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March 1998

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at the University of Cape Town, under the supervision of professor Charles Wanamaker.
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Abstract

This study examines the biblical texts of Luke-Acts in an attempt to reconstruct the general first century eastern Mediterranean context in which Luke wrote. Specific features of urban Greco-Roman society will be analysed. These include the social, cultural, political, economic and religious dimensions, all of which will be used to construct a particular understanding of Luke's attitude to the issues of wealth and poverty in his own setting. I argue that the specific features of urban Greco-Roman society gave rise to a particular type of Lucan ideology which aimed to secure and legitimate the role and place of the poor in the Christian community. Within this process I will trace the traditional understanding of wealth and possessions within the Greco-Roman world and link it to the manner in which Luke wished it to be used within the Christian community. I specifically make use of techniques and models developed by the social sciences in the construction of my argument. The purity and honour codes, as well as the model of patronage, form a significant part of my analysis.

Finally, I use my construction of Luke's understanding of wealth and poverty and its religious significance, and extract from this, via the process of hermeneutics, a message which is relevant for Christians in South Africa today. I argue that Christians in South Africa need to become involved in the process of reconstruction and development by adopting a 'critical solidarity' stance towards society. Christians are reminded of what true Christian fellowship entails and that spirituality is embedded in a 'concrete' reality. The role which Christians can play in the 'healing' process of our country, especially in their adoption of appropriate biblical attitudes to the use of wealth in their homes, churches and communities, is a prime concern.
Acknowledgments

The completion of this study has been made possible with the assistance of a number of people to whom I am greatly indebted. A word of thanks goes to Dr Mazamisa whose postgraduate seminars on *The Bible, Hermeneutics and Culture*, and *The Bible and Economic Justice*, inspired the general theme of this project. I owe a special word of thanks to Professor Wanamaker, who agreed to act as my supervisor on such short notice and whose suggestions, guidance, critical insight and approachability, have made this research an enriching and fulfilling experience. I am also grateful to Gillian working in the Research Institute on Christianity in South Africa (RICS), Evelyn and especially Nancy, for taking the time to edit and proofread my work. A final word of appreciation needs to be extended to the Centre for Science Development (CSD) and the A. W. Mellon Foundation, whose generous and much needed scholarship awards, have funded this project and made my life as a self-supporting student much more bearable.
Introduction
After a long, gruelling and agonising struggle, South Africa’s democratic status has finally been secured. Numerous rights, many of which were previously preserved exclusively for an elite white minority, have now been made legally and constitutionally available to all South Africans. This newly-found status brought with it a very high expectation of change in almost every sphere in society. The message of social equality, of socio-economic and political upliftment, of freedom and justice, reverberated in the hearts, minds and souls of many South Africans who had anxiously awaited the occurrence of this historical moment. The period of struggle which led up to this event, saw the intense commitment, sincerity, devotion and perseverance of a highly diverse group of people working towards a common goal. People from various social, economic, religious, cultural, and educational backgrounds, stood united in their pursuit of democracy. This type of unity transcended the bounds of difference and individualism, and carried with it, the hopes of a new and promising future for South Africa.

Currently in South Africa, however, the high hopes and expectations held by many, seem to have diminished. Having achieved our democratic status, we have come to realise that we have little in common. Instead of focussing our attention on working towards the social construction of some form of ‘common ground’ for the benefit of all South Africans, we seem to be overly concerned with the issue of ‘difference’. I am not proposing that asserting one’s individual, group or social identity is necessarily a negative activity. On the contrary, we need to build, reconstruct and develop a sense of pride in our diverse religious and cultural heritages which for so long have occupied a subordinate and socially inferior status. What I am asserting, however, is that the need to express our identity and heritage seems to have developed into
a phenomenon in which specific group interests, perceptions and attitudes, have superseded and 'hijacked' the concern for the common good in our country. Herein lies the problem to which my concern is directed. This turn of events has resulted in the disillusionment of the masses, who at a grassroots level, are still experiencing much hardship. For these masses, the process of socio-economic marginalisation is a constant threat. The reality of the situation, according to Villa-Vicencio (1990: 127), is that many who are economically better off, have simply ignored or done very little to alleviate the state of impoverishment in which many South Africans find themselves.

Our entry into the transitional period has been a rough and bumpy one. The evidence suggests that state apparatus alone is not able to secure change in our country. As a result, appeals from the government have gone out to different political structures, education facilities, businesses, and community and religious organisations to assist in contributing towards change and upliftment. The churches in South Africa have been called upon "to join other agents of change and transformation in the difficult task of acting as a midwife to the birth of our democracy... " (De Gruchy 1995: 218).

Highlighting the areas of concern

With relation to the above, I wish to isolate and highlight the role that religion can play in securing change in South Africa, particularly Christianity. De Gruchy (1995: 220) states that because the church "embraces a wide spectrum of society," it possesses a great deal of potential in helping to construct a "stronger" civil society. This is seen against the backdrop in which Christians are faced with the
moral responsibility of making decisions in relation to the changing socio-political and economic climate. This entails that they review their stance as members of the church, and also as active members of society. The question facing Christians today is "What now?" What role can we as Christians play in building and securing our democratic society? How do we approach the question of wealth and poverty in our churches and also in broader society? Christians and the Christian church need to consider these questions in a serious, critical and constructive manner, especially since the spirit of unity which was previously experienced in the pursuit of democracy, has fallen by the wayside. As Christians we need, therefore, to recapture a certain essence, a certain vibrancy in our fellowship with each other, and we need to carry this into broader society in a dynamic, flexible, and appealing manner. A thorough reading and understanding of the biblical text is crucial in this regard.

Differences of opinion regarding the approach, the interpretation and the preaching of the biblical text, has done much to contribute towards the division within the church in South Africa. De Gruchy (1987: 64-65) and Villa-Vicencio (1990: 131) have demonstrated how Christian theology has been misused in the past to sanctify the power of the South African state. De Gruchy states that this type of theology represents a theology of alienation, which produces a false consciousness amongst both the powerful and the powerless. This type of consciousness serves to reinforce the structures of domination and oppression in both the state and the church. De Gruchy (1987: 74) and Villa-Vicencio (1990: 131) assert that the economic imperative has also done much to influence the social and spiritual stance which the church adopts. In some instances the spiritual aspects of the church's role have been played down or even abused. Spirituality has been made an 'other-
worldly' affair, removed from the worldly affairs of social, political, economic and cultural matters. A serious lack of social analysis on the part of the church seems to have developed, and it is this which needs to be addressed.

The stark reality is that there is a general lack of concern especially for those members in society who are poor, desolate, and deprived, and who struggle on a daily basis to eke out a living for themselves. For many who are not in these situations, it has become common practice simply to turn a blind eye. The attitude of "its not my problem" and "someone else will probably do something about it" seems to have become the norm. Our money economy has placed the emphasis on upward social mobility at all costs, without any concern for those who suffer in the process. The obsession with accumulating wealth and possessions is fast replacing the compassionate part of our human nature. In response to this state of affairs scholars have made a direct connection between economic justice and proclaiming the good news to the poor. De Gruchy (1995b: 24) argues that economic justice "is not an addendum to the mission of the ecumenical church, but central to that task."

This thesis is an attempt to address the issues relating to the Christians lack of response to various socio-cultural and socio-economic problems experienced within the church and in society at large. Determining the appropriate Christian response to wealth and poverty lies at the core of the argument I will present in this study. The underlying assumption in this thesis is simply that any Christian response to the current situation in South Africa, needs to begin with the Bible because of its authority with most South African Christians. In this thesis, I offer such a biblical response, by drawing from the work of the New Testament author whom we generally refer to as Luke.
The writings of Luke, namely, his Gospel and the book of Acts, will be used concurrently and will serve as a basis for understanding Luke within his own context. The importance of this task, that is, of first understanding Luke within his own setting, will be demonstrated in the paragraphs which follow.

Towards constructing an understanding of Luke

Scholars such as Esler (1987: 30) and Cassidy (1978: 4) have shown that Luke wrote within a Greco-Roman urban setting, which formed part of the eastern Mediterranean region during the first century. The evidence suggests that Luke's urban setting was highly stratified with only a small percentage of those who made up the elite, being in control of social, political, and economic power (Lenski 1966: 210-285; Esler 1987: 171-175). Meeks (1983) and Theissen (1982) have shown that the early Christian communities were comprised of a cross-section of society, and not only of poor members. I will argue that Luke's community also consisted of both rich and poor members and I will show how their presence in the community gave rise to a certain degree of tension and animosity amongst members.

Malina and Neyrey (1991: 26) assert that within the first century Mediterranean context, the concept of 'honour' above all else was important. One's honour rating corresponded with one's power and position on the social scale. Since one's honour, which was an expression of one's social worth, had to be publicly acknowledged by one's peers, it meant that one usually associated with those who possessed similar honour ratings (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 25-26). One's social activities had to, therefore, be structured along the lines of honour.
In Luke's setting, where persons of varying degrees of honour assembled as one group, there may well have been the situation in which particular persons would want to mix only with those who had a similar honour status. This would especially have been the case if one notes, according to Malina and Neyrey's (1991: 34) analysis, that a person with a high honour status stood to lose his honour if he fraternised with someone who had a very low honour rating, such as a beggar for example.

By taking into consideration the concepts of social stratification and honour, I will use Luke-Acts as a guide in my attempt to construct an understanding of Luke's theology of the rich and the poor in his Greco-Roman Christian context. Since Luke-Acts provides us with our main source of information about Luke (Karris 1979: 38), a close study of these texts are required to ascertain what Luke's attitudes, responses, and perceptions were to issues relating to the situation of the rich and the poor within his community.

The focus, therefore, will not specifically be on Jesus' context, since this context differed from Luke's in terms of its location and expected audience. Attention will, however, be given to the manner in which Luke portrays the story of Jesus and his disciples. This approach will allow us to gain some insight into what Luke may have considered to be important in his community. The frequency of particular issues in Luke-Acts related to the theme of the rich and the poor, will be vital in constructing an understanding of Luke's ideological approach.

This hermeneutical process, that is, the act of interpretation in which I will be engaged, is primarily directed towards developing and extracting a certain understanding from the text which can be applied
to Luke's society and also to our own. Since it is not my intention to elaborate to any significant extent on the dynamics involved within the hermeneutical act, I will offer only a brief explanation of what this act entails. This is primarily aimed at illustrating the extent to which we as Christians have to go, to make the world of the biblical text come alive for us.

The process of seeking to understand and internalise what Luke's theological intentions were, require that we, as readers and listeners, develop an idea of the socio-political, cultural and religious context in which Luke lived. The contexts in which the biblical authors wrote, were different to ours. The process of understanding and extracting meaning, therefore, implies that we do not just enter the world of the text as 'blank slates' (Mazamisa 1996). According to Gottwald (1985: 607), the specific understanding which we have of our own situation, has to fuse with the 'horizons of understanding' which we extract from the text. The coalescence of both the horizons of the reader and the biblical author, finally results in real understanding. The latter enables us to make the texts of Luke relevant for us today. Veenhof (1987: 108) asserts that this is a dynamic process in which we incorporate our concrete lived experiences and realities in our interaction with the text. The text here appears in its concrete form, and not just as an idea.

The analysis of the 'rich/poor' motif in Luke's writings, must, therefore, be understood against the backdrop of the social context in which it was written. This study aims to identify, describe and analyse those features of Luke's context, which had a bearing on the situation of the rich and the poor in the first century Mediterranean period. Within this analysis, I aim to isolate and highlight the social,
political, cultural, economic and religious disparities which existed at the time. I will show how these disparities in Luke's Greco-Roman world, influenced the stability and legitimacy of the Lucan community. A specific Lucan ideology will become evident, one which aims to reorganise and unite a culturally diverse group of Christian converts, along the lines of new moral and ethical values. Identifying the Lucan ideology at play here, will provide us with greater insight into what Luke's vision for the urban Christian community entailed.

Overview

The mission of selecting an appropriate methodology which can assist in achieving the objectives of the task at hand, is an important one. In so far as this study aims to explore the social and cultural dimensions of the biblical text, and to a lesser extent also the ideological dimension, the methods and techniques employed will be drawn from the realm of the social sciences. The focus will be on the human dimensions of the text, and on the concrete realities of the normal, everyday lives of the biblical characters. Chapter 2 will address this issue. As we are dealing with a specific social system of the first century Mediterranean period, which is very different to our own, we have to be aware of the cultures, values, social institutions, social codes, social divisions, symbols, systems and types of biblical personalities which operated in and drew meaning from this setting. Public opinion, especially amongst one's social peers, reigned supreme, and it was this, above all else, which motivated specific social actions, attitudes and perceptions. These matters will be addressed in chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 5 deals with the state of conflict and disunity amongst the
members of Luke’s community. The particular problems which were creating division and animosity, will be highlighted here. I will argue that the source of these tensions stemmed from the desire of the rich, who had newly converted to Christianity, to maintain a degree of correspondence with their non-Christian peers on the outside. This lead to the disillusionment of the poor, who had initially turned to Christianity to seek refuge from their oppressed and inferior status. Luke, therefore, is faced with the duty of having to cater for the diverse needs of the Christian converts, without isolating or marginalising any of them in the process. He especially needs the rich to remain in the Christian community, as they, according to Moxnes (1991: 242, 244), have access to the scarce and valuable economic, social, and political resources. The poor, through entering into patron-client relationships with the rich, were allowed some access to those resources which they required.

The methods and strategies which Luke employed to resolve the existing conflict within his diverse Christian community, are revealed in chapter 6. Luke introduced new core values which he hoped would be shared by all members of his church. These core values would become part of a new, common Christian identity, which aimed at transcending the concepts of power, prestige and status.

Chapter 7 deals with the manner in which these new core values were supposed to function. By making use of certain Lucan parables in this section, I aim to demonstrate what Luke’s social vision for the church entailed. The extent and depth of true Christian devotion and commitment, is outlined clearly here.

The conclusion, chapter 8, draws together the ‘horizon of meaning’ of
the Lucan texts with our current experiences in South Africa. The problem raised here relates to how Luke's theology can benefit and guide Christians today, in their understanding and perceptions of society and in their interrelations with other Christians and society at large. The focus will be on raising an awareness of the Christian qualities of love, compassion, hope and charity. The aim is to put into motion concrete actions which are geared towards establishing and repairing non-existent and strained social relations, along the lines of sound Christian values and ethics.

A prime objective of this thesis is to prompt Christians into realising that they are not only members of the church, but also of society. De Gruchy (1990: 227-228) states that the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of God is the main contribution the church can make to any society. This contribution preserves the church from being labelled a political or social welfare organisation. Luke's profound theological vision serves as a reminder that the church has a very important prophetic role to play in our progressive society. The church's prophetic ministry proclaims God's demand for justice and equality, ensuring that these rights be afforded to all, especially the poor, powerless, oppressed and marginalised. Luke sounds a warning to Christians not to view democracy in a naive, uncritical manner, by simply assuming that those in power will put the common good before all else. His message is that Christians have a social responsibility to facilitate, motivate and contribute effectively towards developing virtues, values and responsibilities which will strengthen the democratic base in our society. The Christian communities should lead by way of example. They should communicate to the rest of South Africa that the differences in our cultural backgrounds, in our political, religious and social preferences, do not necessarily provide a recipe
for division and separation. On the contrary, these very factors can create a 'deep unity' based on interdependence (Tutu 1990: 239). The church has holiness because it is a place where human care and compassion take place. It occupies a humanising space in society, and Christians, as representatives of this body, should echo these sentiments to the outside world (Moran 1968: 209).

I hope that this study will provide a more in-depth and illuminating picture about the world and person of Luke. There exists in his work, a profound depth of understanding about the human psyche. This understanding combines with his theological vision in such a manner that it is able to reveal a high degree of relevance for present-day Christians from all walks of life.
A new methodological approach

Interpretation is an important and dynamic phenomenon within the sphere of biblical scholarship. Scholars are constantly involved in the process of attempting to develop new methodological strategies to make the interpretive act a more in-depth, revealing and meaningful experience. The methodological approach which will be adopted in this particular study is one which strongly draws on the ideas and techniques of the social sciences. My focus on the theme of the 'rich' and 'poor' in Luke's writings has necessitated the use of this type of approach, especially in the sense that the human dimensions of this theme will be emphasised. Attention will be directed towards constructing an idea about the physical, emotional and spiritual experiences, of those persons who were classified as being 'rich' and 'poor' in the first century eastern Mediterranean Greco-Roman urban context. The advantages in drawing from the social sciences will be argued in chapters 3 to 7.

Since the early 1970's, there has been a renewed interest in New Testament studies concerning the social description of early Christianity. Since then, many studies have made elaborate use of social-scientific models and theories, in the attempt to investigate how effective the social sciences are in both the fields of explanation and description. The rise of New Testament sociology in particular, has occurred because of a reaction to the 'inadequacy' of historical-critical research in dealing with the social dimensions of the early Christian communities (Horrell 1996: 1-2; Lentz 1993: 7). Esler (1987: 3-4) also stresses the unsuitability of the historical method for the recovery of the usual, typical, everyday features of past communities, as it is mainly directed at the particular, the unique and the unusual.
Although Esler acknowledges that redaction criticism is a viable option for exploring the theological component in Luke, he finds it lacking in its ability to offer a satisfying analysis of the social context. Esler states that the only manner in which to research the 'social setting', would be to incorporate redaction criticism within the strategies developed by the social sciences. Within the sphere of social scientific studies, certain disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology, are especially valuable. They are specifically orientated towards analysing and examining the typical and everyday occurrences of social behaviour and institutions, such as that which occurred in Luke's socio-cultural urban setting. The effectiveness of utilising social science techniques for investigating social themes has been demonstrated in the works of Meeks (1972); Malina (1981; 1986); Horrell (1996) and Neyrey (1991). These works have made important contributions to the social study of Christianity, and only those essays which impinge on early Christianity will be dealt with in this thesis.

Meaning and context

The act of investigating social themes within Luke's urban context is not a simple one. It requires the 'investigator' to have a fair understanding of the structure and organisation of the society in which Luke lived. Within this process, the 'investigator' is ultimately searching for those phenomena which provided 'meaning' in Luke's society. The term 'meaning' occupies an important position within the realm of the social sciences. Malina (1991: 6; 9; 16; 1996: xi) states that individuals within a particular social system, will share cultural values and meanings which are specifically related to that system. Social institutions and social roles are created so that these values and meanings are able to be realised by the individuals in that
specific social structure. This implies that the meanings which are attached to certain words in Luke's urban context are derived from a specific social system: for example, the term 'client', as is used within the context of patron-client relations, signifies someone who is bound by some form of indebtedness to a patron. A patron was someone who had access to social, political and economic resources. These resources were needed by others, namely, clients. The type of relationship which existed between the patron and the client was reciprocal in nature and characterised by an unequal power arrangement that left the client subordinate to the patron (Moxnes 1991: 242). This differs from what we today understand by the term 'client', in that clients have the option of choosing with whom they want to enter into contracts. Furthermore, the client can, to a certain degree, also dictate the terms of that contract, as in the case of life and home insurance policies.

The meanings of words, therefore, have to be located within the social contexts in which those words are used. Malina (1991: 10-11) stresses the importance of this and states that it will allow us to realise that the biblical text reveals meanings which are derived from a particular first century Mediterranean social context, a context which is very different to our own. The work of Luke, then, cannot be read in terms of our own social systems, but rather in terms of Luke's own social context. Only by doing this, will we be able to understand the meaning of Luke's writings as he intended it to be understood by his contemporaries. This means that readers have to be aware of the social systems found within Luke's urban culture. Readers need to familiarise themselves with scenes, schemes and models which were 'typical' of the first century Mediterranean society. To achieve this, Malina (1991: 11) advocates the use of explicit social science models, for example, the
scenario model, for recovering those social systems of the original audience of Luke-Acts. Let us have a look at how this scenario model, outlined by Malina (1991: 14), works.

The scenario model focuses on meaning and acknowledges that the text reveals a succession of mental representations of scenes. These scenes call up corresponding scenes, consisting of a series of episodes, in the mind of the reader. The reader then alters the episodes of the scene which has been called up, in accordance with the arrangements suggested in the text. The scenario model presupposes that the reader has a full grasp of how the world functions, and it is this awareness which the reader brings to the text. In the reading process, the author of Luke-Acts presents a distinctive set of scenarios of his working world which motivates the reader to rearrange the scenarios which he or she brings to the reading. The author of Luke-Acts, however, wrote for a first-century eastern Mediterranean urban audience who were rooted in a specific time and place. The author shared in his audiences understanding of how their world worked and did not find it necessary to explain the systems which were in place at the time, systems which the contemporary reader knows nothing about.

Socio-rhetorical criticism

Esler (1987: 2) contends that in order for us to truly understand Luke, the methodology we employ should be marked by both its capacity for identifying and isolating Luke's theological intentions, and its ability for enquiring into the social and political setting as well. In order to achieve their objectives, this particular study of Luke aims to combine and synthesise different models of the social sciences in a comprehensive and complimentary manner. The techniques Robbins (1996a; 1996b) offers for reading the text, all operate and function under the rubric of socio-rhetorical criticism, and provides a sound basis from which to work. In terms of the aims of this study on the Lucan setting, the interest in Robbins' techniques for reading the text will be limited to the insights he offers in the sections on 'social and cultural texture' and to a lesser extent, 'ideological texture'.

The term 'socio' as used by Robbins (1996a: 1) inextricably involves the human factor and the manner in which people relate to each other and their environments. Human feelings, concerns and fears are inevitably taken into consideration here, and these particular insights are now included and incorporated within the interpretive process. This gives the interpretive process a 'human quality', in which persons and events are not merely reduced to faceless numbers, codes, objects of enquiry and statistical data. This 'human quality' in Luke's social setting as well as in his theological vision of the 'new' Christian community, will be highlighted in this thesis. This study strives not only to identify the 'rich' and the 'poor' in Luke's setting, but to also relate the specific 'experiences' and perceptions the persons in these categories had of themselves, of others, and of their world in general.
Robbins' (1996a: 1) concept of 'rhetoric' focuses on the use of language in a text as a means of communication amongst people. Language can be used in very different ways by persons in a text to structure and convey the sense of reality and self people in a text have. It can also reveal the author's attitude to these persons. Language acts as an indicator, pointing to the particular type of social relations which exists, thereby informing the reader about a particular world-view which is contained within the text. Language forms the medium, the means whereby we can evaluate how people relate to each other and their environment. Language here is not only verbal, it is also physical and emotional. All of this ties in with the concept of 'reason', which offers the reader insight into why attitudes, such as that of the 'elite' and 'non-elite', and the 'rich' and 'poor' in the text of Luke-Acts, are the way they are; why certain beliefs take preference over others; and why society is stratified along certain lines. Language in another sense, can also act as and portray that which embodies a form of resistance to the establishment, and in so doing it is able to unravel discrepancies which exist within the text (Mazamisa 1996). By focussing on the use of language in this manner, we will be able to determine the motivation behind Luke's attitude towards the political and religious authorities, as well as his theological understanding of the terms 'rich' and 'poor' in his socio-cultural setting.

The use of the term 'criticism', points to a particular activity which is vital to obtaining 'meaning'. By means of this, Robbins (1996a; 1996 b) opens the door for the reader to make judgements, to evaluate not only the text and the author, but also him or herself. Only when we are constructively critical in all of these spheres, can we emerge from the text with a critical attitude. By incorporating this 'critical attitude' in this study on the writings of Luke, I hope to discover how
and why Luke used and even manipulated the resources at his disposal, such as his knowledge of the Old Testament tradition and his familiarity with the concept of reciprocity, to achieve his aims in the urban Christian community for which he wrote.

**Broadening the scope and validity of the use of social scientific methods**

Robbins' construction of the 'social and cultural texture of texts' is collectively derived from the works of Bakhtin (Reed 1993), Burke (1966), and Barthes (1977). Bakhtin developed a 'model of dialogue', in which he stressed that all verbal messages have a dialogic nature. He understood dialogue as more than just the phenomenon of two people speaking to each other. Dialogue is the 'linguistic precondition for all communication'. Those participating within the dialogue process already have preconceived ideas, values and opinions about the object at which their discourse is directed. A struggle for dominance between the different voices, dialects and accents in a text, exists. Reed (1993: 13-17) states that by exploring the social and ideological locations of these voices in the text, Bakhtin has made a valuable contribution to the field of social scientific analysis. Burke (1966) contributed to explicating the social and cultural texture of texts by developing a method of interpretation that uses the resources of philosophy, literature and sociology to understand language as symbolic action. Barthes (1977: 146-148) contributed by showing how texts are products of various cultural discourses. He defines a text as a 'multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash'.

Another boost to the use of social scientific methods for the study of
early Christianity came from Smith (1975: 20), who asserted that careful attention should be paid to the 'inner history' of the various religious traditions and cults in the Bible. Smith introduced theoretical practices in which the act of interpretation was moved beyond the limited bounds of poetics. Smith (1975: 21) advocated critical and comprehensive insights from cultural anthropology in his work for constructing a new picture of the social and religious nature of Christianity. From this it can be noted that sociological and anthropological theory form the basis for exploring the social and cultural nature of texts. The 'concrete', non-theological reality of the text becomes important here (Smith 1975: 19). The emphasis behind 'social and cultural texture' then, is to develop a more in-depth and comprehensive sociological theory about the religious communities which we encounter in the world of texts such as Luke-Acts.

Wilde (1974) has illustrated the effectiveness of using the socio-cultural approach, by applying Wilson's (1963) typology of religious sects to investigate the social responses to the world in the Gospel of Mark. The outcome of this particular exercise has resulted in the identification of a number of major social responses to the world, which includes amongst others, the conversionist, revolutionist, reformist and introversionist responses. The conversionist social response is particularly important in this study, as it is the one which Luke adopts in his writings. According to Wilson (1963: 364-365), the conversionist response is one which views the world as being corrupt because people are corrupt. As such, salvation is only possible if the individual undergoes a profound and supernatural transformation, such as the one Saul underwent in Acts 9. By applying this type of analysis to Luke-Acts, I will be able to construct a more appropriate and workable knowledge about particular attitudes and responses in
these texts which are directed towards important features of Greco-Roman urban society.

Towards the construction of a symbolic universe

The identification of social responses and attitudes in the text of Luke-Acts, will allow me to construct an image of the 'symbolic universe' which existed in Luke's society, as well as an image of the 'new' Christian social order as it was perceived by Luke. Neyrey (1991: 275) describes the symbolic universe as being made up of core values present within a culture. These core values influence the manner in which things are arranged and classified, and provides clarity and validity to the symbolic system. Social order here, refers to the structure and organisation of the Christian community, the symbols which gave meaning to and defined 'order' within the community, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the Christians who adhered to these symbols. For example, the Lord's Supper symbolised Christian unity within Christ. The Christian's duty in this respect, was to share with other Christians in a common meal, so that they could reinforce their belief in Christ as their patron and saviour. Luke's perception of the new Christian social order was, however, very different to the general Greco-Roman system of social order. The disparities between these different social systems, make it possible for us to get a 'feel' for the type of conflict which may have existed between the 'elite' and the 'non-elite' in Luke's social setting. This conflict served to reinforce a specific type of social identity within the first century eastern Mediterranean world.

The anthropological work of Douglas (1966; 1982) and Malina (1981), concerning the structuring of the 'purity code', and the analysis of
the values of 'honor and shame' by Malina (1981) and Malina and Neyrey (1991), fall very much in line with the above discussion. Purity and honor as used in this sense, refers to those things which correspond with the core values of a symbolic universe. These works depict how the notions of purity and honor, came to be highly valued and sought after by the elite especially, and how these notions contributed towards the oppressive state of social division within Luke's society. The specific application of these social science models of purity, honor and shame to Luke's context, provides windows through which we can observe and attempt to make sense of a society which is far removed from our own. Malina (1981: V) stresses that models from cultural anthropology do not offer alternate explanations of the Bible. They do not aim to discard or devalue literary critical, historical and theological study, but strive rather to 'add a dimension not available from other methods', especially regarding the question of social context.

The patronage model

A special concern in this thesis is to shed some light on the social relationships which existed between those in Luke's community, especially between the rich and the poor. By applying the model of patronage developed by Moxnes (1988), it is possible for some sense to be made of the range of apparently different social relationships which existed in Luke's social context. According to Blok (1969: 366), these "different sets of relationships", for example, between landlord and tenant, father and son, and God and man, when approached from a specific point of view, can give rise to a more comprehensive understanding of what these relationships entail. An economic approach, for example, reveals that the wealthy elite in Luke's society considered wealth to be important only in the sense that it could be
used to secure social honour and prestige (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 28-29). According to Moxnes (1991: 243), the patronage model combines the study of both social and economic relations.

The patronage model facilitates the scope of Greco-Roman urban socio-economic analysis I wish to cover within this thesis. An examination of patron-client relations will contribute towards understanding the relationship between the rich and the poor in Luke's urban context, especially in relation to the division of 'power'. The focus on patron-client relations also helps to determine the type of symbolic meanings contained within social relations in Luke's society, and the manner in which these relations served to define the concepts of honour, status and social order. By making use of the patronage model, we can gain much greater clarity concerning Luke's perception of God as the ultimate patron and benefactor (Moxnes 1991: 245-247). As such, the techniques which social scientists have developed provide a useful tool for the methodological component in this study.

Identifying 'social responses'

From the above paragraph it can be gauged that different social science techniques facilitate the construction of an 'image' about the type of social order which existed in Luke's urban community. The nature of the conflicts experienced in these contexts and the manner in which the different social responses to these conflicts unfolded, also become apparent. Identifying certain social responses and attitudes which prevailed in Luke's urban context, provides a structure from which to examine Luke's own social stance. For example, if the rich elite are identified as being unconcerned about the poor non-elite in society, as depicted in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31),
then Luke-Acts can be examined with specific reference to Luke’s attitude to the rich who were acting in this manner. A particular social response on Luke’s part can then be constructed. From this it becomes apparent that Luke was in fact offering an alternate response to those which already existed in his Christian community. By identifying and analysing these ‘social responses’, it is possible to draw distinctions between the different approaches of the Gospel writers in relation to the socio-cultural contexts in which they found themselves. As stated earlier in this chapter, Luke adopted the conversionist social response in his writings.

Luke’s conversionist ‘social response’, interacts in a dynamic fashion with other ‘social responses’ in the text, and it is this which gives the discourse a particular social ‘texture’. The term ‘texture’ refers to the complex patterns and images which are contained in the text (Robbins 1996a: 2). Therefore, by making use of the honour-shame, purity, and patronage models, the overlapping social patterns and images contained in Luke’s writings can be ascertained to a certain degree. In this process, the world of Luke-Acts becomes an object which must be acted upon. The overlapping relationship between the different social responses in the text provides clarity as to the type of Gospel discourse that is being dealt with. It reveals how this discourse goes about challenging its audience to modify their own particular social beliefs, attitudes, and predispositions.

Furthermore, a sphere is created in which we are able to focus on the material topics in the discourse, that is, topics such as wealth and poverty which relate to a physical, and not a spiritual state of being. Attention in this respect is drawn to Esler’s (1987) study of socio-political motivations in Lucan theology. In this study, Esler (1987)
makes use of sociology and anthropology to examine the theology of Luke as a response to the socio-political pressures which Luke's Christian community was experiencing. His study covers a variety of themes, such as table-fellowship, the law, the temple, poverty and riches and politics. An analysis of the material aspects of the poor and the rich in Luke's setting, such as the varied conditions under which they lived and how these conditions gave rise to specific views of reality (Esler 1987: 164-179), are specifically relevant to this thesis. This type of analysis provides the scope to determine the extent to which the Lukite theme of poverty and wealth has been influenced by the varied socio-political and socio-cultural backgrounds of Luke's urban Christian audience.

Opening the door to the Greco-Roman world

Constructing a 'social map' for Luke's world

When Robbins' (1996a; 1996b) concept of 'social and cultural texture' is pursued a bit further, we find that it is possible to identify various additional facets of Luke's urban society. These include the identification of various institutions, such as the pre-industrial city, for example. Major social systems which were in operation at the time can also be observed, such as the system of social stratification and the pre-industrial urban system. This type of focus allows us to identify the manner in which these systems and institutions were propagated and manipulated in terms of and in relation to power and authority. The relationships which developed between the imperial power of Rome and its provincial territories, served to define the manner in which social activities in the provinces were carried out. For example, as part of their social obligation, the Emperor and his senators served
as benefactors to cities by paying for, amongst other things, the building of temples, or by establishing endowments. Stambaugh and Balch (1986: 75) assert that the wealthy men in Greek cities had to perform similar tasks. The rich performed these duties to improve their social status and to gain favour and support from those who benefitted from their benefactions. In keeping with this tradition, the elite members of the ruling classes in the Roman provinces were expected to perform certain gestures in their communities, such as contributing towards the city treasury and covering the costs of certain festivals, games, buildings and projects (Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 75).

