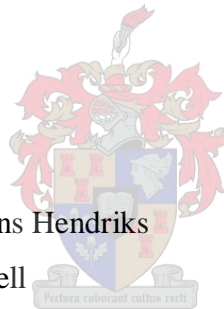# A POST-FOUNDATIONALIST APPROACH TOWARDS

DOING PRACTICAL THEOLOGY:

A CRITICAL COMPARISON OF PARADIGMS

by

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Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch

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<u>Declaration</u>:

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation has sought to examine how a post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology might look. This was done through a critical appraisal of the paradigms of foundationalism and non-foundationalism. These paradigms were explored in their historical context and development to illustrate the defining differences and features of both. The researcher then explored Practical Theology in its historical development to examine whether it has moved beyond foundationalism. This was further done by examining the last three decades of Practical Theology by a comparison of methodologies currently proposed. It emerged that, in many ways, Practical Theology has moved beyond the paradigm of foundationalism. This was seen in its affirmation of the local context, its use of a correlational hermeneutic and the pastoral cycle. These areas were then fleshed out in further detail in an attempt to delineate a truly non-foundationalist Practical Theology. A missional perspective on Practical Theology became an entry point into detailed discussions with regard to context, as well as to how the various sources of the correlational hermeneutic can best be understood in a post-foundationalist world, in light of the post-modern critique. These unique features are indeed central to a post-foundational approach to doing Practical Theology.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif het gepoog om na te vors hoe 'n post-*foundationalistic* benadering tot Praktiese Teologie daar sou uitsien. Dit behels 'n kritiese beoordeling van die *foundationalism* en nie-*foundationalism* paradigmas. Hierdie paradigmas is in hul historiese konteks en ontwikkeling ondersoek om die bepalende verskille en kenmerke van albei te illustreer. Daarna het die navorser Praktiese Teologie in sy historiese ontwikkeling ondersoek om vas te stel of dit verby *foundationalism* beweeg het. Dit is gedoen deur na die laaste drie dekades van Praktiese Teologie se ontwikkeling te kyk en 'n vergelyking te tref tussen die verskillende benaderings tot die vak. Dit het geblyk dat Praktiese Teologie in vele opsigte buite die paradigma van *foundationalism* beweeg het. Dit word duidelik as daar gekyk word na sy bevestiging van die plaaslike konteks, sy gebruik van 'n korrelasie (*correlational)* hermeneutiek en die pastorale siklus. Hierdie areas is toe aangevul met verdere detail in 'n poging om 'n ware nie-*foundationalistic* Praktiese Teologie uit te beeld. 'n Missionale perspektief op Praktiese Teologie het 'n aansluitingspunt vir uitvoerige besprekings met betrekking tot konteks geword, asook tot hoe die verskeie bronne van die korrelasie hermeneutiek die beste verstaan kan word in 'n post-*foundationalistic* wêreld, veral in die lig van die post-moderne kritiek. 'n Missionale perspektief staan sentraal tot 'n post-*foundational* benadering in Praktiese Teologie.

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN THE REAL WORLD

The world is changing, and changing to such an extent that we can hardly define our problems, let alone attempt to solve them. Perhaps one might counter that the world has always been changing and, in some sense, that of course is true. Change is always knocking at our door and attempts to dismantle and re-arrange us, whether for better or worse, for richer or poorer, or for sickness and in health. We do not need sociologists and anthropologists to tell us that our world is in a state of intense insecurity, complexity and inequality. Or, perhaps we do. Perhaps we need the harsh realities of our world to be spelt out again and again until it sinks in and leads to some form of action. Or does this just lead to a sense of escapism or denial as one becomes numb to the world around us and our issues?

In a very real sense, this numbness to the world's problems is played out on the streets of South Africa on a daily basis. As one stops at major intersections, one is confronted with a myriad of desperate people trying to sell something. At first, you try to be amiable but, after repeated encounters, you ignore the would-be traders, stare ahead and hope they will leave you alone (that's after you've quickly locked all the doors and are staring in your rear-view mirror!). These day-to-day realities are part of far greater political, social, economic and philosophical shifts that impact on the very real daily aspects of our lives. We live in an uncertain and shifting world.

But, is this really a time of change, uncertainty, complexity and reaction? The sociologist, Manuel Castells, certainly thinks so. His three-volume series, *The information age: Economy, society and culture* (2004) is just such an attempt to describe this complex world - one that he defines as the network society, a world where many suffer from an acute identity crisis. The following quote from Castells (2004:1) helps to put into more concrete focus what the researcher claims is taking shape:

> This is indeed a time of change, regardless of how we time it. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, a technological revolution, centered around information, transformed the way we think, we produce, we consume, we trade, we manage, we communicate, we live, we die, we make war, and we make love. A dynamic, global economy has been constituted around the planet, linking up valuable people and activities from all over the world, while switching off from the networks of power and wealth, people and territories dubbed as irrelevant from the perspective of the dominant interests.

This globalized world that Castells describes is also one of increasing unity, which the historian Roberts (2002:1174) calls a "creeping unity" that finds its most visible expression in modernity. This unity is not so much political, but rather revolves around economics as nations push to modernize. Despite the apparent cultural diversity, it appears that many, if not all, are battling with or are moving towards an increasingly modernized world.

Alongside modernism and, in some ways, in opposition to it, is the effect of post-modernism. Although highly debated at present, it still appears that post-modernism is a very real dimension of our world, specifically with regard to the question of epistemology. Some see postmodernism as a subspecies of globalisation – both of which in many ways are antithetical to modernism (Osmer & Schweitzer 2003:31). We shall explore Osmer and Schweitzer's definition at a later point when we engage in a more detailed assessment of foundationalism.[1]

It is within this very real changing world, which Castell's describes, that the researcher and others seek to practise our Theology and to teach others how not to

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[1] Although foundationalism will be explored later it is important to bring clarity to how this term is distinguished from anti-, non- and post-foundationalism, as many scholars use the terms differently and interchangeably. It is also important to show the relationship between post-modernism and foundationalism. Anti-foundationalism (Baronov 2004:139-140) is the critique of foundationalist assumptions connected with modernism, that like some aspects of post-modernism, leans towards a relativistic outlook. Non-foundationalism (Thiel 1994:2) is also a critique of foundationalist modernist assumptions, yet is not relativistic as much as it is a statement of what is "not philosophically tenable". Post-foundationalism accepts many of the criticisms of anti- and non-foundationalism, but seeks to move "creatively" forward to some form of resolution of these philosophical dilemma's (Van Huyssteen 1997:4). Post-modernism is not dissimilar to the various categories of foundationalism just mentioned. It can lean towards a relativisitic outlook or have more positive and constructive overtones. Foundationalism, with its history in the pragmatic philosophers of the late ninetieth and early 20th centuries, predates post-modernism (Thiel 1994:6-7). They are however linked by their critique of modern enlightenment foundationalism and its quest for "unimpeachable foundations of knowledge" (Schrag 1992:23). Section two will be a detailed exploration of the similarities and distinctive of foundationalism and post-modernism.

just "learn" theology, but to "do" theology (De Gruchy 1994:2). Or, more specifically, the researcher asks himself whether the theological work in which he engages is simply an exercise in mental trivia and self-gratification and whether it has anything to offer this world. Has it relevance to real life and "the messy realm of work, love, love, celebration, and suffering where human beings dwell and thus where Christian life and ministry take place"? (Bass 2002:1). Of course, this is the question Practical Theology as a discipline needs to reflect upon, specifically with regard to methodological questions. Is it relevant to its context and the given historical situation in which it finds itself?

If it is true, as Osmer and Schweitzer (2003:3) argue, that religious education needs to be seen in its interdependent relationship to its given social context, then the task of Practical Theology is to understand that context and certain aspects of it (Osmer 2008). A post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology would be just one such way of taking one's social context seriously. If we live in a world that is in some way moving beyond modernism, then we need to ask ourselves seriously whether Practical Theology and theological reflection has moved beyond modernism in its methodological assumptions and understanding of itself. Grenz and Franke (2001:29-32) argue that the epistemological centre of modernism is foundationalism. If they are correct, then a post-foundationalist Practical Theology becomes exceedingly critical in a globalized and postmodern world. We cannot ignore these realities, for as Ganzevoort (1996:3) fears "we may be outdistanced by the rapid changes in western society and in the people living in it. Where the church is only just catching up with modern man, humankind is already beyond modernism and plunging into a postmodern era."

Moreover, if foundationalism is the epistemological centre of modernism, it will, at times, require an evaluation of what the epistemology has "spawned" so to speak with regard to modernism – its effects. This could be one of the ways then to evaluate a post-foundationalist approach, by examining its effects and results.

Post-modernism, whether heightened modernism or something entirely new, has certainly been a necessary and decisive counter strike to modernism. It has sought to

show the weakness and frailties of modernistic assumptions. Unfortunately, sometimes its proposals have been overtly negative and nihilistic. A post-foundationalist perspective allows one to position oneself between these extremes and avoid the tendencies towards relativism and anti-foundationalism to which post-modernism drifts (Muller 2005:1). Part of the researcher's evaluation of foundationalism would then have to examine what role rationality might have for a post-foundationalist perspective for Practical Theology, and whether this "chastened rationality" is being affirmed or denied. Here, it is critical that rationality is explored within a post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology, as Van Huyssteen (1997:165) argues:

> In theology we seek as secure a knowledge as we can achieve, a knowledge that will allow us to understand and where possible to construct theories as better explanations. This goal of theology not only determines the rationality of theology, but very much depends on the way we deal with the problem of justification of cognitive claims in theology. If in both theology and science we want to understand and explain, then the rationality of science is directly relevant to that of theology.

Osmer (2008:170-172), based on Van Huyssteen's understanding of transversal rationality, argues that cross disciplinary dialogue where areas of intersection and divergence are important, will be crucial to this rationality. Muller (2009:5-6), in discussing the importance of interdisciplinary engagement for Practical Theology, states that a post foundationalist perspective is one that is well suited to this cross disciplinary dialogue. A post foundationalist rationality is one that rejects both a "universal rationality" of foundationalism and a "multiversal rationality" of anti foundationalism. By asking these questions with regard to Practical Theology, the enormity of the task was realised. Once, there was a time in history when individuals were able to master most of the known knowledge of a wide variety of disciplines and sciences. Paul Johnson (1997:139) notes that many of the founding fathers of America were politicians, scientists, architects, theologians and philosophers, all rolled into one. Benjamin Franklin was a member of 28 different academies and learned societies. Those times are surely past. Today, we have sub-disciplines within disciplines due to the overwhelming amount of knowledge and information with which one must interact – certainly part of the effects of modernism. Even within sub-disciplines, it becomes hard for but a few to be able to master the totality of their discipline. Practical Theology must certainly suffer from this problem. The vast

amount of information, books, seminars, journals and organisations must result in a situation where all but a few are aware of the many developments and perspectives within this discipline. Ganzevoort (2009:1) laments at times the lack of a common object, method and aim which places Practical Theology as a discipline at risk. The fact that, in many ways, Practical Theology relies on other theological disciplines, as well as other empirical sciences, only compounds the problem. Moore (2007:163-167) reminds us of this breadth within the discipline and notes:

> Something of the confusion within practical theology, as well as the creativity and wide compass. Unlike scholars in some religious and theological disciplines, practical theologians (taken as a whole) do not have to challenge themselves to broaden their scope, sources, and their methods.

The researcher does not claim to have come anywhere close to mastering the field and practice of Practical Theology. A discipline inherently difficult to describe (Veiling 2005:3). The choice of material has been driven by his own encounters with other practical theologians and their recommended works. He is also influenced in selection by his own temperament, theological history, church history, gender, societal and economic makeup (to mention but a few). To the extent that he can contribute anything meaningful to this field, is perhaps in the way he brings the various concepts and materials that he has worked with into a specific mosaic in an attempt to answer where Practical Theology at present is situated with regard to foundationalism.[2]

It is part of the researcher's own local and contextual battle, his pastoral concern and vocational experience that has led him to this work. It is because of this that the researcher began to explore the questions of foundationalism and its implications for Practical Theology. This study will therefore methodologically be a literature study dealing with the question: "Where is Practical Theology at present situated with regard to foundationalism?" The structure of this quest will be outlined in the section following the next one.

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[2] Understanding the importance of how one's personal background impacts one's research and how the researcher him- or herself is considered a given in theological circles. This is spelt out in virtually any recent methodology textbook. There simply is no neutral research that can claim complete objectivity, and pretend to dispel any form of subjectivity.

1.2 CONFESSIONS OF A FOUNDATIONALIST EVANGELICAL

To many, this might seem a strange point to take a personal excursion of this sort. It will be argued that it is important as it gives context to much of what follows and the positions taken, or not taken. It is also important in that it is Grenz's proposal that Theology, and specifically evangelical Theology, must take into account the move beyond foundationlism on which so much of its deliberations are built. And, the evangelical community is the one from which this researcher has grown.

John De Gruchy (2006) has recently written a book entitled *Being human: Confessions of a Christian humanist*. In many ways, the researcher would perhaps be moving towards defining himself as such. However, there is something about the term "evangelical" for which an affinity is felt, if not only for emotional and historical reasons. Defining terms is notoriously a sticky business, as De Gruchy (2006:4) notes: "Terms like liberal and conservative, fundamentalist and evangelical, religious and secular, creation and evolution, humanist and even Christian, are laden with diverse meanings as a result of different cultural experiences."

Roger Olson (2002:13), like De Gruchy, notes that the word "evangelical" can mean just such vastly different things. In Europe, the word evangelical refers essentially to Protestant. It is a form of Christianity which is neither Eastern Orthodox nor Roman Catholic, and stands in the tradition of Luther, Calvin and Cranmer. In Great Britain, evangelical is often used to refer to the revivalist movements of Wesley and Whitefield. In America, it is generally a form of Protestant Christianity that is "conservative in theology, conversionist and evangelistic, Biblicist, and is focussed on Jesus Christ" (Olson 2002:13). It crosses various denominations and places a high emphasis on a personal relationship with Jesus. Stanley Grenz (1993:22) widens this slightly by understanding the root word of evangelical in the Greek as "good news": "Understood in terms of commitment to the gospel, evangelical would – or should – characterize every segment of the church and every Christian, regardless of theological loyalties, background or experiences."

Grenz (1993:34) believes that, at its heart, evangelicalism is a way of being Christian where experiencing God is central. It is a commitment to understand this experience

of God primarily through the Scriptures as its starting point. Of course, how one comes to understand the word "Gospel" has radical implications for how one lives out one's faith in the world.

The researcher was "converted" to the Christian faith at the early age of 11 years and remembers the day clearly as he was asked to raise his hand in a small congregational church hall with nine others. He cannot remember exactly what was said, but remembers that he needed his sins forgiven, and that Jesus had done this for him on the cross. This experience was common for many within the evangelical tradition, as well as those from other traditions. De Gruchy (2006:13) speaks of his own experience of conversion in his teens, when he made a "commitment to Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord" and how that decision affected the rest of his life. It was the same for the researcher.

However, what happened next put the researcher within a certain stream of the evangelical movement. He was asked if he wanted to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and receive the gift of tongues. He consented and was baptized thus, but now no longer knows if he even agrees with the terminology and confesses a deep suspicion with much that happens within the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements. Something did happen to him though, and he experienced God. Before long, he went to the Congregational Church on a Sunday morning, a Pentecostal mega Church in the afternoon, and church again in the evening - it consumed his life.

At high school, he moved away from the faith after a friend's brother died and he could not figure out why his prayers for healing were not answered. He had thought that he simply needed to "name it and claim it." After a foray into drugs, alcohol and generally unwholesome behaviour, he returned to faith in his final year of high school – to the shock and amazement of many of his peers. From the time of his conversion, he knew that he wanted to be a minister, but would fluctuate in his early years between evangelist, pastor, teacher and prophet. When told that he could be all four by being an apostle, the option was obvious!

At this point, he began attending a Bible School in the evenings, "completing" two years. A year after school, he began a course in Intellectual and Social History at the

Pentecostal mega-Church of which he was a part. He remembers buying Francis Schaeffer's complete works and devouring almost every book.

During that year, he was told why every other belief system was faulty and how to decipher that philosophically, and was told what the "Biblical Christian Worldview" was, and how that could be implemented in every area of life. This would be the same from New York to New Delhi. In reflection on this time, despite total commitment to the ideology, experientially he was never quite sure; he always wanted to push certain boundaries in the opposite direction. Despite this, he would spend Friday nights praying through the night, committed to revival in South Africa, and reading every book on the topic that he could find. It was in this matrix of educational and experiential realities by which his Christian faith and outlook essentially took on a modernistic foundationalist perspective, based on Scripture as an inerrant encyclopaedia of knowledge to be applied to any context. Grenz (2000:189) argues that both liberals and conservatives fall under the spell of the foundationalist agenda – the conservatives using the Bible as their foundation, and liberals, religious experience. The researcher had fallen on the conservative side.

Later, he began studies at a local South African university through correspondence. It was a journey that would change his life. He remembers the experience of reading a book by Hans Kung (1993), *Credo*: *The apostles' creed explained for today* and, being disgusted with what Kung says, threw the book across the room. He desperately tried to figure out where he was wrong. (Subsequently, Kung has become one of his favourite theologians.) The researcher remembers also being exposed to Barth and Pannenberg - and being intrigued and inspired.

Until four years ago, the researcher remained part of what was essentially a Charismatic Church, yet vastly more moderate than the Pentecostal Church, of which he previously was part. Despite this, their views were by no means vastly different. However, the Pentecostal Church was committed to changing society through biblical ideology by taking over the centres of power, while the Charismatic Church, by converting the masses. However, they were both committed to biblical inerrancy and doctrinal purity. The researcher was still within a predominantly modernist and foundationalist institution. While studying and, at the same time, being involved in all

these different churches, created unbelievable dissonance within him. Things came to a head when his views on the role of women conflicted with their more traditional view.

So where is he now? He is no longer committed to biblical inerrancy, but consider the Bible his first port of call, and a reasonably reliable account of the life of Jesus. It is the critical realist understanding of the text which he believes to be post-foundationalist and which will be engaged with in more detail at a later stage. This will also become immensely important when examining the role of the Bible as a source for Practical Theology. He agrees with Van Huyssteen's (1997:129) statement: "Personally I am convinced that no theologian who is trying to determine what the authority of the Bible might mean for today, and to identify the epistemological status of the Bible in theological reflection, can avoid the important issues raised by some qualified form of critical realism for theology."

The researcher's critical realist and non-foundationalist reading of the Bible has also led him to affirm that the Gospel is equated, not just with the salvation of souls, but is far broader than that. Catholics are not the whores of Babylon, but partners and friends. Islam is not a demonic religion, but one which should be engaged with mutual dialogue and respect. Is he still evangelical? Perhaps not. However, he still values the Bible; he still believes individuals' lives ought to be changed to conform with God's dream for the world, and he still believes God can be experienced.

The researcher's nostalgia for evangelicalism will be evident throughout this work. Many names of theologians will pop up, but will not dominate. A commitment will be found to understand theologians, such as Olson and Grenz, as ones who have attempted to redefine evangelicalism. A desire to interact with McLaren, who has attempted to broaden the evangelical vista from its narrow fundamentalist expressions, will also be found. Yet, the researcher's commitment to the broader dimensions of Christianity are now stronger than ever – both liberal and conservative, Protestant or Catholic, First or Third World, mainstream or free church.

The researcher's personal journey as a "theologian," with all its high points and low points, doubts and fears, is perhaps best described by Paul Tillich (1949:125) in the following quote:

> There are many amongst us who believe within themselves that they can never become good theologians, that they could do better in almost any other realm. Yet they cannot imagine that their existence could be anything other than theological existence. Even if they had to give up theology as their vocational work, they would never cease to ask the theological question. It would pursue them into every realm. They would be bound to it, actually, if not vocationally. They could not be sure that they could fulfil its demands, but they would be sure they were in its bondage. They would believe those things in their hearts belong to the assembly of God. They are grasped by the divine spirit. They have received the gift of knowledge. They are theologians.

The researcher resonates with Tillich's description above, which demonstrates the personal nature of doing theology and the reason for this attempt to share this theological journey to the present. He has also shared his personal faith narrative because he thinks it illustrates, in many ways, the challenge of doing Practical Theology. His Christian history is heavily loaded with modernistic assumptions, expressed through concepts, such as biblical inerrancy.

Evangelicals are also not noted for their desire to reflect on their assumptions and methodological commitments (McGrath 2000:16). The researcher now believes it critical that any conscious Christian and theologian ought to reflect on their methodological foundations (Stone & Duke 2006:60). It was through a process of having his epistemological roots exposed that led to a collapse of faith and an embracing of post-modern beliefs and ideas. In many ways, his present journey has allowed him to settle down somewhere in the middle in a critical realism beyond foundationalism. However, he will now turn to delineating how he will structure this dissertation and move towards asking the question whether Practical Theology has indeed moved beyond foundationalism.

1.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THIS WORK

The very personal story and battle with foundationalism discussed above is really the methodological starting point for this journey. It is part of the researchers own local and contextual battle, his pastoral concern and vocational experience. It is from this base that the researcher began to explore the questions of foundationalism and its implications for Practical Theology. This led the researcher to a broad based literature review of Practical Theology against the background of the epistemological and philosophical discussions of foundationalism and post-foundationalism.

In the journey to be embarked upon, the following areas must be discussed and engaged with. This dissertation will begin by exploring what foundationalism actually is, and how it relates to both post-modernism and modernism. This will also involve understanding critical realism as potentially one way toward a post-foundationalist perspective. In order to answer the question as to whether Practical Theology has indeed moved beyond modernity and foundationalism, these concepts will have to be explored as reference points to the later appraisal of the paradigms within Practical Theology.

Section three will attempt to examine broadly some issues regarding Practical Theology as a discipline. This will be done initially by defining terminology. It could be that, even by an analysis of the changing terminology, some hints may be found as to whether Practical Theology has moved beyond foundationalism.

Having defined the terminology, the historical development of Practical Theology will be considered. Aside from again helping us to understand the present state of Practical Theology, it will also highlight the paradigm shift that has taken place in the discipline, and help us to gain a clearer understanding of whether a move beyond foundationalism has indeed taken place.

This will not be a comprehensive historical construction of the history of Practical Theology and theological reflection. Others are far more qualified to do that and, in fact, have done so. This brief historical survey is being conducted for the reasons

mentioned earlier, and should be evaluated as such – has Practical Theology moved beyond the foundationalist assumptions?

Having set the historical foundations and terminological considerations for our discussion, this study will proceed to the much traversed territory of discussing the various methodological proposals that Practical Theology has put forth over the years. Three handbooks, that have attempted to systematize and summarize the various methodologies within Practical Theology, will be used. There are of course numerous proposals for specific Practical Theological methodologies, which Ganzevoort (2009:1) has noted. These three books however, attempt to give examples of these diverse methodologies for the benefit of comparison.

This evaluation of how practical theologians have viewed the discipline over two decades, will help to move us towards understanding Practical Theology today. It will demonstrate the diversity of methodologies and whether they are based on foundationlist perspectives as the reigning paradigm of modernity.

Having at this point done a detailed engagement with the idea of foundationalism and its consequences, as well as a brief appraisal of the various methodologies on offer within Practical Theology, an attempt will be made to delineate if, and how, Practical Theology has moved beyond foundationalism. Without pre-empting the discussion, the researcher will argue that a return to context and the pastoral cycle appears to move in this direction. A re-evaluation of the sources for Practical Theology would seem to be moving in this way too - both in the widening of the sources as an example, but also in a re-evaluation of the epistemological foundations of those sources. This will involve a detailed discussion of the correlational hermeneutic. Further to that, the question of application will be explored as the full turn of the pastoral cycle. Then, the researcher hopes to make some further comments with regard to ways that Practical Theology can continue to move beyond foundationalism, and how that might begin to look.

2. FOUNDATIONALISM EXPLORED

Twentieth century thought increasingly has had to reckon with the judgements and claims of an approach to philosophical criticism called "non-foundationalism." No particular philosopher can be named the founder of this critical approach, nor does a school of thinkers faithful to the tenets of non-foundationalism exist. At most, one can speak of a commitment to a style of philosophizing shared by a number of thinkers, often in very different ways (Thiel 1994:1).

The above reference to Thiel illustrates just how difficult a task to understand foundationalism might be. An overzealous focus on post-modernism has perhaps clouded the issues involved. An often uncritical embrace of post-modernism or, at its opposite extreme, an uncritical rejection of it, causes furious debate in the quest for epistemological primacy. Muller (2005:1) cautions us against both extremes, but still warns of the serious threat of relativism and anti-foundationalist theories "which are a real threat to Practical Theology." Even if the focus has revolved around post-modernism, perhaps due to the popularity of its proponents that more resemble a "school," is there a possibility that understanding post-modernism might actually enlighten our perspectives regarding a post-foundationalist Theology? What is the link between a post-foundational Theology and post-modernism? Van Huyssteen (1997:74) recognizes that any discussion of foundationalism must be confronted with an understanding of post-modernism: "The either/or of foundationalism versus non-foundationalism, reveals that here we not only are dealing with modernity's challenge to theological reflection, but have in fact already moved into the far more complex challenge of contemporary post-modern thought."

Therefore, we need to understand the challenge of post-modernism and how it relates to post foundationlist thinking.

2.1 THE CHALLENGE OF POST-MODERNISM

The above title is borrowed from a chapter in a book by Schrag (1992:13) entitled, *The resources of rationality: A response to the postmodern challenge*. A quote from that chapter might be a good entry point to our discussion, as Schrag notes the difficulty when engaging with the topic:

> Anyone attempting to provide a sketch of postmodernism has to contend with a somewhat curious diversity of portraits on display both in the academy and on the wider cultural scène. This diversity is in part the result of grammatical variations in the identification of the phenomenon at issue. In the proliferating discussions of the topic the vocabulary often shifts from "the postmodern" to "postmodernity" to "postmodernism" without clear indications of what, if anything, is at stake in such shifts.

Schrag, certainly, is right in his assessment of the linguistic labyrinth that is postmodernism. There is very little agreement on exactly its nature and scope. At the same time, it has crept into our popular imagination, and even our church circles, with a wide variety and diversity of opinion on what it actually is. It is often a heated topic, as McLaren (2007) recently noted in an essay entitled, "Church emerging: Or why I still use the term postmodern but with mixed feelings."

As mentioned earlier on in this work, the terms "post-modernism" and its partner "post-modernity" are still highly debated topics. Some see it as an all-pervasive reality which has consumed the Western world. Others see it as a reactionary movement which is a small component (or shadow) of the larger march of modernism. Further still, many see it as one aspect of globalisation where "it is a configuration of cultural elements that represents one and only one way of responding to the globalisation of culture" (Osmer & Schweitzer 2003:66).

The researcher, for one, believes that post-modernism is more pervasive at the level of everyday culture than some would allow for. Ganzevoort (1996:46) makes this argument and believes post-modernism is an attitude "of individuals and groups that is becoming wide spread in our time". The researcher also believes that our world is a mix of both pre-modern, modern and post-modern realities and that there is a general consensus that post-modernism has certainly played a significant part in raising the right questions with regard to knowledge and rationality. However, he agrees with

Schrag (1992:7) that it is "rationality, and particularly rationality as it figures in the philosophical discourse of modernity, that has been challenged by postmodernism."

Schrag (1992:7) goes on to say that the varied voices of postmodernism really all attempt to critique the overreliance on reason, and "specifically as this over determination was played out in the modern epistemological paradigm." As Van Huyssteen (1997:2) argues, post-modernism is a rejection of all forms of epistemological foundationalism of this modern paradigm.

This, of course, is the direct relevance and importance of clarifying and establishing postmodernism and its relationship to foundationalism, and therefore to the broader question of this dissertation as to whether Practical Theology has indeed moved beyond foundationalism.

Though, before entering into a detailed discussion around foundationalism, a brief sketch of the main contours of postmodern thought would be helpful. The researcher is interested in the philosophical and epistemological consequences of post-modernism and its effects for Practical Theology and foundationalism. These concerns will guide this historical sketch.

2.1.1 What is post-modernism?

The modern world was characterized by the affirmation that knowledge is objective, certain and good (Grenz 1996:4) and symbolized by a positive attitude towards the future "nurtured by a profound faith in the resources of science and technology to deliver us from social ills" (Schrag 1992:43).

There was a claim to view the world objectively and to place knowledge on a sure footing. In his popular novel, *A new kind of Christian,* Brian McLaren's (2001:17) fictional character, Neo, describes modernism well: "It was an age aspiring to absolute certainty, which we believed, would yield absolute certainty and knowledge. In modernity, the ultimate intelligibility of the universe was assumed. What was still

unknown was ultimately knowable. Also assumed was the highest faith in human reason."

The shift away from the assumptions and presuppositions of modernity can be seen in the post-modern philosophers, Derrida, Foucault and Rorty. Based on deconstruction, these philosophers argue that one cannot grasp a unified objective picture of the world. All we are left with are differing perspectives on the same reality. Truth is not absolute, but relative to the community in which we find ourselves (Grenz 1996:7-8).

This reaction was against a modernism that has its roots in Rene Descartes (1596-1650) who was viewed as the first "great rationalist philosopher" (Raeper & Smith 1991:42), the first outstanding thinker of modern times (Kung 1978:5), also labelled "the father of modern philosophy" (Grenz 1996:63). Descartes sought to ground belief in some form of rational certitude in mathematics (Kung 1978:6) with "foundations rationally established by intuition or deduction" (Kung 1978:18). Grenz (1996:64) summarizes Descartes aptly: "Descartes intent was to devise a method of investigation that could facilitate the discovery of those truths that were absolutely certain .... In establishing the centrality of the human mind in this manner, Descartes set the agenda for philosophy for the next three hundred years."

Now, of course, it was not Descartes alone who was responsible for the modern project in all of its forms. Tolstoy (1971:657) is always quick to remind us of the "swarm" of history, and that great individuals are rather products of history before producers. Even in Descartes's lifetime, those like Pascal had perceived the whole "relativity of purely rational, mathematical certainty" (Kung 1978:50). John Locke (1632-1704) did not depart much from Descartes's quest for certain knowledge based on foundations. But, instead of a rationalist approach, he was formative in an empirical approach that sought to ground knowledge in experience, where mind is a blank sheet written on by what comes through our senses (Raeper & Smith 1991:90; Thiel 1994:5). Both Descartes and Locke will be crucial in our link between postmodernism and foundationalism.

Immanuel Kant was also one who questioned many of the assumptions that emerged during the Enlightenment that had flowed from Descartes and others. However,

despite this, those like Grenz (1996:74) believe that "his key reformulation of the ideals of the age of reason breathed new life into the Enlightenment project and gave it the shape it would take in the modern era." For Kant: "Knowledge begins with experience, it does not arise from experience. Knowledge has its genuine origin in the forms of intuition, the schema of the imagination, and the categories of the understanding, that reside a priori in the human mind" (Schrag 1992:2).

So, how did this modern epistemological project begin to slowly unravel? Most will point to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) as the one who led the way. He was one of the formative reasons for the breakup (Schrag 1991:43-44). He attacked Kant and others whose quest was for beliefs that were true (Raeper & Smith 1991:168). He was, without doubt, a foe of modernity:

> Before he died though, Nietzsche formulated most of the themes that would be essential to the development of the postmodern intellectual climate. Above all, he established the course towards postmodernism with his thoroughgoing rejection of Enlightenment principles … lying at the foundation of Nietzche's attack on modernism is his rejection of the Enlightenment concept of truth. (Grenz 1996:88)

Following after Nietzsche, a host of philosophers came who sought to challenge the modern epistemological project. One can quickly devise a "canon of postmodern thinkers which would likely include the works of Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze, Guattari, Bastaille, Foucault, Baudrillard, Rorty, Feyerabend – and surely Nietzsche and Heidegger" (Schrag 1992:6).

The postmodern philosophers sought to attack the quest for universal meaning and truth that the modern philosophers, from Descartes through to Immanual Kant, had sought. The Enlightenment project for progress in society, based on beliefs that are certain, now begins to unravel. Most notably with Nietzsche, and then with the postmodern philosophers mentioned in Schrag's canon. Now, knowledge is fragmented, indeterminate and non-universal (Van Huyssteen 1997:75). Ganzevoort (1996:48) picks up on this fragmented aspect of knowledge and notes that it is one of the defining aspects highlighting the shift from modern to post-modern:

> What is it that makes postmodernism so radical and critical? In my view the core threat and challenge lies in the fact that postmodern thinking is going beyond rationalism, because it takes its starting point in the fragmentation of life. Whereas for modern man

> fragmentation is a consequence (and often regarded as a negative one) of modernism, for postmodern man there is nothing but fragmentation.

The claims of rationality are now problematized (Schrag 1992:7). Van Gelder (1996:114) perhaps best articulates the postmodern condition as follows:

> Describing the postmodern condition and attempting to theorize about it are producing a new vocabulary that can sound strange at first. Concepts such as indeterminacy, deconstruction, diversity, decentering, and the aestheticization of all of life challenge the vocabulary of modernity, which emphasized prediction, certainty, absolutes, centers, and the privileging of a particular style as a preferred culture.

Post-modernism has been taken in a host of different directions by various people. One of the expressions of post-modernism has been that of "positive post-modernism." Van Gelder (1996:134) explains its approach to truth as follows:

> It is their belief that the fact that truth is relative does not rob it of all meaning. The worlds in which we live, both physical and social, are real, and we can come to know meaningful things about them. They simply caution that we can't possess knowledge about them in an absolute sense. We have to use adjectives such as contextual, perspectival and interpreted to define both the process by which we come to know and the content that we learn.

The post-modern turn that we have been discussing has resulted in what some define as "a chastened rationality." Franke (2005:26) believes that post-modernism, with its resulting chastened rationality, leads to a rejection of the epistemological certainty to which foundationalism adheres. This epistemological shift leads to a contextual epistemology and one which is non-foundational. But, what exactly is foundationalism?

2.2 FOUNDATIONALISM

Here, a brief moment has been spent traversing the historical journey of post-modernism, which the researcher believes is directly relevant to the discussion regarding foundationalism. He offers an extended quote from Van Huyssteen (1997:2) which he believes best illustrates this link, while at the same time providing a basic definition of foundationalism:

> Postmodernism is, as I see it, first of all a very pointed rejection of all forms of epistemological foundationalism, as well as of its ubiquitous, accompanying metanarratives

that so readily claim to legitimize all our knowledge, judgements, decisions and actions. foundationalism, as is generally defined today, is the thesis that all our beliefs can be justified by appealing to some item of knowledge that is self-evident or indubitable. Foundationalism in this epistemological sense therefore always implies the holding of a position of inflexibility and infallibility, because in the process of justifying our knowledge claims, we are able to invoke ultimate foundations on which we construct the evidential support systems of our various convictional beliefs.

In many ways, we are all foundationalists in our attempt to root our knowledge in something more basic, or on various other presuppositions. Grenz and Franke (2001:29) note:

> In its broadest sense, foundationalism is merely the acknowledgment of the seemingly obvious observation that not all beliefs we hold (or assertions we formulate) are on the same level, but that some beliefs (or assertions) anchor others. Stated on the opposite manner, certain of our beliefs (or assertions) receive their support from other beliefs (or assertions) that are more "basic" or "foundational."

However, the foundationalist agenda goes further than this and hopes to ground our knowing on a basis that can provide us with certainty and deliver us from error. This basis is regarded as universal and context free and is available to any rational person (Grenz & Franke 2001:30). This approach can be either deductive or inductive, from innate ideas or the sensory world.

Rene Descartes is viewed by many as the "father" of foundationalism in his attempt to establish a sure foundation for knowledge in that he

> [C]laimed to have established the foundations of knowledge by appeal to the mind's own experience of certainty. On this basis he began to construct anew the human knowledge edifice. Descartes was convinced that this epistemological program yields knowledge that is certain, culture-and tradition-free, universal, and reflective of a reality that exists outside the mind (this latter being a central feature of a position known as "metaphysical realism" or simply "realism") (Grenz & Franke 2001:30).

Descartes is central to the story, not only because of his influence, but because non-foundational critics see his thought as paradigmatic of foundationalism (Thiel 1994:3). Descartes believed knowledge could be free from doubt and error with simple and known truths on which knowledge could be based (Kung 1978:7).

Others, like John Locke (1632-1704), argued that sense experience is the foundation of knowledge, which is also known as empiricism (Grenz & Franke 2001:32). Hume (1711-1776), also part of the British empiricist tradition, "argued that sense

experience and not ideas provides a grounding for philosophical inquiry" (Thiel 1994:5). Kant's challenge to the empiricist tradition was already discussed when he was examined here in relation to postmodernism. He argued for the a priori givenness of the ideas in the mind, which are the first foundational principles for philosophy (Thiel 1994:5).

In our discussion of postmodernism, we neglected to mention the pragmatic tradition. Indeed, most discussions of postmodernism tend to focus overly on Nietzsche and the French philosophers. Thiel (1994) has done outstanding work in tracing the philosophical history of non-foundationalism, but space does not permit a detailed recounting of that journey. In summary of the pragmatist's contribution, he has the following to say with regard to the early pragmatists, Pierce (1839-1914), James (1842-1910) and Dewey (1859-1952):

> Their common concerns represent the beginning of nonfoundational sensibilities in the modern philosophical tradition. First, the pragmatists all rejected the Cartesian method of establishing the first principles of philosophy as a necessary propaedeutic to philosophical inquiry itself. Second, all rejected the metaphysics of understanding in which either sense experience or ideas were privileged as the authoritative basis for knowing, as the foundations for the truth of the philosophical system. Third, all rejected the traditional rationalist implications of ideas. This contextual and foundationless conception of truth was the most characteristic mark of the philosophies of pragmatism (Thiel 1994:10).

The discussion of postmodernism neglected to mention Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) who followed on from Nietzsche. In his discussion of Wittgenstein, Grenz (1996:114) states that, for him, language has become a social phenomenon, which has its meaning only in relation to that social interaction. Thiel (1994:11) makes the direct link of Wittgenstein's understanding of language as another nail in the foundationalist coffin as now there are now "no first principles on which a context of meaning rests but only the context itself, a network of interrelated and mutually constitutive meanings."

Thiel (1994:12) then leads into a discussion of non-foundational philosophers, such as Sellars, Quine and Rorty. Sellars attacks, what he calls, the "myth of the given." It matters not whether the givenness is based on rationalist or empiricist assumptions: "Givenness become problematic when a certain dimension of experience is imbued

with authority and regarded as a foundation for the other claims to knowledge in a conceptual scheme" (Thiel 1994:13).

If Sellars attacks the "myth of the given," Quine attacks the "myth of the museum." This is an attempt to distribute its foundationalism into the actual conceptual scheme or theory itself, by which meaning is then passed onto the exhibits within the museum (Thiel 1994:19). For Quine, this simply falls prey to the same context-driven nature of language and the "rootedness of language use in sensory experience." (Thiel 1994:20).

Enter Richard Rorty who we have already met in our discussion of postmodernism and Schrag's canon of postmodern philosophers. Rorty attempts to show how the whole Western philosophical tradition has sought to distinguish between the mental and physical worlds. Here, an extended quote from Thiel will be offered in order to best explain this assumption that Rorty attacks. These considerations will be vital in our following discussion of critical realism as a way forward.

> Whether rationalists or empiricists configured the mental world, they posited its experience as a grounding for any knowledge that claimed to be genuine. In this noetic schematism, thinking (or experiencing) is regarded as an activity that mirrors reality, presenting its truth immediately and firsthand within its very operations. Whether traditional philosophy portrayed reality and its truth as supersensible ideas, the object of sense impressions, or the thing in itself, its privileging of some dimension of mental life as a direct, epistemic avenue to that reality took shape in the assumption that knowledge must have foundations to support the greater share of epistemic claims incapable themselves of direct immediate validation (Thiel 1994:24).

Rorty believes that foundationalism, basically, is the same as forms of religious and political fundamentalisms.[3] Both seek for absolute certainty, attempt to dispel myth, and seek "the promise of ready-made answers" (Thiel 1994:24).

The above foray into philosophical history was an attempt to highlight the foundationalist philosophers and their ideas that promoted a foundationalist

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[3] Religious fundamentalism, or Christian fundamentalism, is here seen as basically forms of foundationalism (Thiel 1994:24). Grenz and Franke (2001:37) agree that much of Christian fundamentalism, whether using tradition or Scripture, is simply caught in a foundationalist spell. The foundationalist spell of inherent foundations finds its home in Christian fundamentalisms affirmation of an inerrant bible or inerrant tradition.

understanding of reality and truth. It then moved on briefly to look at those who sought to challenge this foundationalism.

