

**TANGAZA COLLEGE**

**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

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**SHEMA AND LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR**

**An Exegetical Analysis of Shema and Love of Neighbour in  
Luke 10:25-28. Its Applications Into our Christian Life Today**

Moderator

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A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

**NAIROBI 2005**

*To my Late Father Nakpane Bernard*

*And My Mother Daré Jeanne,*

*With Love and dedication.*

*And to The Society of Divine Word, who gave me the taste to the  
Scriptures*

## EPIGRAPH

*" He who does not Love does not know God ; for God is Love "*

*New Revised Standard Version 1 John 4 :8.*

*"ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν."*

*Novum Testamentum Graece 1 John 4:8*

*"Celui qui n'aime pas n'a pas connu Dieu, Car Dieu est amour."*

*La Bible des Peuples 1 Jean 4:8.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to many persons their timely support and help during the process of writing this long essay. Though the flaws and shortcomings of this essay are my own. I am now more aware than ever of the corporate nature of the human enterprise as I reflect on the process that gave birth to this work.

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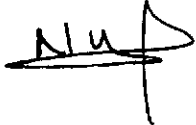
I wish also to express my deep gratitude to the Society of the Divine Word for its support and to all my confreres in CFC Langata.

My most heartfelt thanks to the teachings staff of Tangaza College for their encouragement and concern while teaching different theological courses. My gratitude also to my parents who have deeply inspired me to venture into the world of Biblical studies and helped me to discover Jesus in the sacred scriptures and to practise the virtue of Love. They have really been a constant support for me. I am thus greatly indebted to them.

Finally my greatest thanks to the Almighty God for giving me good health and strength during the process of producing this work.

## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed :  :

Name of Student : Nakpane Gbandi Louis

Date : February 11<sup>th</sup> 2005

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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Name of Supervisor : Rev. Dr. Christopher Owczarek, SDB.

Date : 11 | 02 | 2005

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### **1. The Motivation and Aim of the Study**

Like everyone I know, my life, too, has been a long series of interwoven experiences, both good and bad. For it was mainly through these experiences that I survived my infancy, completed my childhood, ended my adolescence and moved toward a dynamic state of growing to maturity. And as I grow up I realise that the widespread inability to show authentic love remains a big challenge today to our society. Never has human being life been held so cheap and individualistic as today: abortions, euthanasia, genocide, racism, hatred, wars, violence, individualism and so on indefinitely. These facts have been haunting me since the days of my conscious acceptance of Christianity. I saw Christians eliminating each other, conflict between religions in the name of God, wars, discriminations...All these events made me consider Jesus' teaching on the love of God and love of neighbour and to see how relevant it can be for our society today and especially in my work as a missionary.

Therefore my main aim and purpose in this essay is to highlight the Lukan understanding of love in 10:25-28 and its applicability to our society today which is threatened by all kinds of anti-love factors as mentioned above. Hence, in this work, I intend to address myself to this question: What is the relevancy of Jesus' teaching on love today? Then we will see to what extent Biblical instruction on love of God and love of neighbour make sense in our contemporary world.

## **2.Method. Structure and Content of the Study**

In this work, we shall be referring to various commentaries and studies for the exegetical investigation in order to have a systematic synthesis of what some prominent biblical scholars have said on Luke 10:25-28. I have employed a kind of methodology that will render the gospel message of love to be intelligible to those Christians who take seriously the practice of reading and studying the scriptures. Therefore my method will be descriptive, comparative and exegetical in nature.

This essay has three chapters with a short introduction and conclusion for each chapter. Chapter one studies the pericope Luke 10:25-28 in its contexts: immediate and remote. It also makes a survey of the notion of *Shema and love of neighbour* in the Old Testament. In chapter two, we will focus on extensive exegesis of Luke 10:25-28. This exegesis will indeed contain a lot of information and details that will enable us to unveil the concepts of love of God and love of neighbour. In chapter three, we are going to bring out the theological message of love in the Gospel of Luke and how relevant it is for Christian living in our world.

## **Chapter I**

### **Introductory Questions on Luke 10:25-28**

#### **1.Introduction:**

In this chapter, we are basically concerned with introductory questions that we considered necessary to deepen and clarify in order to facilitate an easy grasp of the topic on the part of the reader. Since our main investigation of the text is focused on Shema and Love of Neighbour, we need to trace these themes back to their origins and understanding in the Old Testament and in Judaism. Hence, there is a need of dealing with the questions of historical context and literary context.

#### **2. The Delimitations of the Text**

##### ***2.1 Terminus A quo***

The high point in the narrative of Jesus' relationship with his disciples, which is reached in 10:20-24, is abruptly interrupted by a lawyer. This abrupt question of the Lawyer therefore interrupts the serene atmosphere of the preceding verses and seems relatively unrelated to the previous material.<sup>1</sup> The question that the lawyer raises is about the boundaries between the disciples and others outside the circle of Jesus' followers both here and elsewhere in the journey narrative. The lawyer's question moves the narrative in a fresh direction. Thus we can conclude that verse 25 is really the beginning of our text.

##### ***2.2 Terminus ad quem***

There is an ongoing discussion, however, regarding the terminus ad quem. This discussion regards the collocation of verse 29. Should this verse go with the

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<sup>1</sup> H.HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 75.



preceding vv. 24-28 or the following passage vv. 30-37? “While some scholars approach Luke 10:25-37 as one single pericope, a good number of them consider the passage as consisting of two separate pericopes, the lawyer’s question (Luke 10:25-28) and the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) and Luke 10:29 is considered to be a transitional verse.”<sup>2</sup>

The relative briefness of the surrounding dialogue should not make us ignore it; otherwise the parable which is framed by it would become merely an ethical lesson or exhortation to reach out to people in need. Furthermore there is a logical inconsistency between the meaning of “neighbour” in 10:27,29 and in 10:36. The divergent use of “neighbour” in a passive sense in 10:27 and in active sense in 10:36 indicates that the unity of the text is not that of an authentic and original dialogue between Jesus and lawyer. For the fact that Luke 10:25-28 was found also in Mark 12:28-31 and in Matt 22:34-40, it seems best to conclude that the originally separate units were Luke 10:25-28 and 10:30-36 and that these were united because of their common theme of “neighbour” but with its opposite meanings not totally harmonized.<sup>3</sup> Therefore verse 28 is our terminus ad quem.

### **3. Context of the Text**

#### ***3.1 The Immediate Context***

The question of the lawyer falls during the journey to Jerusalem. Anyone who reads this section will be struck by the frequency of references to “coming”, “goings”, “doings” in the sequence of pericopes or individual passages. A large number of other verbs of movements are also found in 9:51–10:42 such as send

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<sup>2</sup> H.HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 75-76

<sup>3</sup> J.D. CROSSAN, *In Parables*, 60.

(9:52) enter (9:52; 10:5,8) go (10:7,30) follow (9:57) stood up (10:25) do (10:25) do this (10:28). The question of the lawyer fits well in this context, since the verbs like "do", "stood up", "love" are verbs of actions. It does not seem to be accidental that the quotation of love of God and love of neighbour follows so closely the coming of salvation in all of its fullness to all people through the sending of seventy disciples. Thus by accepting their mission, the seventy disciples are showing a concrete example of their love for God and for their neighbours whom they are going to preach. Therefore the question of the lawyer is not out of place in this travel narrative. "The practice of God's word is the central issue in this travel narrative unit and it is obvious from the repetition and placement of the verb "to do". In this way the question of the lawyer is bound together with references to praxis."<sup>4</sup>

In this journey, Jesus expands the core group of 12 Apostles to include the seventy or seventy-two and presents the basic attitudes required to pursue the way to God. The disciples are prominent in 9:51 to 10:24. In this section Jesus' journey to Jerusalem shapes the role of the disciples for they are presented as either sent before Jesus to prepare his way as he journeys or as called to follow him on his journey.<sup>5</sup> He takes up various life contexts, activities and relationships and develops the basic dispositions necessary to inherit eternal life.

### ***3.2 The Remote Context***

Undoubtly, Jesus' commands on the love of God and love of neighbour constitute the most challenging ethical teaching in the Gospel of Luke. We can notice a strong literary dependence between Luke 10:25-28 and Luke 18:18. In 10:25 Luke writes, "teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The formulation

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<sup>4</sup> G.B. JOEL, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: the Gospel of Luke*, 425.

<sup>5</sup> C.ROBERT, *The Narrative Unity of Luk-Acts*, 228.

of this question is verbally almost the same as that of Luke 18:18 “Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Just as in 10:25-28, Jesus refers here in the pericope of the rich man to the commandments.<sup>6</sup>

We do also have an implicit expression of the love of God and of neighbour in Luke 6:27-36. In this Lukan text, love of one’s enemies is mentioned and some attitudes toward those who behave in an inimical way are interpreted as expressions of love.<sup>7</sup> The love of God and love of neighbour is mostly expressed in the person of Jesus in his attitude to adore and serve only his Father (4: 5-8) in his attitude towards the sick\* and the outcasts (5: 12-14; 7: 1-10) in his attitude towards those who contributed to his arrest and his crucifixion (22: 48-51; 23: 34) and above all his attitude towards the gentiles (17:11-19).