The construction of this 'social map' of Luke's social context offers an insightful view into the manner in which resources were allocated, how power and wealth were exchanged and how social structures were legitimated. This 'social map' furthermore provides a metaphorical framework in which terms and actions which were generally viewed as being contradictory by those in Luke's community can be combined. For example, the gathering of the rich elite and the poor non-elite at the same dinner party, as depicted in the parable of the Great Banquet (Lk. 14:15-24), would not have been a likely combination in Luke's stratified society. This type of metaphorical framework will facilitate our understanding of the dynamics present in the Lucan parables in relation to the message and reign of God (Robbins 1996b: 160).

Cultural analysis: reading behind the text

Robbins' (1996b: 167) concept of 'final cultural categories' deals with cultural alliances and the conflicts contained within these alliances. When this concept of 'final cultural categories' is applied to Luke's
urban context, then specific cultural groupings, such as Jews. Romans and Greeks, can be located. The identification of these different cultural groups will facilitate a better understanding of how different people acted in relation or opposition to the values, norms, symbols, moral principles and religious beliefs of a specific culture. The impact which the Hellenistic culture had on those people in Luke's urban context for example, can clearly be discerned in this manner. In so far as culture contributes to the structuring and defining of social identity, it is a category which cannot and must not be ignored.

Robbins' (1996a; 1996b) emphasis on the social and cultural texture of texts, allows us to employ the strategy of reading behind the text. By means of this technique, the reader is able to ascertain information about the culture in a text, how that culture operates, the codes it employs and the manner in which it does so. The effect all of this has on the individual and on social groups can also be gauged, in the sense that the dominant Greco-Roman culture in Luke's setting aimed to dominate and influence all other cultures.

The type of social and cultural location created by 'language' is important here. The reader gains insight not only into the characteristics of Luke's setting, but also into what the persons in this setting required in order to survive. This type of analysis means that we, the readers, do not just accept at face value the events described by the text. Kahl (1993: 231), further defines texts not only as that medium which describes, interprets and makes sense of a particular reality, but as that which also acts as a means by which that reality can be changed. Texts can be both 'part and counterpart' of the social texture. What is needed is an internal analysis into why certain events, such as the division between rich and poor Christians
in Luke's community, occurred in the manner in which they did. The reasons and motivations behind specific actions, events and attitudes, are important in this respect.

What we are touching on here, is the notion of 'ideology', which is inextricably linked to the social and cultural character of Luke's society (Robbins 1996a: 72). An analysis of the social and cultural characteristics of the system of social stratification and the act of almsgiving, for example, reveals the ideological motivation behind specific actions, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, fears and desires.

**Ideology**

The concept of 'power'

Thompson (1984: 4) emphasises that ideology involves an in-depth study and analysis of power and domination and the manner in which these impact on the relationship between action, institutions and social structures. Both Thompson (1984) and Eagleton (1991) claim that ideology has a 'critical nature' which cannot be defined as neutral. Ideology involves a specific 'power struggle' between individuals or groups with contrasting ideas. The persons involved in this 'power struggle', occupy recognised and 'socially' accepted positions of authority and power. Luke, as leader of his Christian community, aims to convince his Christian audience of the correctness in adopting the specific religious, economic or political stance which he has put forward. Thompson's (1984: 2) assertion that ideology "is a controversial, conflict-laden activity," can also, then, be applied to Luke's situation.
Drawing from Thompson’s (1984) and Eagleton’s (1991) analysis of ideology, it can be seen that there is a connection between ideology and the social and cultural components of the text. This has been one of the main motivating factors for including it - at least in part - in the present study of Luke’s writings. Ideology, with its emphasis on the social, political, religious and cultural struggles between those who wield power and authority in Luke’s world, includes the specific perspectives of Luke, his varied audience, and also the reader. An ideological analysis of Luke-Acts allows us to deal directly with the issue of the rich and the poor in Luke’s urban church community, and its relation to the concepts of power and control in society. This is very relevant if we consider that only a small percentage of Luke’s society occupied positions of power, which gave them access to control and manipulate the limited economic and political resources available (Esler 1987: 171-179).

Language and 'power'

By focussing attention on specific methodological components, and the manner in which these effectively contribute to the field of social scientific analyses, Robbins (1996a: 1996b) has encouraged the use of the work of renowned scholars in the realm of the social sciences. The positive contributions which ideological analysis can make to social scientific analysis, has only recently been noted. Negative and controversial opinions have plagued the concept of ideology in the past. Recent scholarship within the study of ideology has, however, resulted in a much more positive analysis of its potential, especially through the study and emphasis on 'language'. These recent studies have revealed that 'ideas' are not abstract and obscure notions devoid of any social context. Ideas make up the spoken and written language of
everyday social life and its associated activities. Thompson (1984: 6) concerns himself with the way in which the activity of language is able to maintain social relations in conjunction with power structures, such as the religious and political structures, and the distribution and legitimation of this power. This 'power' component of ideology is very distinct in the texts of Luke-Acts. Luke possessed a certain degree of 'power' and social status as a recognised leader in the Christian communities for whom he wrote. By virtue of these attributes, Luke was able to counter and reconstruct the generally held Greco-Roman understanding of the concepts of religious, political and economic power, within the Christian community.

To study the ideology present in Luke-Acts, therefore, means that we must become involved in the process of studying the manner in which language is used, manipulated and expressed in the everyday social context of Luke's world. In this particular study of the categories of the 'rich' and the 'poor' in Luke's urban context, ideology is understood as a complex communicative structure. This communicative structure embodies the realistic basis of human needs, desires, pains, aspirations, conflicts and discrepancies within a specific socio-cultural setting (Thompson 1984: 2; Eagleton 1991: 3). Luke's familiarity with this setting and its different power structures, contributes towards a specific type of Lucan ideology.

Eagleton (1991: 14-15) maintains that ideology is constructed from realistic and everyday concerns to encompass and satisfy 'genuine' hopes in an attractive and believable manner. This, as I will show in chapters 6 and 7, is exactly what Luke does. Working from this 'real basis', Luke's ideology, in its attempt to be truly effective, strives to provide for the fashioning of a rational Christian identity. In
addition, his ideology had to provide the necessary stimulus to motivate effective and productive Christian actions, something which is referred to as 'action-orientated sets of beliefs' by Thompson (1984: 78). Eagleton (1991: 15) argues that an ideology will only really be accepted, if it accounts for and refutes any contradictions and incoherences which interested persons might possess. For example, acting in the appropriate neighbourly fashion meant that Christians, as part of a community ordained by God, had to cross social and cultural barriers in order to display acts of true Christian fellowship. as I will show in my analysis of the parable of the Great Banquet (Lk. 14:15-24).

In addition to Thompson's (1984) analysis of power and domination. I will also draw from the work of Castelli (1991: 15: 21-22: 86). who examines the function of 'imitation' in Paul's letters, within the ideological context that it is a 'strategy of power'. Imitation encompasses the fact that a relationship exists between at least two elements, and within this relationship there has been a progression of one of those elements to become similar or the same as the other. One element remains fixed in this process, and is known as the 'model'. The 'model' has authority and power, and it is to this which the 'copy' submits. Castelli's (1991) analysis is especially useful in that it illustrates the 'critical relationship of power' which existed in Luke's social context and also within his Christian community.

I Ideology and materialism

Material conditions also play a vital role in the process of producing ideas, beliefs and values (Thompson 1984: 1: Eagleton 1991: 28). The material aspect of the text is important, especially in Luke's "limited
goods" society, where everything, including access to honour and political, economic and social power, was in short supply. Wealth, in this sense, was exclusively used to gain honour (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 28-29). By focussing on the material aspects in Luke-Acts, the relationship between wealth, honour, status and power in Greco-Roman urban society can be better understood. In support of a materialist-feminist reading of the Bible, Kahl (1993: 226-227) states that materialism must not be seen as a closed philosophical or ideological system. Materialism is a system which takes seriously the concrete bases of the social setting, such as the economic and political power structures found in Luke's urban context, as well as the social struggles against oppression, exploitation and discrimination. The ways in which humans strive to survive, their efforts at producing a livelihood and the manner in which they reproduce life, makes up the material bases for all other human activity, including the production of culture and ideas. Certain ideas and actions which are prevalent in one culture, might not, therefore, be prevalent in another culture. An example of this is the act of almsgiving, which was common amongst the Egyptians and the Jews, but foreign to the Greeks and Romans of the first century (Karris 1978: 117).

Ideology and group interests

Malina (1996: 41) stresses that the persons who belong to the different cultures of the first century Mediterranean period, define themselves exclusively in terms of the groups 'in which they are embedded'. This phenomenon has led Robbins (1996b: 193) to conclude that by concentrating on 'group interests', it is possible to see how ideology is able to account for explanations and reasons behind specific group actions, for example, the attitudes of the elite towards the non-elite.
Hertzog's (1994: 114-130) analysis of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31), clearly illustrates this point. Applying this type of ideological analysis to Luke-Acts means that readers should reveal, analyse, and interpret things about themselves within their own social locations as well. As a result, both the reader and the author of the text become ideologically armed (Kahl 1993: 226).

Ideological analysis entails that we look 'underneath' the text for specific interests of the author, interests which will be supported by the specific mode of discourse which the author has chosen (Robbins 1996a: 89; 1996b: 201). By locating these vested interests in Luke-Acts, one can begin to understand and interpret certain attitudes which prevail in the text.

**Conclusion**

The social science techniques outlined in this chapter provides a sound basis for investigating and reconstructing certain social themes which may have been prevalent during Luke's day. Emphasis has been placed on the fact that the pursuit for 'meaning' can only take place within the specific socio-cultural context in which that meaning was intended. As such, terms like 'rich' and 'poor' as used in Luke's context, imply an understanding of certain social categories which is removed from our modern understanding of those same terms. The focus on the use of language is important here and has provided profound insight into understanding the nature of relationships and communication which existed between the different 'voices' in the text. The text becomes the medium in which all the social, cultural, religious and political 'voices' meet and intersect, with each wanting to assert its own authority, legitimacy and dominance over the other.
The social scientific analysis employed in this study aims, therefore, to highlight the concern for 'human agency'. in that humans have the ability to 'act', to make real choices and decisions in the world with which they are confronted. Horrell (1996: 21) states:

the aim of sociological investigation ... is not to 'explain' human behaviour on the basis of social determinants, but to consider the context and conditions within which human action takes place, the knowledge and intentions of the actors themselves, and the consequences of their action.

To truly benefit from Luke's work then, we have to understand his culture in its own terms. This requires that we pay special attention to the 'social realities' shared by Luke and his fellow Christians (Neyrey 1991: XV). Readers are invited to participate in an in-depth process of searching and discovering things about others and themselves, a process which Karris (1979: 17) states, leads to interpersonal enrichment and fulfillment, as well as personal growth.
Luke's Greco-Roman world: an overview
The writings of Luke: important considerations

The date and place of composition

The New Testament authors and the characters whom they portray almost exclusively originate from the first century eastern Mediterranean region, which is but a small part of the vast area known today as the Middle East (Malina 1991: 4; Gottwald 1985: 36-42). The author whom we traditionally refer to as Luke, must be situated within this context. We have almost no direct information about Luke. Karris (1979: 38) states that our main source of information about Luke comes from the books of Luke-Acts, which are commonly conceived to be a single work (Marshall 1978: 33). The attribution of these two works to Luke cannot, however, be confirmed internally from these texts. Instead we have to infer information about the author from Luke-Acts. In addition to the books of Luke-Acts, Luke is also mentioned in Colossians 4:14: 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24. The dates of composition of Luke-Acts range from the year 60 C.E. to 150 C.E. Esler (1987: 44) and Kingsbury (1991: 1) have estimated that it was most likely written between 85 C.E. and 95 C.E.

Esler (1987: 30) argues that the place of composition of Luke-Acts was a city. Luke's quotation of Greek poets in the words, "It is hard for you to kick against the goad" (Acts 26:14), as well as his proverbs, "Physician heal yourself" (Lk. 4:23), show that he was fairly at home in the Greek milieu (Cadbury 1968: 239). The Areopagus speech recorded in Acts 17:22-31, provides additional evidence to support this point. Further analysis of his writing style and his proficiency in Greek, reveal that he must have achieved a high level of education within the Hellenistic culture, perhaps at Antioch, which some scholars argue.
must have been his home (Leaney 1966: 1; Fitzmeyer 1981: 42). Luke's familiarity with the city of Antioch in the Book of Acts serves as evidence for this assertion. Of particular interest here, according to Bouchier (1921: 132-133) and Cadbury (1968: 245), are the following pieces of evidence: Luke only recorded the nationality of one of the seven deacons chosen in Acts 6:5, namely, that of the Antiochene proselyte, Nicolas of Antioch; Luke knew the nationalities of the first preachers to the Gentiles in Antioch, namely, that they were 'natives of Cyprus and Cyrene' (Acts 11:20); he also knew the names of the church leaders in Antioch, namely, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen from the court of prince Herod, and Saul (Acts 13:1): Luke was also able to distinguish the pre-existing church from the prophets who came down from Jerusalem, and was able to show how the resistance of the Antiochene converts brought to the fore the important question of 'Gentile circumcision' (Acts 15).

Although Marshall (1978: 31) also links Luke's church with Antioch, he asserts that Luke's work reflects a Palestinian basis as well. Marshall concludes from this that Luke was influenced by more than just one particular Christian community. Pervo (1990: 13) and Mack (1995: 172) assert that the text of Acts in particular, was directed at Christian communities around the Aegean Sea, most likely those in Ephesus. Although Esler (1987: 26) does not refute the probability that Luke might have written for more than one Christian community, he does tend to favour the idea of a specific Lucan Christian community. Esler provides evidence for this notion by focussing on Paul's prophetic address to the elders of the Ephesian, in Acts 20:17-35. Esler argues that Paul's use of the word 'flock' to describe the Ephesian congregation and his warning to them about the dangers from the outside, refer to the context in which Luke's own Christian community
found themselves. The crossing and blurring of boundaries between the Christian community and the outside world were a great source of concern for Luke, as is reflected in Acts 20:28-31, which warns about the disunity and turmoil that outsiders will try to wreak within the Christian community. Luke, therefore, wanted to protect his 'fragile' Christian community. Lk. 12:32 may also reflect this concern: "Have no fear, little flock; for your Father has chosen to give you the Kingdom."

In view of what has been discussed in the above paragraph. I wish to make it clear that it is not my intention to argue whether or not Luke has written for more than one Christian community. Even if Luke did write for more than one Christian community, scholars are convinced that the context in which he wrote was an urban one. More specifically, Luke wrote in a city or cities of the Roman empire where Hellenistic culture was a dominant feature (Esler 1987: 30). O'Toole (1983: 2) states that Luke most likely wrote from within the context of an urban Pauline community and adds that he was an accomplished author who had considerable experience in dealing with the affairs of the early Christian churches.

I will concentrate on the specific Greco-Roman urban context in which Luke wrote and lived, rather than the actual place of writing. However, since evidence for Luke's Antiochene roots and his familiarity with the church in Antioch have been mentioned, my construction of Luke's urban context will, at certain points in this paper, come mainly from the Antiochene urban setting. The reason for this is that we know much more about Antioch than many other places. In sum it can be stated that the 'fundamental political reality' of Luke, was definitely Roman Rule (Cassidy 1978: 4; Esler 1987: 30). This view is very important for
understanding the socio-political world in which Luke's urban Christian community found itself.

Luke's vested interest in the 'rich' and 'poor'

This paper aims to investigate the concepts of rich and poor during the first century in the eastern Mediterranean region and the effects these concepts had on Luke's 'new theological vision' for Christianity. It must first be established, however, whether Luke had a particular interest in the issue of wealth and poverty. Mealand (1980: 16-17) is of the opinion that Luke did not have any special interest in issues related to wealth and poverty. Luke's emphasis on these topics was simply out of 'loyalty to tradition', with no special interest on his part. Mealand states that Luke's record of the call of Levi, the mission charge, and the rich man's refusal, were all inherited from Mark. The call of the disciples to leave home and family (Lk. 9:57-60), another version of the mission charge (Lk. 10:4), the advice to lay up treasure in heaven (Lk. 12:33), and a strong antithesis between God and mammon (Lk. 16:13), all have parallels or near equivalents in Matthew, and are not attributed to Luke's inventiveness. Mealand adds that the majority of Marcan passages dealing with wealth and property are retained by Luke. Another argument against Luke having a specific interest in the poor is raised by Countryman (1980). Countryman (1980: 84) observes that Luke was mainly interested, throughout both volumes of his work, in highly distinguished and wealthy converts to Christianity (Lk. 8:1-3; 18:18; 19:1-3; 23:50-54; Acts 8:26-27: 10:1-4; 13:7-12), paying little attention to poor Christian converts. This observation has led Countryman to conclude that Luke himself was not overly concerned with issues related to the poor in urban society.
In response to Mealand's (1980) argument above, Esler (1987: 165) contends that Luke's lack of emphasis and expansion on the Marcan passages related to wealth and poverty does not prove that Luke was unsympathetic or indifferent to these issues. Besides the traditional sources, Luke also drew from additional pericopes and sayings, adding to what he found in the Marcan and 'Q' sources (Mack 1995: 169).

Perhaps more importantly, is the fact that Luke signals his concern for the poor in Mary's Magnificat (Lk. 1:46-55) and in Jesus' sermon at Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-30). Luke detaches the latter from its Marcan context to make it the beginning of Jesus' ministry. In both Mary's response to the announcement of Jesus' coming birth and Jesus' first public act, the theme of the poor and the oppressed are given prominence as the objects of God's caring acts. In the Magnificat, the salvation of the poor is juxtaposed with the humiliation of the rich and powerful. These two texts, then, provide strong evidence for the importance of the poor and the rich in Luke's Gospel.

Luke also adds to Mark's version of the 'call of the first disciples' (Mk. 1:18; 20), the fact that 'they left everything' to follow Jesus. He made a similar alteration to Mark 2:14, when he added that Levi left 'all his possessions' behind (Lk. 5:28). Furthermore, Luke presented a large number of unique sayings and pericopes in his material concerning wealth, social status and poverty. In almost every instance Luke is negative about wealth and positive about poverty. The more important amongst these are the Magnificat (Lk. 1:46-55); the preaching of John the Baptist (Lk. 3:10-14); the blessing of the poor (Lk. 6:20-21); the woes of the rich (Lk. 6:24-26); the exhortation to lend without hoping for repayment (Lk. 6:34-35); the friend at midnight (Lk. 11:5-8): the rich fool (Lk. 12:13-21); the instruction on whom to invite to the banquet (Lk. 14:12-14); the parable of the unjust steward (Lk. 16:1-9):
the accusations against the money-loving Pharisees (Lk. 16:14): the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31): and the conversion of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1-10). Judging from the above, it would be logical to assume that issues relating to the 'rich and poor' were important to Luke (Esler 1987: 165-169).

Countryman's (1980) argument that Luke was not particularly interested in the poor needs to be put into its proper context. It must be remembered that Luke's Christian community was made up of members from the rich elite and also the poor non-elite segments of society (as will be demonstrated in chapter five). It must further be noted that Luke's community was dependent on the hospitality and generosity of the elite and wealthy non-elite Christian members (the categories of elite and non-elite will be dealt with in the following section of this chapter). This is seen, for example, in Lk.8:1-3 where followers of Jesus provide for the needs of the disciples and Jesus himself, and also in Acts 5:42; 10:17-23; 12:12, where Christian converts offer up their private homes for the conducting of church meetings. The dependence of the early Christian church on its wealthier members, especially in relation to providing alms for the poorer Christians, is a matter which is taken very seriously by Luke. This is evident, for example, in texts such as Lk 3:10-11; 4:18; 6:28-38; 12:32-34; 14:16-24; and 19:8-10. Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37 and 20:32-35, also reflect this concern. In short, the early church would probably not have survived without the financial support of its wealthier members. I feel that it was for this reason Luke emphasised the generosity and conversion of rich Christian converts in his writings. Luke's interest in the rich and distinguished Christian converts, therefore, does not prove that he was not concerned about the poor in the Christian community. In fact it was because of his concern for the poor that he chooses to highlight the
generosity of the rich Christian converts, so as to make Christianity more attractive to others who were also wealthy. By doing this Luke hoped to ensure that the necessary financial aid to the church and its poorer members would be maintained.

This is not to say that the rich were only needed for their monetary contributions. On the contrary, Luke stressed that all Christian converts had to truly repent and be baptised in the name of Christ before taking on their Christian identities (Lk. 3:1-14; 7:29-30; 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; 8:36-39). In keeping with Greco-Roman culture at the time of Luke, Countryman (1980: 26) is quite correct in asserting that Luke was in fact encouraging the rich to become benefactors to the Christian community. This benefactor concept will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. Bearing the above discussion on Luke's interest in the rich and the poor in mind, it is important to note that Luke's attitude to wealth and poverty has to be situated within the socio-political context in which he lived, and it is to this which I now turn.

Foreign occupation and its effects

An agrarian society

At the outset I feel it is necessary to elaborate on Lenski's (1966) study which will be used extensively in this section. In this theoretical study on the causes of social stratification, Lenski adopts a comparative approach in which he examines the types of human societies throughout the ages. He starts with the most primitive of human societies, namely, hunting and gathering societies and ends with an analysis of the present day industrial societies. Of importance to
this thesis, is his section on 'agrarian societies'. Lenski (1966: 196-198) identifies the Roman Empire as an agrarian society, and since it has already been pointed out in the above section that Luke's political reality was Roman rule, an understanding of the common features of agrarian societies will benefit the development of this thesis considerably. Of special concern is the fact that agrarian states of the past were conquest states, in which one group was forcibly subjugated by another. As a result, agrarian societies were often made up of a variety of disparate ethnic groups who followed a diversity of vocations. Furthermore, the widespread occurrence of urban communities was another important feature. Technological advances resulted in an increase in trade and commerce in many of these urban centres. Of special interest was the fact that particular individuals and groups in the urban centres, tended to dominate agrarian societies politically, economically, religiously and culturally. Specifically, agrarian societies were noted for marked social inequality. The pronounced differences in power, privilege, and honour associated with advanced agrarian economies, are unavoidable facts.

In what follows in this section, I will show that Luke's context displayed the features of agrarian societies mentioned above. The identification of these features, allows for the identification of specific aspects of Luke's society, such as the economic policies which prevailed and the extent of the division between the rich and the poor. The categorical and analytical framework of agrarian societies provided by Lenski (1966), therefore, provides a sound structure within which to address the social issues related to wealth and poverty in Luke's setting.
The Roman world

By the time Luke-Acts was written, the colonising strategy of Rome had already been at work in the eastern Mediterranean region for over one and a half centuries. Rome's authority, by then, had been firmly established within Luke's urban social setting, including that of Antioch, which was the capital of Syria. Antioch was ranked third amongst the cities of the Roman world because of its size and prosperity. According to Stambaugh and Balch (1986: 146-147), Antioch controlled the land routes that connected Asia Minor, the Euphrates, and Egypt, thereby making it an important centre for trade and commerce. The towns within the Roman provinces of the east were usually divided into various quarters, which housed settlers and natives from particular regions. This was especially evident in Antioch, which had a mixed population: Macedonians, Cretans, Cypriotes, Argives, Jews and native Syrians (Fitzmyer 1981: 44-45; 55). Because of his urban milieu, Luke's experiences of the spread of Christianity was shaped and influenced by his surroundings.

As my emphasis in this paper is on Luke's attitude to wealth and poverty, the economic system of the Roman Empire to which Luke was exposed, will receive considerable attention. At the outset, let us first take a look at the Roman tax system which was in operation at the time that Luke-Acts was written. This will allow us to gain a better understanding of the manner in which society was structured and organised, and the effect this had on the rich and the poor.

Tax collecting

Tribute and taxes were very important sources of income for the Roman
empire. The Romans had a fairly stringent policy of extracting tribute and taxes from the provinces they conquered, and normally established their power and authority by sheer brute force (Rohrbauzh 1991: 134; Horrell 1991: 70). Rome's economic policy was such that it extracted both direct and indirect taxes from its colonies. In Rome itself, Roman citizens did not have to pay direct taxes.

The Romans found that the collection of taxes proved to be quite a complicated procedure. The administrative structures in the conquered territories were often not elaborate enough to collect taxes efficiently. As a result the Senate, which made up the main governing body in Rome, entered into contracts with Roman businessmen. Within these contracts, Roman businessmen were allocated certain areas within the Roman colonies, on whose behalf they would pay the taxes due to the Empire. These businessmen would then in turn, make use of any 'appropriate' means at their disposal to collect the taxes from those in their allocated areas to reimburse themselves. at a profit. This act of making a profit by collecting more than the required tax amount is made evident in Lk. 3:12-14, when John warns tax collectors not to extract more than the required tax amount. and also in Lk. 19:1-10, where Zacchaeus promises to repay those whom he had cheated. These businessmen (tax collectors) were engaged in 'official public business'. In individual towns, such as Antioch, taxes were collected by agents employed by Roman businessmen. These agents were referred to as 'publicans' by the local population (Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 77).

Types of taxes

There were two main types of taxes or tribute which had to be paid to the Roman authorities, namely, *tributum soli* and *tributum capitis*. 
Tributum soli was a property tax which was assessed within a province at a 'fixed rate' on land, houses, slaves and ships. In the province of Syria, this tax rate was calculated at one percent annually. Tributum capitis was a 'head tax', which was levied at a 'flat rate' on adults between the ages of fourteen and sixty-five. This meant that each person had to pay approximately 1 denarius per year. Although this 'head tax' only applied to males in some provinces, in a few provinces such as Syria, it also included women. In order to ascertain the overall amount of 'head tax' which was due from the different provinces, the Romans ensured that the local populations registered themselves at regular intervals at centers in the major cities (Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 78). Luke makes reference to a registration of this kind, which was ordered by the Emperor Augustus (Lk. 2:1-5). The word 'census' is also mentioned in Acts 5:37.

Although cities themselves sometimes collected direct taxes, they did so as agents for the Roman Empire, and passed the money on to the Roman authorities. Tolls and custom duties on the other hand, which were calculated at a relatively low rate of 2 to 2.5 percent on imports and exports, were deposited into the municipal treasuries. The big commercial cities that were major centres in trade, such as Antioch, depended heavily on these toll and custom duties.

Since taxes were assessed at a fixed, flat rate, the rich person always found it much easier to pay taxes than the poor person, and this 'accentuated' the gap between the rich and the poor in the Roman provinces. Residents in the Roman provinces were also liable for nonmonetary payments. The wealthy in these provinces were expected to 'play host' to the Roman dignitaries who passed through. Furthermore, anyone in the province could be called upon by law, to provide animals,
wagons, and supplies for official messengers and military troops (Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 74; 79). This law was especially open to abuse as is evident in Lk. 3:12-14, where tax collectors and soldiers are told by John to refrain from taking advantage of their official status, and also in Acts 24:26, where the governor Felix was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe.

Various factors, therefore, such as the system of social stratification (which will be discussed later in this chapter), the various tax laws as well as the corruption amongst state officials, contributed significantly to the presence of the poor in cities and towns of the Roman Empire (Lenski 1966: 198-204; 210-211). A study undertaken by Rostovtzeff (1957: 385) of the ancient Roman economy, reflects that it was the common people who were left to carry the burden of supporting the state and the privileged classes. Amongst the poor were the destitute (Lk: 4:18), the crippled, the lame, the blind (Lk. 14:13), those in need, and the hungry (Lk. 6:20-21). As was already mentioned in the first section of this chapter, the general assumption of this paper is that Luke’s early Christian church was made up of diverse groups, which included those from the ranks of both the urban rich and the urban poor (the question regarding the composition of Luke’s Christian community will receive further attention in chapter five).

The concept of class

Overall, the effects of foreign occupation in Syria, from the time of the conquests of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.E.) up to Pompey’s annexation of Syria as a Roman province in 64 B.C.E., resulted in the settlement of large numbers of Greek and Roman soldiers in these territories (Glanville 1963: 11. 74; Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 15-16).
At the outset, these military conquests were accompanied by large scale plundering, which allowed those who occupied high positions of power and authority in the Roman Empire, to accumulate large quantities of wealth. Lower ranking individuals also benefitted financially from these conquests, and this gave rise to a state of marked class conflicts (Ford 1984: 4).

To further facilitate the understanding of the term 'class', it must be remembered that Greco-Roman society was generally divided between the elite and non-elite sectors. There were, therefore, different classes which made up each sector, arranged hierarchically in relation to their access to power (Lenski 1966: 74-75). Lenski (1966: 78) defines the elite sector as the 'highest ranking segment of any given social unit who are ranked by the criterion of power'. This 'criterion of power' distinguished the elite from the non-elite in society.

The term 'class', as used in this paper, can broadly be defined as an accumulation or gathering of particular persons in society, all of whom occupy a similar position with respect to power, privilege, prestige and status. This does not mean that all classes had access to power, privilege, prestige and status. Some, such as the expendables - which included the criminals, beggars and outlaws - occupied the bottom of the class system and did not possess any power, privilege, prestige or status. Members of a specific class shared certain common interests, such as the elite's desire to control the access to economic surplus. for example, and these common interests constituted the basis for potential hostility towards 'other' classes (Lenski 1966: 74-76: 281).

In sum, the socio-political context of Luke was one which had been structured and shaped by foreign conquests, where the colonial culture
together with its norms, values and societal codes, had become a dominant feature. Furthermore, the excessive taxation policies together with the development of a specific class consciousness, aimed to marginalise the poorer masses more and more. What this all boiled down to, was the fact that there now existed, more than ever before, a huge schism between the rich and the poor, a situation which Luke frequently preached about (Ford 1984: 4).

The structure and organisation of the urban centre: a stratified society

What then can be said about the specific structure and organisation of society in the world of Luke? How was society divided and for what purpose? What societal codes in particular, ensured that this type of societal division was maintained?

Understanding the term 'city' in the urban setting

Since Luke wrote from within an urban setting and because of all his references to the word 'city' in Luke-Acts (Bethlehem, Capernaum, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Sidon, Antioch, Athens, Caesarea, Corinth, Damascus and Ephesus), Rohrbaugh (1991: 129-139) argues that it is very important to understand the urban context in which these cities were located. This type of analysis reveals that cities were not closed, isolated and independent structures. Cities were dependent on and formed an integral part of the regional structures which formed around them. These regional structures, made up of various villages and towns, all contributed towards facilitating various forms of exchange and communication between the cities and themselves.
The central position of the city and its connection with the surrounding regional structures, ensured that links between the different localities (family, village, town) could be maintained. Because of its position, Lampard (1965: 540) states that the city represented "a multifaceted central place, a focus of generalised nodality", in that it facilitated the performance of a number of specialised roles within its localities. Lenski's (1966: 201-204) analysis of economic activity in agrarian societies supports this point. The steady flow of goods from the villages and towns into the urban centres was maintained in this way. Cities, therefore, functioned as administration centres, tax-collection points, trade centres, and also held the seats of political and religious power. According to Moxnes (1988: 27), agriculture "formed the very basis" of ancient economies. As a result, cities were economically parasitic upon the countryside (Lenski 1966: 206). Lenski (1966: 206) does suggest, however, that the relationship between the city and the countryside was not merely parasitic, but also symbiotic to a certain degree. The city was able to supply the regional structures with political, religious, educational and commercial services, and could also supply commodities such as salt and tools and other objects not produced in the regional structures.

Class, rank and status

According to Moxnes (1988: 31) and Lentz (1993: 7-8), the system of social stratification during the time of Luke, can be assessed in terms of the variables of economic class (which involved one's access to wealth production means), status (related to prestige and noble birth), and power. Within this 'sociological concept' of social stratification, was an evaluation of an individual's worth in society which depended on
his or her placement on the social scale of that society. In the Greco-Roman world of Luke, for example, there existed a distinction between the senators and equestrians on the one hand, and freedmen and slaves on the other. This distinction was relative to the variables of class and status which the senators, equestrians, freedmen and slaves occupied.

