be carried out effectively.³¹²

In other words, Míguez Bonino provides tools for theological and critical reflection to enable the Church to engage efficaciously in its socio-political responsibility to society. Though discussed in the broader context of Latin America, these insights however, provide the Church

³⁰⁸ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.9.

³⁰⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.61; and Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, pp.100-101.

³¹⁰ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.39.

³¹¹ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.39.

³¹² Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.39.

‘at a given time and in a given place’, with the necessary tools with which to fulfil its missionary mandate. Thus, Davies observes that Míguez Bonino’s theology must be understood, not necessarily as a product, but, rather, as a process.³¹³ He does not seek primarily to provide a theological explanation as to *why* the world is facing social, political or economic problems. His purpose rather is to move further by providing the necessary theological and theoretical tools to discern *how* the Church may respond to the various challenges for the common good of humankind. It is as suggested in a précis of Karl Marx’s eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: “It is not the responsibility of theology to understand the world but rather to change it.”³¹⁴

4.2 Theological methodology of Míguez Bonino

Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology involves what may be termed as three mediations: socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and practical mediation. The socio-analytical mediation asks the question: How can the context of faith’s search for effectiveness be understood here and now; and what is the Church’s place in the context? The hermeneutical mediation poses the question: How does God’s revelation, both in the Bible and in current history, as interpreted by theologians, relate to, direct, and inform faith’s search for effectiveness? The practical mediation puts forward the question: In the light of context, the Church’s place in that context, and the reflection on God’s action, how, in concrete terms, does the Church find and work out its mission in society effectively? The next three sections deal with each of these questions in more detail.

4.2.1 Socio-analytical mediation

The first key insight that may be noted from Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology is the significance of socio-analytical mediation in the process of articulating a response to social challenges. He argues that if faith is to be authentic in its search for effectiveness, an analysis and interpretation of the social, political, economic, and cultural context of a given situation is crucial.³¹⁵ Míguez Bonino also contends that both sociological and ecclesiological analysis are important because they are a “means to grasp a total situation, and thus a necessary step toward

³¹³ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.39.

³¹⁴ Quoted in Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.39.

³¹⁵ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.56.

‘discerning the signs of the time’³¹⁶ It is this analysis that enables an understanding of “a particular historical time in the context of God’s purpose and action.”³¹⁷ He points out, “An engaged faith and obedience cannot stand outside or above the world in which they are engaged. This is the reason why, in the effort to enter into this theology, we are forced to dwell on the understanding and analysis of the world in which it finds its *locus*.”³¹⁸

Míguez Bonino proposes “the recognition of social analysis as a constitutive moment in theological reflection on [socio-political issues]”³¹⁹ He stipulates that there is no other way of “knowing social reality; some sort of social analysis is needed.”³²⁰ He is, however, consistent in recognising that there is no value-free science and value-free theology.³²¹ In other words, there is no social analysis or theological reflection that does not assume an ideological framework. He, therefore, argues that Marxist critical tools can expose the ideological frameworks of biblical interpretation by scholars, reveal the socio-economic matrices behind certain biblical texts, and release the ‘truth of the Bible’ by showing the relationship between praxis and interpretation.³²² Míguez Bonino thus chooses dialectical sociological analysis in order to understand the context in which Christians search for in obedience in their mission in the world. This sociological analysis, Davies observes, leads Míguez Bonino to opt for “a Marxist analysis of society”.³²³

Although Marxism can be described as socio-economic-political tool developed at a certain point in European history, Míguez Bonino sees it as “the best instrument available for an effective and rational realisation of human possibilities in historical life. A Marxist praxis is both the verification and the source of possible correction of hypothesis”.³²⁴ He points out that if Marxist tools of analysis are compatible with the realities of human life and history, then “they become the unavoidable historical mediation of Christian obedience”.³²⁵

Davies³²⁶ observes that Míguez Bonino rejects three theological approaches to social analysis. Firstly, Míguez Bonino rejects the position that one can, in an unmediated way, understand and analyse social problems by simple observation.³²⁷ This ‘Samaritan-like’ approach

³¹⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.33.

³¹⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.33.

³¹⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.21.

³¹⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.45.

³²⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.45.

³²¹ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.46.

³²² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.21-22.

³²³ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.58.

³²⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.97.

³²⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

³²⁶ Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.57. See also Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, pp.44-53.

³²⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.96.

is seen in many social action projects which, in reality, are often based on functionalist sociology and lead to reformist answers to social problems.³²⁸ Secondly, Míguez Bonino rejects the purist idea of developing specifically Christian answers to secular problems.³²⁹ This is where theology uses certain philosophical and sociological categories without examining them critically. Thirdly, Míguez Bonino also rejects mixing theological and sociological categories. There is no way of finding direct correspondence or analogy between biblical categories and contemporary situations as analysed through sociological categories. These analogies can end up being arbitrary. Míguez Bonino cites the case of the use of Jesus' attitude towards the zealots, as a support for revolution or a rejection of it.³³⁰

Furthermore, for Míguez Bonino social analysis is not only necessary to understand what is taking place in society, but is also important for the interpretation of the Church's place in society. Davies argues that this is vital to a clear understanding of Míguez Bonino's theological methodology.³³¹ Faith, in its search for effectiveness, starts from the Church's missionary obedience, i.e., the obedience of the Church in its mission in the world.³³² Míguez Bonino approached this issue directly when examining "Christianity as it operates historically. The problem of verifiability cannot be evaded; it has always confronted Christianity."³³³

Míguez Bonino dedicates a whole chapter to 'understanding our world'.³³⁴ His socio-historical analysis revolves around how the liberal Capitalist model has dominated Latin America and has created economic, social and political dependency.³³⁵ He negatively critiques the development blueprint of the nineteen fifties and sixties, which formed the basis of John F. Kennedy's 'Alliance for Progress'.³³⁶ Míguez Bonino concludes his analysis with this comment,

In the final analysis, the capitalist form of production as it functions in [the] world creates in the dependent countries (perhaps not only in them) a form of human existence characterised by artificiality, selfishness, the inhuman and dehumanising pursuit of success measured in terms of prestige and money, and the resignation of responsibility for the world and for one's neighbour.³³⁷

³²⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.96.

³²⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.97.

³³⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.97.

³³¹ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.61.

³³² Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.61.

³³³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.92.

³³⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.21-37.

³³⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.22-29.

³³⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.25.

³³⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.31.

Míguez Bonino then moves on to describe how these conditions have been the point of divergence for a new social consciousness in Latin America. Illustrating his point with the success of the Cuban Revolution,³³⁸ he argues that this revolution showed that change was possible, however costly; “that the capitalist and imperialist system can be overcome”.³³⁹ This was not merely a textbook copy of dogmatic Marxist revolution but one that had Latin American characteristics. It was able to realise some of the alterations and remedies required for making the revolution a success and to supplement it with other forms of analysis.³⁴⁰ Míguez Bonino concludes, “Just as the socialist system which will finally emerge in Latin America will not be a copy of the existing one, but a creation related to our own reality, so the analysis has to be adequate to this reality and develop its own categories and methods”.³⁴¹

In *Toward a Christian Political Ethics*, Míguez Bonino’s approach to the social analysis is historical. He traces the Latin American socio-political situation from dependence upon the Spanish to dependence upon the British, subsequently upon the United States, and finally upon transnational corporations.³⁴² He illustrates how at each stage Latin America has lived in dependency and how imperialist systems have employed both military and religious entities to subjugate the population. Moving from the past to the era he refers to, Míguez Bonino concludes that “the Capitalist transnational project with its technocratic ideology presents itself as the ‘natural’ extension of and successor to the liberal democratic society” and that,

the two characteristic features of their project seem to be controlled development within the framework of the world capitalist system, and limited democracy under the management of technocratic elites. In the countries that dominate this world capitalist system, even though the conditions and mechanisms differ, it is possible to corresponding lines of a similar model.³⁴³

In this regard Míguez Bonino’s analysis reflects the changing context that was experienced in the early 1980s: a slow return to ‘democracy’ after the ‘national security state’ project of the 1960s and 1970s.

The second factor in Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology on socio-analytical mediation is the interpretation of the Church’s place and role in society. This issue is critical in understanding Míguez Bonino’s approach. Davies observes, “Faith, in its search for

³³⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.33.

³³⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.33.

³⁴⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.34-36.

³⁴¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.35.

³⁴² Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, pp.54-78.

³⁴³ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.76.

effectiveness, starts from the Church's missionary obedience, i.e. the obedience of the Church in its mission in the world".³⁴⁴

Míguez Bonino approaches ecclesiological analysis directly when examining "Christianity as it operates historically".³⁴⁵ He argues that any expression of Christianity does not present itself in the world as a set of beliefs or philosophies but as an historical agent.³⁴⁶ He, therefore, proposes that an ecclesiological analysis should be studied in order "to make explicit the ideological framework of interpretation implicit in a given praxis [of the Church]."³⁴⁷ Christians do not necessarily start from a neutral position in their engagement with society. In this connection, Davies observes, "All Churches and Christians possess ideological frameworks of interpretation but they are often held unconsciously. These frameworks support a certain political or economic position, but are not expressed. Even those who believe it is the Christian's responsibility to remain politically neutral possess these ideological frameworks".³⁴⁸

However, Míguez Bonino does not view the possession of these ideological frameworks in a wholly negative way — they are, in fact, inevitable.³⁴⁹ He argues that every person has an ideological framework through which the world is perceived and thereby coheres to their being and action.³⁵⁰ Míguez Bonino points out that it is essential for Christian obedience that these ideological frameworks are examined to differentiate between 'arbitrary, rationalistic, willed' ideologies and those that are necessary to organise the masses, that is the faithful.³⁵¹ In this way they can become "the instrument through which our Christian obedience gains coherence and unity. It is so, though, provided that it is always brought to consciousness and critically examined both in terms of the gospel and of the scientific analysis of reality."³⁵²

Juan Segundo further clarifies the relationship between faith and ideology by saying,

Faith, then, is not a universal, temporal, pithy body of content summing up divine revelation once the latter has been divested of ideologies. On the contrary it is maturity by the way of ideologies, the possibility of fully and conscientiously carrying out the ideological task on which the real-life liberation of human beings depends.³⁵³

³⁴⁴ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.61.

³⁴⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.92.

³⁴⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.93-94.

³⁴⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

³⁴⁸ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.62.

³⁴⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.94-95.

³⁵⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.95.

³⁵¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.96-100.

³⁵² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.95.