#### 4. Structure

From a formal point of view, the dialogue has a very regular structure. To a lawyer’s question Jesus answers with a counter-question and, having received a satisfactory answer, he adds a command.<sup>8</sup> Whoever united the separate units of 10:25-28 and 10:30-37 did more than merely juxtapose them. In each controversy dialogue, the question leads immediately into the counter question either biblical or parabolic. We have as follows:

Luke	10: 25-28	10: 29-37
Question of the Lawyer	10: 25	10: 29
Counter-question of Jesus	10: 26	10: 30-36
Answer of the Lawyer	10: 27	10: 37a
Counter-Answer of Jesus	10: 28	10: 37b

<sup>6</sup> J. LAMBRECHT, *Once More Astonished: the parables of Jesus*, 64.

<sup>7</sup> C. OWCZARECK, *Sons of the Most High*, 101.

<sup>8</sup> C. OWCZARECK, *Sons of the Most High*, 202.

## 5. Parallels

### 5.1 Shema and Love of Neighbour in The Old Testament

#### 5.1.1 Concept of Shema in the Old Testament

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

4 שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

5 וְאַהַבְתָּ אֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ

וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ:

4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD;

5 and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

In chapter five of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses opened his second discourse with a restatement of the Decalogue. Now, in chapter 6, he turns to the major theme of the address, the elaboration of the second commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Deut 5: 7). He begins his ringing appeal with *יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמַע* (shema Israel), words that have become deeply imbedded in the consciousness of Jews. It has taken its name from the first word of the doxology found in Deuteronomy 6:4. As it had developed by at least as early as the second century C.E. (Common Era), the shema consisted of three portions of the Pentateuch: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Deuteronomy 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. The words *יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמַע* (Hear, O Israel) are evidently a stereotyped formula in Deuteronomy (5:1; 9:1; 20:3; 27 :9).<sup>9</sup> We shall now move on to a closer examination of the shema and its commentaries breaking down the text into phrases.

*שְׁמַע*

The primary meaning of shema is "Hear". Where words are heard, it implies an engagement with the mind and comes to mean listen (Gen 18:10). The term *שְׁמַע*

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<sup>9</sup> A. ANNE-CATHERINE, "Hear Israel": a reflection on consecrated Life, 6.

carries with itself the implication of understanding, and subsequent obedience. The word שמע is in the singular, hence it can be said that this is an admonition for Israel as a single body to always have faith in God and take heed to his direction. Besides listening or hearing, שמע is also used in the sense of "to learn about", "to be informed of" (Gen 21:26;42:2). In many passages, שמע means to listen attentively, to pay attention. This emphasis on listening goes together with the title and theme of the Book: "Words, Moses' speech." The great events of creation, patriarchs, exodus, Sinai and the wilderness are at an end. What remain now are the words of the story of what happened and the commandments to be fulfilled. Israel task now and in its future generations, is to listen, to learn the story and to do the commandments.<sup>10</sup> The association of shema with teaching and learning also appears in Deuteronomy. At mount Horeb, Israel assembled to hear God's words so they might "learn" to fear him (Deut 4:10) while Moses' mediatorial role is to teach God's commandments to Israel (Deut 5:31).

From listening, שמע comes to be used in the sense of perceiving, understanding. It may therefore be connected with terms for knowing (the root ידע) and understanding (the root בין) (Job 13:1-2). Israel's failure to perceive God's revelation can therefore be expressed as the inability of their ears to hear. In a variety of context, shema denotes "listen to", "heed by acting upon", or "putting into practice" what has been said. Where the listener is subject to the authority of the speaker, it comes to mean "obey" (Jeremiah 35:14). Obedience to a person is often expressed through שמע (Deut 21:18; 1Sam28: 21).<sup>11</sup> However, the Hebrew constructions with שמע do not clearly distinguish between listening and doing. When

<sup>10</sup> R.E.FRIEDMAN, *The Commentary on the Torah*, 586.

<sup>11</sup> A.V. WILLEM, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 175-180.

Moses finishes reading the book of the covenant, Israel declares, “we will do and we will hear” (Ex 24:7). This raises a question: why does the putting into practice precede the act of hearing? The people seem to undertake to practice the Torah before they have even explored its contents. They know that when God speaks you have to enter into the experience God proposes without presuming to be able to grasp at once the whole meaning of this words. The people come to understand gradually the importance of a word that they first of all hear, and then really listen to only after they have begun to put it into practice. The actions of hearing and doing are so closely linked, that it is difficult to know which comes first.<sup>12</sup>

### ישראל

It is the biblical name of the people of God and of its eponymous ancestor who was also called Jacob. The Bible insists that the name Israel was conferred on the patriarch Jacob by God (Gen 32:22-31), yet there are divergent accounts of its bestowal on him and various theories regarding its meaning. Besides being used to designate the patriarch, it is more frequently employed as a collective title for his blood or spiritual descendants, the “children of Israel” or the “house of Israel”.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed the name Israel is often used as a mere substitute for the personal name Jacob. It is frequent also in the phrase, “the sons of Israel” (בני ישראל), which is used of the immediate sons of Jacob in Exodus 1:1, but which, along with such terms as the “seed of Israel”, the “house of Israel”, and the “assembly of Israel”, is used very frequently of the more descendants of Jacob also. The name ישראל is applied to the immediate family of Jacob in Gn 34:7. Prior to the secession of the northern tribes and again after the restoration of the people of God. But during the

<sup>12</sup> A. ANNE-CATHERINE, “Hear Israel”, *A reflection on Consecrated Life*, 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> J.A. PIERCE, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 695.

period of the existence of the Northern Kingdom, Israel signified that kingdom in contradistinction to the southern kingdom, which was called Juda. In postexilic times, Israel was occasionally used to designate the laity in contrast to the priests, the levitical orders, and the temple servants (1Chr 9:2; Ezr 6:16; Neh 11:3). There is a teaching in Judaism regarding the term "Israel" which is said to be referring to all Jews.

יהוה

The consensus of modern scholarship supports the biblical texts in associating the name Yahweh with the root הוה "to become". It is the most important name of God for Israel. The Tetragrammaton יהוה is the personal name of the God of Moses. The correct pronunciation of the name was lost from Jewish tradition some time during the middle ages. The pronunciation most likely was YAHWEH. "The Tetragrammaton YHWH is not ordinarily written with its appropriate Hebrew vowels. But that the original pronunciation was YaHWeH seems probable, both from the corresponding verbal form, the imperfect of יה ". After the fall of Jerusalem (587 B.C), people did not pronounce any longer the sacred name of the Lord, out of respect for the commandment of Ex 20:7 לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּאָה (You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain). Therefore the people of Israel, in order to respect fully the name of the Lord, did not pronounce it anymore. They only wrote the tetragrammaton, i.e the 4 sacred letters, which are written in scrolls of the Hebrew Bible: יהוה.<sup>14</sup> At the same time the people pronounced אֲדֹנָי (Adonai means the Lords). Towards the eighth century C.E. Jews started writing the consonants in the Hebrew Bible in order to keep the exact

<sup>14</sup> P.BARTON, *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, I, 210.

<sup>15</sup> J. LOUIS, *A Jewish Theology*, 139.

pronunciation of the words. So they wrote the sacred Tetragrammaton יהוה with the vowels of אֶרֶץ, coming to present form יְהוָה, with some minor changes, which are allowed in the fluid pronunciation of the vowels. Late in the period of the second temple the name had come to be regarded as unspeakably holy and therefore unsuitable for use in public reading. The structure and etymology of the name have been much discussed. While no consensus exist, the name is generally thought to be a verbal form derived from the root הָיוּ, “be at hand, exist, come to pass” whether the verb was originally a qal or a hiphil formation is not clear.<sup>16</sup>

The Hebrew word יְהוָה appears to have a close meaning to that of “Baal” both words could be rendered “Lord”. Nevertheless יְהוָה differs from Baal. יְהוָה doesn’t necessarily designate a relationship of ownership but rather authority. The important thing is this: the sacred name of the Lord indicates the God of Israel as near to his people. They will appreciate his mysterious presence little by little.

אלהים

It occurs 680 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is the plural form of אֵל (’ēl) (god, God) who was the central, most powerful deity in the belief of the Canaanites. It mainly indicates God as strong, powerful. אֱלֹהֵינוּ means therefore “Our God”. Generally when the reference is to God, the verbs and adjectives used with, are in the singular. “The plural form has long been a puzzle, the Rabbis being obliged to defend it against the “sectarians” who abducted from the plural form on the basis of the idea that in God are to be found all the attributes of Deity”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> O.C.FREEDMAN, *Theological Dictionary of The Old Testament*, V, 500.

<sup>17</sup> J. LOUIS, *A Jewish Theology*, 138.