Of course, there are a variety of positions amongst the non-foundationalist philosophers. There are also variations of foundationalism itself, on a scale from soft to strong. However, the desire to ground one's beliefs on a sure foundation is common to all of them.

This foundationalism spawns a realist metaphysic that has a strong preference for a correspondence theory of truth (Thiel 1994:30), which, of course, is so much of what the non-foundational philosophers have attacked. A correspondence theory of truth basically states that what one says about the world can be accurately portrayed in language, although, this common sense approach is called into doubt by difficulties in the way in which language is seen to accurately represent reality (Cartledge 2003:42-43). How Wittgenstein dealt with these issues and how Quine's "myth of the museum" exposed the fallacy of this position, have already been discussed. Could it be that critical realism could be a reasonable way forward out of the idealist/realist correspondence theory of truth and meaning?

Post-modernism has raised questions as to whether such sure knowledge is possible, let alone desirable (Franke 2005:27). Franke notes that the questions posed by post-modern philosophy struck at two of the main tenets of foundationalism. It rejected the belief in absolute certainty and universality, which is seen as an impossible dream of finite humans. Secondly, the idea of the inherent goodness of knowledge collapses under the weight of human selfishness and sin and the desire to control and manipulate knowledge at other people's expense (2005:28).

Thiel (1994:37) is forthright in his conclusion regarding foundationalism and its demise on the philosophical landscape: "That nonfoundational criticism is now practised by a majority of contemporary philosophers testifies to the cogency of its analysis, the adequacy of its explanation, and its consistency with experience."

If a foundationalist correspondence theory of truth and knowledge is truly dead with its realist and idealist assumptions, what could be our way forward? A discussion of

critical realism as just such an attempt to take nonfoundationalism to heart, while charting a way forward out of some of the relativistic dangers inherent in foundationalism, will now be turned to.

2.3 CRITICAL REALISM

Van Huysteen cautions regarding certain aspects of non-foundationalism. Thiel (1994:81) notes the very real concern that critics of non-foundationalism have that nihilism is the outcome of non-foundationalism, and that this epistemic relativism is logically self-defeating. Van Huysteen (1997:3) highlights extreme forms of non-foundationalism that certainly do imply what seems to be a "total relativism of rationalities."

In a very important essay entitled *Critical realism and God: Can there be faith after foundationalism,* published in his book *Essays in postfoundationalist Theology* (1994), Van Huyssteen (1994:41) argues that critical realism could indeed be our way forward beyond foundationalism. What he questions with regard to Christian faith, we might ask with regard to Practical Theology:

> Can there be a life of committed Christian faith after moving beyond the absolutism of foundationalism and the relativism of antifoundationalism? I believe a plausible, and very helpful, postfoundationalist model for theistic belief can be found in a carefully constructed critical realism. After all, the model of rationality we choose to live by very much determines our intellectual context.

Much of our discussion regarding post-modernism and post-foundationalism focuses on the complexity of language and how it represents reality. Not only is language flawed by its contextual nature, but it is also burdened by the fact that neither reason nor experience can provide a sure proof foundation of the reality to which language purports to represent. However, Van Huyssteen (1994:43) makes the bold statement that our language can represent reality in some ways. But, the critical realist approach realises that our language is an indirect account of the given reality. It is, therefore, referential and analogical (1994:43). Most importantly, it is critical in the sense that it always maintains a sense of openness and provisionality throughout the process.

Critical realism then attempts to take the separation between reality and our ability to simply reproduce it in exact fashion, seriously. It agrees that there is indeed a separation between reality and our knowledge of it. Yet, at the same time is believes, like naïve realism, that we can have knowledge that can be true (Hiebert 1994:25). We can make "reliable cognitive claims" (Van Huyssteen 1994:44).

This essentially is a mediating position between naïve realism on the one hand, and phenomenalism on the other. Naïve realism is that form of knowledge, taken up strongly during modernism and foundationalist philosophers, that the mind can know the world exactly, exhaustively, and without bias. Knowledge and reality are equated uncritically (Hiebert 1994:23). Osmer (2008:74) notes that the defining feature of critical realism is that "it rejects the simple correspondence theory of truth found in naïve realism." Critical realism sets "limits to the range of religious and theological language" that we can achieve (Van Huyssteen 1994:51).

On the other hand, phenomenalism believes that the only thing we can know for certain is the sense experience we have of the raw data around us (Wright 1992:34) and emphasizes a distinction between this data and our ability to understand it. Phenomenalism can find expression in various forms of instrumentalism or determinism (Hiebert 1994:22).

Critical realism believes that the world out there is real and that we can know it in a provisional sense. However, the critical dynamic requires of us to acknowledge that: "[T]he only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known …. This path leads to critical reflection on our reality, so that our assertions about reality acknowledge their own provisionality" (Wright 1992:35).

In what will become critical at a later point, when examining whether Practical Theology has indeed moved beyond foundationalism, Osmer (2008:74) makes the following comments with regard to research in Practical Theology and critical realism:

Empirical research, thus does not claim to offer direct access to natural and social objects, for it is informed by particular (and relative) theories. Rather, empirical research interacts with theory, testing, revising, and elaborating its perspectives. It is the interaction of empirical research and theory that leads to the formation of more adequate explanation of the natural social world.

2.3.1 Postmodernism, non-foundationalism and critical realism

Our all too brief foray into epistemology was an attempt to lay a platform to begin to answer the question whether Practical Theology has indeed moved beyond foundationalism and its modern paradigm. By examining postmodernism, non-foundationalism and critical realism, the various insights, concerns and proposals that have emerged from the discussion will be brought to bear on our engagement with Practical Theology as a discipline. This will be done through a critical comparison of the various methodologies within Practical Theology itself. Further to that, questions must be asked with regard to Practical Theology's sources, scope and goals. Now, we shall begin to explore Practical Theology itself, its historical development and its methodological diversity and define terms. In concluding this section, a quote from Van Huyssteen (1994:49), which best illustrates the relationship between post-modernism, non-foundationalism and critical realism, has been chosen:

> The key to moving to a postfoundationalist position that moves beyond the alternatives of foundationalism and antifoundationalism lies not in radically opposing postmodern thought shows itself in the constant interrogation of foundationalist assumptions and this in always interrupting the discourse of modernity .... In fact, when postmodern thought challenges foundationalist assumptions in theology, a fallibilist, experiential epistemology can develop that it highly consonant with the qualified form of critical realism that I have been proposing.

3. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Whatever good things may be said about, and from the perspective of, Practical Theology, it does not really have a clear image of its own – Jacob Firet 1968.

Modern Practical Theology had its beginnings in the 1960s. Since then a considerable consensus has emerged regarding the view that Practical Theology is a theological theory of action ... within a theology that is understood as a practice orientated science – Gerben Heitink 1999.

The above two quotes, (both from Dutch practical theologians from the Free University in Amsterdam) are taken from Firet's (1986:1) magisterial work *Dynamics in pasturing,* first published in 1968, as well as Heitink's (1999:104) well-known *Practical Theology: History, action and domains,* first published in 1993. The reason for the juxtaposition of the two quotes (despite the helpful fact of being from the same university and nation), is to show just how far Practical Theology has moved in the past few decades. From a discipline struggling to define itself and let go of its historical baggage in the 1960s, to a discipline that is diverse yet has arrived at some general sense of what it is - now being accepted within the theological fraternity in its own right. It is a field truly coming into bloom (Moore 2007:167). Of course, in the early 1990s, things have moved on from Heitink and, as the editors of the compendium of essays that practical theologians published in the *Blackwell reader in pastoral and Practical Theology* note, the discipline is always "moving, changing and adapting" (Woodward & Pattison 2000:xiv). Even the last decade has seen an enormous amount of material that continues to shift the direction of the discipline at large. The yet released *Wiley Blackwell companion to Practical Theology* noted this.

In the introduction when Miller- McLemore (2012:2) states that "Practical Theology has grown to such an extent that there is a serious need to clarify its emerging uses and contributions" Despite the advances within Practical Theology, as well as its adaptive and transformative nature, theological reflection (which they use to refer to both Pastoral and Practical Theology) remains elusive, diverse and controversial. Written as recently as 2006, Graham *et al.* (2005:1) muse: "Theological reflection is still easier said than done. Received understandings of theological reflection are largely under-theorized and narrow, and too often fail to connect adequately with biblical, historical and systematic scholarship."

This section, hopes to engage in sufficient detail with Practical Theology as a discipline, despite this diversity. Following this engagement, the questions raised in the consideration of foundationalism in the previous section will be posed, and asked whether the discipline is still stuck in its modernistic paradigm of foundationalism, or whether it has indeed moved beyond modernism.

Of course, these developments in the field of Practical Theology have been taking place at the same time as wider developments with regard to the nature of theological education and education itself. With regard to theological education, in his now definitive book *Theologia: The fragmentation and unity of theological education,* Farley (1994:14) makes the sober statement that theological education cannot take place in today's theological schools.

Kelsey (1992:63) tries to show the various intersecting realities of this debate involving theological education. He believes that theological education is varied as a result of how we understand the nature of the Christian "thing," how we understand God, what form a theological community should take, and how theological education should actually take place. This debate within Theology in general must also be seen in light of the wider developments with regard to education, which has had its effect on theological education, as well as Practical Theology and theological reflection. This can be witnessed through the rebirth of Practical Philosophy, which has become influential across a variety of scientific disciplines (Browning 1991:34).

Even within conservative evangelical circles, questions of theological method have become important. A recent book, entitled *Evangelical futures: A conversation on theological method* (Stackhouse:2000)*,* by some of the leading evangelical scholars, is testament to this. Alister McGrath (2000:16) notes: "We must allow for the fact that many evangelicals have grown up in an intellectual environment that shapes their thinking on how theology is done and have absorbed this without feeling the need to give it formal expression in something as rigorous as theological method."

Already it appears that we might be getting ahead of ourselves. Having noted the interest in theological methodology, the changed and changing face of Practical Theology, as well as the wider concerns of education, we must now move onto delineating these realities more thoroughly and systematically. However, before doing this, we need to define the terms that we are using.

3.1 DEFINING TERMS

One would have noticed how, in the preliminary comments on Practical Theology, three terms found their way into the discussion: being "Pastoral Theology," "Practical Theology" and "theological reflection." Authors in Practical Theology often use the terms interchangeably, which then makes understanding difficult. What is more difficult, is when authors have very different understandings of what these words mean and use them in a very intentional manner to communicate something. Therefore, the researcher hopes to bring some clarity to this while making it clear in what way he understands and uses these terms. As will become apparent, he prefers to use the term "Practical Theology" when referring to the discipline itself, and "theological reflection" when referring to the actual practice of doing theology in the church and world.

3.1.1 Pastoral Theology

The *Blackwell reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, published in 2000, has "Pastoral Theology" alongside "Practical Theology" in its title. The point being that, although Practical Theology has become generally accepted as defining this particular discipline in relation to the other disciplines (i.e. Biblical Studies, Church History,

etc.), this is not the term used by all. Reader (2008:4) believes distinguishing between Pastoral Theology and Practical Theology is fruitless. The researcher disagrees and believes that there is an important distinction, although clear overlaps. Louw (1998:4) seems to indicate that Pastoral Theology forms a part of Practical Theology. Later, he spends a good portion of his time delineating the hermeneutical dimensions of Practical Theology (1998:86-98), and indeed concludes that "pastoral hermeneutics is a subdivision of Practical Theology" (1998:98).

So, what is Pastoral Theology then? Certainly, the term is older than Practical Theology and is often referred to as the need to guide, heal, reconcile and sustain the Christian community (Woodward & Pattison 2000:1). The term is still used frequently in the Catholic tradition (Woodward & Pattison 2000:2). Cahalan (2011:3) notes that many Catholics today will note the difference between pastoral theology, and that of Practical Theology, while at the same time still using the terms interchangeably. This is unusual in light of Karl Rahner's preference for the term Practical Theology instead of the more traditional Pastoral Theology (Kelty 2005:150). Of course the term is not unique to the Catholic tradition and has influences from both Puritanism, Pietism and the Reformed tradition (Hurding 1986:17). Amongst these traditions today, Pastoral Theology could be clarified as such: "Practical Theology has tended to be preferred as a term that includes pastoral theology within the mainstream reformed tradition. Anglicanism, however, has tended to use the concept 'pastoral theology' when talking about theology relating to Practical Theology" (Woodward & Pattison 2000:2).

What makes matters more complex is that many use the term "Pastoral Theology" to refer to the term "Pastoral Care" (Woodward & Pattison 2000:2). For this and other reasons, many find the term too narrow with its apparent focus on pastoral and church community concerns (Woodward & Pattison 2000:2;O'Brien 2009:233). Pastoral Care, of course, is a broad field in itself. The researcher has chosen two examples to demonstrate what he would consider the limiting nature of the term.

John Patton's book *Pastoral Care in context* (1993*)* is an interesting case in showing how Pastoral Theology in many ways means Pastoral Care. Not once does he mention the term "Practical Theology" in that book, and yet he would certainly fall under the broad field of Practical Theology and is the professor of Pastoral Theology at the

University of Columbia. This lack of reference to Practical Theology (neither did he mention "Pastoral Theology" much) could be due to the fact that he did not write a book about Theology, but chose to focus on pastoral care. He states this towards the end of his book, but with the important point that it is vital to reflect theologically on Pastoral Theology, even though his book did not (Patton 1993:237). His article entitled *Introduction to modern Pastoral Theology in the United States* (2000) is even more revealing. With regard to the development of modern Pastoral Theology, Patton (2000:53) states that "pastoral care has been an important part of American Pastoral Theology." He comments that students educated in theological schools are educated in accordance with standards set out by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education and American Association of Pastoral Counsellors (Patton 2000:53). Donald Capps (1998) is one who also seems to indicate the limited nature of the term "pastoral care." He is professor of Pastoral Theology at Princeton and seems to focus largely on pastoral care issues. Of course there is nothing wrong with pastoral care and Pastoral Theology, which is of vital importance to church life and God's mission in the world. What is being illustrated with regard to Patton and Capps, is how Pastoral Theology should be considered a part of Practical Theology, and not synonymous with the term itself. This might seem unfair when one considers the fact that Ballard (2000:66), in his article *The emergence of pastoral and Practical Theology in Britain,* uses the terms "Pastoral Theology" and "Practical Theology" interchangeably. However, even he notes that the counselling paradigm dominated Pastoral and even Practical Theology, in the 70s and 80s, influenced by the developments in America. However, his freedom to use the terms interchangeably might stem from the fact that the British Pastoral and Practical Theology environment always had a more secular, public, plural and non-professional side to it (Ballard 2000:67.) In fact, the title of Ballard's book with Pritchard (2006), entitled *Practical Theology in action: Christian thinking in the service of church and society* , says it all. In the book, the term "Pastoral Theology" falls by the wayside and "Practical Theology" becomes the preferred term. Here, Practical Theology can involve issues dealing with anything from the environment to "every aspect of social policy and cultural experience" (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:6).

Despite what might seem as so vast a distinction that is being made here, it is important to note that Pastoral Theology, like Practical Theology, is still interested in

how Theology can be informed, and indeed inform, effective Christian response in the world (Woodward & Pattison 2000:2). The researcher does not say that Pastoral Care and Pastoral Theology are simply concerned with counselling and do not take wider concerns into account. This broader view can be seen in the excellent work of David Augsburger (1986) with his cross-cultural analysis and concern. With regard to the present discussion around Pastoral Theology, however, the researcher still believes it says that the British and Irish Association for Practical Theology changed its name from the original title of "The British Pastoral Studies Teacher's Conference" (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:2). The researcher's conclusion, therefore, with regard to the term "Pastoral Theology," and when he uses it or references it from others, is that he chooses to place it within the broader field and scope of what is known as "Practical Theology."

3.1.2 Practical Theology

What will be attempted at this point is to give a working definition of Practical Theology, which will then receive further elaboration and expression when given its historical setting. Trying to define Practical Theology is difficult. And with the wide range of methods and approaches on offer, Willows and Swinton's (2000:11) comment is apt in noting that one "could be forgiven for assuming that practical Theology is whatever any particular practical theologian says it is!".

Hendriks's (2004:19) work on Congregational Studies (which he considers a sub-discipline of Practical Theology), defines Practical Theology as "a continuing hermeneutical concern discerning how the Word should be proclaimed in word and deed in the world." Cartledge (2003:3) notes that Practical Theology is a diverse and fragmented discipline, with approaches that could stress either "therapy, mission, liberation and pastoral practice." The editors of the *Series in Practical Theology* (Browning, Fowler, Schweitzer & Van der Ven), quoted in (Heitink 1999:xvi), have chosen the following definition:

> Practical Theology should be understood as an empirically descriptive and critically constructive theory of religious practice. The empirical and descriptive dimension, which is pursued in close cooperation with other disciplines in the field of cultural studies, prevents Practical Theology from wishful speculative thinking and contributes to empirical theory building. The critical and constructive dimension, which is aimed at evaluating and improving the existing forms of religious practice, prevents Practical Theology from empiricism or positivism and contributes to a theology of transformation in the name of true religion … religious practice may be studied on three different levels: with reference to society and culture, with reference to the church, and with reference to the individual. Christianity is not limited to the church, and Practical Theology should not be limited to a clerical paradigm. Its threefold focus is on ecclesial practices, on religious aspects of culture and society, and on the religious dimension of individual life, including the interrelatedness of all three

Broad in scope

Of course, there is more to Practical Theology than the above quote suggests, yet it certainly covers some important aspects. Here, the breadth and scope of Practical Theology ranges from the individual, the church, and then to larger societal-cultural questions. Like the editors mentioned earlier, Hendriks's (2004:33) scope includes the individual but also the ecological dimension. On the ecological dimension of Practical Theology, Daniel Louw (1998:110), in his book on pastoral care, speaks of the notion

of "greening the church." He points out the need to take seriously one's concern regarding the environment, which he later notes is the priestly task of sanctifying the earth (Louw 1998:119). Although one can see the importance of this for the individual within pastoral care, the role of ecology in Practical Theology has far wider implications. The researcher would argue that ecology itself takes on a sense of God's presence (concepts of immanence and more particularly panentheism) and falls within the realm, concern and study of Practical Theology. It forms in, and of, itself a religious dimension of which the extended quote earlier spoke. Here, it is not the place to enter into a discussion of these complex questions with regard to the environment, but simply to point out that the church's record with regard to the environment has been nothing short of abysmal (Basney 1994:16). Van der Ven, Dreyer & Pieterse (2000:43) have argued that nature still remains a neglected theme in Practical Theology due to the discipline's strong focus on the human dimension.

Contextual and interdisciplinary

Alongside the important affirmation of the broad scope of Practical Theology, comes the concern related to its empirical dynamic. It simply must involve research and arise out of real life situations and concerns. In his interesting book, entitled *Practical Theology: Charismatic and empirical perspectives*, Mark Cartledge (2003:11) agrees with this: "For Practical Theology, with its orientation of engagement with real people in real social contexts, the need to use empirical approaches is fundamental to the discipline. Theoretical and abstract discussion also remains essential but they are used primarily in relation to empirical and concrete studies of people."

Just prior to this quote, Cartledge (2003:11) argued for a close relationship between the social sciences and Practical Theology. The editors of the *Series in Practical Theology* had mentioned the importance of the cultural sciences as partners to Practical Theology. One might argue that, an attempt to engage with the other sciences makes the practical theologian's task almost an impossibility – at least by itself. Firet (1986:10) notes that in theory a practical theologian would have to be an "exegete, systematic theologian, psychologist and sociologist … to say nothing of historical research." Of course, one could add to this: skills in Ethics, Church History, Economics, Politics and Ecology! Despite these difficulties, we need to affirm the dialogical and correlational partner of the social sciences for Practical Theology.

Indeed, Van Huyssteen (1994:34-38) argues that interdisciplinary engagement is vital for Theology as a whole in its move beyond foundationalism. One could argue that Practical Theology itself, by its very nature, is well placed to move beyond foundationalism because of the importance it affords various other disciplines and its wide scope. However, one must not be overawed by the social sciences and must take serious consideration of its potential weaknesses. Much of social science is charged with its own ideology and is not even aware of its own values (Browning 1991:81). Both theological and social science's concerns must be aware of their hermeneutical character – their own "religious" and hidden perspectives (Browning 1991:92). The descriptive nature remains important, but must take these checks into account.

What the earlier quote perhaps did not make clear, but hinted at, was the correlational dimension between Theology and human sciences that must take the form of a critical engagement. By "critical" is meant that after the "pastoral concern" (Whitehead & Whitehead 1995:13) has been identified through the process of attending (Whitehead & Whitehead 1995:21), which is essentially a posture of listening, one brings into dialogue the traditional concerns from the Christian classics, as well as the present concerns raised by the human and social sciences. This correlational dialogue must remain open and feel the risk of possible revision – even on the Christian side (Graham *et al*. 2005:168). What form of the Christian classics and its tradition becomes the dialogue partner is of course also hotly contested (Graham *et al*. 2005:167). What the researcher's understanding of these issues is with regard to Practical Theology, will become clearer when he evaluates the different methodologies, as well as how he eventually answers the question whether Practical Theology is indeed post-foundationalist. At this point, and taking into account the preceding discussion, as well as comments which he will make at a later stage, he makes this tentative definition of Practical Theology:

> A post-foundationalist Practical Theology is a reflection on the given life experiences of people in their individual, church, societal and ecological dimensions that is both missional and glocal. Its reflection is intentional and arises out of practise moving into dialogue with the Christian classics (in plurality and ecumenically) and with the human, social and even natural sciences that takes into account the concerns of a non-foundational epistemology in its approaches to both poles. This results in a decision for change, which ends up where its reflection started off – practice and mission.

3.1.3 Theological reflection

One might wonder what difference there is between Practical Theology and the term that will now be described as "theological reflection." The short answer to that question is: "not much!" Yet, as one digs a little deeper there are some distinctions that are important to highlight, and they are the distinctions envisaged when using the term. The previous concluding paragraph obviously indicates that a very specific view of Practical Theology – indeed, one with which not everyone would agree. In fact, the truth is that all Christians are engaged in a form of theological reflection, even if they have never heard of the discipline, Practical Theology. We are all familiar with the much bandied about comment in churches that "Theology is dangerous," which is widespread and deep. Of course, this aversion to Theology masks the fact that, in some sense, we are all theologians. Grenz and Olson (1996:13) describe this in the following manner:

> A misconception is growing among Christians that a great gulf exists between ordinary Christians and theologians. For some that perceived gap creates fear; for others it creates suspicion and resentment. We want to close the gap by showing that everyone – especially every Christian – is a theologian and that every professional theologian is simply a Christian whose vocation is to do what all Christians do in some way: think and teach about God.

All Christians want to understand God better and to figure out if their faith has any application to the reality in which they find themselves. Despite the exciting situational theology that emerges from this form of theological reflection, it can often remain narrow and polemical. The great fascination with Tim La Haye's novels of the end times and his series, *Left behind,* demonstrates this. It creates a fascination with leaving this earth and propagates a brand of pre-millennial theology that is unreflective and escapist. This form of theology has practical consequences on how we view our lives as humans, our planet, and what we choose to do about it. The pitfalls of this form of theological reflection leads to a pessimistic view of the world and a lack of real interest to create change within it (Grenz 1992:146). This, of course, is just one example of the negative aspect of theological reflection. The point intended to be made, however, is that it is a uniquely human quest to reflect (whether critically or uncritically) on who we are in relation to God and our situation. Of course, this is not a modern phenomenon of the human race, but in fact is as old as our species itself. In his book, *The story of God,* Robert Winston (2005:22) demonstrates that, from the

very beginning, our earliest ancestors reflected on their life experience and its relation to God and the planet - perhaps not in a technical manner of course, but reflection nonetheless. It is of interest that, toward the end of his book, *Theologia*, where he calls for the recovery of the understanding of *Theologia*, Farley (1994:157) notes: "Although the understanding of the believer may result from a self-conscious effort, this does not mean technical scholarship. It is the understanding required by the life of faith in the world. This mode of understanding is reflection or theological reflection."

Graham *et al*. (2005) attempt to track the many and varied ways that theological reflection has taken place within the Christian tradition - in technical and non-technical ways. They list seven ways, with examples from original source material, to demonstrate this process of theological reflection. The researcher will discuss these areas in more detail later, but would like to bring out what is becoming an important conclusion for himself - being the local dimension of Practical Theology and, more specifically, theological reflection. This emerges out of a desire to see theological reflection become the domain of the everyday in Christians' lives. It arises from a motivation to see Christians schooled in the basic modes of theological reflection in order for them to reflect critically on their world in light of the Christian story.

> Christian ministry comes to be understood as being less about the application of expertise and more about facilitating the vocation of all Christians through processes of understanding, analysing and reflecting. The purpose of theological education, therefore, is to equip people with skills and strategies to enable them to reflect theologically (Graham *et al*. 2005:5).

Reader (1994:1) argues for this strongly and contends that "At a time when far greater emphasis is being placed on the role of the laity in the ministry of the church, it is surely vital that we begin to investigate how doing theology might become a shared local activity". This desire to help all Christians to reflect theologically is not new. This is evident in the many "Bible study" courses and other theological programmes on offer in many of our churches today. The researcher's experience over the last 12 years of his life is interesting in this regard. Three different denominational groupings each had their own systematic Theology that formed the basis of their theological reflection – these being Louis Berkhoff (1994), Wayne Grudem (1994) and Millard Erickson (1983) respectively. Characteristic of all these approaches is the form of

applied Theology that has dominated Practical Theology from the time of Schleiermacher to the 1970s and, if Farley (1994:33-34) is correct, even in the early Christian centuries and the Middle Ages. Recently Grab (2005:187) has disputed the fact that Schleiermacher proposed a form of "Applied Theology". Even so, the researcher believes, with Schleiermacher we have a narrow view of Practical Theology that focuses on church leadership. Even Grab (2005:184) admits that with Schleiermacher "The practical life of the church and of Christians within it, is not yet practical theology. It also remains for Schleiermacher of central importance that Practical Theology distils the essence of Christianity (:186). An illustration of this shift and change in Practical Theology will take place under the historical discussions that will follow later. However, a brief comment is called for here with regard to this applied Theology and the call for all within the church to reflect on theology. "Applied Theology" is basically another way of saying "foundationalist Theology," and an approach to the Bible as the only source for Theology, which is also inerrant, is captive to foundationalism (Benson 2006:68-69)

This "applied theology" approach in many of our churches today is highlighted when adults are invited to begin theological reflection and to come with the idea and belief that they ought to start off by "believing theology to be a set of general rules which they can apply to their lives. They hope to learn these rules and their application so their lives will be better" (Whitehead & Whitehead 1995:103). Despite this, and when theological reflection is encouraged for all Christians, it indeed results in a better embodiment of the Gospel and reception of the richness of our Christian heritage (1995:110). Aside from the applied theology model in much of today's theological reflection in our churches, an equal danger lurks in its area of focus. It seems wholly ecclesial in its dimension, and overly individualistic in its application. This is why it will be argued later that a missional approach to theological reflection, which encompasses all of God's world as a dimension of reflection and that values the non-ecclesial worlds of the majority of the church's members, is of vital importance. Without pre-empting what will come, a truly missional Practical Theology will be one that is contextual, springing from experience, and therefore moving beyond foundationalism that makes universal claims, based on "unquestionable" foundations, then applied to a variety of contexts. This is not to make experience some form of certain foundation, but rather give it it's unique place in the theological discussion.

Experience is open to critique and vulnerable to the limits of knowledge and the limits of context.

Guder (2000:178) notes the importance of each person to identify their calling and gifts and the need for "biblical and theological training to incarnate the Gospel in their particular fields, and then to commission them to that ministry." This missional dimension for Practical Theology and theological reflection will be dealt with later in evaluating whether it truly represents a move beyond foundationalism.

The researcher's view is that theological reflection, in many ways, is similar to Practical Theology. In an academic setup, one who engages in Practical Theology in many ways engages in theological reflection. However, theological reflection is in fact an approach in which every human is engaged. All Christians engage in theological reflection - whether they admit it or not. The theological reflection that this dissertation will argue for is one that seeks to engage God, the world and ourselves in a reflective and critical manner. The specifically non-foundational nature of this form of theological reflection will become evident as we progress.

3.2 HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Having taken some time to define the terms that will be used, our discussion with regard to placing ourselves in an historical setting can now begin. As has been mentioned already, theological reflection has a long history that, in fact, goes right back to the beginning of humankind. It is part of being human to reflect theologically on our world and its relation to something other than ourselves. Prior to the time of the early church we have the people of Israel who reflected on their world in relation to God. Later to Paul, who did his theological reflection in the first century, through to the early church fathers, to the councils, through the Middle Ages, to the Enlightenment and our modern world, Christians have been engaging in theological reflection.

The fragmentation of Theology

Edward Farley (1994:31) argues that, for a long time, theology was seen as the "individual cognition of God and things related to God" - a habit of the human soul known as *habitus*. The second form of theology is a "self-conscious scholarly enterprise of understanding" (1994:31), which has a more disciplinary twist and can be called *scientia*. Of course, the term "theology" only arose quite late in the Christian tradition, but this habit of the heart and theological reflection existed from the beginning. It would be unwise to say that theological reflection was done in a certain way in the early church, that it changed in the Middle Ages, then morphed again during the Reformation, and then again with Schleiermacher and then with further changes in the 20th century. That would assume that there was a clear trajectory that can be followed and traced with neat divisions, moving from one form of theological reflection to another. Indeed, it is true that there have been changes - and some dramatic. It will be argued later that the second half of the last century witnessed just such a change within theological reflection, or more specifically Practical Theology. On the whole, however, it is perhaps better to say that forms of theological reflection often ran alongside one another in the church's history. The book by Graham *et al*. (2005) already mentioned, demonstrates this well. Therein, they identify seven various methods of theological reflection and examine ways throughout the church's history that they have been practised.

This could be paralleled to the reality that Kelsey (1992:34) notes with regard to theological schools. Here, the different ways of understanding God shape the theological school and its form of reflection. Farley (1994:44) examines theology's history throughout the ages from the first few centuries, through the Middle Ages and ending in the Enlightenment. In these periods, s*cientia* and *habitus*, although running concurrently, have maintained their essence. With the arrival of the Enlightenment, theology as *habitus* disappears, and *scientia* fragments into various disciplines.

Practical Theology as applied theology

In the wake of the Enlightenment and with the arrival of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Practical Theology as a discipline first began to take shape. The approach that developed at this point defined Practical Theology right up until the past century and, in fact, still broods over the discipline today. The change that took place during, and

after, the Enlightenment has been called the "most important event and the most radical departure from the tradition in the history of education of clergy" (Farley 1994:49). The Enlightenment of the subject led Schleiermacher to a radical rethinking of Theology. Heitink (1999:19) comments on this development by noting: "Practical Theology owes its origin to Schleiermacher, the first modern theologian, who, recognizing the value of the Enlightenment, wanted to build a bridge to modern humanity by reflecting on the Christian faith on the basis of the experience of the subject."

Of course, Schleiermacher has been crowned the father of many ideas in Theology, of which Practical Theology is just one. There were others who preceded him and influenced him, such as Gundling and Mosheim (Farley 1994:77), as well as others who sought to embody the practical theological "way" he described, such as C.I. Nitzch (Anderson 2001:24). Despite this, today, many choose to place Schleiermacher at the starting point of Practical Theology (Heitink 1993:23; Graham *et al.* 2005:2; Woodward & Pattison 2000:24). What exactly was it that Schleiermacher set into motion that has defined Practical Theology so dramatically? And what would this have to do with a post-foundationalist Practical Theology?

Alongside the fragmentation of theology that took place, Scheiermacher's belief that Theology should move from historical knowledge to practical application has significant influence. Unfortunately, he did not understand how the church's practises could influence the very questions we bring to our sources (Browning 1991:43). Practical Theology now becomes a term for ministry and clergy - duties with the sole goal being the application of the theoretical sciences of biblical, historical and systematic studies (Farley 1994:78). Practical Theology itself has simply nothing new to offer philosophical and historical theology (Heitink 1999:26). Louw (1998:90) describes this shift in the following manner: "Practical Theology now becomes applied theology; in other words, the truth is applied to ecclesiastical practice. Focus shifts from clergy's preparation to the functions of the church. This functional approach represents a radical shift which has long term consequences for Practical Theology."

The process of modernization also led to an empirical shift in society, which has resulted in the rise of the social sciences and Sociology in particular (Heitink 1993:35). Practical Theology has been a bedfellow of empirical studies ever since and, in many ways, is defined by it and cannot avoid it (Cartledge 2003:2). Often, however, the use of the empirical sciences has been accepted uncritically. Browning (1991:91) argues that the social sciences are captive to their own philosophical, ethical and indeed religious frameworks. However, this does not mean that they should not be embraced by Practical Theology, but rather that they should function within a specifically theological context (Browning 1991:92). Even Van Huyssteen (1994:38), who argues strongly for the importance of engagement with other disciplines, argues for disciplinary integrity and the importance of standing firm in our traditions.

It was mentioned earlier that Practical Theology does not move and develop in neat linear lines. This, of course, makes it difficult to analyse how the discipline has been shaped and changed. It was also mentioned earlier that a noticeable shift and change took place in Practical Theology in the second half of last century as it moved away from the applied theology of the previous century and a half. The fact that this change has taken place is now widely accepted in the practical theological fraternity (Heitink 1993:104; Graham *et al.*. 2005:2). There are many reasons that have led to this change in Practical Theology, some of which will be discussed later. Important to note at this point is that there has been a shift from Practical Theology being regarded as a fringe discipline within Theology, as well as a move away from the view that it focuses on theory and is moved onto practice only once all the hard theoretical work is done. It was also often seen in the theological fraternity as practical, but certainly not theological (Ganzevoort 2010:1) In the following quote Browning (1991:3) captures this shift delightfully:

> The field of Practical Theology has been throughout its history the most beleaguered and despised of the theological disciplines. The discipline of theology itself had few friends, even in the church. To admit in academic circles that one is a theologian has been, in recent years, to court embarrassment. To admit that one is a practical theologian invites even deeper scepticism. To admit at a major university that one is a practical theologian has been to invite humiliation. With the rebirth of the practical philosophies, Practical Theology itself has been reborn. Five years ago few would admit to being practical theologians. Today there is a rush among more dignified and well-established systematic and historical theologians to ask. After all, aren't we all practical?

The introductory remarks in this section on Practical Theology mentioned that it was the rise of practical philosophy and practical education that partly explains this shift. Another vastly important factor was the rise of Liberation Theology, Black Theology and Feminist Theology. Each sought to move from the practice and reality on the ground, examining the stuff of life. People's oppression and their experience becomes a starting point in their theological reflection. One example from James Cone's (1990:29) statement with regard to theological entry points will suffice. He places revelation only fourth in his consideration of doing theology and places Scripture and tradition fifth and sixth. The three sources and starting point for Theology, are black experience, black history and black culture. The dramatic impact of this shift will be seen later when the various methodological options with regard to theological reflection are examined. That this focus on a unique context with multiple sources could lead to a post-foundationalist position, should be self-evident.

To try to understand this shift how Practical Theology has evolved from the 1960s in certain parts of the world to the present, will now be examined. As this is being done to demonstrate the shift that has taken place in Practical Theology as a discipline, an attempt will not be made to paint a picture of Practical Theology across the world. That is not the goal of this study. The researcher realizes that he focuses strongly on both Europe, America and South Africa in what follows. This does not imply that certain developments outside of these centres are not important. Indeed, the importance of Liberation Theology in South America has already been referenced. A more sustained interaction with Liberation Theology will be noted when we engage with methodological issues. The yet released book *The Wiley Blackwell companion to Practical Theology* (Miller-Mclemore 2012) will attempt to capture the present state of Practical Theology in a wide variety of centres, with a wide variety of authors.

3.2.1 Developments in Germany

Karl Barth's shadow has continued to hover over the development of Practical Theology in Germany. This reality left little room for the development of an inductive approach to Practical Theology (Heitink 1999:112). Browning (1991:5) defines Barth's view as practical, only in the sense of applying God's revelation, and he later

calls Barth's approach significantly wrong (Browning 1991:7). Bastian believed that Barth contributed to the decline of Practical Theology (Heitink 1999:12). Van Wyk (1995:86) further notes that "Bastian appealed to practical theologians to shake off the chains of dogma and to stand on their own two feet.' The normative-deductive approach was rejected, and the need for praxis to correct and critically evaluate theory was stressed. Heitink (1999:112) comments that, with Bastian, one notices an empirical shift that looks for questions that faith evokes, and one that tries to find paths to non-theological disciplines. In 1974, a paper prepared by both Catholic and Protestant practical theologians, entitled *Praktische Theologie heute,* was viewed as seminal in breaking the applied theological stranglehold in German Practical Theology. It showed how Practical Theology started from concrete praxis and was to be regarded as a theory of action (Heitink 1999:113). This path was then followed by others, such as Josuttis and Otto.

Otto lamented Practical Theology's Applied science mentality and neglect of practice. Van Wyk (1995:87) notes that Otto believed:

> theologians have been so busy with their own theological traditions that they have had no time to address contemporary society or the contemporary church. This produced a void in.reflection on the relationship between theory and praxis. Further outcomes were a blind emphasis on action, a contentless pastoral praxis, and the establishment of practical theology as an applied science. To overcome these errors, practical theology should take up the premise of its wide social relevance and be redefined in terms of the interrelationship of religion, the church, society, and theology. Practical theology must be a critical theory of religiously influenced praxis in society.

One of the central figures in German Practical Theology was Kael Nipkow who was Proffessor of Religious Education and Practical Theology at the university of Tubigen from 1968-1995 (Schweitzer & Osmer 2003:192). Following on from the shift from a more hermeneutical approach to a social sciences approach in German education in general in the 1960's, Nipkow believed that the challenges of Modern theology, Modern education and modern rationality all had to be taken seriously. He placed high importance on the Bible yet not in the conservative sense or applied theological way (:193). The consequences of much of his thought led to the "demand for a type of religious instruction that takes the contemporary world as its starting point, educationally as well as theologically" (:196). Nipkow has his roots in the school of Klafki with its orientation towards the human sciences (Heitink 1993:271).

More recent Practical Theologians in Germany have solidified this shift to a more empirical approach consistent with a shift to the social sciences. Yet Schweitzer (2006:166) still believes many within the theological fraternity still see Practical Theology or Religious Education as simply an applicatory discipline. He resists this and places high value on the Empirical nature of the discipline and its research (:167). This should not be at the expense of Systematic, Historical and Comparative research. An example of this comparative research was the work done by himself and Osmer (2003) in *Religious Education between Modernization and Globalization.*

Heimbrock also argues strongly for an empirical approach to Practical Theology (2011). He specifically argues for a Phenomenological approach to research (2005). He argues for the importance of taking ones methodological assumptions into account when doing research, and believes a phenomenological approach is one that moves beyond positivistic assumptions of reality (:277).

3.2.2 Developments in the Netherlands

Of course, in the Netherlands, the name of Jacob Firet dominates in any discussion of Practical Theology. His book, *Dynamics in pastoring (1986),* is viewed as seminal in the debate. However, he meets with mixed reception. Heitink (1999:120) seems to speak favourably of him and his development of a theory of action. Others, such as Ballard and Pritchard (2006:62), view him squarely within the applied theology framework that dominated Practical Theology for so long. Firet (1986:11) himself states explicitly that Practical Theology "Is not the practical end of the curriculum."

Heitink (1999:121) mentions many other names in Dutch Practical Theology, such as Haarsma, Kessel and Hofte. With Van der Ven, he notes a move to an empirical approach, which he defines as fresh. Cartledge (2003:14) credits Van der Ven with breaking new ground and greatly influencing developments in Britain with regard to his empirical theology. He notes the emphasis on practise in Van der Ven, where the "direct object of empirical theology therefore is the faith and practice of people concerned. The social sciences are used to further this enterprise and theology is

dependent upon these disciplines within Practical Theology." Browning (1991:35) notes the effect of practical philosophy on Van der Ven, and indeed even on Firet. Dingemans (1996:87-88) has noted this shift from applied theology to an investigation of Christian practice itself, and sees both Firet and van der Ven as examples of this shift to a more empirical approach. Heitink himself would be central to any discussion of Practical Theology in Holland. Ballard and Pritchard (2006:62) seem to place him alongside Firet as part of the applied theological spectrum. On the researcher's reading of Heitink, he would question such a perspective and would see him as one who takes the practise of Christian life in the world as of vital importance. In the researcher's view, his empirical approach to the mediation of the Christian faith leans toward this (Anderson 2001:25). Ganzevoort (2009:7) has shown that Heitink attempts to balance empirical, hermeneutical and strategic concerns in his Practical Theology.