³⁵³ Juan Luís Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll:Orbis, 1976), p.123.

In other words, faith, to be effective, should have an ideological framework which enables a reflection on its own positioning within society; its reading of the Bible; and the consequences of its actions. This framework should be made explicit in order to inform the engagement with society.

Through socio-analytical mediation operating at these two levels, namely sociological analysis and ecclesiological analysis, Míguez Bonino begins an exploration of the Latin American context, identifying the two historical movements that had come to inform the Latin American socio-political situation of oppression. These two historical movements, as noted above, were conquest and colonisation in the sixteenth century, and modernisation and neo-colonialism in the nineteenth century.³⁵⁴ The ecclesiological analysis reveals the complicity of the Church — deliberate or inadvertent — in the oppression of people in Latin America.³⁵⁵ By unveiling these historical movements that defined the historical reality facing Latin American society, Míguez Bonino is able to identify the options that faced Latin American Christians and Churches in the context of the struggle for liberation.³⁵⁶

4.2.2 Hermeneutical mediation

The next key insight that may be noted from Míguez Bonino's theological methodology is that of hermeneutical mediation. As has already been observed, Míguez Bonino's theology must be understood as faith seeking effectiveness.³⁵⁷ In order to achieve this effectiveness, he argues that it needs to begin with obedience to God's call to mission.³⁵⁸ In other words, obedience is a prerequisite to understanding the road toward effectiveness in mission. He also has argued, as noted above, the necessity to analyse scientifically the context of the Church's mission as well as the Church's place within that context.³⁵⁹ To ensure that this process remains theological, Míguez Bonino argues that faith must be confronted with God's Word (the Bible) so that it conforms to God's purpose in the world.³⁶⁰ Therefore, the component of hermeneutical mediation in Míguez Bonino's theological methodology is important.

Míguez Bonino argues that the understanding of how the Church and theologians, read

³⁵⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.4-5, 13-15, 17.

³⁵⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.17-18.

³⁵⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.38-42.

³⁵⁷ See Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.39.

³⁵⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, pp.47-49.

³⁵⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.47.

³⁶⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.47.

and interpret the Bible must be analysed.³⁶¹ It is also necessary to understand how the Church receives and interprets God's revelation,³⁶² and how this revelation is handed on to future generations through doctrine.³⁶³ The significant questions of 'revelation', 'Scripture', and 'tradition' are thus interlinked in his work. Míguez Bonino understands 'revelation' to be God's action in history, especially in Jesus Christ; he understands the Bible as the apostolic witness to that 'revelation'; and 'tradition' as the Christian interpretation and communication of that revelation in Jesus Christ as interpreted through the apostolic witness.³⁶⁴ For Míguez Bonino, 'tradition' includes all Christian doctrine, dogma and theology, as well as the creeds, including the full life of the Church and its presence in the world.³⁶⁵

Míguez Bonino regards God's 'revelation' as the starting point in the process of biblical interpretation.³⁶⁶ Revelation, he argues, is to be understood "not as a communication of eternal truths, but as God's action in history."³⁶⁷ He does not consider scripture, reason, Church tradition or experience as sources of revelation; he asserts plainly that revelation is to be seen in God's acts of salvation. These acts are what Míguez Bonino³⁶⁸ calls "the germinal events" of the faith which include "God's dealings with Israel; the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; the hope of the Kingdom". Revelation, therefore, is conceived of as taking place in history.³⁶⁹ Although the acts of God in history as recorded in, and interpreted by the writers in the Bible, are many and varied (Hebrews 1:1), Jesus Christ is God's ultimate, decisive and definitive action and revelation to humanity.³⁷⁰ "The final saving revelation of God has been uniquely given in Jesus Christ."³⁷¹ This is a programmatic statement for understanding his biblical hermeneutics.³⁷² Consequently, "revelation meets us in a person. In concrete, human existence of Jesus of Nazareth we meet God's Word. He is the truth".³⁷³ God's revelation in Christ is unique.³⁷⁴ Later on in his career, Davies observes that Míguez Bonino stated the same thing but in a different

³⁶¹ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.53.

³⁶² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.91.

³⁶³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.99-100.

³⁶⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.89-92.

³⁶⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.93.

³⁶⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.90.

³⁶⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.89.

³⁶⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

³⁶⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.89.

³⁷⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.88.

³⁷¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.90.

³⁷² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.92.

³⁷³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.93.

³⁷⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.93.

way.

There certainly exists a time and place that has for us a unique and unchangeable, normative nature: the Biblical history. The New Testament is not a testimony of a time and a place among others but rather the time and the place where God made known and put into operation his mission in an exemplary and determinant form for all times and all places. But it is fundamental to caution that God didn't do this through an abstract and extemporal definition of this mission but rather 'incarnating himself' in a particular history.³⁷⁵

According to Míguez Bonino, therefore, the New Testament is not itself God's revelation but rather is a record for humanity, and especially for the Church, of God's definitive revelation of God's own nature in those specific events in history.³⁷⁶ God is revealed at a specific time and place in history by becoming a human being.³⁷⁷ This 'Christ event' comprises the frame of reference and the starting point for the understanding of Míguez Bonino's biblical hermeneutics.³⁷⁸ From this perspective both the Bible and human tradition are relativised. Neither scripture nor tradition can claim to be revelation in the same way as Christ is. For Míguez Bonino, scripture and tradition are placed on the same level and seen as human, sharing the same characteristics; relativity, contingency and fallibility. This does not empty them of their significance because, as Míguez Bonino says, they "fulfil their witnessing function precisely in all the limitation and fallibility of their humanity."³⁷⁹ So his understanding opens the way for a contemporary re-reading of God's revelation.³⁸⁰

Apostolic witness has a special place in Míguez Bonino's theology, not merely because it is the Word of God itself, but because it is the primary witness to God's revelation in Christ.³⁸¹

If the Word of God dwelt fully in the humanity of Jesus Christ, [the apostolic witness] to that humanity [of Jesus Christ] has a unique, permanent and irreplaceable character which no other instance can share ... as temporally and materially original [apostolic] witness to the concrete and definite humanity of Jesus Christ in whom God meets us uniquely and decisively, the scripture must be distinguished from all later witness as the only normative instance for the knowledge of revelation.³⁸²

For Míguez Bonino,³⁸³ Scripture has "a unique, permanent and irreplaceable character"; it is the "final source of knowledge of God" and the "only normative instance of the knowledge

³⁷⁵ Quoted in Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.65.

³⁷⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.95.

³⁷⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.95.

³⁷⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.95.

³⁷⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.96

³⁸⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

³⁸¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.93.

³⁸² Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.31.

³⁸³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

of revelation.” Just as the ‘Christ event’ is unique and normative as God’s revelation, so the Bible is also unique, final and normative in its witness to that revelation.³⁸⁴ Scripture, therefore, has a special relationship with revelation that tradition does not.³⁸⁵

The fact that Christ is God’s unique saving revelation to humanity does not mean that revelation is not related to the human reception of that revelation.³⁸⁶ Although the Church’s interpretation in its preaching, dogma and doctrine is relativised and cannot be considered even to be on the same level as the Bible, it is, however, intimately related to Christ.³⁸⁷ The emphasis on the present work of the Holy Spirit in the Church gives meaning and importance to the witness and proclamation of the Church.³⁸⁸ This should not be understood in terms of only the verbal communication of the gospel or the confessional expression, but in the whole life of the Church in worship, preaching, suffering, and acting of the Church.³⁸⁹ Míguez Bonino calls this “active tradition”.³⁹⁰ In the very life and preaching of the Church, in communion with the Holy Spirit, the Church not only interprets God’s revelation but lives it out.³⁹¹ The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church enables the Church to achieve effectiveness in its life and mission.³⁹²

Míguez Bonino argues, “In the life of the Church the revelation is always given in the tradition. But the relation is irreversible: tradition is never in itself revelation”.³⁹³ This handing over does not make the Church immune from the creation of human traditions.³⁹⁴ Human traditions are created when human understanding of the ‘*paradosis*’, that is, gospel tradition, is elevated to a divine reality in itself or when authority is claimed for human understanding of that ‘*paradosis*’.³⁹⁵ This, Míguez Bonino says, “makes our traditions not only meaningless but also contrary to God’s revelation. However, when traditions really convey God’s revelation in Christ, they lose their effectiveness when authority is claimed for tradition.”³⁹⁶ The only authority is that

³⁸⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

³⁸⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.34.

³⁸⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

³⁸⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.97.

³⁸⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.97.

³⁸⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

³⁹⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

³⁹¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.97.

³⁹² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.99.

³⁹³ Quoted in Davies, “Faith Seeking Effectiveness”, p.67.

³⁹⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.105.

³⁹⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.105.

³⁹⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94. 7.

of the *paradosis* itself as recorded in the apostolic witness.³⁹⁷

Míguez Bonino affirms that the Church is accompanied by the living Christ in the process of handing down and handing on God's revelation.³⁹⁸ However, that tradition is still deeply affected by its involvement in history which has implications for Christian witness and effectiveness in mission.³⁹⁹ This is so because humanity is socially and culturally conditioned.⁴⁰⁰ Whenever cultural change takes place or a new tradition is received, it always takes place within the framework of already existing cultural traditions.⁴⁰¹ Míguez Bonino puts it in the following way,

The language structures of community, mores, science, religion of our community are the categories within which we determine the meaning of our own existence. They do not destroy our freedom but they condition it and give the concrete conditions which make possible the exercise of that freedom. In other words, creativity, freedom can only take place in the framework of tradition.⁴⁰²

This is to say that "we do not read the Bible as people of the first or second century, but as people of our own time and place".⁴⁰³ He further argues,

revelation and faith are always absolutes: they are the revelation of the only true God, nothing more and nothing less ... At the same time, all understanding and expression of this revelation, all experience of this faith is necessarily relative: conditioned by time, place, culture, sex, temperament, social status, language, and modes of expression.⁴⁰⁴

The Church's reading of the Bible, therefore, is always a contextual reading.⁴⁰⁵ This process generally takes place unconsciously. To illustrate this point: a people-group uncritically accepts the existence and validity of a culture from another people-group through tradition and then pass it on without understanding or evaluation.⁴⁰⁶ The cause of this, Míguez Bonino points out, is that all groups of people are children of cultural traditions, and consequently, they "give birth to a tradition which at the same time is and is not what we have received".⁴⁰⁷ He calls this the "traditioning process".⁴⁰⁸ The Church cannot place itself outside the framework of this process,

³⁹⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.44.