אֶחָד is an adjective masculine singular absolute. אֶחָד ('eḥad) one, same, single, first, each, once, fem. 'aḥat (אֶחָת). Here we are going to examine the meaning of the “the Lord is our Lord, the Lord is one”. To confess that the Lord is one is not just to say it with lips but with full commitment of heart and soul. To say “God is One” suggests that there are no other gods. This is affirmed in the first verses of the Decalogue: “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt...” Deut 5:6-8. The Jewish mystical perception of God’s Oneness is of a dynamic, not static unity. God’s unity is characterized by a degree of diversity that is expressed in many ways in which God discloses himself to the world. Moses himself affirms that the God of Israel is greater than all gods. (Exod 18:11). From the point of view of syntax, the meaning of v4: יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד in Deut 6:4-9, is debatable. For instance, it might be translated: “ The Lord is our God, the Lord alone”. But it might also be translated “ The Lord, our God, is one Lord”. In the first case the passage is a confession set in opposition to the temptations of the Canaanite cult of Baal; in the other case it is a confession of the oneness of Yahweh in face of the multiplicity of divergent traditions and sanctuaries of Yahweh. Both interpretations can claim support from Deuteronomy.<sup>18</sup> “One” is not a title or name of God, but an adjective of quality. The correlation between the two halves of the sentence and the following verses suggest that this is not so much an abstract monotheism as a claim to Israel’s total obedience and the exclusion of any other (Deut 5:7). The immediate context does not suggest that it is directed against polytheism or different ideas of Yahweh found in local cults. Nor is this idea used to support the Deuteronomy

<sup>18</sup> V.R.GERHARD, *The Old Testament Library*. “Deuteronomy”, 63.

program of the centralization of worship. However, in the broader context of Deuteronomy and the Old Testament it can imply unity, uniqueness and monotheism. Israel shares in God's uniqueness (2sam 7:23) and Israel's eschatological hope looks to the realization of Yahweh being one and his name One (Zech 14:9), when all powers that have claimed divinity will be renounced or absorbed into the One true God.<sup>19</sup>

#### אהב

This verb forms of אהב (ahābā) love, occurs 140 times in the Old Testament. There are three categories of the religious use of the אהב. First it is used of Yahweh's love for his people. With God as subject, the term expressing God's love appears frequently within the circle of theology. Yahweh's love is one of the most important bases of the covenant. The second category is in the context of human love for Yahweh or for things related to him. The majority of instances describing human love for God occur in these passages that represent or reflect deuteronomic theology. אהב expressing human love for God, occurs actually only in Deuteronomy or Deuteronomy influenced parts of the Old Testament. Love for God in the Old Testament has an essentially religious content or significance rather than a predominantly moral content, as in the case in the New Testament, where it is so linked to love for the world. (James 4:4; John2: 15). We noticed that in the Old Testament there are two main motifs of loving God. First motivation for loving Yahweh is the fact that God alone is God and hence to him alone is much exclusive loving devotion due (Deut 6:4-5). But such human love for Yahweh is also motivated by presenting is as the fitting, grateful response of a human being to all

<sup>19</sup> A.V. WILLEM, *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament & Exegesis*, I, 349-350

that Yahweh has done for him/her in terms of election, redemption and providential care.<sup>20</sup> The third category will be love of neighbour or towards the fellow human being. We will elaborate more about it later.

בְּכָל-לֵבָבְךָ “with all your Heart”

Jewish tradition offers two readings of the fourth phrase, “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart”. According to biblical anthropology the heart is an individual’s innermost area, the seat of one’s will, discernment and decision-making process. It is the center of thought (Ps 45:2), conscience (1Sam 24:6) and emotion. It represents the whole inner life of man.<sup>21</sup> In the Old Testament, the word has a dominant metaphorical use in reference to the center of human psychical and spiritual life, to the entire inner life of a person. Deuteronomy emphasizes that covenant fidelity begins with the heart and not external actions or rituals. The “heart” occurs 51 times in Deut referring mainly to the human heart before God. While בְּכָל-לֵבָבְךָ occurs frequently in the Old Testament (46 times). The connotations of the word “לֵבָה” (heart) are not the same in Hebrew and in English. In the Hebrew the heart is understood as the “inside” of man in a far wider sense. The ancients were unaware of the circulation of the blood and the physiological functions of the heart, but its emotional reaction is easily recognized, and the heart is the bodily focus of emotional activity.<sup>22</sup> In the Old Testament, the heart is the place where man meets God, an encounter which becomes fully effective in the human heart.

<sup>20</sup> A.V. WILLEM, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, I, 277-298.

<sup>21</sup> T. FREEDMAN, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 843.

<sup>22</sup> J.L. MCKENZIE, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 1965.

וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ (with all your soul)

The word “soul” is used in English Bible to translate the Hebrew word נֶפֶשׁ (nephes). The word נֶפֶשׁ has several meanings. Originally, it probably meant like “throat”. From this point, the meaning gradually changed to “breath” (i.e. Gen 35:18) and finally to “life”. The word נֶפֶשׁ can also have the attenuated meaning of “person” or “self”.<sup>23</sup> The association of the נֶפֶשׁ with life is so close that the word is often translated by “life”. The blood was considered the seat of נֶפֶשׁ, since the ancients observed that man lived as long as blood pulsed through his body, but died when the blood had flowed from it.<sup>24</sup> Therefore נֶפֶשׁ is responsible for physical life. If נֶפֶשׁ be preserved, man stay alive, if it leaves the body, man dies. נֶפֶשׁ can denote the essence of any living creature (Gen2:7); it may even be equated with the blood (Gen 9:4). Thus “with all you soul” is understood as meaning that one should be willing to die rather than betray God. That is why Jewish martyrs, who often accepted torture and execution rather than conversion to another religion, recited the shema just before they were murdered. The second century rabbi Akiva was the most famous Jewish martyr to die with the shema on his lips. The word “all” (all your soul, or all your life) was heard as an invitation to give up one’s whole life to God, holding nothing back for oneself, giving back to God this life that he has given and of which he is the sole master and Lord.

וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ (with all your might)

מְאֹד occurs at least 296 times in the Old Testament. It means power, might, much greatly, exceedingly. The two terms אֵלֶּכָּה (heart) and נֶפֶשׁ (soul) are frequently used in Deuteronomy to express unreserved, undivided loyalty to Yahweh (Deut

<sup>23</sup> R.HERMER, *Israelite Religion*, 122.

<sup>24</sup> H.H.PAUL, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 159.

4:29;10:12). In Deut 6:5, a third term נאד is added to underscore the total commitment that is appropriate to the Love of Yahweh with all their heart, with all their essence and with all their might. The Love commanded here certainly involves fear, reverence, obedience, loyalty and service.<sup>25</sup> “With all your might” is interpreted by the Rabbis as meaning with all one’s wealth. One shows love to God by a willingness to dispense charity. Jewish sources regard a person who is unwilling to dispense money to help others as something of an idolatry, since his worship of money takes precedence over his worship of the God who commands him to share with others some of that money.

#### *5.1.2 Concept of Neighbour in the Old Testament*

Lev 19:18 אהבת לרעך (you shall Love your Neighbour as Yourself). In the Old testament רע (neighbour, friend, companion) comes from the root רעה (to associate with, be a friend of ). It is used indiscriminately to designate various degrees of association between men ranging from friendship (Deut 13:6; 2Sam 13:3) love (Jeremiah 3:1; Hoseah 3:1) comradeship, companionship (Job 30:29; Prov 17:17) to any other kind of association. Often it means no more than another person.

In Deuteronomy, the formulation of the commandment of love in Lev 19:16-18, the terms רע and רעה are used to designate those who are bound to each other by the covenant, the members of the community. It is not clear whether the commandment to love one’s neighbour applies to Jews only or to non-Jews as well. There is no substantial proof from the Bible concerning the practice of the commandment. From the parallel term in the first part of the verse 18 את בני עמך (“children of your people”), it would seem that לרעך (your neighbour) in the second

<sup>25</sup> A. V WILLEM, *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 824-825.

part of the verse refers to specifically Jewish neighbours, though the word רֵעִי is used elsewhere in the Bible to refer to non-Jewish neighbours as well.<sup>26</sup>

Hence the commandment to love one's neighbour actually applies only to those who are bound to each other in virtue of the covenant with Yahweh. It is not until Deut 10:19 that this commandment is extended to גֵּר (the aliens, sojourners) living in the land as well; while aliens who are merely passing through the land נֹכְרִי (nokri) are not included <sup>27</sup>. The surrounding verses of Lev 19:18 qualify the commandment of love of neighbour. They prohibit unfair dealing and defrauding even of the defenseless and forbid vengeance and the bearing of a grudge. According to the interpretation of the rabbis of the Talmudic period, the commandment of loving one's neighbour does not refer to idolaters. Idolatry is the classic wickedness in Jewish eyes. On the contrary, both Hillel in Avot 1:12 and R. Meir (Avot 6:1) enjoin that one should love all mankind.<sup>28</sup> The love towards the non-Jews and their welfare is understood to be part of the Jewish goal of promoting peace among men. From this commitment a whole range of moral responsibilities toward gentiles devolves upon Jews.