3.2.3 Developments in Great Britain

Pattison (2007:16) noted that in the 1970's Practical Theology did not exist as a discipline in England. His studies took him to Edinburgh which "was then the centre of a revival in Practical Theology as thinking about and analysing experience and theology rather than just teaching ministers how to 'do' practical things like baptising babies". Things have changed since then. Paul Ballard's (2000:61) article on *Pastoral and Practical Theology in Britain* (2000) notes that Practical Theology in Britain is one of the fastest growing and most popular areas in the British theological curriculum. He notes that, in times past, the British pastoral scene was dominated by "transferring theological truth into some kind of practice" (2000:62). He further notes that the change that has taken place has been due to the rise of professionalism in ministry and the need to find legitimacy for one's discipline (2000:63). The crisis of the clergy's role in a declining church has resulted in deep reflection that came with the rapid increase in secularization in the post-war years (2000:64). Ballard continues by showing that the 20th century has seen a notable turn to the human in Theology, manifested by the various liberationist Theologies. It has resulted in a focus on, and the importance of, "lived experience, practice, action and the primacy of human need"

(2000:65), with a move away from abstract Theology. The change in the British scene has also been brought about by the turn to the practical in education (2000:65) and a greater awareness of the laity (2000:66). He sums up the changes in British Practical Theology with the following words (2000:61):

> Before the war it was, broadly speaking, a severely practical, atheoretical discipline that was marginal to mainstream theological endeavours and uninformed by the human sciences and professional skills. It was exclusively focussed upon the work of clergy. Now it is becoming a growing and diverse field which is gradually developing a theoretical literature as well as skills of reflection upon practice of many different kinds. It is gradually moving towards the centre of contemporary theological endeavour, as well as outwards to embrace many practical contemporary issues and concerns such as poverty, the future of work, and the nature of community.

The recent work by (Cameron, H., Bhatti, D., Duce, C., Seeney, J. & Watkins, C. 2010) has argued strongly for what they call "Theological Action Research" as a vehicle for doing Practical Theology, consistent with this shift to practice. Action Research crops up often in recent work in Brittish Practical Theology (Swinton and Mowat 2006:255-258; Bennett & Graham 2008:46). The recent Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology recently introduced in England is a good example of the changes that have taken place in Practical Theology. Bennett and Graham (2008:46) discuss the Doctorate in the following terms:

> The design and ethos of the PrD certainly accords well with shifts in practical theology itself, which has, over the past two decades, exhibited a shift from an understanding of itself as an "applied" discipline towards a "turn to practice," in which the theorization and analysis of context and practice assume renewed significance, and in which the processes and methods of "theological reflection" on practice are placed at a premium

This seems to have been a move in the right direction for Practical Theology in Great Britain. This is confirmed by the study by Lynch and Pattison (2005) entitled *Exploring Positive Learning Experiences in the Context of Practical Theological Education* where they sought to examine the experiences of those studying in Practical Theology institutions, and what they value about the education they have received. The findings confirmed the shift that has taken place within the discipline in Great Britain where the students valued a Practical Theological education that was relevant to their personal and professional experiences, and gave them the ability to critically reflect on those experiences (:148-149).

3.2.4 Developments in North America

The pragmatic nature of the American scene has characterized it from the start. This perhaps was the reason why Practical Theology, as a separate discipline, had no place for such a long time (Heitink 1999:115). The influence on Pastoral Theology early on came in the form of the clinical pastoral movement represented by Seward Hiltner (Patton 2000:52). There was in North America in the 1980's and 1990's "a significant and extended reappraisal of the fundamental aims and purposes of theological education as a whole" (Bass & Dykstra 2008:6). This can be seen in the seminal book published in 1983 entitled *Practical Theology: the emerging field in Theology, Church and World.* The book captured the changing mood and creative discussions that was emerging at the time. Browning (1983:3) in his introduction sought to capture that mood and noted the new interest:

> in questions of right action in addition to its traditional interests in right meaning and correct belief. There seems to be a growing hunger to make theology in general more relevant to the guidance of action and to bridge the gap between theory and practice, thought and life, the classic theological disciplines and practical theology.

Heitink (1999:118) notes a shift from Pastoral Theology to Practical Theology in the work of Don Browning (1991:7), who calls for Practical Theology to begin with practise, then move to theory, with a return to practise. Heitink (1999:118) notes the correlational nature of Browning's theology and discusses the public dimension of Tracy's Practical Theology. In regard to them, he notes Rebecca Chopp's critique of both Tracy and Browning as being far too academic, modern and liberal (Heitink 1999:119). The major development, which has taken place within North American Practical Theology, has been the fact that context has been pushed to the forefront, involving the whole situation, background and environment of the specific event and circumstance (Patton 2000:55) In *Teaching Practical Theology: six perspectives* (Cahalan, Hess & Miller-McLemore 2008) we get an interesting insight into the present state of Practical Theology in North America. Here "practice, embodiment, self reflection, and recognition of Gods presence" are important (:80). An extended quote, on reflection on the six perspectives, perhaps best illustrates the present state of North American Practical Theology:

> Almost all the essays use the term "real" life and directional words like "in" and "out" to describe the subject matter. Meaning only lies "in specific contexts," a location that confounds teaching inevitably abstracted from this. Students must go "out" of the classroom, whether imaginatively through dramatic exercises or literally through ethnographic research that allows a "whiff" of the "air of real situations." Knowledge depends on a practiced ability to "read" these situations and the cultural context around them. It comes from "loving" or "disciplined" attention to the multiple meanings of "what is going on." (Cahalan, Hess & Miller-McLemore 2008:81)

There has also been a significant shift to questions around public engagement and life outside the church, which concerns the mission of the church, which is now seen as a legitimate horizon for Practical Theology in North America (Cahalan & Nieman 2008:79).

3.2.5 Developments in South Africa

In the late 1990's Pieterse (1998:155) sketched the situation of Practical Theology in South Africa by stating that:

> Practical Theology has been prospering in theological faculties of South African universities since the beginning of the seventies. The discipline is taught and researched at eleven universities of the sixteen in the country. The lecturers in Practical Theology are swamped with post graduate students from all races, many of whom are doing doctoral research. Without overstating it, a person can say that more South Africans obtained doctoral degrees in Practical Theology in the past three decades than in the whole history of the country.

Pieterse (:155) believes the success of Practical Theology in South Africa was due to the fact that it is essentially a "crisis' discipline which is suited to South Africa, which has been in a state of "political, economic and social crisis since the sixties". Many theologians have been influenced by this reality in different ways that has led them to their specific approaches. Kretzschmar (1994:20) is one who has argued against a safe descriptive analysis in the academy and for a "theological praxis, in which theory and practice, analysis and action, intellectual development and practical transformation are welded together". It is one that takes "community needs and actions into account" (Kretzschmar 2000:7). Another example of this was the book published in the late 1980's entitled *Theology & Violence: The South African Debate* (Villa-Vicencio 1987). The contributors were from a wide range of disciplines and circles whose theological reflections were based on the contextual realities that were taking place in South Africa at the time.

This contextual nature of Practical Theology was one of three approaches that Burger (1991) had identified in his study on Practical Theology in South Africa at the time, the others being the Confessional and Correlational. Outside of a few exceptions, Burger concluded that not many had reflected on the important questions regarding Practical Theology. Burger (1991:20) noted that it was only in recent times (late 1980's and early 1990's), that South African Practical Theologians were beginning to ask methodological questions around the discipline itself. The most notable being that of Pieterse and De Gruchy.

Burger (1991:20) stated that with Pieterse there was a notable shift to a more empirical emphasis in Practical Theology. For Pieterse (1993:4-5) Practical Theology is a theory of communicative action, whereby the lifeworld's of individuals and groups come under consideration. Van Wyk (1995:93) believes Pieterse's approach is to "explain, understand and theorise", through empirical methods, these lifeworld of communicative action. Pieterse (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:66) argued that theory and practice ought to be held in tension with regard to the specific "terrain" one studies, and that this terrain ought to be understood empirically.

Pieterse's (1998) overview of Practical Theology in the late 1990's noted Burger's (1991) study of Practical Theology, where he had discussed the three approaches to Practical Theology in South Africa at the time. With all three approaches Scripture was deemed as important. Pieterse (1998: 159) further reflected on Wolfaardt's description of these approaches of Burger's being "Scripture and context, the gospel and context and faith and context".

The Scripture and context approach is one where the Bible is used deductively and its contents are sought to be applied to any given context (:160). Van Wyk (1995:88) describes this confessional approach to Practical Theology in South Africa as follows:

> (1) The study of the Bible is central, and it is the only norm and source of practical theology; W. D. Jonker suggests that practical theology stands in the service of the Word of God? (2) Guidelines for the service of the church are deductively derived from a theological theory based on Reformed theology. (3) The church and the service of the church are central. And (4) the training of ministers is the most important task of practical theology.

The Gospel and context approach is seen as a more empirical approach where the Bible is used indirectly and issues in society are taken seriously and not just the church. This more empirical approach is the one of Pieterse's which we have already noted.

The last approach is one of faith and context, or Burger's description of a contextual approach (:161). It is one that takes seriously the specific contextual realities within society and seeks their transformation. The bible is used selectively, and the broader context and religious community are emphasized more than the church. The key work for this approach was that of Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen (1991) entitled *In word and Deed: towards a Practical Theology for Social Transformation.* In it they state that social transformation involved the dismantling of apartheid society and "process whereby society is contructed to be increasingly consonant with the vision and values of the 'Kingdom' or rule of God" (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen 1991:2). In his concluding remarks regarding the various approaches to Practical Theology in South Africa Pieterse (1991:161-162) notes a general movement towards the acceptance of a more contextual approach to Practical Theology:

> To a lesser or greater extent all the theologians are moving towards a contextual theology for praxis. The motivation to develop theories for a transformative praxis has become more urgent. The value of critical theory, social transformation and especially economic transformation of the poor has come to the fore. This is the situation especially as Practical Theologians want to address the huge social and economic problems of the country and its people. They want to address the praxis and identify the role of the churches in this context. Practical Theology, to accept the challenge of its relevancy, will have to approach the challenge reflexively, and fulfil its task close to the actuality of its praxis.

At the same time in the early 1990's there was a significant drive to help local congregations in South Africa to reflect on their local context. The handbook by Hendriks (1992) *Strategic planning in the congregation: principles and practice of renewal in a congregation* became the most used Practical Theological handbook at the time. Both Hendriks at Stellenbosch and Nel (1994) at Univesity of Pretoria sought an "up-buidling" approach for local congregations instead of the Church Growth models at the time being pushed from America by the work of McGavran and Wagner (1990). Hendriks work (1992), alongside highlighting the importance of

good contextual and congregational analysis, highlighted the importance of the Missional and Triune dimensions in Practical Theology. This was done again in *The future of the Church, the Church of the future* (2003:11). The same paper highlighted the importance of Post-Modernism and the Growth of African Independent and Pentecostal churches in South Africa. This focus on the Missional and contextual dimensions in Practical theology for local congregations was important for Hendriks (2001) and was central to his eventual book (widely used not only in South Africa but also in Sub-Saharan Africa) published in 2004 *Studying Congregations in Africa* which discussed his Practical Theological methodology used in the Network for African Congregational Study (NetACT). This missional shift in congregations is demonstrated in many of the discussions and material in the website http://www.communitas.co.za/

Also on a congregational level the work of another South African, Wynand De Kock, is important. His Open Seminary methodology and approach to Practical Theology came to the fore in the early years of 2000. His training of local church leaders to reflect on their local context was influential in many of the Charismatic English speaking churches. It helps Church leaders understand their context, reflect on that context and then lead to transformative action in that context (De Kock 2011:9). The methodology has since been used at Tabor college in Victoria, Australia, and will be run from Palmer Seminary in Philadelphia, Australia, from 2012. De Kock (2009) comments that:

> "Openseminary aims to equip leaders for the church who are able to think critically and constructively about the ways in which the church shapes its life to respond to what God is doing in our world. Openseminary networks educational institutions, academics and practitioners to provide graduate level education".

Dreyer (2010:1) has recently argued that there has not been much reflection on the present situation of Practical Theology in South Africa since Burger (1991) and Pieterse (1998). Dreyer (2010:1), like Pieterse, highlighted the importance of the book *In Word and Deed: towards a Practical Theology of social transformation* (Cochrane, De Gruchy and Peterson 1991) as a book which provided an "important outline for a contextual, transformative approach to practical theology" at the time.

Dreyer also highlighted the work of Msomi (1994) as an attempt to describe the state of Practical Theology in the 1990's. Dreyer notes that Msomi believed his description was not dissimilar to Burger's. Msomi discusses three approaches – Deductive, Inductive and Dialogical.

Dreyer's (2010:2) work then asks the question as to recent developments since the above mentioned studies:

> What has happened since these studies regarding the state of practical theology were published? A few articles or chapters in books have been published in the past decade on specific methodological or epistemological issues or personal approaches to practical theology (cf Cillers 2009; Dames 2009; De Wet 2009; Dreyer 2008; Janse van Rensburg 2007; Kotze et al 2002; Louw 2001, 2003, 2008; Muller 2005, 2009; Nell 2009). I am, however, not aware of a major study on practical theology in South Africa that was done during this period. Perhaps it is time again to take stock of practical theology at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st millennium in the light of recent developments in practical theology on the international scene as well as in our own context.

Dreyer (2010:3-5) did a short empirical study on the journal *Practical Theology in South Africa* as part of this attempt to describe the present state of Practical Theology in South Africa. While realising the limited nature of his choice of journal and other factors, he was able to draw some initial perspectives. The first was that the three approaches that Burger (1991) highlighted (confessional, correlational and contextual) are still present. There have however been some further developments, such as a social constructivist as well as a post-foundational narrative approach (Dreyer 2010:4).

Buchner and Muller (2009:3) have noted that since the 1990's the works of Cas Vos, Pieterse and Julian Muller has become internationally recognised with their hermeneutical and narrative contributions to Practical Theology. Muller (2004; 2005; 2009) has tried to show the importance of understanding Post Foundationalism for Practical Theology in South Africa, while addressing the important issues of HIV/AIDS. Dreyer (2010:4) mentions new leaders in the field of Practical theology such as "Cilliers, Jan-Albert van den Berg, Fritz de Wet, Ian Nell and Gordon Dames".

Dreyer (2010:5) noted that one of the challenges for Practical Theology is that it had yet to come to terms with the changing reality of the churches in South Africa and the

growth of African Independent and Pentecostal churches. Dreyer (:5) noted that Hendriks has warned the Practical Theological fraternity of this in 2003.

Dreyer (2010:6) notes that one of the strengths of South African Practical Theology is its diversity of approaches. Which approach is adopted often depends on which institution one finds oneself in (:4). To end our reflections on South African Practical Theology a quote from Dreyer (2010:4) describing the apparent unity amongst the diversity of approaches in the country would be apt:

> Is there some agreement on the "core" of practical theology as Ganzevoort (2009) indicated in his paper referred to above? Will we be able to fit most of the work published under the umbrella of "hermeneutics of the 'cultural approach' and the issue of interreligiousity that Ganzevoort refers to. It seems to me that most authors still take a more traditional, ecclesiological understanding of the field of practical theology as point of departure, with only a few new and interesting experiments and variations.

3.2.6 In summary

The above discussion regarding the discipline of Practical Theology in Europe, America and South Africa has demonstrated the radical shift that has taken place. Practical Theology has moved from a discipline that is focused largely on the end product of Theology. It was previously seen as simply the outworking of an applied theology that tells it what it ought to do. With the changes that have taken place, a noticeable shift on the importance of reflecting on practise as a starting point for theological reflection has been emphasized. Practical Theology has also broadened its concerns from a narrow ecclesial perspective to a more holistic one. This can be seen most obviously in the new emphasis on development research in South African Practical Theology which has " broadened the spectrum of practical theological specialization in the socio-economic sphere of life" (Swart 2008:107). Of course, this does not mean that now there is some form of methodological consensus. Rather, a wide variety of methodological proposals are on offer which we will examine in the next section.

So much of Foundationalism, specifically in its theological guise, has had the quest for sure foundations that lead to certainty and true knowledge. The Post Modern critique and that of the Post Foundationalists have poured scorn on this attempt. The

shift in Practical Theology highlighted above in some of the main centres seems be consistent with this shift for a more contextual based approach which gives value to local experience. With the growing diversity of sources, and the place of the human sciences finding a voice, there seems to have been a move beyond narrow Foundationalist assumptions about how we obtain knowledge and where we obtain it from. We now turn to examine some of the methodological considerations within Practical Theology and its implications for a Post Foundationalist approach.

4. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is no shortage of methodological proposals in how one ought to conduct theological reflection. In many ways, proponents of the different views overlap, and the insights of one area can be useful in the shortcomings of another. It would be simply impossible to go through each of the major players in the practical theological field and enter into a critical dialogue with their method and perspective. The choice of theologians would be biased by the researcher's own prejudice, and besides that, there are simply too many. Therefore, as his basis for discussion, he has chosen to use various "handbooks" that have attempted to trace the different ways that theologians attempt to do Practical Theology. The extent of his interaction with individual authors will be on the basis of whether they are discussed in these various handbooks. Three books that were published over a period of two decades, beginning in 1985, 1996 and 2005 respectively, have been chosen. The first one published was Poling and Miller's (1985) book, *Foundations for a Practical Theology of ministry*; the second Ballard and Pritchard's (1996) book, *Practical Theology in action: Christian thinking in the service of church and society,* with the second edition published in 2006. The last book is written by Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Frances Ward (2006), entitled *Theological reflection: Methods*. To a lesser extent, *The Blackwell reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Woodward & Pattison 2000) will also be used, and specifically Part Two, entitled "Approaches and methods in Pastoral and Practical Theology." Although not exhaustive and diverse as one would like, it will enable the Researcher to get a sense of the development within the discipline in general, while at the same time provide information whereby one can examine Foundationalist or Post Foundationalist assumptions.

4.1 POLING AND MILLER'S TYPOLOGIES

In 1985, Poling and Miller's book attempted to capture, in some way, the various perspectives of how Practical Theology was taking place. Some might question the use of it, since so much has changed within the discipline in the past 22 years. However, the researcher still finds its fashioning of the subject matter to be both useful and insightful. It will also provide a vantage point when examining the books that were written later in terms of how things have evolved.

They examine what they call six "types" of Practical Theology, which they hope will stimulate and enliven discussion (Poling & Miller 1985:30). At the start, they note that their typology is based on the assumption that equally valid ways of understanding Practical Theology arise as we face different situations in a variety of contexts. They understand their typology in the following manner (1985:30):

> We can assume that each type has validity within some context, and we must be aware that each type has inherent limits. While no typology is adequate to the richness of thought and experience, emphasizing some questions over others, as it necessarily must, Practical Theology includes these beginning steps toward a typology that will help the community develop a more adequate means of perceiving the field. Such a typology will strengthen our work together, increasing the influence of Practical Theology in the church and society.

They divide the various methodologies into two axes. The first involves a critical method of bringing together different interpretations in the Christian tradition on the one side of the axis, and the secular disciplines in culture on the other. The second axis attempts to describe the relationship between church and society as seen as the context and location of praxis. One could picture the church on one side of the axis, and society on the other (Poling & Miller 1985:31).

Axis one: The critical relationship between the Christian tradition and secular disciplines

The critical method of axis one involves a critical scientific, critical correlational and critical confessional approach respectively (Poling & Miller 1985:32). The critical scientific method places secular disciplines as the defining factor, with Christian tradition playing a secondary role.

The critical correlational method seeks a more equal dialogue and one that is collaborative. Both the Christian tradition and the secular disciplines challenge each other and contribute to the normative statements arrived at.

The critical confessional approach frontloads the Christian tradition, which is seen as "normatively prior." Here, hermeneutics plays a vital role in understanding the Christian tradition, and the secular sciences play second fiddle in order to minimize outside influences within the Christian tradition (Poling & Miller 1985:31).

At this point, it would be important to note what they mean by "critical." They do not allow for an uncritical or precritical approach, which is seen in those who are swallowed up in practise with no time to reflect. On the flip side, they also do not see the form of fundamentalism, which has an ideological interpretation of the Christian tradition, remaining uncritical of oneself, as part of the critical approach. By "critical" they understand a need to be aware of one's method and presuppositions (Poling & Miller 1985:32). They note that: "Practical Theology is not the same as practice and the pre-critical thinking that goes into much practice. Rather, Practical Theology describes the critical reflection that is done about the meaning of faith and action in the world, and the deposit of that critical reflection in the form of coherent theological statements" (1985:33).

Axis two: The relationship between church and society

The second axis, which examines the relationship between church and society, attempts to describe the various ways in which this relationship is worked out (Poling & Miller 1985:34). The question they ask here is where (what they call) "the horizon of praxis" is located. Is it primarily the religious community or the secular community? (1985:34). The combination of these two would work out in much the same way as the first axis already mentioned, with either the church or secular community taking prime position, or some kind of hybrid.

What Poling and Miller (1985:34) then propose is that a combination of these two axes results in six types of Practical Theology. These types either focus on facilitating the church's faithfulness and identity, or encourage the church to dialogue with society. They again affirm that these types are not mutually exclusive and that they

can be used in different ways depending on the context. They note that practical theologians tend to have a preference for one, even though they may use others as context permits. The irenic nature of what they say is demonstrated in the following quote (1985:35): "We obviously need those who specialize primarily in a careful study of the tradition and its confession as well as those who dedicate their lives to uncovering the theological implications of the various cultural theories. We also need those whose careers are located in the wider public debate about values."

We shall now examine what form the various types take. The first is what they refer to as "Type 1A." "Practical Theology can take the form of a critical science whose purpose is the formation of society" (Poling & Miller 1985:36).

As already mentioned, the norms and methods that science proposes dominate this type. These specialists were often nurtured in the church, but are now involved in secular employment. Other specialists would be scholars who have decided to study the church as a social reality with scientific methods. Often, the goal here is general knowledge of human nature, rather than specific plans for church development (Poling & Miller 1985:37). Although perhaps contributing some form of support, the tradition does not contribute in any meaningful way to either the content or methods of Practical Theology (1985:38).

The next that Poling and Miller (1985:38) discuss is Type 1B where "Practical Theology can take the form of a critical science whose purpose is the formation of the church."

When using a critical scientific method, the formation of the churches' identity and mission is the overarching concern. Here, there is a desire to use the insights of social science for the benefit of the church: "This type is based on a theology of openness to the wisdom of society and the courage to appropriate this wisdom even when it seems to challenge the traditional understanding of the church about its task and identity" (Poling & Miller 1985:39).

Both Poling and Miller (1985:40) note that the potential weakness of this type is that one's religious tradition might become separated from reflection, due to the fact that

the other sciences are now no longer open to confrontation and critique. Positively, they mention the example of Ernst Troeltsch as one who balances a sociological method while dialoguing with the Christian tradition (this they refer to as "Type 2A"). Richard Niebuhr (1952:14) disagrees, despite valuing his influence greatly. He feels that Troeltsch's faith remained vague and "never becomes explicit."

In Type 2A, "Practical Theology can take the form of a critical correlation of the Christian tradition and contemporary philosophy and science in its concern for the formation of society" (Poling & Miller 1985:42).

Here, the public nature of Practical Theology comes into play. Although important, the church remains a subset of society (Poling & Miller 1985:43). Here, the discipline is seen as philosophical even though beginning with the Christian faith. Poling and Miller mention both Don Browning and David Tracy in this regard. Although starting with the Christian tradition, it remains a "critical correlation" with the sciences and could be described as follows (1985:44): "… a phenomenological description of contemporary human experience, a restatement of Christian themes in contemporary and public language and symbols, an examination of the contemporary sciences for their descriptive and normative statements about human life, and a philosophical correlation of these sources."

These scholars believe that the Christian tradition indeed offers important insights for public discussions and is a modern form of apologetics for the Christian faith. In fact, it argues that modern pluralism indeed demands that the Christian tradition should have a voice (Poling & Miller 1985:45).

This critical correlation must result in an equal dialogue between Theology and Science. Even when starting with tradition, this does not give the tradition any logical priority (Poling & Miller 1985:45). It is important that the collaboration and correlation result in symbols and language for public discourse, which is not overly burdened by Christian tradition's outdated symbols and language (1985:46).

The fourth type they speak of is Type 2B, where "Practical Theology can take the form of a critical correlation in terms of method which focuses primarily on the formation of the church as a community of faith" (Poling & Miller 1985:47).

The example mooted here is that of James Fowler who seeks the same correlational dynamic, which the previous type offers, yet seeks to locate Practical Theology within the community of faith (Poling & Miller 1985:47). They describe this type in the following manner (1985:49):

> Theology is deeply dependent on a concrete community of believers who try to be faithful in the modern world. Theology does not exist mainly as a discipline, but arises out of the need of Christian communities to define their identity in ways that make sense in the world. Therefore, Practical Theology is a discipline "arising out of and giving guidance to a community of faith."

The last sentence in the above paragraph was, of course, James Fowler's well-known saying. Fowler, contra Browning, notes that the public transformative nature is not always evident in practical theological reflection. This type of Practical Theology is strongly committed to the vitality, formation and adventure of the concrete church (Poling & Miller 1985:51).

The fifth type discussed is type 3A, where "Practical Theology can take the form of critical confession with a primary emphasis upon the church's vision for the larger society" (Poling & Miller 1985:50).

Here, a critical interpretation, or reinterpretation, of the Christian tradition is regarded as normative for today. It is a self-critical approach that examines its own presuppositions and social locus. Despite levels of scepticism towards philosophy and science, it takes their dialogue and the wisdom that they offer in a serious light (Poling & Miller 1985:51). Despite this, the central desire is to come to grips with the Christian tradition in order to keep continuity with the Christian story. Discussing Yoder, Poling and Miller (1985:52) note the following:

> Yoder seems to be criticizing a method of correlation which brings the biblical tradition into essentially equal dialogue with secular interpretations. He suspects that this method usually results in the Christian tradition being taken less seriously than the modern norms dominating the discussion. Yoder wants, instead, to start with the assumption that the texts about Jesus are

normative for Christians and should be normative in any discussion about the form and content of modern theology.

Carter's recent work on Yoder (2001), called *The politics of the cross: The theology and social ethics of John Howard Yoder,* certainly confirms Yoder's ecclesial focus. The church seeks to articulate its identity in the modern world and therefore views theology as the activity of the church, which regards its vision as a primary source for guidance in society at large (Poling & Miller 1985:55). Poling and Miller (1985:56) refer to Farley as one who attempts to define the church in a way whereby its faithfulness can redeem our social, political and cultural realities without getting lost in them.

The last type that Poling and Miller (1985:57) discuss is Type 3B, where "Practical Theology can take the form of critical confession that is centred in the practice of a concrete community of the Christian faith in mission."

Here, theological tradition is primary, seeking a serious and careful hermeneutic, with which to reinterpret the Christian story. The community of faith is seen as the interpreter of truth where the concrete reality of the church is authoritative and normative (Poling & Miller 1985:57). In discussing John Cobb, Poling and Miller (1985:58) remark that, as all the traditional sources of authority have failed (Scripture, tradition and reason), the only port of call to discern the truth as best it can, is that of the local community of faith.

Here, one seeks a consensus within the community of faith in facing many of life's issues and challenges. Poling and Miller (1985:58) comment: "There is no objective truth to which the community of faith can order its life. Rather, truth is revealed as the community struggles to order its life together, and theology is the reflection that emerges then the church engages in this process to reach consensus."

Local communities confess the traditional confessions in their communities regardless of whether the change in society is immediately evident. This type is seen as unique in the manner in which it allows communities to interpret the tradition to correlate with its interpretations of human living (Poling & Miller 1985:59). This approach is seen as deeply troubling for many (1985:60).

The above foray into the various areas of practical theological reflection helps demonstrate one of the early attempts to make sense of theological reflection within the discipline of Practical Theology. Polling and Miller go on to work out their own methodology and admit they favour the critical confessional community approach of Type 3B. Although the types on offer are helpful in bringing a certain level of clarity, the researcher is not sure that such an easy distinction actually works out that way in practice. In some sense, our methodologies can take from the variety of methods on offer by Poling and Miller and, more often than not, is rather a both/and approach. By this is meant that a practical theological methodology can involve both A and B dimensions in Type 3 with regard to the location of its praxis – both church and culture. The same would apply to the other types, of course.

At this point, it is important to note that, even with Poling and Miller's types, it can be seen that a move beyond foundationalism has in some ways taken place. This is most obvious in their affirmation that context often defines which type is appropriate. Although making that statement early, they seem to quickly place theologians and practitioners quite speedily into certain camps – which seem then to solidify. Equally so, gone is a non-critical approach, either pragmatic or idealistic fundamentalism, which certainly would be foundationalist. It seems as if applied theology, with its modernistic context of free overtones, has fallen by the wayside. The researcher believes that the critical correlational approach, which holds confession and science in tension, would best move beyond foundationalism. This interdisciplinary approach is what he believes Van Huyssteen argues for as a way to move beyond foundationalism. Whether it is the church or society that is the locus for Practical Theology should surely not be defined by method, but rather by context. Again, this would be a move away from foundationalist concerns.

Moving on from here, a work will now be examined that was produced just over a decade later - it also attempts to delineate the variety of ways in which theological reflection can take place.

4.2 BALLARD AND PRITCHARD'S MODELS

Ballard and Pritchard's (2006) book, *Practical Theology in action: Christian thinking in the service of church and society,* was first released in 1996. At the time of the original publication, Paul Ballard was teaching Practical Theology at the University of Cardiff, but is now retired. John Pritchard, who is now the bishop of Jarrow, has previously filled various church positions in both Canterbury and Durham. In the preface to the first edition, they note that there was a need to "provide a rationale and theological focus in a field that is increasingly diverse both in aim and content and in its institutional expressions" (2006:ix). In their chapter entitled "Models for Practical Theology," they attempt to delineate the more important models that inform Practical Theology while, at the same time, introducing one to the specific literature in the various models (2006:60).

The first model that they discuss is that of Practical Theology as applied theory (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:60). It is of interest that, in Poling and Miller's discussion of various forms of Practical Theology, they did not discuss the starting point of theological reflection in the same manner as Ballard and Pritchard. However, in their later discussion of methodology, it is clear that this indeed is important for them, as they argue that Practical Theology ought to start with practise and experience (Poling & Miller 1985:65). Despite affirming this, it seems they tend to focus on the two areas of how one correlates the Christian tradition and the empirical sciences on the one hand, as well as where the focus of Practical Theology rests – whether on the Christian community, or society at large. In some senses, one could start with either an applied theory perspective in any of the types they propose. For Ballard and Prichard, this is too important a point not to be included in any reflection on practical methodologies.

The applied theory model

Ballard and Pritchard (2006:60) regard the applied theory model in Practical Theology as emerging from the Enlightenment. Here, a social scientific approach dominates, and is accepted and simply applied to a given situation. The alternative, but also an applied theory approach, is to move from an established point of authority within the Christian tradition toward practise (2006:60). This can take many forms, which they discuss (2006:60): "This may be the bible as sufficient in faith and morals; or the teaching authority of the church; or even, in more liberal circles, natural theology established by reason. But once accepted, appropriate actions and obligations are deduced on the basis of its authority. Christians are expected to obey the commands of God, however mediated.

Within the current world in which we live, this particular model seems attractive. In a pluralistic world with very few fixed points of reference, there is a desire to hold onto fixed reference points (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:61). Today, one could look at the growth of many of the churches that "use" just such a model. It results in a strong authoritarian approach where a given theory or truth can simply be applied and enforced on any given situation, regardless of context. Examples are evident in the area of divorce, where an apparent clear teaching of Jesus is forced upon any given individual without due consideration for the unique reality they are facing. The area of women in the church is another example, where the apparent leadership gifting of women is there for all to see. Yet, an abstract theory on their role (whether secular or religious) is forced upon them. An applied social science theory with regard to human development, which is then simply rolled out into society, is another example.

One does not need to look hard for the weaknesses of this model. It results in Theology being the prerogative of the church's various professional structures (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:61). This is all the more dangerous in our present world context where "Ours is a society in which traditional modes of authority no longer has the influence they had previously when authority could be exercised from the top downwards. This has a direct influence on the way we do theology" (Hendriks 2004:26).

The second weakness, already noted, is that practice becomes derivative of theory. Real theology is located "in the traditional academic interests of historical and philosophical enquiry" (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:62). This form of theology is still very much alive today, according to Ballard and Pritchard. They feel it is the basis of much German theology and provides the underpinnings of Practical Theology in Britain and elsewhere (2006:62). More recent examples, which they propose, are those of Firet and Heitink. From a Catholic perspective, they mention Karl Rahner with his theology of pastoral action. Others they mention within the evangelical/conservative fold are Jay Adams and Roger Hurding. With Adams, this certainly is the case (Louw 1998:29; Hurding 1986:281). With Hurding (1986:400-404), this needs some clarification. He would fall under what was earlier defined here as "Pastoral Theology." He certainly would fit in with the applied theory approach, which can be seen in his biblical approach to counselling, which is prophetic, pastoral and priestly. However, he does call for an approach that is not tied to any one methodology (1986:405). His book, *Roots and shoots* (1986), is an attempt to describe a variety of approaches, some of which are inductive and the others deductive (1986:393).

With Firet, perhaps one would have to agree with Ballard and Pritchard's conclusion. Based on his affinity with Karl Barth's method, and the role of God's Word, as mediated through the pastor, this becomes clear (Ballard & Pritchard 1996:62; Firet 1987:39-43). What one must be careful of, and what the researcher is beginning to pick up, is a terse dismissal of the value of those who hold to an applied theological approach. Simply by dismissing their methodology, much of the good they offer is neglected.

Heitink's (1993:105) focus on Practical Theology, as a theory of action, is much more nuanced than simply placing him under an applied theory approach. He places great emphasis on the practical nature of Practical Theology, as well as affirming (what he considers) a consensus to view actions as the object of Practical Theology (1993:147).

The second model of Practical Theology is the method of critical correlation. Ballard and Pritchard divide this model into three areas, which are markedly different to the ones Poling and Miller discussed under axis one (critical scientific, critical correlation

and critical confessional). Here, like Poling and Miller, the desire is to understand the way in which the sciences interact with the Christian tradition.

The first subsection of the critical correlation method seeks to bring into dialogue, in a threefold engagement, that of the Christian tradition, the social sciences and the actual situation that confronts one (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:64). Its weakness is the fact that the actual situation is often multi-layered and complex, causing difficulties to work with it in a straightforward manner. The positive is the fact that it is not now solely under the guidance of trained professionals, but can be part of the entirety of Christian experience that emerges from the concrete situation (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:64-65). If we refer back to Poling and Miller, it deals with axis one concerns of how tradition and science relate, yet Ballard and Pritchard add the actual concrete situation as a dialogue partner in a more explicit manner.

The second subsection that Ballard and Pritchard (2006:65) discuss under the critical correlation method is an attempt to bring together pastoral concerns and ethics. Here, Theology tries to become aware of how personality and experience are brought to bear upon any given situation. The question is asked: How can we better understand this situation in order for Christians to make better decisions? For this to be accomplished, we need to have some actual understanding of that social and personal context (2006:65). Ballard and Pritchard discuss Don Browning and how he wanted to accomplish this. They note the various ways and levels on which people act and how Browning argues that the pastor should help the groups to relate and understand each of these levels. They feel that Browning, on occasion, subsets Practical Theology under Ethics and is laid captive to its parameters and ethical methodology (2006:65). This would place Browning within the critical scientific part of Poling and Miller's axis one, with a focus on the church's witness in the wider society of axis two. The researcher wonders whether either of these descriptions of Browning is accurate. To the researcher's mind, Browning places great emphasis on the religious and hidden scientific presuppositions that underlie much of social science. When in dialogue, he applies the same critical framework in dealing with theological concerns as he does with social science concerns. Browning (1991:77-92), in fact, devotes a whole chapter in an attempt to ensure that Practical Theology does not become captive to the social sciences underlying methodologies. This would put him in more of a critical

correlational framework, which is indeed where Poling and Miller (1985:50) put him. The researcher also feels that Browning's focus in Practical Theology cannot be as neatly divided as Ballard and Pritchard describe. In Browning's (1991) book, *A fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and strategic proposals,* his concerns seem to involve dimensions of both church and society. His personal stories of his engagement with various different faith communities, the researcher believes, demonstrate this. However, Ballard and Pritchard do note that the great strength of Browning's position, which he shares with Tracy, is the focus on the public nature of Practical Theology (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:66).

The third subsection of the correlational method embraces the widespread interest in hermeneutics. Within this subsection, there is a concern to study how we interpret the way in which humans communicate and how meaning and truth can be conveyed. It is a hermeneutical model that seeks to "ask what is happening to both (or more) parties at the different levels of dialogue: cultural, historical, social, psychological, metaphysical, ethical and so forth" (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:67). A move toward understanding personal and communal stories in a non-propositional manner results from this interpretive model. In making decisions or choices, we therefore need to understand each other in a deeper manner (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:68). Here, is the realization that, in fact, there are two stories which intersect in our lives – our personal story and God's story. The desire to rediscover the Christian story in its narrative dimensions through art, drama and oratory becomes vital (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:68). The researcher confesses to battling to place this model within the areas that Poling and Miller provide. Perhaps, most comfortably, it would sit within a critical confessional dimension, even within a critical correlational dimension. It seems to take the hermeneutical concerns of the confessional approach and its reinterpretation of the Christian tradition seriously while, at the same time, asking the deeper questions of one's personal or corporate story. However, it is critical correlational in its use of the social sciences to understand the dimensions and stories that lie within the individual or group.

Ballard and Pritchard note a vast array of authors who cover the various subsections of the critical correlational method. Browning has already been discussed and it was agreed that he would fall under the critical correlational method. It was also

mentioned how he differs from Ballard and Pritchard in their evaluation of himself. Ballard and Pritchard also mention two other authors who, in some way, fit into this broad method. Poling and Miller's treatment of the broadness of this method also demonstrates it. The two authors are Donald Capps and David Augsburger, both of whom the researcher would consider to be pastoral theologians within the greater field of Practical Theology.

Ballard and Pritchard (2006:69) place Donald Capps under the hermeneutical model, which is subsection three of the critical correlational method. Capps (1998) is perhaps a good example of this model and helps to demonstrate what is actually quite hard to define about the model. The very title of one of his books shows this in the title, *Living stories: Pastoral counselling in a congregational context*. In it, Capps (1998:10) argues for the importance of the experience of telling stories within a constructive framework and a systematic attempt to interpret other stories in order that new understanding might occur (Capps 1998:11). He notes three ways in which our lives are "storied" – inspirationally, paradoxically and miraculously (Capps 1998:13). Capps (1998:20) comments:

> I believe we are currently witnessing a shift of emphasis among family therapists from a systemic model to a narrative or story model, and that it is valuable for pastors of congregations to know something about these more recent developments … a great deal of attention is now being paid by family therapists to the fact that therapy involves storytelling.

The researcher believes Capps (1998:23-52) is partially right in this regard, which he demonstrates ably with his exploration of various family therapists in chapter one of his book. It is worth noting the newness of this move to narrative, by noting that in a book by Olson (1993), called *Integrative family therapy,* which attempts to describe the field of family therapy, storytelling as a method does not even feature!

Louw (1998:15) notes that Capps does what the hermeneutical model does according to Ballard and Pritchard. It tries to help people to locate their stories within the greater framework of the Christian story. If we refer back to Poling and Miller, it would seem that Capps would fit under the critical correlational method that Poling and Miller describe, but would locate its concern within the Christian community in regard to axis two and the locus of Practical Theology.