³⁹⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.44-45.

³⁹⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.44.

⁴⁰⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.93.

⁴⁰¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

⁴⁰² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.90-91.

⁴⁰³ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.47.

⁴⁰⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.93.

⁴⁰⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.92.

⁴⁰⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.92.

⁴⁰⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.101

⁴⁰⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.87.

The core of the tradition — in the passive sense — are the facts, symbols, ideas, meanings which cluster around the historical person Jesus of Nazareth and the early Christian community's understanding of him. But we do not escape here the general law of transmission. Christian tradition is not a mechanical handing down of the original traditions, but a constant reconception and reinterpretation in the changing condition of human history and the history of the community.⁴⁰⁹

Each era and culture has its own assumptions and approaches to understanding issues. Consequently, the Church receives and transmits the traditions in the context of its own internal development but also in that of its relations with the surrounding social, political, economic context.⁴¹⁰ Therefore, “conservation and creation, reception, understanding and reconception are also a part of the process of tradition in the Church”.⁴¹¹ This process does not invalidate the validity of the Church's tradition but gives it a new meaning in a new situation.⁴¹²

Míguez Bonino, therefore, asserts that Christianity must be presented in the world as an interpretation of the historical act of God in Jesus Christ.⁴¹³ This makes possible the conception of new meanings, values, symbols in the historical Christian faith. This means that the proclamation of the gospel is not merely the repetition of a formula; it is also, in a limited sense, the creation of new meanings.⁴¹⁴

Míguez Bonino argues that this ‘traditioning process’ was already taking place in the Bible itself.⁴¹⁵ Critical studies have shown how Scripture is the product of the communication of an oral tradition.⁴¹⁶ Oral tradition is not only due to the fact that the biblical communities were not ‘bookish communities’, but to the very character of the biblical faith.⁴¹⁷ The biblical faith is one of constant reinterpretation.⁴¹⁸ God's actions in the Old Testament are,

not left as isolated facts of the past, but taken up in each generation, told and retold, and relived as they are told again. The community goes through the experience of the Exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea or the Covenant at Sinai as these events are repeated in the tradition — whether oral or written. Thus the living tradition of these “traditions” re-enacts, contemporizes the past event, whether in the great religious festivals or in the modest setting of the life of the family. The revelatory event constitutes a community and this community transmits the event.⁴¹⁹

⁴⁰⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.88-89.

⁴¹⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.93.

⁴¹¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.93.

⁴¹² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

⁴¹³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.95.

⁴¹⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, pp.51-52.

⁴¹⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.89-93.

⁴¹⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.101.

⁴¹⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.89.

⁴¹⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.89.

⁴¹⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.43.

In the New Testament, Jesus “proclaims himself as the true interpretation of God’s past acts of redemption, as the present fulfilment of these events and, therefore, in a real sense, as the true tradition”.⁴²⁰ Although Christ is the goal of Israel’s traditions which find fulfilment in him, he is also the foundation of a new tradition, namely the Apostolic tradition.⁴²¹

It is clear that Míguez Bonino is engaged in developing a dynamic hermeneutics that allows the re-reading and recapturing of Scripture for the believing and witnessing community.⁴²² The hermeneutical community of the biblical world listened to the tradition of the acts of God — in the recounting and relived these events before they were written down.⁴²³

Míguez Bonino illustrates his viewpoint further by using Pierre Bonnard’s understanding that the Apostle Paul interprets the resurrection not as a simple historical fact — which it is — but as an event which has meaning as “bearer of the present world”.⁴²⁴ Therefore, the text is open to a contemporary reading “not in spite of its concrete local and dated historicity but because of it”.⁴²⁵ Consequently, it is possible to propose a hermeneutical circulation, a dynamic interpretation that takes place between the history within the text and the historical contemporary reading of the text. This is what Míguez Bonino refers to in this hermeneutic approach as the historico-social analysis.⁴²⁶ An engaged reading of the Bible is not only inevitable but the Bible itself requires that this be done.⁴²⁷

4.2.3 Practical mediation

The final key insight that may be noted from Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology is that of practical mediation. Míguez Bonino’s theological and methodological process moves from Christian obedience, through analysis and reflection, and back to obedience.⁴²⁸ It begins with action and leads to action; it is an odyssey from praxis to praxis.⁴²⁹ The practical mediation is the final stage in Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology of faith’s search for effectiveness. It is also the stage at which action, resulting from this stage in the process, becomes the concrete

⁴²⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.45.

⁴²¹ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.45.

⁴²² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.99

⁴²³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.99.

⁴²⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.101.

⁴²⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.102.

⁴²⁶ José in *Faces of Jesus: Latin American Christologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books), p.6.

⁴²⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴²⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

⁴²⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

obedience to the gospel that forms the basis for beginning and continuing the hermeneutical circle.⁴³⁰

Practical mediation, although its focus is upon strategies, options, possibilities, dangers, and consequences, remains for Míguez Bonino a wholly theological task.⁴³¹ The main theological work done at this point is to define how theology's reflection upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the salvation God has brought about relates to concrete action.⁴³² Míguez Bonino poses it, "how do the original events (or the 'germinal' events as it would be more accurate to call them), namely, God's dealings with Israel, the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the hope of the Kingdom — how are they determinative in this single, synthetic fact that we call historical praxis of a Christian?"⁴³³

Míguez Bonino is of the opinion that in order to ensure that theological reflection leads to effective praxis, the Christian must opt for some type of already existing praxis.⁴³⁴ In other words, in order for faith to find true effectiveness in its mission it is essential that it includes a concrete political option.⁴³⁵ For the Christian, these options are what Míguez Bonino calls "historical projects".⁴³⁶ An historical project is a limited, measurable attempt at a model of political and economic organisation in obedience to God.⁴³⁷

However, Míguez Bonino notes that the danger is that the choice of historical projects and options are usually "sacralised".⁴³⁸ In other words, the choice of a political, economic or social option must not be considered or treated as if it were given by God, or drawn directly from the Bible, but rather that it is a decision and choice taken in obedience to God's command by fallible and sinful human beings.⁴³⁹ He seeks to solve the problem of sacralising historical projects in terms of attitude towards alternatives among options. The first solution, he suggests, is connected to people's attitude towards historical projects. In the case of historical projects people make their choices "in obedience to the dictates of our faith, will not be anything but a human project, fallible, destined to fulfil a relative and transitory role in history".⁴⁴⁰ Any

⁴³⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

⁴³¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

⁴³² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.94-95.

⁴³³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

⁴³⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

⁴³⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.86.

⁴³⁶ Quoted in Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.67.

⁴³⁷ Quoted in Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.67.

⁴³⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

⁴³⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.92.

⁴⁴⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Christians and Marxists*, p.51.

Christian action, including the Christian action taken as a result of social analysis and theological reflection, is described as human and fallible.⁴⁴¹ Although there is no guarantee that the action is either right or will be successful, action must be taken.⁴⁴² The historical project is only destined to fulfil a relative and transitory role.⁴⁴³ It is nothing more than a considered but humble attempt at Christian obedience done in faith.⁴⁴⁴

The second solution to the danger of sacralisation is that the choice of a historical project is part of an ongoing process of action and reflection.⁴⁴⁵ In other words, the relationship that exists between the direction perceived in Scripture and tradition, the ideology that mobilises and gives coherence to praxis, and the analysis which defines and directs action is neither one-directional nor static.⁴⁴⁶ As Christians engage in the process of “action – analysis – reflection – action”, they experience new challenges that drive them back to new analysis.⁴⁴⁷

New human possibilities lead us to enlarge our understanding of the biblical witness — indeed, in evangelical terms — the Spirit discloses Jesus Christ to us as we engage in the concrete witness to his redeeming love. But also the love which belongs to God’s Kingdom suggests further horizons for human life which act as magnetic poles or horizons of hope for kindling man’s [sic] analytical and ideological imagination.⁴⁴⁸

In other words, historical projects cannot be sacralised because their very employment in missional activity opens up new possibilities and induces Christians to return to the analysis stage and theological reflection. As new situations are created by Christians in their search for effectiveness, they are driven to reflect upon these new situations in the light of social analysis and biblical reflection.

In order to make Christian action concrete and effective theology must move from the general and indeterminate to the particular and determinate.⁴⁴⁹ Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology begins with the particular and determinate in the socio-analytical moment, moves to the general and indeterminate in the hermeneutical moment, and then returns via a second moment of analysis to the particular and determinate in concrete action.⁴⁵⁰ The question that must be answered here is: how is this done?

⁴⁴¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.148.

⁴⁴² Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.86.

⁴⁴³ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.87.

⁴⁴⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.148.

⁴⁴⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103

⁴⁴⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.151.

⁴⁴⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.151.

⁴⁴⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.151.

⁴⁴⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.100.

⁴⁵⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.57.

The effectiveness that faith seeks is not the cheapest, quickest, and easiest way to achieve a previously decided goal, but rather it is a genuine search for the best means and methods, in order to achieve the goals of God's Kingdom in the concrete situation in which the Christian Church finds itself.⁴⁵¹ It is "a prophetic word of discernment received in faith".⁴⁵² Therefore, it is not a planning meeting that could be carried out by executives but rather a deeply spiritual and theological exercise carried out by committed Christians.⁴⁵³

Míguez Bonino suggests two means to achieve an engaged reading of the text and thereby to move from the biblical text to the practical, or from the abstract to the concrete — the reading of the biblical text, and the determination of historical conditions. Míguez Bonino refers to these as, "conditions for all Christian action".⁴⁵⁴ Firstly, speaking of the biblical text, Míguez Bonino⁴⁵⁵ warns that in this act there cannot be "a direct historical consequence" between the reading of the Scriptures and "a form of law" in the formation of a plan of action or project. By this he means that there is not a direct route between the biblical text and historical praxis.⁴⁵⁶

The solution to this problem Míguez Bonino suggests, should be "a deepening of the biblical testimony in relation to the context of the issue or of the problem under consideration".⁴⁵⁷ This requires an identification of biblical paradigms of action.⁴⁵⁸ He identifies that the germinal events of the faith point to such notions as liberation, righteousness, shalom, the poor, love as concepts that guide Christian obedience.⁴⁵⁹ These should be considered only as dimensions of actions or paradigms not abstract principles.⁴⁶⁰ Míguez Bonino argues, "They serve as an orientation in the elaboration of a social ethic that guides the action of the Christian and the Church in society."⁴⁶¹

Then there is what Míguez Bonino calls "the determination of the historical conditions and possibilities of our present situation, as discovered through rational analysis".⁴⁶² He suggests the consideration of the Christian community — the Church — past and present is vital.⁴⁶³ It is

⁴⁵¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.96.