### *5.1.3 Shema in the Jewish Liturgy and in the Jewish tradition*

The "Shema Israel" is the confession of faith par excellence of the Jewish people. They are the first words children learn from their parents, the last to be murmured by the dying. Recited twice a day, morning and Evening, the "Shema Israel" dwells in and shapes the Jewish memory. It is at the central creedal statement

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<sup>26</sup> E.B. BOROWITZ, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, XI, 520-528.

<sup>27</sup> J.B. BAUER, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, II, 613.

<sup>28</sup> E.B. BOROWITZ, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, XI, 520-528.

of Judaism. “Shema, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord” are the most important words in all Judaism, define the relationship of the Jewish people with God, a relationship best expressed in the term of ברית (Beriyt) “covenant”.<sup>29</sup> According to the rabbinic tradition, the Shema originally consisted only of Deuteronomy 6:4, but was later expanded to include verse 5-9; 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. The Mishna<sup>30</sup> devotes considerable space to the proper means of fulfilling one’s obligations to recite the shema as debated by various Rabbis through the ages. The Talmud says that when Jacob was about to reveal the end of days to his children, he was concerned that one of them might be a non-believer. His sons reassured him immediately and cried out “Shema Israel”. The Torah records Moses including the Shema in his farewell address to the Jewish people. “Shema” which derives from the first word of the doxology found in Deuteronomy 6:4 is the core of both the morning and evening daily services and is the Jew’s confession of faith, which bears witness that God is the one, and expresses the duty of loving and serving him with one’s whole being.<sup>31</sup>

## 5.2 Comparison to Markan Text (12:28-34) and to Matthean Text (22:34-40)<sup>32</sup>

Luke 10:25-28	Mark 12:28-34	Matthew 22:34-40
25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?	28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?	34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.
26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?	29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord	35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,
27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with		36 Master, which is the great commandment

<sup>29</sup> C.D. SANTE, *Jewish Prayer: the Origin of Christian Liturgy*, 52.

<sup>30</sup> Mishna is a body of Jewish Law transmitted orally by rabbis who were teachers. Etymologically it means repetition.

<sup>31</sup> P.RAPHAEL, – U.K. COHEN, *The Jewish Liturgy*, 74.

<sup>32</sup> Any Biblical quotations in this long essay are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

<p>all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.</p> <p>28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.</p>	<p>our God is one Lord:</p> <p>30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this <i>is</i> the first commandment.</p> <p>31 And the second <i>is</i> like, <i>namely</i> this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.</p> <p>32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:</p> <p>33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love <i>his</i> neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.</p> <p>34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him <i>any question</i></p>	<p>in the law?</p> <p>37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.</p> <p>38 This is the first and great commandment.</p> <p>39 And the second <i>is</i> like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.</p> <p>40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.</p>
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Here we see the three versions of love commandment and their differences. Each version has been formulated to reflect the situation of the Christians for whom the Evangelist writes. The relationship between the three versions is complex enough to suggest that there were several version of this commandment in circulation among the early Christians.<sup>33</sup> A careful comparison of the three parallel passages seems to indicate that a pericope containing a question addressed to Jesus

<sup>33</sup> P. PERKINS, *Love Commands in the New Testament*, 10.



and leading to a quotation of Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18 was found in both Mark and Q. In line with the other similar cases, Matthew seems to have combined the text of Mark and Q, selecting the context of Mark. Luke apparently chose both the text and the context of Q.<sup>34</sup>

**Markan Text:** In the present pericope a scribe asks Jesus to identify the most important commandment (v. 28). But Jesus goes beyond the question by identifying the next most important commandment. The scribe praises Jesus answer (vv. 32-33) and Jesus pronounces him not far from God's Kingdom. Luke 10:25-28 occurs in a different context from Mk 12:28-34. In Mark, it occurs in Jerusalem after his solemn entry. Because of considerable differences in content, some biblical scholars argue that Luke 10:25-28 is not a Lukan parallel to Mark 12: 28-34. Moreover, Luke contains undeniable reminiscences of Mark 12:28-34, i.e., the fact that he retains the Marcan quartet "heart, soul, strength, mind" while the Septuagint had the triad "heart, soul, strength".<sup>35</sup> Mark uses the term scribe rather than "lawyer" as it is found in Luke and Matthew. Unlike in Matthew and in Luke where the lawyer's intention is to test Jesus, In Mark, the scribe is presented as asking an honest question to Jesus who even praises him. In verse 33, the scribe's answer adds the term "intelligence", and his answer is called "intelligent". Scholars have concluded that we have here a tradition deriving from Hellenistic Jewish Christianity. The explicit statement of v. 33 that love is superior to sacrifice and the quotation of the shema, which stresses monotheism in contrast to gentile polytheism, also point in the same direction.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 76.

<sup>35</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 75.

<sup>36</sup> W. LAMAR, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching & Preaching Mark*, 225.

**Matthean Text:** In contrast to Luke, Matthew is very much interested in the question of Jesus' relationship to the Law. He has reformulated the tradition in 22:40 to make it clear that what is involved is the Christian principle of interpreting the Law.<sup>37</sup> In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is asked what is the greatest commandment in the Law. The Matthean setting is similar to Marcan episode; but the scene is more elaborate and the questioner is "a lawyer".

We will develop more on the reason why Luke differs with Mark and Matthew on the following chapter and hence we see how the difference illustrates the theology of Luke.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter has inserted us into the world of "Shema and Love of Neighbour" and, as such has provided us with some basic tools such are the historical and literary contexts of the text, the meaning of the words in order to start a journey to the Lukan understanding of love of God and love of neighbour. It has set up for us a specific framework within which everything else is to be analyzed. Thus, it has laid the ground for a deep and meaningful exegesis of Luke 10:25-28, which is the object of our next chapter.

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<sup>37</sup> P. PERKINS, *Love Commands in the New Testament*, 23.

## Chapter II

### Exegetical Analysis of Luke 10:25-28

#### 1. Introduction

We have established in chapter one the historical and biblical understanding of “Shema and love of neighbour” and the introductory questions of Luke 10:25-28. We will now concentrate on the exegesis of the text. However, we do not intend to exhaust all that the exegetes have commented on this text, for such an intention would require a gigantesque scientific research beyond the scope of our work. We will venture into a detailed analysis following verse-by-verse format.

#### 2. Analysis

Verse 25: “And behold” (Καὶ ἰδοὺ): Καὶ ἰδοὺ occurs 17 times in Luke and 6 times in Acts. It serves to enliven the narrative, either to awaken attention, or to introduce something new, to emphasize the importance of what follows. It indicates a new beginning which may sound very semitic, but which is also very characteristic of Luke who often imitates the semitizing style of the Septuagint.<sup>38</sup> In the context of this verse, Καὶ ἰδοὺ is just a simple introductory formula.<sup>39</sup> No other indication of time or place is provided.

“A lawyer” (νομικός) : Luke uses νομικός, which is a noun for “lawyer”. It appears in 10:25; 11:45,46; 14:3. The word νομικός is found seven times in Luke (once in Matthew, never in Mark). Luke tends to substitute “lawyer” for “scribe”

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<sup>38</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 78.

<sup>39</sup> J.A.FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke*, x-xxiv, 880.

which would have meant “secretary” in the Greek world (i.e. Acts 19:35), and could have been therefore easily misunderstood by Luke’s Gentile readers.<sup>40</sup> In so doing, he intends to supply his readers with the nearest equivalent in Greco-Roman society to the Jewish scribes who were experts in Mosaic Law.<sup>41</sup> Unlike to modern ears where “lawyer” suggests a professional expert in the secular legal system, a lawyer in Jesus’ time was a person educated in the Jewish law and its interpretation. Jewish law however embraced the whole of life without distinction between the secular and religious spheres.<sup>42</sup> The nearest equivalent in modern Judaism would be a Rabbi. Apart from the interpretation of the law, the lawyers acted as judges in the courts and, specially interesting for this passage, trained young men in discipleship.<sup>43</sup> Luke, in accord with Matthew 22:3, uses the term “lawyer” (νομικός), instead of Mark’s “scribe” (γραμματεὺς) in 12:28. Nevertheless a comparison of Luke 5:17 with Mark 2:6 and Matthew 9:3 shows that the three terms: scribes, doctor of the Law and lawyer were used synonymously and did not denote three distinct classes.<sup>44</sup>

“Stood up” (ἀνέστη): ἀνίστημι is found in several texts in the New Testament; in the context of this verse, the action of the lawyer reflects a social courtesy and a greeting of respect. He stands before Jesus, a sign of esteem, and addresses Jesus respectfully as “teacher”. Normally a teacher would be seated, and his hearers would be seated listening attentively around him. But here an expert in religious law stands up to ask the common test question among the rabbis.

“And tempted him” (ἐκπειράζων αὐτόν). It is actually in the present participle. There is no “and” in the Greek version. He “stood up (ἀνέστη, ingressive

<sup>40</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 79.