Ballard and Pritchard (2006:70) also refer to another pastoral theologian, David Augsburger, with regard to cross-cultural practice and its importance. The researcher finds it more difficult to place Augsburger than Ballard and Pritchard do, when placing him under the hermeneutic dimension of a critical correlational theory. They, in fact, give no reason why they put him there, which makes it all the more challenging! The specific book in mention, *Pastoral counselling across cultures* (Augsburger 1986), is not an attempt to propose a methodology as much as it is an attempt to help the counsellor to counsel across cultures. There is no doubt that Augsburger (1986:40) holds the Christian tradition in high regard, and also has no doubt that the social sciences play an important role. What the book demonstrates rather, is the importance of dialogue between cultures and how that is best done. He is open to the Christian tradition and story being influenced and changing, which demonstrates the critical correlational nature of his method. In some senses, Augsburger contributes most strongly in his approach to the importance of the unique situation of the other person and how we can understand that. In many ways, there might be an affinity here, and ability to use his insights, in the more praxis-based methodology that Ballard discusses next.

The third model of Practical Theology, which Ballard and Pritchard (2006:70) note, is that of the praxis model. The use of praxis is an attempt to overcome the rationalist distinction between theory and practice. The starting point however is clear – the present concrete situation and current praxis (2006:70). Ballard & Pritchard (2006:71) describe this as follows:

> The first task, then, is to subject everything to an analytical critique, including the perspective of the analyst. Then, in Christian reflection, comes the need to recover the basic gospel imperative. This provides the attitude which should inform the critical praxis that follows the analysis. This is to be found in the biblical perspective on the situation: the option for the poor and the struggle for liberation. Out of the juxtaposition of analysis and gospel emerges the new praxis, which itself has to be subject to the same process.

Of course, this approach is found within the Liberation Theology movement that emerged from Latin America (Gutierrez 1973; Segundo 1976; Bonino 1975). However, it has found widespread expression in Black Theology (Cone 1986), Feminist Theology and other Third World Theologies (Cochrane 1991). The overlap

that emerges with the critical correlational perspective is also interesting (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:71). This is often symbolized in, what has been called, the "pastoral cycle." It starts with the present situation, moves to analysis of the situation to uncover the truth, then the process of theological reflection (often critical correlational), to the planning stage which results in action, and so the cycle then continues (2006:71).

The overwhelming strength of this method is its anchoring in the practical. All theological activity (whether biblical or empirical) serves this task (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:72).

> It takes seriously the experience of the church in its struggle. It is lived faith which is an important and primary source of theological understanding. Theology has to listen to how people experience their belief. This is why the sociological and psychological study of faith and practice is so important. Out of the actual ways faith and practice impinge on each other come new insights (2006:72).

The danger with this model is not unlike some forms of fundamentalism, and akin to the non-critical practice mentioned by Poling and Miller (1985:32). Certainly, being engaged in practise can have either traditionalist or progressive dimensions (Boff 1987:160). Its activism often discourages reflection and personal spirituality while being overly simplistic and prone to taking short cuts (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:72). Liberation Theology must be open to analysis and criticism.

In relation to Poling and Miller's types, it again becomes difficult to place. Its high emphasis in starting with the practical, although affirmed, is lacking in Poling and Miller's evaluation. The praxis model could fit within any of the three dimensions of axis one in how the Christian tradition and social sciences interact - as long as practice dominates the starting and end point. With regard to Poling and Miller's second axis, there would be a real desire to focus on the church's witness to society, which becomes the locus of Practical Theology. Again, we find that Poling and Miller's division of axis two remains far too tidy. Within this model, the formation and change of local communities is also of central importance (demonstrated in the base communities), not just the larger societal concerns. It is a both/and scenario.

The last model that Ballard and Pritchard (2006:73) examine is that to which they refer as the "*habitus* model." They describe this in the following manner: "So the task of theology, and Practical Theology in particular, is not in the end to provide methodology or skills, but a training of mind and heart. On this account the aim is to build up the body of Christ in everyway" (2006:63).

Here is a desire to keep the mind and heart together, which is affirmed to have been strongly present in Christianity's early patristic and classical era. The transfer of wisdom and knowledge is valued and not simply the church's task. It is through just such a change in individuals that Christians can live out their faith naturally and be a light to the world (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:75). For many, just such an approach might not seem entirely new. Indeed, many churches would claim that this is important – not just knowledge, but real change in people. Early Charismatic Theology placed great importance on just such a notion (Richards 1975:22). However, this approach has often led to an escapist approach from the world and society. This need not be the case, as the examples that follow will soon demonstrate. In this model, the importance of the concept of virtue ethics, where one's principles and ethics derive from the community or culture, as opposed to some normative and revealed principle, is affirmed (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:75).

Ballard and Pritchard (2006:73) place Farley under this specific model and note that they borrowed the term from him. This way of doing Practical Theology would certainly be Farley's (1994) argument in his work *Theologia: The fragmentation and unity of theological education*. Throughout this work, there is an emphasis on *theologia* as a *habitus* that results in spiritual formation and *paideia* (Farley 1994:178). It is true that, for Farley (1994:176), the community becomes central in the formation of individuals. However, he argues that the ecclesial community is itself a redemptive community and that the individuals' formed will therefore be redemptive in society. In a later essay, entitled *Interpreting situations: An enquiry into the nature of Practical Theology,* Farley (2000:123) notes that Practical Theology should focus on both "churchly and worldly actions." It seems that Farley does not fit neatly into the critical correlational framework that Poling and Miller developed. It would appear that his *habitus* model, and the spiritual formation of the individual, might tend to locate him within the critical confessional dimension if pushed. On Poling and

Miller's second axis, it seems obvious that Farley's main focus lies on the formation of the individual within the Christian community, despite the importance of Christian action in the world.

Under the *habitus* model, Ballard and Pritchard (2006:76) also discuss Henri Nouwen as one who is interested in the relationship between spirituality and ministry. He in fact demonstrates well the discussed model and method. Throughout his life, Henri Nouwen has sought to model a desire to "take care" of the inner person, and its vital significance for ministry in the world. With regard to this form of ministry, Nouwen (1981:76) comments:

> Does not this spirituality of the desert close our eyes to the cruel realities of our time? No. On the contrary, solitude, silence, and prayer allow us to save ourselves and others from the shipwreck of our destructive society. The temptation is to go mad with those who are mad and to go around yelling and screaming, telling everyone where to go, what to do, and how to behave. The temptation is to become so involved in the agonies and ecstasies of the last days that we will drown together with those we are trying to save.

Nouwen's approach takes seriously the change in individuals that the *habitus* model requires for Practical Theology. To say that the church becomes the locus of Practical Theology for Nouwen, and not society, is to fall into the ever apparent trap of the second axis with which Poling and Miller work. Nouwen would argue both must change, yet the individual must change in order to meet the challenges that present themselves.

So, with this last model, there is a specific focus on the fact that theological development ought not to be separated from personal spirituality and the forming of individuals within community.

4.3 Graham, Walton and Ward's typologies

The last book to be examined is a work produced by Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Frances Ward (2005), entitled *Theological reflection: Methods*. It seeks to do the same thing as Poling and Miller, as well as Ballard and Pritchard, by trying to "place" the different forms that theological reflection takes. In some ways, a significant departure has been noticed from the other examined authors' two previous attempts. Graham *et al.* seem not to focus as strongly on the academic nature of Practical Theology at the expense of day-to-day theological reflection. This is seen by including the pre-critical or non-critical reflection that Poling and Miller (1985:32) so easily dismiss. The attempt to include those who are outside of the academic fold is perhaps why the term "theological reflection" is used as against "Practical Theology." Here, this would fit the use and definition of the term defined earlier. Graham *et al.* divide theological reflection into seven areas. They try to give source material and examples right from biblical times, through church history, to the present day. The academic side of things begins to come through quite strongly toward the end of each section when they discuss the "method realized." Graham *et al.* (2006:12) describe what they hope to achieve through this approach:

> Our approach to theological reflection stands in this tradition of constructive analysis. We advance seven indicative methods, which are genuine, if stylized, representations of authentic theological traditions. We do not intend them to be transhistorical, a criticism often levelled at ideal typical forms; instead, we have chosen to take a number of historical "snap shots" that we think are indicative and exemplary of the development of each method, and suggest processes of creative theological thinking. Each method enables contemporary practices of reflection and action to locate themselves in relation to received traditions.

The first of the seven methods that Graham *et al.* (2005:18) describe is what they term "Theology by heart" or the living human document. Here, the interior life is the scene and the location where theological reflection takes place and is grown. It is a method, which finds that deep personal feelings often result in faithful and adventurous living (2005:18). They move from examining Psalm 139 through to St. Augustine's theological reflection (specifically represented by his confessions). The famous letters between Abelard and Heloise are used as an example of this method of reflection. The nature of letters to capture this form seen in Abelard and Heloise, and in a more extended sense in Augustine, has a long history going back to Paul in the New

Testament (2005:27). In more recent times, they look at the journal of John Wesley as an example. In all these excursions into history we are to see:

> [H]ow the turn to the interior life in the poetry of the psalms, journals, letters, and spiritual autobiography can generate theological reflection. As the often intense experience of a relationship with God is framed into words, a process is begun that enables reflection, both by the initial writers, but then also by other readers (2005:30).

When it comes to the method realized, Graham *et al.* (2005:33) mention a host of people whose writings attempt to reflect on the deeper dimensions of their lives as a source for meaning, and a quest to discover their religious sensibilities. One of those on whom they focus is Anthony Boisen and the concept of the "living human document." Boisen believes that a study of people who struggle with issues regarding their spiritual lives, in the concreteness of their relationships, would be of great value. This stems from his fight for the right to interpret his own experience and illness (Graham *et al.* 2005:33). Patton (1993:147) feels that this is at the heart of the clinical pastoral paradigm that Boisen pioneered. The use of verbatim reports that flowed from the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) movement, which Boisen in some senses represented, has become widespread.

Here, the work of Frances Ward is also of importance. Her use of verbatim reports is an attempt at "turning-life-into-text" (Graham *et al.* 2005:38). These verbatim reports can improve self-awareness and generate theological reflection in conversation with the Christian tradition (2005:39). The use of writing as a creative activity can also provide valuable insight as the work of Riet Bons-Storm reveals (2005:44). In critically reflecting on this method of theological reflection, Graham *et al.* (2005:44) state:

> [I]n this method of theological reflection, writing is a crucial element. Whether it be in the journal form, or as a correspondence by letter, or as spiritual autobiography, or in the form of a verbatim report, or as creative writing, turning-life-into-text offers the opportunity to reflect upon identity. Each of the forms can set that exploration of self within the context of a relationship with God.

The criticism of this form of reflection might be its focus on the interior life at the expense of ministerial or social action. However, it can provide an immense resource for those actually functioning in social, ecclesial and political contexts (Graham *et al.* 2005:45). When thinking back to Poling and Miller, this form of reflection can

function across the board in any of the six types, or two axes. In some sense, it would actually function in a prior manner to any of the critical reflective methods proposed by them (critical scientific, correlational or confessional). This is perhaps the weakness here repeatedly referred to with reference to Poling and Miller's typologies. Although assuming practice as a starting point, it fails to show how it happens within the various typologies.

This form of reflection would be a wonderful starting point prior to the critical reflection with science and the Christian tradition. With regard to Poling and Miller's axis two, we have already noted the danger that this method could exclude participation and focus on either the church or society. However, this is not a logical conclusion with regard to this method that Graham *et al.* discuss. That sort of result would flow from deeper ideological commitments than simply the result of this form of methodology.

If one attempts to place this form of theological reflection within Ballard and Pritchard's models, it would seem to have a natural place in the *habitus* model. Here, one could see the work of Henri Nouwen fitting in well. It is worth noting that many Christians across denominational boundaries note the importance of these forms of theological reflection as both a method and a source. Richard Foster (1989:89) notes many of the authors that Graham *et al.* referred to as source material for spiritual formation and growth. Dallas Willard (2002:105) encourages journaling as a way of transformation and bringing to light ideas and images. Of course, the method of "theology by heart," which Graham *et al.* discuss, is not the sole domain of the *habitus* model. What is revealing is how it can play a vital role in the praxis model. In many ways, the living human documents of much of the poor, excluded and oppressed, can come to life as they reflect on their experience in the deep caverns of their hearts. If one ought to start with the praxis and concrete situation on the ground, this form of reflection would provide an invaluable and possible healing source. It is with interest that Graham *et al.* (2005:45) note this form of the role of reflections for women who have been silenced in many other ways.

This comparison with the other types and models discussed demonstrates its robust nature as a form of theological reflection that can transcend a variety of

methodologies. This is despite its clear affinity with the *habitus* model. It also shows a deep commitment to experience as the starting point, and indeed source, of much theological reflection.

The second method of theological reflection that Graham *et al.* (2005:47) discuss is what they call "speaking in parables," or narrative theology. This model of theological reflection employs the creativity that people have to construct stories of meaning out of the various circumstances of their lives, which in turn can lead to personal formation and an affirmation of their faith journey (2005:48). Graham *et al.* (2005:47) note that in this regard: "The stories recounted in scripture are important within this method of theological reflection but these do not determine the pattern of the believers own narratives. It is rather that threads from these foundational traditions are woven with many other strands into new stories which are vivid and original."

The first thing they mention is the storytelling that takes place in Jesus' parables and how he uses stories to reflect on theological truths. It is worth noting that, in much of what he communicates, Jesus himself seeks to delve deeply into the story of Israel and his own self-understanding (Wright 1992:76). In the same way as God's story is made manifest in the story of Jesus, His story is intertwined with the stories of countless others. The martyr Perpetua was one who sought to understand the immense suffering that she endured, and was to endure, through aligning her story with a vision of God's story (Graham *et al.* 2005:53). Another example of the use of story that Graham *et al.* use is that of John Bunyan and his famous *Pilgrims' progress*. The work of "myth, metaphor, allegory, parable, fantasy, vision and imagination" (Graham *et al.* 2005:60) all find expression in Bunyan's theological reflection of the life of faith in the world. In his apology for the book, Bunyan (1973:386) notes that this was the case for the prophets, the apostles and most of the Bible.

Graham *et al.* (2005:61) move on to discuss the method realized. They discuss Stephen Crites who believes that cultural identity is discovered through narrative and that this is the way humans shape, and end up shaping, their world. The sacred narratives that lie beneath cultures are not often discussed and told as stories in everyday life. Rather, they appear in the way a culture's other stories are told (Graham *et al.* 2005:61). This is similar to what Wright (1992:123) argues when he

mentions that a cultural story is often expressed in the answers it provides to other areas and often takes the form of symbol.

Next, Graham *et al.* (2005:64) discuss Paul Ricoeur and his use of metaphor. For Ricoeur, they note that metaphor actually pushes language to its limits and can actually provide a new way of living and being. Ricoeur wants story, like metaphor, to play a unifying function where there is apparent discord (2005:66). Graham *et al.* (2005:66) summarize his hope for story and narrative: "Just as individual human beings undertake this task we can also imagine how through hearing and telling stories (particularly the stories of victims and survivors) human cultures can form narrative identities that enable them to move forward through time in healthy and creative ways without forgetting the past."

This unity is what Anderson and Foley want to achieve. They hope for an encounter between the divine and human stories within the experience of ordinary people (Graham *et al.* 2005:66-68). However, they admit to uneasiness in bringing the biblical story together with humans' personal stories, and the difficulty of deciding what stories should be told, and even what stories should be used to challenge one's own story (2005:70).

Heather Walton points out that the biblical narrative is often in need of reappraisal and should be challenged with regard to the oppressive stories that have arisen from it. She also notes the importance of entering alongside people without trying to weave their story into some form of coherence. Often, "we make rituals, symbols or music to allow pain to be communicated rather than constructing stories that promise an illusory reconciliation of tragic circumstances" (Graham *et al.* 2005:73).

In their evaluation of this method Graham *et al.* conclude that storytelling is important in individual and corporate formation, as well as helping to make a connection between our own lives and the Christian tradition. One must be careful to place too much hope in this method as there remains a

> great danger in underestimating the irreconcilable aspects of existence by, for example, seeking to resolve pastoral problems through offering narrative closure or by too readily assuming that God can easily be plotted into human narrative scripts. Jesus taught in parables,

uncomfortable and unstable stories with equivocal meanings. They emphasize both the closeness and strangeness of God (Graham *et al.* 2005:76).

This particular method fits in nicely with the hermeutical correlational model that Ballard and Pritchard discuss. In its attempt to understand story and its value in theological reflection, it is indeed similar. Of course, the need to understand cultural stories and personal stories would also be important for a praxis model in allowing it to bring to light the often painful stories that lie hidden in our personal and social stories. The first subsection of the correlational method that they discuss, with its threefold relationship between social science, tradition and actual situation, would find a role for narrative reflection. Even an applied theory position could use narrative, although probably in a more destructive way. It would seem redundant to say that, in Poling and Miller's types, a form of theological reflection should proceed, but also form part of the critical approaches under axis one. Narrative reflection could have as its goal both dimensions of church and society under their axis two. In some ways, both "theology by heart" and "narrative reflection" could be put under the same category. This is demonstrated when they were discussed under Poling and Miller's types. Narrative, and inner formation and experience, tend to complement one another nicely. The difference seems to lie in the fact that narrative theology seems to link up well with Ballard and Pritchard's correlational hermeneutic method, while the theology-by-heart method that Graham *et al.* propose links more with the *habitus* model.

The third method that Graham *et al.* (2005:78) discuss is "telling God's story" or canonical narrative theology. This method sees theological reflection as focusing on God's story as it comes to us in the story of Jesus' life and death. The challenge is for Christians to pattern themselves in line with this self-revelation where "The theological task is to discern how contemporary experience can be interpreted through the story that the church tells about Jesus and to identify forms of practice that are coherent with this narrative" (2005:78).

As usual, they start off with a biblical example, which in this case is the Lord's supper, as Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians 11. Jesus' story provides a normative element on which to model their lives. They then discuss the example of St. Francis of Assisi as someone who modelled his life on the tough claims of Jesus and the demands that this would place on his personal life with regard to the poor. In the lives

of his followers, he sought to create just such a devotion to the way of Jesus (Graham *et al.* 2005:83). Chesterton's (1958:17) little biography on St. Francis shows that his desire to pattern himself on Jesus' example had radical implications for how he engaged with the world. It resulted in him embracing humans and nature in a very practical and real manner.

The other example of this form of theological reflection is found in the lives of the Anabaptists who sought to return to authentic discipleship, based on a return to the Gospel narratives (Graham *et al.* 2005:89). This attempt to be faithful to the Bible took on an interesting dimension:

> Not only was the bible viewed as self-interpreting; the Anabaptists also regarded certain parts of the bible as obviously more significant than the rest. As a text it was not flat and certain features commanded more attention than others. The New Testament had clear priority over the Old Testament and the Gospels more authority than the epistles (2005:92).

This desire to regard the Bible as normative for Christian life and practise (Estep 1975:142) led to a generous approach to how one shares one's possessions with others (Estep 1975:29). The approach to model their lives specifically on the New Testament and the teaching of Jesus had implications for how they approached the question of violence and war. Verduin (1991:271) remarks:

> The Stepchildren [as the Anabaptists are often referred to] of the reformers were frequently known as "weerloze Christenen," that is, defenceless Christians, people who believed in non-resistance. To this day the typical descendant of these Stepchildren will be classified as a "C.O," a conscientious objector … to bear arms is incongruous for a Christian.

When Graham *et al.* (2005:93) move on to discuss the method realized, they start off by examining Karl Barth. They note that this form of theological reflection, with its identity rooted in the foundational stories of the faith, is particularly helpful in times of difficulty. The strange new world of the Bible provided a story and revelation which enabled him to resist Fascism in the form of National Socialism in Germany. Of course, there is much criticism of his position, which finds God's story solely located in God's revelatory word at the expense of the strange world and experience that surround us (Graham *et al.* 2005:96). Dietrich Bonhoeffer noted just such a frustration in a letter he wrote to a friend about a meeting he had with Barth. In the conversation with Barth on Ethics, he noted that they could not get past Barth's

reference to the Bible in their debate (Robertson 1995:20). Barth (1966:17) himself notes that our ability even to understand God's story and Word "rests not upon a human possibility and human initiative, nor on the fact that we men bear in us a capacity to meet God, to hear his word."

Also mentioned is what is often referred to as "post-liberalism," represented by Hans Frei, George Lindbeck and the rediscovery of the biblical narrative (Graham *et al.* 2005:97). This movement seeks to recapture Jesus' narratives as central to how we understand doctrine and Scripture. The doctrinal formulations of Christianity become the grammar for understanding what part of the story can be regarded as authoritative and provides the identity for Christians and the church (Graham *et al.* 2005:98). The thrust of Frei's criticism is that liberals have separated the story of Jesus from its location in the biblical narrative, and replaced Jesus' story with another story, thereby losing its Christian identity (Grenz & Olson 1992:278).

Another example of the method realized is that of Stanley Hauerwas and the ethics of a story formed Christian community (Graham *et al.* 2005:100). In Hauerwas, we see a strong move to practice, and the implications of the biblical story for ethical considerations (2005:100). Hauerwas compares Christians to "resident aliens who must submit themselves to a rigorous alternative regime of life in order to mark out their distinction from the corrupt social order they reluctantly inhabit" (2005:102). He becomes highly focused on the type of community that the story should form (2005:101). Graham *et al.* (2005:105) provide a clear evaluation on this type of theological methodology:

> Canon narrative theology offers a straightforward and coherent vision of the task of theological reflection; it is the process through which individuals and communities seek to embody and act out the story of God told in Jesus …. It offers an effective means of Christian nurture, a clear basis for ecclesiology and a means of affirming Christian identity in contradiction to culture. Furthermore, many of those who have sought to live as Christ in the world have offered moving examples of Christian resistance to worldly power. From Francis's embrace of the poor Christ, to Barth's rejection of fascism and the contemporary witness of Hauerwas against American imperialism, we can see very tangible examples of the way this process forms lives of radical discipleship.

However, Graham *et al.* (2005:105) note certain concerns with this method, as it believes the Christian story is in many ways simple, realistic, and easy to understand. It also often claims that the church has always viewed the story in this way. They note

that this method often refuses to take cognizance of the conditions of a post-modern world and would prefer to return to the position that the biblical narrative held in pre-modern times (2005:106). Graham *et al.* argue that the Christian story shares many similar narratives with Jews and Muslims, and that this is important in today's pluralistic world. They also wonder if it is so easy to simply apply the Gospel narrative to the many complex issues in the world today. It is also important to ask questions as to who determines how the story is told today (2005:106).

The form of theological reflection that we are examining here would link up strongly with the confessional critical method in Poling and Miller's axis one, where the Christian story dominates the interactions with the world and sciences. The focus of this method could apply to either dimensions of church and society in their axis two. Ballard and Pritchard would probably put this form of theological reflection into their model of applied theology – where they certainly would place Barth. One could also argue that this form of theological reflection would fit in with the hermeneutical correlational method they propose with its focus on understanding the Christian narrative. It would also be fair to say that, when looking at St. Francis, the concerns of the *habitus* model with the spiritual formation of individuals, is equally important.

The fourth method of theological reflection that Graham *et al.* (2005:109) describe is what they delineate as "Writing the Body of Christ," or corporate theological reflection. Here, the focus moves toward the faith community or congregation where "the faith community can construct a sense of corporate identity through the use of a central metaphor, or symbolic practices such as prayer, eating and working together, or by creating a narrative that tells the story of its ongoing life."

Symbols and images become important forms of reflection in this method, as can be seen in the first example discussed in 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul uses the image of the body of Christ as a way of describing the faith community. In fact, it is an image borrowed from stoic philosophy that demonstrates Paul's ability to interact with current thought (Graham *et al.* 2005:113). The way the rule of Benedict functions in corporate practice and life is also proposed as an example of corporate theological reflection. In modern times, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's example and the guidelines he laid down for Christian community in his book *Life together* is also discussed. In the book,

various uses of symbols are used to help the community to understand its existence (2005:120).

In terms of the method realized, they discuss Leonardo Boff, Don Browning and the emerging church. Boff's attempt to help churches form themselves from the "bottom up" through the use of storytelling of its members as they reflect theologically upon their faith, is cited. The base communities' engagement with socio-political issues, however, is to become the reason for existence (Graham *et al.* 2005:124). This way of doing Theology from the bottom up leads to new ways of thinking and to new results. It helps to organize oppressed people for liberation (2005:124). Its method follows a see-judge-act form of reflection. Graham *et al.* (2005:126) comment:

> The model of theological reflection employed here has had a profound influence upon other ecclesial groups and congregations throughout the world, enlivening institutions grown stale through tired theology ineptly applied. The attention to process and dynamic in the methods of theological reflection here ensure a self-generating body, which constructs its own sense of community as it hears and responds to the issues of members. In the practice of community, the community itself is constructed. This is a real departure from the more institutional forms that traditionally established the church community and expected members to shape themselves to its form.

Don Browning is proposed as one who falls within this corporate theological reflection method. His studies attempt to see in what manner local congregations exist in relation to their various traditions of faith and the challenges that they face (Graham *et al.* 2005:126). This process happens through (what Browning defines as) "practical reasoning" and is practical in the sense that it begins as congregations realize that the traditional answers are no longer adequate to the changing circumstances in which they find themselves (Graham *et al.* 2005:128). This often results in a reappraisal of the community's sacred texts and often leads to new practices and again new questions. Browning (1991:6) notes that communities go from times of consolidated practice to deconstruction, to reconstruction and consolidations. Graham *et al.* (2005:130) believe his encouragement to "respect the genius of local groups of committed believers in practical theological reflection represents a vital contribution to Practical Theology."

Graham *et al.* (2005:132) also explain how they see the emergent church as part of corporate theological reflection. They note how, within this movement, the role of the

Trinity is central to how the community functions. This is with regard both to unity and diversity in mission. They note a

> … groundswell of interest in local church communities and how they need to respond to a changing world. Many writers have characterized those changes by describing the impact of globalization, of the network society not "wired up" in communication systems, and in changing patterns of spirituality and a sense of the diversity of culture.

They refer to the network dimension of much of the emergent church and how the emergent term is salient in this regard. Dialogue, the use of symbol and narrative characterize this movement (Graham et al. 2005:134). Gibbs and Bolger's (2005) book, Emerging churches: Creating Christian community in postmodern cultures, reveals the multifaceted way that this form of theological reflection is taking place and some of its unique features.

If we think back to Poling and Miller's evaluation, we might be able to place this form of theological reflection within the critical correlational method. This would certainly link up with Don Browning's understanding and use of the critical correlational method. Indeed, the emergent church, in many ways, holds to a critical confessional method of doing its Theology with its open and mutually informative dialogue. One would again see the short-coming in Poling and Miller's types in their not adequately addressing the experiential and practical starting point of theological reflection. Boff certainly prioritizes this, Browning affirms it, and the emergent church agrees in certain ways. With Ballard and Prichard, it would then make sense to place them within the praxis model that they propose. However, they would not place Browning in the praxis model, but rather the correlational method, with a focus on ethics. It is probably becoming clear just how difficult it is to package various methods neatly with regard to theological reflection! Although there are clear distinctions in many, there are also vast overlaps and similarities in others.

The fifth method of theological reflection proposed is defined as "Speaking of God in public," or correlation. Here, the question of engagement with contemporary culture is of great importance where "the Christian tradition should be prepared to engage in an open exchange of ideas and debate with different cultural disciplines, values, images and world-views" (Graham *et al.* 2005:138). The importance of sources outside the

Christian tradition is regarded as vitally important in the corrective role they can play within this method.

They speak of two dimensions as regards the correlational method. The first involves an apologetic strand to see in what manner Christianity meets or fulfils human questions. The dialectical strand emphasizes the truth within secular thought that can contribute in a meaningful way toward theological reflection (Graham *et al.* 2005:139).

The biblical example that Graham *et al.* (2005:142) use is Paul's preaching in Acts 17, with its emphasis on the public and apologetic nature of the engagement. They argue that Paul's "willingness to harness the thought forms of the prevailing culture and to depict it as an embryonic revelation of the God whose presence is already dimly apparent to human reasoning independent of revelation."

This public and apologetic engagement is evident elsewhere in the development of Christian theology in the first few centuries. The use of Greek thought forms to express a variety of Christian ideas and theological thought forms is just one such example. Thomas Aquinas and his form of theological reflection, in many ways, was a synthesis of Christian and Aristotelian philosophy. This is also seen in the epistemology that Thomas uses with its high value on natural theology, emerging in one way from reason and its ability to discern truth (Graham *et al.* 2005:144-145). In passing, they also mention the example of Schleiermacher. The important aspect that they note with Schleiermacher is his grounding of theology in human experience that had vast similarities with the Romanticism of the time (2005:149).

So, how is the method that they speak about realized? One of the people whom they discuss is Paul Tillich who believes that the existential and moral questions of each generation should be the subject matter to which Christian theology ought to address itself. His method found its real outworking in the relationship between Psychology and religion (Graham *et al.* 2005:155). Of course, there was always an apologetic dimension for Tillich, whose "approach was consistent with Tillich's overall professional goal to make Christianity understandable and relevant to religiously sceptical people living in a modern, secular, technological culture" (2005:157). Hiltner questions what he views as Tillich's simplistic method, which claims that

theology can simply provide answers to cultural questions. He feels the process should be more of a two-way process (Graham *et al.* 2005:158). It is worth noting that others feel that Tillich, in fact, went the other way round with the cultural answers and questions framing his theology (Grenz & Olson 1992:129-130). One of his most well-known books, *The courage to be* (1952), is just such an attempt to correlate culture and theology. His stated intention is to converge theological, sociological and philosophical problems (Tillich 1952:13).

David Tracy is examined in what is called a revised critical correlational method. For Tracy the task of theology is to

> … locate itself at the interface between human experience and culture, and Christian truth claims. Tracy argues that the event of Jesus Christ, albeit mediated by historical tradition, tested and developed by the best literary, historical and critical enquiries, and correlated with our present situation, is the source of Christian revelation (Graham *et al.* 2005:159).

Tracy believes that Christian faith itself ought to be prepared to undergo revision. The correlation must be mutual and must be revisionist by nature. The theological insights that are discussed, emerged and correlated ought to be open to the three publics – church, academy and society (Graham *et al.* 2005:161).

Graham *et al.* (2005:161) believe that this correlation is put to work in the two Whiteheads, Evelyn and James (1980), and specifically in their book, *Method in ministry*. Theology ought to result in a pastoral decision that emerges from the correlation and consultation between tradition, personal and corporate experience, and cultural information. This dialogue must be mutually transforming. The process of reflection that the Whiteheads propose is known as "attending, assertion and decision." While attending, one listens to the three sources mentioned, while the assertion stage seeks to engage these sources in a way that will lead eventually to the decision that ought to be made (Graham *et al.* 2005:162). These decisions must result in actions for which Whitehead and Whitehead (1995:86) argue to be central to theological discourse:

> So the critical test of reflection in ministry is not simply the quality of the insight to which it leads but the quality of the pastoral response which is its fruit …. To be sure, throughout the reflective process decisions have been required and choices have been made: what issues to consider, what sources to consult, who will be involved in the conversation. At this final stage,

decision making names the practical strategies that move the community from shared insight to joint response.

In terms of a feminist perspective, Graham *et al.* (2005:163) conclude by examining the work of Rosemary Radford Ruether, who agrees with the critical correlational method, but argues that the Christian tradition, in fact, is in great need of a radical corrective and the inclusion of non-theological perspectives. The tradition must be held accountable to the manner in which it has misrepresented the spirit of the Gospel (Graham *et al.* 2005:163). One of the non-theological voices she argues for is women's experience (Graham *et al.* 2005:165). An example of the radical revision of the Christian tradition that Ruether calls for can be seen in her eco-feminist ethic and an approach to the environment, which affects God's fundamental nature (Grenz 1997:189-191).

Graham *et al.* (2005:167) conclude their evaluation on the correlational public method by asking the following telling questions:

> If this method rests on a dialogue between "Christian tradition" and experience then what do these categories actually contain? What kinds of experience are referred to, and how will it be articulated? What disciplines and methods will be adopted to bring such experience to light? Whose experience is deemed as authoritative? And are their correctives to ensure that particular voices and perspectives are not neglected? How does engagement with "Christian tradition" deal with the diversity of theological sources; and what counts as authentic tradition, and by what criteria?

For Poling and Miller, this method of speaking of God in public obviously fits well into the critical correlational type on axis one. Its high value on the mutual and revisionist nature, that Poling and Miller note, is closely linked to the correlational model of Graham *et al.* Its concerns clearly sweep across both ecclesial and societal concerns in terms of focus, although they might lean more toward the societal domain.

For Ballard and Pritchard, this form of theological reflection would fall under model two, also under critical correlation. Its specific location would be the first model under critical correlation, as opposed to the ethical and hermeneutical concerns. However, this of course is not watertight, as the focus on experience in the concrete circumstances would lend itself to the praxis model with Ballard and Pritchard as well. It is worth mentioning that the see-judge-act of the praxis model would link up in some manner with the Whiteheads' attend, assert and act.

The sixth area and method that Graham *et al.* (2005:170) explore is what they call "Theology in action" or praxis. Here, Theology is inseparable from "doing," and the Marxist term "praxis" to describe this, is used. Praxis denotes that form of theological reflection which cannot be formed independently from practice. Right action becomes more important than right belief. Practical Theology ought to start and end with practice (2005:170).This method is rooted in the call for social justice and liberation for the two-thirds world (2005:172).

They begin by looking at the parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25. In this passage, Jesus makes serving the poor and destitute in practical action a criterion for judgement, and not whether we knew him or not. This remains a challenge for the literalists who believe in hell, but find that the criteria they thought of, in terms of who is in and out, might be radically different to what they previously thought! Two other examples they discuss are of Pope Gregory I of Rome and the Society of Friends, or Quakers.

The method locates itself quite squarely within Liberation Theology's camp. Here, they examine Paulo Freire and his education for freedom (Graham *et al.* 2005:182). Latin Americans drew a similarity between their experience and Marx's original diagnosis of the polarization that capitalism seems to promote:

> [T]hey also used Marxism's critique of religious ideology, of regarding all knowledge as socially constructed and conditioned, of those who use religion to support an unjust status quo as cloaking the truth, and the poor as possessing a clarity and authenticity of vision that guarantees theological and moral deliverance (2005:182).

Here, the call to a preferential option for the poor becomes a central tenet for belief and practice (Graham *et al.* 2005:183). Within this context, Freire's educational method calls for an experiential learning process that is inductive, situational and committed to change (2005:183). It recognizes the need for conscientization amongst the people that enables them to attain new levels of awareness and activism (2005:184).

Gutierrez is then discussed as one who views critical reflection on praxis as the task of Theology. It begins with an analysis and moves through reflection to purposeful action. Flowing from this conviction is the belief that the nature of Theology would actually be transformed. Gutierrez argues for a spirituality that is a totality which involves every aspect of life.

Next, Graham *et al.* (2005:188) discuss the pastoral cycle that emanates from Juan-Luis Segundo (1975) and his book, *The liberation of theology*. It moves from immersion in experience, social analysis, hermeneutical reflection and pastoral planning. Within this method,

> Practice is thus both "foundation and aim" of a process of experience-analysis-action; and arguably, within such a method, even the activities of reading, reflection and interpretation are themselves forms of praxis because they serve to excavate the theological values by which faithful practice is to be guided (Graham *et al.* 2005:190).

Following from examining the liberation theologians, Graham *et al.* (2005:193) move on to examining the work of Elaine Graham and how the notion of Theology in practice is worked out. She attempts to do her Theology in the light of post-modernity that has exposed the illusion of knowledge. Despite this, there is still a call to understand the norms and sources that arise out of the concrete dimensions of human praxis (2005:193). Graham defines the problem as follows: "While the destabilization of fixed identities inherent in Enlightenment rationality has been liberative in many respects, post modernity's scepticism towards modernity's narratives of progress, reason and human rights is also disturbing for all those, including Christians, concerned with the possibilities for moral action and human emancipation" (2005:193).

For Elaine Graham, the challenge is whether Christian values can derive from anything other than rational ethical discourse (Graham *et al.* 2005:194). She notes the loss of innocence with regard to values, but still believes theological reflection can take place amidst these uncertainties. Despite contingency, there can be some sense of coherence (2005:194). She believes that values are encoded in social life, are constantly evolving, and that Christians contribute directly to this through their worship, care and social involvement. She believes that there is a transcendent reality

that stands above praxis and can therefore judge it. To dialogue with post-modernism is not to become a nihilist. She notes that those who feel it is a capitulation to nihilism have forgotten that Christianity has always proceeded on the basis of dialogue with contemporary ideas and movements (2005:195).

In their evaluation of this form of theological reflection Graham *et al.* (2005:197) note that, for Theology, this method has experienced a radical shift in epistemology. For Graham *et al.* this method,

> … insists on a unity of action and reflection, emerging from concrete experiential knowledge, and adopts an inductive method that tests out the efficacy of Christian teaching in the arena of practical action. This results in a process of reflection on received tradition in the light of substantial problematics such as poverty, marginilization and social exclusion: a process of theological reflection on practice that emerges from "grassroots" experience. Such reflection also seeks to integrate social analysis that addresses socio-political concerns with materialist readings of scripture and Christian doctrine informed by the interpretative hermeneutic of the "bias to the poor". This is thus a contextual theology emerging from the dilemmas of Christian and ecclesial identity in a context of extreme economic polarization and political oppression.

At first sight, it might seem strange that Graham has been evaluated and placed in the same method as both Freire and Guttierez, who are liberation theologians, while Elaine Graham is a lecturer at Manchester in England. One could argue that she would fit in with other forms of theological reflection, such as public theology. It is interesting that Ballard and Pritchard (2006:73) in fact put her under the praxis model with the liberation theologians as well. They note that she is an example of how modern Marxist thought is making its way into Practical Theology (2006:73). In this sense, she would fit well with Liberation Theology and its use of praxis. Indeed, the commitment to truth that emerges from practice, and tradition in many ways being subservient to this, would fit. Essentially, she uses a similar method, yet in a very different context. To what extent post-modernity is a global phenomenon is open to much debate. Yet, its critique of knowledge is surely correct and has had a vast influence on Western society, as we have already seen. It certainly is a critique, a move away from, or reaction to, modernism (Grenz 1996:2). In similar ways, a post-colonial theology has vast similarities with post-modernism and its critique of dominating powers, as well as questioning the power that knowledge exerts in dominating and oppressing others.

In Poling and Miller's types, you would not fit this method easily. It would probably be a critical scientific model in axis one. But again, this points out the weakness of Poling and Miller's types in giving very little "clear" reference to experience. This method would probably focus on societal issues in their axis two types – at least in its main focus. With Ballard and Pritchard, this form of theological reflection is virtually identical with their praxis model. However, what is important to note is that many others in fact use a very similar methodology that can be seen in the previous method of theological reflection that Graham *et al.* discuss. Both Browning and the Whiteheads use this praxis method.

The last form of theological reflection that Graham *et al.* (2005:200) discuss is what they call "Theology in the vernacular," or local theologies. Here the call is for Theology to emerge and take the shape of local and particular cultures in order to speak in the vernacular. This is done in the language and symbols of ordinary people, or popular culture. "This method draws attention to the specific form the Christian gospel assumes in any given place or time. It demonstrates that theology is culturally, temporarily and spatially located, and that the gospel cannot exist independent of particular, embodied expressions" (2005:200).

Here, words, such as contextualization, indigenization and inculturation, are ways of trying to express ways in which the Gospel and culture interact and how the message is shaped and transmitted (Graham *et al.* 2005:201). Graham *et al.* (2005:202) describe this approach as a "treasure hunt" in which one attempts to bring to the surface, or discover, God's grace and activity already present within a given, particular culture.

Of course, the obvious biblical example that Graham *et al.* discuss is the day of the Pentecost in Acts 2, i.e. the question of how understanding of the message can be communicated to a diverse group of people. Origen is mentioned as one who attempts to synthesize the Gospel with Greek thought. Origin was deeply in debt to Platonism and Stoicism in articulating his Christian faith and belief. This approach was seen in much of early Christianity, as Graham *et al.* (2005:207) note:

> Christianity spread rapidly from its original cultural setting, and before long it was competing with a variety of religious and philosophical world views across the ancient Near East and North Africa. The understanding of early Christian writers of the inescapably culturally rooted nature of the gospel thus represents an important and enduring source for styles of theological reflection that seek to embody cultural particularity and diversity.

Shifting to the Catholic missions in the new world, Graham *et al.* (2005:210) examine Las Casas and his respect for the local beliefs and customs of indigenous peoples, instead of trying to impose moral absolutes on them. Ricci, a missionary to China, was another who sought convergence between Christianity and Confucianism (2005:211).