⁴⁵² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴⁵³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴⁵⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.102.

⁴⁵⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴⁵⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴⁵⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.100.

⁴⁵⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.100.

⁴⁵⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.100-101.

⁴⁶⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.98.

⁴⁶¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.101.

⁴⁶² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴⁶³ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.87.

essential to consider how the Church has treated certain issues and their contexts; how it has been successful, failed, and resolved ethical issues in the past.⁴⁶⁴

For Míguez Bonino, it is obvious that, the practical moment in theology must be done in community.⁴⁶⁵ Consequently his ecumenism is not only theologically based; it is also shaped practically and, in a positive sense, pragmatically.⁴⁶⁶ Furthermore, there must be an analysis of the contemporary social problems surrounding a given context.⁴⁶⁷ There is a difference between the analysis of the socio-analytical mediation and the analysis done in the practical moment.⁴⁶⁸ The macro context must still be taken into account but, at this point, a single issue is in focus and it is the surrounding elements that are vital to the investigation.⁴⁶⁹ In this moment of analysis, the problems that are dealt with are local unemployment, drug use, local government corruption, and other social questions.⁴⁷⁰ Míguez Bonino reiterates that the Christian's search is for an effective course of action.⁴⁷¹ Finally, practical mediation must consider various options. Various questions should be asked at this point: "What alternatives exist? What are the consequences of each of these options? What level of cooperation do I need to best work out these alternatives? What are the possibilities of success?"⁴⁷²

Míguez Bonino mentions four critical questions that all those committed to involvement in the world must consider,

What are the most important needs? (i) The critical points which demand immediate action and the further development to advance the process of change; (ii) What are the resources that at individual and institutional level are available to us to respond to these needs, and I mean resources at the level of people, abilities, spaces that are possibly open to our work, economic and infrastructure to respond to the needs in the immediate situations that we face and in the continuation of these initial actions; (iii) Where can we be more useful and efficient and if we spread our work too much will we probably have only a 'token' presence: is this an area which we know? Is it likely to open to our work? Do we have enough leadership and can we enlist our membership in the task? And (iv) what kind of concrete programmes can we define and organise?⁴⁷³

All these questions and their careful and analytical consideration are not "a foolproof key

⁴⁶⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴⁶⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.87.

⁴⁶⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.87.

⁴⁶⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.87.

⁴⁶⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.98.

⁴⁶⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.102-103.

⁴⁷⁰ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴⁷¹ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.65

⁴⁷² Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.103.

⁴⁷³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.103-104.

to Christian obedience but a significant framework for it⁴⁷⁴ to be effective.

Míguez Bonino's theological methodology has three mediations: socioanalytic mediation; hermeneutic mediation; and practical mediation. Socioanalytic mediation clarifies the context of the Church's missionary task which is necessary to understand the Church's role in society. Míguez Bonino uses dialectical tools of analysis in order to describe the dynamics of oppression and social change.

The issues raised by this social analysis are assumed by hermeneutic mediation. God has revealed the divine nature to humanity in Jesus Christ. The Bible records that revelation. Theology's role is to re-read that original divine revelation, through the eyes of the original witnesses but from its contemporary perspective. In a real sense it creates a new tradition which is both the same as, and different from that which is received. These contemporary theological readings are partial and incomplete and so there must be a constant critical contemporary reevaluation of both received and new re-reading of God's revelation in Christ. There must be mutual accountability between traditions across confessional and national boundaries; it must be ecumenical and international.

Míguez Bonino insists that the hermeneutic mediation is not complete until it returns to the moment of practical action. The journey from hermeneutic mediation to practical mediation, must be mediated by a concrete option. Options of action must be mediated by the context and an engaged reading of the gospel. At this point social analysis mediation is not at the level of macro context but at micro context. The practical projects that emerge from the practical mediation then form the basis for the analysis that begins the hermeneutical process once again.

4.3 Conclusion

For Míguez Bonino, theology is both a gift and a task. It is a gift because it is based upon God's revelation to humanity in Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament and it is a task because it serves the Church in its missionary obedience, or in fulfilling its socio-political responsibility. Míguez Bonino's understanding of epistemology means that this task set before the Church must begin with concrete missionary action, not abstract theory.

As discussed in this chapter, for Míguez Bonino, theology is 'faith seeking effectiveness'. His theological methodology begins and ends with praxis. Theology is not done for mere interest

⁴⁷⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.104.

or curiosity, much less to merely guard against heterodoxy. Theology is the process by which the Church obeys its missionary mandate. Effectiveness is not conceived of in terms of efficiency. Rather it is in terms of an interaction between faithfulness to the gospel and faithfulness to the context.

Having considered Míguez Bonino's theological methodology of socio-political engagement, which involves what he terms three mediations: socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and practical mediation, this study will proceed in the next chapter to engage Article 5 of the *Lausanne Covenant* with the insights drawn from Míguez Bonino's theological methodology.

Chapter Five

Engaging Article 5 with Insights from Míguez Bonino

5.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this study is to suggest a theological and methodological framework for evangelical socio-political engagement within the radical evangelical tradition. As discussed in Chapter 3, Article 5 of the *Lausanne Covenant* has failed to provide the theological and methodological framework for evangelicals to engage effectively in the Church's missionary task in society. Though it does provide a soundly evangelical theology *on* the Church's socio-political responsibility, it provides an inadequate theological and methodological framework *for* evangelicals to effectively engage in socio-political activities for the common good of humankind.

This chapter seeks to engage the *Lausanne Covenant* in general and Article 5 in particular with the key insights drawn from Míguez Bonino's theological methodology. This process will conclude by suggesting some recommendations towards strengthening Article 5 of the *Lausanne Covenant* on 'Christian Social Responsibility' as a theological and methodological framework for effective evangelical socio-political engagement within radical evangelical tradition.

5.2 Míguez Bonino and Article 5

As already noted, Míguez Bonino's theology is described by Davies⁴⁷⁵ as "faith seeking effectiveness", rather than as "faith seeking understanding". Davies describes Míguez Bonino's theological methodology as follows,

[It] is a theological and critical reflection upon the Church's missionary responsibility at a given time and in a given place. It starts with the present praxis, questions the validity of that praxis in the light of biblical and theological thought, and then projects forward to examine how this should be carried out effectively.⁴⁷⁶

Míguez Bonino provides the essential critical tools of reflection that will equip the evangelical Church to engage efficaciously in its socio-political responsibility in society. This

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Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.39.

⁴⁷⁶ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.39.

study has enumerated these critical tools of reflection from Míguez Bonino that will enhance the usefulness of ‘Article 5’ of the *Lausanne Covenant*. The study proceeds to analyse the *Lausanne Covenant* in general and ‘Article 5’ in particular, in the light of these critical tools cited from the works of Míguez Bonino.

The first key insight that has been noted from Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology is the significance of socio-analytical mediation in the process of formulating an effective response to the social, economic or political challenge that may be facing society. Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology begins with the concrete context of the mission of the Church. In other words, if faith is to be authentic in its search for effectiveness, then an analysis and interpretation of that context are critical. Therefore, socio-analytical mediation as the starting point in the process of socio-political engagement is a significant insight from Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology.

However, reflecting on Article 5 in particular and the *Lausanne Covenant* in general, nowhere is the necessity of the critical tool of socio-analytical mediation in the process of socio-political engagement discussed or even mentioned, even in a cursory manner. As noted above from Míguez Bonino’s discussion of the critical tool of socio-analytical mediation, he argues that any context is complex and therefore a scientific tool of analysis is important to unfolding the reality.⁴⁷⁷ This is especially so of the social, political, economic and cultural context. Míguez Bonino asserts that sociological and ecclesiological analysis are an important starting point as critical tools that will assist in grasping a total situation.⁴⁷⁸ As Míguez Bonino points out, “An engaged faith and obedience cannot stand outside or above the world in which they are engaged. This is the reason why, in the effort to enter into this theology, we are forced to dwell on the understanding and [sociological] analysis of the world in which it finds its *locus*.”⁴⁷⁹

On this score, Stott gives what may be considered as a representative perspective on this critical tool of socio-analytical mediation, not only of the majority of the drafters of the *Lausanne Covenant*, but also among the delegates to Lausanne 1974. Stott, in making reference to evangelical antipathy to Liberation Theology made mention of the critical tool of socio-analysis. In enumerating arguments why he is opposed to Liberation Theology, Stott advances

⁴⁷⁷ This may be observed from both his works. The whole of Part One of *Doing Theology* in a Revolutionary Situation (pp.2-82) and in the first two sections of *Towards a Christian Political Ethics* (pp.11-36), Míguez Bonino discusses this point of socio-analysis.

⁴⁷⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.33.

⁴⁷⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.21.

the following against it: “ ... it also [tends] to endorse Marxist theories (especially its social analysis) and to espouse violence ... ”.⁴⁸⁰ This statement, though directed towards Liberation Theology and its endorsement of Marxist theories in general, singles out its socio-analytical tool as one major point of contention. Another evangelical who was involved at Lausanne 1974, Carl Henry, also expresses an antithetical position towards the employment of social analysis.⁴⁸¹ Emilio Núñez states this evangelical antipathy towards the critical tool of socio-analytical mediation is merely an evangelical animosity towards the Marxist social theory *per sé*.⁴⁸² More than what Núñez may admit to, this antipathy on the part of Western evangelicalism only goes to demonstrate its imperialistic ideological leanings; consequently, opposing the socialist model and uncritically espousing the capitalistic model with its neoliberalism and its attending social theories, like the ‘free market’ notion. In other words, this is the usual carrying over of Western evangelical Christianisation of a culture opposed to socialism and rendering ideological support to capitalism. Notwithstanding, Míguez Bonino⁴⁸³ points out that there is no other way of “knowing social reality; some sort of social analysis is needed”, whether that social analysis is Marxist or otherwise, for there is “no value-free [social] science and no value-free theology”. This is important to note.

Joe Holland and Peter Henriot define the necessity of socio-analytical mediation as, “[an] effort to obtain a more complete picture of the social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships. Social analysis serves as a tool that permits us to grasp the reality with which we are dealing - ‘*la realidad*’ so often referred to in Latin America.”⁴⁸⁴ The lack of a discussion of the socio-analytical mediation and an articulation of its necessity in the process of the Church engaging in its missionary task in society, renders the *Lausanne Covenant* in general, and ‘Article 5’ in particular, an inadequate theological and methodological framework for evangelical socio-political engagement.