<sup>41</sup> EVANS, *Luke*, 355.

<sup>42</sup> B. BYRNE, *The Hospitality of God*, 98.

<sup>43</sup> E.J. TINSLEY, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 119.

<sup>44</sup> W.E. VINE, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament*, 318.

second aorist active) trying to tempt him." Πειράζω is a late form of πειράω and ἐκπειράζω apparently found only in the LXX, and N.T. (quoted by Jesus from Deut 6:16 in Mt 4:7; Luke 4:12 against Satan). Before looking more closely at this phrase, it is good to remember the verses which immediately precede it: "then turning to the disciples he said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" (Luke 10:23-24). Indeed what the disciples see is found in Luke 10:25ff. The seeing of which Jesus speaks to his disciples has the Hebraic meaning of "experiencing", belonging to a generation in which the promises will be realized. Thus the lawyer in order to know the requirements for one to be part of those promises stood up to entrap/ tempt Jesus through his question.<sup>45</sup>

The same verb ἐκπειράζω was used in Luke 4:12 when Jesus after being baptized, went to the desert and was tempted by Satan; here too the lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test. Luke thus identifies the intention of the lawyer. Although one can only speculate on the motives of the lawyer, the suggestion is certainly present that he would like to sound Jesus out. Our text tells us that this lawyer comes to our Lord, asking this question to put him to the test. It is a hypocritical question, because he appears to be a seeker, but he is not. He is not really seeking to be taught by Jesus, nor is he interested in finding the way to eternal life. He does not believe that Jesus, an uneducated man (so far as Judaism viewed him, see John 1:46, 7:44; Acts 4:13), could possibly teach him anything. Therefore he wants to show that Jesus is unlearned, insufficiently trained in knowledge of the Law and methods of

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<sup>45</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 78-79.

argumentation and application and so discredit him as a legitimate teacher of the people of the Torah.<sup>46</sup>

Unlike Matthew who made use of πειράζων (tempting or testing Matt 22:35) Luke rather has strengthened it with an ἐκ (prefix). Most certainly Luke wants to put emphasis on the hostile attitude of the lawyer toward Jesus.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore while in Mark 12:28-31.34, the scribe is presented as asking an honest question which is therefore answered by Jesus, who even praises the scribe as one who is “not far from the Kingdom of God”, Luke and Matthew agree that the lawyer’s intention is to test Jesus, who therefore, in Luke, replies by a counter-question, so that the material seems to have been arranged in the form of a controversy. At the end we can say that the lawyer’s knowledge of the answer shows that his inquiry was not well intentioned.

“Teacher” (Διδάσκαλε used in the vocatif, derives from the noun διδάσκαλος): it is a honorific title given to John the Baptist in 3:10 and it is frequently used later on for Jesus. Earlier this title “διδάσκαλε” had already been given to Jesus in Luke 7:40 by Simon who acknowledged Jesus as one of the teachers of Israel. Only in the fourth Gospel is this title “διδάσκαλος” equated with rabbi (John 1:38) or rabbouni (John 20:10). Jesus, challenged with respect to his status as a teacher, maintains common ground with this expert on the Law while at the same time redirecting the challenge with a counterquestion. Inquiring into the content of the Law, Jesus assumes and endorses its ongoing normativity.

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<sup>46</sup> F.H. BORSH, *Many Things In Parables*, 66.

<sup>47</sup> J.A. FRITZMYER, *The Gospel according to Luke*, X-XXIV, 880.

“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω). Literally it means “By doing what shall I inherit eternal life?” We can notice that the emphasis is put on “doing” (ποιήσας).

Eternal life is endless life as in John's Gospel (John 16:9; 18:18,30) and in Matt 25:46. Luke has taken this form of address over from Mark 10:17. However, in Luke, the question is very different from that in Mark 12:28-34 and Matthew 22: 34-40. There is no reference to the “great” or the “first” commandment, but “... what shall I do to inherit eternal life”. In this form the question was undoubtedly more understandable to Luke's Greek readers, who would have been puzzled by the typically Jewish question about the “first” or the “great” commandment. The latter should be understood against the background of the 248 commandments and 365 prohibitions (totaling 613) of the Old Testament. This does not necessarily mean that Luke himself composed the question in its present form. It is thoroughly biblical, and as we said already it is found in Mark 10:17 (parallel in Matthew 19:16; Luke 18:18), in the story of the rich young man/ruler. It rather shows Luke's capability of selecting from the traditional material what would be readily understandable for his Greek readers.<sup>48</sup>

Luke emphasizes the verb ποιέω “to do”, which occurs in this story four times (Luke 10:24, 28, twice in 37). Elsewhere Luke stresses the importance of doing, i.e. in Luke 3:10, where in response to John the Baptist's exhortation to repentance, the multitudes asked him, “what then shall we do?” (See also Luke 3:12, 14; 11:28, 42). In Luke 10:25, doing and inheriting are related more closely than the

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<sup>48</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 80.

English text shows. The Greek text has a participle: "what doing shall I inherit eternal life".<sup>49</sup>

In the Old Testament, the idea of inheritance referred especially to Israel's privilege of inheriting the promised land. Israel did not do anything to deserve this inheritance which was understood as a gift of God. The inheritance "κληρονομία" was the reward promised to those who belonged to the covenant people. God promised to make them great people, to bless them, and to give them land (Gen 12:1-3). Psalm 15:5 (LXX) speaks of the Lord as one's inheritance and Psalm 36:18 (LXX) of an eternal Inheritance. But this is not connected to "*eternal life*". In fact the combination of *inheritance* and *eternal life* does not occur in the Torah. In the New Testament, the idea of *eternal inheritance* is found only in Hebrew 9:15 although it is suggested by 1 Peter 1:4. As background for the term "eternal life", one can cite in addition Daniel 12:2: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to *life eternal*, some to shame and eternal disgrace".<sup>50</sup>

The phrase "*inherit eternal life*" will be explained in Luke 18:18 as entering the Kingdom or as being saved. The question put to Jesus makes its own contribution to the Lucan treatment of an important effect of the Christ-event in his writings. In Mark 12:28 the concern is with the Mosaic Law; here in Luke the question is phrased more generally to suit readers not concerned with the Law.<sup>51</sup> *Eternal or everlasting life* is an eschatological concept. Later this concept of *eternal life* became frequent in Jewish texts.

Verse 26: "and Jesus replied": The name is supplied in most of the English translation. The Greek text has simply, "and he said".

<sup>49</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 80.

<sup>50</sup> J.A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel according to Luke*, X-XXIV, 880.

<sup>51</sup> J.A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel according to Luke*, X-XXIV, 880.



“How you read” (πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις): In the very style of a controversy, Jesus replies with a counter-question which directs his interlocutor to the law of which he is supposed to be an accredited expositor. The double question reflects Jewish methods of discussion. The precise significance of this double question is debated: some biblical scholars understand it to mean “how do you expound the law at this point?” while others especially J. Jeremias<sup>52</sup>, think that the question means “how do you recite?”<sup>53</sup> In both cases the “ἀναγινώσκεις” (read) means not the act of reading as such, but the understanding or the perceiving of the sense of the text that has been read. By means of this counter-question, Jesus first of all refers to the deeper meaning of the Torah as a guide for life or for practical conduct, but also subjects the lawyer to the judgment of the Torah. In fact it was the business of the lawyer to know the facts in the law and its proper interpretation.<sup>54</sup> Remarkably this is Luke’s first reference to “the Law” (νόμος) since the frequent use in the infancy account (6:23,24,27,37). Jesus refers the lawyer to the Law in other words to the Pentateuch or the Torah of Moses. At the time of Jesus, there would have been no sharp distinctions made between what today would be regarded as religious law and civil Law. The whole of the Law not only spoke to what people were required to do and not to do in society but set out before them what ought to be done if they were to fulfil all God’s will for God’s people. Luke gives a vivid picture of the controversies over the law which arose in the early church. On the one hand, there were the Jews

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<sup>52</sup> J. Jeremias is a world famous biblical scholar. He is a professor of the New Testament at the University of Göttingen, Germany. He is the author of many books, including the *Rediscovering the parables*.

<sup>53</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 80.

<sup>54</sup> T. JOHNSON, *Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke*, 172.

and Jewish Christians who remained true to the Law, and on the other hand, Hellenists Christians who thought in universal terms.<sup>55</sup>

#### Verse 27

“He said in Reply”: Luke uses the Septuagintal formula “ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν” which literary means “answering he said”.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind;” (Ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης [τῆς] καρδίας σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ἰσχύϊ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου) : Just as the lawyer’s question had derived from the axiomatic connection between obedience to the law and inheritance/life in Deut 6:16-25, so his answer reflects the shema (Deut 6:5) a passage that was fundamental to Jewish life and worship in the home, the synagogue, and the temple.<sup>56</sup> The Septuagint text of Deut 6:5 speaks of loving God “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength”. Luke has the same quadripartite presentation as Mark 12:30, which adds “with all your mind” (in the third place in Mark, in the fourth place in Luke), while Matthew 22:37 has a tripartite expression without the phrase “with all your strength”. It has been duly pointed out that the various parts of the human person mentioned in the quotation should not be diagnosed separately. In a thoroughly semitic way the verse expresses the totality of one’s being, and emphasized that one should love God with all one’s resources.<sup>57</sup>

The verb ἀγαπάω is not typically Lucan (Luke 13 times; Acts 0 times; New Testament 143 times), but still he uses it as much as Matthew and Mark taken

<sup>55</sup> H.B. FREDERICK, *Many Things In Parables*, 66.