So, how was this method realized for Graham *et al.* (2005:212)? They began by exploring Vatican II and how the Council affirmed the right of each culture to articulate the Gospel in their own particular way without the use of Western thought forms. They then study the work of Robert Schreiter (1985) and his well-known book, *Constructing local theologies*. The challenge for Schreiter, who follows Geertz, is to try to understand and uncover the cultural symbols that are important to interpret cultures. These are often embedded in everyday cultural practices (Graham *et al.* 2005:215). Schreiter's approach is a strongly inductive one that seeks to stress the integrity of the immediate and the specific. This form of local theology "seeks to be a conduit by which some of those expressions might be realized: the values of a culture, its focal images, its social ills and problems, codes of conduct, habits and customs, cultural and political institutions" (Graham *et al.*:216).

Moving on from Schreiter and various others, Graham *et al.* (2005:224) highlight the importance of the "space of the local in postmodernity." Here, questions of glocal cultures are important. The quest is: in what way local cultures in fact are in a dialogue of sorts with other universal cultures, or ways of thinking, which form hybrid or glocal cultures (2005:225). There is a rejection of modernism that sought to put "time" over the importance of "space and place." Within post-modernity, there is a struggle to recognize space as a "fundamental experiential category" that helps us to make sense of the world (2005:225). The following quote demonstrates the rootedness of this form of theological reflection: "A theological reading of material culture will necessarily acknowledge its rootedness in the everyday texture of human lives, and

the opportunities it offers to reflect theologically on issues of land, home, the integrity of creation, technologies, globalization and power" (2005:226).

Graham *et al.* (2005:227) evaluate this model as helpful as it honours revelation within the local dimensions of people's lives, while arguing against any timeless essence of the Gospel that remains unembodied in time and place. It is argued that a correlational model would in many ways be important here.

To say that this form of theological reflection would battle to fit in with Poling and Miller's typology in axis one would border on being totally redundant at this point. With regard to locus, it would be obvious that it would fit naturally into a focus on culture as part of axis two concerns, although not exclusively. Ballard and Pritchard, interestingly, would place Schreiter under their praxis model. To the researcher, this highlights the fact that perhaps the local theology and praxis theology methods that Graham *et al.* propose are indeed very similar. As soon as one starts with the local, practical, experiential and concrete realities, it becomes more about emphasizing certain dimensions of that process that leads to its various distinctives.

4.4 TYPES, MODELS AND POST-FOUNDATIONALISM

In this section, the attempt was to examine three different Practical Theology handbooks and how they tried to capture some of the major developments and, specifically, different streams within the discipline. The journey started off with examining Poling and Miller's book, *Foundations of Practical Theology of ministry,* published in 1985. The second book by Ballard and Pritchard, entitled *Practical Theology in action,* published just over a decade later in 1996, was also an attempt at delineating methodological positions within the discipline. The last book we examined was by Graham, Ward and Walton, *Theological reflection: Methods.* It was of a more recent time, being published in 2005.

Here, we made no attempt to synthesize the various books in their methodological positions. In fact, as one probably witnessed with this interaction amongst the three, it

is an impossible task. To repeat what was discussed throughout the last section would be needless repetition.

In concluding this section, some general comments might prove helpful. Firstly, it seems that Poling and Miller's work, although dated, captures a unique perspective in terms of the variations within the correlational method. However, the weakness of the types is that there is no sustained discussion of how the various models embrace experiential practice as a starting point. The second axis discussion around the two poles of church and culture leads to complicated boxing in many cases. Often methods run across both in terms of focus.

Ballard and Pritchard's types are a move on from Poling and Miller in that they note specifically the importance of realizing that one's starting point in Practical Theology has methodological consequences. Their correlational perspective, although divided into three in the same way as Poling and Miller, is significantly different.

In many ways, Graham, Ward and Walton's book is a further improvement. Besides covering more recent developments in Practical Theology, it took a distinctly new approach. In some senses, it demonstrates just how difficult it is to box methodologies. It became clear that there is a significant overlap. One could argue that one could have grouped together certain methods, which they keep apart. Their unique approach is to move theological reflection away from simply academic discussions. By looking into the history of reflection within the church, including its more recent academic expressions, it feels more wholesome and honest. It also opens up the possibilities to plot the ways in which theological reflection could make a return to the local, and not simply remain in the academician's domain.

Beyond foundationalism?

The larger question though looms now as to what can be gleaned from the previous discussions with regard to the various methodologies proposed in the three different works evaluated, with specific regard to answering our question as to whether Practical Theology has indeed moved beyond foundationalism.

Context

Very early, Poling and Miller (1985:30) reminded us that the use of particular methodologies is largely dependent on context. Graham *et al.* (2005:12) urge us to consider the various methodologies with regard to context and received tradition. Ballard and Pritchard's (2006:81) consideration of their own evaluation could be said in a general sense of all the works with which we have engaged, "The discussion suggested that there is indeed considerable diversity which in a growing discipline needs to be resolved: but at the same time, there is a considerable common ground in the actual doing of Practical Theology."

One could argue that the Practical Theology that emerged from Schleiermacher is one in which applied theology won the day. Whether truth was founded on an inerrant Bible, or derived from experience as a foundation, those insights then still simply apply to the context. And, consistently, this context revolves around ecclesial dimensions. What we see in virtually all the examined works is a move away from this applied theology. In many ways, Poling and Miller refuse to even consider a pre-critical applied Theology as a methodological option. Graham *et al.* are far more generous. But, of course, with the latter we have a vast array of methodological options dependent on context.

A modernistic foundationalist approach to Theology would be one that would claim that knowledge and truth is knowable and should have universal application with regard to context as seen, when examining foundationalism earlier, that myth has come crashing down. Therefore, there cannot be one way of doing Practical Theology. So, one would have to argue strongly that all three works, at least to the extent that they affirm this diversity in methodology, would lean towards a post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology. Whether that is the context of one's church tradition, or the given local context, there is an affirmation that knowledge and truth are situated locally and in a given context.

Critical correlational hermeneutic

It seems that, to some extent, all three works argue for a critical correlational hermeneutic. Poling and Miller seek to plot all forms of Practical Theology on a correlational axis and to show how various methodologies affirm either the sources of

culture or the church's tradition, or somewhere in the middle. Broadly speaking the critical correlational hermeneutic emerges strongly in Ballard and Pritchard's (2006:64) model where there is a "dialogue with the 'tradition' or a theological perspective on the one hand, and the issue under consideration on the other." Of course, the issue being contemplated will bring into consideration many of the various disciplines of the social sciences, which can best illuminate this issue. The praxis model that Ballard and Pritchard discuss affirms the previous importance of context as starting point (2006:70) while, at the same time, it shows how even the praxis model has similarities with the correlational hermeneutic, "It can also be seen that there are points of convergence with the 'critical correlation' models outlined above. So a growing consensus begins to emerge" (2006:71).

Graham *et al.* also emphasize the importance of the correlational hermeneutic and describe the variety of its expression. As Ballard and Pritchard have just shown, the praxis model affirms the correlational hermeneutic at the same time as the concrete situation as its starting point. The same is said for Graham *et al.* (2006:139) when they comment, "Like local theologies therefore, the correlative method recognizes that 'talk about God' always takes place in a specific place and time."

What begins to emerge from these considerations is the importance of context as a starting point, and a movement towards a correlational hermeneutic as a necessary next step. Later, more will be said of what this means for Practical Theology. We have already proved how an applied theology simply is not compatible with a move beyond foundationalism. Context is crucial as both a starting point and in discovering which methodology suits best. The researcher believes that a correlational hermeneutic moves us further beyond foundationalism as it seeks a diversity of sources to be brought to bear on any given situation in its given context. Instead of a foundationalism that either affirms an inherent Bible or church tradition, or places too much weight on cultural resources, based on an inherent rationalism or empiricism, a correlational hermeneutic allows the context to shape the questions. At the same time, the diversity of theological and non-theological traditions, which help us understand that context, provides a broad range of perspectives that affirm the limited nature of our knowledge consistent with non-foundationalism. Others, like Van Huyssteen

(1997:13), highlight that there are implications for theology in light of post-modernism and the future of a post-foundationalist Theology:

> In theological reflection then, a postmodern critique of foundationalist assumptions will therefore be an inextricable part of a post foundationalist model of rationality, and will definitely shape the way in which theology is located within the context of interdisciplinary reflection.

Most important though, is the word "critical" that in many ways summarizes a move beyond foundationalism. Poling and Miller (1985:32) note their distaste for any theological reflection that is pre-critical or ideological:

> To summarize, there are three types of methods: critical scientific, critical correlational, and critical confessional, on the critical method axis. The word "critical" distinguishes these types from those which are uncritical or pre-critical in method. On the one hand, there is an extreme in ministry practice which is so dominated by action that there is no time for self-critical reflection and the result is contradiction and incoherence. Similarly, an extreme in fundamentalist theology may be so committed to a certain ideological interpretation that it cannot afford to be self-critical. "Critical" implies awareness of one's method and presuppositions, and the definition includes the willingness to revise one's perspective under certain conditions.

This "willingness to revise ones perspectives" in light of other views, affirms the limited nature of our knowledge and the affirmation that all our truth claims are partial and based on interpreted experience, and not necessarily an accurate representation of reality. This willingness to adapt one's perspectives on the basis of new information from other disciplines is vital to the critical correlational hermeneutic (Browning 1991:44-47). A Practical Theology that, in method, is bound to an applied Theology, oblivious to context, that is unaware of its foundationalist assumptions (in whatever fashion), and refuses to yield to the perspectives of experience and other disciplines, has not moved beyond foundationalism.

The pastoral cycle

We have started with the importance and affirmation of context for Practical Theology and, moving from there to a critical correlational hermeneutic, we have affirmed that in many ways Practical Theology has moved beyond foundationalism. The second half of this work will examine in more detail what this emphasis on context and experience means, as well as take into account a post-foundationalist approach to the critical correlational hermeneutic with regard to its sources.

What begins to emerge then is an affirmation that the pastoral cycle perhaps best represents a post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology. It takes into account the affirmations above, but also affirms the importance of landing in practise, or action. This is a direct contribution of Liberation Theology (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:82), which affirms both the importance of starting and ending in practise, as Graham *et al.* (2005:170) explain:

> This is more than simply another form of applied theology in which systematic and historical theology provide norms for pastoral care or ethics. Rather, here, practice is both the origin and the end of theological reflection, and "talk about God" cannot take place independent of a commitment to a struggle for human emancipation.

The pastoral cycle has become commonplace in professional and practical theological education (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:83) and gives a "methodological tool that does indeed take account of the strengths and weaknesses of the various models ... and also provides some kind of structure for thinking about Practical Theology which allows both flexibility and diversity" (2006:82). Later, more will be said around the pastoral cycle as a way that best exemplifies a Practical Theology which has moved beyond foundationalism.

It has become clear that a Practical Theology that has moved beyond foundationalism, which has been summarized in these concluding comments regarding methodology, is one that affirms context, has a critical correlational hermeneutic and is expressed in the concept of the pastoral cycle. In what follows, these various aspects will be examined in more detail in terms of a post-foundationalist Practical Theology.

5. A POST-FOUNDATIONALIST PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

We started out by examining and comparing a foundationalist and post-foundationalist understanding of reality. Then, we moved into a discussion around the development of Practical Theology, as well as a detailed discussion regarding methodology within Practical Theology over the last three decades. The tentative conclusion offered was that Practical Theology has, in many ways, moved beyond foundationalism for the reasons provided in the last section. We now hope to further illumine this by engaging in far greater detail with issues of context and the pastoral cycle under the heading, "A glocal praxis-based Practical Theology." A detailed discussion of a "critical correlational hermeneutic" will be advanced as an example of how Practical Theology has indeed moved beyond foundationalism, both in the method itself, but also in its approach to the sources with which the method seeks to engage. Before doing that, the concept of a "Missional Practical Theology" will be provided, which helps best to get to grips with these issues. It will also become apparent that the broadness of this concept, in many ways, becomes a way for a post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology to be advanced.

5.1 A MISSIONAL PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

In this section, discussion of the missional nature of Practical Theology will argue for the importance of this discussion as being integral to any discourse on a post-foundationalist Practical Theology. Hastings (2007:29) has recently argued that much of Practical Theology, or certainly its North American dimension, has held onto the hope that some sort of synthesis between the Gospel and Northen American Churches and culture might be possible. He believes that only now the question of the mission of congregations is being taken seriously by American Practical Theologians. Hastings (2007:29) goes onto say that:

> The North American churches are already in a Post-Constantinian situation, and a new
> generation of missional theologians, drawing on the work of Lesslie Newbigin, are wondering
> whether or not North America can be converted, most Practical Theologians have still not
> seriously addressed the hitherto unthinkable problematic of how to understand and guide

Christian practice within their own post-Christian social, political, and cultural context.

With the help of David Bosch, an attempt will be made to briefly highlight the problem of missions before trying to place mission in its historical context. Having established these foundations, we will move onto exploring the consequences of the Trinity for a missional Practical Theology that, in turn, will lead to a missional perspective regarding the nature of the church. In conclusion, the various points and perspectives discussed will be drawn together and argued that an incorrect understanding of mission can lead to a defunct view of Practical Theology, which could be burdened with foundationalist assumptions. The opposite being that a correct view of mission, critically adhered to and reflected upon, will lead to a healthy Practical Theology that is broad, holistic and non-foundationalist. This will provide the entry point into the section that follows on the local and global nature of Practical Theology and later to the discussion of post-foundationlism within a correlational hermeneutic.

At this point, the argument is that, at its very root, "missional" should imply local, contextual, practical and experiential - all things that help us to move beyond foundationalism - and affirm the contextual nature of knowledge and reject forms of applied theology. Hazle (2003:349) has made a strong argument that the the praxis based nature of practical theology has enormous implications for mission and helps us move beyond forms of applied theology:

> Whether the response is personal and corporate, ecclesiastical or political, prophetic or pastoral, theology now seeks to set forth an answer to the question, "what would God have me/us do?" However, and more than that, theology's answer seeks to fufil, in a given time and context, the ethical demand of God's revelation for that time and place. Theology with a practical paradigm is therefore inescapably missionlogical.

It will require a re-examination of the very word "missional," and perhaps a re-interpretation of it, to arrive at this conclusion - a position that would argue that God is already missionally involved in the concrete, particular and experiential dimensions of our lives. God's revelation and action, by its very nature, is local and particular. Newbigin (1989:88) defines this as the "scandal of particularity." Here, the election of Israel in a local cultural context becomes a model (he would probably say more than a

model) and endorsement of the Gospel coming to life in each local cultural expression.

By claiming that mission, in essence, is local, it could easily be discussed under a subsection of the local dimension of Practical Theology. This is resisted for several reasons. The first, already mentioned, is a desire to place the missional question in its specific historical context. The fact that this is needed could be demonstrated by attending many Evangelically conservative churches today and listening to a sermon. It will soon be discovered that, when many think of the word "mission," they equate it with saving souls from an eternity without God. This does not necessarily lead to neglect of other material concerns, but certainly becomes secondary. To correct real imbalances, the correct understanding is essential.

Secondly, the Researcher believes it is important to root our reflections in the nature of the Triune God. This Triune God, by nature is missional, and our mission actually starts with his missional activity (van Gelder 2007:18; Bosch 1991:389-392; Hendriks 2004:25; Newbigin 1978:19-29).

Lastly, this missional question is addressed in the belief that it provides a helpful narrative to understand the glocal dimensions of Practical Theology, as well as questions regarding praxis – so central to a post-foundationalist Practical Theology. It provides the necessary framework and grounding with which these terms ought to be understood.

The problem of missions

The story of mission is as old as Christianity itself. From the very beginning, Paul wrestles with questions of the implication of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The disciples' desire to risk their lives post-Easter (after abandoning Jesus at the cross) in spreading his message of the kingdom all over the known world as Jesus had instructed them, remains one of the great turn-abouts in history. It is the resurrection that gives impetus to this missional activity to which the disciples commit themselves (Wright 2006:17). Of course, for many, the importance of whether they were simply apparitions, or an actual physical resurrection, is beside the point (Crossan 2006:46-47). However, the reality was the explosion of missional activity.

Christian mission in the world has a chequered history, with high points and low points, producing both good and evil. But, as we have noted right from the beginning, there was a commitment to mission, and the Christian faith spread quickly throughout the known world. We are forced to ask the question with one of last century's most famous church historians, "What was this faith which had this remarkable spread?" (Latourette 1943:45). Was it the intense community life (Stark 1997:208), its new conception of humanity (:215), or both? Whatever the many factors, mission has been at the centre of the Christian faith from its inception to the present.

Peter Scott, a missionary to Africa in the 19th century, was at the grave of David Livingstone in Westminster Abbey. He looked at his name on the slate and says he had a vision. He saw a line of mission stations passing through East Africa into the "mysteries of the Sahara desert" (Anderson 1994:17). So began the story of the Africa Inland Mission. What would these mission stations look like? How would they understand the Gospel? What do they mean by "church"? How would they understand the relationship of Western culture in relation to the indigenous communities?

There has been enough written about the history of mission in South Africa to know exactly what those mission stations looked like and, in fact, still do in certain places. The missionaries' relationship to the colonial authorities remains a fierce debate in many circles. Specifically, within a South African context, Saayman (1991:34) argues that the missions and missionaries, were certainly entangled with colonialism and the colonial authorities. He takes an ambivalent position though, arguing that they were simply a product of their times. With the collapse of colonialism, the nature of missions was placed under the spotlight and there was a call for indigenous leadership (Pillay & Hofmeyr 1991:277). There were even calls for a moratorium on missions, which, for long, was not widespread or imposed (Pillay & Hofmeyr 1991:277). The debate was vigorous, but even those, who opted to oppose any form of moratorium, had serious concerns about missions. It was urged that missionaries learn from their mistakes, listen to national voices and receive training in cross-cultural missions (Wakatama 1976:17). The call for a moratorium highlighted a real concern to preserve traditional cultures, something that had first gained prominence in Latin America,

where the indigenous cultures were collapsing and being exploited (Wakatama 1976:13).

Despite harsh criticism for the missionaries' role in Africa, others have noted the subversive nature of the very gospel they perpetuated. Lamin Sanneh (1993:19) is one who noted this with regard to the missionaries in their "root conviction that the Gospel is transmissible in the mother tongue, I suggest, missionaries opened the way for the local idiom to gain the ascendancy of foreign superiority."

Sanneh (1993:181) argues that, by adopting the local languages, they extended the principle of Jewish ethnic particularity and, in some ways, helped preserve certain dimensions of local cultures. It is perhaps best to settle on the fact that Western missionaries were a mixed blessing. We should not ignore the real positives, but also own up to their real shortcomings (Van der Walt 2003:23-24). At this point, it is perhaps pertinent to note the foundationalist danger of an applied Theology for a local context. The sense of surety with regard to knowledge (whether inerrant Bible, church tradition or Western cultural supremacy) caused numerous problems. An affirmation of the local and contextual nature of mission, so central to post-foundationalism, was missing in many cases.

5.1.1 Mission in historical perspective

Of course, it is important to note that missions did not start with people being sent to Africa by Western churches. David Bosch's (1991) book, *Transforming missions: Paradigm shifts in theology and mission,* captures the complex development and shifts that took place in mission throughout the ages. Bosch's work has become some-what of a Holy Grail in mission studies. It could be fair to say that, for Mission Studies, it could become what Niebuhr's *Christ and culture* has been for many in the discussion of the relationship between the church and the world. We cannot hope to capture everything that he says, but will use his work for the express purpose of trying to put mission, and more specifically the missional concept, in its historical frame of reference.

Transforming mission

Bosch starts by examining the question of mission in the Old Testament, then moves on into the New Testament. Most people would feel comfortable to note that the modern missionary movement can be evaluated as ambivalent. However, when it comes to the New Testament, a sort of uncritical filter moves over many Christians' eyes as they gaze upon the golden age of Christian mission as the model for all future times. To be honest, with Bosch (1991:54), we must concede that mission in the New Testament was indeed ambivalent. The good, the bad, and the ugly often lay side by side. In his analysis, Bosch examines three missionary paradigms in the New Testament – that of Matthew, Luke and Paul. As regards Matthew's paradigm, he argues that one cannot deduce a universally binding missionary theory from it. Despite this, we can look in the same direction as Matthew. Bosch (1991:83) summarizes Matthew's view as follows:

> Christians find their true identity when they are involved in mission, in communicating to others a new way of life, a new interpretation of reality and God, and in committing themselves to the liberation and salvation of others. A missionary community is one that understands itself as being both different from and committed to its environment; it exists within its context in a way which is both winsome and challenging.

In Luke's paradigm, we see a slightly different emphasis than in Matthew. Luke emphasizes the continuing presence of Jesus in the church through the Holy Spirit, who guides the church in mission (Bosch 1991:114). This is demonstrated in the correlation between the mission to the Jews and the gentiles (1991:115). For Luke, great importance is placed on the witness of the church to the events in Jesus' life, which should continue in the church's mission (1991:116). Great weight is also placed on repentance and forgiveness in turning towards Jesus. However, this should not be interpreted as the saving of souls which "flatly contradicts Luke's understanding of mission" (1991:117). Luke seems to insist on a new perspective on wealth, which could be seen as the economic justice dimension of mission (1991:117). It could be argued that this is linked to Luke's belief that Jesus' Gospel is one of peace. Peace-making is central to mission (1991:118). One of the most important dimensions of Luke's paradigm is the emphasis on the church as a historical manifestation of mission, although notable in its absence of church structure (1991:120). For Luke, there is also the realization that mission would often encounter adversity and suffering (1991:121).

When examining Paul's missionary paradigm, Bosch (1991:172) highlights the fact that Paul places great weight on the church as a new community and vanguard of the coming world. In discussing Paul's understanding of mission to the Jews, he treads with great sensitivity without committing himself (Bosch 1991:174). Rodney Stark (1997:69-70) takes quite a radical position on the mission to the Jews believing that large numbers of them were actually converted and that the mission to the Jews was actually quite successful.

Bosch (1991:174) also notes the puzzling nature of Paul's belief in the imminent triumph of God - one which is hard to resolve, but should still remain central for mission. With regard to involvement in society, Bosch (1991:176) concludes that Paul encouraged participation in society but, at other times, discouraged it. This remains a hot topic of debate. What is not a hot topic of debate is that much of Paul's mission took place with much difficulty and personal weakness (1991:177), and that his aim was the proclamation of Jesus' message and the reality of unconditional love and unmerited grace (1991:178).

Bosch (1991:189) concludes his examination of the New Testament by noting that we cannot simply jump from a discussion of the church's primitive mission to the present-day situation, without paying attention to mission within the church's history. He begins by looking at the Eastern Church's missionary paradigm, which was significantly different from that of primitive Christianity. It worked out theology from the bottom up in order to make sense to the Greek mind (1991:211). There was also a universalizing tendency toward a Hellenization of the faith, yet without departing from the essentials of the Christian faith by "affirming the Old Testament, the historicity of the humanity of Jesus, [and] the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead" (1991:211).

The other dimension of the Eastern paradigm was the monastic movement that spread widely throughout Christianity, which ought to be considered a form of mission - and indeed was quite successful (Bosch 1991:212). The significant weakness of this model is that it tends to synchronize religion with society, which then moves beyond inculturation and contextualization. It often assimilates in too radical a manner with

the existing political setup and can end up being overly nationalistic. It can also be in-grown and pay little attention to those who do not agree with its doctrinal formulations (1991:212). Perhaps, the most striking loss with regard to the primitive dimension of mission was the loss of eschatology, rooted in the promise of Christ to intervene in this world. It moved to a salvation that was totally concerned with another world, and the attempt to move towards that and "even when believers do get involved in the contingencies of historical life, they do so with reservations and often with a bad conscience" (1991:213).

The second paradigm that Bosch examines is the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm. This is the period roughly from 600 CE to 1500 CE, which was dominated by a belief that the pagans and those outside the church ought to be compelled to enter into the church - if necessary by force (Bosch 1991:236). Now, the church was a large organisation whose connections with Judaism were severed. Despite the often accompanying negative assessment with regard to a discussion of Constantine, we must acknowledge that it could have been no other way and that we would have done the same (1991:237). By far, the most damaging impact on mission in this paradigm was the individualization of salvation with its roots in Augustine and his battle with Pelagius (1991:215). Augustine's clash with the Donatists defined the ecclesialization of salvation, where salvation could not be found outside commitment and participation in the church (1991:218). Before it seems that Bosch (1991:222) is on an Augustinian bashing session, he qualifies his critique: "Given the historical alternatives he and others had before them, they were the only choices that made sense to them. And it is appropriate to ask whether our choices, in similar circumstances, would have been any better, even if they were different."

The third paradigm for missions is that of the Protestant Reformation. Bosch notes that the Protestant emphasis on God's sovereignty often paralyzed the missionary movement while, at other times, was held in tension with human accountability. This polar tension was demonstrated further in the reality that people were often seen exclusively as sinners while, at other times, Christ's love for humans was emphasized.

This tension was further expressed in the objective and subjective dimensions of faith (Bosch 1991:261). The relation between church and state was close, and had an enormous influence on mission (the Anabaptists being the exception).

Following the Protestant Reformation, Bosch deals with mission in the wake of the Enlightenment. His extensive treatment of this era culminates in stating the complex, varied, oppositional, polemical nature of its various dimensions. Bosch (1991:342) comments, "There was virtually no trace of a unified pattern of thought and practice. Sometimes Christians responded in widely divergent ways to the challenge posed to the Christian mission by the Enlightenment."

Bosch discusses the motifs and motives that emerged within the Enlightenment paradigm. The subject-object dichotomy found expression in both liberal and conservative approaches to the Bible. Regardless of this approach, there still was in both (liberal and conservative) a tendency to treat those in other cultures as objects, rather than as one of their own. The belief that mission would indeed be successful was seen as possible only if the right conditions were set up with regard to social progress. Or alternatively, if people were converted, this would lead to social betterment (Bosch 1991:342). Missionaries believed that progress was indeed possible, even inevitable, as Western culture made itself known and continued to spread. For the liberals, this progress was often seen as the goal of the Gospel, and thus had a "this-worldly" focus. On the other hand, focusing on the salvation of souls resulted in an otherworldly focus (1991:343). This belief that things were solvable led to a vast explosion in mission agencies and volunteers.

Perhaps the saddest divide to emerge during this period was the God-human divide: "If the aim of mission was viewed as giving glory to God, this was interpreted as slighting the value and contribution of humans; if the inherent capability of human beings to make the right choices and act ethically was emphasized, this was seen as a refusal to give all credit to God" (Bosch 1991:343).

The shadow of the Enlightenment loomed large over missionaries of all kinds. Although a sense of tolerance emerged, and a somewhat relativistic perspective, a Western sense of superiority and prejudice was common. We must also not be too

quick to blame the missionaries of this period, as they brought the Gospel as they knew it, despite the negative consequences and superiority that accompanied it (Bosch 1991:344).

Bosch believes that, in the area of missions a real shift is taking place, to which he refers as the "post-modern paradigm." The collapse of foundationalist rationalism as an Enlightenment bastion, and one that can solve all of the world's problems, is a growing reality, as noted. This does not lead to a total rejection of rationality, but rather to what Stanley Grenz refers as a "chastened rationality." This will possibly allow for a greater role of religion within society, but one which will be "chastened and humble" (Bosch 1991:355), consistent with post-foundationalism. Bosch argues that there is a definite move beyond the subject-object scheme of the Enlightenment. This has resulted in a missiology that does not allow any object (whether human or nature) to be subject to the chains of rationality, as objects to be manipulated and exploited by others (Bosch 1991:355). The belief that the world is not shaped by a set of unchangeable laws that contain humanity and society, has led to the belief in hopeful change for many people. This hope also is a chastened one, which does not accept that all progress is good and inevitable. In terms of mission, this would bring into question notions of development (whether technological, social or personal), which often are seen as the result of the Christian message (Bosch 1991:358). This chastened post-foundational optimism (Bosch 1991:362), together with the other changes mentioned, leads towards a greater interdependence with others and a turn away from individualistic and monolithic conceptions of the world (Bosch 1991:362). Paul Hiebert (1994:51) attempts to capture some of these missiological implications in light of this shift away from the Enlightenment by noting:

> In a post-modern world we need to re-examine our epistemological foundations to see how they affect our relationships to other people, cultures, theologies, and religions in a pluralistic world. I am convinced that critical realism is a biblical approach to knowledge. I am also convinced it is the approach we must take in a post-colonial era in missions. We must deal with cultural, religious, and theological pluralism with deep conviction about the truth, but without arrogance and paternalism.

Earlier, we have already engaged with this post-modern paradigm. Post-modernism's attack on Enlightenment's foundationalist assumptions has helped us to move into a

post-foundational space. Hiebert's quote, like Van Huyssteen's earlier, has suggested that a critical realist approach helps us to move in this direction.

Taking further the discussion regarding the post-modern paradigm, Bosch sets out to describe what he believes to be the emerging missionary paradigm today. Here, some of his material and insights will be used, but under headings directly relevant to our present discussion.

5.1.2 Missional salvation and Practical Theology

Today, the question of salvation - what it means and its implications - is part of the emerging missional paradigm. We believe that a missional Practical Theology ought to have a specific view of mission that takes these developments into account. A discussion of missional salvation will combine the concerns that Bosch raises under his various sections on mission - as mediating salvation, justice, evangelism, liberation, action in hope and interaction with other faiths.

The question of salvation is complex. As seen in the various paradigms with which Bosch has worked, there was a move toward a salvation located in the church. There was also an individualisation of salvation in the Eastern Orthodox, Protestant and Enlightenment paradigms. A greater awareness of the social dimension of the Gospel was also seen to emerge in the Enlightenment, albeit with a superiority complex. Within the post-modern paradigm, a greater humility in interacting with other religions and a chastened approach to development was seen. The post-modern or post-colonial realities, and the rejection of exploitative authority, are evident in the various quests for liberation from oppression.

There are various dimensions that need to be considered when engaging with the question of salvation. These questions involve aspects of kingdom versus church, and personal salvation versus social concern. There is a significant overlap within these two poles, but both seem to engage with concerns that a missional Practical Theology ought to consider.

Kingdom versus church

Here, the specific focus is to examine whether the location of God's action is in the church and its role in the world, or whether the locus of God's action is in the world primarily – or a combination of both. The discussion and interaction of Poling and Miller's axis two have provided an entry point into our discussion. The researcher, for one, does not want to create false dichotomies, but to highlight simply that one's focus in terms of either kingdom or church has significant consequences for Practical Theology. If the church is seen to be equated with an extension of God's kingdom, or even as God's kingdom, we are left with a negative view toward the culture and lives of which we are part. Here, membership of the church becomes all important, and participation in the world and culture secondary, in that participation in this world is tolerated as a way of bringing people into the church (hence God's kingdom), or using the resources of culture and the world to extend God's growth through growing the church. This emphasis on the church leads quite naturally to the propagation of other-worldly salvation (as opposed to a worldly, or cosmic one), as well as a quest for "winning souls" (as opposed to a holistic salvation). These other two concerns will be addressed later.

We can see that these complementary concerns express clearly when church growth becomes the goal of mission, and the concerns of the world are regarded as periphery. Donald McGavran's (1970) book, *Understanding church growth,* is just such an example of this approach. At the time, it set in motion a church growth movement that has flourished in many quarters around the world. More importantly, it espouses the view that Evangelicals and many others have internalized, and continue to propagate. The following quote from McGavran (1970:22) illustrates this:

> The chief and irreplaceable purpose of mission is church growth. Social services please God, but it must never be substituted for finding the lost. Our Lord did not rest content with feeding the hungry and healing the sick. He pressed on to give his life as a ransom for many and to send out his followers to disciple all nations. Service must not be so disproportionately emphasized at the expense of evangelism that findable persons are continually lost. In the proportioning of social ministries and church planting, the degree of growth being achieved must always be taken into account.

Later, McGavran (1970:31) goes on to state that the supreme task ahead is the multiplication of churches. This view is also evident in the British context in the work of the late David Watson (1978:51). Although hesitant to equate the church with the

kingdom, he stills sees the spread of the church, with conversions of individuals, as tied to the spread of the kingdom of God (Watson 1978:54-56). His whole discussion regarding the kingdom always begins with, or returns to, questions regarding the church and her role in the world (Watson 1978:51-63). Many will note that the two examples used here come from within the evangelical tradition. Of course, one can see this demonstrated in other segments of Christianity, yet it remains a unique evangelical problem where evangelism (they have resisted the word mission) is seen as "church extension" (Bosch 1991:415). However, there are radical evangelicals who are aware of just such a problem. Ballard and Pritchard (2006:73) mention one of these, Chris Sudgen, in his analysis of the praxis model. Sudgen (Samuel & Sugden 1987:150) comments that, very early on, many came to believe that "the kingdom of God was a matter of faith that had nothing to do with society. They believed that God's activity and kingdom were locked into the church." This focus on the church often leads to embracing a status-quo approach with regard to political and social realities. Somehow, it claims neutrality with regard to the world. In the political arena, its focus on church life can lead to a disengagement from political issues, endorsing the status quo, and refusing to be aware of one's own political assumptions (Saayman 1991:11).

Essentially, what we have been discussing is a fusion between the kingdom and the church, which sees the kingdom of God, at least in its temporal earthly dimensions, as synonymous with the extension of his church throughout the world.

On the other side of the coin is the reality that often the world outside the church is viewed as the kingdom of God itself. This, of course, has its roots in early times with the conversion of Constantine and the complex interrelationship between the church and the state that followed - referred to as the "Christendom model." The desire for the perfect Christian society, also known as *Corpus Christianum*, attained its climax under Innocent III just prior to the birth of Thomas Aquinas (Latourette 1943:514).

Alan Hirsch (2003:8) attempts to describe this phenomenon, which is Christendom:

> Christendom is the name given to the sacral culture that has dominated European society from around the eleventh century until the end of the twentieth. Its sources go back to the time when Constantine came to the throne of the Roman Empire and granted Christians complete

freedom of worship and even favoured Christianity; thereby undermining all other religions in the empire.

Of course, the church did not always dominate the state; in fact, it was most often the reverse. This, despite the attempts of the papacy to invoke the forged Donation of Constantine, claimed to be written by Constantine to the then pope, Silvester I. This purported to give the church and the pope authority over the empire (Southern 1970:91). Shenk (1995:35), who places the roots of Christendom in the fourth century, notes that the consequences of equating society with the church leads to the collapse of any sense of mission. Mission tends to advance by force, which is what Bosch notes with regard to some forms of the Roman Catholic paradigm in mission. This collusion between society and church, and its eventual demise under the weight of secularism, lead to a crisis in mission and a crisis for the church. The most obvious response was the shift to equate the kingdom with the church, in the sense of the churches' growth and the individuals' salvation. However, the approach that seeks for a partnering of church and state is not something that has "left the building" with the rise of secularism. Islam does not consider state affairs to be a distraction from spirituality, "but is the stuff of religion itself" (Armstrong 2002:xi). In modern day America, we have witnessed the attempt by certain Christian groups to win back the government, and hence society, as just such a modern manifestation of what we are talking about (Castells 2004:29).

Here, the danger lies in the two extremes. On the one hand, swallowing up the kingdom into the church and, on the other hand, swallowing up the church into the kingdom. The swallowing up of the church into the kingdom poses huge problems. Bosch (1991:382) notes that in the 1960s, with Hoekendijk and others at the Strasbourg Conference, "the idea of the world providing the agenda for the church and the church having to identify completely with this agenda first surfaced clearly." In this scenario, the church became overtaxed, and any distinction between world and church disappeared completely (1991:383-384).

The question then becomes: In what manner will the church relate to the world, and how should the kingdom and the church be seen? A fuller discussion of this will take place with regard to the church's role, when we explore the missional nature of the church. At this point, the researcher merely wishes to point out that the church is

simply not the kingdom. The kingdom is broader than the church and includes all of life. God's kingdom is manifested in the smallest atoms and particles here on earth to the furthest cosmic realities with its planets and galaxies. It involves the most destitute dimensions of human life and our highest achievements and goals. It is an all-of-life reality. If the church were to cease to exist, God would still be manifest in his world. It is obvious that the argument here is for a balance between transcendence and immanence. In saying this, the argument would also be that the church is one of God's primary vehicles to testify to the arrival of his kingdom , in the now, but also in the not yet. The not-yet dimension helps one to guard against the excessive optimism of the Enlightenment paradigm in missions, as well as to guard against the Utopian idea of a Christian society or kingdom. Therefore, the church is a body of people who are dedicated to God's dream for the world (his kingdom) and seek to embody it in their relations, not only with themselves but with the whole of his kingdom. It encourages its members to participate in this dream. But, at the same time, it makes common cause and calls others, who are not its members, to participate in God's kingdom project. It believes, like Cornelius in the Book of Acts, that the prayers and good deeds, which arise from those who are not Christians, are a sweet smelling incense to God. It affirms that, often, those outside the church are better at extending God's rule and reign on the earth than those inside the church. People can participate in the kingdom without knowing the King. The church then ought to call those participants into relationship with the One they are already serving. Sometimes, the church (not necessarily the church corporate, but the individual members) will be driven by the concerns of the world and yet, at other times, not. The tension between nature and grace, kingdom and church, immanence and transcendence, will often require a prophetic stance as one stands against some of the world's programmes. This discernment is no easy task. As will be mentioned later, Practical Theology is therefore obliged to see the whole of the earth as a concern and locus for reflection and action, not just the components of church life. It also must acknowledge that the starting point can be in the very real daily concerns of humankind, as they have within them elements of God's revelation and concern. A Practical Theology that holds the church and kingdom in creative tension must answer the question as to the nature of salvation.

Personal salvation and cosmic redemption

In what follows, it will be argued that salvation is not simply restricted to the personal domain of our lives. Bosch (1991:397) calls such a position - that locates salvation in the individual - as untenable and a manifestation of the Enlightenment paradigm. God seeks to bring cosmic salvation and redemption to our world, not just to individuals. McLaren (2006:4) asks the question: What would it be like if Jesus' message was not just about personal salvation, but had

> practical implications for such issues as how you lived your daily life, how you earn and spend money, how you treat people of other races and religions, and how the nations of the world conduct their foreign policy? What if his message directly or indirectly addressed issues like, advertising, environmentalism, terrorism, economics, sexuality, marriage, parenting, the quest for happiness and peace, and racial reconciliation?

Although McLaren captures something of what a move beyond a personal salvation paradigm should look like, it is Newbigin's (1995:66) words that we believe best illustrates this. He states that the Gospel is "good news about God's universal reign. It is directed to the whole of human and cosmic reality," and believes that the perspective of the Bible indicates just such a universalistic overtone, bringing all of history and the cosmos under God's redemptive purposes (1995:78).

The focus on the personal dimension of salvation often takes on quite a specific bent with regard to the need for a personal and individual conversion. It is argued that, one day, God will destroy the earth and create a new heaven and a new earth. Therefore, the need to participate in making this world a better place is seen as counter productive. This form of understanding the world is often linked to forms of evangelicalism that adhere to a pre-millenialist view with regard to eschatology (Grenz 1992:146-147). Bosch (1991:510) argues that our eschatology under the emerging missionary paradigm must allow for a tension between our participation and God's final consummation of the world. Within American evangelical circles, Ladd (1974:210) was someone who was instrumental in bringing a balance between pre- and post-millennial camps. He argues that biblical eschatology, and the tension that Bosch describes, is that of a now-not yet reality. A post-foundational missional Practical Theology would be one that is tentative and perhaps is best represented by the pastoral cycle which will be discussed later.

The focus on the personal dimension of salvation, at the expense of engaging salvation in a broader sense, has its roots in the notion that humans are destined for an eternity in hell. Perhaps, the leading evangelical conservative today explains his view of salvation:

> When Adam and Eve sinned, they became worthy of eternal punishment and separation from God (Gen 2:17). In the same way, when human beings sin today they become liable to the wrath of God and to eternal punishment: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). This means that once people sin, God's justice could require only one thing – that they be eternally separated from God, cut off from experiencing any good from him, and that they live forever in hell, receiving only wrath eternally (Grudem 1994:657).