Lentz (1993: 7-10) adds the category of 'rank' to the above mentioned variables, and states that it is important that certain distinctions be made between class, status and rank. Lentz's definition of 'class', however, is problematic, in that he defines it exclusively in terms of one's economic earning power. According to Countryman (1980: 23), in addition to wealth, one's class was also determined by birth (as a child of a king or the child of an artisan for example), as well as one's legal classification (as a senator, priest or educator for example). High ranking officials of the Roman Empire did, however, have to possess a certain minimum level of wealth, referred to as 'census'. 'Status' is defined as a quality of social honour or lack thereof, and is expressed through a specific type of lifestyle. The term 'social status' is not limited to 'economic factors' and extends itself to define various levels of prestige. For example, a tax-collector and a centurion may have the same economic standing but possess different social status. This meant that the rich were not only to be found amongst the elite, but also amongst the non-elite members of society, such as rich freedmen for example. By virtue of their wealth, these rich freedmen were able to carry a certain amount of prestige and influence in society, but their wealth, generally, did not alter their non-elite status. 'Status', therefore, referred to positions of influence and authority that did not have to correspond to the official hierarchical pattern of the social order.
A person's 'rank' in society was also important for defining social status, although these terms were not synonymous. 'Rank' marked any formally defined position in society, such as that of the senators and equestrians in the Greco-Roman world for example. In sum, wealth and social distinction were, therefore, not identical in Greco-Roman societies (Lentz 1993: 7-10; Countryman 1980: 23-24).

Administrative positions within the Empire: the privileged elite

As a result of the system of social stratification within the ancient Greco-Roman societies, elite groups, who made up only a tiny percentage of the local populace, were able to hold a firm grasp on the limited social resources of wealth, prestige and power. This ensured that the elite's access to these resources were well protected from the non-elite masses, whom they generally held in very low esteem. To alleviate the burden of having to administer these conquered territories themselves, the Romans opted for a system of 'indirect rule'. Headed by their own officials, the Romans would appoint certain individuals and groups from the conquered territories to perform certain duties, such as judicial matters, on behalf of Rome (Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 18-19). Drawing from 1 Cor. 1:26, in which Paul makes reference to the 'wise, powerful and well bred', Esler (1987: 183-184) concludes that this indicates the presence of Roman senators, equestrians, decurions and magistrates. Although this was the situation during the fifties of the first century C.E., it would not be unreasonable to conclude that these positions at the top of the local social, economic and political hierarchy, were still prevalent during Luke's time in the eighties and early nineties of the first century C.E. In fact, the high offices in the Roman Empire's administration and in the military, were reserved exclusively for the senators and equestrians.
The lower administrative positions within the civic communities were reserved for the local elites, who made up the 'order of decurions'. The order of decurions consisted of members of the council, who held their positions for life, and the magistrates, who were elected annually. According to Moxnes (1988: 164), these persons were set apart from the local masses of the city, who made up the non-elite. As was mentioned earlier, wealth was also a qualifying factor for entering this elite strata of society, but it did not automatically ensure membership, especially if the applicant was from 'humble origins'.

Rohrbaugh (1991: 132) states that it was for the small group of urban elite that specialists in the city produced a variety of goods. Since the consumers were made up of such a small percentage, only a limited labour force was needed to service them. The result of this state of affairs was that the limited labour force within the city aimed at all costs to secure their positions and to keep the 'competition' out of town. This economic system depended upon the geographical and social distancing of classes, as well as the physical separation of their functions in the productive and political spheres (Rohrbaugh 1991: 133). The elite were, therefore, the ones who occupied the city centre while the non-elite, who made up about ninety-five to ninety-eight percent of the population, lived in the outlying areas of the city. Despite this physical distancing, the elite still dominated, ordered and controlled both the city and the countryside (Rohrbaugh 1991: 136; Moxnes 1988: 28). With this in mind, Rohrbaugh (1991: 136) states: "Because territoriality is a social construct, it is by its very nature a means of social control."

Overall, the main aim of the economic elite during the first century was to control the economic system and to extract a 'surplus' from it.
The control of this 'surplus' economic production meant that one had power, and it is within this context that social classes could also be understood as 'power groups' (Moxnes 1988: 26-27). With reference to this Malina (1996: 137) states that "power was dwelt upon by first-century Mediterranean conquered peoples rather endlessly, almost compulsively, for its natural prey was liberty."

The non-elite

The upper levels of the non-elite, were made up of the wealthier merchants and traders. This group, despite their 'reasonable' incomes, were still excluded from joining and sitting in on provincial city councils. Below this group were the artisans, who normally formed guilds (Esler 1987: 173; Rohrbaugh 1991: 134), which served to provide social rather than political or economic roles. The guilds were normally named after the patrons whose contributions served to benefit the guild in some way or another. The unskilled workers occupied a position below the artisans, and their survival very often depended on gaining employment in the cities, usually as day-labourers. Oakman (1991: 167) states that the 'surplus' children from the surrounding villages were the ones who usually became day-labourers. They were usually employed to assist in the construction of buildings, to work as messengers and hawkers, and to dig ditches and trenches (Esler 1987: 173). Those amongst the 'free poor' who were physically and mentally handicapped, were either supported by their families or had to take to begging on the streets.

Another group who were in a most unfortunate position, were those who had been deprived of their liberty due to their inability to pay their debts (Oakman 1991: 159; Esler 1987: 174). G.E.M. de Ste Croix (1981:...
136-137), refers to them as 'debt bondsmen', who were in a state of 'debt bondage' (Lk. 12:58-59). They could only regain their freedom once their debt had been paid. The lowest level was occupied by the slaves, who in some cases were better off than the free poor since they had owners who provided them with food and shelter (Moxnes 1988: 58).

Defining the poor

Manual labour and small to medium scale trade, which was generally perceived by the elite as being degrading activities, was only engaged in by the non-elite and outcast groups within the city (Rohrbaugh 1991: 134). The rich lived off their investments and by the labour of others. In urban society, the rich also distinguished between two groups of people amongst the poor, for whom they had specific names. The group of poor at the bottom of the economic scale were called 'indigentes' (indigent), whom Luke would have referred to as ἀποστέρωσαί in Greek. The indigent were completely without resources and owned nothing by way of property or tools of trade. They lived a hand-to-mouth existence and gained some source of income by working as day-labourers and by begging. At a higher level of the economic scale stood the group of poor known as 'pauperes', also known as οἱ πάνεται in Greek. Luke was probably referring to this group in Lk. 12:21. They represented the small shopkeepers, artisans and farmers. The 'pauperes' owned property and the tools of their trade, and could expect reliable incomes from their labour. Despite their reliable incomes, they were regarded as being 'poor' by the elite sector of society because they engaged actively and directly in business, and lived by their own labour. In general, the objective of the rich was to behave as the rich towards the poorer members (more will be said about this in chapter 5). In this sense the rich would act as benefactors (Countryman 1980: 24-25).
Supporting the church

If we consider the requirements of the early Lucan church in the Greco-Roman community, then it could well have been the case that rich Christians contributed in various ways to the well-being of the entire Christian community. When we refer to Acts 12:12 for example, we find that Peter, after his rescue from prison, finds that a large group was gathered in Mary's house for prayer. Luke's mentioning of this could well have been to influence those Christians in his own community who were by the means to do so, to also make their homes available for similar gatherings. Other forms of assistance from the rich, such as providing food and shelter for various members of the Lucan community, could have been a likely scenario. In Lk. 8:1-3 for example, Luke mentions that specific female individuals, such as Joanna, the wife of one of Herod's stewards, had supported certain members of the church. The fact that it was women performing this function, is not unusual. Stambaugh and Balch (1986: 112) claim that women were amongst those who made a reasonable income in Greco-Roman urban society, and draws attention to Lydia, the dealer in luxury textiles whom we read about in Acts 16:14.

The experience of poverty

We can deduce from the above section on social stratification, that the majority of those living in Luke's world were subjected to varying degrees of poverty. At this stage it would perhaps be helpful if the 'experience of poverty' was examined, so as to better understand the context which has both shaped and influenced Luke's theology. Esler (1987: 175) states that the experience of the poor in this Hellenistic
setting of the Roman East, was driven by two basic needs: namely, that of obtaining food and finding shelter. Since the most important food consisted of legumes, porridge and barley loaves, the poor were constantly engaged in the activity of making sure that they had enough barley as well as a supply of olive oil for cooking and lighting. These needs for barley and oil caused intense concern especially for the day-labourers, since no hire on a particular day meant that no barley or oil would be available to them the following day. Esler (1987: 177-178; 182), also asserts that famine was a common feature of urban life in the cities of the Roman East. Esler argues that Luke's use of the age-old story of the widow of Zarepath (Lk. 4:25-26), which conveys the detrimental effects of famine on human societies, must, therefore, have "struck a chord of recognition" amongst Luke's urban audience.

The urban poor were, then, involved in a constant day-to-day struggle to survive. In cases where the rich did donate food or money to the poor, it was always done with the idea of receiving something beneficial in return, especially honour (Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 75). In general, those without any source of income except through begging, were very often homeless, and slept on the street or under any shelter they could find. Lk. 14:21-23, provides us with some idea as to where the poorest, non-elite members of society lived. The economically 'better-off' urban poor lived in small huts which were situated far away from the residences of the wealthy. The poor who could afford it rented apartments in multi-storey tenements called 'insulae', which were often badly constructed. Within these 'insulae' there was massive overcrowding with no toilets and running water. Some of the 'insulae' were three floors high, and it seems as if Luke was apparently familiar with these dwellings if we note the case of Eutychus (Acts 20:9), who fell from a three-storey building. Luke reminds the rich that they have
a social responsibility of striving to alleviate the pain and suffering which the poor, such as those living in 'insulae', experience on a daily basis. Luke urges the rich to help the poor (Lk. 14:12-14; 18:22). In Luke's day, the high death rate amongst the poor was the norm.

In general, the poor suffered social, economic and political deprivation. Their lives were plagued by poor housing, ill health, hunger, ostracism and unemployment. They were both in a state of helplessness and hopelessness, stripped of all dignity and respect (Esler 1987: 176-179). The character Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31), whose plea for help was ignored by the rich man, probably represents an extreme situation, in which the severity of the social divide between the rich and the poor could be drastically emphasised. Within this context, it was not surprising to find that the wealthy were generally despised by those who suffered under the oppressive socio-economic system of the Roman Empire (Ford 1984: 3).

Conclusion

We can deduce from the above section on the structure and organisation of the urban centre, that Luke's setting was indeed highly stratified. This system of social stratification, as will be shown in chapter 5, caused a high degree of antagonism to exist amongst the diverse members of the Lucan community. This antagonism was aggravated by the elite's control over the access to economic and political resources, which created a further schism between the elite and non-elite. The Greco-Roman social system which was in place in the eastern Mediterranean region, had its own specific colonial nature, with its laws, norms, values, social and political distinctions and evaluative procedures.
All of this was aimed at securing control over the economic surplus of the region. Despite the social, political and economic divisions which existed between the rich and the poor in Luke's setting, a certain level of contact and communication did take place between the diverse groups in society, especially in the sense that the poor were required to service the needs of the elite.

The question I would like to ask is whether the social relations between the elite and non-elite (which includes both poor and rich), were structured and organised in any specific manner? Was there any metaphysical structure in place which provided a sense of 'meaning' and 'purpose' for those interacting in the Greco-Roman setting? To better understand Luke and his world, it is important that I give some attention to the questions raised above, so as to provide some insight into how meaning and order were perceived by those in Luke's world. This will improve our understanding about the types of relationships which existed between the different members of Luke's stratified society. It is to this which I now turn.
The quest for meaning: understanding the symbolic universe
The symbolic universe

There were obvious economic divisions between the rich and the poor in Luke's urban society. Specific societal codes, however, may have exceeded the importance of the economic factor in creating divisions in society. The combination of these various codes provided the first century Mediterranean persons with resources out of which they could construct meaning in their world. As such, we find that Luke and his audience would have shared a common understanding of the symbols of their world and would have a common shared perception of the meaning and importance which was attached to those symbols. As modern readers of Luke-Acts, we are completely removed from the world of Luke. Thus we are faced with the task of attempting to construct some sort of 'feasible' scenario of Luke's world which would enable us to make some sense of the events which he describes in his writings (Neyrey 1991:272). My focus in this chapter, therefore, is aimed at gaining some insight into how the Greco-Roman world, together with the symbols which made up and ordered that world, were perceived by Luke and his contemporaries.

The question of constructing order in the world in which we live, is important. Humans by nature impose order on the world in which they live, so as to define and to distinguish themselves from the concept of chaos which symbolises formlessness, disorder, turmoil, confusion, and pandemonium. By imposing order on their world, people are able to define themselves in relation to it, and in this process they seek and produce socially shared meanings. Order provides us with a sense of direction and purpose in the world. People, therefore, construct and
erect both real and imaginary lines to define what is 'theirs' in relation to what belongs to someone else. For example, a fence around a house marks off the boundaries of that property and confirms the status of the 'owner' of the property (Neyrey 1991: 272-273). The process of constructing a system of lines acts to define and classify certain basic concepts which provide meaning in the world. These concepts includes: self, others, nature, time, space and God. The construction of this system of lines, definitions and classifications of the above concepts, makes up the symbolic universe of a particular culture (Douglas 1966; Malina 1981: 25). Pervo (1990: 11-12), states that it is vitally important that 'symbolic universes' are recognised for what they are without the imposition of 'other' symbolic universes onto that framework. If we consider that a diversity of ethnic, cultural and religious groups lived within the first-century Mediterranean world (Lenski 1966: 196), then a variety of symbolic universes must also have been prevalent. My intention is, then, to recover and reconstruct the symbolic universe of the Greco-Roman world of the first century as an entity on its own, without transferring the norms, values, definitions and classifications which make up my own world, onto that particular unit.

The purity model

By adapting the works of Douglas (1966, 1982), Neyrey (1991: 274-304) has developed a 'model of purity'. This model is flexible enough to deal with a variety of perceptions of the cosmos, including Jewish, Christian, Greek and Roman perceptions. Neyrey (1991: 302) states that the purity model concerns "the basic sense of order and proper placement, which is a feature of every culture, but in varying degrees." For example, in Luke-Acts we find that there is a clash
between the Jewish and Christian perceptions of the symbolic universe concerning the construction, classification, and definition of purity lines. This clash is clearly evident in Acts 11:1-18 when Peter, confronted by Jews who accuse him of transgressing purity codes, describes how God made it possible for Gentiles to also receive salvation. Neyrey's (1991) focus on Jewish and Christian symbolic perceptions of the cosmos in Luke-Acts, will be used in this section as a basis from which to construct a Greco-Roman symbolic order.

In the above paragraph it was determined that cultural systems are ordered according to a specific system of lines and classifications. To this orderly system of lines and classifications, Douglas (1966) attaches the term 'purity', to designate the correctness and appropriateness of the system when it represents the norm in a culture or society. Neyrey (1991: 274), defines the term purity as an abstract term which indicates order in a social system. Only certain, prescribed patterns of perceptions and systems of classifications are eligible to form part of this ordered system. What this simply means, according to Neyrey (1991: 274), is that anything which is contrary to the purity of a social system, is deemed as being 'polluted', or out of place. So while purity stands for order, pollution stands for the exact opposite, namely, disorder and chaos.

Drawing from this, Neyrey (1991: 275) states that purity relates to the perception that "certain things belong in certain places at certain times". Within a symbolic system it is the core values, which are structured in the cultural life of a group, that determine which type of behaviour is appropriate and which is not. That which falls in line with these core values is seen as being pure while anything which contravenes them is polluted. Malina (1981: 122-125) describes purity
and pollution in terms of the 'sacred and profane', 'the clean and unclean', and these, in keeping with the observations above, are defined as that which involves "a human relationship of varying degrees of exclusivity relative to some person, space, time or event". Since Luke bases his writings on the traditional Jewish biblical setting, he encompasses specific Jewish attitudes, values and norms in his work. These have a serious bearing on his attitude to the rich and the poor in his community.

The Judaic concept of purity

Our modern construction of the terms purity and pollution, when applied to the first century Judaic context, reveals certain findings which enable us to make more sense of the symbolic universe of that world. In his application of these terms to the ancient Judaic world, Neyrey (1991: 276) finds that purity and pollution are not just general, abstract terms, but relate instead to the specific ordering of the world of the Jews. These two terms describe in a precise manner those persons, things, places, times and actions, which were perceived to be either pure or polluted. Creation, the opposite of chaos, entailed the act of ordering and classifying the world, and it was upon this act that the original act of purity for Jews was based. God's holiness was expressed through this order, and the Jews had to imitate this holiness by keeping a clear distinction between the different categories of creation (Soler 1976: 24-30). For example, time was divided into day and night and the week was divided into work days and the Sabbath, the day of rest.

In this way, Jews constructed maps of places and persons in terms of progressive degrees of holiness. The movement towards holiness.
therefore, was from the borders of the land of Israel upward and inward towards the centre of God's presence, situated in the Holy of Holies in the temple (Smith 1978: 112-113). The Gentiles were excluded completely from this map of places since according to the Jews, they were not part of God's chosen people (Acts 10:28). With reference to the map of people, holiness meant "wholeness." Thus, persons with damaged and deformed bodies were ranked last on the list, while those from damaged family lines such as slaves and bastards, were ranked second last. The positions of high ranking persons such as the priests and Levites, corresponded with their proximity to the centre of the temple (Neyrey 1991: 279; Malina 1981: 131-137). Maps of uncleanness and of times operated in a similar fashion. Drawing from Douglas (1966: 114), who states that society is formed in terms of external boundaries, margins and internal lines, Neyrey (1991: 281-282) concludes that first-century Jews were more concerned with the first two of these categories, namely, external boundaries and margins. External and observable phenomena, according to Neyrey (1991: 282), provided clarity as to what 'belonged' and did 'not belong'. The preservation of purity meant that this clarity had to be maintained at all costs. As such, Jews could not eat with sinners, associate with Gentiles, mix with the sick, or dwell in graveyards. According to Talbert (1986: 124), special procedures and purification rituals had to be followed in the event of death and the burying of corpses (Num. 19:11-13; 14-19; Lev. 21:10-11).

The physical bodies of the Jews were such that they were viewed and used in such a manner that they resembled and imitated the larger societal norms and values of the Jewish 'social body'. Douglas (1982: 65) sums this up appropriately when she states that "the physical experience of the body sustains a particular view of society." How then does this analysis of the Jewish purity code contribute towards the
construction of a Greco-Roman symbolic order?

Applying the purity model to Luke's social setting

I mentioned earlier that as a model, the purity code allows itself to be used in different socio-cultural contexts. This enables us to identify the symbols of purity and pollution which are specific only to a particular culture. The implications of these purity codes for Luke's Christian community, represents an enormous challenge to Luke's attempts at legitimating and firmly establishing the unity of the early church within urban society. I have shown in chapter three along which lines Luke's society was stratified, and the role wealth played in contributing to this form of social division which was constructed along the lines of economic class, status and power. Greco-Roman society, then, also adhered to a certain purity code, in which some persons were included within certain social classifications while others were excluded. For example, the elite strata of society were made up of an exclusive minority group, who constructed strong boundary lines so as to separate and distinguish themselves from non-elite groups. These boundary lines established by the elite were defined by the categories of class, rank and social status, as was discussed in chapter three. Judging from the above, it is not difficult to picture the problems Luke experienced within the Christian community which was made up of members from the elite as well as the non-elite of society. These problems are especially evident in Luke's call to the rich to provide help to the poor (Lk. 6:30-35). This matter will be dealt with in detail at a later stage in the thesis.
The pivotal values of honour and shame

Honour and the symbolic universe

The confines of the Jewish purity codes within the first-century Mediterranean context, can be extended to include the pivotal values of honour and shame which operated in Jewish society and also within the broader, Gentile society. In the same fashion that Jews associated different degrees of purity with certain spaces, persons, times and things, so too they attached a certain amount of honour, in varying degrees to the persons who performed specific actions in certain spaces at certain times. For example, only the temple priests were allowed to enter the Holy of holies, which is the holiest space in the temple. These priests held a higher honour rating than the Levites, who were only allowed to proceed as far as the second most holy space in the temple, namely, the sanctuary (Neyrey 1991: 278-279).

In a similar fashion, varying degrees of honour were also ascribed to particular persons who held important religious positions in Greco-Roman society. For example, only certain magistrates and priests, drawn from the ranks of wealthy freedmen, were elected to lead and organise the cult of the emperor, in which participants venerated the emperor’s power and openly declared their allegiance to him. These specially elected freedmen gained much social recognition and were also in an official position to act as benefactors in the communities in which they served. This boosted their honour status in society even more (Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 130-132). In short, honour was an important part of first-century Mediterranean society’s ‘symbolic universe’. The values of honour and shame offer us the means with which to analyse the ways in which Luke’s society organised its world and how it structured
For the ancient Mediterranean people, honour was a positive core value, and one's sense of identity and acceptance into society depended solely on acting in accordance with this core value. To have honour depended on not only valuing oneself in a positive light, but also on whether others in one's group were in agreement with the granting of such worth. Honour was, thus, a public acknowledgment of worth in society and having this positive worth meant that one was in place (Lentz 1993: 15; Malina 1981: 27; 1986: 43-44). The worse thing that could happen was to lose one's worth in society and to become a 'dishonourable' person. Persons who fell into this category were out of place, polluted, and were shunned by their peers. An example of someone who fell into the 'dishonourable' category was the apostle Judas. Judas' betrayal of Jesus meant that he was a source of pollution, a threat to the unity and security established by the other apostles (Acts 1:15-21).

The legitimate place of people in society depended then, on the amount of honour which they held. This meant, for example, that a husband's claim to honour was legitimate if he as a father and the head of the household, was respected, obeyed and honoured by his wife and children. Were this the case, then in the eyes of the public, that man would have acted in accordance with his gender (male, father), position (head of the household) and power (obedience of household members), which meant his claim to honour was legitimate. This understanding of the concept of honour can clearly be seen in 1 Tim. 3:1-13, in Paul's description of the attributes which church leaders should possess in order to maintain their honour in both the church and society at large. On the other hand, if children, for example, disobeyed their father, it would
have meant in the public eye that the father's power and position as head of the household, were not being acknowledged. This, then, would have resulted in a loss of honour for the father. These values of honour and shame are also culturally specific, in that recognised honourable or dishonourable actions in one culture might not be given the same weight in other cultures (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 26; Malina 1981: 27). What then constituted honour and dishonour in the world of Luke-Acts?

Sources of honour

We note, firstly, that honour can be ascribed through the process of birth, family connections, or endowment by recognised powerful persons (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 28). This aspect of ascribed honour, forms a major part of Luke's birth narrative of Jesus (Lk. 2:1-32) and also his description of Jesus' genealogy (Lk. 3:21-38). Within these passages Luke aimed to legitimate the position and status of Jesus as Lord and Messiah (Lk. 2:10-11). In a similar fashion, a prince also has ascribed honour by virtue of his noble birth and the power that has been bestowed upon him. Honour can also be acquired through social achievements, which include benefactions (Lk. 7:4-5) or prowess (Lk. 7:15-17).

Challenge and riposte

In Luke's context, honour was most popularly acquired by competing with others along socially defined lines (Malina 1981: 29). The victor was able to lay claim to the other person's honour in this contest, and could, in the process, boost his or her original amount of honour. Since the first-century Mediterranean world was a limited goods
society, honour, like all limited goods, was greatly sought after. The way to gain honour was via social interaction with others according to challenge-riposte criteria. The challenger in this sense, would send a public message by way of word, deed or both, to someone else. A challenge could be positive, in the form of praise, a request for assistance, or a gift. It could also be negative, in the form of a threat, insult, or physical attack. The person who received this message was obliged to react, since it was this reaction which would be evaluated by the public in terms of honour and loss of honour. Since only social equals could challenge each other, the receiver had to determine whether the challenge was worthy of a reaction. If the challenger was of lower social standing, he or she could be punished by the receiver for impudence. Also, the superior person's honour remained intact when being challenged by an inferior person, irrespective of the former's reaction. Gaining or losing honour could only take place among equals, and in instances where this was the case the receiver had to respond, since a non-response was viewed as a loss of honour in the public eye (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 27-31; Malina 1981: 31-32).

The replication of honour

Honour could also be replicated. This meant that honour contests generally, did not take place within one's family. Within the family group, honour and trust was secure, and it was only those outside the group which could pose a threat to the family honour. Honour was replicated in 'blood', when males were named after their fathers and kinship groups (Lk. 3:23-38). One's prestige and societal status depended on the ability or power one had to dominate other people. Malina and Neyrey (1991: 33) assert that the accumulation of wealth was undertaken with the strict intention of gaining honour by sharing this
wealth with equals or "socially useful lower-class clients". The act of reciprocity featured very strongly here. Wealth was, therefore, only useful in so far as it acted as a vehicle with which one could obtain honour in society (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 32-34; York 1991: 94-95). The principle of reciprocity is reflected in the parable of the great banquet (Lk. 14:12-24). Initially the host only invited his social equals, from whom he would receive praise for sharing his wealth. The invited guests would then at a later stage repay the host by extending banquet invitations to him and others of equal social status. Moxnes (1991: 244-246) states that this was, in fact, the basis of friendship in the ancient world. Ties of honour between social equals were maintained in this way.

Collective honour

The category of collective honour was an important one. Collective honour pertained firstly, to the honour in a natural grouping, that is, the group into which one was born and whose honour codes one had to maintain. Crimes against one's own natural group members was 'extremely grievous and socially disorientating' (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 38; Malina 1996: 80; 109). This is evident in Lk. 21:16-17, where the followers of Jesus, who acted in opposition to the honour codes of their natural groupings, were warned about the hostile reactions of their close kin. Since the behaviour of a particular family member in society could affect the public honour of the entire family, those contravening the family codes of honour were dealt with severely by the authoritative figures within the family hierarchy. This included being rejected, disowned and even persecution by one's own family group.

Besides the natural group, there were also the voluntary groups, which
involved the personal choice of the individual to join. These included the trade guilds, municipalities, religious groups and burial organisations. The early Christian community of Luke can be placed in this category of a voluntary group. In these groups the members were always seen in relation to each other, with the tone of the group being set by the head, or leader. The honour which the head of the group held, determined the honour which the group as a whole held. In voluntary groupings, we find that public opinion was 'sovereign'. The head or sacred person of a group, had the power to organise, structure, and delimit the boundaries of the group within acceptable measures. The head 'defined the unconditional allegiance' of the members who made up the voluntary grouping (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 38-40; Malina 1996: 81). Let us consider how Luke may have used his position as head of the community for whom he wrote.

Countryman (1980: 131) argues that in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus addresses two different groups of audiences. The first group, the inner circle, was represented by the disciples. The second group represented "the multitude" (Countryman 1980: 131). In this paragraph I will focus mainly on the inner circle. The inner circle of disciples which Countryman refers to, may well have represented those who occupied leadership positions in Luke's Christian community. As such, Luke's Jesus defines the allegiance of the disciples by setting in place certain criteria related to riches to which they have to adhere. In Lk. 12:2-10, Jesus warns his disciples of "God's impending judgement," which is to be feared more than "earthly persecution." Lk. 12:4-5 states: "...Do not fear those who kill the body and after that have nothing more they can do. ...fear him who, after he has killed, has the authority to cast into hell." Countryman (1980: 132) asserts that these words set in place an important Lucan theme: "that earthly goods
are incommensurate with heavenly." Luke's Jesus also warns his disciples to detach themselves from earthly goods: "I bid you put away anxious thoughts about food to keep you alive and clothes to cover your body. Life is more than food, the body more than clothes" (Lk. 12:22-23). In this sense, Luke, as one who occupied a prominent position in the Christian ranks, could have been reminding the Christian leadership in his community about the extent of their obligations and duties toward God and the other members of the community. The argument that Luke was acting as a client of the Christian leadership, namely, the apostles, who were seeking to legitimate their position, could also be raised here.

**Conclusion**

How then did the issue of purity, combined with the pivotal values of honour and shame, affect the stability and legitimacy of Luke's Christian community? How did Luke, both as a member of the broader first-century Greco-Roman urban society and as a prominent leader in the early Christian community, respond to the above societal constructs of purity, honour and shame? What type of relationship existed between Luke's Christian community and those on the 'outside'? Only by considering questions such as these will we be able to construct some kind of understanding about the experiences of the early church and how this contributed towards developing Luke's theology of the rich and poor, which is the main theme in this thesis. It is from this vantage point of the rich and the poor in Luke's urban society, that I will later show how the categories of purity, honour and shame, are used decisively by Luke to construct a new symbolic universe which is exclusively Christian in character and distinct from that on the 'outside'. For now, let us first identify and analyse the nature of the
problems which Luke encountered in his early Christian community.
The division within Luke's community: a serious threat to unity and legitimacy
The composition of Luke's Christian community

In chapter three the social context of Luke's Greco-Roman world was briefly sketched. The picture we have constructed so far indicates that his society was stratified and that there was a marked division between the elite and non-elite. All political, economic, and even religious power was concentrated in the hands of the small percentage who formed the elite, who dominated and controlled all access to these 'limited' resources at the expense of the non-elite. The 'purity' code and the pivotal values of 'honour and shame' have been identified as important components which structured and organised the Greco-Roman society in a meaningful and coherent manner. Honour above all else, was the most sought after commodity and had to receive official public sanctioning before it could be bestowed upon any individual or group. One's attitude and activity in public, therefore, determined whether one belonged or whether one would be excluded or marginalised. Mention has also been made of the fact that the accumulation of possessions was done solely for the purpose of gaining public honour and prestige, especially amongst one's peers, via the principle of reciprocity.

If the above indicates the general tone of the Greco-Roman society, it is now necessary to consider the composition of Luke's urban Christian community to get an idea of the type of personalities and groups Luke addressed. Since the Christian community addressed by Luke was drawn from the surrounding Greco-Roman social context, the specific identities of these Christians will enable us to determine the types of social positions they held within broader society. For example, a governor would be located amongst the elite and would have a high social status. This analysis will enable us to better understand the nature of the type of inter-Christian relations which could have
existed within the Christian church, especially between the rich and the poor.

**Jews and Gentiles**

Recent research has revealed that the commonly held account that all early Christians were poor slaves and uneducated peasants is in fact inaccurate (Theissen 1982: 69, 73, 95-96; Meeks 1983: 25-30: 78-80). Furthermore, in his analysis of the composition of Luke's Christian community, Esler (1987: 24-25; 31) draws attention to the fact that some of Luke's audience must have been knowledgeable about the Jesus proclamation of the Gospel, otherwise Luke would have had to explain expressions such as 'the Son of man' and 'the kingdom of God' in his writings. Explanations to background information on the parables and the beatitudes, would also then have been expected. This could mean that Jews were probably amongst those in Luke's early Christian community.

If this was the case, why then does Luke paint certain Jewish groups so blackly? For example, in Lk. 16:13-15, Jesus criticises the Pharisees for their self-righteous actions and for being more concerned about money than about God. Esler (1987: 45) argues in response to this depiction of certain Jewish groups, that it could well have been to reassure those Jews who had become followers of Jesus and a part of the Christian community, that they had made the right decision. Esler asserts that this reassurance was important, especially in the light that those Jews who had converted to Christianity, might well have been ostracised by fellow Jews for "endangering Jewish ethnic identity".

This danger to Jewish ethnic identity stemmed from the fact that there were both Jews and Gentiles in the early Christian community who sat
down to eat together, as is evident, for example, in Acts 11:3-4: and 
16:19-34. Esler (1987: 105) concludes from this that it was the 
presence of both Jews and Gentiles in the community that led to Luke's 
focus on table-fellowship and his attempts to legitimize it.