<sup>56</sup> G.B. JOEL, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke*, 428.

<sup>57</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 81.

together (Matthew 8 times, Mark 5 times). The meaning of “love” in Luke’s Gospel, as was already the case in the LXX, is very broad. It refers to the whole range of human affectionate attentions. The great majority of occurrences, however, refer to the attitudes towards other humans, i.e., a love showed to one nation (Luke 7: 5), a love as gratitude for as granted forgiveness (7: 42-47), as the answer to the love of others or neighbors (6:32; 10:25-37) and as antonym of hate (7:5).<sup>58</sup> But generally ἀγαπάω refers almost exclusively in the New Testament to the love of persons for persons.

Now how can this love be a requirement or a duty? This difficulty is partly met by emphasis upon the particular greek word ἀγαπάω which is used here and is always used when love is enjoined as an obligation. Love moves from three directions: from God to us, from us to God, and toward one another. Love is supremely a relationship of faithfulness. The Greeks had four terms for expressing the major senses of love. First, στίργη (Stiorge) refers either to the tender feelings that parents naturally feel toward their children or children toward their siblings. Ἔρως (Eros) expresses unreasoning passion and desire. Φιλία (philia) refers often to affection, friendship, and amity; And the verb ἀγαπάω most often means “ value, set great store by, hold in high esteem”. It is a love with deep respect, which often goes along with admiration and can become adoration. The precept “you shall love the Lord your God” can also be translated “ you shall adore the Lord your God”.

κύριος, “Lord” ( title used of God and of Christ), master, lord, owner, sir (an address of respect). In the Old Testament quotation, it refers to Yahweh. Love of God means total commitment and total trust. In particular, it involves a renunciation

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<sup>58</sup> C. OWCZARECK, *Sons of the Most High*, 131-132.

of mammon and of vainglory. To love God is to exist for him, to listen faithfully and obediently to his orders, to place oneself under his Lordship, value above all else the realization of this Lordship. It also means to base one's whole being on God, to cling to him with unreserved confidence, to leave with him all care or final responsibility.<sup>59</sup>

καρδία: it occurs 22 times in the gospel of Luke. With regard to meaning, the New Testament is dependent on Old Testament and Jewish usage. καρδία is not regarded, as in the Greek understanding, as an organ in the physiological sense and the location of mental and spiritual feeling but is the equivalent for Hebrew word לב (lēb). καρδία refers thus to the inner person, the seat of understanding, knowledge, and will and takes on as well the meaning conscience. The theological meaning of καρδία is more significant than simple anthropological usage. The καρδία is the place of the person in which the encounter with God is realized in the positive or negative sense in which religious life has its firm ground and from which the ethical conduct of the person is determined.<sup>60</sup>

διανοία: although it appears in Luke 10:27, Mark 12:30, Matthew 22:37, it is not in the LXX of the cited text. The Lukan text of which agrees with the LXX, save for the addition of "and with all your mind" (in the fourth place), the substitution of λογύ for διανοία (in the third prepositional phrase) and the substitution of the preposition ἐν (dative) for ἐξ (genitive) in the last three phrases. The LXX actually has the preposition ἐξ in all phrases. The original Hebrew of Deut 6:5 has only three phrases (heart, soul, might). A corrector of manuscript of the LXX has introduced διανοία (mind) for καρδίας (heart). The aspects of the human person so expressed

<sup>59</sup> E. STAUFFER, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, I, 45.

<sup>60</sup> A. SAND, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 250.

have to be understood in the Old Testament sense: καρδιά “heart”, as denoting the more responsive and emotional reactions of a human being; ψυχή “soul” is the vitality and consciousness of a person; ἰσχύς “might” is the powerful and instinctive drive; and διανοία “mind” the intelligent and planning qualities.<sup>61</sup> As a group, they sum up the totality of personal life.

καὶ τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν (Your Neighbour as yourself): the lawyer’s second response joins Lev 19:18 to the first, but as a unit. One is to have the same esteem and care for a neighbor that one would have for oneself. Going back to Leviticus, “neighbour” stands in parallelism with “the children of your own people”, i.e. fellow Israelites. The love is eventually extended in Lev 19:34 to the “sojourner” in the land.<sup>62</sup> In the Old Testament, the Hebrew term for “neighbour” refers to members of the covenant community; thus the command “love your neighbour” refers accordingly to members of the people of Israel, even though there are traces of an extension that takes into account strangers dwelling in the land. Later in Judaism understood an explicit limitation of the law of love, making it apply only to Israelites and full proselytes. But there were also voices supporting the removal of limits. The debate was clearly in full swing at the time of Jesus<sup>63</sup> and at the time of the apostles. That is why Luke in inserting this passage in his Gospel wants rather to stress on the universal dimension of “neighbour”. i.e. Luke 10: 29 “who is my neighbour”.

We have already seen that love of God and love of neighbour derive respectively from Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18; the latter appearing as a separate citation in Mark and Matthew. But in Luke, it is made into a part of the first and only

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<sup>61</sup> J.A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 880.

<sup>62</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 881.

<sup>63</sup> W. SCHRAGE, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, 73.

quotation. While for all their closeness the two commandments are nevertheless given a distinct identity in Mark and Matthew, in Luke only one occurrence of “you shall love” governs the two commandments which are linked together by a simple “and”. In this way the two commandments become just one.<sup>64</sup> For a Jewish lawyer it would have been extremely difficult to quote these two laws in such a close union. His idea of the exclusive election of Israel made Lev 19:18 an awkward thing to deal with. Because the idea of neighbour had to be limited, and was in fact increasingly limited; it has led in the Old Testament to the exclusion of the non-Israelites, at least those living outside Palestine. Even in Jesus’ time the notion of neighbour was even further restricted. Many religious groups seemed to accept only their own members as brothers and neighbours. This exclusivism was especially strong among the Qumranites, who spoke explicitly of the duty of hating the sons of darkness.<sup>65</sup> At any rate, the Samaritan was definitely excluded by any Jew, and that is exactly the reason why a Samaritan is going to play a major role in the following example story (Luke 10:30-37). Thus Luke wants to show us that Samaritans are also part of God’s plan of salvation.

Verse 28:

εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ· ὁρθῶς ἀπεκρίθης· τοῦτο ποίει καὶ ζήσῃ. (And he said to him, “You have answered right; do this, and you will live”) : This verse, unparalleled in Mark and Matthew, which caps the first phase of the controversy, and to that extent is semitic in character, may nevertheless in its formulation be due to Lucan editorial activity. This is confirmed in the first part of the verse, “you have answered right”, a typically Lucan form of commendation, as seen from Luke 7:43,

<sup>64</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 81.

<sup>65</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 82.

“you have judged rightly”, in reply to the Pharisee’s statement in the controversy concerning the woman who was a sinner (Luke 7: 36-50), and in Luke 20:21, “ you speak and teach rightly”.<sup>66</sup>

ζήσῃ: the Greek text has here a future which means “you shall live”. It is an immediate future that could mean: “do this and you will come alive”. But also this future could also mean life after death: “do this and you will live in the next live.” The verb “do” is a present imperative meaning “ keep on doing”. The Lawyer requested a specific and limited action in order to inherit eternal life. But the answer given to him is a command for an open-ended life-style that requires unlimited and qualified love for God and people.<sup>67</sup>

From what we have said above, we may say that Luke recasts the traditional material in such a way that, while the lawyer was made to quote the great commandment, the real climax of the first round of the controversy comes in Jesus’ statement, “do this, and you will live ” (compare to Gen 42:18, “ Do this and you will live”). By means of a reference to Lev 18:5, “ you shall therefore keep my statutes and my ordinances, by doing which a man shall live”, Jesus refers back to the lawyer’s initial question and states that the commandment shows the way to life. Jesus’ words are also reminiscent of Deut 5:33; 6:24. This emphasis on doing, which anticipates the final exhortation, “go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37), is in accord with Lukan doctrine on the strong link between hearing and doing which summarized in Luke 11:28 “blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it”. The present imperative “do this” includes the connotation “continually do this”,

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<sup>66</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 83.

<sup>67</sup> E. BAILEY, *Through Peasant eyes*, 39.

and indicates that continuous action is the way to life. While Jesus praises the lawyer for having the right theology, his practice is still in question.<sup>68</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

In the foregoing investigation and analysis, we have been able to gain a clear view of Luke's understanding of the text (10:25-28). It has also helped us to appreciate the importance of Lukan teaching on love of God and love of neighbour at the time of Jesus. But we should not look at these two dimensions of love as independent. That is precisely why instead of making one commandment first and the other second as it is found in Matthew or in Mark, Luke rather combines them into one single unified command.