This view is seen as central in mission. Conservative commentators have argued that the attack on the doctrine of hell is one of the greatest threats today from mission. They argue that it makes mission impotent and unwarranted. The researcher finds it quite ironic that many who see the rejection of eternal damnation as a rejection of mission, also hold to a strict predestination that should lead to the same rejection of mission, if they are consistent (Walls & Dongell 2004:196-197). Despite the fact that this view can paralyze mission, as Walls and Dongell note, it often has the reverse effect, whereby those who believe they are elected feel that they cannot remain inactive and therefore have to participate in mission (Bosch 1991:258). It is also the case with those who believe that the end of the world is near are driven to great sacrifice to save as many people as possible.

However, when one moves beyond a narrow view of salvation, to a broader and more cosmic view, your picture of God and that of the world around you changes. De Gruchy (2006:155-156) believes judgement to be an important concept, but demonstrates the crassness of the doctrine of hell and its absurdity:

> To believe that God has devised and maintained a prison torture chamber infinite in extent and reminiscent of the worst concentration camp for those who step out of line demeans God and destroys the integrity of the gospel. Can the God revealed in Jesus Christ, and those who have spent their lives trying to "save the lost", be "eternally blest" while those they failed to convert are being tormented eternally in hell? The idea is bizarre. It is even more theologically obscene to think that a believing Christian who is the commandant of a concentration camp will go to heaven, and those Jews, gypsies and homosexuals whom he incarcerated and killed will end up in Hell. Is Ghandi, a Hindu, to be excluded, and a member of the Klu Klux Klan who, in the name of a "white Christ," bombed a black church, killing children, to be welcomed by St. Peter with open arms?

More moderate evangelicals caution us against this received doctrine of hell and note that the end time is one of surprises (Grenz 2000:286), and that we should not speculate on who is in or who is out. On the other hand, it probably is important to note that Jesus' comments around hell are more about the judgement in this present world against a rebellious Israel, rather than an other-worldly reality.

It might seem strange to enter into a discussion of hell in a paper on Practical Theology! However, it is our contention that the doctrine is so pervasive in Christian circles that it is woven into the very fabric of the non-reflective theology of many and their "theory laden practice" (Browning 1991:47). Its deep roots continue to push Christians to other-worldly concerns at the expense of engaging in a broader programme of salvation. It provides a warped and one-sided view of mission. A missional Practical Theology will need to address this doctrine of hell, and communicate a reworked critical understanding of it, which can be available to the masses. The work of Brian McLaren (2005) is just one such attempt to do so. His book, *The last word and the word after that,* is a popular attempt at this. McLaren (2004:247) believes that Jesus threatened people with inclusion, not exclusion. Of course, in certain Christian sectors, McLaren's view has not been received well at all (Carson 2005:168-169). The recent firestorm over Rob Bell's (2011) book, *Love wins,* has shown how sensitive a topic this is.

So, what do we speak of when we think of a broad view of salvation? Brian McLaren refers to it as "God's dream for the world." Marcus Borg (1997:132) refers to it differently as the "dream of God." For the researcher, it is a thought that has taken root and captures the cosmic nature of redemption - the sense that all of life is charged with God's presence and, in fact, is a sacrament. It is a place where God's presence can be encountered and embraced. One's work and play are encounters with the most high God. This is despite the fact that the world remains deeply scarred. The person who enjoyed the sunset at the ocean the night before the tsunami struck in South-East Asia would have marvelled at the beauty of our world. The same person would have come face to face with the deep contradiction that is our world's burden when, the next day, a giant wave rose up to wreak havoc and death. More examples can be given, not only from nature, but from one's own personal and existential struggles. Paul Tillich notes that, at our very core, we are anxious beings. We are anxious

because of the awareness that death awaits all of us. It requires great courage, the courage to be, in the face of this threat of non-being.

> It is not the realization of universal transitoriness, not even the experience of the death of others, but the impression of these events on the always latent awareness of our own having to die, that produces anxiety. Anxiety is finitude, experienced as one's own finitude. This is the natural anxiety of man as man, and in some way of all living beings. It is the anxiety of non-being, the awareness of one's finitude as finitude (Tillich 1952:44).

What we, as Christians, admit is both the beauty and ugliness that characterize both the bacteria (pro-biotics) that heals us, as well as the virus that kills us. We realize both the reality of Tutu's work for peace and, in contra-distinction, Hitler's work for destruction. We are aware of the sunsets and the tsunamis. However, we affirm that this does not remain God's dream for the world, and that we have been promised a picture of hope that gives us the courage to be. Therefore, we believe that God will intervene in the future and partner with humanity in the creation of God's good world. In the light of this, the good we do and contribute towards in this world, carries on into the next, and indeed we are rewarded for our good works.

What does this broad view of salvation mean for Practical Theology? It means that a cure for HIV/AIDS is a direct concern for Practical Theology, as well as the care and provision for its victims. Any future settlement on Mars, and how it is conducted, would be a concern for Practical Theology, as much as the worship of a small church in the Karoo. The current virtues and vices of globalization are the domain of Practical Theology, as well as the concerns of biology and ethics. All these areas are charged with God's presence, and He is there. In the daily experiences of humanity, the flow of the Spirit can be detected and tentatively uncovered. God has a dream (Borg 1997:133). With deep humility and weakness, as with the cross, we seek to embrace God's dream, and the whole broad salvation he brings to the world in light of his resurrection. Practical Theology is a Practical Theology of hope. It believes the best about our world and sees its entirety as the locus of its focus. What can this hope look like? This section concludes with the words of Moltmann (1967:33) who attempts to paint its contours:

> Hence all its knowledge will be an anticipatory, fragmentary knowledge forming a prelude to the promised future, and as such is committed to hope. Hence also vice versa the hope which arises from faith in God's promise will become the ferment in our thinking, its mainspring, the

source of its restlessness and torment. The hope that it is continually led on further by the promise of God reveals all thinking in history to be eschatologically orientated and eschatologically stamped as provisional. If hope draws faith into the realm of thought and life, then it can no longer consider itself to be an eschatological hope as distinct from the minor hopes that are directed towards attainable goals and visible changes in human life, neither can it as a result disassociate itself from such hopes by relegating them to a different sphere while considering its own future to be supra-wordly and purely spiritual in character. The Christian hope is directed towards a *novum ultimum*, towards a new creation of all things by the God of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

5.1.3 Trinitarian mission and Practical Theology

If the modern missionary pattern is broader than a personal salvation, and mission involves the creative tension between the church and the kingdom, so it ought to be with Practical Theology, which is missional in its commitment to all of life. All dimensions of our lives, therefore, fall under the orbit of its reflection and study. Practical Theology is missional in the sense that it is a witness to, and a commitment to, God's dream for the world (Borg 1997:133). In this dream, it must participate through reflection and practice in a holistic and broad manner. But why be missional in the first place? Why concern oneself at all with questions around God's kingdom and cosmic plan? The answer to these questions is that, at the very centre of our faith, in the very being and heart of God, is the desire for mission. The Triune God is in the business of putting the world right. We are on a mission, because God is on a mission.

Before exploring the Triune God as missional, two criticisms must be addressed. The first is the criticism as to why traditional doctrinal formulations should form any part of Practical Theology. The second, being linked to the first, is the question as to how we can know anything about God at all. The second criticism is perhaps easier to address than the first. No attempt will be made to give a thorough response to either, but, rather, why both are regarded as important will be highlighted.

The Trinity in Practical Theology?

A missional Practical Theology embraces the reality and usefulness of a Trinitarian formula, as it is one of the central aspects of our faith. The Trinity is a belief that is accepted by all forms of Christianity across the great traditions – Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, Reformed, Pentecostal and Charismatic. The 20th century has

witnessed a bourgeoning interest in the doctrine of the Trinity, as Stanley Grenz's (2004) book, *Rediscovering the triune God,* demonstrates. In this regard, he notes:

> Far from being a secret, the doctrine of the Trinity has become one of the most widely acknowledged Christian teachings, exploring the triunity of God has developed into one of the most popular theological pursuits, and Trinitarian theology has emerged as one of the most widely touted theological labels, encompassing the efforts of thinkers representing nearly every ecclesiological tradition and theological persuasion (2004:1).

Alongside this widespread agreement about the importance of the Trinity, is the acknowledgment that Practical Theology is theological, after all. Part of what this means is that it takes the Bible and Christian tradition seriously. It believes that, although God reveals himself in various ways in experience, culture and reason, He has revealed himself in the events recorded in the Bible and throughout Christian history (despite its flaws and human frailty).

Therefore, from a theological and a Christian point of view, questions around the Trinity and God's nature can provide a useful perspective in understanding mission. Koopman (2010:123-124) has argued for the importance of the Trinity for forms of public theology strongly, noting that:

> This triune work establishes, confirms and actualises the dignity and worth of all humans and of the rest of creation. God's love for the world, which comes to expression in the magnalia Dei, does have meaning, significance, and implications for all dimensions and terrains of life, from the most private, personal, and intimate to the most public, open, social, and cosmic. At its heart, therefore, Christian theology is public theology. It reflects on the love of the God who is at work in all spheres of life. Moreover, the caring, liberating and renewing work of the triune God does have dignifying implications for the whole of creation, for all of reality. It may be helpful to identify three basic questions

These considerations, of course, might lead naturally to the rebuttal that this Theology is from above and given to abstract theory and philosophical speculation. The counter to this assertion is that all experience and culture, in fact, are theory laden from the start. In avoiding this danger, it is also important that we allow for our view of the Trinity to be open to critical reflection and re-appraisal from culture and experience. Of course, some might feel that this opens us up to the charge of relativity.

The practical consequences of a correct understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity can be amply demonstrated in the current "war" in Evangelical circles regarding the

role of women in the home and in ministry. A hierarchical view of the Trinity results in Bruce Ware (2002:92) (president of the Evangelical Theological Society in America) noting that the female actually participates in the image of God through reliance upon the male, "particularly manifest in the home and community of faith." On the other hand, an egalitarian perspective on the Trinity leads to a more open view with regard to women, as Kevin Giles (2005:352) notes when he comments:

> The doctrine of the Trinity categorically and unambiguously rejects the eternal subordination of the Son and the Spirit in being and work, it does not and cannot be used to support the subordination of women to men, nor to demonstrate that personal equality can be reconciled with permanent subordination.

Therefore, in light of the fact of the doctrine of the Trinity's centrality as part of faith and scholarship, it is incumbent upon Practical Theology to attend to it. However, it must not get locked up in an overtly doctrinal perspective, but allow for revision and correction.

Knowledge of God's being?

The question regarding the nature of the Trinity leads to the addressing of the second concern that one might have with regard to the importance of Trinitarian thought for Practical Theology. This is the question of how we can know anything about God at all.

The researcher believes that, in some senses, it is true that any ontological statement regarding the nature of God and the Trinity must come in the wrapping of anthropological language. We must also acknowledge that we can only know things about God in the events in which He has chosen to reveal himself along with our error-ridden attempts to record and reflect upon these events. In this sense, our understanding of the Trinity, imparted to us through the Scriptures and tradition, arises out of our experience of God and our cultural tools used to express that experience. This is demonstrated in the very terminology of the Father and Son with its patriarchal overtones, as well as the Greek philosophical concepts which the early councils chose to understand about the relationships within the Godhead. We have to acknowledge that our statements about God's nature and reality are second-order theological statements that we affirm by faith, with the aid of reason. How faithful our reasoning is, however,

is open to debate and critique. In his book on Pannenberg, entitled *Reason for hope,* Stanly Grenz believes Pannenberg's understanding of the Trinity and God arises out of God's activity in history (Grenz 2005:70). However, even Pannenberg (1972:25) would argue that, where one's traditional understanding of God cannot absorb changed experiences taking place in the world, it "must make room for a new experience of God more capable of fulfilling this task. Pannenberg believes that, if we can know anything of the Trinity and God in the Bible revealed in historical events, it has to be an indirect revelation (Dulles 1988:171). Louw (1998:82) is one who rejects any form of ontological speculation that arises out of an analysis of our cultural and social existence. We are aware of the strength of this position and therefore admit to the metaphorical and symbolic nature of our pronouncements, which remain an "attempt" to get to grips with the God-human encounter in history (Louw 1998:83).

Despite these difficulties and taking these considerations into account, a venture will be proposed that the God revealed in history has revealed himself as a Trinity. This cannot be proven conclusively, and must be open to revision and further revelation. This further revelation lies at the consummation of history as presently lived.

Taking these presuppositions into account, it will now be argued that God is missional in his Triune nature. The researcher also believes that this God is still presently "in mission" outside of our participation, alongside our participation, and with our participation. A missional Practical Theology acknowledges the Triune God's presence in culture and experience, in the "stuff" of our world. A post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology, which takes seriously the local and contextual aspects, finds itself at the coalface of the Triune God's very mission on this earth. And, because this mission is broad, a post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology that is local and contextual, will unearth God's very activity and interest in all dimensions of life. We further participate in this mission because God is missional by nature and is presently in mission ahead of us. Affirming this, we must now ask ourselves: What is this mission of God, or, what has come to be known as the *missio Dei*?

The missio Dei

In our historical sketch, we noted Bosch's comment that mission has often been seen through the lens of personal salvation, church expansion or, alternatively, understood in cultural terms. All these aspects tend to place our efforts at the centre. However, in recent times, there has been a decisive shift toward understanding mission as God's mission (Bosch 1991:389). Bosch (1991:390) comments that, in fact, it was Barth who first gave impetus to the idea that mission was to be derived from God's nature. Today, it is important that we now see mission as an extension of God's very being (Hendriks 2004:25). Mission is firstly God's mission and is broad in scope.

> Since God's concern is for the entire world, this should also be the scope of the *missio Dei*. It affects all people in all aspects of their existence. Mission is God's turning to the world in respect of creation, care, redemption and consummation .… The *missio Dei* is God's activity which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate (Bosch 1991:391).

Missionary activity, therefore, encounters a God who has secretly been at work (Bosch 1991:391). We noted earlier with Hoekendijk how often the expanding of the term "mission" led almost to an exclusion of the church, and the swallowing up of the church in the world. Despite these over-corrections, mission ought still to be seen in the width with which Bosch has described it. Its source though remains God's being and heart (1991:392): "Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people."

Graham *et al.* (2005:132) note with interest how the Trinity influences those within the emergent church, and others in their corporate theological reflection with regard to mission. Root (2006:54) has argued of the importance of a Trinitarian understanding for Practical Theology and highlights the incarnation as central for leading us deep into the human situation (:63). In light of this renewed emphasis of a missional Triune God, we need to ask how we can understand this Trinitarian mission. In what way do the Father, Son and Spirit participate in, and embody, the mission of God? One of the ways people have chosen to understand the Triune God as missional is by seeing the three persons of the Trinity in terms of certain roles - Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. We shall be using Lesslie Newbigin's Trinitarian missiology to help us with this, but must first make a few comments regarding the gender of the Trinity. In

today's world, we cannot simply speak of Father and Son without some form of explanation. A quote by Hans Kung (1992:29) has been chosen to illustrate the perspective to which we hold:

> … that God is not male, that God is neither masculine nor feminine, that God transcends masculinity and femininity, that all our terms for God, including the word "Father", are only analogies and metaphors, only symbols and ciphers, and that none "fixes" the symbol God, so that one might, say, obstruct women's liberation in society and the ordination of women in the church in the name of such a patriarchal God.

Louw (1998:82) shows the power of God-images in people's lives. He challenges us to uncover the patriarchal dimensions of our view of God. He also speaks of how the term "fatherhood" (or "motherhood" for that matter) could provoke negativity for many (1998:84-85). He proposes an understanding of God as soul friend (1998:85). Taking these considerations into account here, a choice will still be made to work with the terms "Father" and "Son," noting their metaphorical nature and how they have arisen out of a patriarchal context. Would a better term perhaps be the "parental nature of mission"?

Newbigin (1995:28) believes that our understanding of the Trinity arises from the axioms of our culture, from the authority of revelation, and can provide practical wisdom for life. It is worth mentioning that Newbigin's theology was not always Trinitarian, but in fact was quite Christocentric. However, as Newbigin's concern developed for reality outside of the church, there was a shift from a Christocentric approach to mission, to a Trinitarian understanding of mission (Goheen 2001:65). We will now examine how Newbigin understands the missional dimension of each person of the Trinity.

Proclaiming the kingdom of the Father

Newbigin (1995:30) places the proclamation of God's reign over the whole of the cosmic universe as the starting point for mission:

> God is the creator, and consummator of all that is. We are not talking about one sector of human affairs, one strand out of the whole fabric of world history; we are talking about the reign and sovereignty of God over all that is, and therefore we are talking about the origin, meaning, and the end of the universe. We are not dealing with the local and temporary disturbance in the current cosmic happenings, but with the source and goal of the cosmos.

The particularity of the election of Israel in the biblical story must be seen in the light of a blessing for the nations (Newbigin1995:32). This is not an other-worldly promise or a means of escape, it has to do with the here and now (Newbigin 1995:34). Newbigin has been criticized for making this the starting point for his reflection on the Father, instead of the creation (Goheen 2001:133).

The calling for God's dream to become manifest in the world is not a way of triumphal Utopia, through the conquering and captivity of the world, but the way of the cross, suffering, pain and humility (Newbigin 1995:35). In the same way that the benefits of election for Israel were not for themselves, neither is the benefit of the resurrection for those who receive it, but for others (1995:36). This story of God's reign and the Father's proclamation will not be a straightforward ride to victory, but one of "tribulation and faithful witness, of death and resurrection" (1995:38). The logical outworking for mission is what Newbigin (1995:39) states as faith in action where,

> It is the acting out by proclamation and by endurance, through all the events of history, of the faith that the kingdom of God has drawn near. It is the acting out of the central prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to use: "Father, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Sharing the life of the Son

In Jesus, the kingdom becomes present and manifest. The kingdom was not a distant hope, but now has a human face (Newbigin 1995:40). A shift from proclaiming the kingdom became, for those after Jesus, one of proclaiming Jesus who was the embodiment of the kingdom (1995:41). Of course, part of God's reign involves the forgiveness of sins and the reality of judgement (1995:42). The reality of the kingdom calls for decisive action now (1995:44). We ought also to embody the life of the kingdom in ourselves with the same commitment to action for God's kingdom. Newbigin (1995:50) further believes that, as Christians, we cannot lose the concept of God's wrath towards sin - correctly understood and appropriated.

Despite this, questions regarding the cross, the wrath of God, and the atonement, seem to find scant reference in Newbigin's works. Goheen (2001:152) notes that this might be due to his ecumenical tendencies that often led him "to frame controversial

theological issues in terms that would challenge familiar divergences between traditions."

For Newbigin (1995:52), it is important to realise that we cannot escape the fact that Jesus called to himself a community to be witness to the arrival of his reign – the church. As already seen, the researcher is wary to equate the kingdom with the church. Despite his hesitation, one must still attest to the reality that, in some way, the kingdom should be uniquely manifest in the church as it serves the world. Yet, this must always remain in tension with affirming that the kingdom is broader and, in some senses, exists without the church.

In speaking about the church's relationship to the kingdom, Newbigin (1995:54) notes:

> The church represents the presence of the reign of God in the life of the world, not in the triumphalist sense (as the successful cause) and not in the moralistic sense (as the righteous cause), but in the sense that it is the place where the mystery of the kingdom present in the dying and rising of Jesus is made present here and now so that all people, righteous and unrighteous, are enabled to taste and share the love of God before whom all are unrighteous and all are accepted as righteous.

Bearing the witness of the Spirit

Newbigin (1995:56) speaks of the Father as the proclamation of the kingdom, and the Son as the presence of the kingdom. He now refers to the Spirit as the prevenience of the kingdom. For Newbigin (1995:56), the Spirit's role is prior to, and necessary for, the church's work: "Mission is not just something that the church does; it is something that is done by the Spirit, who is himself the witness, who changes both the world and the church, who always goes before the church in its missionary journey."

Newbigin (1995:58) calls it "the very life-giving presence of God himself." It is God's Spirit that launches the mission of the church at Pentecost and it still remains the Spirit's mission. It is the Spirit that shapes, changes, moulds and moves the nature and shape that mission takes (1995:58-59).

The church's witness is secondary to the witness of the Spirit, and to where the Spirit leads us (Newbigin 1995:61). The Spirit further brings a powerful witness to the

reality of God's reign in the world (1995:63). The future of God's great dream for the world is caught up in the clash between the Spirit's work in the past and the movement of the future into the present (1995:61):

> The Spirit brings the reality of the new world to come into the midst of the old world that is. It is the proof that we are heirs of the coming kingdom. And it is thus that the Spirit is witness – the recognizable presence of a future that has been promised but is not yet in sight. It is thus, also, that the Spirit is the source of hope – not just hope for ourselves, but hope for the completion of God's whole cosmic work.

Reflecting on a missional Triune God

After attempting to place the relevance of the Trinity for practical theological discourse, as well as briefly discussing the issue of the knowledge of God's being, we looked at the question of the *missio Dei* as understood by Newbigin. We noted the Father's proclaiming role, the Son's presence and the Spirit's prevenience.

The researcher believes that Practical Theology finds its basis and task in serving the Triune God's mission in the world. It indeed draws its theological reflection from God's activity in the world while, at the same time, is committed to participation in its ongoing missional activity. Practical Theology, due to the wideness of God's mission, regards all of life as within the bounds of theological reflection. Taking into account the reality of God's missional nature and its implications for Practical Theology, we shall now examine the concept of the church as missional.

5.1.4 The missional church and Practical Theology

If Practical Theology and theological reflection are committed to seeing God's reign reflected upon, and demonstrated in, the real world - the stuff of life - it must ask itself the missional question. Here, an attempt was made to show how the missional question should be framed and it attempted to place it in its historical context. It also attempted to show its roots in God's missional nature and activity. Practical Theology ought to be committed to missional reflection and activity, because the Triune God is committed to missional activity. As we shall see in the next section, Practical Theology must therefore return to the local. By doing this, it is consistent with a missional perspective while, at the same time, moving beyond foundationalism with

its emphasis on the contextual nature of knowledge. Theological reflection ought to emerge from within faith communities and those who are involved in the local, real situations of life. This is in contrast to academies and denominational structures that provide the communities' theological reflection, already packaged and ready for application – the applied theology of foundationalism. Yet, it is the researcher's conviction that faith communities, with an incorrect understanding of the all-encompassing nature of mission, remain at present largely handicapped in their ability to respond to the challenges at hand. Therefore, a broader focus on mission would enable Christians within faith communities to see all of life as ready for analysis and reflection. It is based on the belief that all of life is redeemable and within the orbit of Christ's Lordship, and is open to the reality of the Gospel's message and change. Simply stated, God is missional, therefore the church is missional. A quote from John Franke (2005:120) perhaps best illustrates this:

> The church is entrusted with the missional task of proclaiming and living out the gospel and its implications in the world. The nature of the church and its missional calling are tied up with the church's relationship with God and its role in the *missio Dei*. As suggested, God is social and missional in character, and these aspects of the divine nature have implications for the church and the task of theology.

If the church is missional, it therefore gives itself in mission – and this has implications for its theology, as Franke notes. This means that the shape and task of the church should be related to its unique missional calling. We do not ask what a church should look like, but rather: What is the mission for this specific church? Once the mission has been clarified, the "type," "model" or "structural questions" can be discussed. This would imply that our churches (and indeed theological reflection) would be vastly different according to the unique nature of the mission in which one is engaged (Frost & Hirsch 2003:30). The Gospel (the good news that Jesus is Lord of the whole world), as it breaks into each unique situation as a result of God's missional activity to which the church has responded, would lead to different expressions of church life: unique mission – unique location – unique church – unique theological reflection. Vincent Donovan (1978:81-82), who worked amongst the Masai, reminds us that, "While the general outline of the church is certainly present in Scripture, the specific details of the church, the response to the good news, will just as certainly have to be as free and diverse as all the separate cultures of the human race."

Not only is the church (and Practical Theology) missional by nature, but also finds itself in a unique missional environment. The close relationship that the church enjoyed with the state, and all its benefits, has collapsed. This Christendom model resulted in what Shenk (1995:35) describes as a "church without mission." Traditionally, Christian societies no longer view themselves as Christians. This reality has its roots in the Enlightenment, but has only really borne its fruit during the last century. Some have begun to speak about the desecularization of the West. But Ganzevoort (2008:119-120) has argued, that even though this might be the case, the Church still finds itself deinstitutionalized situation and on the fringes of society. The truth of the matter is that the Western World is now itself a mission field (Newbigin 1995:7). Christianity's precarious position within much of the world is further heightened by the huge shifts that have taken place in Epistemology, which we have noted. The rejection of the modern Enlightenment project has created a uniquely challenging missional reality for the church. Hiebert (1994:51) comments that, in a "postmodern world we need to re-examine our epistemological foundations to see how they affect our relationships to other people, cultures, theologies, and religions in a pluralistic world …. I am also convinced it is the approach we must take in a postcolonial era in missions."

This missional reality is one that Practical Theology will have to take into account. The specific consequences of this epistemological shift beyond foundationalism will be further fleshed out when we explore in what manner Practical Theology ought to approach its sources for theological reflection.

The missional church and Practical Theology?

James Fowler is perhaps best known for his work *Stages of Faith* (1981). It is however perhaps his chapter written in *Practical Theology* (1983) entitled *Practical Theology: the shaping of Christian lives* that has had a significant influence on the development of modern day Practical Theology. Fowler (1983:149) states that:

> Practical Theology is theological reflection and construction arising out of and giving guidance to a community of faith in the praxis of its mission. Practical Theology is critical and constructive reflection on the praxis of the Christian community's life and work in its various dimensions

Therefore Practical Theology, and its reflection, does not take place in a vacuum. It arises out of, and gives guidance to, the community of faith and the individual Christians who comprise that community. If this community is stated to be missional by nature, derived from God's missional nature, its reflection should also be missional. Therefore, it discovers its mandate in the unique missional reality in which it finds itself. Practical Theology is at the service of God's mission and his mission is local, therefore, compatible with an approach to Practical Theology that is post foundationalist. In the next section, we shall begin to examine what this local aspect of Practical Theology should look like, as we take the important issues of context and the local and combine them with global realities, and discuss the glocal nature of Practical Theology.

5.2 A GLOCAL PRAXIS-BASED PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

We have been discussing the missional nature of Practical Theology and have come to several conclusions that need to be restated. Firstly, mission by nature is holistic. It involves all the dimensions of life – individual, corporate and cosmic. All of life is subject to God's missional activity. God's kingdom represents an understanding of mission that broadens "salvation" to include activity outside of the church, yet also near to it. The kingdom and church are held in creative tension. Practical Theology, in service of God's mission, must take into account the individual, the corporate and the cosmic. All of life is subject to theological reflection and action.

Secondly, God is missional by nature. He is on a mission and is the author and sustainer of mission. Therefore, Practical Theology is also, by nature, missional as it places itself in service of God's mission and dream for the earth. Practical Theology is not the author and sustainer of mission, but rather a reflection upon, and an acting-with, God's mission.

Thirdly, God is missional, therefore the church is missional. The church responds to God's mission, and is sustained by him in mission. Because God is on a mission, the church is on a mission. The fact that the church is local implies that God's mission is unique according to each location, which then has implications for the shape and nature of the church. Practical Theology, in the service of God and the church,

therefore aids the church in its reflection and participation in God's mission. As the church's mission is local and particular, so Practical Theology is local and particular. Therefore, Practical Theology must begin its reflection with local realities and seek to ensure that its theoretical proposals have practical ramifications and outlets into these local realities. This is a missional Practical Theology that has indeed moved beyond foundationalism, which affirms the contextual nature of knowledge.

The question must now be asked as to how one does this reflection. How do we reflect missionally and in a way that is consistent with a post-foundationalist approach? We reflect missionally by taking context into account. The local realities and stuff of life in which people are involved become the locus of God's mission. If God's mission is local, then theological reflection must begin with a pastoral concern (de Kock 2011:8). Cronshaw (2011:6) explains De Kock's focus on the pastoral concern as follows:

> De Kock's method in vocational learning is to start with the students' questions that emerge from contemporary life and ministry practice rather than traditional answers and biblical sources. He is committed to sourcing appropriate theological responses from Scripture and Tradition, but wants to train students to start with the emerging questions of our time.

If God's mission is local, and Practical Theology starts with a pastoral concern, then people's experience becomes a source for Theology. The applied Theology of foundationalism, whether based on an inerrant Bible or religious experience, will not work. Knowledge is contextual and emerges within a given reality. It is one of many factors that is brought into the theological conversation and is, in itself, the starting point.

If God's mission is local, and Practical Theology begins with a pastoral concern, then it requires an empirical analysis that is glocal (taking local and global factors into account). This missional activity of God in the local pastoral concern, taking people's experience into account, analysed glocally and empirically, gives rise to pastoral reflection at a theoretical level, at which God's missional activity, or potential missional activity, is reflected upon where certain sources come into play. A correlational hermeneutic, whose epistemology is non-foundationalist, now takes both the Christian classics (biblical and historical) and the human and social sciences as sources for reflection. These sources are brought to bear on the experience of

individuals, communities and the environment, which has arisen through glocal analysis. A theoretical proposal for a non-foundationalist glocal missional activity is now followed through with a proposal for, and indeed participation in, pastoral action. This participation in missional action has glocal implications. This process of pastoral concern, pastoral reflection, and pastoral action is then repeated as action gives rise to new experiences, upon which reflection is needed. This is consistent with the local contextual nature of knowledge for which a post-foundationalist approach calls. What has been described is known as the "pastoral cycle." In the researcher's analysis of the last three decades of Practical Theology and its methods, he stated that the pastoral cycle could best represent a move beyond foundationalism. This will now be explored in more detail.

5.2.1 The pastoral cycle

There are various ways of framing what is meant by "the pastoral cycle." In the short introduction to this section, the researcher has already hinted at how he understands it. When we examined the various methodological proposals earlier, one of the handbooks we studied was that of Ballard and Pritchard, called *Practical Theology in action.* They divided Practical Theology into four models with various sub-divisions. To refresh our memory, the broad categories were: applied theology, correlational hermeneutics, praxis and *habitus*. The pastoral cycle was regarded as being central to the praxis model, yet having equal importance within the correlational model (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:71). In terms of some form of methodological consensus, they regarded the pastoral cycle as a unifying factor. Ballard and Pritchard (2006:82-83) comment as follows: "The pastoral cycle has become widely used in Practical Theology, and there are a number of variations on the theme …. Such widespread acceptance clearly suggests that the pastoral cycle should be at the heart of any contemporary perspective on Practical Theology."

The pastoral cycle has many roots but, in contemporary Practical Theology, it certainly has found its impetus from the influence of Liberation Theology (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:82). Throughout the discussion on praxis that follows, one will notice a return again and again to the work of the liberation theologian, Clodovis Boff (1987)

and his work, *Theology and praxis*. Although torturous at times, and certainly not easy reading, he attempts to look intensively at the complex relationship between theory and praxis and, in many ways, demonstrates the use of this pastoral cycle.

Graham *et al.* (2005) place the pastoral cycle's roots, developed by Liberation Theology, in the Young Christian Workers' "see-judge-act" method. It was also in the work of Juan-Luis Segundo's *The liberation of theology,* informed by Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, that the pastoral cycle was popularized (2005:188). It is no coincidence that, like Ballard and Pritchard, Graham *et al.* have placed the pastoral cycle under the praxis model, or what they call "theology in action."

We noted that Ballard and Pritchard feel that the pastoral cycle has a unifying dimension for various practical theological models - especially the correlational and the praxis models. It is no wonder then that Don Browning (1991:7), who developed a critical correlational model, in fact adheres in many ways to this pastoral cycle. A quote from him perhaps best affords us a definition of what we mean by the pastoral cycle: "The view I propose goes from practice to theory and back to practice. Or more accurately, it goes from present theory-laden practice to a retrieval of normative theory-laden practice to the creation of more critically held theory-laden practices."

This pastoral cycle is not dissimilar to the theological reflection that James and Evelyn Whitehead propose in their book, *Method in ministry: Theological reflection and Christian ministry,* published in 1995. They propose a three-step process similar to the see-judge-act, or the practice-theory-action process for which the pastoral cycle argues. The process that they propose is one of attending, asserting, and then pastoral response (Whitehead & Whitehead 1995:13). One attends to a specific experience or practice that is then brought into dialogue with the Christian tradition and culture where an assertion is made, which in turn leads to a pastoral response. Here, the term "pastoral concern," taken from the Whiteheads, has been used when discussing the first part of the pastoral cycle. The term "pastoral action," similar to the Whitehead's term "pastoral response," but borrowed from De Kock, has also been used. De Kock has developed a form of theological reflection in what is known as "open seminary." Here, he essentially works with, adapts, and actually fleshes out, the Whiteheads' methodology. He chooses to call the term "pastoral response" "pastoral action." This

is done intentionally to show that the pastoral cycle must not end in a theoretical proposal for action, but must go beyond that and move to an intervention, or action (de Kock 2011:9). Poling's (2009:199) description of Practical Theology demonstrates this pastoral cycle whereby he advocates a "rhythm between practice-based reflection and systematic theological reflection. Practices stimulate theological reflection, and theological reflection shapes the development of practices".

So, what does it mean to begin one's theological reflection with a pastoral concern? It means that certain local and global factors ought to be taken into account. It also affirms the importance of experience as a source for theological reflection, as well as the value of social analysis or research. These will all now be discussed separately.

5.2.2   The local dimension of Practical Theology

Essential to understanding the local nature of theology is to admit from the outset that an applied Practical Theology, a Theology from above that is trans-historical and simply downloaded onto a local situation, is indeed a thing of the past. For, as Hendriks (2004:27) notes, "If Christianity really wants to engage the hearts and minds of believers, it must seriously regard the context that shapes their lives and in which their communities are rooted." By arguing for the starting point of Theology in the local, we reject "theological debate which proceeds as if abstracted from the total situation in which reflection takes place" (Bonino 1975:86). By arguing for the local nature of Theology, we agree with Segundo (1976:13) that there is no "autonomous, impartial, academic theology floating free above the realm of human options and biases." Theology does not begin in the academy, but in reality, – in the experiences of "individuals and communities" (Cochrane, de Gruchy & Peterson (1991:17). It resists a form of abstract theology (Kretzschmar 1994:4)

This means that theological reflection must begin with the "stuff" of people's lives. The word "praxis" is controversial. Bevans (2002:72) sees praxis as "action in reflection" and defines it in the following manner:

> It is reflected-upon action and acted-upon reflection – both rolled into one. Practitioners of the praxis model believe that in this concept of praxis they have found a new and profound way

that, more than all others, is able to deal adequately with the experience of the past (Scripture and tradition) and the experience of the present (human experience, culture, social location, and social change).

Bevans (2002:71) rejects an understanding of praxis that equates it simply with practice. He notes its roots in Marxism, the Frankfurt school and Paulo Freire. For Bevans, it is rather a method and model of thinking. It seems that others would agree (Hendriks 2004:22; W. de Kock 2011:9). De Kock views praxis as the interaction and tension between theory and practice where true knowledge lies. Kim (2007:421) has noted the roots of praxis in Aristotle's thinking, where theory and practice are intertwined, and where *praxis* referred to a purposeful and reflective action initiated through engagement in social situations." Clodovis Boff (1987:213) also argues for a tension between theory and practice. In fact, he argues that even though they are to be differentiated, it is artificial when one tries to separate the two. Yet, it seems that despite Boff (1987:210) speaking of praxis as "human activity to transform the world" (which includes a theoretical dimension), he still uses praxis in a "practical sense" as the starting point for theological reflection. In the following quote, Boff (1987:215) argues for praxis as holding primacy as a starting point for Theology:

> It must first of all be acknowledged that praxis holds the primacy over theory. This primacy is of an analytical, not an ethical, character. It is not to be understood as one of mechanical causality, but precisely of dialectical causality. It defines how the one factor is the prime, material condition for the existence of the other. Praxis is *de facto* the comprehensive element of theory; as such it constitutes the space where theory is localized and defined, the space where it arises, develops, and comes to completion.

Although affirming the importance of the local for theological reflection, Boff cautions against equating the local situation as truth. Practical effectiveness, or a pragmatism that rejects theoretical reflection, is rejected. For Boff (1987:202), the local practice of something does not assign a "moral qualification" to it. He argues that taking local practice into account at the expense of theory is to the detriment of praxis itself (1987:198).

Here, we are perhaps getting ahead of ourselves. The point that is attempted is that the starting point of the pastoral cycle must begin with the practice of real life. It cannot start by taking abstract ideas and seek to work them out in local realities. As noted repeatedly throughout this work, a post-foundationalist approach to Practical

Theology must emphasize these local realities, as knowledge is contextual and fluid. Muller (2009:5) describes it thus:

> The postfoundationalist approach forces us to firstly listen to the stories of people in real life situations. It hasn't got the aim of merely describing a general context, but of confronting us with a specific and concrete situation. This approach, although also hermeneutical in nature, moves beyond mere hermeneutics. It is more reflexive and situationally embedded in epistemology and methodology.

Practical Theology must begin its dialectical process by listening to the "emerging questions" (de Kock 2011:8; Cronshaw 2011:6) that arise out of the daily cultural realities of human beings and the church. It takes seriously the current issues of the day (Chopp 1995:115). Praxis "prepares the agenda, the repertory of questions, that theology is to address" (Boff 1987:200).

We have realised that by arguing for the local nature of theology, we argue for a contextual theology. Bevans (1992:9) points out the importance of contextual Theology today. He notes the dissatisfaction and suspicion of the Third World toward First World Theology, which has overpowered them and forced them to deal with realities irrelevant to their daily lives. Along with the growing identity of local churches, the oppressive nature of the older approaches that neglected and, in fact, attacked legitimate cultural expressions, has also been rejected (1992:10).

Bevans (1992:12) also reminds us of the theological underpinnings of a local Theology in the idea of the incarnation, as well as the affirmation of the sacramental nature of Theology (where all of life is seen as a locus of God's presence and activity). The importance of the broad dimension of mission in Practical Theology, as mentioned already, has obvious parallels in discussing Theology's sacramental nature. The nature of divine revelation as present in believers' daily lives (1992:14), the catholicity of the church in championing the local, and the Triune God's active, present and dynamic role in day-to-day realities, are all affirmed as important (1992:15).

The importance of contextualisation for theology is worked out in the pastoral cycle. Segundo (1976:9) describes this as the hermeneutical circle that begins with experienced reality - a real context. When discussing contextualisation, Bosch

(1991:425) also refers to this dialectical relationship between theory and practice that has its roots in praxis, or experience.

However, Bosch (1991:427-428) cautions contextual theologians about viewing God as totally wrapped up in the historical process. Further dangers involve uncritical celebration of a variety of often exclusive Theologies, which can often lead to absolutism. When taking these concerns into account, one must not allow the contextual and local realties to determine the truth of Theology. What we are affirming here though, is that a Theology that is divorced from local realities remains irrelevant and subject to potential ideological captivity and foundationalist assumptions. To realise God's presence in history and to begin with local issues means that we can begin the process of dialogue from the correct starting point. However, for a theologian to be local, he or she must identify, participate and give voice to the experience of the local situation out of which his or her Theology arises.

5.2.3 Experience as source

Many are aware of John Wesley's quadrilateral, in which he posits four sources that need to be taken into account when conducting theological reflection. They are: experience, tradition, reason and Scripture. Grenz (1994:15) cautions against the use of experience as a source for Theology and sees it rather as the medium through which sources are received. However, he does argue that just because it is not normative for Theology, does not make it irrelevant (Grenz 1994:17). In his elevation of culture as a source of Theology, he might in fact be engaging with people's experience as a source, without knowing it. Again, we do not argue that one's experience is true, but again affirm that experience must be our starting point. James Cone (1986:23) is one who argues that black experience should be one's starting point when doing local and contextual Theology. Chung Hyun Kyung, who attempts to delineate what an Asian women's Theology should look like, elevates Asian women's experience as a starting point when beginning theological reflection. A quote from her best illustrates what we mean by experience as the starting point for theological reflection (Hyun 1990:22):

> Asian women's theology was born out of Asian women's tears and sighs and from their burning desire for liberation and wholeness. It is neither the logical consequence of academic debate of the university nor the pastoral conclusion of the institutional church. Asian women's theology has emerged from Asian women's cries and screams, from the extreme suffering of their everyday lives. They have shouted from pain when their own and their children's bodies collapsed from starvation, rape, and battering. Theological reflection has emerged as a response to women's suffering.