However, evangelicals in general are usually reluctant to engage the critical tools such as social analysis to aid reflection in the process of socio-political engagement. And this may account for its absence in the *Lausanne Covenant*. This may more likely be due to what Míguez

⁴⁸⁰ Stott, *The Contemporary*, p.351.

⁴⁸¹ Carl F.H. Henry, “Liberation Theology and Scriptures” in *Liberation Thinking: An Evangelical Assessment*, ed. W. Dayton Roberts (Monrovia: Marc Publications, 1987), p.31.

⁴⁸² Emilio A. Núñez C., *Liberation Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), p.28.

⁴⁸³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.45, 46.

⁴⁸⁴ Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, S.J., *Social Analysis: Link Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985), p.14.

Bonino observes concerning how ill-equipped theologians are for such a theoretical work that is interdisciplinary in nature,

Theologians are singularly ill-prepared for a theoretical work that must necessarily be interdisciplinary in nature, dealing as it does with an area (politics) and a group of sciences (the social sciences in general) with which they have usually had little experience. Nevertheless the work has to be undertaken”⁴⁸⁵

Nevertheless, within the radical evangelical tradition, the social sciences are generally regarded favourably. Escobar, who is usually designated a radical evangelical theologian⁴⁸⁶, argues for the employment of the social sciences in the process of socio-political engagement, in a paper he presented at the International Missiological Consultation held in Iguassu, Brazil in October 1999, by the WEF Missions Commission,

I would add that Theology, History and the Social Sciences are useful as tools for a better understanding of God’s Word and of contemporary missionary action, but only that Word is inspired and always fertile to renew the Church in mission.⁴⁸⁷

Social analysis is important as a starting point, because, it is, as Míguez Bonino argues, “... a means to grasp a total situation, and thus a necessary step toward ‘discerning the signs of the times’, that is, toward understanding a particular historical time in the context of God’s purpose and action.”⁴⁸⁸

The omission or neglect to incorporate a discussion of socio-analytical mediation in the *Lausanne Covenant* just makes Article 5 an inadequate and ineffective theological and methodological framework for socio-political engagement among evangelicals. As Escobar argues, the social sciences and socio-analytical mediation in socio-political engagement are useful as critical tools for an effective understanding of the Scriptures and of the context where the missionary activity is engaged.⁴⁸⁹

It may be observed, as noted above, radical evangelicalism is a socially-engaged stream of evangelicalism, because it incorporates a socio-analytical mediation.⁴⁹⁰ It integrates insights from both biblical and social science sources. Hence, as Escobar argues, radical evangelicalism’s engaging of the “witness of the canonical Scriptures, through the hermeneutical mediation of

⁴⁸⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, pp.9-10.

⁴⁸⁶ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, p.92.

⁴⁸⁷ Samuel Escobar, “Evangelical Missiology: Peering into the future from a critical historical moment”, p.1. Online: <http://homepage.mac.com/rowanpc/.Public/7%20EscobarEvangMiss.pdf>. Accessed on 3 November 2008.

⁴⁸⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Towards a Christian*, p.33.

⁴⁸⁹ Escobar, “Evangelical Missiology”, p.1.

⁴⁹⁰ Langmead, *The Word made Flesh*, p.96.

exegesis, historical studies and the social sciences.”⁴⁹¹

An effective missionary engagement with social, political, economic or cultural issues necessitates the critical tools, one of which is socio-analytical mediation. It is a socio-analytical mediation that will inform the options by which a programme of intervention or action of any sort will be outlined. Without socio-analytical mediation as an essential critical tool in socio-political engagement, it is not possible to conceptualise a programme that will effectively address the challenge, because this critical tool assists the grasping of the total situation.

The next key insight that has been noted from Míguez Bonino’s theological methodology is that of hermeneutical mediation. Míguez Bonino argues that a hermeneutics that takes in consideration not only the original historicity of the text but also the singularity of the reader’s *locus*; that is, a hermeneutics that incorporates a careful exegesis and historico-social analysis as well.⁴⁹² Hermeneutics, in this new context, means also an identification of the ideological frameworks of interpretation implicit in a given religious praxis.⁴⁹³ This is so because the Church’s reading of the Bible is always a contextual reading.⁴⁹⁴ Consequently, every interpretation of the Bible which is offered to us, whether as exegesis or as systematic or as ethical interpretation, must be investigated in relationship to the praxis out of which it comes.⁴⁹⁵ At this point the critical tools of ‘suspecting’ are of great significance.⁴⁹⁶ They provide tools for the clarification of the theological hermeneutics being employed.⁴⁹⁷ Therefore, as Míguez Bonino argues, very concretely, “we cannot receive the theological interpretation coming from the rich world without suspecting it and, therefore, asking what kind of praxis it supports, reflects, or legitimises”.⁴⁹⁸

However, an examination of the *Lausanne Covenant* reveals a different hermeneutic approach. The covenant discusses the issue of hermeneutics in Article 2, which is entitled ‘The Authority and Power of the Bible’. The article states,

We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God’s word to accomplish his [sic] purpose of salvation. The message of the

⁴⁹¹ Escobar, “Evangelical Missiology”, p.3.

⁴⁹² Míguez Bonino, “Introduction”, p.6.

⁴⁹³ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.95.

⁴⁹⁴ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.96.

⁴⁹⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, pp.91-92.

⁴⁹⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.91.

⁴⁹⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.92.

⁴⁹⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.94.

Bible is addressed to all men and women. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He [sic] illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole Church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God.

Stott observes that this article discusses the issues of the authority, power and interpretation of Scripture.⁴⁹⁹ This is discussed from a conservative evangelical position. In discussing the Covenant's statement on the authority of Scripture, Stott states, "The order of the three words is logical. It is the divine *inspiration* of Scripture which has secured its *truthfulness*, and it is because Scripture is truth from God that it has *authority* over men [sic]."⁵⁰⁰ On the issue of the power of Scripture, Stott discusses it in the context of God's word accomplishing God's purpose in creation and in salvation.⁵⁰¹

On the issue of interpreting the Scriptures, or hermeneutics, it states, "... The message of the [Bible] is addressed to all men and women. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He [sic] illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole Church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God" (Article 2, *Lausanne Covenant*). The article espouses the conservative evangelical approach to hermeneutics, referred to as the "grammatico-historical method".⁵⁰² This hermeneutical approach focuses on the grammatical construct of the Bible, which includes the study of words, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters that surround and relate to a text. It also focuses on the historical, which includes knowledge of the culture, economy, geography, climate, agriculture, architecture, family life, morals, and social structure of the Bible's original authors and recipients.⁵⁰³

Vinay Samuel argues that the grammatico-historical method is the dominant hermeneutical approach among evangelicals. He states that evangelicals believe that by this hermeneutical approach, "the scholar enters into the culture, language and world of the original author and recipients. The meanings contained in the text are expected to be unlocked by a painstaking application of grammatical and historical [process]. Exegesis then lays bare the

⁴⁹⁹ John Stott, "LOP 3: The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary", pp.5-6. Online: <http://www.lausanne.org/all-documents/lop-3.html>. . Accessed 30 November 2010.

⁵⁰⁰ Stott, "LOP 3: The Lausanne Covenant", p.5.

⁵⁰¹ Stott, "LOP 3: The Lausanne Covenant", p.6.

⁵⁰² Daniel M. Doriani, *Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1996), p.30.

⁵⁰³ Doriani, *Getting the Message*, pp..29-32.

original meaning which can then be applied to any situation”.⁵⁰⁴

However, this hermeneutical approach endorsed by the *Lausanne Covenant* differs significantly from that which Míguez Bonino proposes in his hermeneutical mediation. Míguez Bonino argues that humanity is socially and culturally conditioned. Whenever cultural change takes place or a new tradition is received, it always takes place within the framework of already existing cultural traditions. Míguez Bonino puts it in the following way,

The language structures of community, mores, science, religion of our community are the categories within which we determine the meaning of our own existence. They do not destroy our freedom but they condition it and give the concrete conditions which make possible the exercise of that freedom. In other words, creativity, freedom can only take place in the framework of tradition.⁵⁰⁵

What the drafters of the *Lausanne Covenant* do not realize is that, as Míguez Bonino points out, “we do not read the Bible as people of the first or second century, but as people of our own time and place”.⁵⁰⁶ The Church’s reading of the Bible is always a contextual reading. All the Church’s understanding and expression “of [the Bible], all experience of ... faith is necessarily relative [and not absolute]. It is all conditioned by time, place, culture, sex, temperament, social status, language, and modes of expression”.⁵⁰⁷ Consequently, the historico-social approach is an effective hermeneutical approach of a faith seeking effectiveness and not the grammatico-historical approach that neglects or ignores the social factor of the reader.

Escobar, discussing whether hermeneutic mediation, as articulated by Míguez Bonino may be applied to the study of Scripture, argues that the challenge of hermeneutic mediation for evangelicals must merely be to “deepen and sharpen our interpretation of the Bible with the appropriate biblical rules and tools of exegesis”.⁵⁰⁸ Escobar further argues that a contextual approach to hermeneutics asserts that “we [need to recognise] that we cannot make our starting point other than our present historical and cultural situation”.⁵⁰⁹ The reason for this is that “we cannot rid ourselves, our reasoning faculties or our linguistic skills of the culture in which we have acquired them and in which we continue to make sense for ourselves”.⁵¹⁰

Assuming a contextual approach to hermeneutics means a readiness to critically

⁵⁰⁴ Vinay K. Samuel, “Gospel and Culture” in *Proclaiming Christ in Christ’s Way*, eds. V. Samuel and A. Hauser (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1989), p.78.

⁵⁰⁵ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.99.

⁵⁰⁶ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.101.

⁵⁰⁷ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.101.

⁵⁰⁸ Samuel Escobar, “Evangelical Faith and the Theologies of Liberation” in *Liberation Thinking: An Evangelical Assessment*, ed. W. Dayton Roberts (Monrovia: Marc Publications, 1987), p.36.

⁵⁰⁹ Samuel, “Gospel and Culture”, p.79.