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<sup>68</sup> H. HERMAN, *The Parables of Jesus*, 83.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **Luke's Theological Concern on Love and its Message Today**

#### **1. Introduction**

Now that we have finished with the exegetical analysis of the text, we will venture into the theological concern of Luke on love and how its message can be applied into our Christian context today by putting more emphasis on the relevance of Christian love in the modern world. We will see especially how love in our times appears as a necessary dimension for an authentic social renewal and for the strengthening of peace in the world.

#### **2. Universal Dimension of Jesus' Love in Luke's Gospel**

The scribes and Pharisees as well as of the literal application of the law had erected barriers between people but Jesus in the gospel will break down those barriers. Jesus wanted to reveal the love of God to all people and show all people that God loves them equally. Therefore he did not pay heed to social taboos or the restrictions of society and religion of his time but rather showed how anyone could be considered as our neighbour; he broke the barriers between God and sinners, tax collectors, Samaritans, women, the non-Jews and even his enemies.

##### ***2.1 Jesus and Sinners***

The Gospels bear abundant witness to Jesus' relationship with sinners. This is especially true in the Gospel of Luke. In Luke 5:17-26, Jesus forgave the paralytic man his sins, and to show that he had authority to forgive sins Jesus healed him of his paralysis. When, accused by pharisees and scribes of associating himself with

tax collectors and sinners, Jesus responded by saying that he “did not come to call righteous persons but sinners to repentance” (5:32). In Luke 7:36-50, Luke relates the story of the woman who was a sinner and received forgiveness from Jesus. We also have the Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14) where Jesus contrasts the behaviour of a sinner with the behaviour of a Pharisee, and again the sinner is justified before God. In Luke 15:1-2 we are told that the tax-collectors and sinners drew near to Jesus, and the Pharisees and scribes complained, so Jesus told three parables about finding the lost; the lost sheep (15:3-7), the lost coin (15:8-10) and the lost son (15:11-32). These parables are a response to the complaints and a vindication of Jesus’ associations with sinners. Luke is also the only Gospel to record a saying of Jesus that there is more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner, than over ninety-nine who have no need of repentance (15:7). In so doing Jesus wants to show that love of neighbour can be applied even to the sinners.<sup>69</sup>

## 2.2 *Jesus and the Tax-collectors*

Since 63 BC, Palestine was under the control of Rome that caused much resentment from the Israelites who wanted self-rule and independence. Although the tax- collectors were Jews, they were treated by their fellow Jews as Gentiles, not only because of paying tolls to Rome but because they were working for non-Jewish employers. Jesus worked to break down that barrier in the society. One of the disciples whom Jesus called to follow him was Levi, a tax-collector (Luke 5:27-29). On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus lodged with a tax-collector Zacchaeus, who was a sinner in public eyes (Luke 19:7), and proclaimed that salvation had come to his

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<sup>69</sup> When we talk about a sinner, we should think of a person “whose immoral way of life was common knowledge, such as adulterer, prostitute, murderer, robber and swindler. ( See S. LOISEL - S. WOLFGANG, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor*, 14 ).

house (19:9). This was even more serious than eating with Levi because Zacchaeus was a chief tax-collector (therefore a very big sinner in the eyes of his fellow Jews). At the time of Jesus, there is a widespread impression that tax collectors are well off and fraudulent people.<sup>70</sup> Yet in many parts of the Gospel of Luke, we see Jesus dealing with tax collectors. In so doing, Jesus shows his love for them and how the kingdom of God is open to everybody. The love of God now becomes a reality for these people in the words and deed of Jesus. No longer are these social outcasts condemned by God, neither by Jesus.

### *2.3 Jesus and the Samaritans and other non-Jews*

Throughout his Gospel, Luke emphasizes the fact that Jesus was a friend not only to Jews but also to Samaritans. The Samaritans lived in Samaria which was between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north. Samaria was invaded by the king of Assyria and finally captured in 722 BC. The Samaritans intermarried with the foreigners (2 Kings 17:5-41). Therefore they were not regarded as fully Jewish, but half-Jews. The Samaritans built their own temple in Samaria in opposition to the one in Jerusalem. It was destroyed in 128 BC and since then there was continuous animosity between Jews and Samaritans. At the time of Jesus there was a lot of hatred between them.<sup>71</sup> Jesus' dealings with them show him breaking down barriers between Jews and Samaritans by showing his love to them. In Luke 10: 1-12 on his way to Jerusalem Jesus sent out the "seventy" to carry the message of the kingdom to different places. The number "seventy" is especially significant. In Jewish torah, the number refers to all the nations of the earth. Luke wants to make it clear that Jesus' love is for all humankind and not just for the Jews. Although Jesus

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. S. LUISE - S. WOLFGANG, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor*, 6.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. A. FEUILLET - A. ROBERT, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 77.

was not made welcome in the village (9:53), it is significant that Jesus intended to visit a Samaritan village,<sup>72</sup> and in response to the lawyer's question as to who is his neighbour. Jesus told the parable of the "Good Samaritan" (10:30-35).

Luke therefore shows the broad humanitarian character of Jesus' work that was manifested from the first in Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans and others whom the Jews regarded as their enemies or outcast. Jesus never failed to commend those who had a humble and contrite heart, and it made no difference whether they were Jews or Gentiles, friends or enemies.

### **3. Love: Our Individual Response**

#### ***3.1 Love of Neighbour: a Criterion of True Christian Faith***

The command to love one's neighbour stands at the head of a longer teaching of Jesus regarding the behaviour of his followers. His own attitude of love and benevolence toward the sinners, Gentiles, the tax-collectors and the Samaritans reflects this principle. Thus Christians are also invited to love their fellow human beings. Loving our neighbours has always been the criterion of true Christian faith. Love opens itself precisely to those whom we would naturally say are not worth loving. Jesus' law of love is an ultimate unnatural demand, contrary to empirical human nature. Loving our fellow human beings without any condition is a supreme demonstration that love is not a matter of partiality, not a consideration of what will be most advantageous. Love that looks to receive love on the basis of mutuality, such love is not yet ἀγάπη for Jesus.<sup>73</sup>

To love appears more and more necessary for our Christian faith today. It brings an authentic social renewal and strengthens peace in the world. Pope John Paul II

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. J.A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel according to Luke* 860.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. S. WOLFGANG, *The Ethics of the New Testament* 77.

said in his 2001 lenten message, that “ the only way to peace is forgiveness and love”. To accept to forgive our fellow human beings makes possible a new quality of rapport between men, interrupts the spiral of hatred and revenge. <sup>74</sup> As Christians, if we constantly seek to love others, to sense the presence of God in them, every aspect of our lives will be reshaped. Though the prescription to love and to requite evil with good is sometimes thought of as an impractical, as Christians we are much challenged to uphold this ethical teaching of Jesus. In fact, Christian love is unconditional and impartial. Thus the metaphor of the sun that shines down on all life. According to Ted Grimsrud, assistant professor of Theology and Peace Studies in eastern Mennonite University, it is clear from the responses Jesus himself received in his own lifetime, and from the responses pacifists have received ever since, that this whole issue of loving without limit is actually very much a question that can only be ultimately answered on the level of Christian faith.

Christian love is respect for others. When the King James translators came upon the Greek word ἀγάπη, they often chose the English word “charity”. This was meant to reinforce the idea that ἀγάπη is selfless. <sup>75</sup> Just as God’s love is unselfish and unconditional, Christian love should also be so.

### *3.2 Christian Love in a Fragile World*

Many see love as the centrepiece to Christian teaching. Once true love is perfected in the human world, what possible economic, cultural or environmental problems could persist? There is no problem that cannot be resolved in the world of true love. A world of true love is one of bliss, peace and freedom. It is the world where joy is magnified infinitely and eternally within the domain of the rights to

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<sup>74</sup> J. LASSERE, *War and the Gospel*, 30.

<sup>75</sup> J. MACARTHUR, *About Mutual Love*, 13.

equal position, equal participation, and inheritance of true love. The problems that humanity faces today can be resolved fundamentally only with the perfection of Christian love.<sup>76</sup>

Daily human events clearly show how much love of neighbour is undeniably needed for bringing peace and building a society of love. The numerous and tragic conflicts which tear at humanity, sometimes also arising from misunderstood religious motives, hatred, selfish ambitions and vengeance, have left marks of violence among people. Even some Christians have been involved in a spiral of unstoppable violence that will continue to reap victims upon victims i.e. Rwandan genocide. The desires for peace that arise from every part of the world are thus ineffective. In the face of this alarming scenario, Christians cannot remain indifferent. The only way for the Christians to promote peace will be to prove that even love of enemy is possible: to love, to accept and give forgiveness make possible a new quality of rapport between men, interrupts the spiral of hatred and revenge, and breaks the chains of evil which bind the hearts of rivals.<sup>77</sup> For nations in search of reconciliation and for those hoping for peaceful coexistence, there is no other way than that of love towards another. The words of the Lord still resonate strongly: "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...so that you may be sons of your father who is heaven" (Luke 6:35)<sup>78</sup>. To love the one who offends you may even disarm the adversary and transform a battlefield into a place of supportive cooperation.