Someone's experience, or one's own personal experience, gives birth to the pastoral concern that begins the pastoral cycle for Practical Theology. Of necessity, this raises the question as to the location of the theologian or "theological reflector." Can Practical Theology be done without some form of engagement by the one doing the theological reflecting? Clodovis Boff gives three ways in which a theologian can be engaged with the theological process. Before doing this, however, he makes some presuppositional comments around the idea of "engagement" that must be taken into account when discussing experience as a starting point for theological reflection.

The truth is that one need not begin theological reflection from experience or the local to be "engaged" (Boff 1987:160). Indeed, by nature, everyone is engaged to some extent and all theologians "do theology in and from some determinate social locus" (1987:159). An engaged theology can be "traditionalist" or "progressive" and its content is usually defined according to one's ideological position (1987:161). There are also important distinctions and overlaps between practical engagement and theoretical engagement (1987:168). The three types of engagement that Boff lists with regard to local and experiential realities are as follows.

The specific contribution model

Here, engagement is done at a theoretical level where intellectual positions are taken on behalf of a group or individual's local experience (Boff 1987:168). However, pure theory can only have practical implications through practical participation. By this, Boff (1987:169) means that one ought to have certain channels and opportunities to engage with the experience and local reality that one seeks to represent.

The alternating moments model

This might be seen as a sort of dualism - the theoretical and practical moments coincide. In one moment, the theologian is reflecting; yet, in the other moment, he is participating in the actual lived experience of a group of which the reflection forms

part (Boff 1987:170). It is not so much a dualism as it is, rather, a series of alternating movements of the one who is engaging (1987:170).

The incarnational model

Here, one does not so much identify with a specific group, and participate in that lived experience, as much as one actually is joined in the "general life condition and lot of the group in question" (Boff 1987:170). In certain circumstances, this sort of identification might make theological reflection difficult in terms of materials at one's disposal (1987:171).

These three models provide a picture of what sort of engagement is necessary for theological reflection that is local and takes into account experience as a starting point for Theology. It is important that we realise that Practical Theology does not take place in a vacuum, and is somehow privy to some sort of theological and experiential neutrality. In what has been discussed, it might appear that a position has been taken that states that, unless someone is part of, or sympathetic to, a specific local context and experiential dynamic, they cannot do good Theology. It might appear that, unless someone is bound within a specific pastoral concern, they are really unable to be truly concerned. Bevan (1992:21) says the following in this regard:

> A person can in several significant but limited ways contribute to the contextualisation of theology in a context that is not his or her own. But when a person does this, he or she must approach the host culture with both humility and honesty. He or she must have humility because he or she will always be on the margins of the society in which he or she has chosen to work.

What Bevan's says of cultures applies equally to any specific pastoral concern that Practical Theology uses as a starting point. For this reason, Hendriks (2004:26) places such emphasis on the fact that the laity and believers ought to be "producers of theology." For this reason, the best form of theological reflection on the church and her practical engagement flows from those who are actually engaged in that church, the contextual dynamics, and lived experience of that community.

Here, the argument has been for the local nature of Practical Theology as it best illustrates a post-foundationalist approach to theological reflection. It is a Practical Theology that places high value on experience as a starting point and source for

theological reflection. It is a Practical Theology that seeks to take the local seriously by identifying or participating with the lived experience of a particular group or individual. At this point, it would be unwise not to bring the global nature of Practical Theology into the discussions. The local situation with the lived experience of that local group has, at the same time, a global influence to it. A simple analysis and understanding of the local might provide a skewed picture of what is happening, and even the possibility to bring about change might be thwarted. Financial markets and policies on different continents can have a vast and long lasting impact on the local situation in which one finds oneself. Ideological currents and economic instability can radically alter one's lived experience. In taking into account the local nature of Theology, we must also take into account the global. This tension of analysis the researcher has chosen to call the "glocal" (local and global) nature of Practical Theology and theological reflection. With specific reference to Africa, Hendriks (2004:27) speaks of the global dimension of Practical Theology: "In doing theology in Africa, we must be realistic about our situation in Africa. Theology should study the global, social, economic, political megatrends and how they influence our continent. What are the national and local realities with which we should deal?"

The global nature of Practical Theology

We have been focusing on Practical Theology's local nature, as well as the importance of experience as a starting point for theological reflection. Any analysis of one's local situation and its contextual realities must take into account global dynamics that are brought to bear upon one's situation. Bonino (1975:5) shows how Latin America has been at the mercy of outside factors from the very beginning of colonial times. The lust for wealth and power in Spain saw the local people's culture destroyed and desecrated. Even later when independence was gained from Spain, the ruling classes connived with foreign banks, countries and institutions to bring about new levels of exploitation and an era of neo-colonialism (1975:16). Global factors, of which one has no control, affected people's local context and helped to define their experience and identity. Bonino (1975:31) shows how the capitalist form of production has had adverse effects on the dependent countries. Bonino was writing in the 1970s and could not have foreseen to what extent technology would add to the unfettered march of capitalism. This, certainly, is not an argument for any sort of

communism or socialism, but merely points out what sociologists, such as Manuel Castells, have been showing us.

Castells (2004:1) points out that the world, in which we live, has become globalised to the extent that our whole social landscape has changed. "Our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity. The information technology revolution, and the restructuring of capitalism, have induced a new form of society, the network society."

Individuals, groups and regions that do not service the goals of this network society are simply ignored or "switched off" (Castells 2004:3). The intense and changing global world in which we live has resulted in massive insecurity for many.

> In a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective and individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning … identity is becoming the main, and sometimes the only, source of meaning since in an historical period characterized by widespread destructuring of organisations, delegitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions (2004:3).

Globalisation is a fact. The reaction against globalisation, in the rise of national (not state) identities, is testament to this. Therefore, it is only logical that a Practical Theology that has experience as a starting point, and one seeking to be local, must at the same time give due attention to global factors. It must be a glocal Practical Theology. It must ask questions as to what economic, cultural, political and social realities in the rest of the world are impacting on one's local reality. Segundo says, this is part of the suspicion toward ideological superstructures arising out of one's experience that ought to be challenged. This could be worked out in a myriad of ways. The local clothing industry in the Cape could collapse due to the rising power of China. Inflation, with its impact on local households and their ability to feed themselves, has its roots in conflicts in the Middle East, monopolies and speculators.

Practical Theology certainly has seen a move to the local in the last quarter of the 20th century, as already discussed. However, this return to the local must take into account global factors that impinge on people's identities and experience, noting the

"increasingly interconnected character of all human, political, economic, and social life on earth" (Hendriks 2004:27).

But, how do we go about understanding this glocal context? How do we take into account experience as a starting point, while trying to get to grips with local and global factors that influence that experience? What is called for is some form of social analysis.

5.2.4 Social analysis

Don Browning's fundamental Practical Theology argues for four movements within Practical Theology. Here, the first movement concerns us which is, what he calls, "descriptive theology." Descriptive theology is linked directly to what has just been discussed regarding the glocal nature of Practical Theology with its starting point in experience. Browning (1991:47) describes it as follows:

> Its task is more important than its name. It is to describe the contemporary theory-laden practices that give rise to the practical questions that generate all theological reflection. To some extent, this first movement is horizon analysis; it attempts to analyse the horizon of cultural and religious meanings that surround our religious and secular practices.

This desire to begin with descriptive Theology, by necessity, implies the importance of social analysis. The human sciences are directly linked to descriptive Theology in their role of determining the concrete reality that will, at a later point, be brought into dialogue with the Christian sources (Browning 1991:92-93).

Gerben Heitink (1999:221) takes into account the anthropological shift in Theology, characterized by the empirical shift in Practical Theology since the 1960s (1999:220). We have demonstrated this shift and its importance for Practical Theology in the first part of this work. None would doubt that there has been this empirical shift in Practical Theology, but we do need some perspective on this issue which I think Heimbrock (2011:155) provides us with:

> the empirical interest within Theology it is neither an invention nor the sole property of Practical Theology. "Empirical Theology" as an explicit and programmatic formula has been labeled in the beginning of the 20th century, in remarkable theological efforts on

both sides of the Atlantic. And this happened long before Practical Theology got its present form.

Heitink (1999:221), like Browning, believes the empirical data, which the social sciences uncover, is of utmost importance for theological reflection. This leads him to "an empirically orientated Practical Theology, which opts for a point of departure in the actual experiences of people and the situation of church and society, and is characterized by a theorizing approach that attempts to do full justice to empirical data."

Clodovis Boff sets out to demonstrate the importance of social analysis and the role of the human sciences for theological reflection. Although his work focuses mainly on the role they offer with regard to political Theology, the insights are still of real use. Like those already mentioned, he affirms that a Theology orientated toward practice must take into account the sciences of the social. This becomes important in what Boff (1987:6) calls "a socio-analytic mediation." The importance of the use of the social sciences is not just to gain a correct understanding of a given situation, but to help Theology to avoid the abstract speculation that endangers real change. Boff (1987:7) puts it graphically in the following manner:

> The interfacing of theology with praxis through the medium of socio-analytic mediation has as its objective the safeguarding of theology from the empty "theorism" that, in certain circumstances, is a trait of academic cynicism that ignores the crying scandal of the starving and suffering multitudes of our world.

This must serve as a constant reminder that the use of the social sciences is not just for methodological integrity, but also has real people and their real situations as its focus. The social sciences, however, are not devoid of ideology with regard to both content and method. This will form an important part of our discussion later when the religious nature of the social sciences will be examined. At this point, we should note some of the obstacles that one encounters when discussing the importance of the social sciences. Boff mentions five, which we shall briefly discuss and acknowledge.

Empiricism

Here, the importance of social analysis is argued against on the basis that the issues are self-evident and the concerns are immediate. Lacking social analysis here can lead

to multiple misunderstandings as to what is actually taking place (Boff 1987:21). Natural scientific knowledge must form the basis of theological cognition. Those who claim that the facts are self-evident, and that no non-theological disciplines are therefore needed, might simply get caught up in "certain current, ideological images that common sense forms of facts" (1987:22).

Methodological purism

Here, socio-analytical mediation is excluded on the basis that theology has its own proper status and has no need of other disciplines (Boff 1987:24). This does not take into account that Theology, by its very nature, has arisen out of social reality and is socially mediated. Boff (1987:25) rejects this option and argues that Theology ought to assume that it takes the raw material of life into account and seeks to do so critically.

Theologism

In many ways, theologism is linked to methodological purism in the sense of claiming Theology's unique and independent status. Here, Theology believes it possesses within its storehouse, all the resources necessary to comment on any given situation – whether political or otherwise (Boff 1987:26). It has its roots in a view of the world that argues for the transcendent nature of truth and a deeply sceptical attitude to real life (1987:27). Boff argues against theologism believing that one must take into account the silent prerequisites that the social sciences afford us in understanding reality (1987:26).

Semantic mix

Here, the insights of the social sciences are not so much discarded as they are not integrated critically or properly (Boff 1987:28). On the one hand, the information is taken into the theological discourse without proper attention to its role. On the other hand, things that emerged from the analysis, which one cannot tolerate or accept, are replaced by more spiritual content. It seeks to collapse the tension into either corner instead of seeking to hold the insights of the social sciences in creative tension (1987:28).

Bilingualism

Bilingualism is related to that of semantic mix and it is quite difficult to distinguish between the two. Essentially, what happens here is that the social sciences and Theology interact on the same "field," yet speak two different "languages." What happens in this scenario is that one of the different languages will seek to overcome the other and force it aside (Boff 1987:29).

A way forward?

Boff (1987:30) believes that a healthy relationship and appropriation of the social sciences are possible despite these difficulties and objections. He believes that Theology ought to understand that its formal object must be distinguished by its material object. In other words, what emerges from the social sciences is not Theology in the proper sense of the word. He explains it in the following manner (1987:31):

> The sciences of the social furnish theology only with that upon which to ply its practice. Thus what for the sciences of the social is a product, finding, or construct, will be taken up in the theological field as raw material, as something to be (re)worked by procedures proper to theologizing, in such wise as to issue in a specifically theological product, and one so characterized.

The importance of the social sciences for Practical Theology cannot be disputed, despite the objections, which we have just examined with Boff's help. Of course, there are dangers inherent in the use of the social sciences. Boff himself has called for Theology as a theoretical discipline to be aware of, and shaped, according to its own grammar. The truth is that Practical Theology today has unanimously accepted the importance of the social sciences – and perhaps uncritically so. Yet, Browning argues that we might have done so uncritically without taking into account the ideological bent of the social sciences and, indeed, the researcher's situatedness. To this we now turn.

5.2.5 The religious dimension of the social sciences

The title of this short section could have been put under a different heading. It might have been called the "ideological" dimension of social sciences – for this could certainly be the case. However, the term that Don Browning (1991:89) uses in discussing the social sciences – that of its religious nature - was chosen to be used.

We have already affirmed the importance of the social sciences for Practical Theology, as well as certain obstacles in terms of how the relationship between theological reflection and the sciences can be related. Browning helps us to examine the hidden prejudices and ideological presuppositions that often lie hidden within the human sciences, which should urge caution on their unrestricted and uncritical appropriation. As already noted, Browning (1991:77) believes that theological reflection's first task is of a descriptive nature, which includes the use of Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Anthropology and a range of other disciplines.

Browning (1991:81) reminds us that the very research that takes place in an attempt to describe or understand what is happening is influenced by the historicity and ideological assumptions to which researchers are bound in their historical situatedness. Browning (1991:89) describes this situatedness in terms of its religious dimension. It is religious in the sense of having pre-understandings and prejudices that have an effective history:

> If the social and human sciences are rooted in a tradition, if that tradition inevitably influences their interpretive perspectives (their pre-understanding and prejudices), and if that tradition has religious dimensions, does it follow that the interpretive horizon of the social sciences is colored by the religio-cultural backgrounds of the researchers?

This religious and presuppostional awareness is something that was not addressed here, when emphasizing experience and the local as a starting point for theological reflection. For, as one begins one's research, certain decisions as to what experience and what local situation one will examine, is made at the expense of another local situation and experience. What pastoral concern does one concern oneself with? What does one remain unconcerned about? It would be foolish to think that one's ideological predispositions do not, in some way, govern one's choice. Segundo (1976:48) notes that this problem described here with regard to an individual

researcher is, in fact, a much larger problem within the discipline of Sociology itself, "Present-day sociology is retreating from the realms of human social life that are of increasing importance and simply refusing to deal with them. For our purposes here the important point is that they are the very realms which are most important …."

Browning (1991:91) believes that the best way to do this is to bring these religious assumptions and hidden implicit values into the light right at the beginning. If the investigator does not do so, it will influence what is seen and indeed how that is evaluated. Browning's (1991:92) caution in the use of the social sciences should, in no way, be seen as devaluing their use within the theological context, but rather arguing that, what is implicit in the human sciences, becomes explicit in theological reflection. In that way,

> … the human sciences can be used within descriptive theology and their explanatory interests employed to account for biological, psychological, and sociological factors that influence but do not determine human behaviour. Here they would function within an explicit theological context, not unlike how they function within their implicit religious contexts in the human sciences as such.

Taking into account Browning's cautions and Boff's obstacles to the use of the human sciences, we will now begin to look specifically at certain methodologies in terms of how we uncover the "raw material" for theological reflection.

5.2.6 Research methods

This is an entire field in, and of, itself. The researcher cannot hope to give a definitive, or indeed even an overview, of this deep and complex subject. In this section he hopes to relate the reality of a Post Foundationalist perspective and its implications for research methods. We have been discussing the importance of the local dimension of Practical Theology and how experience is a critical source and starting point for Practical Theology. If foundationalism was driven by a quest for certainty, and an applied theological approach, what does that mean for researching the concrete and local realities Post Foundationalism? The researcher believes that this has enormous implications for one's approach to Social science methodology. If Practical Theology is not an applied theology based on Foundationalism, but rather Post Foundationalist,

it simply has to engage with the Social Sciences in order to engage with specific local context to uncover and understand that is going in within that context. It is perhaps worth noting at this point Cameron et al's (2010:26) reflection that the Practical Theologian, having to be skilled as "practitioner, social scientist, theologian and cultural expert is in danger of becoming an impossible person!". However due to its focus on specific situations, Practical Theology simply has to get to grips with the social sciences and research methodology. Swinton and Mowat (2006:vi) believe that due it's focus on the local and specific Practical Theology will need to enter into discussions with regard:

> to the various methods through which this knowledge is captured, analysed, understood and recorded. Historically, the primary mode of analysis and data collection has emerged from a continuing dialogue with the social sciences. The social sciences have offered Practical Theologians vital access to the nature of the human mind, human culture, the wider dimensions of Church life and the implications of the social and political dimensions of society for the process of theological reflection.

Cartledge (2003:11), like Swinton and Mowat (2006) already mentioned, believes that theology cannot do without the human sciences – especially the empirical sciences:

> Practical theology, with its orientation of engagement with real people in real contexts, the need to use empirical approaches is fundamental to the discipline. Theoretical and abstract discussion also remain essential but they are used primarily in relation to empirical and concrete studies of people.

Taking into account that Sociology cannot be value free, and that such an idea is clearly at its end point in a post-foundationalist world, Cartledge (2003:11) has set out to chart a way forward with regard to methodology. Cartledge (2003:15) borrows heavily from the work of Van der Ven, who argues for an intra-disciplinarial approach for Practical Theology, which adds some of the tools and instruments that the empirical sciences offer into its repertoire. Heitink (1999:174) speaks of Van der Ven's intra-disciplinary approach as an attempt to give maximum credit to social scientific research and encourage practical theologians to become conversant with social scientific methodology.

Yet not only do we need to become conversant with Social science methodology, but we need to understand the epistemological assumptions that underlie much social science research. These discussions require us to pay attention to what one chooses in

terms of research. As mentioned earlier, this decision is thwarted by the ideological and interest-driven approach in terms of what is chosen for reflection. Heimbrock (2005:280) comments on this by noting that:

> any serious empirical based theory does not simply apply to "facts," but inevitably bases its propositions upon large theoretical concepts, such as reality, life, and religion. Even the so-called starting points of data, empirical findings, or phenomena carry a heavy theoretical load.

Although focusing on a more academic setting in terms of conducting research, Heitink (1999:224) provides a helpful starting point by arguing that research should ask the questions: Why, what, where and how? Further questions for the researchers to ask themselves are what they can handle, their limitations and their competence (1999:226-228). At this point, one must also begin to ask what type of research is best suited to the area one hopes to examine, and the question of qualitative or quantitative research (1999:228).

As mentioned earlier there is also a need to come to grips with ones epistemological issues when choosing ones area of research. This is critical for a Post Foundationalist approach. Mason (2002:16) believes clarifying these issues early on in the research process is crucial, and that certain epistemologies are more consistent with different types of qualitative research itself, as well as with either qualitative or quantitative research. This speaks directly to questions of knowledge and understanding and the issues of foundationalism. Questions of how we know things and the certainity of that knowledge. Mason (2002:16) speaks to this directly by noting that:

> Your epistemology is, literally, your theory of knowledge, and should therefore concern the principles and rules by which you decide whether and how social phenomena can be known, and how knowledge can be demonstrated. Different epistemologies have different things to say about these issues, and about what the status of knowledge can be. For some, the concept of evidence itself is to categorical, implying as it does that research can provide self-evidential proof of universally perceived objective realities, instead of the more epistemologically modest concepts of perspective and argument.

This examining of one's own fundamental assumptions around the nature of truth and knowledge can be unsettling (Baranov 2004:5). Baranov's (2004) work *Conceptual foundations of Social research methods* is an attempt to show how different understandings regarding the nature of reality, and what can be known about that reality, has vast implications with regard to the type of methodology ones uses and the

outcomes that can be gained from different research methods. For Baranov (2004:7) the challenge of Anti-Foundationalism raises "fundamental questions about the ability of human reason to produce reliable knowledge about the social world". This has significant implications for Practical Theology and Theology in general, specifically with regard to qualitative research as Swinton and Mowat (2006:73) comment in that the:

> inherent tendency of qualitative research to assume a fundamentally non-foundational epistemology which is highly sceptical about the possibility of accessing truth that has any degree of objectivity, stands in uneasy tension with the theological assumption that truth is available and accessible through revelation.

Van Huyssteen (1997:226) agrees that "nonfoundationalism will present a very real challenge to the Christian concept of revelation". Baranov (2004:169-170) believes antifoundationalism poses several challenges for social research. These challenges are the rejection of models as accurate representations of reality, the neutrality of knowledge, the rejection of knowledge claims as universal findings and the danger of generalizing individual case studies. Van Huyysteen (1997:228) believes these challenges can be met by an approach which resists embracing antifoundationalism or foundationalism. Rather a

> postfoundationalist shift to a fallibist epistemology, which honestly embraces the role of traditioned experience, personal commitment, interpretation, and the provisional nature of all our knowledge claims, avoids the alleged necessity of opting for either foundationalism or antifoundationalism.

The researcher will later explore aspects of a correlational hermeneutic. At that juncture he will enter into discussions regarding certain epistemological underpinnings that underlie the human sciences in general. At this point he would simply like to point out that even the various methodologies one chooses to analyze experience in any given local context is theory laden as it "is impossible to carry out observations that are uncontaminated by theory" (Baranov 2004:69).

Any desire to understand one's local context will need to use the broad perspectives of either qualitative and quantitative research, or both. How do these differing ideas of research, and the diversity of methods within them, reflect the shift to a Post

Foundationalist perspective, and the implications of that, which van Huyssteen (1997:228) has just highlighted?

Traditionally these questions of have revolved around the broad discussion of Qualitative and Quantitative research already mentioned. Dreyer (2010:3) believes that the fruitless debate between which method is better is a thing of the past and that most would agree that different methods are appropriate to differing contexts. The researcher agrees with this but believes that it is important to be aware of ones own epistemological assumptions underlying ones use of specific research method. Are certain methods, and approaches to those methods, more appropriate to a Post Foundationalist perspective? Mason (2002:4) agrees with the need to appreciate both the importance of both methodological perspectives but notes a vital caution as to the diversity within each broad approach itself:

> I do not think research practice has to involve stark either/or choices between qualitative and quantitative methodology. Partly, this is because neither 'quantitative' nor 'qualitative' bodies of philosophy method and technique which they are sometimes seen to be. This means that any researcher should always think carefully about integrating different methods.

The researcher believes that perhaps the "mixed methods" approach to research that Osmer (2008:50) refers to is best.

Qualitative research

Here, an attempt is made to view the situation from the perspective of those who are being studied, and to get to grips with the social context being discussed (Cartledge 2003:68). There is an attempt to interpret and understand a given context in complexity and detail (Mason 2002:3):

> Qualitative researchers, wishing to focus on the worldviews of the subjects under study, tend to operate with an open and flexible research strategy rather than one which is overly prescriptive from the start. This means that research problems tend to be organized around more general and open questions rather than tightly defined and theory-driven questions. Qualitative researchers tend to favour a process that formulates and tests theories and concepts as they arise from within the data under collection (2003:70).

There is a wide range of approaches to Qualitative Research which makes it difficult and slippery to define (Swinton & Mowat 2006:29). Osmer (2008:50-53) lists six different strategies to conduct Qualitative research – life history/narrative research,

case studies, ethnographic research, grounded theory research, phenomenological research and advocacy research. In terms of actually generating the data as part of the various strategies Mason (2002:52) lists people, Organisations, Texts, specific settings, Objects/Artifacts and events that might take place.

Qualitative methodology often requires that researchers immerse themselves within the group/ person/environment being studied (Cartledge 2003:70). Cartledge (2003:70) describes this process of enmeshing within the group as "participant observation." This might require different levels of participation or non-participation from those involved. The interviews that participant observers conduct are often conducted in an ad hoc manner. It is also regarded as unavoidable that the researchers have some influence on the social dynamic of their study, regardless of the level in which they participate (2003:71). The interviewing that takes place is often unstructured by nature and allows for deeper interaction between the interviewer and interviewee (2003:72). This is not entirely true as no form of interview is totally devoid of structure (Mason 2002:62) These participatory observation stories provide information on "insider perspectives and their practices" (Mouton 2001:148).

Focus groups that take into account life histories, oral histories and documentary analysis can also be used (Cartledge 2003:72). Hendriks (2004:226) notes that, as qualitative research is of a more philosophical nature, its expression remains less formalized and more flexible in its research design. Here, the contention is that this points to a research methodology that would be more suited to the less academically orientated person - which would represent most who attend our churches. Heitink (1999:230) would probably equate qualitative research with what he discusses as "explorative research," which is "more intuitive than methodical. The result is therefore limited to preliminary statements, models, or search strategies, for which one can adduce solid arguments."

Another form of qualitative research is that of participatory action research, which Mouton (2001:150) describes in the following manner:

> Studies that involve the subjects of research (research participants) as integral to part of the design. [They] use mainly qualitative methods in order to gain understanding and insight into

lifeworlds of research participants. Most types of PAR have an explicit (political) commitment to the empowerment of participants and to changing the social conditions of the participants.

Cameron et al's (2010:39) book *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action research and Practical Theology* make a strong case for Action research. They claim that it is the first time Action Research has emerged within Practical Theology. This is not entirely true. Hendriks (2004:216-217) proposed this form of research when discussing his research paradigms. Important for Action Research is that it is context based, collaborative between researchers and participants, emphasizes diversity, that meanings arise from the process that lead to action and those actions to new meanings (Cameron et al 2010:36) This is the research paradigm that Hendriks (2004:219) proposes for faith-based organisations. To the researcher's mind, the participatory action research and the participant observation research are vital when calling for a Practical Theology that is local and seeks to take into account the experience of real people. These experiences often go beyond the bounds of practice or action as " Many experiences – such as being touched by a specific atmosphere, being opened to a disclosure experience, being caught by "flow" experiences and other religious or cultural phenomena – reach beyond the category of practice." (Heimbrock 2005:290).

The researcher believes that one would be hard pressed to really understand any given local context without some form of Qualitative research. And if a Post Foundationalist approach values understanding one's local context as a source of knowledge, Qualitative research is critical.

Quantitative research

This form of research, of course, has been most prevalent in the natural sciences where measurements, control, variables and experiments come into play (Cartledge 2003:74). Traditionally it found expression with Positivistic approaches in the natural sciences but eventually spread to the social and human sciences (Baranov 2004:78). Neuman (1994:96) believes that Quantitative research still relies heavily on Positivistic assumptions. Baranov (2004) has shown that Positivism itself has morphed in a variety of ways from Embryonic Positivism, Logical Positivism and Post Positivism. Baranov (:74) believes that the present position is the realisation that the quest of Positivism, originating with Descartes, for absolute certainty is an

impossibility. Knowledge is still attainable and their is progress in human understanding but certainty is not possible (:75). Objectivity though is still prized even if certainty cannot be achieved. Johnson and Christenson (2012:36) explain:

> Quantitative researchers attempt to operate under the assumption of objectivity. They assume that there is a reality to be observed and that rational observers who look at the same phenomenon will basically agree on its existence and characteristics. They try to remain as neutral and value free as they can, and they try to avoid human bias whenever possible. In a sense, quantitative researchers attempt to study the phenomena that are of interest to them "from a distance'

It is a form of research that is far from simple and involves the use of statistical and numerical data (Heitink 1999:229;Johnson & Christensen 2012:33) using a language of "variables, hypotheses, units of analysis and causal explanations" (Neuman 1994:96) This form of research is "highly formalised as well as more explicitly controlled" (Hendriks 2004:226). It has often been viewed as the best type of research, as Cartledge (2003:74) explains, "It has been usual to regard quantitative researchers as embracing the more scientific or factual approach, while qualitative researchers are regarded as embracing approaches that are more person centred and have more in common with the arts."

Many prefer this method of research as Qualitative methods can often be time consuming and Practical Theologians like (Astley 2002:98) consider it to be more reliable and valid. Often though there is a loss in "richness and meaning" (Babbie 2004:26). Like Qualitative research there are a variety of different approaches to Quantitative research but broadly fall into the two categories of Experimental and Non-Experimental research (Johnson & Christensen 2012:41-47). My intention here is not to give a detailed discussion of the various options for Quantitative research. My intention is to give enough information to be able to distinguish the two options and make some remarks with regard to Foundationalism. To that we now turn.

Qualitative or quantitative research?

Both forms of research have their strengths and weaknesses and both should be incorporated into Practical Theology in terms of how they explain and describe the raw material that forms part of one's theological reflection. In terms of understanding

the glocal nature of a specific group or person, quantitative data can be of immense value; this is specifically so with regard to global issues. In the work of the sociologist, Manuel Castells, one can see the importance of good quantitative research for explaining the vast global currents that sweep through our world. The difficulty is that the average person will find this form of theological reflection difficult, which is why qualitative research proves to be a better vehicle for research that takes place locally.

The nature of the qualitative method of research is also more geared to a deeper understanding of the experience that arises from communities and individuals who can form the starting point of theological reflection, as Cartledge (2003:78) explains: "Qualitative research does not present its findings as 'true' but as an invitation to view things from a particular perspective. It aims to enable the search for meaning in a complex social world." Qualitative research is also not a "fleeting" engagement with those being studied but rather a sustained engagement (Cartledge 2003:81).

The ability for those who are unable to do good quantitative research to get to grips with the global realities that form part of theological reflection, would mean they would need to have access to various quantitative data that would help them understand what effects global realities have on their local context. Still, a mixed methods approach (Osmer 2008:50) might be the preferred option in trying to understand the reality of a given context. With the rejection of a Positivistic approach to reality, and the demise of a Foundationalist quest for certainty, a mixed methods approach could in fact provide a more reliable picture of the reality concerned. Johnson & Christensen (2012:31) noted that their was a time when the mixing of Qualitative and Quantitative approaches was seen as impossible and was known as the "incompatability thesis". This mixed approach has much to offer for a:

> Creative and thoughtful mixing of assumptions, ideas, and methods can be very helpful and offers a thirds paradigm. The mixing of ideas and approaches has been present throughout history because mixing or combining builds upon what we know and offers new ways to study our world...mixed research offers an exciting way of conducting educational research

Cartledge (2003:82) calls for the importance of both qualitative and quantitative research for Practical Theology where one,

> [W]ill recognize the value of engagement with the lifeworld of the people under study as well as the value of a more detached and structured approach that uses the mechanisms of distance. Therefore knowledge is to be gained both by participation and by reflection, by engagement and detachment.

The researcher believes, that mixed research would be one way towards getting a more "thick" description of a given local context. It honours a critical realist understanding of reality that does not embrace a positivistic certainty but also believes that one can gain understanding of that reality. Any approach that deems itself as the only way to acquire knowledge has fallen prey to Foundationalist assumptions – whether Qualitative or Quantitative. The researcher will still hold that it would be enormously difficult to have a good understanding of a local context without Qualitative means. It is perhaps best suited to understanding "individuals, groups and communities in depth" (Osmer 2008:50)

An experiential, glocal and social scientific approach to a post-foundationalist Practical Theology?

The previous few sections have been exploring a Glocal praxis based approach to Practical Theology. It has explored the "pastoral concern" dynamic of what is known as the "pastoral cycle" and has also argued that praxis takes place between the tension of practice and theory. More specifically, the local dimension of Practical Theology, from which the pastoral concern emerges, has been examined. The argument was that theological reflection emerges from experience, which is a source for practical theological reflection consistent with non-foundationalism. It was mentioned that, in order to understand the "local experience," means that one ought to take global factors and currents into account – hence a glocal Practical Theology. Lastly it was stated that, in order to understand this glocal experience, one must critically use and engage the social sciences in terms of gathering the "raw data" that will be taken up into further dialogue with the culture's resources and with the Christian story (represented by tradition and Scripture). To this part of the pastoral cycle we now turn.

5.3 A CORRELATIONAL HERMENEUTIC

5.3.1 Pastoral reflection

What we have looked at so far is the first part of the pastoral cycle, and that of beginning with a pastoral concern. The pastoral concern seeks to take the glocal nature of any given reality into account. It also seeks to value and understand people's experience as a source for theological reflection. In attempting to do this, it embraces the social sciences, realising its potential pitfalls and limitations, to provide insight into the nature of any given pastoral concern. A pastoral concern can range from understanding poverty in one's local community to the crisis of pollution in one's local area. It has individual, corporate and ecological dimensions, consistent with a missional Practical Theology.

The second step is to bring this "raw material" into a dialectical dialogue with cultural resources on the one hand, and the Christian classics on the other. Here again, we find a role for the human sciences, but also the natural sciences, according to the specific pastoral concern chosen. Dealing with ecological concerns could involve the use of Biology, Geography and Science as a resource for reflection. Dealing with a given individual's crisis could call for the insights of Psychology, or Psychology of Religion (Ganzevoort 2010). Politics, Economics and Philosophy could play a role in other areas. Of late, Wolfteich (2009:123) has demonstrated the importance of the discipline of Spirituality as a potential dialogue partner. Depending on the nature of the pastoral concern, it will lead to the correct appropriation of any given natural, human or other science.

On the other side, we bring the "raw material" of the pastoral concern into dialogue with the Christian classics. Here, the researcher believes Stanley Grenz's call for Theology, and specifically Evangelical Theology, to move beyond foundationlism. This involves both the church's tradition, as well as the use of Scripture. Needless to say, the importance of the traditional biblical disciplines of Biblical Studies, Church History, Systematic Theology and Theological Ethics becomes obvious. In dealing with both the cultural and the Christian sources, we must take into account an

epistemological shift that, in turn, must lead us to a non-foundationalist approach to sources within Practical Theology consistent with our earlier discussions. This theoretical moment of pastoral reflection must result in a theoretical proposal for pastoral action that must then move back to practice in the form of an intervention in the real world (de Kock 2011:9).

In dealing with pastoral reflection, we shall examine the nature of the correlational hermeneutic itself, followed by an understanding of what a non-foundationalist approach should imply for this hermeneutic in respect of Scripture. Then, more specifically, both the role of the human sciences and the Christian classics will be examined.

5.3.2 A critical correlational hermeneutic

We have already mentioned the close relationship between both the praxis and correlational hermeneutical models within Practical Theology. If we see praxis as represented by the pastoral cycle, then the correlational hermeneutic finds itself as a movement within the second part of the pastoral cycle, which we called "pastoral reflection." We need to remind ourselves of our earlier discussions with regard to models in Practical Theology and of the prominence of this method. Also, we noted the importance of the critical correlational hermeneutic for our discussion of a post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology and Theology in general, "In theological reflection then, a postmodern critique of foundationalist assumptions will therefore be an inextricable part of a post-foundationalist model of rationality, and will definitely shape the way in which theology is located within the context of interdisciplinary reflection" (Van Huyssteen 1997:13).

Poling and Miller's axis one seeks to show the three ways in which the correlational hermeneutic could be worked out. Ranging from one that promotes the importance of the human sciences on the one hand, called the "critical scientific approach" to, on the other pole, the critical confessional approach that pushes for the prominence of the Christian tradition. In the middle, is the critical correlational approach, which seeks to hold the two in tension and allow for mutual change and engagement.

Of course, there is a wide variety of correlational approaches – one might even say a bewildering variety. Ballard and Pritchard (2006:64-68) note three of these. The first is a dialogue between the situation on the one hand, and the theological tradition on the other. A second option is one that seeks to bring pastoral concerns together with ethics. The public nature of this subset of the correlational hermeneutic comes to the fore here (2006:66). The third option is the hermeneutical one where an attempt to interpret biblical stories and one's situation, on the other hand, are important.

Tillich is the most well-known proponent of the correlational hermeneutic, which is often considered his most enduring contribution to modern Theology (Grenz & Olson 1992:119). His correlational perspective involves a dialogue with Psychology on the one hand, and Christian tradition on the other (Graham *et al.* 2005:155). More recent exponents are Tracy and Browning. Tracy (1981:64) argues for a revised critical correlational method and one that seeks for an interface between cultural concerns and theological truth claims. Browning (1991:44), who leans heavily on Tracy, tries to connect two poles, which he believes have often been split up, "These two poles are the confessional approach (which sees theology as primarily witnessing to the narrative structure of faith) and the apologetic approach (which defends the rationality of the faith and tries to increase its plausibility to the contemporary secular mind)."

Browning (1991:46), like Tracy, views Theology as a dialogue between the Christian message and contemporary cultural experiences and practises.

The researcher is aware that people mean very different things when discussing a correlational hermeneutic. The form of correlational hermeneutic that he proposes certainly takes, at its base element, the assumption of its dialogical nature in terms of how various perspectives interact and correlate with each other (Hendriks 2004:21).

Here, the argument will be for a correlational hermeneutic that seeks to hold both sources (human sciences and Christian tradition) in creative tension. It gives neither primacy nor dominance to either in the discussion. It is a "critical" dialogue in that each side opens itself up to potential revision or change.

Once the pastoral concern (that has arisen out of local experience) comes to the "surface," it meets further "sources" for reflection in the human sciences and the Christian classics. In this moment, a threefold dialogue emerges with relevant insights that interact with each other in plotting a way forward for action. As mentioned earlier, the specific resources used depend on the nature of the pastoral concern. At this point, a specific example will help to illustrate how this dissertation understands the correlational hermeneutic to work out in practice.

A young women in a large urban Evangelical Church is confronted with the alienating experience of being gifted in leadership, but is told that her denomination does not allow her to hold certain leadership positions. The pastoral concern is the crisis of this woman's experience and the conflict between her personal experience (being a gifted women) and her experience of being in a faith community that does not allow her experience to be valid. She then takes up these concerns in a dialogue with the Christian classics and the human sciences. Within church tradition and the Scriptures, she finds a largely patriarchal view of the women's role in church. However, she also finds a different strand within church tradition (both past and present) and within Scripture, which seems to allow for a fuller expression of women's leadership giftings.

When listening to the voices of the human sciences, she becomes aware of the sociological barriers that have held women back. She comes across psychological studies that demonstrate that women have equal ability to lead as men. As she holds these various sources in tension, she is able to discern a way forward. The correlational hermeneutic, as the researcher understands it, is that place of tension as her experience is taken into dialogue with the two poles of the human sciences and the Christian classics. An attempt to examine and delineate what is understood by the human sciences and the Christian classics will follow.

5.3.3 The human sciences

We have already examined the human sciences or, more specifically, the social sciences, when discussing experience as our starting point for theological reflection. One ought to be equally vigilant when heeding the human sciences as part of a correlational hermeneutic.

The challenge we face here is one that illustrates the particular "torment" of being a practical theologian. For, depending on the pastoral concern that one is dealing with, it will have an influence over a variety of sciences that might come into play. This problem is even more apparent in the light of how we defined the missional nature of Practical Theology. If we say that anything and everything can come under the orbit of Practical Theology, then we say that Practical Theology has the potential to touch any dynamic and situation in life. We also know that the human sciences touch different dimensions of our lives in a variety of contexts and are, therefore, vital in any form of missional Practical Theology.

When discussing the nature of Practical Theology in the first half of this paper, we noted the fact that a practical theologian might be called a "jack of all trades." Firet comments on the fact that, if practical theologians seek to do a thorough job, they might have to specialize in a host of different disciplines. It becomes even more challenging if we hope for a form of theological reflection that most people would be able to achieve. Yet, if we argue for a correlational hermeneutic, at least in the way that the researcher understands it, we are bound to come into contact with a host of different sciences. Therefore, Practical Theology must take an interdisciplinary approach seriously - again, important for a truly post-foundational Theology (Van Huyssteen 1997:13). This is even at the risk of being seen in a negative light as Ballard and Pritchard (2006:115) explain:

> Interdisciplinary dialogue has become a necessity. Moreover it is recognized that creative insights often come precisely at those places where disciplines overlap and challenge each other. There is, therefore, no need to be ashamed to be living at the boundaries, in however a lowly way. Maybe the practical theologian has to endure the risk of marginalization, ridicule and error, but he or she can also be at the place of the new possibility, discovery and prophecy.

Firet (1986:10) comments that Practical Theology will often have to use the aid of its sister disciplines and various other sciences. Of necessity, this will mean that it will have to rely on secondary sources more than might be desirable (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:116). It will also pose a challenge as to which disciplines are chosen with which to engage (Graham *et al.* 2005:167). Ganzevoort (2006:3-4) has argued for a social constructivist approach to Practical Theology as a way of creating this dialogue between Practical Theology and other disciplines. He believes this to be vital for a public theology that is taken seriously by the social sciences.