Meeks' (1985) work which deals with the separation of Christianity from 
the Jewish communities can also be noted here. Meeks (1985: 114) argues 
that the Christian movement by the end of the first century, "was 
socially independent of the Jewish communities in the cities of the 
empire." He adds that this independence of the Christian communities 
could already be noted much earlier in the Pauline groups. Meeks (1985: 
107) acknowledges the unity which is hinted at between Jews and 
Gentiles in Ephesians 2:11-22, but asserts that this passage provides 
no evidence that any relationship existed between Christians in the 
community and Jews attending the synagogue. The Christians mentioned in 
Ephesians were, therefore, an independent unit. If we consider the 
later Lucan urban community, we are reminded that it consisted of a 
majority of Gentile-Christians in a predominantly Gentile-setting. 
which included some Jews and Jewish-Christians (Fitzmeyer 1981: 59). It 
could have been likely, therefore, that Luke was playing to Gentile 
prejudices towards Jews, in an attempt to legitimate and validate the 
Gentile presence in the community. Acts 13:46-48 stresses this point:

"It was necessary... that the word of God should be 
declared to you first. But since you reject it and thus 
condemn yourselves as unworthy of eternal life, we now 
turn to the Gentiles... When the Gentiles heard this, 
they were overjoyed... ."

If what Meeks (1985: 114) stated above is correct, then Luke may have 
also been asserting the independence of his Christian community, in 
keeping with the general Christian movement of the time.
The presence of educated and distinguished members of society

The prologue of the Gospel of Luke (Lk. 1:1-4), as well as the sea voyage and shipwreck descriptions (Acts 27), represent a 'high literary style'. If we consider that the lower orders of first century Mediterranean society had very little access to the literary education offered by the Hellenistic cities (Jones 1940: 285), then it could be that the author Luke was a client of a wealthy upper-class householder in society. Luke's introduction to his Gospel (Lk. 1-4), suggests that this was the case. According to Stambaugh and Balch (1986: 121), the content of education in Hellenistic cities was the same. This meant that all educated people would have "shared a common sense of culture, read the same standard passages, copied them, recited them, and memorised them" (Stambaugh and Balch 1986: 121). The most popular mythological tales and quotations would easily have been recognised by those who were exposed to this type of education. According to Stambaugh and Balch (1986: 122), such an educated audience would, for example, have recognised the passage to which Paul alludes from Aratus in Acts 17:28, "For in him we live and move, in him we exist: as some of your own poets have said, we are also his offspring."

Luke's inclusion of this type of work implied that there were persons of the upper reaches of society in his early Christian community. This is evident in the prologue, where Luke addresses someone known as Theophilus, who is referred to as 'Excellency' (Lk. 1: 3), indicating someone who held a high social position. According to Downey's (1963: 128) analysis of the Pseudo-Clementine Romance which was written in the early third century, one of the most prominent men in Antioch during the time of Luke, was a man named Theophilus, who had donated his house for use as a church. Downey asserts that this could have been the
Theophilus to whom Luke dedicated his writings (Lk. 1:1; Acts 1:1). In Acts 17:18-23, Luke's Paul debates with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The topic of debate concerned Jesus and the resurrection, which attracted the philosophers' attention since it represented the 'latest novelty' at the time (Acts 17:21). Acts 17:33-34 reflects that a few of these philosophers, such as Dionysius, a member of the Court of Areopagus, later became believers. With reference to the high level of intellectual activity which took place in the important courts, such as that of Areopagus mentioned in Acts 17:19, Stambaugh and Balch (1986:149) state that it was the atmosphere of "ethnic diversity, culture, education, power, trade and religion" of the most important and popular urban centres, such as Antioch for example, which enabled Christians to enter public debates and to make unique contributions to the development of Christianity.

In further support of the above analysis concerning the presence of distinguished members of society within Christian ranks, we find that the first Gentile to convert to Christianity was the Roman centurion, Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8). Luke 7:1-10 and 23:47 provides further evidence of the willingness of Roman centurions to convert. Roman centurions had a great deal of social status, and their 'mustering-out pay' could easily have elevated them to the status of decurion, which meant they would have had an even higher socio-economic and political status (Esler 1987: 184).

Other persons of high social status who also displayed a willingness to convert to Christianity were Joanna, Herod's steward's wife (Lk. 8:3), the Ethiopian eunuch, a high official of the queen of Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-39), Manaen, who grew up with Herod the tetrarch (Acts 13:1), a few Greeks of noble birth from Borea (Acts 19: 31), and the governor
Sergius Paulus of Cyprus, who held a senatorial rank (Acts 13: 7). Luke's mentioning of these persons was to allow Christians in his community with similar positions to identify with them (Esler 1987: 184). Luke could also have been creating the impression that Christianity appealed to the upper echelons of Roman society.

Another important feature in the work of Luke is that the conversion of upper-class household heads usually resulted in the conversion of other members of the household as well, including slaves, all of whom then formed part of the early Christian church. Evidence for this can be found in Acts 11: 14-15, in which Peter confirms the conversion of the centurion Cornelius and his entire household, including the two servants mentioned in Acts 10:7. Similar conversions of entire households can be seen in Acts 16:13-15, 25-34: 18:5-8. From these examples of household conversions, it can be argued that converted household heads who occupied prominent positions in society, would then also have expected some level of social status in the church, especially if their subordinates were visibly present. The examples cited above also show that a sizeable Gentile presence in Luke's early church was highly likely.

The presence of the poor

We have seen in the above paragraph that slaves were also a part of the early Christian communities, and were often better off than the socially destitute. How then can we confirm the presence of other poor members of society in Luke's community? Esler (1987: 185) asserts that:

"it is difficult to credit that the emphasis placed on the poor throughout Luke's Gospel was not balanced and even motivated by the presence within the author's community of such people, on whom this message would have had the maximum impact."
Esler (1987: 185) uses the parable of the Great Banquet (Lk. 14:15-24) and argues that Luke’s mentioning of beggars, the crippled, the blind and the lame (Lk. 14:21), are identical to those groups who are promised the good news in Lk. 4:18 and who are called "blessed" in Lk. 6:20-21. Esler (1987: 186) states further that the prayer for daily bread in Lk. 11:3 would have been taken very seriously by the poor in Hellenistic cities. Similarly, the language in Lk. 18:22 and Acts 4:34-35 concerns the injunction to give alms, and would have held some appeal for the poor in the Hellenistic setting as well. Drawing from the evidence presented here and in the above paragraph, we can conclude that Luke’s urban community must have contained members from both ends of the socio-economic spectrum.

The Antiochene church: A Gentile community

In chapter three it was mentioned that Luke was quite familiar with the city of Antioch, and it would perhaps be useful to the discussion concerning the Gentile composition of Luke’s Christian community. to identify who the Antiochene Christians were at the time of Luke. Brown and Meier (1983: 50) state that the Antiochene church in the 80’s of the first century C.E. was made up of various groups. Included in these groups were the Gentile Christians, the liberal Jewish Christians, and the more conservative Jewish Christians. Despite the presence of Jews within the church, we are reminded by Fitzmyer (1981: 59) that Luke wrote from within a Greco-Roman urban context, which was predominantly a Gentile setting, containing a few Jews and a few Jewish-Christians. A large Gentile presence in the Antiochene church could, therefore, have been expected. This Gentile presence within the early church is confirmed at the end of Acts: "Therefore take notice that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles: the Gentiles will

Luke's Paul

We are also able to get a sense of the social worth and integrity of specific members of Luke's Christian community from his description of Paul. If one considers that the possibility exists, according to Mattill (1978: 78; 81) and Horrell (1996: 73), that Luke might have been acquainted with Paul and that he respected and was influenced by him (as is evident in his description of Paul in Acts), then it is highly likely that Luke used his construction of Paul to address 'similar' problems within his own Christian community. Lentz (1993: 3; 10) states that Luke portrayed Paul as one who 'possessed high social credentials' and who personified the classical cardinal virtues of 'true dignity and morality' in his society. In this process, Luke equated the Jewish notion of 'rightness' with the Greek concept of 'virtue' (Mack 1995: 234-235). Luke's Paul is, therefore, an honourable figure, one who has both authority and control.

Luke's reference to the artisans Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2; 18: 26), and Lydia, the dealer in luxury textiles (Acts 16:14, 40), is also significant. These individuals possessed a low social status, but were, however, in possession of some wealth. This reveals that there were also wealthy members of the non-elite ranks present in the early Christian church, who by way of their relationship with Paul, must have also possessed 'acceptable' social credentials. Luke may have wanted to create the impression that Christianity also held an appeal for wealthy
members of the lower class. Meeks (1983: 51-73) analysis of Paul's urban setting provides further evidence that the early church was comprised of a 'fair cross-section of urban society'.

There seems to be a general agreement that the members of Luke's early Christian community did consist of a range of Jewish and Gentile individuals from the urban setting which included slaves, household servants, householders (some with considerable wealth and high social positions), tax collectors, traders, as well as high and low ranking officials. The majority of these members were most probably from the non-elite classes with marked differences in wealth and possessions (Moxnes 1988: 165; Horrell 1996: 101).

The attitudes and perceptions of the elite and wealthy non-elite within the Christian community

The Christian community: a microcosm of wider society

Malina (1996: 145) states that patron-client relations were usually employed to "cushion the vagaries of life for social inferiors." The wealthy entered into such relations with the poor and needy in exchange for honour, praise, loyalty, support and the like. This type of situation was open to abuse, and made the poor and needy totally dependent on the patron's good will. In terms of the above analysis, Luke's Christian community seemed to represent a 'microcosm' of the wider society. As far as Christian norms and values were concerned, however, Karris (1978: 116-117) argues that these diverse groups within the church were not acting in accordance with the ideal of true Christian fellowship. Karris states further that many of these members, because of their diverse cultural backgrounds, were either ill-informed
or not informed at all about the Christian ideals of sharing and communicating with each other across social barriers. Luke uses Acts 2 and Acts 4, therefore, to raise an awareness about the necessity of almsgiving and fellowship amongst converts.

We can conclude from the above paragraph that social stratification along the lines of power, wealth, possessions, social status and prestige, was an unavoidable reality within the early Christian church, and must have clearly caused a split among the diverse Christian membership. Esler (1987: 193) states that it was "virtually unknown in Hellenistic cities for representatives at the top and at the bottom of the social hierarchy to gather together in a single association."

Voluntary associations such as the burial organisations and trade guilds, for example, would have consisted of members who most likely came from a "similar socio-economic level" (Esler 1987: 193). Malina and Neyrey (1991: 40) classify the early Christian groups as voluntary associations, since individuals chose to belong to these groups. If one considers that Luke's community was comprised of different groups who came from different socio-economic levels, then a certain degree of apprehension and tension must have existed within the community. Esler (1987: 193) argues that a Christian theology which spoke of "unity in Christ" would have added to this tension.

If we consider Lk. 14:12-14, we will note that it highlights the degree of conflict between the social values of the rich in Roman society and the new Christian standards which were being proclaimed in Jesus' name. As such, the Hellenistic notion of gift-giving is rejected by the Lucan Jesus, who appeals to the rich to rather give to those who have nothing to offer in return, such as the beggars, the lame, the crippled and the blind (Lk. 14:12-14). Esler (1987: 198) asserts that Luke could have
been reminding the rich in his community not to neglect their duty towards the poor. Luke's focus on the appropriate use of possessions, wealth and friendship, was the means whereby he hoped to achieve some sort of unity amongst those groups which made up his community.

Reconstructing the 'expected' attitudes and perceptions of the elite and wealthy non-elite Christians, will provide us with a deeper understanding of how and why divisions within the Christian ranks were seen by the elite and wealthy non-elite as a normal and necessary development. This type of analysis will also reveal the basis from which Luke acted to construct new and alternate attitudes, norms and values, and perceptions which were 'exclusively' Christian in character. The somewhat repetitive nature of this analysis is necessary because it aims to show the degree of correspondence and continuity which the early Christian converts still had with the outside social contexts from which they came. As it was Luke's intention to construct a new symbolic universe for Christians, it is important to note at which points the 'breaks' with the outside occur, as well as the nature and severity of those breaks. This will give us some idea about the intensity of the choices which the early Christians had to make.

The issue of social identity

Thus far we have established that there were both Jews and Gentiles present within Luke's Christian community. In chapter four we saw the important role played by the purity code in structuring and ordering Greco-Roman urban society. The analysis in chapter four also revealed how the human body can be used as a 'symbol of society', and how rituals which involve concern for body orifices and boundaries, also reflect the care which is used to protect the political and cultural
unity of a particular group (Douglas 1966: 114).

Esler (1987: 75-76) states that these very strategies were adopted by Jewish religious movements in order to maintain their particular group identities and to distinguish the actions of those within the group from the actions of those on the outside. For example, if we consider the manner in which the Pharisees adopted the purity code, we note that they were strongly against eating with 'outsiders'. Outsiders here can be viewed in terms of those who were not Jewish, but could also be extended to other Jews who did not follow the same ritual purity codes as the Pharisees did. The Pharisees set up social barriers between themselves and those who did not follow these ritual practices. For example, in Lk. 11:37-38, the Pharisee is rather disturbed by the fact that Jesus did not wash before sitting down to eat. On another occasion the Pharisees draw a strict divide between themselves and the "sinners" with whom Jesus shared a meal (Lk 15:1-3). The "sinners" in this instance, were viewed as being in a state of 'ritual defilement'. which for the Pharisees symbolised matter out of place (Douglas 1966: Malina 1981).

In a similar fashion, the members of the rich elite in society also set up social barriers between themselves and the poor non-elite. The low economic and class status of the non-elite, as well as their lack of honour, caused them to be viewed as being out of place by those in the elite strata of society. Luke's use of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) aptly illustrates this point. The contrast between the rich man's wealth, status and splendour, and Lazarus' abject state of poverty, may have been used by Luke to illustrate the depth of the schism which existed between the very rich and the very poor in the early Christian church.
Luke records that there were Jewish converts from a range of places (Lk. 23:50-51; Acts 2:1-41; 17:1-4; 10:12; 18:24-28; 28:16-25), and for reasons mentioned in the above paragraphs, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that those from different areas or from different Jewish sects may have been quite wary of protecting their individual Jewish identities. This can be demonstrated, for example, by analysing the dispute between the Sadducees and the Pharisees in Acts 23:1-10, concerning certain charges which had been brought against Paul. The Jews participating in this dispute, must be viewed as representing the views of their own particular groups. This meant that there was a strict adherence to maintaining a distance from others, and mixing could only take place with those who were socially and ideologically acceptable. These actions of distancing and mixing, had to conform to specific socio-religious criteria, and it was this, generally, which contributed towards the division within the early Christian communities. In Lk. 6:1-11, for example, there is a confrontation between Jesus, his disciples, and a group of Pharisees. The dispute revolved around certain Sabbath observances, to which Jesus and his disciples were not adhering (Lk. 6:1-2, 6-11). The actions of Jesus and his disciples were regarded by the Pharisees as being 'out of place', hence the Pharisees plan to take some form of action against Jesus (Lk. 6:11).

These types of confrontations in the early church became even more apparent and much more strident when Jews as a whole, encountered Gentiles, who symbolised pollution and chaos. The Gentiles threatened the symbolic order of the universe to which Jews conformed (Neyrey 1991: 279). The Jewish Christians were, therefore, still conducting their social activities according to which they were accustomed, namely, the purity code and the pivotal values of honour and shame.
This is apparent if the utterances made by Peter in Acts 10:14-15; 28, concerning dietary restrictions and the law against mixing with Gentiles, are noted. Acts 11:3-4 illustrates this point as well: When Peter is confronted by Jews who are alarmed by the fact that he had sat down to eat with Gentiles. Because Peter had violated the Jewish purity code, his honour was being challenged. He would have been dishonoured by his challengers had he not convinced them of the appropriateness of his actions (Acts 11:18).

Special attention can also be paid to the debates which took place amongst Jewish-Christians in Acts 15:3-5; 19-21. These debates deal with the controversial issue of Gentile circumcision and other matters related to Gentile observances of the Law of Moses. From this we get an idea of what Luke regarded as the minimum purity requirements for Gentiles, namely, that they "abstain from things polluted by contact with idols, from fornication, from anything that has been strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:19-21). If we suppose that the Gentiles within Luke's Christian community had complied with these purity requirements, then what other factors could possibly still have been causing division amongst the Christian ranks?

The approach adopted in this thesis is that the pursuit of honour and social status still remained a priority within Luke's community. This meant that the poorer Christians, who held low positions of honour and social status, were still being marginalised and overlooked by the wealthier Christians, both Jew and Gentile. We must remember that the wealthy elite (including Jews), were those who characteristically held powerful positions of authority in society, and whose positions of honour and social status 'demanded' respect and reverence from the non-elite. An example of this can be found in Lk. 20:45-47, concerning the
"doctors of the law", who were most easily accepted by society because of the power they wielded (Johnson 1977: 139). If we consider the privileged lifestyle of the elite within society, then it would almost be natural to assume that they would expect the same reverence and respect when they entered into the Christian community. This would especially have been the case if one considers that many of them, such as Romans and Greeks, were not familiar with Christian codes of conduct. These elite Christian members would want to have their 'elite identities' made known as soon as possible within the Christian community, in order to draw a distinction between themselves and the non-elite.

Drawing parallels with Paul's Corinthian community

If we use Horrell's (1996) analysis of the Pauline community in Corinth, we find that this community was made up of both Jews and Gentiles, but mostly Gentiles (1 Cor. 7:18; 12:2). Meeks (1983: 51-73) has shown that the Pauline community was comprised of a fair cross-section of urban society, while the works of Theissen (1982) and Judge (1960) have revealed that there were Christians with a relatively high social status in the Corinthian community (1 Cor. 4:8; 2 Cor. 8:14). Drawing from this, Horrell (1996: 95) has argued in favour of social diversity within the Corinthian Christian community, where a range of individuals from the urban setting could be found. Included amongst these individuals were slaves (1 Cor. 7:21-23) and householders. some who possessed considerable wealth and prestige (1 Cor. 1:16: 11:22, 34; Acts 18:8). Welborn (1987: 85-111) also draws attention to the factions which existed among the believers in Corinth (1 Cor. 3:1-4, 18-23; 4:1-21; 11:17-22). He argues that divisions within the community were as a result of power struggles which encompassed both social and theological
differences (Welborn 1987: 89). In 1 Cor. 3:3-4, Paul condemns the rivalry, jealousy, and strife which were taking place among members.

If we consider all that has been mentioned above about the Christian community in Corinth, coupled with the fact that social and administrative structures of Corinth were part of the wider social, economic, and political systems of the Roman Empire, then it is possible to draw certain parallels with Luke's community approximately thirty years later. The similarities between the social diversity of members, as well as the presence of members from both extremes of the economic spectrum, may have resulted in competitions for positions of honour and prestige in Luke's community also. In terms of preserving their honour status, the rich elite in Luke's community may have opted to mix with their own elite kind only, along socially and culturally designated criteria. By examining Lk. 14:7-12, which concerns the amount of importance which was attached to securing certain seats at social gatherings, as well as the basis along which friendships were formed, we are able to get an idea of how important it was to preserve one's honour amongst one's social peers.

Protecting one's space in society

Since honour is displayed in the space where the physical body is located, these spaces would be sealed off and protected from others who could possibly pose a threat or defile that space (Malina and Neyrev 1991: 34). The elite would not easily have allowed the non-elite to enter their privileged space, which was reserved only for other elite members of society, such as relatives, friends, or wealthy social peers (Lk. 14:12). The non-elite, because of their low social status and lack of power, would not easily have attempted to violate the space of the
elite, since such behaviour would have been viewed as aggressive behaviour by the elite. This is evident in Lk. 14:23-24, where the servant is told by the master to "make the poor come in." The Greek word anagkazein used here, indicates compulsion since the poor needed to be convinced that it was safe to enter the master's space (Rohrbaugh 1991: 145). In a situation where the non-elite did enter the space of the elite without permission, the latter had the socially accepted authority to punish the non-elite without affecting their own (elite) honour status (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 30). This is evident in Acts 19:13-20, where a few Jewish exorcists, who were not followers of Jesus, attempted to cure possessed persons in Jesus' name. Unlike Paul, these Jewish exorcists had no legitimate claim to call upon the power and authority of Jesus, and were punished for their transgression.

**Almsgiving versus philanthropy**

I explained earlier that possessions and wealth were used solely for the benefit of gaining honour, and for the elite the social recognition and acceptance of their honour amongst those of their own social class. was above all else, the most important concern. Their wealth and possessions were distributed in such a way amongst their peers so as to allow them to maintain their honour status, as is evident in Lk. 14:12. This ensured that wealth was circulated primarily amongst the elite, with very little concern for the poor and oppressed classes. The treatment of Lazarus by the rich man in Lk. 16:19-31, illustrates the lack of concern. This type of behaviour amongst the elite was based on the principle of reciprocity, which meant that the favour bestowed always had to be returned in some way (Moxnes 1988: 89). In reaction to this state of events within the community, Luke advocates that members adopt new patterns of wealth distribution, as is evident, for example,
in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37. Within these passages we find a claim that in the earliest Christian community, everything was held in common, with distributions being made to those who were in need. This particular issue will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

Countryman (1980: 105-107) draws attention to the fact that Judaic almsgiving was different to the philanthropy (acts of charity) of those in other Greco-Roman societies. Philanthropy in Greco-Roman urban societies was generally not directed at the poor as such, but to one's friends and fellow citizens. Hands (1968: 91) states that gifts very often went to the town-counsellors or "to that section of the upper-class to which the donor himself belonged." Those worthy of honour, therefore, benefitted the most from these gifts. Evidence for this type of charity can be seen, for example, in a document composed by a donor in central Italy in the period 120-148 C.E. (Hands 1968: 192-193). This document contained information about a donor who left behind 200 000 sesterces to fund his funeral feast; 400 sesterces to certain decurions; 300 sesterces to the board of six and the Augustales (who presided over the Emperor cult), and 200 sesterces to the common people.

State philanthropy was mainly given to those who were classified as citizens, and not specifically to any one group who was in need. Drawing again from Hands (1968: 95-96), we have as evidence an inscription from Samos in eastern Aegean, which relays information about the public distribution of corn in the ancient Greek and Roman cities. Hands analysis of this document reveals that this type of fund was not only intended for the poor. In fact, nothing in the document suggests that any attempts were made to disqualify those who were more well-off from also benefitting from this fund.
There were, however, certain cases in which the rich elite made public benefactions, such as grain doles and banquets, for the benefit of the poor. Hands (1968: 89-90) mentions Epaminondas of Akraephia in Boeotia as an example of this. In the middle of the first century C.E. he became very popular through his revival of the Emperor cult. In the sixth year of the celebration of the Emperor cult, Epaminondas made a general distribution to all citizens, residents and slaves, giving each one a 'measure of corn and half a measure of wine.' The booth-holders and others who were putting on the festival received a public invitation to dinner, at Epaminondas' expense. Nearly everyone in antiquity expected some form of tangible repayment and reward from those who benefitted from their gifts (Jews expected as much from God for their tithes and offerings).

In return for the generous gifts given to the public by rich benefactors, the latter could expect the public granting of titles of honour, inscriptions and statues. This public recognition for acts of benevolence, including that from the poor, was very important.

According to Countryman (1980: 106), by the late first century C.E., the poor in Greco-Roman society had very little to offer the rich in return for their favours and gifts. This resulted in the rich giving benefactions particularly to other rich persons who were in a position to return the favour. In these situations, the poor had to simply make do with the little they had.

The Hellenistic world was, therefore, somewhat reluctant to single out the poor for special treatment in society. The urban elite and wealthy non-elite most likely brought this mode of behaviour with them into the Christian community of Luke. The poor Christians were in no position to offer any resistance to the actions of the rich and had in all
probability, simply to accept the situation as it was.

In reaction to this form of philanthropy, the early Christians such as Luke, opted for the Jewish pattern of almsgiving, where the object was to share with everyone in need (Countryman 1980: 108). Examples of almsgiving can be found in Lk. 6:30-38; 12:32; 16:9; 19:8; Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-37; and 20:35. If we consider Lk. 6:30-38, for example, then it can be noted that a special appeal is being made to the wealthier members of the community to refrain from partaking in acts of philanthropy. Such acts were based on the principle of reciprocity, which meant that the favour had to be returned. The rich are asked not to expect anything in return from those who benefit from their gifts of charity (Lk. 6:30-35). They are reassured that they will receive a reward from God, the ultimate benefactor (Lk. 6:35, 38). In a similar fashion Acts 2:44-46 and Acts 4:32-37 also focus attention on the fact that the recipients of 'gifts' should be the 'needy'. The theme of sharing is important here (Acts 2:45-46; 4:35), as it epitomises the unity and faith of the believers (Acts 2:46-47; 4:32). These two examples illustrate the important position which the poor occupy within the Christian community, and served as a reminder to the rich not to neglect their duty towards the poor.

Those Christians who found themselves in the most precarious position, were the rich non-elite members, such as the rich freedmen for example. As was shown earlier in chapter three, the rich non-elite, although on the same economic standing with the elite, would by virtue of their origins, not be permitted to enter the ranks of the elite (Horrell 1996: 66). This could have caused them to experience considerable frustration, and probably a certain amount of disdain for their humble origins. Based at least on their similar economic standings, these rich
non-elite members may have attempted to 'court' the favour of the elites, or more drastically, challenged their honour with the aim of elevating their own. Another scenario which could have prevailed was that these rich non-elite, together with the wealthy elite, would eagerly enter into 'patron-client' relations with the poorer non-elite Christians in order to boost their existing social status, since the poor would then be in a position of 'indebtedness'. Luke's attitude towards this, was to appeal to the rich to forgive those who were in debt to them. This can be seen, for example, in Lk. 6:35, where an appeal is made to believers to lend without expecting anything in return. This would seem to be most applicable to the wealthy. Lk. 11:4 implies something similar by linking debt forgiveness towards others with divine forgiveness of sins.

The value attached to the act of imitation

If Castelli's (1991: 22) analysis of 'imitation and power' is applied here, then it becomes evident that the rich non-elite would have held the social position of the elite in very high esteem. Ideologically, they would then have found it necessary to imitate the actions and perceptions of the elite, and this movement towards being like the elite would have been highly valued amongst their rich non-elite ranks (Herzog 1994: 19). Once the non-elite were caught up in this motion, their knowledge of being different to the elite in terms of social class and status, came to be regarded as a problem, a danger, a threatening presence which had to be repressed at all costs. The elite within this type of analysis, represented the 'model group' whom everyone else wanted to imitate. What is important to note with respect to this act of imitation, states Castelli (1991: 22), is that it involves a critical relationship of power, in which the 'model' sets
the terms and conditions of the relationship, which is both hierarchical and asymmetrical. In this type of setting only a few would be in a position to benefit, usually at the expense of the many.

The rich non-elite in Luke's Christian community then, like the elite, would have been overly concerned with protecting their own social boundaries from the poorer non-elite Christians, from whom they were trying to distance themselves as much as possible. We can get a sense of the perceptions and superior attitudes which rich Jews held towards the poor in Lk. 20:45-47. This passage warns about prominent Jewish men in society who demand to be treated with respect and honour in the street, the synagogues, and at feasts. Jesus describes these men as thieves and hypocrites who "eat up the property of widows" and who utter prayers in public for "appearance sake". Luke's Gentile audience may have interpreted this passage as an attack on public officials, such as the grammateus depicted in Acts 19:35, who is in fact a senior public official of Ephesus. This attack on public officials could have been in response to certain acts of corruption and deceit which some of them were involved in.

**The social importance attached to meals in Luke's urban setting**

On the whole it would seem likely that the poor in Luke's community still experienced the same type of marginalisation and oppression as they did in broader society. This was blatantly evident at gatherings such as dinners and banquets, which were important social events on which social distinctions could be made clear. This ideology of "elite discourse and its social expressions" were additional ways in which the steep social hierarchy could be maintained (Horrell 1996: 72). Since meals were such an important social activity in the Greco-Roman world,
it would be natural to expect that the same amount of social importance would be attached to the Lord's Supper celebrated by the Christian communities. For Christians, this meal was not just an important social event but also an important religious one, in which they were all supposed to share in a common meal, in memory of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Cor. 10:16-17). In terms of what was discussed above, this important ritual of Christian unity and identity, as well as other occasions where Christians gathered, proved to be a major problem for Luke, who became acutely aware of the growing dissension in the Christian ranks. We are able to construct some idea about the possible nature of conflicts which may have occurred in the early church by observing what happens in passages such as Lk. 14:7-11, 20:44-47 and 22:14-37.

We note in Lk. 14:7-11 how guests were squabbling with each other in an attempt to secure the best seats for themselves. In Lk. 20:45-47, Jesus lashes out at the "doctors of the law" because of their inappropriate behaviour: "These are men who eat up the property of widows, while saying long prayers for appearance sake" (Lk. 20:47). These men, according to Jesus, were the ones who most often wished to secure the most honourable seats at feasts (Lk. 20:46). A possible connection between these men and the guests in Lk. 14:7, can, therefore, be drawn.

According to Neyrey (1991: 366) there were "high ranking and low ranking places at the table which corresponded with one's honour ranking." As such, the issue at stake here was to ensure that one was able to occupy an honourable position. The competition amongst followers to have their high honour rating acknowledged by others at meal gatherings, is also noted in Lk. 22:14-38, when Jesus shares in a Passover meal with his disciples. An argument arose amongst the
disciples as to "whom amongst them should rank the highest" (Lk. 22: 24). In this instance Jesus appeals to his disciples to take on the role of servant, not master, in the carrying out of their missionary roles. In a similar manner, the guests in Lk. 14:10 are asked to humble themselves by "sitting down in the lowest place." Drawing from Lk. 14:11 Neyrey (1991: 379) states that Jesus reverses the rules of the day, by stressing that one can only obtain honour by forsaking it first.

The repetition of the above texts, reveals that Luke was making a specific point about the common eating of meals. If we use Esler's (1987: 193) argument that the Lucan community contained members of both ends of the socio-economic spectrum, and that a Christian theology of "unity in Christ" existed within this community, then there might well have been a degree of tension existing. This tension would have been between members who were not used to the idea of sharing in a common meal with others, especially if they were regarded as social inferiors. Luke could, therefore, have been commenting on this issue.

Emphasising group identities and social divisions during meals

To promote further unity within the Christian community, especially around the contentious issue of meals, Gentile Christians were asked to follow certain dietary restrictions, by abstaining "from anything that has been strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:19-21). Esler (1987: 99) states that the prohibitions mentioned in Acts 15:19-21 would have been appropriate in a Christian setting where Jews and Gentiles engaged in table-fellowship. The Gentiles were, therefore, simply being asked to abstain from certain activities which Jewish Christians abhorred.
This issue of table-fellowship must have been complicated further by the social divisions which existed between the elite, the rich non-elite and the poor in Luke's society. MacMullen (1974: 110-111) notes that the upper classes, during the period of the Empire, constantly reminded others of their high social status by their "conspicuous consumption, their entourages in the cities, their dress and their titles, and by offering their clients inferior food and wine at banquets." The description of the rich man in Lk. 16:19, who "dressed in purple and the finest linen, and feasted in great magnificence every day" fits the scenario described by MacMullen above. There may, therefore, well have been rich Christians in Luke's community who, like the rich man in Lk. 16:19-21, were ignoring the plight of the poorer members. These rich Christians could have been entertaining mainly those who held a similar honour and status rating, as is seen in Lk. 14:12, where the host's initial guest list does not include those who have no social status and hardly any form of income. The rich may have been reluctant to act as benefactors towards the poor, as the latter may have had nothing or very little to offer in return. In terms of the honour-shame code, the rich Christians, therefore, first saw to the needs of those on whom they depended for the recognition of their honour. The frequency with which Luke raises issues around eating conditions at banquets, then, could probably account for his attack on the manner in which possessions and wealth were being ill-used by certain members of his Christian community during gatherings.

If we consider Stambaugh and Balch's (1986: 148) analysis of the ancient Greco-Roman city of Antioch during the later part of the first century C.E. for example, we find that Jews in the city could be found among the ruling class, shopkeepers, artisans, and even among slaves. With these class divisions in place, it can safely be assumed that in
instances where both Jews and Gentiles were present, that the Jews, like the Gentiles, would have eaten with those of their own class, so that they could preserve their purity and status. An example of such an incident can be noted in the story of Levi (Lk. 5:27-34), who, having become a believer, held a reception in his house for Jesus. Amongst the invited guests were Pharisees, who refused to share meals with sinners and tax-gatherers. This same type of disapproval was expressed by Simon the Pharisee against the sinner woman who anointed Jesus' feet in Lk. 7: 36-40.