⁵¹⁰ Samuel, “Gospel and Culture”, p.79.

challenge theological formulations that tend to ignore the African context. As Míguez Bonino argues, accepting a theological hermeneutics originating from the developed and industrialised world without suspecting it will only promote and perpetuate a praxis that is not just ineffective but also incongruous.⁵¹¹ Such a hermeneutics will only engender, support, reflect and legitimise praxis from a social context that may not necessary be relevant and applicable to the African context. Discussing the necessity for such a process of a hermeneutics of suspicion, Harvie Conn observes the consequences of failure to do so on the part of North American evangelical missionaries on the Latin American Church.

To a greater extent than we usually care to admit, [the North American missionary] has conceived of his mission to the young Church [in Latin America], reproducing the North American Church of which he is a part. Forms, structures, and functions have been transported *in toto* to a Latin American setting, not as an expression of theological imperialism but as a sincere effort to produce a Church that is biblical and orthodox.⁵¹²

What Conn observes concerning the Church in the Latin American context is equally true of the evangelical missionary-planted Churches in Africa.⁵¹³ Notwithstanding this, whether inadvertently or not, much of the theology of Third World evangelicalism is bequeathed on it by North American and European evangelicalism without taking context seriously. It was this discovery that caused a group of “concerned evangelicals”, at the height of oppression by the apartheid regime in South Africa, to recognise just how inadequate their theology was and “to address the crisis [they and their fellow citizens] were facing”.⁵¹⁴ They began to realise that their theology was influenced by,

American and European missionaries with political, social and class interests which were contrary or even hostile to both the spiritual and social needs of [their] people in [South Africa] ... Having realized that there was something wrong with the practice and theology of evangelicals in [South Africa, they] felt God’s calling to [them] to rectify this situation for the sake of the gospel of the Lord.⁵¹⁵

Bosch affirms the rightness of contextual theology in stressing the need for a “hermeneutic of suspicion”, particularly as concerns the religion of the ruling classes.⁵¹⁶

This ‘theological imperialism’ will only be deconstructed by engaging in a process of

⁵¹¹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.87.

⁵¹² Harvie M Conn, “The Mission of the Church” in *Evangelicals and Liberation*, ed. Carl E. Armerding (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1979), p.63.

⁵¹³ See Allan Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience: African Renaissance and the Spirituality of Politics* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2005), 148-149.

⁵¹⁴ *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, p.2.

⁵¹⁵ *Evangelical Witness in South Africa*, p.2.

⁵¹⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.430.

hermeneutical suspicion. This ‘theological imperialism’ and the necessity for a hermeneutic of suspicion may be illustrated by Allan Boesak’s observation in the theological training of black Church ministers within the Dutch Reformed Churches,

The theology of [the Dutch Reformed Churches] was an unbiblical mixture of orthodoxy and pietism that hardly bore any resemblance to the robust, world-formative theology ... the Reformed tradition inherited from John Calvin, so that these Churches had very little, if any, social consciousness. There was not a hint of the radical biblical and theological interpretations that so inspired the white DRC during the first four decades of the 20th century and articulated so forcefully by D.F. Malan ... but the fundamental change ... would come only with liberation theology and a completely new understanding of both the Bible and the radical nature of their Reformed, Calvinist heritage.⁵¹⁷

Boesak further argues that the black preachers of these missionary-planted Churches received their theological education from “white professors who were themselves missionaries”.⁵¹⁸ However, these preachers remained “theologically impoverished and undernourished”.⁵¹⁹ They had heard nothing of “John Calvin’s holy tirades against the wretchedness of the poor and the greed and complacency of the rich”.⁵²⁰ They had not heard Calvin say that “the whole human race is united by a sacred bond of fellowship”.⁵²¹ They had not realised “their theology did not include Calvin’s insights that a just and well-regulated government will be distinguished for maintaining the rights of the poor and the afflicted”.⁵²² He goes on to observe, “Their hermeneutical key was shaped and cut by the white Church, and could not open the door to the proper understanding of Scripture these Churches so sorely needed. Theirs was truly a theology of subservience and enslavement”.⁵²³

It is this similar transmutation that evangelicalism had to undergo under Princeton Calvinism’s influence in redefining evangelicalism. Princeton Calvinism, sometimes also referred to as Princeton Theology,⁵²⁴ did this by recasting the principles of the Reformation that defined evangelicalism,⁵²⁵ consequently redefining evangelicalism and shaping it ideologically to suit Western cultural views. This redefinition of evangelicalism is noted in Dayton’s analysis

⁵¹⁷ Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience*, p.148.

⁵¹⁸ Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience*, p.148.

⁵¹⁹ Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience*, p.148.

⁵²⁰ Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience*, p.148.

⁵²¹ Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience*, p.149.

⁵²² Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience*, p.149.

⁵²³ Boesak, *The Tenderness of Conscience*, pp.148-149.

⁵²⁴ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, pp.128-129.

⁵²⁵ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.129.

of Princeton Calvinism. Dayton's⁵²⁶ threefold analysis identifies Princeton Calvinism's influence in its "conservative social views", its "[close ties] to the aristocracy and higher social class", and its emphasis on "human depravity with its social pessimism." This has engendered perspectives in evangelicalism that gravitate towards upholding the *status quo* and foster social passivity. Princeton Calvinism is what has been used to systematise and homogenise contemporary evangelical theology and not the Reformation principles.⁵²⁷

The grammatico-historical hermeneutical approach gravitates towards a Western *modus operandi* of epistemology. Samuel argues that the grammatico-historical method depends on the philosophical concepts of the European Enlightenment with its hypothesis that these can be employed in a plain grammatical sense approach to interpret meaning.⁵²⁸ However, Samuel argues that "making sense differs from culture to culture and among disciplines in a culture".⁵²⁹ The reason for this is that "we cannot rid ourselves, our reasoning faculties or our linguistic skills of the culture in which we have acquired them and in which we continue to make sense for ourselves".⁵³⁰ The grammatico-historical method does not address a faith seeking effectiveness, but merely faith seeking understanding. Therefore, the hermeneutics proposed by Míguez Bonino's hermeneutical mediation, which incorporates a careful exegesis and historico-social analysis is what provides the critical tools needed for faith seeking effectiveness.

However, caution must be exercised in terms of the practical implementation of a hermeneutic of suspicion. As much as it is true that theology is contextual and, therefore, necessitates a hermeneutic of suspicion, especially as concerns the religion of the middle or ruling classes. The danger James Martin cautions against is that "the suspecting tends to become an end in itself".⁵³¹ Following on with Martin's observation, Max Stackhouse argues that where this happens, theological conversation becomes "less and less a dialogue about the most important questions and more and more a power struggle about who is to be allowed to speak".⁵³² Bosch argues that usually assuming such a position suggests that "only those who have access to privileged knowledge may interpret the context and are able to say what the gospel for the

⁵²⁶ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, pp.129-131.

⁵²⁷ Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical*, p.129.

⁵²⁸ Samuel, "Gospel and Culture", p.79.

⁵²⁹ Samuel, "Gospel and Culture", p.79.

⁵³⁰ Samuel, "Gospel and Culture", p.79.

⁵³¹ Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.430.

⁵³² Max Stackhouse, *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp.22-23.

context is”.⁵³³ Stackhouse⁵³⁴ further observes that in this paradigm, anything “‘non-victims’ think is irremediably tainted”; if they do not immediately “endorse a particular orthopraxis”, they are “unofficially excommunicated because of their false consciousness” and judged to be “beyond the pale of God’s justice”.

Bosch observes that the hermeneutic of suspicion approach also tends to end up having a low view of the importance of text, as coming from outside the context.⁵³⁵ He argues that the very idea that texts can judge contexts is methodically doubtful.⁵³⁶ Bosch further argues that the message of the gospel is not viewed as something that we bring to context but as something that we derive from context.⁵³⁷ Just as Albert Nolan argues, “You do not incarnate good news into a situation, good news arises out of the situation”; after all, “the prophets did not ‘apply’ their prophetic message to their times, they had it revealed to them through the signs of the times”.⁵³⁸

However, Bosch argues that “the problem is that ‘facts’ always remain ambiguous. It isn’t the facts of history that reveal where God is at work, but the facts illuminated by the gospel ... in reading the signs of the times, is to interpret them in the light of the gospel.”⁵³⁹ Bosch goes further to observe that in all major ecclesial traditions: Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant, people not look only at where they are at the present moment, but also at where they come from:

They look for a real, reliable, and universal guide to the truth and justice of God, to apply as a criterion in evaluating the context. This means that it is the gospel which is the *norma normans*, the ‘norming norm’. Our reading of the context is also a norm, but in a derived sense; it is the *norma normata*, the ‘normed norm’. Of course, the gospel can only be read from and make sense in our present context, and yet to posit it as criterion means that it may, and often does, critique the context and our reading of it.⁵⁴⁰

Indeed, with the foregoing caution in mind, it is the larger picture of the general evangelical hermeneutical approach that needs to be critically evaluated. As noted above from Samuel, an uncritical engagement by the Third World evangelicals with the grammatico-historical hermeneutical approach that gravitates towards a Western *modus operandi* of epistemology will only augment notions that will invariably militate against the enunciation of

⁵³³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.430.

⁵³⁴ Stackhouse, *Apologia*, pp.102-103, 186.

⁵³⁵ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.430.

⁵³⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.430.

⁵³⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.430.

⁵³⁸ Albert Nolan, *God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel* (Cape Town/Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988), p.27.

⁵³⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.430.

⁵⁴⁰ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p.430.

a theological methodology that will give rise to an effective socio-political engagement for evangelicals in society.⁵⁴¹

The last key insight that may be noted from Míguez Bonino's theological methodology is that of practical mediation. It has been noted above that Míguez Bonino's theological process moves from Christian obedience, through analysis and reflection, and to obedience; it starts with action and leads to action; it is the journey from praxis to praxis.⁵⁴² Practical mediation is the final stage in faith's search for effectiveness where action becomes the concrete obedience to the gospel and forms the basis for the continuation of the hermeneutical mediation.⁵⁴³

However, a critical analysis of the *Lausanne Covenant* in general and 'Article 5' in particular shows that this stage is omitted. There is no deliberate articulation of a call to Christian obedience. This, from the analysis of this study, is due to the omission of an articulation of a socio-analytical mediation that critically evaluates context and the assumptive espousal of a hermeneutic approach that does not enhance the development of a theological methodology that will inform an effective socio-political engagement. Stott states that the reason why the *Lausanne Covenant* was called 'a covenant' and not 'a declaration' was that the participants at Lausanne 1974 "wanted to do more than find an agreeable formula of words. We were determined not just to declare something, but to do something, namely to commit ourselves to the task of world evangelisation".⁵⁴⁴ The focus of the *Lausanne Covenant* is not on the notion of holistic mission but on the singular activity of evangelism. The main Lausanne 1974 congress did express "penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive".⁵⁴⁵ However, the delegates who were concerned to develop a radical Christian discipleship, expressed it more strongly, "We must repudiate as demonic the attempt to drive a wedge between evangelism and social action".⁵⁴⁶ They even went further and positively affirmed that, "... evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty".⁵⁴⁷

However, as Míguez Bonino argues, Christian obedience worked out in concrete practice is a pre-requisite for knowledge of the truth and thus a requirement to do contextual theology.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴¹ Samuel, "Gospel and Culture", p.79.