> The language we use depends on the criteria that are important to the iscourse at hand. In the realm of the church, one may employ religious language more easily. Dealing with social scientists we will accommodate our language to include their language and theories. This is not a matter of chameleonic adaptation, but a consequence of understanding that the meaning of the term is located in a conversation. Obviously, if we are to engage in such diverse conversations, we will encounter conflicts of interpretation that we cannot accommodate. The practical theologian in that case faces the difficult task of maintaining his or her professional integrity while working in conflicting languages.

Although it is true that the social sciences tend to dominate in Practical Theology, there must be a place for the other human sciences – or any science for that matter. As already discussed, the implications for this means that, depending on the pastoral concern of any given moment, a specific science, or combination of sciences, could come into dialogue correlationally with the Christian classics. In reflecting on the emotional abuse of a child, there would be a role for Psychology. When trying to understand the destitute situation of a given family, economic insights could prove vital. Sociology, History, Philosophy, Biology, Political Science, Medicine, Law or Developmental Studies – anything could become a partner in dialogue. Sanchez (2007:230-231) has argued for the importance of this interdisciplinary thinking, what he calls a transdisciplinary approach, for understanding the concrete realities within Puerto Rican society. Pattison (2007:21) reminds us that "interdisciplinary work is notoriously difficult to do" but "is the most incredibly rewarding work possible".

Despite this, one must be cautious to remember that the human sciences, in and of themselves, are not neutral. They have also been affected by the post-modern critique

of knowledge and the epistemological shift to non-foundationalism that we have already explored.

5.3.4 Foundationalism and the human sciences

We mentioned Descartes and Locke as the genesis of foundationalism – the idea that we can come to certain knowledge by finding a sure footing or foundation on which to construct our views. Locke is of specific relevance when we examine the foundationalist setting of the human sciences. Grenz (2000:222) argues that Locke seeks to find a universal method of enquiry that could be applicable to all disciplines:

> Locke argued that the foundation for demonstrative knowledge, characterized by universality and certainty, and which can be stated in the form of assertions, lies in sense experience, i.e. observations of the world, from which we abstract ideas and induce conclusions. His proposal, known as empiricism, provided the methodological foundationalist turn in science.

Whether starting with an empirical foundation with Locke, or a rationalist one with Descartes, this reigning paradigm found its home in many of the human sciences that emerged from the Enlightenment. The universal claim of science, which emerged from this paradigm, was brought into question in the 20th century. Positivism, with its innate foundationalism, was itself called into question (Kung 1978:102). It was Karl Popper who led the attack on both the rationalists and empiricists. He pointed out that both sides regard their basic truths as self-evident and immediately certain. For Popper (1978:103), our knowledge always begins with "conjectures, assumptions, patterns, hypotheses, which must be exposed to scrutiny." Popper proposes that we cannot therefore achieve knowledge by verification but only through falsification. Popper's falsification theory, though proved to be provisional, and as Kung (1978:106) notes, "his falsification theory has been exposed to falsification and has in fact been falsified."

Despite Popper "killing" positivism and pulling out the carpet from underneath foundationalism in science, it was left to Thomas Kuhn to chart a way forward with his paradigm theory. Bosch (1991:185) explains:

> The paradigm theory implies a fundamental break with preceding theories of science, particularly logical positivism's emphasis on verification as well as Karl Popper's idea of

"falsification" as sure ways in which scientific research advances. It is widely accepted today, in all the sciences (natural as well as social) that total objectivity is an illusion, and that knowledge belongs to a community and is influenced by the dynamics operative in such a community. This means that not only scientific data are tested, but also the researchers themselves.

Kuhn's basic thesis is that science and knowledge advance not by progressive steps, but rather through revolutions. A revolution takes place as a reigning paradigm is slowly called into question by a network of diverse social and scientific factors (Bosch 1991:184). The knowledge community begins to realize the shortcomings of its paradigm and realizes that traditional answers cannot solve the new questions. As one shifts into the new paradigm, you begin to see the same objects, with the same instruments, in a different manner (Kung 1978:109). The consequence of seeing knowledge as a series of paradigm shifts calls into question any form of objective truth. We are left rather with something that is relatively objective (Kung 1978:110).

Bosch argues that Kuhn's understanding has direct relevance for all disciplines. Not only does it help us move beyond the Enlightenment's foundationalism, but actually helps us to understand the very paradigm change that all the human sciences find themselves in today – which, of course, is the dissolution of the Enlightenment paradigm itself (Bosch 1991:185).

A brief attempt was made to show how science has moved beyond foundationalism and it was stated that the positivist foundationalism that emerged out of the Enlightenment has given way to a non-foundationalist perspective, exemplified by Popper, and more definitively by Kuhn.

In understanding the non-foundationalism of the human sciences, we are also forced to get to grips with Jurgen Habermas's relativizing of knowledge, which Kung (1978:110) describes as "social-critical de-ideologizing." Before discussing Habermas, the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer must be noted. He is important in demonstrating that our tradition and horizon of meaning has an impact on how texts and reality are understood (Heitink 1999:185). There is a mediating between our present horizon and meaning, and the text's present horizon of meaning (Baranov 2004:125) Heitink (1999:184) describes Gadamar's position in the following manner, "In our attempts to understand texts or reality we all operate with our own biases.

Understanding is always conditioned by the context of the one who explains ….Objective knowledge does not exist."

Gadamer proposes a hermeneutical approach in helping us to gain understanding (Heitink 1999:184). Habermas critiques Gadamer in not paying more attention to the role of ideology and power (Heitink 1999:186). Habermas proposes a "community in dialogue" approach to arrive at knowledge that can lead to ethical decision-making in society (Van Gelder 1996:133). Browning (1991:69) notes that many of Habermas's critics have accused him of a foundationlist drive, and even see him as a continuation of the Enlightenment quest for certainty. This is not the place for a sustained inter-action and delineation of the views of Habermas or Gadamer. What was intended, was to show that with both of them (and Paul Ricoeur) a shift to a more social interpretive process in terms of how knowledge is gained has been seen (Van Gelder 2007:109). Bosch (1991:351) shows the connection between these social theorists and that of Polyani and Kuhn:

> In spite of the differences between them, it could be argued that there is a degree of convergence between the theories expounded by Kuhn and those espoused by Polyani. Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, and more recently John Thompson and Charles Taylor, have worked out similar ideas. In all these views scientific theory, history, sociology, and hermeneutics go hand in hand. A new vision is emerging, and it affects all the sciences, both human and natural.

The researcher's basic thesis regarding the use of the various sciences in Practical Theology has been that it ought to be conducted in light of the post-foundationalist turn, while taking into account the critique of reason and knowledge that the Enlightenment held dear. The previous discussion in showing how there has been a shift in science and the theory of knowledge, has direct bearing on how one engages with the sciences as part of a critical correlational hermeneutic. Browning (1991:79) certainly believes that the results of the hermeneutical turn (represented by Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur) are of direct relevance for a responsible use of the human sciences in Practical Theology.

Browning (1991:81) has shown that the consequences of Gadamer's understanding of dialogue mean that any human science ought to acknowledge its historical situated-ness. This again, is consistent with a post-foundational approach. Therefore, any

appropriation of the human sciences must come to terms with the implicit values and presuppositions that accompany the discipline. This applies not only to the discipline in question, but to the researcher who conducts research within any discipline. Browning (1991:89) further notes that what emerges from these considerations is that the hidden values and assumptions are essentially religious. He comments that:

> If the social and human sciences are rooted in a tradition, if that tradition inevitably influences their interpretive perspectives (their pre-understanding and prejudices), and if that tradition has religious dimensions, does it follow that the interpretive horizon of the social sciences is coloured by the religio-cultural backgrounds of the researchers?

Engaging with the human sciences

When listening to the human sciences, in light of what we have already discussed, we can make some tentative conclusions. The first is that a correlational hermeneutic cannot do without the human sciences, as it is vital in terms of shedding light on any given pastoral concern that is subject to theological reflection. Secondly, that this requires an interdisciplinary approach that seeks to build bridges with others. Thirdly, practical theologians should be aware of their own bias in terms of the material they select. By this is meant that, when there are differing perspectives in a given human science, an endeavour to listen to both sides as part of the dialogue should be attempted. Fourthly, due to accepting a non-foundationalist approach to the human sciences, one must accept the provisional nature of the conclusions and perspectives on offer. Lastly, and related to the previous point, it is recognized that the human sciences retain their own prejudice, bias and ideological colouring. This affects the discipline as a whole, as well as the unique individual researchers. The religious dimension of the human sciences makes us aware of uncritically accepting their findings, while downplaying the contribution of the Christian classics.

In practice, the task of listening to the various contributions will prove to be difficult – if not impossible. Ballard and Pritchard (2006:116) suggest an attempt to gain some form of specialization in at least two human sciences and to try to keep up to date with their developments. For the majority who embrace the task of theological reflection, this remains an idealistic illusion. Rather, having access to a good resource base of secondary sources will be the most likely option.

In all probability, to engage with the human sciences will prove the more difficult part of the correlational hermeneutic. This is due to the fact that most often those who engage in theological reflection and Practical Theology are already familiar, even if in a very limited sense, with the Christian classics. We now turn to a consideration of this second pole of the correlational hermeneutic.

5.3.5 The Christian classics

The Christian classics are represented by both the Christian Scriptures and the church's tradition. They are of the utmost importance for Practical Theology as Cartledge notes:

> It is essential that practical theologians engage with scripture and Tradition in a rigorous way in order to understand the divine revelation and how it has been used historically. The Christian metanarrative of Scripture as inspiration and truthful vision provides an essential critique with respect to the focus of study, and without which it might become a form of religious studies

Of course, the understanding and appropriation of these sources to any given pastoral concern is no easy task. The subjective nature of one's selection with regard to the content of these sources is inescapable. Which resources does one consult? Which Scriptures? Whose interpretation of Scripture? Whose tradition? We propose that the practical theologian ought to try to bring into account as many diverse perspectives as is possible and realistic. This is what we would call "the ecumenical nature of Practical Theology." Recently Hastings (2007) has argued for just such an approach for Practical Theology in what he calls a "Missional-Ecumenical Model". It remains suspicious of one's own confessional starting point and must allow itself to remain open to critical revision from within the broader faith community. This is of vital importance in the responsible use of Christian resources.

This can be demonstrated by going back to our earlier example of the woman who was denied leadership responsibility on the basis of her gender. If the only Christian resources consulted are those of a narrow segment of the Evangelical community, she would find her personal experience of being a gifted woman invalidated. Her experi-

ence would then need serious revision in terms of how she understands her role as a woman within the church. If she utilised the specific understanding of the Scriptures by certain evangelicals from within the Southern Baptist tradition in the United States, she would have been left with the following "voice" from the pole of Christian classics that says the following: "[T]he Bible teaches that men and women fulfil different roles in relation to each other, charging man with a unique leadership role, it bases this differentiation not on temporary cultural norms but on permanent facts of creation" (Piper & Grudem 1991:35).

If, however, in her utilization of Scripture and tradition, she exposed herself to a different segment within the Evangelical tradition who held a different understanding of Scripture, she might conclude differently that:

> Gender, in and of itself, neither privileges nor curtails one's ability to be used to advance God's kingdom or to glorify God in any dimension of ministry, mission, society and family. The differences between men and women do not justify granting men unique and perpetual prerogatives of leadership and authority not shared by women" (Pierce & Groothuis 2005:13).

Responsible use of the Christian classics would seek to listen to the divergent voices from within the tradition. It would seek to hear what the Methodists, Catholics, Anglicans or Orthodox would say regarding the role of women in its history and dogma. It would seek to see how various approaches to Scripture and its interpretations yield different views on the role of women within the church. What have the liberal voices said? How do Evangelicals understand the Scriptures? This ecumenical approach to the Christian classics honours the Christian tradition in its many forms and seeks to bring different perspectives into dialogue with one another. Again, it is important to remind ourselves that these resources are not being utilized in some distant abstract academic setting. They are being appropriated to a unique pastoral concern arising out of real people's reality and experience. In fact, many women's experiences in the past have given rise to fresh reflection within various traditions, as well as a fresh examination of the Scriptures. These reflections then become a further resource for new experiences into the future as new pastoral concerns arise.

The Scriptures

As the sacred book of the Christian community, the Scriptures are a source for theological reflection. Many would claim it to be the "only" source and norm for Christian theology. Others would not only claim it to be the only source for theological reflection, but indeed propose a specific view of Scripture which ought to be normative. Here, Scripture is seen to be inerrant – without error. A collection of "immutable laws and infallible truths" (Hanson 1986:535). Of course, if this were true, there would be no need for the human sciences to be part of the discussion. Nor would there be any need for one's unique local experience to be taken into account. Then, all we would need would be an applied Theology. In a foundationalist sense, Scripture now becomes the foundation from which all other knowledge derives, and is based upon. This is what one of the stalwarts of the Evangelical movement proposed, "The issue is clear: is the Bible truth and without error wherever it speaks, including where it touches history and the cosmos, or is it only in some revelational sense where it touches religious subjects?" (Schaeffer 1982:121).

Of course, like many Evangelicals, Schaeffer would argue that the Scriptures must be without error. Within Evangelicalism itself, however, there has been a rethinking with regard to one's view of Scripture. Millard Erickson (1997:76-78), who himself believes in inerrancy, has sought to warn those within the Evangelical movement about this rethinking. Others, such as Olson (2002:67), have urged the identity-forming nature of Scripture for the Christian community and prefer the term "inspiration." At this point, it must suffice to say that the researcher does not believe that a critical correlational approach to Practical Theology can be possible with a doctrine of Scripture that claims to be without error. It would make nonsense of the use of the human sciences (except perhaps to confirm revelation) and would seriously diminish the power of experience as a starting point. It would also require a return to a pre-1960s approach to Practical Theology that would champion a foundationalist and applied Theology.

The desire to see the Bible as inerrant is actually an outworking of the modernist and foundationalist agenda that we discussed earlier. Stanley Grenz (2000:70) shows convincingly that the Princeton theologians, who spearheaded the inerrancy debate, were heavily influenced by Enlightenment foundationlist rationalism. This was an

attempt to find a sure foundation for the theological truths that emerged from the Bible. It rested on an assumption that knowledge requires that the human senses can perceive the world as it actually is. Foundationalism has had an enormous influence on Evangelicalism and its approach to Scripture:

> [T]he firm foundation the hymn writer believed had been laid in God's excellent word came to equated with the words in the Bible themselves, the veracity of which was thought to be unimpeachable when measured by the canons of human reason. With such an incontrovertible foundation in place, conservative theologians were confident that they would deduce from Scripture the great theological truths that lay within its pages …. Enlightenment foundationalism seeped into neo-evangelical theology and became its reigning paradigm (Grenz 2000:189-190).

A non-foundationalist approach to Scripture?

If we are serious about moving beyond foundationalism in Practical Theology, an appropriate way to engage with the Christian Scriptures as a source will be needed. This is of critical importance for a post foundationalist approach because as Ganzevoort (2006:1) notes, "there are of course strands of practical theology in which a straightforward reference to revelation is accepted, often resulting in deductive or foundationalist approaches". If Scripture is not inerrant, and the sure foundation for knowledge, then how do we appropriate its insights?

With humility

A chastened rationality means that no matter how certain we think our interpretation of Scripture is, we remain finite human beings. Our prior confessional and ideological commitments that weigh in upon our interpretation can easily cloud our judgement. Being aware of our own frailty, might not give us the right answer, but it certainly places us in the correct posture to be open to further insights and guard against potential bias. We agree with Wright (1992:32) that we cannot "read the text straight" in a naïve realistic manner. Along with realizing our confessional and ideological bias, one will need to be aware of one's personal and historical location that affects how one approaches Scripture. Heitink (1999:196) puts it in the following way:

> One must first of all acknowledge the bias, or the prejudicing, determined by historical, sociological, and historical factors. How people understand the words of Scripture and apply these in a concrete situation is in part determined by their historical context, by the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of traditions within the group to which they belong, and by their personality, their possibilities for understanding, their personal history, with psychological factors that may either foster or hinder religious understanding.

A practical theological engagement with Scripture then approaches the text with due awareness of its own bias. It also realizes that a "chastened rationality" requires that it remains suspicious of simple readings, as well as obvious conclusions.

Ecumenically

This is essentially related to a humble appropriation of Scripture. Instead of claiming that one specific confessional approach has a monopoly on understanding what Scripture teaches, we in fact affirm the opposite. It involves a process of mutual affirmation and admonition with regard to inherited confessional positions on scripture (Fackre 1998:124). In the same way that there is no inerrant biblical foundation, neither is there no inerrant biblical interpretation. Now, our approach to Scripture is one that attempts to listen to all interpretations of the biblical text – liberal and conservative, Catholic and Protestant, emerging church and African indigenous. The various insights and interpretations that each bring are held together in a web of belief, or a web of interpretation. The researcher believes this is consistent with a chastened rationality. This web of interpretation must also heed the marginalized voices and interpretations of Scripture. This would allow it to take seriously the post-modern criticism of how knowledge and power are interrelated. Of course, such an approach requires the humility, of which we first spoke. The implications for Practical Theology then become clear. Practical Theology, in its engagement with Scripture on any given issue (pastoral concern), should avail itself of the plurality of interpretations that are available. Are Practical Theologians ready for this challenge? Hastings (2007:29) believes that an ecumenical approach to Practical Theology has vast implications, including epistemological, for the discipline as a whole and not simply in ones approach to Scripture. His approach though still has insights for our understanding of the Ecumenical nature of Scripture. Whose interpretations do we engage with? Are we as Practical Theologians ecumenically involved worldwide or have we become captive to the turn to the local? Hastings (2007:144) notes that "In spite of the positive direction at the international discussion among Practical Theologians today, it must be admitted that this discussion has not yet discovered ways to fully include our colleagues in the non-Western world". Dreyer (2010:7) has noted that this remains a challenge for South African Practical Theologians, who find themselves more engaged with the non-Western world than perhaps their North American and European counterparts. He argues that we need to become "more

ecumenical in our research endeavours and to include denominations and religious traditions that are often marginalised in our research". An ecumenical approach to Scripture, while engaging meaningfully with our non-Western colleagues, would be one of the ways we could begin to engage with ecumenical issues within Practical Theology.

Coherency

Grenz (2005:15) believes that Wolfhart Pannenberg is one theologian who has sought to move beyond foundationalism in his theological approach. Important for Pannenberg, is whether theological truth coheres with other forms of knowledge. Coherence is not a new thing within theological circles as is evidenced by its use in the scholastic tradition. However, Pannenberg rejects the scholastics' attempt to reduce reason to simply illuminating truth that is presupposed to exist in revelation handed down through inspired Scripture (Grenz 2000:196). For Pannenberg, the danger here lies in

> [P]lacing the Bible in contradiction to every new discovery of truth, rather than integrating scientific discoveries into the truth claim of the Christian faith. In short, their doctrine of biblical inspiration failed to facilitate theologians in demonstrating the coherence of Christian doctrine with human knowledge (2000:196).

Pannenberg believes that truth must have a universal content, and further that it is displayed in history (Grenz 2000:197). But, just in case we think Pannenberg argues for a rationalist certainty, he reminds us that all truth will be unveiled only at the end of history, at the eschaton. This means that our knowledge and belief remain partial at best. The researcher believes that this approach is consistent with a critical realist approach. Grenz (2000:197) agrees while commenting on Pannenberg that he "draws from a coherentist approach in his attempt to carve out a theological method that is nonfoundational, yet committed to a realist metaphysic."

The principle of coherence then becomes vital for any approach to understanding Scripture. A non-foundational approach to Scripture asks itself whether the insights of Scripture, with reference to a given pastoral concern, cohere with other forms of knowledge. The very nature of the correlational hermeneutic aids this principle of coherence. As one allows the knowledge base from the human sciences to be in dialogue with Scripture, one can begin to ask whether the insights of the human

sciences cohere with the perspective of Scripture. Of course, this does not mean that, if the human sciences disagree with Scripture, that the human sciences are automatically right. What it does, however, is give us pause for thought and further reflection and, if need be, revision.

Critical realism

In our treatment of foundationalism and non-foundationalism, we have already discussed the importance of critical realism as a way of moving beyond foundationalism. We mentioned that, when we examined the sources for Practical Theology, and specifically when addressing Scripture, it would again prove important. If this seems a strange thing to do, we have Van Huyssteen (1997:129) to remind us that:

> Personally I am convinced that no theologian who is trying to determine what the authority of the bible might mean today, and to identify the epistemological status of the bible in theological reflection, can avoid the important issues raised by some qualified forms of critical realism for theology.

One of the world's leading New Testament scholars admits that we can no longer simply approach the Bible in a modernistic enlightenment fashion. He also believes that critical realism is the best way forward (Wright 1992:32). With regard to the biblical text, critical realism steers a position between literalism and fictionalism (Van Huyssteen 1997:134). Wright (1992:33) articulates it thus: "One meets it among naive theologians, who complain that while other people have 'pressupositions,' they simply read the text straight, or who claim that, because one cannot have 'direct access' to the 'facts' about Jesus, all that we are left with is a morass of first century fantasy."

Van Huyssteen (1997:135) speaks about how the Bible provides all the models that we might use for understanding our faith. They might not be literal pictures, but are more than useful fictions. However, the Bible is crucial for affirming what we believe about God and his world:

> This text, as original witness to the events and person of our faith, in a very specific sense, is all we have. The metaphorical reference of its central concepts remains our only epistemic access to the God we believe in. Because of the importance of this fact, we can talk on an epistemological level about the realism of the text (1997:49).

An approach to the Bible that affirms the reality to which it speaks is important. This does not mean that it is infallible. Van Huyssteen (1997:161) quotes Peacocke in reminding us that our theologies can never be infallible, but some of them can be surer. A critical realist understanding of the Scripture will help us with this. Scripture that is read humbly, ecumenically, and in a way that seeks to cohere with other knowledge forms, will help us with the "critical" side of things. Wright (1992:35) reminds us that a critical realist approach to Scripture "leads to critical reflection on the products of our enquiry into 'reality', so that our assertions about 'reality' acknowledge their own provisionality. Knowledge, in other words, although in principle concerning realities independent of the knower, is never itself independent of the knower." Perhaps Ganzevoort (1996:56) is right in arguing for the reliability of scripture as the best way for understanding it.

Tradition

Scripture and tradition are often pitted against each other. When we think of Scripture, we think Protestant. When we think of tradition, we think Catholic. Often, in Protestantism, and specifically within Evangelicalism, we find a very terse dismisssal of tradition. Luther and his call for *sola scriptura* is Evangelicalism's mantra. What follows will attempt to describe the importance of tradition as representing a vital resource for Practical Theology, and will argue that, in fact, a fresh engagement with the different church traditions is a healthy route in moving beyond foundationalism.

When, in theological reflection, we dealt with the role of Scripture, we noted in some detail questions regarding inerrancy. We rejected inerrancy in our use of Scripture for various reasons, and noted its epistemological affinity with foundationalism. Yet, for sectors of the Christian community, the infallibility of tradition has also been a hotly contested issue. Hans Kung's (1970:27) lifelong battle with the magisterium within the Roman Catholic Church is well known. In his short little book entitled, *Infallible,* published in 1970, he seeks to bring to light some of the faults and dangers of infallibility for tradition, as represented by the magisterium. He states his view tersely: "The errors of the Church's teaching office have been numerous and grave; nowadays, when an open discussion can no longer be forbidden, they cannot be denied even by the more conservative theologians and church leaders."

He then proceeds to give a long list of the various errors that the Pope and the magisterium have committed, and where the church's tradition has in fact proved to be false.

The Roman Catholic Church is more forthright in admitting the infallibility of the Church's tradition, as interpreted and given voice in the magisterium. Evangelicals claim differently, but also are not immune to the charge of making their tradition infallible. McGrath (2000:31) notes that, what often happens, is an affirmation of the inerrancy of the evangelical tradition represented by the various Reformational confessions.

Without going into great detail, this can be witnessed in the debate regarding justification by faith, to which McGrath alluded. The fact that justification is concerned with how the gentiles are to be included as part of God's family and has very little to do with individual salvation, is now generally accepted by most Pauline scholars (Harink 2003:29). Luther's understanding of justification by faith is concerned more with medieval Catholicism than with what Paul actually said (Wright 1997:114). That some within Evangelicalism cannot accept this is perhaps due to the fact that they might give their confessional tradition too high a standing. This is demonstrated specifically in the work of John Piper's response to N.T. Wright's understanding of justification.

Despite all the debates around the inerrancy of tradition, whether overt or subtle, it still remains a vital tool for theological reflection, as McGrath (1991:21) notes:

> One of the greatest tragedies that has beset Protestant churches in the present century is a loss of corporate, long term memory, in favour of a time-scale that spans at best a generation. When you're trying to get somewhere, it helps to know where you've come from. Hindsight leads to foresight, as an enhanced awareness of possibilities dawns. There is a need to recover and value the hard won insights of earlier generations, and incorporate them into our thinking.

Negatively, a non-foundationalist perspective with regard to tradition would have to resist anyone who claims to accurately represent either the Bible, God, or any other inerrant position. Positively, a non-foundationalist approach toward tradition would affirm that tradition, represented by the Christian tradition, has been a vehicle for God

to speak to the world through his Spirit. Tradition seeks to embody, as best it can, the faith communities' understanding of God, and indeed even its participation with God in mission. There was a form of tradition that was located within the early Christian communities before Scripture was written. In fact, even after Scripture was written, it was the living tradition of the church that authorized which texts were deemed to be authoritative (Grenz & Franke 2001:115). The biblical texts were regarded as the vehicle through which the Spirit addressed the community. It was the illuminating work of the Spirit that brought forth the Scriptures from the community, and that illumination does not cease with the closing of the canon (2001:116). Therefore, the Spirit enables the church to apply the Scriptures afresh in its own context.

To understand the role of the Spirit is essential in understanding a non-foundationalist approach to tradition. Grenz and Franke (2001:117) explain:

> A nonfoundational understanding of Scripture and tradition locates ultimate authority only in the action of the triune God. If we must speak of a "foundation" of the Christian faith at all, then, we must speak of neither Scripture nor tradition in and of themselves, but only of the triune God who is disclosed in polyphonic fashion through Scripture, the church, and even the world.

As with Scripture, an ecumenical approach to tradition is another way to guard against a foundationalist approach to tradition. By listening to a variety of voices in an ecumenical spirit, we are able to guard against the abuse of knowledge and the insularity of one's own tradition. In the same way that we argued that a non-foundationalist approach to Scripture ought to be humble, so it is with tradition. In this way, we allow for the opportunity for mutual correction (Fackre 1998:118). We are far more likely to gain a correct understanding of what the Spirit might be saying through the churches, by listening to the multiple traditions within the churches. What is being affirmed here is a "community of communities" that are all legitimate expressions and understandings of the one true church (Webber 1999:85).

A non-foundational appropriation of the churches' tradition within a correlational hermeneutic must therefore reject a totalizing of one's own tradition, whether in confessional statements, or embodied in practice. Despite this, the Spirit still speaks through the church's tradition. In order to discern the voice of the Spirit through

tradition, one needs to maintain a humble and ecumenical position, consummate with a non-foundationalist epistemology.

The mediation of Scripture and tradition for Practical Theology

This is another point where Practical Theology walks on the boundaries, and is open to criticism as being far too eclectic. For, in order for practical theologians to engage with the Christian classics as part of a correlational hermeneutic, they must heed other theological traditions. This is even more difficult, as each tradition has its own hermeneutical positions and self-regulating conversations. But, this cannot be avoided. Hendriks (2004:29) lists how these disciplines are used in mediating the Christian classics of Scripture and tradition:

> The biblical disciplines of Old and New Testament Studies specialize in understanding the biblical text; Systematic Theology or Dogmatics have organized the content of Scripture in various ways using different methods; philosophical and comparative religious studies play a role; ethical debates have taken place; and church history tells the ongoing story of the church in the world.

To the researcher's mind, Practical Theology, without the aid of these disciplines, would remain seriously handicapped. Graham *et al.* (2005:7) argue that theological reflection has been extremely weak in its use of the traditional theological disciplines and has an "uneasy relationship with the study of the Bible" (2005:7). They further note that practical theologians are far more equipped in dealing with understanding local contexts and socio-economic realities than engaging with church history, doctrine and the Bible. They believe that the main cause is the separation of theological reflection from systematics, historical theology and the biblical disciplines in theological courses and curricula (2005:7). It is our contention that the rush to the practical in Practical Theology, as already noted, is partly to blame for the scepticism or even disdain toward the traditional disciplines.

The researcher believes that, in future, a far closer relationship between Practical Theology and the other theological disciplines must be worked out. It is also incumbent upon academic practical theologians to try to keep abreast of various developments within the other disciplines. As it was with the human sciences, a use of the other theological disciplines will most likely result in the use of secondary sources. It is also important to have access to archives and resources in the other

disciplines, which can be utilized with reference to the various pastoral concerns that are to be reflected upon.

A non-foundational critical correlational hermeneutic

In this section, an attempt was made to show how the two sources of a correlational hermeneutic engage with the human sciences and the Christian classics. It argued for a specific understanding of this correlation that remains open to mutual correction and affirmation (hence critical). This study sought to underpin the discussion by noting that, when engaging with both sources, a non-foundationlist approach must be taken. This move beyond foundationalism has been due to the post-modern shift and the hermeneutical turn. A non-foundationalist approach to epistemology leads to a rejection of understanding truth in an absolute sense, and is characterized by a chastened rationality seen in the position of critical realism. Taking these epistemo-logical concerns into account, both sources engage with each other and with the given pastoral concern (that has arisen out of experience in a local context). At this point, we move to the last section for our discussion, and conclude our hermeneutical circle – action.

5.4 PASTORAL RESPONSE

In this brief closing section, we bring our pastoral cycle to full circle. Moving from practise (the local experiential reality) to theory (correlational hermeneutic), we now return to practise. This pastoral cycle leads to real action and change in a real world. It is not good enough for theoretical proposals to remain theoretical. Here Practical Theology is affirmed as "inherently transformative" and seeks to transform life (Maddox 1990:667). As already noted, the limited nature of knowledge and our ability to understand reality, which a post-foundational approach requires, leads to an affirmation of the pastoral cycle, for the pastoral cycle has no end as it returns to practice in the pastoral response, which then becomes a source of theological reflection. It is here that the hope that a form of practical life wisdom emerges from one's "theological endeavour" (Nell 2011:8) which leads to a transforming, or transformative practise (Couture 1991:25).

A pastoral response, and a missional praxis-based Theology, moves out into the life and witness of the church and brings about aspects of God's eschatological future (Hendriks 2004:33). It is important for Practical Theology not just to rest when the theoretical work has been done, and when it has proposals for action. It must actually intervene in that pastoral concern (de Kock 2011:8). Miller-McLemore (2007:28) in a penetrating article entitled *The "Clerical" paradigm: a fallacy of misplaced concreteness* highlights the fact that Practical Theology has been particularly bad at this juncture.

> In descriptions of practical theology, interpretation has been key. Action and implementation are often afterthoughts, even though both of these are understood as important elements in the science of hermeneutics. Practical theologian Don Browning, paraphrasing Richard Bernstein and Hans-Georg Gadamer, says that in the practical wisdom necessary for ministry, "understanding, interpretation, *and application* are not distinct but intimately related." Major spokespersons in practical theology such as Browning and Farley, however, have had immense interest in the first two: understanding and interpretation. They have had less to say about "application."

It is important to remember the groundwork that was laid earlier in our discussion of Practical Theology's missional nature and theological reflection. It was argued that all of life is under the scope of God's mission and that He is missional by nature. The implication drawn was that all of life can come under the "scope" of Practical Theology. Any part of life can become the raw material of pastoral concern, as it arises out of local realities and real lived experience. As it was with our starting point, so it must be with our ending point. Hendriks (2004:33) argues that action should be expressed at five levels: personal, ecclesiastical, secular, scientific and ecological. These five dimensions are regarded as helpful in capturing the scope and breadth of theological reflection. However, the researcher thinks that reflection on a pastoral concern must not speak to all of these areas simultaneously. The given area from which a pastoral concern arises would also be the area where an intervention will be done. Of course, this does not mean that there will not be any implications for the other areas, but it does imply that it might not.

The importance of action, as the conclusion of the pastoral cycle, must not lead to a now static conclusion of the theological process. The important and neglected (Louw 2001:336) question for Practical Theology as to what we can hope for, and how we

do that, now rises to the fore. The process is circular, and intervention must lead to further reflection. We are never really finished as Veling (2005:7) notes:

> Practical Theology wants to keep our relationship with the world open, so that we are never quite "done" with things; rather, always undoing and redoing them, so that we can keep the "doing" happening, passionate, keen, expectant – never satisfied, never quite finished.

Hence, the proposals for action, and the action itself, will take on a largely provisional nature. It is also provisional in the sense that all action will ultimately find its fulfilment and perfection at the eschaton. When God comes to restore the earth and cosmos in all its dimensions, there will be a completion of all our good works. We act also because we believe that God will not obliterate all our good deeds and the earth that we now inhabit. God is in the business of restoration, not simply destruction.

Our intervention in people's real lives and the planet ought also to be conducted with a great deal of humility and sensitivity. Humility that knowledge can very easily be used to exploit and control, rather than liberate. Humble, also in the sense that it is God who is already acting, and it is the Triune God whose mission we are now joining.

We are also sensitive to people's real needs; we do not intervene in a colonial manner. By this is meant that we do not act out of a sense of our superiority and belief in the rightness of our knowledge; we act in partnership with, and for, the other.

At this point, the various ethical considerations as to how one brings about change and how one conducts oneself while acting, will be avoided. Certainly, at the secular or public level, there could be a call for action that might result in certain actions that could result in the law being broken. Equally so, reflection on the role of women in ministry in an ecclesial setting might require one to take a stand that might result in one's excommunication. These are difficult issues, which need to be evaluated in their own right. At this point, what is being argued for is simply that one must act once the theoretical reflection has taken place. One must act because Practical Theology is missional and, to be engaged in mission, is to act.

6   CONCLUSION

From the beginning, an attempt was sought to define what a practical theological approach that has moved beyond foundationalism, would look like. This was done by a critical appraisal of paradigms that sought to examine what foundationalism is from an epistemological perspective. This was done by examining its historical development from Descartes through to Kant, and an argument was presented that foundationalism was one of the central tenets of modernism, as expressed in the Enlightenment. Both rationalism and empiricism were influenced by this foundationalist paradigm.

Then, the post-modern critique of modernistic assumptions about knowledge and reality and how the modern project collapsed, was examined. A detailed discussion of the growth of non-foundationalism, which takes seriously the post-modern critique, was then explored. Then, it was proposed that a form of critical realism is a good option for moving beyond foundationalism.

The section that followed attempted to examine the discipline of Practical Theology in detail, in order to discover whether it had indeed moved beyond the modern foundationalist paradigm. However, before doing this, we sought to lay a definitional, methodological and historical foundation with regard to Practical Theology. Definitionally, three separate terms – Pastoral Theology, Practical Theology and Theological Reflection – were examined. Practical Theology was chosen, as referring to the more formal and academic dimensions, while theological reflection was used in a broader sense. It was noted that there are similarities between Practical Theology and theological reflection, but also important distinctions; the obvious being that anyone would be capable of doing some form of theological reflection.

Moving on from there, we sought to examine the historical development of Practical Theology as a discipline. This was done for two reasons. Firstly, methodological integrity was sought to place later proposals within their historical and disciplinarial context. Secondly, we wanted to demonstrate the move from an applied theological

methodology to a more praxis-based methodology consistent with a move beyond foundationalism.

This historical development involved examining Practical Theology within the broader theological conversation with regard to how Theology had become fragmented. Leaning heavily on the work of Farley, we tried to show how the discipline fragmented while, at the same time, pointing out the rise of Practical Theology as a sub-discipline within Theology as a whole. Then, it was noted that certain developments in the latter half of the 20th century led to a rethinking with regard to the nature of Practical Theology. Developments within Practical Philosophy, as well as influences from Liberation Theology, brought this on. The researcher concluded that Practical Theology is no longer viewed as an applied Theology, but rather one whose domain involves the very practical and earthly dimensions of our existence. It was demonstrated how Practical Theology had indeed made moves beyond foundationalism. Snapshots of certain developments in different regions of the world were given in an attempt to illustrate this.

Taking this shift beyond foundationalism in Practical Theology into account, engagement with the various methodological proposals that have arisen within Practical Theology was sought. The way this was done was to take three separate handbooks on Practical Theology that spanned two decades. The first was Poling and Miller's *Foundations for a Practical Theology of ministry,* published in 1985. The second was Ballard and Pritchard's *Practical Theology in action,* first published in 1996. The last was a book by Graham, Walton and Ward, entitled *Theological reflection: Methods,* published in 2005. In each book, the various methods that the authors discussed and interacted with were noted. An attempt was made to note the potential weak and strong points in terms of how they understood Practical Theology. On occasion, an attempt was also made to interact with how they had placed certain practical theologians within their methodological frameworks. The important manner in which Graham *et al.* had moved the conversation on, from not just academic concerns, with the term "theological reflection," was noted. It is the researcher's belief that they have opened up Practical Theology into a new dimension in terms of how its different methods ought to be considered. The comparisons of the three handbooks and their examinations of different methodologies again confirmed a move beyond

foundationalism in Practical Theology. A move to a more contextual-based approach to Practical Theology, the importance of a correlational hermeneutic, and the use of the pastoral cycle, all demonstrated this move beyond foundationalism.

After laying the above foundations, an attempt was made to flesh out in greater detail what a post-foundationalist approach would look like for the above developments. The missional discussion of Practical Theology was entered into by first examining the question of mission. The problem of missions and how they have been perceived was noted. An attempt was also made to place the missional question within an historical context. This was done with the help of David Bosch's *Transforming mission.* Bosch illustrates the various paradigms within mission – firstly in the Bible and then how it has been understood in church history. Flowing from this discussion, it was demonstrated how incorrect understandings of the church and her relationship to the kingdom can lead to a defunct Theology. It was also mentioned that one's understanding of personal salvation and cosmic redemption shapes one's views. This discussion led to a conclusion that mission is broader than the church, yet the church remains central. A further conclusion was that mission cannot be seen in a personal salvific sense only, but involves the whole of God's created order.

Then, we engaged with a Trinitarian understanding of mission and argued for the importance of understanding the missionary nature of the Triune God. This was done with the help of Newbigin and his views regarding the Father, the Son, and Spirit within mission. Leading on from understanding God as missional, it was argued that the church is also to be regarded as missional in its nature and purpose. The conclusions drawn from the engagement with the missional question (understood in a Trinitarian sense and with reference to the church) led to the conclusion that Practical Theology is also a missional discipline. As God and the church's mission is broad and involves all of life, so too are Practical Theology and its theological reflection broad and involve all of life. Practical Theology is at the service of God and the church in reflection upon, and participation in, God's mission in the world in all its varying dimensions. This could also be called a "holistic Practical Theology." The above missional framework provided a lens to examine the pastoral cycle, a correlational hermeneutic, and contextual approach consistent with a post-foundationalist approach.

It was mentioned that the pastoral cycle is the most helpful way to understand the theological reflective process, and one that is consistent with the provisional nature of our knowledge and non-foundationalism. The first stage of the pastoral cycle, as a starting point for reflection, was to look at the local situation and one's experience of that situation. In understanding this local experiential reality, one needs to take both local and global factors into account – hence a glocal approach to Practical Theology.

This pastoral concern is included in the second part of the pastoral cycle, which is of a more theoretical nature. Here, it was argued for a specific understanding of the correlational hernmeneutic that takes into account both the human sciences and the Christian classics. It was demonstrated that, in dealing with both the sciences and the Christian classics, one must take into account epistemological shifts and the decline of the Enlightenment paradigm. Therefore, the argument was for a non-foundationalist approach to both sides of the correlational hermeneutic. Once the raw material from the glocal experience of the pastoral concern is taken into dialogue correlationally with the human sciences and the Christian classics, a proposal for action must be decided upon. However, in order to complete the pastoral cycle, it must actually lead to action and some form of intervention. This ought to be done in a responsible and sensitive manner. This practise to theory, and back to practise again, the researcher believes is a praxis-based approach to Practical Theology, consistent with a move beyond foundationalism.

Indeed, Practical Theology has come a long way from the confines of the foundationalist modern paradigm. Its emphasis on the local, its critical correlational approach and emphasis on the pastoral cycle are a few examples of how the post-modern critique has been taken seriously, and a truly post-foundationalist approach to Practical Theology has emerged, and is emerging.

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