The intensity of the separation between Jews and Gentiles is clearly noted when Peter tells the centurion Cornelius, "I need not tell you that a Jew is forbidden by his religion to visit or associate with a man of another race" (Acts 10:28). In this way, Jewish Christians within Luke's community, may have found validation for excluding their fellow Gentile Christians from sharing in their meals. This exclusion could have especially affected those Christians who featured very low on the Jewish map of purity, such as the crippled, the blind and the lame (Neyrey 1991: 285). In relation to this, Manson (1977: 130) has interpreted the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame in Lk. 14:21, as being Jews, and those "on the highways and along the hedgerows" in Lk. 14:23, as being Gentiles. This is a clear indication that the purity lines within the community had been extended to include those who were previously socially marginalised and discriminated against.

Something else that needs to be considered is that the poorer Christians in Luke's community who were eligible for daily food distributions, may not have received these distributions on a regular basis. Acts 6:1 reveals that there were problems of this nature in the
early Christian community, as is evident from the dispute between the Greek speaking and Jewish speaking disciples concerning the lack of daily distribution to Greek widows. The importance the poor placed on receiving these daily distributions is emphasised in Lk. 16:21, which relates that Lazarus "would have been glad to satisfy his hunger with the scraps from the rich man's table." The neglect and lack of consideration of the rich Christians towards the poor in the community was, as such, a source of concern for Luke.

An analysis of the actions of wealthy Pharisees in Luke 16:14. reveals further that certain Jewish groups may have regarded their wealth as a sign of God's favour (Karris 1978: 122). Being in a state of purity and observing the Law was seen as that which made one righteous before God, and this served to justify one's wealth and possessions. This type of thinking can also be observed in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Lk. 18:9-14). The fact that wealth had gained religious sanctioning meant that the poor were thought of as those who lacked holiness or purity, and were, therefore, more prone to suffer. Those who held these views would then have considered the division between Christians of different socio-economic status as a legitimate and necessary move.

Power struggles and the issue of social identity

The example of the Corinthian community

Both Horrell's (1996: 125) and Welborn's (1987: 85-111) analyses of the Christian community in Corinth, referred to earlier in this chapter, reveal that struggles between individuals for positions of power and
status definitely took place (1 Cor. 1-4). Welborn’s (1987: 89) claim that a power struggle motivated the writing of 1 Cor. 1-4 has also been noted. Welborn’s assertion that the situation in the Corinthian church community closely resembled the conflicts in the cities which were described by Greek and Roman historians, is taken seriously in this section. The source of the problem within the Corinthian community is revealed in 1 Cor. 11:21-22, namely, the contempt of the rich for the poor. Welborn (1987: 93) asserts that this was "an attitude typically exhibited by wealthy Romans toward the lower classes." We find in 1 Cor. 2:6-3:3, that Paul addresses those in the community, who by virtue of their apparent higher religious knowledge, claim superiority over the rest of the believers. This again serves as evidence for the presence of factions within the Corinthian community.

Earlier in this chapter I drew a comparison between the Corinthian community and Luke’s community, and concluded from this that similar happenings might have taken place in Luke’s urban church. If we add to this the statements made by Welborn (1987) above, concerning the typical attitude of the rich Romans towards the lower classes, then it strengthens the argument that rivalry between the different groups in Luke’s Christian community, did take place. Lk. 9:46-48 and Lk. 22:24-27 reveal that there were even disputes amongst the disciples in the early church, regarding which one of them was the greatest. In order to occupy favourable and influential positions within the Christian community, some of the rich Christians may have also publicly drawn attention to their own righteousness and fidelity. The Pharisee, who was comparing himself to the publican in Lk. 18:9-12, acted in this manner. Luke’s depiction of the Pharisees are important. In a major part of Luke’s narrative, the community leaders were usually represented by the heads of synagogues, the Pharisees, and also
the scribes. In many instances, we find that these persons tend "not to facilitate access to God, but instead block it" (Moxnes 1991: 256).

This can be seen, for example, in passages such as Lk. 5:21; 6:2, 7; 13:14, where community leaders make use of Torah in an attempt to put a stop to those who were coming forward for healing and salvation.

Brokerage

These leaders, according to Moxnes (1991: 248), were supposed to function as brokers, in that it was their responsibility, as mediators, to provide the clients access to a higher power, namely, that of God, the ultimate patron. Their blocking of those who were appealing to Jesus for salvation, meant that they were not fulfilling their function as brokers. Moxnes (1991: 256) states that Luke identifies some of the Pharisees with the rich elite of his own community. In Lk. 14:1-14, a rich Pharisaic leader invites only his rich neighbours, friends and relatives (Lk. 14:12). The Pharisees were, therefore, sharing amongst themselves only, thereby failing in their duty as brokers, in sharing with the community. The Pharisees did not show generosity through almsgiving (Lk. 11:41). The fact that they claimed the honours of patrons and benefactors to the community (Lk. 11:43), was, therefore, illegitimate. Because the Pharisees were lovers of money (Lk. 16:14), they could not serve as brokers between God and the community. Moxnes (1991: 256) states: "With this, Luke has described, not the historical situation and the real expectations of patrons and brokers in first century Palestine, but his own social system." Luke's congregation may, therefore, have viewed the community leaders in a very bad light, since they could not depend on them for support. We can also note in this respect, the dispute between Jewish and Greek speaking disciples in Acts 6:1-6, which eventually led to the appointment of "seven men of
good reputation" from their group, to decide upon contentious issues of distribution.

Conflict in the community and the struggle to maintain honour

Luke also mentions a dispute between Paul and Barnabas about which disciples should be selected to accompany them on their visits to different towns (Acts 15:36-41). We find in Acts 15:37-38 that Barnabas' selection of John Mark is rejected by Paul. Paul judges John Mark to be lacking in both commitment and faith, and finds him unworthy of accompanying them. If we apply the honour-shame code here, then Paul's rejection of John Mark would have been interpreted by Barnabas as an attack on his ability to make sound judgements and decisions. Were Barnabas to accept the decision made by Paul, he would have been publicly admitting to the fact that he had made the wrong choice in choosing John Mark. Furthermore, Barnabas' reputation as a reliable and trustworthy person and as a man of his word, would have suffered a great blow in the eyes of John Mark and the public, had he not done what he set out to do. The same applied to Paul. Both Barnabas' and Paul's honour, therefore, was at stake.

If the above disputes concerning positions of honour and status are considered within Luke's context, then it would seem quite normal to expect rich Christians with similar amounts of honour and status in society, to be involved in confrontations with each other. Since Luke's Christian community was made up of diverse groups, those Jewish-Christians who favoured the argument that 'wealth' illustrated God's favour, would have been met with counter-religious arguments by others of different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds, who were also vying for leadership positions. These arguments may well have taken
place between the rich Christians who held similar views to the Pharisees (Lk. 16:14-15), and those Christians who had already given up all that they owned as a symbol of their true discipleship (Lk. 5:27-28; 18:28-30). The results of these types of confrontations gave rise to theological disparities within the urban Christian community.

If we apply Moxnes (1991: 242) analysis of patron-client relations here, then we are dealing specifically with social relationships based on a strong inequality and difference in power. What becomes apparent is that it was only the elite who had access to the economic, social, and political resources in society. Those who did not possess power or any access to these resources, became the clients of those who did (Moxnes 1991: 242). In exchange for the services which the elite, also referred to here as the patrons, had to offer, the clients pledged their loyalty, honour and support to these patrons. Because of their low social status and their lack of power, the clients could not challenge the honour of the rich elite, since "only equals could play" (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 30). The poor were, therefore, no match for the elite in a society where wealth, power and honour, could only be met on equal terms. Those with power in Luke's community, namely, the patrons, determined not only the rules of the game but also who would be allowed to play. We come across examples of patrons in Lk. 7:4-5, where the centurion in Capernaum takes on a patron status after building a synagogue for local Jews, and also in Lk. 19:11-27, where a nobleman, according to Moxnes (1991: 253), acts as patron towards his servants, who actually represent clients. The extent of the patron's power and authority is especially evident in Lk. 19:11-27, in terms of the rewards and punishments he deals out to his clients (Lk. 19:16-27).

We are reminded, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter, that in
certain instances the entire household converted to Christianity. For the elite who ran such households, this effectively meant that they had a ready made list of supporters, consisting of family members, slaves, freedmen, hired labourers and business associates (Horrell 1996: 117). For example, those who were baptised with the centurion Cornelius included his servants, a military orderly serving under Cornelius, relatives and close friends (Acts 10:7-8, 24, 44-48). The householder's patronage could then be used to encourage and demand allegiance from those affiliated to the household (Horrell 1996: 117). By virtue of the power such a person possessed, it would not have been difficult to solicit support when it was needed. The competition for positions of honour, therefore, represented a serious 'break with solidarity' within Luke's Christian community (Moxnes 1988: 135).

The courts of law and Christian honour

The rich were favoured in the courts of law as well. Garnsey's (1970: 242-243) analysis of the Roman Empire reveals that decurions were exiled for capital crimes instead of being punished. Furthermore, decurions and their families were protected by law against being crucified, exposed to wild beasts, tortured, and from partaking in forced public labour. The court facilities proved to be another way in which the honour, power, and status of the elite, could publicly be upheld and displayed (MacMullen 1974: 110-111). The courts were then just another 'power centre' which were controlled and manipulated by the elite and rich non-elite, and from which the poor non-elite, by virtue of their lack of status and power, hardly ever benefitted. This is demonstrated in Acts 16:16-24, where Luke describes how a slave, who was possessed by an oracular spirit, had a gift for telling fortunes. This gift, which brought her owners great wealth, was taken away by
Paul's exorcising of the spirit she possessed, thereby cutting off a lucrative source of income for the wealthy owners. As a result, the owners dragged Paul and Silas to appear in front of the magistrate, who ruled against the two disciples, had them flogged and then sent to jail. The silence on the part of Paul and Silas before the magistrate, can probably be seen in relation to Lk. 12:11-12. when Luke's Jesus states:

"When you are brought before synagogues and state authorities, do not begin to worry about how you will conduct your defense or what you will say. For when the time comes the Holy Spirit will instruct you what to say."

These same words are repeated in Lk. 21:12-16, indicating their importance for Luke. Keeping silent during conflicts with the rich and powerful members of society was, therefore, the best policy for those such as the poor, whose low social status and powerlessness made them extremely vulnerable to onslaughts from the rich. Even in cases where the poor persisted in seeking the court's favour, it took a very long time before the judicial authorities eventually decided to take the matter up for consideration. The reluctance on the part of judicial authorities to react to cases involving the poor, can be noted in the parable of the unjust judge (Lk. 18:1-8). Due to the widow's persistence, the judge eventually decides to consider her case (Lk. 18:4-5). If the rich Christians in Luke's community were involved in seeking court judgements, it would have seemed to the outside world as if the community leaders were incapable of solving internal problems and keeping "their house in order." This would have reflected negatively on the honour status of the community as a whole.

In Malina's (1981: 39) analysis of honour and going to court, we find that it was "highly dishonourable and against the rules of honour" to use the courts to seek legal justice from one's social equal. The person who applied for court judgement only aggravated his dishonour
and made it public knowledge that he could not protect his own honour. Luke could have, therefore, used this as a weapon to keep all disputes contained within the walls of the Christian community. Solutions to disputes had to be found within the Christian community itself, as is hinted at in Lk. 12:58.

Were rich Christians involved in some kind of strategy which aimed to include certain principles and ideals within Christianity's social ethos which would be more beneficial to them? Were they in fact trying to mould Christianity into the shape of an exclusive community group? If this was so, were there any outside forces which were directly influencing the actions and attitudes of the elite in the Christian community? To gain some understanding about the types of outside pressures which were involved, it would perhaps be best to view the general types of relationships which existed between the broader society and the Christian groups as a whole. This will then allow for a more thorough analysis of Christianity's social position within the Greco-Roman context.

The relationship between the early Christian community and the outside world

The rejection and persecution of the Christian community

Within this context, according to Karris (1979: 43-44), the most common type of persecution suffered by the Christian communities was of an informal nature. The rich and the powerful members of society used tactics of deception and deceit to cheat those who were poor and powerless out of their money and possessions. In Luke, the Jews are the primary persecutors of the Christian community. How then, does Luke portray these Jews?

If one compares Luke's picture of persecution with what Matthew depicts, then one finds that Matthew makes references to floggings in synagogues, to persecuting from one place to another, and to killing. Sanders (1987: 309) states that Matthew thinks mainly in terms of persecution of missionaries, and that he anticipates such difficulties for his readers. Sanders argues that Luke does display the Jewish persecution of missionaries such as Paul, but asserts that the act of killing plays a much more important role in Luke-Acts than in Matthew. In Luke-Acts, the Jews always want to "do away" with Jesus and the missionaries, as can be seen, for example, in Lk. 4:21-30; Acts 9:20-25; 21:27-36; 22:22-23. Luke also seems to have a particular problem with Diaspora Jews and makes them responsible for Stephen's death. Sanders (1987: 309) argues that it was Luke, and not Matthew, who described such persecutions as happening to the early missionaries, with no interest on his part for warning his readers of the coming of such persecutions. The Lucan version of the parable of the Great Supper (Lk. 14:16-24) does not mention killing. In Lk. 6:28, the admonition to pray for one's persecutors does not include the word 'persecute', and is much more general in scope than the Matthean version. The Lucan version of the last beatitude (Lk. 6:22) warns against the hatred of the people and not against persecution. We can also note that Jewish persecution in Luke involves turning Christians over to the Roman
authorities. This theme is absent in Matthew. Luke shows that Paul is able to establish a relationship with Roman officials (Acts 21:37-40: 27:42-43), and also has Paul assert his Roman citizenship (Acts 16:27: 22:25-29; 23:27). Luke may, therefore, have been currying favour with the Roman authorities in order to secure his community's position in society.

We have evidence to suggest that Christian persecution could also take the form of economic boycotts. Important businessmen with a high level of social status and influence in society, could easily persuade fellow business associates to take up an antagonistic stance towards Christians. We find an example of this in Acts 19:23-41, where a wealthy and prominent silversmith named Demetrius, speaks out against the actions of Paul and his companions. Since Demetrius' fortune, as well as the fortunes of those for whom he provided work, depended on the production of silver shrines of the goddess Diana, Paul's statement that statues made by hand could not be considered as gods, posed a threat to this shrine making industry (Acts 19:26-27). If we note that Demetrius provided a great deal of work for craftsmen, and that he was well known and respected by other workers in "allied trades" (Acts 19:24-25), then it can quite safely be assumed that he would have no difficulty in limiting Christian access and participation in the trade industry in general, especially if one notes the crowds reaction to his words in Acts 19:28: "... they were roused to fury and shouted, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!'"

If we consider that only a small percentage of Luke's society made up the elite, and that members of the elite strata depended on their small group of elite peers for bestowing honour on them, then it would have been beneficial for a certain amount of agreement to be established
between them. This common agreement would have secured not only their positions in society, but would also protect their investments. In terms of seeking favours, they could have exploited the principle of reciprocity to its fullest.

Demetrius' honour as a silversmith and as a wealthy and prominent member of society had been challenged by Paul, and he uses all the power and influence at his disposal to counter and nullify this challenge, in order to protect his position in society as well as the reputation of his business. Within this context, Christian tradesmen and Christians in general, would not have been well received by those who benefitted from the lucrative shrine industry and worshippers of the goddess Diana. In this setting the Christians would be considered as a source of pollution, an external threat, a symbol of chaos (Douglas 1966), to the shrine industry and to the worshippers of the goddess Diana. The early Christian communities, therefore, must have faced a fair amount of harassment and opposition from different sectors of the outside world. Support for this can also be found in 1 Thes. 2:14-16, where Paul relays the extent of the abuse which was suffered by the congregation of Thessalonians.

Conservative Jewish reactions to Christianity also had drastic effects on the Jewish-Christians, especially the elite and wealthy non-elite. The realisation by these Jewish-Christians that they could be cut off and ostracised from everything and everyone whom they were in contact with outside the bounds of Christianity, must have come as a complete and utter shock. The passages of Lk. 12:52-53, which speaks of divisions within the family, and Lk. 21:16-17, which relates how family and friends would turn upon believers, gives us some indication of what Jewish-Christians may have experienced. This probably caused quite a
few Jewish-Christians to doubt whether they had made the correct
decision to convert.

The rich Christian converts, by virtue of their choice to belong to
this diverse Christian group, had the most to lose, namely, their
honourable positions of power and status in society. By becoming part
of the Christian community they took on a specific socio-religious
identity which was 'other' and 'different' to that which they had been
used to on the outside. As such, Christians were warned to be wary of
the dangers which the outside world posed to them. This danger could
even come from individuals within the community itself, as is evident
from Paul's statement in Acts 20:30: "Even from your own body there
will be men coming forward who will distort the truth to induce the
disciples to break away ... ." In terms of Neyrey's (1991: 281)
analysis of religious and cultural boundaries, Christians, both Jews
and Gentiles, were blurring specific group boundaries in that they
belonged to an additional group, namely, Christianity. In Luke's Greco-
Roman society there was no middle line, one was either in or out.

Within this social context, the Christians who owned property, who had
access to or controlled economic resources, and who held positions of
high social rank and status, must have found it extremely difficult to
close themselves off from their previous cultural backgrounds and their
access to wealth. This is depicted in Lk. 18:18 -26, where a rich man
of the ruling class experiences a severe crisis when he is asked to
choose between his wealth and following Jesus. According to Karris
(1978: 118) the rich Christians were, therefore, probably amongst those
who were most often tempted to compromise their faith under the threat
of persecution, social ostracism and possible property loss. With the
presence of these threats hanging over their heads it was only to be
expected that they would be hesitant to befriend their 'fellow' persecuted Christians, of whom the majority were poor (Karris 1978: 117-118).

The response of the rich

What the rich (elite and non-elite) urban Christians did, was to try and straddle two worlds. They wanted to mould their new Christian identities into an extension of their outside group identities. They wished to maintain specific social relations with their non-Christian peers on the outside so as to secure their honour status in society. In this manner, they almost fanatically inculcated the norms and values of their specific social groups on the outside, within the Christian community. This was done to demonstrate the degree of correspondence they held with their non-Christian peers, so as to prove that they were not different and out of place, and that they posed no threat to the existing group boundaries on the outside. We find in Lk. 9:58-60, a tendency for wanting to maintain contact with those outside the bounds of Christianity. In this passage Jesus warns those who wish to follow him, that their duty towards God must take absolute priority. This perception of certain rich Christians in wanting to 'correspond' with the ideals and aspirations of their rich non-Christian peer groups, was countered by the basic needs, desires and expectations of the poor in Luke's Christian community. Unlike the rich, the poor were expecting to experience something different to that which they were used to on the outside. For them, Christianity offered the possibility of hope for a better life, an improved self-image, and some sort of social acceptance by the rich. In this sense, Lk. 14:13, 21-24, could indirectly be revealing certain desires of the poor, which include wanting to be invited to share on an equal basis in the banquets hosted by the rich.
The poor wanted to feel that they belonged in society, and desired that the rich show some form of compassion towards them.

The poor were always the marginalised, the oppressed, the exploited and the despised. Christianity offered them the chance to at last be included as members of a community, and to equally share with others in God's plan of redemption and salvation, as is shown in Lk. 13:29-30:

"From east and west people will come, from north and south, for the feast in the kingdom of God. Yes, and some who are now last will be first, and some who are first will be last."

These very desires and expectations of the poor were threatened by the actions and attitudes of certain rich members within the early Christian church. These threatening actions and attitudes of the urban rich were especially prevalent, as was mentioned before, at important social gatherings such as dinners and banquets. If one considers how difficult it was in Luke's context for the poor to provide basic necessities for themselves, especially food, then it is easy to see how much they depended on their wealthier Christian brothers and sisters to provide for them (Esler 1987: 195-196). This tendency for the poor to depend on the charity of wealthy persons within broader society can be noted in the example of Demetrios, Empedon and Pamphilos, all of whom made generous donations of oil, corn and money, thereby offering welcome relief to the town of Akraephia in Boeotia during the year 42 C.E. (Hands 1968: 91, 182). The feeling of complete and utter destitution which formed part of the experience of being poor, is revealed in Lk. 15:14-18, when the prodigal son discovers just how difficult it really is to survive without some form of income and support from others in the community.

Supporting the poor, however, may have proved to be a major problem for
the wealthier Christians, who were overly concerned with their social honour and status and who always expected 'something' in return for whatever they did. The emphasis Luke attaches to the plight of the poor must, therefore, be seen in relation to the immediate presence of the poor in his own Christian community (Esler 1987: 185).

Conclusion

Luke's ideas about the appropriate use of wealth and possessions within his urban Christian community, might seem simple and uncomplicated on the surface, but for the diverse Christian group at the time it represented a radical and revolutionary shift in ideas and actions. Luke proposed that they adopt and comply with a completely new 'symbolic order', something 'other' than what they had ever experienced or partaken in before. In this process Luke makes use of the all too familiar codes of purity, honour and shame, but in a significantly different way, in that he redefines and redraws the lines which classify these codes. The enormity of his task within the structured setting of the Greco-Roman world cannot be emphasised enough here, and in keeping with the societal codes of honour and shame, his public status and that of his Christian community as a whole was at stake. Were Luke to fail in what he set out to do, he may have put not only himself in jeopardy, but the legitimate status and unity of the early Christian church as well. By bearing the above in mind, I wish to now consider the strategies Luke adopts in achieving his goals. As I have mentioned before, the core issues which will constantly be emphasised and highlighted will be those related to the concepts of poverty, wealth, possessions, honour and status, and the manner in which these were used in the Christian community.
The construction of a new symbolic universe for Christians
Creating a new symbolic universe for the Christian community: An ideological challenge

In the previous chapter I argued that a degree of division and conflict was very likely to have existed amongst the diverse membership of Luke's community. Confronted with this situation, Luke had to come up with a plan of action with which to address and possibly resolve the discrepancies which plagued the community. His *modus operandi* was to present his audience with a model which prescribed new ways of interacting with each other and the world at large. In doing this Luke was introducing what Neyrey (1991: 275) calls "core values", into the community. Neyrey (1991: 275) states that "core values influences how things are classified and where they are located. It is the overarching rationale for behaviour, the principle justification for the shape of the system." Neyrey (1991: 275) defines this system, together with the symbols it employs to define what is "pure" and "polluted", as a "symbolic system." I will demonstrate in this chapter how Luke defines and justifies the new core values which he presents, so as to bring about stability and to secure solidarity amongst community members.

Within Luke's construction of a new symbolic universe for his urban Christian community, he had to employ an ideology which his diverse community would find both attractive and meaningful. The construction of this type of ideology had to be tied up with the actual 'lived' experiences of the Christian members and their knowledge about the social reality with which they interacted (Eagleton 1991: 14-15). Using the above as a basis from which to work, Luke's main ideological aim was to fashion a rational Christian identity, which was acceptable to both the rich and the poor in his urban community. He also had to produce sound explanations and motivations as to why certain actions.
such as providing alms for the poor without expecting anything in return, were more meaningful and more valuable than other actions, such as the Greco-Roman principle of reciprocity. According to Eagleton (1991: 15), ideological construction is usually accompanied by the doubts, contradictions, fears and incoherences of those at whom it is directed. In the diverse Christian community, Luke had to come up with an effective strategy which either accounted for or discounted these feelings. In general, the material conditions of the Christians Luke addressed, played a vital role in his production of new ideas, beliefs, and values.

The previous chapter has shown why so much dissension and rivalry existed within Luke's Christian community. Mention has also been made of how difficult it was for the early Christian converts, especially the rich, to take on their new Christian identities and to present it to the 'outside' world. For those within the Christian community, social acceptance by their peers, their families, as well as the social groups to which they belonged, was very probably a prime concern. This created severe problems in Luke's community, especially in the sense that the community itself was composed of a range of individuals from different social and economic levels. Taking all of this into account, what then was Luke's reaction to the unsatisfactory state of affairs between the rich and the poor within his church? To what extent does he refute, incorporate and manipulate the different societal codes to bring about change and encourage unity in his Greco-Roman urban Christian community?

In terms of wanting to establish some sort of beneficial relationship between the rich and the poor in the Christian community, the urban setting probably posed a serious challenge to Christian leaders such as
Luke, in that many problems had to be rethought and reinterpreted to suit the new context of the proclamation. This meant that a new symbolic universe, with new and redefined norms and values, had to be created. Within this new symbolic universe, Luke's Christian community could be resocialised in terms of a new Christian social reality. Esler (1987: 18) states that in providing this new symbolic universe, Luke wished to show those in his Christian community that everything was in its correct place, and that their present reality was cohesively connected both to a past and a future, in an ordered universe, from which they could draw a sense of purpose and belonging.

Defining historical links

The word 'past' as used in the above sense, refers to the Jewish biblical tradition of the Old Testament. Luke reorganised and made current this inherited tradition of the past, before handing it over to the new generation of Gentile believers. The writing of Luke-Acts must, therefore, be seen within the context of it being a continuation of the history of God's interaction with his people. In this respect, Luke-Acts is an attempt to show just how Jesus, and those in Luke's urban Christian community, fitted into and formed part of this history (Karris 1979: 23-24; Marshall 1970: 9). To be included in this history meant being a part of God's people. It meant that one had accepted Jesus as God's son, as well as the message which he preached about the reign of God. Acts 8:12-13, which deals with the success of the disciple Philip's preaching in a Samaritan town, reveals that the process of accepting God and his son Jesus, is sealed with the ritual act of baptism.

The importance of Jesus' position in relation to his disciples and to
God, can be noted in Lk. 10:16. This passage formed part of Jesus' address to the newly elected 'seventy-two': "Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the One who sent me." Central to Jesus' message was that one's love and loyalty to God should reign supreme. This love was demonstrated, as can be deduced from Jesus' message to his disciples in Lk. 6:27-28, through loving and caring actions and by showing compassion towards one's fellows in the spirit of true Christian brotherhood and sisterhood. These sentiments are echoed in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37, which tells of how believers held everything in common and how they provided for those who were in need. This represented the ideal state of harmony and unity within the Christian community, and it was this ideal state of being that Luke aimed to achieve in his own community.

Bearing this in mind, let us now take a closer look at how Luke reacted to the lack of love, compassion and fellowship which existed between the rich and the poor in his community, and the course of action he planned to take to remedy this situation. More specifically, let us examine the concepts Luke used to inform those in his Christian community about true Christian commitment. The manner in which he manipulated and redefined familiar Greco-Roman concepts, such as the idea of friendship, to suit his purposes, will also receive attention. Within this process it is important to remember that Luke was in fact trying to convince the rich and powerful that their present attitudes and actions of superiority, self-righteousness and exclusivity, were 'out of place' within the new Christian symbolic universe.

The shared belief in the schema of promise, fulfilment and rejection: A basis for Christian unity
Within the passages of Acts 2:44-47 and Acts 4:32-37, Luke relays situations in which the material needs of everyone in the community are taken care of, allowing them to truly experience unselfish love and fellowship as a community of God. Luke highlights the sincerity and commitment behind the acts of giving and sharing in these two passages:

"All those whose faith had drawn them together held everything in common: they would sell their property and possessions and make general distributions as the need of each required. With one mind they kept up their daily attendance, ... shared their meals with unaffected joy, as they praised God ...(Acts 2:44-47)"

"The whole body of believers was united in heart and soul. Not a man of them claimed any of his possessions as his own, but everything was held in common ... they had never a needy person among them, because all who had property in land and houses sold it, brought the proceeds of the sale, and laid the money at the feet of the apostles: it was then distributed to any who stood in need (Acts 4:32-35)."

Luke does stress in his Gospel, however, that the material needs of the community should not detract from their commitment to God. For example, in Lk. 12:22-31, Luke's Jesus tells his disciples not to be anxious about food and clothes, but to concern themselves with proclaiming God's will first and foremost. In fulfilling this duty, all of their 'other' needs would be satisfied by God (Lk. 12:31). In this sense Luke asserts that it is the commitment and faith of Christians which enables them to act and relate to others in the community in the appropriate Christian fashion. This particular aspect can be noted in the passages of Acts 2:44 and Acts 4:32, where the act of holding everything in common is preceded by the fact that their faith had united them as a community. These passages of Acts 2 and Acts 4 can be linked to Lk. 12:32-34. In this passage of Lk. 12:32-34, Jesus asks his followers to sell their possessions and to provide alms for the needy, so that they could provide for themselves purses that would "not wear out, and never-failing treasure in heaven..." The act of giving and sharing here is linked directly to God's promise of salvation. Within his own
Within this schema, 'promise' refers to God's promise of salvation to
Christians, through their acceptance of the gift of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. This is apparent in Jesus' statement to his disciples in Lk. 24:49: "I am sending upon you my Father's promised gift, so stay in this city until you are armed with the power from above." Acts 5:32 also illustrates this point. In Acts 2:33 Peter, after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), announces to a gathering that Jesus also received the Holy Spirit from God as was promised, and that the message of the reign of God now flowed directly from Jesus. Jesus, therefore, formed an integral part of God's promise, as can be noted in Acts 13:23.

This promise also tells of the coming judgement of the world (Lk. 21:20-24; Acts 24:25). Within this judgement, those who will suffer damnation will be those who had rejected Jesus and his baptism and God's purpose for themselves. This is evident, for example, in Lk. 3:15-17, where John speaks of the power of Jesus who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. John warns those who reject Jesus' baptism, that they will suffer eternally: "His shovel is ready in his hand, to winnow his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but he will burn the chaff on a fire that can never go out." This theme of rejection is continued in Lk. 10:16, 12:8-10, Acts 13:46 and Acts 18:5-6, where Jesus warns those who reject him and his disciples, that they are also rejecting God, and would as a result be found unworthy of eternal life. In Acts 18:5-6 and Acts 13:46, Luke reveals that the Jews were the first ones to be given the opportunity to accept and follow Jesus. The Jews rejection of Jesus, however, meant that the Gentiles could now be approached with the offer of eternal life through Jesus. This was how Luke reassured the Gentile Christians that their place within the community was both a legitimate and a necessary development. The Gentiles were, therefore, 'in place' within the Christian church.
God's promise of the coming judgement would be fulfilled in this way, as well as God's promise of true salvation, which was made possible through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins. How then does Luke use the above message to create an awareness of the importance of unity and compassion within his church?

In terms of the analysis in the above paragraph, Luke's schema of promise, rejection and fulfillment, may well have been used to address the different needs of the rich and the poor in his urban Christian community. Within Luke's context, this schema would have played a positive and reassuring role. By making use of Lk. 18:28-30, for example, those Christians in Luke's community (both Jews and Gentiles), who were rejected and ostracised for their faith by family and friends outside the Christian community, may well have held dear to their hearts the thought that at the end of it all, they would receive the reward of God's salvation. This would enable them to endure the suffering which they were experiencing. In a similar fashion, these Christians could then also be made aware of why it was important for them not to reject their fellow Christians, especially the poor, who had also accepted baptism in Jesus Christ. Their hearing of passages such as Lk.10:16 and Lk. 12:8-10, signalled that their rejection of the poor Christians in the community would also be a rejection of God and God's salvation. Luke could, therefore, urge both the rich and the poor in his community to share a common belief in the schema of promise, rejection and fulfillment, since this common belief would link them, as a community, to God.

The above approach complements the statement made by Moxnes (1991: 250), namely, that Luke hoped to gain the confidence of the diverse groups within his community. If Luke achieved this, it would put him in
a better position to influence the manner in which these Christian groups related to each other, thereby improving his chances of creating some form of united Christian front. By making use of the schema of promise, fulfillment and rejection, Luke could incorporate the theme of the rich and poor in a symbolic fashion within his understanding of what the church community should strive for. Taking all of this into account, let me now reveal how Luke put his thoughts into practice within his Christian setting.

A new course of action for Gentile Christians

Tolerating the poor in the community

Something definite which was shared between the traditional community of Israel and urban Christians in the Greco-Roman setting, was the continued forms of persecution and harassment which each faced. In chapter five it was noted that Gentile Christians, irrespective of their economic and social status, were vulnerable to some sort of suffering and persecution within society (Cassidy 1978:24). The argument that rich and powerful Christians were contributing towards the plight of the poorer members within the community, can also be noted here. If we consider texts such as Lk. 5:29-30, 7:39, 15:1-2. and 19:1-8, we find that Luke's Jesus is shown to fraternize with marginalised individuals, namely, sinners and publicans. Luke's Jesus also mixed with the rich and the powerful in society, as can be seen, for example, in Lk. 14:12 and Lk. 18:18-27. By making use of these types of texts within his community Luke must have intended his rich audience to be more tolerant of 'dishonourable' people.