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. J. LASSERE, *War and the Gospel*, 53.

<sup>77</sup> B. EUGENE, *Reconciliation foundation for Reconstructing A New Rwanda*, 20.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. J. LASSERE, *War and the Gospel*, 53.

We also live in a world marked by class struggle and tribalism which are big challenges to the church and to all Christians; Jesus in all his teachings, stands as sharp rebuke to all who call themselves Christians, attend worship, yet nurture in their hearts a hateful ethnicism, racism or a feeling of religious superiority. Religious feelings are involved in ethnic conflicts in many parts of the world, especially in countries of the so-called third world. It is sad that this attitude of Jesus about "others" has been neglected in the teaching of the church that Christians can engage in ethnic hatred, torture and even genocide without realizing that they directly disobey their Lord. We have for instance the case of Rwanda though it is a country that has been massively Christian. According to the 1978 census 66% of the population said they were Christian: 58% being Catholics, 15,2% Protestant and 6,3% Adventists thus making the country more than 70% Christian. In spite of this, Christians in Rwanda massacred one another barbarically during the 1994 genocide. It is estimated that about half a million people died.<sup>79</sup> The wounds Christians inflicted on one another are so deep that the entire world cannot help asking the following questions: what made such Christian nation to behave in such an unchristian manner? Why was the Christian faith so fragile when it was tested? Why did the message of Christ on love of neighbour not take root in the people who claimed to be his followers? What actions were taken by the church? These questions are still more resonant than ever. This is a challenge to the church in Rwanda and to the whole Church and therefore, the first thing needed is a new look at the Gospel so that Christians attain self-understanding and self-identity in a church based on the gospel of love. Peace is impossible unless God's love intervenes

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<sup>79</sup> B. EUGENE. "Reconciliation: Foundation for Reconstructing a New Rwanda". 19-27.

and people open themselves to God and to one another in love. A person cannot love God if he/she hates his/her neighbour.

Church doctrine affirms that harbouring and entertaining racist thoughts and attitudes is against Christ's message of love. According to Christ, one's neighbour is not only a person from one's tribe, race, milieu, religion or nation, but also every person one meets along the way. Racism and racist acts must be condemned, not only by Christians, but by all humankind. All these forms of discriminations are even practised by Christians against one another. Yet the church is supposed to be a community of people who love one another, a community where people of all races, classes, tribes and countries live in harmony.

Christian love calls all human beings to love their neighbours for the sake of God. Since God does not live with us, so to love him is abstract. Therefore Karl Peschke states, "loving our neighbour gives concrete content to the love of God. To love God means to love all those who are loved by him and that includes even sinners and enemies".<sup>80</sup> On the same issue, Albert Pie' writes, "to love God is to love our neighbour and to love our neighbour is to love God; charity unites the world of God and the world of men in one single love".<sup>81</sup> The only way to love God is to love others and to be responsible for his creation which culminates in a human being who is made in God's image. Christians are called to love one another, that is, to show care and concern for all people because all human beings belong to God's family. According to William Temple, "there is only one ultimate and invariable duty, and its formula is: Thou shalt love thy neighbour and thyself".<sup>82</sup> Christians are

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<sup>80</sup> K. H. PESCHKE, *Christian Ethics: General Moral theology in the light of Vatican II*, 35.

<sup>81</sup> A. PIE', *Love of Our Neighbour*, 50.

<sup>82</sup> Cited in the preface to John Fletcher's book entitled, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*.



to love each other in recognition of the human essence that unites them. Love among Christians is not limited to Christians only, but flows out to all people since all are God's children. This is what Jesus meant when he asked his followers to love their enemies. These too are part of the human race.

### *3.3 The Mission of the Church Towards a Society Built on Love*

The church has received from Christ the mission of preaching the Gospel of love, which contains a call to people to turn away from hatred, violence and all kind of sins to the love of the father and love of neighbour. It is the duty of the church to proclaim love on the social, national and international level and to denounce instances of hatred, violence, tribalism, racism when the fundamental rights of people demand it.

The violence which so many individual and peoples continue to experience, the wars which still cause bloodshed in many areas of the world and the injustice which burdens the life of whole continents can no longer be tolerated. The time has come to move from words to deeds. The church is called to renew its commitment to work for peace. Everyone is aware of the difficulty of this task. If it is to be effective and long-lasting, work for peace cannot be concerned merely with the external conditions of coexistence; rather, it must affect people's heart and appeal to a new awareness of human dignity. It must be forcefully repeated: authentic peace is only possible if the dignity of the human person is promoted at every level of society and every individual is given the chance to live in accordance with this dignity.<sup>83</sup>

Unless the Christian message of love shows its effectiveness through action in the cause of justice in the world, it will only with difficulty gain credibility with the

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<sup>83</sup> Message of Pope John Paul II on the World Day of Peace in 1995.

people of our times. Christians should act as a leaven in the world full of hatred and violence, in their family, social, cultural and political life. Though the church is not alone responsible for harmony and peace in the world, however, she has a proper and specific responsibility which is identified with her mission of giving witness before the world of the need for love and justice contained in the gospel message, a witness to be carried out in church institutions themselves and in the lives of Christians. Its distinctive contribution flows from her religious nature and ministry. It is called to be in a unique way, the instrument of love and peace. Since peace is one of the signs of that kingdom present in the world, the church fulfils part of her essential mission by making the peace of the kingdom more visible in our time.<sup>84</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

We started this chapter by examining the universal dimension of Jesus' love in the gospel of Luke. Hence we see how Jesus' love can be a source of inspiration to Christians in our fragile world. Indeed, we now stand in the historic period of great transition where we must liquidate the grave moral confusion, world conflicts, environmental problems and crimes which have stained our century. Humankind longs for a world of peace<sup>85</sup> free from war and suffering. Much is already being done to try and bring about peace in the world. The Church, however, is especially equipped with the Holy Spirit and the example of God's reconciliation of the world to bring about peace between peoples in conflicts. Yet it is difficult to be hopeful

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<sup>84</sup> Message of Pope John Paul II on the world Day of Peace in 1995.

<sup>85</sup> Peace, in the ordinary perception, denotes absence of conflict. It is the tranquillity of order; it is the right relationship between God and people and between people and people. This right relationship consists in the observance of love for one another. It is both a gift from God and an effort by the people to achieve it, individually and socially. It must therefore be constructed on the basis of central human values such as love ( see T. PAZHAYAMPALLIL, *Pastoral Guide*, 1,942).

when the future is still threatened by wars, terrorism, hatred, tribalism, class struggle, racism, family breakdown, AIDS pandemic. In regard to this, I am much convinced that only the practise of ἀγάπη (love) can be the solution to all these problems which threaten our modern society.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

Love is the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence. The society which excludes the development of love, must in the long run perish of its own contradiction with the basic necessities of human nature.<sup>86</sup> Love is indispensable in all human relationship as all the major religions of the world have come to recognize.

Our purpose in this work has been to shed light on the Lukan passage of 10:25-28 and its relevance for our Christian life. Now, as we come to a conclusion of our reflection, we should note that this has just been an eye-opener on how crucial and urgent is the relationship between the biblical teaching on love and the issue of peace and justice in our world.

In the first chapter, we tried to delimitate and situate our text in context. We then moved to assess the historical background of *Shema* and *Love of Neighbour* in the Old Testament and the importance of *Shema* in Jewish Liturgy and in the life of the Jews.

In the second chapter, we gave more importance to the exegetical analysis of Luke 10:25-28. In the last chapter, we looked at the concrete relevance of Luke 10:25-28 and its theological message today. We began by looking at the universal dimension of Jesus' love in Luke's Gospel. We saw indeed that Jesus did not limit his ministry to the Jews, nor his love only to the Jews or to his friends but he extended it also to the non-Jews and to the marginalized of his time. Lastly we tried

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<sup>86</sup> E.KAMAARA, *Love As the Basis of Universalism* 380.

to show how love of neighbour could be a criterion of true Christian faith and how Christian love can be a remedy to our fragile world.

Now at the conclusion of our study we are well positioned to acknowledge the significance of Luke's contribution on love. When I look at all the conflicts in this world, I think of Christ. Christ stressed love, honesty, justice, diligence, active caring for others, and reconciliation. Christ made it clear that the relationship with one's neighbors was the key sign of the health of one's relationship with God. Our societies need Christ's kind of reconciliation more than ever. Luke sets the context of what Christ did in bringing us back together with God; thus, reaching people with the gospel message of love. Yet, the other part of a reconciliation ministry is that Christ wants us all to live in solidarity with God and each other. I think a vision of reconciliation and forgiveness is the most important gift that Christian believers can give to the world and the political systems right now in order to build a society of no discriminations, injustice, hatred, wars, violence and vengeance. Only then we will have a society built on love.

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