⁵⁴² Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", p.73.

⁵⁴³ Davies, "Faith Seeking Effectiveness", pp.73-74.

⁵⁴⁴ Stott, "LOP 3: The Lausanne Covenant", p.2.

⁵⁴⁵ Stott, "LOP 3: The Lausanne Covenant", p.2.

⁵⁴⁶ "Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship", p.1294.

⁵⁴⁷ "Theology and Implications of Radical Discipleship", p.1296.

⁵⁴⁸ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.95.

In other words, for faith to be effective in mission it is essential that it includes an option for action. It is only as the Christian assumes, what Míguez Bonino calls “historical project”,⁵⁴⁹ that there will be effectiveness in socio-political engagement.

However, nowhere in the *Lausanne Covenant* in general or in Article 5 in particular does the document discuss the necessity for socio-political engagement. This is due to the fact, as Walker observes, that evangelicalism considers it to be incompatible with evangelical theology.⁵⁵⁰ However, in discussing the option for the poor, Walker argues that the assumed disinclination on the part of evangelicals towards the option for the poor, for example, is not because there is anything inherently inconsistent between evangelical theology and the option for the poor.⁵⁵¹ This is primarily due to patterns of thought that are reflective of Western culture.⁵⁵²

The point being argued here is that an option for action that will in turn inform a historical project is critical in the Church fulfilling its missionary task in society. The omission of this critical element in the *Lausanne Covenant* in general and in Article 5 in particular, renders it an inadequate framework for socio-political engagement among evangelicals.

5.3 Conclusion

This study has argued for the necessity of the application of the critical tools of socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and practical mediation to the process of socio-political engagement. The neglect of these critical tools renders the *Lausanne Covenant* an inadequate theological and methodological framework for socio-political engagement. It does not provide a framework that is able to engage faith in its search for effectiveness in the world. While radical evangelicalism emerging from within the Third World does endeavour to incorporate these critical tools, it may be concluded that the *Lausanne Covenant* neglects to frame its discussion of socio-political engagement in this way in the article entitled ‘Christian social responsibility’. This is the case because it is essentially a document constructed from within a Western conservative evangelical perspective, and thus neglects the socio-economic and

⁵⁴⁹ Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology*, p.97.

⁵⁵⁰ David S. Walker, *Challenging Evangelicalism: Prophetic Witness and Theological Renewal* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), pp.116-117.

⁵⁵¹ Walker, *Challenging Evangelicalism*, p.116.

⁵⁵² Walker, *Challenging Evangelicalism*, p.117.

political realities of the Third World context.

In the next chapter, the study concludes by giving a summary of its primary argument, namely the challenge to evangelical missiology that an interdisciplinary approach in socio-political engagement brings. In this chapter, a possible way forward is suggested for evangelicals in the Third World, especially in Africa.

Chapter Six

Concluding the Study

6.1 Introduction

This study has argued that ‘Article 5’ of the *Lausanne Covenant* does not provide an adequate theological and methodological framework for socio-political engagement for evangelicalism. It has also argued that the ‘two-mandate’ approach is not only a hindrance to the theologising of an evangelical socio-political framework for missional action, but is also a continuation of the constant undermining of evangelicals who endeavour any form of Christian engagement in socio-political action. It has further argued that this ‘two-mandate’ approach to mission is not the only challenge facing evangelicalism in developing an adequate theological and methodological framework for socio-political engagement within the radical evangelical tradition. There are other aspects of evangelicalism, such as the absence of any engagement with social analysis, the hermeneutical method, and a process that engages with the historical context. It has also shown the need to develop a theological methodology that will undergird the process for an effective socio-political engagement.

6.2 Summary of the Study

The study has argued that evangelical missiology must engage an interdisciplinary approach. It has posited that engaging a missiological process that takes full cognisance of the key insights of Míguez Bonino in understanding the role of faith in the world, namely, that of socioanalytic mediation, hermeneutic mediation and practical mediation, will provide a more adequate theological and methodological framework for effective evangelical Christian socio-political engagement in Africa. Such a missiological approach will provide African evangelicalism with a frame of reference enabling a critical understanding of reality. To neglect to engage such a process will render any socio-political engagement of African evangelicals ineffective. It suggests that evangelical missiology must have an interdisciplinary approach to understand and effectively fulfil the missionary action of the Church in society. It further suggests that the missionary activities of the Church must be approached from a

multidisciplinary perspective including biblical studies, theology, history and the social sciences. This interdisciplinary approach must be systematic and critical. Such an evangelical missiological approach will enable evangelical witness and missionary activity to be relevant and effective in its dealing with the enormous socio-economic and political challenges confronting the African continent today.

This study has observed that there were two cycles of evangelical missiological development. The first cycle was developed prior to the Second World War, before the ‘great reversal’ when evangelical denominations played a key role both in the practice of mission and in the theologising of it. Concerning this era, Stott observes, that it was an era when evangelical witness and missionary activities were quiet “[unselfconscious], without feeling any need to define what they were doing or why”.⁵⁵³ It was a period still marked by significant activity from European as well as North American Churches and by theological debate about the nature of the Christian mission and the identity of the young Churches that were growing in Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁵⁵⁴ The second cycle developed after the Second World War. This, as noted earlier, was essentially a decline of traditional evangelical activity and a marked growth of activity and influence from conservative evangelical agencies that spread missionary ideas that reflected American cultural values and mores.⁵⁵⁵ Through massive use of Christian media, theological institutions, and missionary conferences its influence was felt not only in countries receiving missionaries, but also in the old sending countries of Europe.⁵⁵⁶ Consequently, bringing about the same perspectives that brought about the ‘great reversal’ on the question of evangelical socio-political responsibility.

However, towards the end of the third quarter of the twentieth century evangelical missiological reflection gathered momentum and Lausanne 1974 which became a rallying point for the promotion of Christian evangelical mission summarised in the *Lausanne Covenant*. Since then, evangelical missiological reflection has experienced sustained growth in both quantity and quality because of the widening and deepening of its agenda, the growing dialogue of different traditions within evangelicalism, and the emergence of missiologists from the younger Churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America.⁵⁵⁷ This has led to a growing body of work which has come

⁵⁵³ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.2.

⁵⁵⁴ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.2.

⁵⁵⁵ Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.4.

⁵⁵⁶ Escobar, “Evangelical Missiology”, p.2.

⁵⁵⁷ Escobar, “Evangelical Missiology”, pp.2-3.

to be known as ‘radical evangelicalism’. This study suggests that employing this tradition together with the theological methodological framework of Míguez Bonino, will engender an effective African evangelical socio-political engagement.

The following recommendations are being suggested as a way forward for evangelicals in the Third World, and Africa in particular.

6.3 Recommendations

Firstly, evangelicals in Africa need to develop a missiology that reflects the African context. The continual reliance on the part of evangelicals in Africa on missiological and theological works developed from a Western perspective will merely hinder the Church in Africa from effectively engaging in socio-political issues that bedevil the continent. African theologians and missiologists must develop theological and missiological works that reflects the socio-political, economic and cultural challenges facing the evangelical Church in Africa. William Houston makes a similar suggestion in his doctoral studies, when he proposals that the evangelical Church in Africa develops “its own theological response to its particular realities and challenges”.⁵⁵⁸

Secondly, evangelicals in Africa must identify academic institutions, such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s School of Religion and Theology (SORAT) for further training of its leaders. This School offers socially relevant post-graduate programmes that are responding to contemporary challenges that could assist African evangelicals build a critical mass of academics, theologians and Church leaders who will be able to develop similar programmes in evangelical institutions throughout the continent.

Thirdly, African evangelicals need to develop theological and missiological courses at both post-secondary and post-graduate levels that have an interdisciplinary approach. The need to engage with history and the social sciences in the theological education is critical in developing Churches that are more responsive to socio-political and economic challenges facing the continent. This has been suggested by the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) in its Strategic Plan 2010-2014.⁵⁵⁹ However, trying to provide an evangelical platform for evangelicals in Africa for an effective response to socio-political and economic issues in Africa

⁵⁵⁸ William Houston, “Theological Models of Biblical Holism with Reference to Theological Colleges in Africa”, D. Min Thesis. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (May, 2008), p.144.

⁵⁵⁹ *Association of Evangelicals in Africa*, pp.9-10, 14, 18-19.

as integral to mission, will not materialise by being dependent on missiological and theological works that are written from a North American and European perspective. This study, therefore, suggests that such a process needs the theoretical insights offered by Míguez Bonino: socioanalytic mediation, hermeneutic mediation and practical mediation. It is this theological method that will assist African evangelicals in developing a relevant and contextual theological response to the socio-economic and political challenges of the continent. In so doing, the African evangelical faith might yet become “effective” in engaging with socio-political issues.

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Appendix 1

The Lausanne Covenant

Introduction

We, members of the Church of Jesus Christ from more than 150 nations, participants in the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, praise God for his great salvation and rejoice in the fellowship he has given us with himself and with each other. We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization. We believe the gospel is God's good news for the whole world, and we are determined by his grace to obey Christ's commission to proclaim it to every person and to make disciples of every nation. We desire, therefore, to affirm our faith and our resolve, and to make public our covenant.

1. The Purpose of God

We affirm our belief in the one eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the glory of his name. We confess with shame that we have often denied our calling and failed in our mission, by becoming conformed to the world or by withdrawing from it. Yet we rejoice that even when borne by earthen vessels the gospel is still a precious treasure. To the task of making that treasure known in the power of the Holy Spirit we desire to dedicate ourselves anew.

Isa. 40:28; Matt. 28:19; Eph. 1:11; Acts 15:14; John 17:6, 18; Eph. 4:12; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 5:10; 2 Cor. 4:7.