The social outcast groups within Luke's Christian community must be
understood in the sense that they were deprived of all social standing without any means of meeting certain social requirements and gaining honour (Moxnes 1988: 103; Malina 1987: 356). Luke's major concern was that these social outcasts were still suffering the same social, economic, psychological, political and religious rejection and deprivation within the Christian community itself. Luke appeals directly to those Christians, such as the prominent elite and rich non-elite, who were responsible for treating the outcasts in this manner, to change and to 'soften' their actions towards the latter. An example of such an appeal is found in Lk. 14:13-14, where the rich host is asked by Jesus to invite the outcasts of society to his feast, instead of his family and friends. Further examples of this type of appeal are found in Lk. 6:27-38, 12:32-34, and Acts 20:35.

Luke issues warnings

Those Christians responsible for causing pain, suffering and discomfort amongst their fellow Christians, were most likely informed that they themselves had become persecutors of the Christian community, either directly or indirectly. When they heard the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31), Luke's audience would very probably have been surprised to find that the rich man, someone who had immense wealth, status and prestige in society, ended up in Hades. The role reversal which takes place between the rich man and Lazarus after each dies, would have given Luke's entire community something to think about. The rich in the community, with all their worldly power and wealth, were now faced with the possibility that they could also find themselves in a similar position to the rich man in the parable. If we draw from Douglas' (1966) analysis of the concept of purity, then those Christians who were acting in a similar fashion to the rich man, would
be 'out of place', a threatening source of pollution and chaos within the Lucan church. The rich and powerful Christians who were persecuting the poorer members, were merely continuing the undesirable actions they performed prior to converting to Christianity. If we consider Lk.20: 45-47, for example, we find that Jesus condemns the hypocrisy of the "doctors of the law," whose actions did not correspond with what they uttered in their prayers, that is, with what they supposedly confessed to trust in. Those in Luke's community who were trying to secure and promote their honour and social status above all else, including their commitment to fulfilling God's word in the building of a united community of faith, may well have felt the thrust of Jesus' words in this passage. Luke, therefore, appeals to those responsible to refrain from engaging in these threatening actions within the Christian community.

In addition to this, Christians were also warned just how dangerous it was to abuse authority and power within the community, especially when it caused others to suffer. Luke's use of Lk. 12:45-46 in his church would have been very effective in this case. The violent reaction of the "master" to the "servant" who was guilty of abusing other servants, must have attracted the attention of those Christians in Luke's Greco-Roman community who were guilty of abusing and negatively asserting their power and authority over others in the community. Such actions did not comply with the example set by Luke's Jesus, and was, therefore, out of place.

Luke also issued warnings to those Christians who were hoping to use the power and authority of the Holy Spirit outside of the church, that they had to first be fully and truly committed to God's will and purpose. Insincerity in this case, was a threat to Christian unity and
had to be eliminated. An example of such an insincere and threatening presence was the 'outsider' Simon (Acts 8:9-24), who wished to buy the power of the Holy Spirit with his money. Simon's perception that God's gift was for sale signalled his complete lack of understanding of true Christian commitment and dedication. His selfish craving for power and public recognition, prevented him from truly experiencing God's love and purpose. Simon's lack of commitment and dishonesty before God is condemned. Another instance where dishonesty and insincerity before God is condemned is found in Acts 5:1-11, when Ananias and his wife Sapphira, both Christians, hold back a portion of that which they had promised God. Their lack of sincerity, especially as 'insiders', was out of place within the bounds of the Christian community and contrary to the ideals which the community strived for.

Those outside the Christian community were also warned of the danger they faced if they attempted to manipulate Christian power or challenge it. Acts 13 and Acts 19 provides evidence for this. In Acts 13:6-11, the challenge issued by Elymas the sorcerer to Barnabas and Paul, is met with the superior power of the Holy Spirit, which blinds the sorcerer. In Acts 19:13-16, certain Jewish exorcists were calling upon the name of Jesus to exorcise evil spirits. As these Jews were not themselves Christians or part of the Christian community who shared a common bond through their belief in Jesus Christ, they were viewed by Christians as abusing and violating the name of Christ. As outsiders, these Jews had no claim to the power which the name of Jesus offered, and because of their illegitimate use of Jesus' name, they were punished. The power contained within the word of the Lord demonstrates that Christian 'magic' was more powerful than 'pagan' magic. The fact that there was public acknowledgment of the power of Christian magic (Acts 19:18-20), must have brought a fair amount of courage and pride.
to those in Luke's community when they heard this story. Luke reminded them that their faith in God's promise of salvation through Jesus, would enable them to face all dangers and strengthen their Christian commitment (Acts 20:29-35).

A new plan of action: incorporating new core values

We can deduce from what has been discussed in this chapter so far, that the high degree of internal division and disunity which existed within the Christian community (Acts 6:1-4, 20:29-31), as well as the threats posed by outsiders (Acts 13:6-8, 19:13-17), must have been a serious concern for Luke. In order for the church to win some form of legitimate social recognition from the 'outside competition' and from the wider society in general, it had to present itself as a united and harmonious body. The necessary precondition for presenting the Christian community in this way, was to persuade the diverse Christian groups to follow a specific plan of action. In keeping with the theme of the rich and the poor in Luke's community, it could be argued that the events described in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37, formed an important part of this plan of action. The devotion, sincerity, compassion and humility of the believers in these two passages illustrate the ideal state of harmony which could be achieved within the Christian community.

This type of strategy which Luke employed, conforms to the purity code proposed by Douglas (1966) in which the 'physical' body would represent and epitomise the traits of the larger 'social' body of Christianity. For example, the actions performed by the believer Joseph in Acts 4:36-37, who sold his estate and gave the money to the apostles to be distributed amongst the needy, conformed to the ideals and requirements
which Luke had in mind for his church community as a whole. Joseph's actions were 'pure' and in place within the Christian church, and contributed positively towards the state of unity and harmony which Luke mentions in the passage. Joseph's actions subscribed to the requirements set by Jesus in Lk. 6:28-38, namely, that one should act lovingly and compassionately, giving to those in need without expecting anything in return.

What Luke was actually aiming for then, was to strengthen and reinforce the external group boundaries of his Christian community. This required that he bring about some form of in-group cohesion and solidarity amongst the rich and poor Christians. By directing his community's attention to events in Acts 2 and 4, for example, Luke could inspire Christians to unite. By emphasising the actions of persons such as Joseph (Acts 4:36-37), he could encourage his congregation to strive for a certain quality and intensity in their Christian commitment to God and to the entire community itself. In order to facilitate this type of correspondence between the physical and social body of Christianity, the diverse groups in Luke's community had to undergo a stringent resocialisation process, with the incorporation of new core values, ideas, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and desires. Luke was, therefore, actively engaged in the process of introducing fundamental changes within his community. To succeed fully in his plans he had to choose topics which would substantiate, verify, and ultimately necessitate the implementation of these changes (Esler 1987: 193).

Luke's emphasis on the topics of almsgiving, sharing and friendship amongst Christians, are crucial with respect to securing the changes he aimed for. If we consider for a moment the socially stratified arrangement of Luke's urban context, then we will remember that honour.
power, wealth and status were the most sought after commodities in this society (Malina 1981: 27; 1986: 43-44). With this in mind, it then becomes apparent that those members within Luke's community who did not have any access to these commodities, would in practical terms, automatically benefit the most in terms of almsgiving, sharing, and even friendship. This was especially true of those Christians, such as the poor, crippled, lame and blind (Lk. 14:13-14), who had nothing to offer to the rich in return for their acts of charity. The reality of this situation was that the few who had access to the commodities of honour, power, wealth and status, such as the man mentioned in Lk. 18:18-23 for example, were the only ones within the Christian community who could ensure, by way of the resources at their disposal, that the changes Luke hoped for actually took place.

Since very few people in first century Roman society had access to the limited economic and political resources, the rich Christians in Luke's community would have been depended upon for their acts of charity and patronage, which had to be extracted in such a manner that it would benefit both those who 'gave' as well as those who 'received'. Luke's success in this venture bears witness to the immense skill he possessed in being able to combine the core societal values and codes of the time with his profound theological vision. By focussing on the topics of almsgiving, sharing and friendship mentioned above, let us now take a look at how they were effectively put to good use by Luke, without alienating the rich Christian patrons. The manner in which these topics of almsgiving, sharing and fellowship, are intricately woven into the fabric of the Christian perception and understanding of its own origins and heritage, should also be noted.
Almsgiving, sharing and friendship: the basis for building the new Christian community

In chapter five it was mentioned that Luke opted for the act of almsgiving to be in operation within his Christian community. This act of almsgiving, which was a cultural expectation amongst Egyptians and Jews, but a foreign concept to many others in first century Roman society, was chosen above the more familiar understanding of charity, which was reciprocal in nature (Countryman 1980: 105; Karris 1978: 117). The challenge facing Luke was that he had to convince those in his audience who were unfamiliar with the Jewish almsgiving laws, that this was an important and vital part of their acceptance of the Christian faith (Lk. 12:32-34). In order to illustrate the legitimacy and authenticity of the almsgiving act, Luke traces it back to its traditional Old Testament roots, as can be seen, for example, in Ex. 23:10-11, Lev. 19:9-11, 25:35-38, and Deut. 15:7-11. Luke emphasised that almsgiving symbolised the true-acting out of the God's Law in the Old Testament, and that the Christian community, as a continuing part of this tradition, should do the same. The act of providing alms for the poor, out of the sincere goodness and kindness of one's heart and soul, made one pure and acceptable before God (Lk. 11:40-41; 19:8-10). Luke clearly demonstrates that even Gentiles, who were regular in their worship of God and who gave generously to help the poor and needy, could, after receiving baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, achieve a state of purity that not even Jews could dispute or disrespect. This is illustrated in the example of Cornelius' conversion in Acts 10:1-33, 44-46.

The act of almsgiving also epitomised the essence of 'genuine' conversion. Luke's understanding of this concept of genuine conversion
meant that the individual who underwent this change, would be so moved by compassion that he or she would be willing to sacrifice the security of their own situation in order to help and to share with someone in need (Karris 1979: 96-97). This willingness to offer aid to those in need is evident, for example, in Lk. 10:33-35, 14:12-14, 19:8-9, and Acts 4:32-37. According to Cassidy (1978: 101-103), by making use of the Old Testament Laws, such as those contained in the Old Testament passages mentioned in the paragraph above, Luke could inform and remind those in his church of the special provisions made in the Law of Moses on behalf of the poor, weak, and oppressed (Lk. 3:10-14, 4:18. 6:29-38. 7:41-42, 18:22). Karris (1978: 117) concludes that Luke's intention was to incorporate a form of mission theology with which he wished to raise an awareness about the necessity of almsgiving and fellowship (Acts 2 and 4), amongst converts whose different cultural backgrounds did not include these Christian concepts.

According to Dupont (1979: 89; 90; 93), Luke made use of the 'philosophical terminology' of friendship in his writings. By making use of this type of philosophical terminology, Luke could subtly adjust his inherited tradition so that it would make sense to his audience. Within both the Greek and Roman culture, friendship involved affection to the extent that a person would readily make all of his or her goods available to a friend in need without holding anything back. This understanding of the term friendship meant that the goods at one's disposal could be transformed into 'common resources' between those involved in such a friendship relationship. In the socially stratified Greco-Roman setting, one's choice of friends would most naturally be those from one's own class and economic standing, especially in the sense that these friends were responsible for the sanctioning of one's honour in society (Malina 1981: 31-32). This meant that the poor in
society, because of their lack of honour, wealth, power and possessions, would not have been able to meet their part of the friendship requirements had they been involved in such a relationship with someone who was rich. Taking this into consideration, how then would one describe the idea of friendship which Luke hints at in Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32, and to what extent can the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), to which reference was made earlier in this chapter, be viewed as a violation of the idea of friendship?

The story of Ananias and Sapphira provides us with an important clue as to what Luke actually meant by his use of the word 'friendship'. The story reflects that Ananias and Sapphira were punished by death for their 'fraudulent mishandling' of the proceeds they received from the sale of their property (Acts 5:5,10). According to Countryman (1980: 79), Luke at first makes it sound as if it was a universal rule that the rich should sell their possessions and hand over the proceeds to the church. This is evident, for example, in Lk. 12:32-33; 18:22; Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-37). Yet, in Acts 5:4, Peter assures Ananias that he did not have to sell his property and that he could have used the money as he saw fit. Countryman argues, therefore, as was alluded to earlier on in my discussion on sincerity, that the fatal charge against Ananias and Sapphira was not that they had withheld money, but that they had lied to God (Acts 5:3-4). Drawing from this, he asserts that it was not Luke's summary in Acts 4:32, which probably came from a redactor, but rather the story of Ananias and Sapphira which more likely reflected the actual life of the primitive church.

'Love' communism

Countryman (1980: 80) concludes from this story that the primitive
Church did not practice true communism, but rather a form of 'love' communism. Contained within this concept of love communism was a strong religious pressure for the rich to voluntarily share their goods with others, especially the poor in the Christian community. Karris (1978: 123) states that it was not necessary for the rich to sell all of their possessions and to distribute the proceeds amongst the poor. Although these voluntary gifts from the rich were necessary, the spirit in which the rich gave was also equally important. Gifts to the poor were to be given in a spirit of true sincerity, honesty and goodwill, without any hint of regret or loss. This meant that one, in imitation of Christ, was totally committed to giving of oneself out of a sense of love and compassion for those in need. An example of one who gives in this manner, is Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:8), despite the fact that he only gave up half his possessions. Karris (1978: 123) concludes from Lk. 19:8, that Zacchaeus' actions offered an alternate and legitimate response to the actions of those followers found, for example, in Lk. 5:11 and 27-28, who gave up everything they owned to follow Jesus.

The spirit in which this act of sharing took place, according to Cassidy (1978:31), is what received positive praise from God. Luke, therefore, stressed that a kind of 'voluntary communism', in which the rich gave freely and sincerely without any sense of attachment or regret, should exist within the Christian community. Only if alms were given in this fashion could the Christian community experience true joy, solidarity and unity within Christ, and it is this vision which Luke captures in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37. By making use of the key concept of friendship drawn from Greek philosophy, and the act of almsgiving drawn from the Mosaic Law, Luke was able to define what this concept of 'voluntary communism' entailed. By combining the concepts of friendship and almsgiving, he redefined in more inclusive and
compassionate terms, the more common Greco-Roman understanding of the
terms philanthropy and friendship, which was based on the principle of
reciprocity (Countryman 1980: 80).

Esler (1987: 196) and Moxnes (1988: 84) argue that Luke's emphasis on
voluntary sharing must be placed within a particular context. In Luke's
'limited goods society' accumulated wealth was often obtained unjustly
and at someone else's expense, and this made it a morally incorrect
practice. This improper practice was promulgated, for example, by
soldiers (Lk. 3:14), tax collectors (Lk. 3:12-13; 19:8), and other
prominent members of society (Lk. 20:45-47; Acts 24:24-26). The wealth
accumulated in this manner, represented unjust mammon (Lk. 16:10-13).

Luke's Jesus states that such wealth had to be shared amongst one's
friends and family (Lk. 16:9). Luke may have wanted to drive home the
point that everyone in his community was now part of a new Christian
family, which necessitated the act of sharing wealth. This type of
Lucan understanding of the idea of friendship formed an important part
of Luke's 'educative task', especially amongst those Christians who
were unaware of and even antagonistic towards the Christian/Jewish
concern for the needy and the poor (Karris 1978: 116).

Almsgiving: a vital part of Christian education

Luke's teaching on almsgiving was on one level educative, but on
another level it also served as a very important reminder to those
familiar with the tradition not to forget or to neglect this duty.
This can be seen when Jesus admonishes the Pharisee in Lk. 11:39-41 for
being more concerned with purity rituals than with acts of almsgiving.
The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) is yet another
reminder to the rich, of the important connection which existed between
the act of almsgiving and the reward of God's salvation.

On an even deeper and more profound level, the teachings on almsgiving served to highlight Luke’s Christian interpretation of the almsgiving Law and his social vision for the church. Throughout Luke-Acts Luke highlights the 'appropriate' Christian responses towards almsgiving, and the benefits which could be derived from this (Lk. 6:28-31, 35-38; 12:32-38; 14:13-14; 18:22, 28-30; 19:8-10; Acts 4:32-35; 20:35). At the same time, Luke also issued warnings to those in his Christian audience who possessed the means to provide alms for the poor, about the effects of improper actions which did not correspond with almsgiving requirements. For example, in Lk. 6:32-35, Jesus states that it will be of no benefit if "you love only those who love you,... if you do good only to those who do good to you,... if you lend only where you expect to be repaid," This was something completely different to what the Greeks and Romans in Luke's community were used to, especially in terms of the reciprocity principle, which until then had been the basis on which most of their relationships were based. In Lk. 16:9-13, Jesus relays to his disciples that wealth has a specific purpose, and that it should be used wisely in the honour and fulfillment of God's purpose on earth. Those who were not acting in accordance with this message would be deprived of sharing in the eternal wealth of God's kingdom. Those in Luke's community who heard this message, could then examine the extent of their Christian commitment in the light of how they themselves managed their wealth.

Luke's teachings about the importance of the Law of almsgiving was very much in line with his vision of the new Christian symbolic universe. Within this new symbolic universe, Luke used the Law of almsgiving as a device with which to redefine the meanings of the Greco-Roman societal
codes of honour, shame, purity and pollution. For example, the rich man who hosted a dinner party in Lk. 14:16-24, gained honour by inviting those who could not repay the favour, such as the poor, crippled, blind and lame. Normally, this type of action would have been viewed by those in the Greco-Roman setting as being out of place and inappropriate in relation to the host's class and honour status. The host's position on the social ladder would have demanded that he only associate with those of his own elite class, as this was the only way in which he could secure his honour standing in society (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 34).

In this redefining process, Luke shifted the external, observable boundaries established by the diverse groups within his Christian community, in such a way that it was more inclusive and more conducive to establishing sound relations with other Christians. Group solidarity could be established within the urban Christian community in this way, which would put it on par with the vision Luke champions in Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-35. By educating and guiding Christians in the appropriate manner, Luke could direct and focus their attention on those things which he deemed to be important for the survival of the Christian community. With this in mind I take seriously the statement made by Herzog (1994:28) about education, namely, that it is "not a neutral activity, it is political to the core".

The redemption of the poor

We can deduce from the above discussion, that Luke's basis for counselling and instructing his Christian community was drawn from his deep, theological concerns. Included amongst these theological concerns, according to Esler (1987: 49:59), was Luke's preoccupation with individual penance and the acceptance of the Gospel in baptism.
Within this context the believer could enter a sphere of 'spirit-filled experience' until the second coming of Jesus Christ (Lk. 3:3-6; Acts 13:22-39; 18:24-28; 19:1-7). Luke does not emphasise the revolutionary belief in an 'imminent ending', and rather opts for what Wilson (1963: 364-365) describes as a 'conversionist response' in which individuals themselves have the choice of undergoing a profound and supernatural transformation in order to achieve salvation. Vorster (1987: 30) adds to this by stating that Luke created in his community, not an apocalyptic eschatological perspective, but rather an 'awareness' of the return of the Lord and of the day of judgement, as is evident, for example, in Lk. 21:20-28. In a similar fashion Esler (1987: 193) argues that the alleviation of injustices and suffering of the poor was also, therefore, not just an eschatological notion for Luke, but formed a vital part of the worldly redemption which was offered to the poor. As such, the liberation which is alluded to in Lk. 4:18, must be understood in a manner which includes salvation at a physical level as well.

What is significant in Lk.4:18, is the fact that it is a proclamation of the 'good news' to the poor, the captives, the blind and the destitute. This statement is remarkable and extremely peculiar, especially if one considers the intense manner in which Luke's Greco-Roman urban society was stratified. In this case it is the least of the least, the socially marginalised, the ostracised, and the social outcasts who have primary access to the Gospel. This attitude towards the poor was motivated by Luke's belief that "the gospel was not gospel unless it offered them immediate relief for their physical misery and gave them a sense of their own dignity as human persons" (Esler 1987: 199).
The manner in which Luke believed the poor should be treated, like his understanding and interpretation of friendship and sharing mentioned earlier on in this chapter, signalled a radical shift away from the prevailing social attitudes at the time. It must have been surprising for the ruling elite, whose social stature normally guaranteed them special privileges (Lk. 16:14-15; 20:45-46), to hear Luke speaking about the poor in such a different manner. It must have been equally surprising to the poor non-elite, who had accepted the stratification of society (Esler 1987: 180-181). This 'surprised' reaction can be observed in Lk. 14:21-24, where the poor had to be persuaded that the host's dinner invitation to them was not a prank, but a sincere gesture. By placing a great deal of emphasis on almsgiving, generosity and unconditional love, even for the enemy, as is indicated in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37), Luke was able to prepare his Christian community for the Lord's day of reckoning and their salvation. For those in Luke's community for whom almsgiving was something new, passages such as Lk. 12:32-40, must have provided some form of motivation, even comfort:

"Have no fear, little flock: for your father has chosen to give you the Kingdom. Sell your possessions and give in charity. Provide for yourselves purses that do not wear out, and never-failing treasure in heaven ... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

From a social science perspective we could also argue that Luke was using the concept of impending judgement for the ideological purpose of coercing the response that he desired from the wealthy in his community.

This then, was Luke's ideology of salvation, which was centred around the participation and transformation of the individual. The type of transformation in question here was one which was prompted by the
'promise' of a change in the external reality at some time in the future (Esler 1987: 49). Luke taught that by believing in God’s purpose and by imitating the actions of Christ, all the obstacles which Greco-Roman urban Christians faced, such as persecution, social ostracism and rejection by family and friends, could be overcome. Within the context of imitating Christ we fully encounter the nature of Luke’s concern for both the rich and the poor in his Christian community. In imitation of Christ the rich had to act as saviours of the weak, poor, oppressed, despised and blind (O’Toole 1983: 3-4). This is evident in passages such as Lk. 1:53-55 and Lk. 4:18.

A message for the rich

Esler (1987: 187) and Marshall (1978: 35) assert that by acting in the above manner, the rich and powerful Christians in Luke’s urban Christian community were given the opportunity to secure for themselves, places of honour, not only within the community itself, but also in heaven. For the rich and powerful in the community, this meant that they had to act in accordance with the guidelines set by Jesus, as is evident, for example, in passages such as Lk. 6:35-38; 12:32-34; 14:7-11; 18:22. Within the context of imitating Christ, Luke was able to issue a radical challenge to those in the Christian church, especially the rich and the powerful, to adopt a drastic change in their perceptions and self-indulgent attitudes to wealth, prestige, honour and possessions (Cassidy 1978: 24; Esler 1987: 199). This type of challenge can be observed, for example, in the advice given to the rich host in Lk. 14:12-14. By making use of this type of strategy, Luke could establish the act of almsgiving and the theme of imitating the actions of Christ, as core values within Greco-Roman urban Christianity.
Conclusion

The core values introduced by Luke played a vital spiritual role within the hearts and minds of those in the Christian community. On a more practical level, it highlighted the intense need for unity to be established amongst Christians from different economic, social, political and cultural spheres of Greco-Roman society. This unity was vital to the survival of the early church. The diverse membership within Luke's Christian community required that he operate at different levels, so as to accommodate and facilitate all the needs, desires, fears and expectations of these members. The wealthy members in the Christian community were depended upon for their contributions towards the poor and needy. For this reason Luke adopted in his writings an approach by which he indirectly, through the acts and sayings of the Lucan Jesus and his disciples, challenged individuals to personally decide between what was right and wrong. These challenges were made in public at different social gatherings. An example of such a challenge can be noted in Lk. 11:37-41, where Luke's Jesus appeals to the Pharisees to follow the full extent of the Law and not only those parts which suited their own selfish purposes. Being committed to God meant, therefore, that one had to express this commitment fully, not only by way of one's actions, but also through what one felt and experienced in one's heart, mind and soul. In sum, Luke did not blatantly point a finger or isolate anyone in particular, and since he wished to attract the rich to the ranks of Christianity, he made use of parables to indirectly highlight the personal and moral choices which Christians had to make. Within the parables, Luke could also, at the same time, illustrate his social vision for the church. Let us now take a closer look at how he achieved these aims.
Luke's social vision for the new Christian church
Imitating the 'model' of the 'reign of God' in the parables

Parables have the ability to be flexible enough to be presented to a variety of people all at once. The socio-economic and cultural diversity of Luke’s Christian community, therefore, made it especially conducive to parabolic instruction. Perkins (1981: 4) states that the important dynamic contained within a parable is the aspect of 'incompleteness', where it becomes the task of the hearers to fill in the gaps and to draw conclusions. On hearing the parable, it is the individual hearers who have to evaluate the actions of the characters within the story, drawing from this an effective course of action for their own Christian lives. This, for example, is evident in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37), where the Lawyer is asked not only to identify those actions which are expected of one's neighbour, but is also urged to imitate those actions in his own life (Lk. 10:36-37). In the parable of the Great Banquet (Lk. 14:15-24), the rich are urged to treat the poor with love and compassion in the true spirit of Christian fellowship. In both these examples, it is up to the individual to realise which of the actions portrayed in the parable are appropriate and more in line with the Christian message contained within Jesus' teachings.

We can use the two examples mentioned above, to emphasize yet another significant function of parables, namely, the ability to accentuate the human dimension in terms of how people relate to and live with each other. This human dimension forms the core element of the 'religious' significance of the parables (Perkins 1981: 4; Herzog 1994: 3). Since the investigation of the human factor within Luke's writings is of prime importance in this thesis, an analysis of certain Lucan parables which deal directly with the issues of wealth and poverty and the rich
and the poor, will contribute towards a better understanding of Luke's urban society.

Since parables relate to the 'lived experiences' of the audiences they address, they portray scenarios from everyday life with which the audiences are familiar. Another component of some parables is the dimension known as the 'reign of God'. The realistic basis in which these parables are grounded, is viewed and examined against this backdrop of the 'reign of God'. The 'reign of God' dimension forms an overarching structure, a boundary marking mechanism, which epitomises the Christian identity. God's omnipotence. His word. His infinite understanding and patience, and His divine love for humankind. all form part of what the 'reign of God' dimension symbolises. In terms of Douglas' (1966: 274-275) analysis, the 'reign of God' dimension in parables is that which denotes purity and which is in place. Everything which did not conform to what was prescribed by the 'reign of God' was in violation of this purity, and was regarded as being out of place. By making use of parables, Luke could then fulfill a very important educative task among his Christian community. He could inform his congregation about those things which he felt corresponded and conformed to the ideals of the 'reign of God', for example, the ideals of acting lovingly towards one's neighbour (Lk. 10:25-37), and providing alms for the poor without expecting anything in return from them (Lk. 14:15-24).

In terms of Castelli's (1991: 22) analysis of the concept of imitation. Christians in Luke's day would have felt inclined to imitate that which was prescribed by the reign of God, as it represented the 'ideal'. There existed within the dimension of the reign of God, certain prescriptions regarding the manner in which Christians should conduct
their lives in terms of their relationship with God. other Christians. and those outside the community. Since God's authority. power. and salvation reigned supreme within the Christian community. Christians would willingly submit to a particular understanding of God within a particular context. For example, within Luke's context the large Gentile presence included amongst the Jews in the community would have generated a perception of God which was inclusive in character. This God was a loving and understanding God who was responsive to the changing needs of the new Christian community. God was not a rigid. unyielding figure, who defined the community along strict lines of race, culture and class. One's faith and commitment towards fulfilling God's will defined one's acceptance into the community of believers. Since everything in the community rested upon and flowed from the will of God, individual Christians would have made it a top priority to correspond with the actions, thoughts and feelings of the community as a whole, so that they could be 'in place.' Certain actions, such as that of Simon (Acts 8:9-25), who wanted to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit, was 'out of place' within the Christian community. The extent of Simon's out of place behaviour is evident in the words of Peter in Acts 8:20: "Your money go with you to damnation, because you thought God's gift was for sale!" Individual Christians, in terms of Douglas' (1966) analysis, would then have attempted to preserve not only their own purity, but also the purity of the community as well.

For devout Christians, the movement towards this aspect of 'sameness'. that is, the attempt to imitate that which is prescribed by the reign of God, is one which is highly valued. Castelli (1991: 22) uses the term "model" to define the object at which acts of imitation are directed. The reign of God, therefore, represents the model, and the pursuit to be in synchronisation with the identity of the model would
take preference over all else. Since the values, aims and objectives of the community were structured and determined by the 'model', they occupied a legitimate place within the Christian reality. Only by incorporating and adhering to these values, aims and objectives, could enter into a relationship with the reign of God. For example, only by showing compassion to fellow Christians by sharing with those in need, could the community unite in a true spirit of Christian fellowship (Acts 2:42-47). Any beliefs, attitudes and actions which did not subscribe to the ideals of the community, for example, the rejection of Jesus as the son of God and the lack of love and compassion for one's neighbour, fell outside the purity system of the reign of God. Since they fell outside of the purity system, they were not viewed as being in synchronisation with the model. In terms of Neyrey's (1991: 275) analysis, anything which contravenes this purity, which in this case refers to the symbolic system of Luke's Christian community, is seen as being different, a problem, a danger, a source of pollution, a threatening presence which has to be suppressed or expelled.

Since the pivotal values of honour and shame and the purity system made up an important portion of the symbolic universe of Luke's audience, it would have been natural for them to incorporate these into their understanding and interpretation of the parables Luke presented to them. By way of the parables, Luke challenged his Christian audience to make choices. These choices as we will note, were not always easy ones to make, and in fact involved a complete shift away from the type of lives which many were previously used to. Luke calls on the wealthy members in particular, to make major sacrifices on behalf of the Christian community in general, sacrifices which in all likelihood would ruin their social standing amongst their peers outside of the Christian community. For example, if we depict the rich host in Lk.
14:12-14 as a member of Luke’s urban community, then it will be noted that the actions which he is being asked to perform, is quite out of character with his position and status in society. The rich host is called upon to invite to the feast, the poor, crippled, lame and blind, instead of his family and friends. Since the function of these gatherings was generally to secure and to increase one’s honour standing in society amongst one’s family, friends and business associates (Malina 1981: 31-32), the host was being asked to forsake the honour his rich peers would bestow upon him. He also stood to lose the existing honour he possessed if he associated with those who fell outside of his class, such as the expendables, for example. The host, therefore, was being asked to make a major sacrifice on behalf of the poor in the community.

Luke did emphasise, however, that these sacrifices were necessary, since they fell in line with the prescriptions of the 'model' and would not go unrewarded. The rewards Luke spoke about, were not the material ones that the wealthy were used to, but referred rather to the spiritual reward of God’s salvation. This can be noted, for example, in Lk. 12:32-34; 13:29-30; 14:13-14; and 19:8-10. From within this context, Luke sets out to subtly convince and persuade the wealthy members of his community to provide alms for the poor, to care for the needy and to act compassionately towards their Christian neighbours. Luke used the parabolic style, according to Herzog (1994: 3), to reveal to his Christian audience that they had it within their grasp "to break the spiral of violence and cycle of poverty created by exploitation and oppression". To see how Luke integrates the above, I now wish to focus on two Lucan parables which capture the themes of giving alms and sharing, and which also highlight the need to recognise and accept everyone in the Christian community as fellow Christians. Those aspects
which the reign of God rejects as being out of place and polluted, will also be highlighted in this analysis.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31)

The reversal theme

In his attempt to convince the rich and powerful urban Christians of the correctness and validity of following and sharing in the ideals of truth, compassion, love, and salvation prescribed by the reign of God, Luke effectively made use of the theme of 'reversal' in his writings. This reversal theme concerns the complete turn-about of an individual's situation, that is, it reflects a reality which is the opposite of what an individual had initially experienced. Luke used the theme of reversal to illustrate just how the consequences of one's choices in this life would effect one's position in the afterlife (Kingsbury 1991: 33). In what follows, I will make use of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus to demonstrate how Luke put the reversal theme into effect.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is found only in Lk. 16:19-31. It is regarded as being either a Lucan or a pre-Lucan composition (Herzog 1994: 114). The parallels between the parable of the rich man and Lazarus and traditional rabbinic tales and Egyptian folklore have led commentators to conclude that this parable was composed from parallel materials, that is, from materials which dealt with a similar theme (Bultmann 1963: 197; Smith 1937: 54). Bultmann's (1963: 178, 196) analysis of these materials revealed that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus could be divided into two parts. In his analysis of this parable, Herzog (1994: 114-115, 120-121) identifies verses 19-22 as those which make up the first part. Herzog states that this part
depicted the chasm that separated the urban elite from the expendable poor, and also illustrated the theme of the reversal of fortunes. The reversal of fortunes theme is continued in verses 23-31, which make up the second part of the parable. The second part also constitutes an argument against the need for signs to augment the Torah and Prophets for revealing God's will. In contrast to the arguments that the parable parts are unrelated and that each had to be treated separately (Bultmann 1963), or that one had to be subordinated to the other (Jeremias 1963: 180-187), Herzog (1994: 130) argues that both parts should be retained as they are both essential to understanding the overall meaning and purpose of the parable's message. The two parts are, therefore, ultimately part of a larger single unit. In keeping with Herzog's view, I will also treat the entire narrative, verses 19-31, as having two interrelated parts.

The narrative events which lead up to the telling of the parable are also very important, as it provides the basis on which the parable is told and on which evaluations are made. Within this context, the incident which occurred in Lk. 16:15, in which the rich Pharisees were accused of being "lovers of money", forms the core of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31). Of prime concern in Lk. 16:15 was the attitude of some of the rich members of society, who claimed that they were devout in their observance of the Law and the Prophets. From Luke's point of view he could direct the saying "lovers of money" to anyone in his community whom he thought was overly concerned with wealth. The underlying purpose of the parable then, was to prove that the claims made by these rich men concerning their sincere religious devotion, were lacking in certain areas. If we consider that Luke had an urban audience, how then does he structure the parable so that it would make sense to those in this setting, especially the rich and the
The social locations of the rich man and Lazarus

By paying attention to the social script of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it can be noted that it contains the social structure of an advanced agrarian society (Herzog 1994: 117). In basic terms, this meant that the type of society depicted in the parable was divided into two levels. The top level was occupied by the ruler, the ruling class, retainers and a few merchants. The bottom level was occupied by peasants, artisans, the unclean and the degraded, and the expendables at the very bottom (Lenski 1966: 243-288). Another important characteristic of agrarian societies was the regular occurrence of urban communities (Lenski 1966: 198-199), such as the community for which Luke wrote. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, therefore, was not removed from the reality of Luke's urban listeners, in fact it depicted an aspect of reality with which they were familiar and with which many could identify. For example, the class difference between the rich man and Lazarus must have been evident to all who listened. Since the issue of class difference serves an important purpose in this parable, especially in light of the fact that it accounts - to a certain extent - for the attitude of the rich man towards Lazarus, let me examine it in view of the reversal theme mentioned at the beginning of my discussion on this parable.

The rich man is described as one whose clothes and food are of the highest and finest quality (Lk. 16:19). In Luke's Greco-Roman urban setting, the rich man would have been viewed by the audience as one who belonged to the urban elite, the class that controlled wealth, power, and privilege in society (Herzog 1994: 117). He was clothed in the
colour purple, "the garments of luxury" (Smith 1937: 135), which was amongst the most costly of dyes. The association of purple coloured garments with other precious items can be also be noted in Rev. 17:4 and Prov. 31:22. In Mk. 15:17-18 and Jn. 19:2-3, the wearing of the colour purple is associated with the garments worn by kings. The rich man's purple clothing, therefore, not only depicted great wealth but also "insinuated that he lived like a king" (Fitzmyer 1985: 1130). His great wealth made it possible for him to dine extravagantly every day (Lk. 16:19). The final element which describes the rich man and which also alludes to his social prominence, is the mention of the word "gate" (Lk. 16:20). According to Oesterley (1936: 205), the gate indicates that the rich man lived in a "nobly built mansion". This 'mansion' would have been situated in that area which made up the city centre, which is characteristically where all the urban elite lived and from where they could control the political and economic life of the city and the surrounding countryside (Rohrbaugh 1991: 136; Moxnes 1988: 28).

In contrast to the rich man's wealth, status and power, we locate Lazarus, a destitute beggar whose body was covered with sores. This is the state in which we find Lazarus lying at the rich man's gate. According to Herzog (1994: 118), Lazarus was probably shunned as unclean because of his skin condition (Lk. 16:20), which in effect made begging even more difficult. Added to Lazarus' unclean status was his perpetual state of hunger, which has led Scott (1989: 151) to conclude that Lazarus had even lost his honour as a beggar, since he no longer provided an occasion for almsgiving. He is rendered more degraded and unclean by the actions of the dogs, who licked his sores while he laid waiting for scraps from the rich man's table. From this it can be noted that Lazarus' status as a beggar had deteriorated to the extent that he
could not even help himself anymore. In this state of helplessness he had to depend on the goodwill and charity of others, such as the rich man in the parable.

In chapter five a brief description of the Greco-Roman urban elite was given as well as the manner in which they accumulated wealth. But where did beggars like the character Lazarus come from? Many theories concerning the origin of characters such as Lazarus have been put forward. The most popular amongst these portray Lazarus as one who was born in the country, on either a peasant farm or in a village. If he had been the second or third-born son, there might not have been enough land for him to inherit, which meant that he was forced to seek employment elsewhere, probably as a day labourer in the countryside and later as an urban day labourer. The city, however, was overrun with characters such as Lazarus, who were also seeking employment. The rich held the upper hand in this situation, since they could pay these labourers, who were desperate for employment, very low wages. A spell of bad luck in seeking employment could quickly lead to physical deterioration and disease for these labourers, who could afford neither shelter nor food with which to sustain themselves (Herzog 1994: 119).

Whatever the circumstances which led to Lazarus' status as a beggar, we have in this parable two opposite extremes in Greco-Roman urban society, namely, the exceptionally rich man on the one end of the social spectrum, and Lazarus who was an expendable on the other end.

**Applying the reversal theme**

By taking cognizance of these two extremes, we can also note another important characteristic of the parable, and that is its ability to bring together figures such as the rich man and Lazarus, who under
normal circumstances would have been kept apart. In fact beggars such as Lazarus would in all likelihood have been cleared out when the gates which separated the elite quarter from the poorer areas were closed (Rohrbaugh 1991: 145). The gates which controlled entry into the rich man's home, functioned as a social barrier between the urban elite and the expendables (Neyrey 1991: 281-285). An external boundary marker designates that space which separates the rich man's honour and purity status in society from Lazarus' state of shame and utter humiliation. By bringing together these two extremes in society the parable is able to focus our attention more specifically on the issues of rich and poor, honour and dishonour, purity and pollution. According to the story told in Lk. 16:19-26, "death" presumably results in the greatest reversal of fortunes. Let us now take a closer look at what verse 22 entails.

After the deaths of both Lazarus and the rich man, the 'reversal of fortunes' theme sets in. The rich man who enjoyed his earthly life now suffered while Lazarus was placed in Abraham's bosom, which is designated as a place of honour (Herzog 1994: 121). According to Esler (1987: 193), this depiction of Lazarus being carried by angels to rest in the bosom of Abraham, is also a depiction of the 'Messianic Banquet', an aspect which I will touch on later in this chapter. A complete role reversal is evident in verses 22-23. Since it is the formerly poor, unclean and helpless Lazarus who enjoys the official welcoming and comfort of Abraham, while the rich man is degraded to suffer humiliation and torment (Herzog 1994: 121-122). The space which Lazarus occupied was now the area which was protected and secure. Lazarus' space designated purity, while the space in which the rich man found himself, symbolised impurity and unrighteousness. The area mentioned in verse 23, namely Hades, has been described as a waiting
place where both the righteous and the sinners, separated from each other, gather after death to await the final judgement (Smith 1937: 136). In Hades, therefore, we find both Lazarus and the rich man. According to Herzog (1994: 122), the fact that Lazarus and the rich man occupied totally different areas of Hades, depicted the extremes of another social order. In fact, the situations in which Lazarus and the rich man found themselves, very adequately describe the first beatitude and the woes of the rich (Lk. 6:20; 6:24).

The entry into the second part of the parable, verses 23-31, begins on a surprising note and must have come as a shock to Luke's urban audience, who were expecting the opposite to take place. The reversal theme continues in verses 24-25, and just as the rich man refused to give Lazarus any food, so he could not receive any water from Lazarus' fingertips. Even if Lazarus wished to comply with the demands made by the rich man, he was prevented from doing so by the chasm. The gate which had previously separated the rich man from Lazarus, had now become the chasm, which served to keep a social distance between the two figures and also to protect Lazarus from the 'predatory' rich man (Herzog 1994: 122). According to Herzog, despite the rich man's predicament, he was still acting as a member of the urban elite. issuing demands: show mercy and send Lazarus. Furthermore, the rich man called Lazarus by name, which indicated that he both saw and knew Lazarus (Lk. 16:24). Although the rich man called Abraham "father", he remained blinded to the fact that Abraham was both his father as well as Lazarus'. Herzog (1994: 123) argues that Abraham's response to the rich man was to remind him that he died with some sin on his soul, and that he was in need of repentance. The rich man was urged to acknowledge his sins, so that he could be saved from ultimate damnation. Hope for the rich man, therefore, was still an option
(Oesterley 1936: 208). Herzog (1994:124) asserts that the chasm in this regard was not eternal, but functional. This ties in strongly with Luke's conversionist approach.

The rich man's refusal or inability to recognise and acknowledge his sins, illustrated just how blind and unrepentant he was. Even his pleas for mercy on behalf of others, were only limited to his family, and by extension to members of his own class. His refusal to recognise Lazarus as his brother implied that he did not expect his family to change their attitudes towards the poor (Herzog 1994: 124). Herzog (1994: 124-125) stresses that the rich man selectively followed the provisions of the purity code above all else, a code which condemned the poor. This man was, therefore, not only extremely wealthy, he was also, because of his great wealth and sinful indulgence, indifferent and insensitive to the demands of the Law and the Prophets concerning the giving of alms to the poor and needy. By paying no attention to the poor and hungry Lazarus at his gate, the rich man was in fact rejecting the Law and the Prophets (Lk. 16:29). Even if a sign was sent to the rich man's family, it would not have mattered since they did not follow the Law of Moses and the Prophets as they were supposed to. They, like the rich man, would be blind to the message of repentance and salvation.

Luke's description of the attitudes and perceptions of the rich man, sketched a picture which revealed the hopelessness of the situation in which the rich man and his brothers found themselves. This is reflected in Lk. 16:30 when the rich man admitted that his brothers were so concerned about their own sense of importance and pleasures that they were unable to follow the scriptures (Johnson 1977: 140-143). Herzog (1994: 128) adds to this by stating that the urban elite whose wealth could only be maintained by the continual exploitation and oppression
of the poor, could very well end up in the same situation as the rich man. The fact that the rich twisted the scriptures to serve their own ends, their incorrect use of wealth in conspicuous consumption, and their greed and continual pursuit of power and privilege (Lk. 16:14-15: 20:45-47), indicated that their wealth was not a sign of God's blessing but a curse on the land. The rich in this instance, were acting contrary to that which symbolised the reign of God, namely, love, compassion, justice and peace. By way of this parable Luke calls those rich members of his urban Christian community to seriously reconsider their self-indulgent and self-righteous ways.

Luke asks the rich to make a choice between their love for money and their love for God, as it was not possible to serve both (Lk. 16:13: 18:22-24). He did not condemn wealth as such, but rather the way in which it was used by the rich to create barriers between themselves and the poor. These very barriers established by the rich, would in terms of the reversal theme, perform a function which was opposite to what the rich expected when they entered the realm of the afterlife. Within this realm, these barriers determined the position which the rich and the poor had to occupy in relation to God's gift of salvation. In this sense, the barriers served to exclude the rich and include the poor as members of God's community. The improper use of wealth by the rich lead to them not being able to recognise their fellow brothers and sisters, especially those like Lazarus, who were in dire need of life's basic necessities. In the same manner that the rich ignored the needs of those whom Lazarus represented, so too would the needs and desires of the rich be ignored in the afterlife. In keeping with the reversal theme, Luke's appeal to the poor in his urban community was that they remain steadfast in their faith, so that they too could be rewarded by God, just as Lazarus was. The rich in Luke's community were, therefore,
advised to use their wealth wisely: "So I say to you, use your worldly wealth to win friends for yourselves so that when money is a thing of the past you may be received into an eternal home" (Lk. 16:9).

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus was effectively used by Luke to illustrate the phenomenon of rejection. The Pharisees who claimed to hold the literal demands of the Law, still rejected the outcasts (Lk. 15:1-3), just as Lazarus the outcast was rejected by the rich man. Luke's insertion of this parable illuminated the manner in which he used the theme of the rich and poor to convey to his audience a certain pattern in the life of Jesus. The rejection of the rich by God is linked directly to their rejection of the Prophet Jesus. This rejection of Jesus is evident, for example, in Lk. 4:24-30, where the congregation he addresses turns upon him. The passage of Lk. 20:9-16, also reveals the hostility displayed, especially from the chief priests and lawyers, towards Jesus and his message. In Lk. 17:25 Jesus speaks of his own rejection and suffering.

Luke's emphasis on the rejection of Jesus must have been a response to certain happenings within his community, such as a lack of compassion for the poor, which did not correspond with what was prescribed by the reign of God. The poor in this sense, were those who responded to Jesus (Johnson 1977: 143-144). Talbert (1986: 156-158) states that this parable is also an indication that wealth is not necessarily a sign of righteousness and that poverty in itself does not signify someone's sinfulness. The rich man's actions in Lk. 16:19, symbolised the misuse of wealth, especially with regard to his neglect in giving alms to the poor. The generous giving of alms by those who could afford to do so, was a righteous act that had to be adhered to.
The reversal of power

If we apply Castelli's (1991: 15) ideological analysis of 'imitation' to the above paragraph, in which imitation is described as a 'strategy of power', then it will be noted how prominently the 'reversal theme' is reflected in relation to the 'positions of power' of the rich man and Lazarus. The act of 'reversal' between the rich man and Lazarus was accompanied by a loss of honour, status, and power on the rich man's part. In the end it was Lazarus who was the 'powerful' one by virtue of the position he occupied in Abraham's bosom. The rich man who had his every wish and desire satisfied and every command obeyed while he was on earth, did not even have enough power in the afterlife to make a 'beggar' follow his wishes (Lk. 16:24: 27-28). The rich man possessed a 'worldly power' which as always, had the possibility of being used 'in the appropriate' manner, such as giving alms to the poor and showing active concern for those less fortunate. Since he chose not to use this 'power' wisely on earth, he is deprived of it in the afterlife. This is why Nickelsburg (1978 in York 1991: 13) states that passages which relate to riches and possessions in Luke, are almost always in some way or another tied up with issues of judgement and salvation. Luke needed the economic backing of the wealthy in his community, and in keeping with his conversionist approach, he provided greater scope for them to repent (Countryman 1980: 143).

Luke emphasised in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus that God's kingdom was open to all, and that the Law was still very much in operation. From this basis Luke condemns the indifference of the rich man to Lazarus (O'Toole 1983: 12; York 1991: 68). The rich man is called upon to recognise and to acknowledge his incorrect actions towards the poor, so that his eyes could be opened to the reign of God
and the promise of salvation which it held. One’s ultimate destination after death was, therefore, dependent on the type of concrete action which was engaged in on earth (Theissen 1992: 125).

Ideologically, Luke was motivating the rich urban Christians in his community, to act in a positive and productive manner for the benefit of the entire Christian community. For this reason Luke used the story of Zacchaeus so that he could stress its positive outcome (Cassidy 1978: 31). Zacchaeus was actively involved in the process of putting Jesus’ teachings into practice. By focussing on the Zacchaeus episode in which Zacchaeus only gave half of his possessions to charity, Luke was appealing to the rich Christians in the community to strive for an ideal which was not precisely voluntary detachment and poverty, but rather an ideal of charity that would not tolerate need among fellow Christians in the community (Dupont 1979: 95). From this it can be concluded that Luke’s intended audience did include rich Christians who did not necessarily have to offer up all that they owned, on condition that they were able to demonstrate ‘actively’ and ‘sincerely’ that their possessions did not hinder their concern for the poor (Theissen 1992: 130).

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus calls for a radical change in the attitudes and perceptions of the rich towards their worldly possessions and towards their fellow Christians, especially the poor (Tyson 1992: 73). It shows that the excessive accumulation of possessions for only one’s own benefit is a foolish and dishonourable activity, which acts in gross contradiction to the ‘spirit’ in which God has given ‘life’ and to the way in which Christians are supposed to live as a loving community. It also shows that the ideals of wealth, prestige, power and status, offers but a false and temporary escape
from God's eternal judgement in the hereafter. I want to look now at how Luke directly addressed both the honour/shame values and the purity codes, and how he was able to justify the 'breaks' between the new Christian community and the 'outside' world on the one hand, while still advocating a certain degree of continuity with the latter on the other.

The parable of the Great Banquet (Lk. 14:15-24)

Luke uses the parable of the Great Banquet as an exemplary story in which he fully illustrates the profound depth of his theological vision. It is to this which I now turn.

In my discussion on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it was mentioned that the events which lead up to the telling of a parable, are very important. The pre-parable events act as stimuli, providing a basis on which the parable is told. The events which take place in Lk. 14:7-11, form the main motivating factor behind the telling of the parable of the Great Banquet (Lk. 14:15-24). In Lk. 14:7-11, a considerable amount of stress is placed on the importance of the themes of humility and spirit of service, and how valuable the acting out of these themes are within the Christian community. By using this as a basis, Luke could envisage transformation of the division within the Christian ranks, especially along the lines of class and more specifically between the rich and the poor. Cassidy (1978: 39) aptly captures Luke's thoughts here when he states that "Humility and service are presuppositions for criticizing political relationships of domination and oppression."
The importance of meals: a confirmation of honour, status and identity

Rohrbaugh (1991: 138-139) asserts that Luke knowingly used the features of the urban system of the pre-industrial city in his depiction of the Great Banquet. This is evident when a comparison is drawn with Matthew, where the host is a 'king' (Mt. 22:2) while Luke describes the host as 'a certain man' (Lk. 14:16). Also, while the occasion in Matthew (22:2) is described as a 'wedding feast', in Luke (14:16) it is described as a 'great supper'. In Luke's Greco-Roman urban setting, events such as attending meals, formed an important social activity. Food, according to Douglas (1975: 249), acted as a code in Luke's society, and relayed messages about the pattern of social relations which existed. For example, if the procedures which surround the meal, such as the placing of guests, are observed closely, the degrees of hierarchy and social ranking can be observed (Lk. 14:7-10). It can also be determined who is included and excluded (Lk. 14:12-13).

Neyrey (1991: 363) states that meals can be described as ceremonies which "bolster the boundaries defining a group or institution, even as they confirm established roles and statuses within the group". Meals were thus occasions on which honour could publicly be established, displayed and reaffirmed (Malina and Neyrey 1991: 29). By referring to the event in Lk. 14:16 as a supper, Luke was, therefore, referring to an activity which his audience was familiar with. For example, in Luke's socially stratified society, his audience would know who would be included and who would be excluded from attending a supper hosted by someone of the elite strata of society, as well as the reasons for this (Lk. 14:12).

The fact that the supper is referred to as a 'great supper' (Lk 14:16).
indicated that it was quite an elegant event. In Luke’s limited goods society, wealth was in the hands of a very small percentage who formed the elite, which meant that the person who was hosting this 'great supper', had to be someone who had considerable wealthy. Rohrbaugh (1991: 140) argues that the host mentioned in Lk. 14:16, because of his great wealth, must have been a prominent member of the elite urban group of society, a group which set the terms for and controlled the access to social interaction between itself and others. In terms of the honour-shame criteria of Luke’s Greco-Roman society, social approval by one’s peers was crucial with respect to holding and maintaining one’s position of honour in society. Since wealth was something which the elite shared amongst those of their own class to maintain their honour status, the host mentioned by Luke must have had quite an intense social obligation to his peers. The manner in which the host carried out these social obligations was critical in that it determined whether or not he would maintain his position and that of his family, amongst his elite peers (Rohrbaugh 1991: 140).

If we use what we have established above about the rich elite, then it becomes apparent that the description of the excuses of the three guests who refused the invitation (Lk. 14:18-20), indicates that they were wealthy (at least in the first two instances), and part of the urban elite. Rohrbaugh (1991: 143) places the first of the three excusees in the group of absentee landlords, since much of the land outside of the city was bought and owned by the urban elite. Such a landlord would have first inspected the land he wished to acquire most thoroughly before securing the purchase, especially in terms of the projected profit he hoped to receive from his investment. The second excuse is from a man who had bought five yoke of oxen. According to estimates derived by Schottroff and Stegemann (1986: 101), ten oxen
could plow over 100 acres of land. If we compare this to the fact that
the land owned by some of the families in the Eastern Mediterranean
region during the first century, could range from 1.5 acres to 6 acres
per adult (Oakman 1986: 61), then we can conclude that someone who
needed five yokes of oxen must have owned a large area of property.
Although the economic status of the third guest who refused the
invitation is unclear, it must be assumed that he was also a part of
the urban elite, or else he would not have received an invitation at
all. The rich host in the parable would certainly not have put his
social position at stake by inviting someone who was not recognised as
being part of the wealthy elite group which was being catered for.

Luke's mentioning of the economic status of the guests who refused the
host's supper invitation is significant here. In Luke's limited goods
society, the wealth of the guests who were initially invited to supper,
was 'bad wealth', since it could only have been obtained unjustly and
at the expense of someone else, usually the poor, non-elite members of
society, who were continuously exploited by the elite (Esler 1987: 196;
Moxnes 1988: 84). An example of where wealth was obtained unjustly by
prominent members of society, can be found in Lk. 20:45-47. The manner
in which Luke hoped to deal with this 'bad wealth' will be revealed at
a later stage in this chapter.

What is apparent is the fact that the original guests received a double
invitation to attend the feast. Perkins (1981: 97) and Rohrbaugh (1991:
141) contend that this double invitation was not an uncommon practice
among the upper classes of the city, and that it fitted in well with
the dynamics of the pre-industrial urban system (which was referred to
in chapter three) in which Luke was located. The purpose of this type
of invitation was to enable the guest to decide if this was a social
obligation which he or she could afford to return in kind or turn down (I stressed earlier in chapter five, that the act of reciprocity with reference to meals especially, was a common feature in Luke's socio-cultural context). The period between the two invitations, therefore, gave the invited guest time to find out what the occasion entailed and who else had been invited. Only if the invited guest was satisfied that the host had acted in accordance with the 'honour/shame' criteria of his social class and status, and that no social codes had been violated, would the invitation be accepted.

What is striking in this parable is that the original guests, as was mentioned earlier, all refused the invitation to the feast. Rohrbaugh (1991: 142) is of the opinion that the 'excuses' made by the guests who could not attend, symbolised peer disapproval of the host's supper arrangement. The manner in which the host conducted his social obligations towards others in society, must have, therefore, been out of place. This made it impossible for those guests who first received invitations to accept, less they be tainted as well. In terms of the specific codes of honour which prevailed in Luke's urban society, especially amongst the rich elite, it could be quite likely that this type of 'rejection' is what the rich Christians were being exposed to. Their status as Christians, made them appear different from the rest of their non-Christian peers, which resulted in them being viewed as out of place amongst those they formally socialised with. These rich Christians came to be viewed as outcasts, deserters of the social identity given to them by their elite non-Christian peer group (Rohrbaugh 1991: 146). The elite Christians risked being cut off from all the prior social networks on which their possessions depended. They risked losing their friends, their property, economic survival and the well-being of their extended families, as is evident for example in
Lk. 21:12-17.

What was distressing for Luke, was the fact that these very Christians were trying to compensate for their social rejection by their non-Christian peers, by incorporating those same 'outside' values inside the Christian community (Lk. 11:42, 46; 20:45-47). Acts 8:18-21 clearly illustrates how difficult it was for those engaged in these 'outside' actions to fully understand the purpose of the Christian community's commitment and devotion to God. In terms of supper engagements where honour could publicly be displayed and bestowed on the host by his peers, it meant that certain rich Christians were hosting feasts exclusively amongst themselves, based on the principle of reciprocity, which automatically excluded the bulk of the poorer Christian community.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31), which I discussed earlier, illustrates the severity of the type of exclusion which was evident at meals between the rich and the poor. By following the norms and values of the outside, which included acts of injustice, deceit and exploitation of the poor, the rich Christians hoped to hold on to that which they were accustomed to previously. They wanted to prove to their wealthy non-Christian peers that as Christians, they were still attached and in continuity with the value codes of the outside, despite the latter's rejection of them (Rohrbaugh 1991: 146).

An example of this type of attachment by some Christians to that which they had valued prior to their conversion, can be found in Lk. 9:59-62. In another example, namely that of Lk. 14:7, it can also be noted how intense the struggle was amongst certain Christians to secure positions of honour and prestige within the Christian community. Struggles of a similar nature most likely took place in Luke's community as well. This
type of behaviour indicated that certain converts within the Greco-
Roman urban Christian community, were acting in a similar fashion to
the first two guests who refused the host's dinner invitation. Those
acting in this manner were still fanatically pursuing and engaging in
activities which were highly valued by their peers on the outside.
activities which Luke regarded as being out of place in the new
Christian symbolic universe. Evidence for this can be found in Lk.
16:14-15 and Lk. 20:45-47, where Luke's Jesus warns against the
trappings involved in the pursuit for money, prestige and power.

The reaction of the host, upon hearing that his invitations to supper
had been refused by his peers, is completely out of keeping with the
honour system in the Greco-Roman urban setting (Lk. 14:21-23). The
host, angered by the reaction of the invited guests, extended the
invitations to the non-elite within the city walls, especially the
poorest amongst them. In Matthew, the scene is depicted differently.
The host in Matthew is described as a 'warlike king' whose servants had
been murdered by those whom he initially invited. In reaction to this
the king sent out his troops to kill the murderers (Matt. 22:2: 6-7).
Luke records no such brutal behaviour in his depiction of the parable.
and simply states that the host was 'angry'. This lack of violence and
unrest in Luke's depiction of the Great Banquet, will be dealt with at
a later stage in this chapter.

Further analysis of the Lucan version of the parable of the Great
Banquet, reveals that after the poor non-elite within the city walls
had been invited, the banquet hall of the rich host was not yet filled
(Lk. 14:22). Once again this differed from the scene depicted in
Matthew 22:10, in which the hall was filled at once. In Luke, the
failure to fill the hall with those within the city walls, gave the
host the opportunity to go beyond the normal bounds of communication in seeking out guests. This enabled him to include even those on the outside of the city gates, namely the outcasts, such as tanners and certain traders, along with beggars and prostitutes. From this it can be noted, that unlike Matthew who used the general term "thoroughfare" (22:9), which probably referred to the place where the main street exited the city, Luke (14:22-23) pointed to specific locations within the urban setting (streets, alleys, highways and hedgerows), that housed certain sectors of the population. Rohrbaugh (1991: 144) argues that this illustrated Luke's familiarity with the pattern of the city.

The outcast groups to whom the host extended supper invitations were normally only allowed entry into the city to serve the needs of the elite, but were not allowed to live inside the city (Rohrbaugh 1991: 145). The host stressed to his messenger to 'compel' the outcasts to attend (Lk. 14:23), since the latter would have been well aware of the danger of entering a 'space' where they were normally not allowed, except for matters of business. Those outside the city walls would have viewed the invitation with suspicion, regarding it "as an inexplicable breach of the system". The groups outside the city wall belonged neither to the city nor the country, nor did they enjoy the protection and benefits of either setting. They were not only isolated from the city elite, but also from the city non-elite and the villagers alike. For this reason they had to be persuaded to attend the supper (Rohrbaugh 1991: 144-145). Because of the extent of his efforts to include those from outside the system, which was controlled and dominated by the social elite, Luke emphasises and exalts the reaction of the host, a member of the elite strata of society, for breaking with a system which favoured the few elite at the expense and suffering of the non-elite masses. This then forms the core issue which Luke is
addressing in his community, namely, that certain elite and wealthy members were avoiding any kind of association with poor Christians (Rohrbaugh 1991: 142). What then is the challenge which Luke extends towards the rich in his Christian community?

Extending the challenge

Luke advocates by way of this parable that the rich in the Christian community should break ranks with their peers with regard to the reciprocal criteria of hosting feasts and inviting guests (Lk. 14:12-14). Luke defines this break both socially and physically. In that even those such as the outcasts who are furthest removed from the city centre, from the core of power, purity, prestige and honour, should be invited to attend feasts and other social gatherings. Johnson (1977: 147) and York (1991: 143-145) assert that the rich who did not adhere to the proper Christian virtues involved in the important act of table fellowship, and who were too concerned about securing their possessions and relationships with their elite and rich peers, would ultimately not be invited to the 'Messianic Banquet' which would be hosted by God. as is evident in Lk. 13:22-30 and 14:24. To them Luke extended a radical challenge which could cost them everything they were accustomed to in their former life (Rohrbaugh 1991: 147). The passage immediately following the parable of the Great Banquet, Lk. 14:26-33, clearly illustrates this, and conveys the extent to which the rich had to go in order to become true followers.

In Lk. 13:29-30, Luke indicates that those who were previously considered as outsiders, as outcasts, as the least amongst the least, would occupy places of honour in God's kingdom. In God's eyes it is the least amongst the least, the humble servant of God's will, who occupies
the highest position within the Christian community (Lk. 9:48; 22:24-27; Acts 20:35). Within Luke's new Christian symbolic universe, the lines and boundaries which depicted the 'map of people', now not only included the rich, but also the outcasts, the poor, and the needy. This mission to the poor, as is also evident for example in Lk. 6:27-38, 19:8, and Acts 4:32-35, was, therefore, very important, as it was willed by God (Dupont 1979: 13). This was how Luke made a direct comment about the importance of participating actively and sincerely in a spirit of true Christian fellowship with everyone in the urban Christian community. The advantage of acting in this spirit of true Christian fellowship, would draw all Christian members together as a community, and would enable them to truly experience the joy and power of God's salvation, as is alluded to in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:24-27.

This was the ideal Luke strived to achieve within his church. The particular system of 'redistribution' described by Luke in Acts 2:42-47 and 4:24-27, as well as the system of redistribution mentioned in Lk. 19:8, as discussed earlier in the section on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, destroyed the normal basis of patron-client relations in first century Greco-Roman society. Within Luke's new redistribution system, the 'client' would no longer be bound in a social obligation of dependency. Wealth used in this sense, could not be transformed into 'power', 'rank' and 'social status'. This put a stop to the development of patron-client relations which were based on a marked element of inequality and difference in power.

Luke, therefore, served as a mediator between the rich and poor. Luke portrays via the parable of the Great Banquet that rich Christians are expected to go far beyond the lines of kinship and close allies, to exceed the bounds of social etiquette and purity rules, to include the
needy and the unclean at the table which was originally reserved for members of the elite group (Moxnes 1988: 42; 44: 132-133: 137). Karris (1978: 121) and Moxnes (1988: 134) argue that the reward for these acts of charity, service and devotion towards the poor in the Christian community, would be left to the will and discretion of God the 'great benefactor', at the resurrection of the just, as seen in Lk. 16:19-31.

Judging from the above, it was Luke's aim to fully demonstrate God's supreme majesty, power and authority over all, including those rich beneficent Christians in the community. This is evident from the discussion between Jesus and the disciples in Lk. 22:24-27. Like Jesus, the rich also had to strive to become humble and truthful servants of those, including the poor, who made up the Christian community. Within the Christian context, the ultimate benefactor was God alone. This symbolised a radically reformed purity system, in which faith and loyalty to God above all else, were boundary markers (Neyrey 1991: 292-293, 300). An example of where this reformed purity system is displayed, is in Lk. 7:36-50, where Jesus, despite the great disapproval of his Pharisaic host, commends the actions of love and humility of the sinner woman who washed and anointed his feet. Luke could emphasise the folly contained in the concern for worldly wealth and prestige amongst rich Christians. He assured them that by making God's will the core of their existence, everything else would automatically fall into place, an notion which is clearly expressed by Luke's Jesus in Lk. 12:22-34. In this way, Luke was able to contrast the strenuous and demanding life of discipleship against the worldly temptation of riches, power and prestige (Marshall 1978: 36).
The example of Cornelius

From the above discussion on the parable of the Great Banquet, we can gauge the extent to which Luke used the urban system to show how far the rich had to go to preserve their place in the Christian community. For the rich, table fellowship was the final test of approval regarding their Christian status. It also symbolised their final rejection of the norms and values of the elite on the 'outside' (Rohrbaugh 1991: 145-147). This idea of rejecting the socio-economic system which was created and dominated by the elite, is evident in Acts 2:37-38, where Peter tells the crowd to repent and to accept baptism. Repentance here served as a separation from the evil ways of the world. The leaving behind of one's possessions and the giving of alms, were, therefore, positive signs that one was responding to the will of God.