2. The Authority and Power of the Bible

We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God's word to accomplish his purpose of salvation. The message of the bible is addressed to all men and women. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole Church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God.

2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Isa. 55:11; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21; John 10:35; Matt. 5:17-18; Jude 3; Eph. 1:17-18.

3. The Uniqueness and Universality of Christ

We affirm that there is only one Savior and only one gospel, although there is a wide diversity of evangelistic approaches. We recognize that everyone has some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature. But we deny that this can save, for people suppress the truth by their unrighteousness. We also reject as derogatory to Christ and the gospel every kind of syncretism and dialog which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies. Jesus Christ, being himself the only God-man, who gave himself as the only ransom for sinners, is the only mediator between God and people. There is no other name by which we must be saved. All men and women are perishing because of sin, but God loves everyone, not wishing that any should perish but that all should repent. Yet those who reject Christ repudiate the joy of salvation and condemn themselves to eternal separation from God. To proclaim Jesus as "the Savior of the world" is not to affirm that all people are either automatically or ultimately saved, still less

to affirm that all religions offer salvation in Christ. Rather it is to proclaim God's love for a world of sinners and to invite everyone to respond to him as Savior and Lord in the wholehearted personal commitment of repentance and faith. Jesus Christ has been exalted above every other name; we long for the day when every knee shall bow to him and every tongue shall confess him Lord.

Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Tim. 2 :5,6; Acts 4:12; John 3:16-19; 2 Peter 3:9; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; John 4:42; Matt. 11:28; Eph. 1:20-21; Phil. 2:9-11.

4. The Nature of Evangelism

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sin and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialog whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service in the world. 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Acts 2:32-39; John 20:21; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:11,20; Luke 14:25-33; Mark 8:34; Acts 2:40,47; Mark 10:43-45.

5. Christian Social Responsibility

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again, into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.

Acts 17:26,31; Gen. 18:25; Ps. 45:7; Isa. 1:17; Gen. 1:26-27; Lev. 19:18; Luke 6:27,35; James 3:9; John 3:3,5; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 6:33; 2 Cor. 3:18; James 2:14-26.

6. The Church and Evangelism

We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world. We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society. In the Church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary. World evangelization requires the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. The Church is at the very center of God's cosmic purpose and

is his appointed means of spreading the gospel. But a Church which preaches the cross must itself be marked by the cross. It becomes a stumbling block to evangelism when it betrays the gospel or lacks a living faith in God, a genuine love for people, or scrupulous honesty in all things including promotion and finance. The Church is the community of God's people rather than an institution, and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system, or human ideology.

John 17:18; 20:21; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 20:27; Eph. 1:9-10; 3:9-11; Gal. 6:14,17; 2 Cor. 6:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:19-21; Phil. 1:27.

7. Cooperation in Evangelism

We affirm that the Church's visible unity in truth is God's purpose. Evangelism also summons us to unity, because our oneness strengthens our witness, just as our disunity undermines our gospel of reconciliation. We recognize, however, that organizational unity may take many forms and does not necessarily forward evangelism. Yet we who share the same biblical faith should be closely united in fellowship, work and witness. We confess that our testimony has sometimes been marred by sinful individualism and needless duplication. We pledge ourselves to seek a deeper unity in truth, worship, holiness and mission. We urge the development of regional and functional cooperation for the furtherance of the Church's mission, for strategic planning, for mutual encouragement, and for the sharing of resources and experience.

Eph. 4:3-4; John 17:21,23; 13:35; Phil. 1:27.

8. Churches in Evangelistic Partnership

We rejoice that a new missionary era has dawned. The dominant role of western missions is fast disappearing. God is raising up from the younger Churches a great new resource for world evangelization, and is thus demonstrating that the responsibility to evangelize belongs to the whole body of Christ. All Churches should therefore be asking God and themselves what they should be doing both to reach their own area and to send missionaries to other parts of the world. A reevaluation of our missionary responsibility and role should be continuous. Thus a growing partnership of Churches will develop and the universal character of Christ's Church will be more clearly exhibited. We also thank God for agencies which labor in Bible translation, theological education, the mass media, Christian literature, evangelism, missions, Church renewal and other specialist fields. They too should engage in constant self-examination to evaluate their effectiveness as part of the Church's mission.

Rom. 1:8; Phil. 1:5; 4:15; Acts 13:1-3; 1 Thes. 1:6-8.

9. The Urgency of the Evangelistic Task

More than 2,700 million people, which is more than two-thirds of all humanity, have yet to be evangelized. We are ashamed that so many have been neglected; it is a standing rebuke to us and to the whole Church. There is now, however, in many parts of the world an unprecedented receptivity to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are convinced that this is the time for Churches and para-Church agencies to pray earnestly for the salvation of the unreached and to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization. A reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelized country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national Church's growth in self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelized areas. Missionaries should flow ever more freely from and to all six continents in a spirit of humble service. The goal should be, by all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and receive the good news. We cannot hope to attain this goal without sacrifice. All of us are shocked by the poverty of millions and disturbed by the injustices which

cause it. Those of us who live in affluent circumstances accept our duty to develop a simple life-style in order to contribute more generously to both relief and evangelism. Mark 16:15; John 9:4; Matt. 9:35-38; Isa. 58:6-7; James 2:1-9; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; James 1:27; Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35.

10. Evangelism and Culture

The development of strategies for world evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of Churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture. Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because men and women are God's creatures, some of their culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because they are fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. The gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture. Missions have all too frequently exported with the gospel an alien culture and Churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to Scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and Churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God.

Mark 7:8-9,13; Gen. 4:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Phil. 2:5-7; 2 Cor. 4:5.

11. Education and Leadership

We confess that we have sometimes pursued Church growth at the expense of Church depth, and divorced evangelism from Christian nurture. We also acknowledge that some of our missions have been too slow to equip and encourage national leaders to assume their rightful responsibilities. Yet we are committed to indigenous principles, and long that every Church will have national leaders who manifest a Christian style of leadership in terms not of domination but of service. We recognize that there is a great need to improve theological education, especially for Church leaders. In every nation and culture there should be an effective training program for pastors and laity in doctrine, discipleship, evangelism, nurture and service. Such training programs should not rely on any stereotyped methodology but should be developed by creative local initiatives according to biblical standards.

Col. 1:27-28; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5,9; Mark 10:42-45; Eph. 4:11-12.

12. Spiritual Conflict

We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil, who are seeking to overthrow the Church and frustrate its task of world evangelization. We know our need to equip ourselves with God's armor and to fight this battle with the spiritual weapons of truth and prayer. For we detect the activity of our enemy, not only in false ideologies outside the Church, but also inside it in false gospels which twist Scripture and put people in the place of God. We need both watchfulness and discernment to safeguard the biblical gospel. We acknowledge that we ourselves are not immune to worldliness of thought and action, that is, to a surrender to secularism. For example, although careful studies of Church growth, both numerical and spiritual, are right and valuable, we have sometimes neglected them. At other times, desirous to ensure a response to the gospel, we have compromised our message, manipulated our hearers through pressure techniques, and become unduly preoccupied with statistics or even dishonest in our use of them. All this is worldly. The Church must be in the world; the world must not be in the Church.

Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 6:11,13-18; 2 Cor. 10: 3-5; 1 John 2:18-26; 4:1-3; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2; John 17:15.

13. Freedom and Persecution

It is the God-appointed duty of every government to secure conditions of peace, justice and liberty in which the Church may obey God, serve the Lord Christ, and preach the gospel without interference. We therefore pray for the leaders of the nations and call upon them to guarantee freedom of thought and conscience, and freedom to practice and propagate religion in accordance with the will of God and as set forth in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We also express our deep concern for all who have been unjustly imprisoned, and especially for those who are suffering for their testimony to the Lord Jesus. We promise to pray and work for their freedom. At the same time we refuse to be intimidated by their fate. God helping us, we too will seek to stand against injustice and to remain faithful to the gospel, whatever the cost. We do not forget the warnings of Jesus that persecution is inevitable.

1 Tim. 2:1-4; Col 3:24; Acts 4:19; 5:29; Heb. 13:1-3; Luke 4:18; Gal. 5:11; 6:12; Matt. 5:10-12; John 15:18-21.

14. The Power of the Holy Spirit

We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father sent his Spirit to bear witness to his Son; without his witness ours is futile. Conviction of sin, faith in Christ, new birth and Christian growth are all his work. Further, the Holy Spirit is a missionary spirit; thus evangelism should arise spontaneously from a Spirit-filled Church. A Church that is not a missionary Church is contradicting itself and quenching the Spirit. Worldwide evangelization will become a realistic possibility only when the Spirit renews the Church in truth and wisdom, faith, holiness, love and power. We therefore call upon all Christians to pray for such a visitation of the sovereign Spirit of God that all his fruit may appear in all his people and that all his gifts may enrich the body of Christ. Only then will the whole Church become a fit instrument in his hands, that the whole earth may hear his voice.

Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:4; John 15:26-27; John 16:8-11; 1 Cor. 12:3; John 3:6-8; 2 Cor. 3:18; John 7:37-39; 1 Thes. 5:19; Ps. 85:4-7; Gal. 5:22-23; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; Ps. 67:1-3.

15. The Return of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly, in power and glory, to consummate his salvation and his judgment. This promise of his coming is a further spur to our evangelism, for we remember his words that the gospel must first be preached to all nations. We believe that the interim period between Christ's ascension and return is to be filled with the mission of the people of God, who have no liberty to stop before the end. We also remember his warning that false Christs and false prophets will arise as precursors of the final Antichrist. We therefore reject as a proud, self-confident dream the notion that people can ever build a utopia on earth. Our Christian confidence is that God will perfect his kingdom, and we look forward with eager anticipation to that day, and to the new heaven and earth in which righteousness will dwell and God will reign forever. Meanwhile, we rededicate ourselves to the service of Christ and of people in joyful submission to his authority over the whole of our lives.

Mark 14:62; Heb. 9:28; Mark 13:10; Matt. 28:20; Acts 1:8-11; Mark 13:21-23; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-3; Luke 12:32; Rev. 21:1-5; 2 Peter 3:13; Matt. 28:18.

Conclusion

Therefore, in the light of this our faith and our resolve, we enter into a solemn covenant with God and with each other, to pray, to plan and to work together for the evangelization of the whole world. We call upon others to join us. May God help us by his grace and for his glory to be faithful to this our covenant! Amen, Alleluia!

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