For example, the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48), was one who "gave generously" and "prayed regularly" (Acts 10:2). His acts of charity towards the needy in the Jewish community was a sign that he was diligently fulfilling a religious duty, without the ulterior motive of seeking any special public acclaim for his efforts. His motives were pure, and it was because of this that God responded to him (Acts 10:3-4). His rank and social status as a centurion, did not stop him from communicating all the details of his meeting with the angel, to two of his servants and a military orderly (Acts 10:7). As head of his household and because of his status, Cornelius had a certain amount of authority over others, as is evident from the words of the centurion whom Jesus encountered at Capernaum (Lk. 7:8). As such, Cornelius did not have to offer the servants or the orderly any of the intimate details of his encounter, except to give them the order to find and to bring Peter to him. Yet he chose to reveal everything to them. which
meant that the lines and channels of communication between him and his servants, were of such a nature that he could entrust them with his most personal feelings.

Cornelius's sincere acts of charity, were borne out of his deep religious convictions, which enabled him to truly experience God's presence (Acts 10:3-4). By indicating that Cornelius did not hesitate in relaying the events of his religious encounter to those who were ranked much lower than he was, Luke revealed what it really meant to be a true Christian. It meant sharing the word of God in every sense, with fellow Christians, across the barriers of class and economic status. For when one reaches this stage, as Cornelius had, then the will of God alone becomes important. Cornelius' faith and the sincere manner in which he carried out his religious duties, ensured that the socially constructed barriers of class, race, culture and religion, could be overcome (Acts 10:28-29, 45).

Establishing new barriers

In relation to the overcoming of social barriers. Robbins (1991: 328-330) argues that the Lucan ideology in operation here is one which wished to show that God had cleansed a mixed group of people within the Christian movement. This ideology is demonstrated for example, through the cleansing of lepers, which includes Samaritans (Lk. 4:27; 5:12-13; 7:22; 17:14, 17). Further evidence can be found in Lk. 11:39-41, where the Pharisees are told that what a person has on the inside, such as goodness and fidelity to God, should also be given in charity, so that the whole body may be cleansed. In the same way the poor, needy, and ostracized within the Greco-Roman urban society, also had to be welcomed as fully legitimate fellow members into the Christian

The faith and commitment of Christians towards God's will and towards all other Christians, bound them as a community. Luke used the parable of the Great Banquet to emphasise the theme of universality in which everyone, including the very poor, was welcome to accept the invitation to dine in the kingdom of God. Eschatologically, the parable of the Great Banquet can be understood in the sense that the call of God to the poor, is representative of human hospitality and compassion (Johnson 1977: 133). According to Lentz (1993: 171) and Dupont (1979: 16; 19), the idea that God's salvation was open to all, is already revealed early in Luke's Gospel (Lk. 3:6) as well as in the conclusion of Acts (28:28), via Luke's use of Isaiah 40:5: "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together...". Also, the concrete equivalence of proclaiming the message "to all nations" (Lk. 24:47) and the witnessing of the apostles "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), is a further representation of the movement and expansion which Luke hoped to achieve within his church, to include those who were formerly excluded from its official ranks. In short, Luke's new Christian community, based on almsgiving, was one which served to sever the boundaries which were established by purity norms and honour codes between insiders and outsiders. What then do these new purity norms and honour codes entail?

Faith in God and the expression of this through prayer and almsgiving were the 'new' requirements for Christian purity (as was already illustrated in my discussion of the centurion Cornelius in Acts 10-11). Purity was now qualified in a different manner. Unlike the Greco-Roman norm of paying strict attention to the visible and physical boundaries
on the 'outside', Luke now described the 'inside' of a person in social terms. This description was put together by observing the manner in which a person used possessions in social interactions with others (Moxnes 1988: 121-123). This trend of thought can be found, for example, in passages such as Lk. 6:43-45; 11:37-41; 16:14-15; 20:45-47; and Acts 1:18-19. Luke linked the hope for the poor in the present, directly to the fellowship of the new community. York (1991: 17: 19), asserts that the eschatological reversal theme in the blessing of the poor and needy, serves as a warning to the wealthy Christians to use their resources wisely and in conjunction with the needs of the church community, so that none would be in want (Lk. 16:9-13). Wealth had to be used in the appropriate Christian fashion to express the Christian virtues of 'love' to both God and those in need (Lk. 6:35-38; 10:33-35; 12:32-34; 14:21-24; Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37; 11:27-30). Talbert (1986: 155) states that in this way, Luke was able to emphasise that everyone in his community had the right to basic necessities and respect.

From the brief discussion in the above two paragraphs, it can be noted that the normal, everyday understanding of the purity norms and honour codes within Greco-Roman urban society, had taken on radically new meanings within Luke's community. The Christian community had developed its own codes of conduct, such as that which allowed the rich to freely interact with the poor in the spirit of true Christian fellowship. These codes of conduct were centred around core Christian values, which included (as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter) the ideals of truth, compassion, understanding, and salvation. A high degree of correspondence between the codes of conduct and the core values was vital for achieving the appropriate Christian response to the world. Achieving and maintaining the appropriate Christian response to socio-political, cultural and religious factors both within and outside the Christian community, was fundamental to the identity, legitimacy and purpose which Luke had in mind for the church.

The Romans

Throughout this thesis I have emphasised that the strained relations between the rich and the poor Christians in Luke's urban church community, was a source of great concern for him. We have also seen that Luke's main concern was geared towards restructuring, rearranging and reorganising the diverse Christian community into one united body of believers with common aims and purposes. This is evident from the depictions in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37. If we assume for the moment that Luke had been relatively successful in achieving what he had set out to do within the Christian community, what then can be said
about his attitude to the general Greco-Roman urban society? Were there any particular persons or authorities whom he concerned himself with, and if so, what were the motivating factors behind these concerns? I will now deal with questions such as these in order to construct some understanding about the history of the Christian church's survival in first century Greco-Roman urban society.

Notable Roman officials could be found within the Christian movement. Examples of these are the governor Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7, 12), as well as middle ranking individuals such as the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1-11; 18) and the centurion of Capernaum (Lk. 7:1-10). Other Gentiles of high social standing had also converted to Christianity (Acts 17:12). How then did Luke hope to benefit from the presence of these persons in the church?

Pervo (1990: 70) and Kingsbury (1991: 21-23) reveal that the 'most fearsome' opponents of Christianity were jealous Jews, who aimed to get Christians into trouble with civic powers or Roman officials. This can be observed, for example, in Lk. 21:12; 22:47 - 23:2; Acts 13:4-10; 14:1-7; 17:1-9; 23 - 26. Considering this, it would have been most beneficial to the position, influence and security of Christianity, if high ranking Roman officials, such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph, could be persuaded to remain on as members of the Christian community (Pervo 1990: 70; Lentz 1993: 3). The dilemma which the Romans faced, however, was the fact that a Roman governor of Judea had executed Jesus, the 'son' and 'representative' of God. Because of this, they were unsure if they would ever be accepted as true Christians within the Lucan church.

Luke responded to these Roman concerns by stating that their faith in
Jesus Christ was not incompatible with their connections and loyalty to Rome. This is evident, for example, from the Cornelius episode in Acts 10 and 11. Luke needed to assure his followers that Rome was not opposed to Christianity per se, even if individual Roman officials treated Christians unjustly. He assured the Romans in his community of possible alliances between Rome and Christianity, as seen in the story of Naaman the Syrian, referred to in Jesus' programmatic proclamation in Nazareth (Lk. 4:27). Naaman's acceptance of the Israelite God and the agreement reached with his master, was scriptural proof that conversion to Christianity did not mean a withdrawal from public life (Esler 1987: 217; Lentz 1993: 19). According to O'Toole (1983: 8), Luke intended to draw full benefit from the Roman polity. To further gain the confidence of the Romans, Luke even flaunted the Roman citizenship of some well-known Christian leaders, as is evident in Acts 16:35-38 and 22:25-29.

According to Robbins (1991: 330), the Lucan ideology at work here was one in which prominent members of political, military and legal systems could feel at ease within the Christian church. Christianity could then likewise, also feel comfortable within the socio-political system. As such, Robbins states that "the basic ideology of Luke-Acts appears to be the belief that God has ordained a place for the 'foreign affairs' of Christianity within the affairs of the Roman Empire" (1991: 327). Prominent, wealthy and powerful Romans were, therefore, both a necessary and a welcome addition to the Christian ranks. Their presence not only boosted the social status of Christianity, but also afforded the Christian community, especially the poor and powerless, with some sense of security (Acts 2:40-47; 4:32-37). Luke's advice to those in the church community, including the Romans, was not to act antagonistically towards the Roman authorities, but to create a space
in which a relationship between them could develop.

Luke does not, therefore, advocate political violence and unrest within his community. This non-violent stance was observed earlier on in this chapter, when Luke's version of the parable of the Great Banquet was compared to Matthew's version, which relayed incidents of murder and social unrest (Mt. 22:5-7). Luke's attitude to violence is also evident when Mark 11:15-16 and 14:47 is compared with Luke 19:45-46 and 22:49-51. Here, Luke tones down the aspect of violence presented by Mark. For Luke, it was the enemies of the Christian community who had weapons and who used them in a violent and destructive manner. Luke advocated that Christians should teach and act emphatically and boldly within Greco-Roman society, but in a non-violent manner (O'Toole 1983: 4-5). Christians could direct challenges at those responsible for the existing social evils, but only within the context of 'love and truth'. An extreme example of this type of challenge can be seen in Acts 6 - 7, where Stephen, up until his death, demonstrated the strength and sincerity of true Christian commitment. It was only by adopting this non-violent stance that Christians could create a space for dialogue, which would then lead to the necessary favourable changes they hoped for (Cassidy 1978: 41-42).

The conversionist response

Luke–Acts was, therefore, geared at persuading those in Luke's church community not to partake in and to perpetuate violence and acts of unrighteousness. What this all boils down to, according to Esler (1987: 189), was that Luke's non-revolutionary stance actually symbolised an appeal to the rich and powerful to bring about change themselves, by becoming true and devout members of the Christian community. This ties
in strongly with Luke's conversionist strategy. In relation to this, Moxnes (1988: 173-177) states that reconstruction for Luke was limited to alleviating only the severe and harsh aspects of the political economy within the Christian community by way of benefaction and general reciprocity. This is evident, for example, in Lk. 6:27-38; 8:1-3; 12:32-33; 14:12-14; 19:8; Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 20:35.

In terms of the honour/shame model, the entry of the wealthy with high social status into the ranks of Christianity, was perceived by Luke as a concrete strategy by which not only the social status of the Christian movement would be increased, but also the 'status' and 'sense of worth' of the poorer and powerless members of the movement (Lentz 1993: 172). General upliftment was a primary aim and Luke makes explicit the ideal situation in Acts 2:40-47, where converts shared meals and made general distributions to meet the different requirements of those in need, developed a high degree of comradeship, and "enjoyed the favour of the whole people". The community's practice of sharing all things symbolised their total spiritual unity. The redistribution of surplus possessions was, therefore, associated with the act of meeting social obligations within the urban Christian community (Moxnes 1988: 87).

If one views the above paragraph from the perspective of Luke's 'conversionist response', then Luke was still acting in accordance with what he set out to do. Luke deemed it important first to change the 'inside' before positive changes to the 'outside' could be made. Luke aimed to structure Christian actions appropriately, so that it would be in line with his theological vision of working towards Christian unity. Luke's main concern was to inspire, comfort and readily encourage those in his community, to pursue their mission with 'steadfast endurance'
(Lk. 8:15), and to 'take up their cross daily' (Lk. 9:23) in order to assert their identity as a combined and united community of faith (Karris 1979: 34; Ford 1984: 2). This type of understanding must be seen against the backdrop of hope, which forms a crucial part of Luke's writings.

**Conclusion**

I conclude from the above that Luke did not wish to stress the simple act of giving, but the quality, emotion, truthfulness and compassion associated with this 'giving'. Surplus possessions were 'morally neutral', but the manner in which they were used and distributed was subject to moral judgement. This was evident, for example, in Peter's confrontation with Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, who were accused of lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-12). An individual's wealth or position of high social status did not make that individual honourable. The nature of that person's actions, as was observed, for example, in the Cornelius episode in Acts 10, contributed towards honour.

Throughout Luke—Acts Luke demonstrates that true power and honour is found in the ability to look beyond the issues of race, ethnicity, purity, economic status, class, physical and mental disabilities, and culture. Only by doing this would one be able to recognise and treat fellow Christians, rich and poor, in a neighbourly, loving, caring, and compassionate, the way Jesus did.
Conclusion
The South African context versus the Lucan context

In light of our analysis of the writings of Luke, which relates especially to the context of the 'rich' and the 'poor' in Luke's community, we find a message which is especially relevant to our current situation. With the establishment of our new democratic status, South Africans are finally experiencing the long awaited period of transition. The reality, however, as reflected in the media, has seen an increase in violence, crime, unemployment and corruption. Incidents of corruption reported in the Mail and Guardian newspaper (February 20 to 26, 1998: 5-7, 13; February 27 to March 5, 1998: 7, 15, 29), for example, reflect that numerous officials employed by our new government have been involved in the misuse and fraudulent mishandling of vast sums of money which was meant for development projects across the country.

Despite positive socio-political changes which are taking place, there is still a certain amount of uncertainty, insecurity, and anxiety about what the future holds in store for us. The fact that many of those who were previously marginalised are still being marginalised today, has added to the feelings of pessimism which is currently being experienced. The housing crisis in particular has contributed to this state of affairs. A front page caption in the Mail and Guardian (February 20 to 26, 1998), which reads: "the gap between housing promises and reality," goes on to describe the difficulties which the government is experiencing in trying to satisfy the demand for low-cost housing. The South African masses, therefore, are yet to experience the socio-economic benefits which was supposed to accompany the move to democracy. Only a small percentage of society, mainly because of their economic status, are able to fully experience true freedom, mostly at
the expense and suffering of the masses. The weak position in which the masses find themselves, is a constant reminder that much more needs to be done to secure social and economic upliftment in our country. Villa-Vicencio (1990: 140) argues that the church has an important function to fulfill in the reconstruction process, in that it has to empower the poor and the oppressed.

The very feelings of disappointment and disillusionment alluded to above, were likely to have been experienced by the poor who joined Luke’s Christian community, as was illustrated in chapter 5. The promise of the kingdom of God did not bring with it relief from being socially marginalised or from experiencing severe poverty and hunger. Within the confines of the Christian community which contained rich and prestigious members as well, the fears and pessimism of the poor must have been accentuated. It must have been equally frustrating for the more prestigious Christians, who were being asked to 'accept' and 'tolerate' the poorer Christians, with whom they would normally have no contact. How then are Christians in South Africa today, able to use what Luke envisaged for his own community nearly two thousand years ago?

The effectiveness of social science techniques

In response to this question we can once again stress the applicability and flexibility of the social science techniques for not only equipping readers with the skills for understanding Luke on his own cultural terms, but also for making it possible by way of contrast, to learn more about their society (Neyrey 1991: XViii). In the interpreting process, the reader has to be fully aware of his own social reality, as well as that of the text. Using social science techniques, I have
throughout this thesis, constructed scenarios in which Luke could be encountered in his own socio-cultural setting. Having done this, I am now in the position to compare my own social context with Luke's.

Accepting the challenge posed by the poor

Within Luke's community, he makes a call to Christians to 'accept' the challenges posed by both Christianity and society at large. Luke urged his audience to adapt and comply with the demands raised in the community, in such a way that it would promote true Christian fellowship. Personal sacrifice on the side of Christians, especially the rich, was the only way in which to secure Christian unity. Addressing the needs of the poor and the needy in the community was the true test of Christian commitment, hospitality, understanding, and compassion. Only by doing this could the community as a whole experience the true joy of God's salvation, as was demonstrated in Acts 2 and 4.

More than a decade ago Domeris (1986: 58) asked regarding our South African context: "So who are the poor, whom God champions: are they the literally poor, the spiritually poor or the godly poor?" His question is no less relevant today.

Biblical analysis of this question has lead Domeris (1986: 58) to conclude that the 'poor' must be understood in the sense that they are the ones who suffer at the hands of the 'wealthy and unscrupulous'. The greed and self-righteousness of the wealthy, issues which are stressed in the writings of Luke, are factors which contribute directly to the plight of the poor. The ones who are most affected by this state of affairs are those who at the end of the day, have no means with
which to physically sustain themselves. Domeris deduces from this that poverty is synonymous with oppression, and that God acts as 'redeemer' for all marginalised groups, such as orphans, street children, the hungry, the disabled, the beggars, the homeless and the unemployed. Throughout Luke-Acts Luke displays a similar concern. Karris (1979: 103) also voices himself very strongly concerning the concept of poverty in society when he states that: "Poverty is an evil which is to be stamped out. The kingdom of God is a frontal attack on the evil by which people are made and kept economically poor and oppressed."

Karris (1979: 103) adds that poverty should not be glorified, and Christians should actively take up the struggle by joining in demonstrations for improved human rights for all. The scandal to the church and humanity today is the fact that the gap between those living in 'poverty' and those living in 'affluence', is becoming all the more greater (Wolterstorff 1981: 74).

In chapter 7, reference was made to the 'reversal theme' in the work of Luke. Marshall (1970: 142-143) reminds us that although this theme of 'reversal' is used by Luke to highlight certain socio-economic concerns, it is not restricted to wealth and poverty alone. This theme is also used by Luke to draw attention to certain attitudes and perceptions which people have of God. The parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk. 18:9-14), where there is a contrast between legal righteousness and sinfulness, demonstrates this point. This, states Marshall (1970: 143), is the real paradox which is presented in Luke. Marshall does agree with Karris (1979: 103) that poverty is not an ideal in itself, but adds further that wealth is not necessarily and automatically an evil state of being. Rather it is the underlying attitude towards God which is of greater concern.
Luke's concern for the poor in his Christian community has highlighted the very real and practical concerns which Christians of his time were faced with. Haan (1988: 54-55) states that issues concerned with individual worth and acceptance, the nature of one's duty towards fellow Christians and towards 'others' in broader society, have been and will continue to be areas of concern for all Christians. Christians today live in a highly technological society where much emphasis is placed on individual achievement and prowess. Haan (1988: 41) reminds us, however, that in the Bible the survival of the weakest is a priority. The Christian concern for the weak, therefore, must not occupy a subordinate position in our lives. We need to express our concern for those in need in a practical and constructive manner.

The Christian commitment to the community and wider society

Botha (1988: 35) states that the types of situations described above, cause Christians to experience tension in their daily lives, because they are caught between being separated from society as well as having a commitment to that same society. In chapter 5 reference was made to rich Christians in Luke's community who found themselves in a similar position, in that they wanted to identify and maintain strong ties with their non-Christian peers. Luke's response to this state of affairs was that these Christians first establish the appropriate fellowship ties with other Christians in the community. He also stressed that the new core values of almsgiving and friendship were vital parts of one's identity and sense of belonging in the community.

We can apply Luke's sentiments in the above paragraph to the situation in our Christian churches today. Botha (1988: 35) suggests that Christians should adopt a 'critical solidarity' stance towards the
world and their societies. The 'critical' aspect of this stance does require that Christians maintain a certain distance from society, by conforming to a way of living which is distinct from the world. This does not mean, however, that there should be no Christian involvement in society. Botha (1988: 35) asserts that Christians should maintain solidarity with the world in which they live.

In the pursuit of 'holiness', which is shaped and structured by Christian reverence and commitment to God, there is also a further commitment to love and respect the neighbour, the fellow men and women both in the church and in society at large (Botha 1988: 35). The parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk.10:25-37), illustrates the extent to which Christians have to go in order to assist a needy neighbour, without expecting anything in return. God's call to Christians to 'love one another' actually compels Christians to also be involved in the affairs of the neighbour and of the world in which they live. Botha (1988: 35) states that the word 'holy' has been avoided when Christians describe themselves. Yet it is the Bible which demands that Christians live holy lives, and it is this aspect which requires Christians to also be 'strangers' in the world. This means that Christians, in their imitation of Jesus Christ, should conduct themselves concretely in society. This 'concrete' participation in society designates 'holiness'. Villa-Vicencio (1995: 57-61) stresses that Christians have to take on this responsibility with critical Christian conviction, so that they can make responsible choices in deciding what is best for them as members of the Christian community in the world today.

Christian peace

Much can also be learned from Luke's focus on establishing the correct
type of relationship between the rich and the poor in his Christian community. Establishing proper Christian relationships was ultimately aimed at achieving a sense of 'peace' amongst the diverse Christian membership. Being at peace with oneself was a prerequisite for being at peace with the world. This aspect of 'peace' carries with it the Christian sense of hospitality and almsgiving, of being humble, considerate and understanding towards others, of loving and caring for one's fellows. These actions are governed by the correct attitude and sincere commitment one has to God.

In de Villiers (1989: 28) analysis of the significance of the gospel of 'peace' (Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:17; 6:15) for South Africa, he states that peace refers to much more than just the absence of war. This notion is echoed by Wolterstorff (1981: 69). This understanding of the 'gospel of peace' is drawn from the Old Testament message of peace as 'shalom'. The implication here is that the 'peace' brought by Jesus Christ is similar to the 'shalom' that the Old Testament prophets yearned for. De Villiers (1989: 28) describes it as follows:

Peace as shalom ... formulated negatively, ... includes the absence of alienation, material need and oppression in society. Formulated positively, it indicates a state of comprehensive social harmony and material well-being in society.

Peace cannot truly exist when no true worship and obedience to God is taking place (Ez. 13:10; 16). Complete peace can only occur if there is harmony in nature and if men and women have entered into a true, correct and harmonious relationship with God, themselves, and their fellows (Wolterstorff 1981: 69). Drawing from the emphasis to follow the example of Jesus Christ, who on the cross reconciled humans with God, de Villiers (1989: 29) states that Christians can find the basis for building a new Christian community. In Luke's Christian community,
which consisted of people from varying cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status, reconciliation was made possible by Luke's emphasis on imitating the actions and attitudes of Jesus. Only by doing this could a previously divided community combine to form a close unity which looked beyond the 'differences' which existed (de Villiers 1989: 29). These thoughts about reconciling differences are expressed in Eph. 2:14, where both Jew and Gentile are united in Christ, and also in Gal. 3:28, where one's commitment to Christ transcends all social, cultural, and gender boundaries. True peace, then, is for the benefit of all and not only for certain 'elite' groups. This peace is not restricted nationally, ethnically, socially, economically, or politically (Swartley 1983: 33).

Money versus salvation

According to Haan (1991: 63), the powers of money, possessions and oppression, are powers which provoke 'jealousy' in the liberating God of the Bible (Deut. 6:15). Today, the power of money is much greater because it is interwoven with the power of the state. Although this power today is in a different historical form, it is the same power, according to Haan (1991: 63), which 'earlier had stood between God and humanity'. The presence of people who are in need, exploited and oppressed, is an indication that true peace does not yet exist in society today (de Villiers 1989: 29). Domeris (1986: 58-59) and Wolterstorff (1981: 81) both assert that those persons who actively contribute towards the absence of peace, are putting themselves into direct conflict with the protective function of God as 'redeemer' of the 'poor'. The fact that God takes the side of the poor regardless of their spiritual state corresponds completely with the Hebrew understanding of 'Redeemer or Go-el'. Legally this means that the weak
and powerless have to be defended at all costs against the exploitation of the rich and the powerful. This does not mean, however, that the faults of the 'poor' will not be judged by God, for they will, but only after God has offered them protection first.

Swartley (1983: 29-35) concludes that the themes connected with the concept of 'peace' in the writings of Luke have to do with the following: redemption from oppression; light to the pagans; forgiveness of sins; blessings to outsiders; 'yes' to those of good will; a distinguishing characteristic of the Christian community; salvation; and also judgement. In keeping with the theme of 'imitation', Christians today are invited to also act as 'redeemers' and defenders of the poor in their communities, offering them protection and true Christian hospitality.

Peace and justice

To the vision of 'shalom', Wolterstorff (1981: 69; 71) adds the concept of 'justice', in which each person is able to enjoy his or her rights. As such, Shalom is a characteristic of an ethical and responsible community, which is unable to exist without the notion of justice. Haan (1991: 52-53) stresses that looking out for one's own interest only in the money economy, sooner or later leads to acts of injustice. Today, everything we are revolves around money. The constant concern about money causes us to lose sight of everything else, such as family commitments, church and inter-acting with others. Many work seven days a week towards gaining financial stability, and the more one earns the higher one's standard of living becomes. This creates a vicious circle in which no 'real' satisfaction or enjoyment can be obtained. For this reason it is not good enough to strive for financial stability if
everything else, such as our human side, our emotions and dependence on others, falls by the wayside. Commenting on the role of the church in South Africa, Villa-Vicencio (1993: 55) records Cheryl Carolus of the African National Congress as saying: "Religion has an enormous contribution to make in enabling disenchanted, alienated people to rediscover what it means to be human. We are rapidly forgetting that in our society." In this sense, if we give money an independent life of its own we become its slaves and devotees, and this leads to the stifling of proper human relations. This is why mammon is called 'unjust mammon' (Lk. 16:11).

Haan (1991: 55) states that although 'unjust mammon' involves us all, it is important to remain faithful to the little things, the things within our reach, such as providing food or clothes for those needy persons who so often knock on our doors. Wolterstorfff (1983: 71) argues that technology today does have a positive role to play in society, in so far as it makes the advancement towards shalom possible. But within this very process, the limits of technological progress must also be acknowledged, for the latter is 'entirely incapable of bringing about' the realisation of shalom between people and God, and between oneself and the neighbour. This is the responsibility of the individual.

As Christians, we have to assume responsibility just like Luke did, for our weak and needy neighbours, whose very presence 'represents a bit of God's guidance in our lives' (Haan 1991: 41). God's mercy is revealed by the fact that he allows himself to be loved by us in the person of the 'neighbour', as is revealed in the parable of the Good Samaritan. God only becomes incarnate in humans when humans become incarnate in other humans. This act, according to Mazamisa (1987: 165), is
'epiphaniised' in interhuman comradeship, which represents the indestructible foundation upon which the love of the neighbour is anchored. According to Perkins (1981: 131), the Lucan understanding of this 'love command':

...is represented as the ideal fulfillment of the law ... it expresses some of the deepest aspirations of humanity, since it sets forth the real condition for the justice and peace that humans find so sadly lacking in their world.

A further argument is that the poor actually exist for our salvation. Haan (1991: 41) states that the poor are the 'associates of God who have been given the authority to 'bless'. This is often experienced when we offer food, clothes or money, to the beggar at our door. The reply of thanks usually given is "God bless you". Part of our Christian duty, then, is to actively pursue justice and to enrich human life by making use of and mastering the technology at our disposal (Haan 1991: 41-42).

In South Africa, the atrocities committed in the past and the 'secret' motivations behind these actions, have finally being unveiled via the pursuits of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. During these gatherings of the Commission, the hardships, pains and sufferings of a whole range of South Africans have finally been revealed and made publicly known. Within this public space, Christians need to reach out to those in need in order to accommodate and facilitate the process of healing in our country.

This healing process, which embodies true reconciliation and genuine peace must, however, be accompanied by the process of social justice. Reconciliation and peace cannot become absolute values at the expense of justice (South African Council of Churches 1995: 1-3). De Gruchy
(1995: 218) and Villa-Vicencio (1992: 40) assert that this process of social justice must include sincere acts of 'appropriate reparation' on behalf of the marginalised, oppressed, poor and dehumanised 'victims' of apartheid in South Africa. These 'victims' issue a radical prophetic challenge to the Christian church and society at large, to review things from 'below', from the perspective of those in need. Luke's understanding of the story of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:8-10) motivates the necessity and legitimacy of this type of action.

**Securing the appropriate relationship between the rich and the poor**

Luke's message to the rich shows that wealth in itself is not evil, but rather the extent to which it can take precedence over one's sense of community and fellowship. Luke does not outrightly denounce the 'rich' in his Christian community. He is 'sensitive' to the problems and difficulties which they experience in relating to others who are less fortunate than themselves. Luke is also well aware that the cause of these strained relations is directly connected to the intense attachment of the rich to the material wealth they have accumulated. This attachment to material wealth which has overshadowed the deeper and more profound concern for the well-being of the poor. Luke, therefore, opts to interact directly with the rich in his community. His call to them is one of 'friendship', in which he challenges them to change their attitudes and perceptions of the 'poor' in exchange for an opportunity at gaining true salvation. So doing, Luke stresses that the 'spiritual' development of one's being is also vitally important.

A crucial component in Luke's ministry is his focus on the aspect of humanity. This is why he is so close to the poor, the widows, the orphans, the powerless, the oppressed, and the outcasts, for it is they
who have nothing to offer God except their humanity and their state of suffering. They come to God as they are: in their poor and humble disposition. The rich on the other hand, are blinded by their wealth and possessions in so much as it deprives them of that very type of humanity they need in order to be 'humble'. In Luke's eschatological vision of reversal, it is those without humanity who are deprived. He challenges them to reach beyond the values of their wealth, power and prestige. They are prompted by Luke to identify within themselves that human element of their nature, which reaches out to others and embraces them. The process of coming to terms with the 'human element' within ourselves, will allow us to 'see' Jesus in the neighbour. This realisation will enable us to help put an end to the abuse and neglect suffered by our fellows.

Within the context of our South African setting, Luke's ministry is a ministry of 'ubuntu'. When we analyse the suffix ntu, we find that it refers to the ancestor who gave rise to a human society which functions communally for the sake of all. In this type of society no person should be left poor or deprived. The prefix ubu, is a reference to the abstract, and in this sense "ubuntu is the quality of being human. Ubuntu represents the quality or behaviour of ntu society. that is, sharing charitableness and co-operation" (Mfenyana 1986: 19).

Luke's ministry of 'ubuntu' concerns specific attitudes towards people and society. The archbishop of Cape Town, Njongonkulu Ndungane, emphasises that 'ubuntu' is a prescription for a human way of life which involves caring, sharing, love, patience, understanding and compassion. He states that this acting out of 'ubuntu' brings one closer to God (The Mail and Guardian, February 20 to 26, 1998: 34). As humans we are, therefore, all dependent on others to exercise, develop
and fulfill our own humanities. Only within this context will Christians be able to legitimately occupy their positions as part of God's people. In pointing to the importance and potency of good story endings, Karris (1979: 32) states that a well written piece is not only held together by its ending, but that it is also this very ending which "points us toward our future; it challenges our present and asks how we are to live our futures."

The end of Acts, therefore, provides not only resolution and closure, but also openness and mission, a strategy for the future in South Africa. Pervo (1990: 96) states that Luke's closing words are indicative of:

an opening, a bright and invigorating bid to the future, an assurance that 'the ends of the earth' is not the arrival at a boundary, but realization of the limitless promises of the domain of God.

For Luke the path to true salvation starts with the sincere awareness of the love and compassion of God within the individual self, which is experienced through the acceptance of the teachings and actions of Jesus Christ. This awareness within the 'self' becomes concretely visible in the expression of our actions, perceptions and attitudes towards the neighbour. Only within these 'expressions' can our understanding of what God desires of us as Christians, achieve true fruition. Before Luke could preach this message to the outside world, he had to ensure that his followers, as the representatives of God's rule, had reached this level of understanding in both word and deed. This is the profound depth and extent of Luke's commitment to his role as a Christian leader and as a follower of Jesus. His message for us today is that we hold steadfast in our faith, by accepting the
challenges of society in the spirit of life, hope, community and fidelity to God. This is in keeping with his tradition of sincere Christian commitment, which is a continual, enriching and dynamic process.

As members of the Christian church today, we have a definite role to play in the upliftment of society. No longer can we ignore the plight of the poor. Like Luke, we have to become actively involved in working towards our own salvation and also the salvation of others. The salvation process is grounded in the reality of our South African situation, and it is from this basis that we can begin to develop a true and meaningful relationship with God, by way of imitating the actions of Christ.
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