The Brazilian Jesus:
In Search of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian Context

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor of Philosophy
aan de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.dr. V. Subramaniam,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
den Faculteit Religie en Theologie
op maandag 24 September om 11.45 uur
in de aula van de universiteit,
De Boelelaan 1105

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Acknowledgments

This dissertation is a work on Brazilian contextual Christology. The Brazilian context is my original context. It is the country where I was born, brought up, and had most of my theological education. Interestingly, precisely when I was writing about my own context my context had changed several times. I started to write my dissertation when living in the Netherlands, then moved to Scotland and finished it in England. Every place I have lived and every culture I have encountered had an impact on me. Those changes have helped me to understand the wide Reformed context where the Brazilian Protestant church came from, but also they have helped me to perceive what the differences and specific Brazilian characteristics are. Thus, this dissertation is in more than one sense the end of a long journey. To undertake this journey, however, would have been a tough experience had I not, on the way, been supported by different organisations and so many kind people.

Firstly, I was supported by the Kerk in Actie, whose generous financial support gave me the possibility of living in the Netherlands for a period of my research. I am also grateful to the Church of Scotland which through the Ministries Council gave me the conditions to continue my studies. In every country that I lived during this period I was supported by local congregations and I am grateful to all of them, Castrolanda (Evangelical Reformed Church) in Brazil, Bergsingel Kerk (PKN) in Rotterdam, Carnwadric Parish Church (Church of Scotland) in Glasgow and St. Ninian’s Corby (Church of Scotland) in England.

Many people helped me in different ways such as welcoming me to their homes, giving me encouragement, listening to my thoughts and sharing with me insights and valuable criticisms. The list could be much longer and include many other names but I would like to mention at least some of them who were especially helpful, Marianne Paas, Grietje ten Hoeve, Frans and Janny de Jager, João Rickly, Jan-Peter Prengen, Ferdy and Netty van der Vinne, Henk Kassies, Tjeerd de Boer and my two English revisers, Jairo Machado and Kenneth Bell. Among the many who were important on my journey there were some that were fundamental and they are all part of the same family, the family
Grosheide. Elbert, Dinie, Erik, and Frank have made my journey more pleasant and their friendship is one of the most valuable gifts that I have.

I am also grateful to the VU, the many professors, lecturers, and students that through their comments and criticisms made me think more sharply about specific topics and themes. Among the scholars that especially encouraged me, challenged me and helped me to bring this work to an acceptable academic level, I am mostly grateful to prof. dr. Rudolf von Sinner, whose ideas and comments were fundamental in great part of my work, and especially my two supervisors, prof. dr. Martien Brinkman and prof. dr. Hans de Wit. To work with prof. de Wit and prof. Brinkman was a real joy and they have taught me much more than the dissertation may reveal.

Last but not least is my immediate family. My wife and my children have had an outstanding patience and kindness to me. During many meals together my dissertation was a topic and they showed interest and curiosity even when I was not so enthusiastic about my own work. You are the reason and the source of my perseverance. Especially my wife, Ingrid Machado, has endured the side effects of being married to a PhD student. I would like to dedicate this work to you as a sign of my love and my gratitude for your patience with me during this long journey. Your companionship gave me courage to dare to start and the strength to get to the end of this journey.
1. Introduction

This dissertation is a work of contextual Christology. Its main goal is to contribute to the development of a model that enables the dialogue between theologians, churches and groups with different Christological viewpoints by finding the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context. It is comprised of seven chapters. The second chapter presents the methodological standpoints that are used in this dissertation. The third chapter deals with the first Protestant Christology that was brought to Brazil. It is the Christology of the North-American missionaries, which was embraced by the first Protestant Brazilian ministers and became the main Christology in Brazil. The fourth chapter points out the emergence of the Liberation Theology and its Christology, showing how it tries to address the changes in the Brazilian context. The fifth chapter presents the efforts to address new issues related to the Afro-Brazilian presence in Brazil and how, the Negra theology tried to build a new Christology to deal with these issues. The sixth chapter shows how the Neo-Pentecostal movement approaches the same issues but with a very different response, even though both are working with the same basic mindset. Finally, the seventh chapter presents a summary and conclusions of my research. But before being able to address all this, we need to illuminate what we will understand by context/contextuality. Therefore, we have this introduction which consists of four sections. The first section explores the issue of contextuality. It does this by dealing with the possibility of a contextual Christology. The main question is what does the term ‘contextual’ mean in the expression ‘contextual Christology’ or ‘contextual theology’? What is the difference between a Christology that is labelled contextual and a Christology that is not? In other words, is there an a-contextual theology? It presents the historical background of the consciousness of contextuality in Christology and it shows its two forms: contextualisation and inculturation. The second section explores in further detail the differences and similarities between contextualisation and inculturation. The main question here is what approach is the most suitable to be applied to the Brazilian context. In other words, the choice for a kind of contextual approach must take in consideration the context where it will be applied. Attention is given to contextuality in its broader sense:
possibility, history and interaction; but also its applicability to the Brazilian context. In that way, it intends to present one of the core terms of this dissertation: ‘contextual’. The first section tries to answer the more general question, namely, what does ‘contextual’ mean, while the second section tries to answer what ‘contextual’ methodology is the most suitable to the Brazilian context. The third section presents the plan of a Brazilian contextual Christology. In the fourth and last section I articulate my main research question. To know whether the goal of building a Brazilian Christological model is achieved depends on how someone approaches the Brazilian context and identifies its main issues. Thus, after defining what contextual means it might be possible to indicate how a Brazilian Protestant Christology looks like and what its main components are.

1.1. The Current Inculturation/Contextualisation Debate

The term ‘contextualisation’ has only recently been linked to theology in general and Christology in particular in the history of theology. ‘Inculturation’ was not used for describing the encounter between theology and culture until a few decades ago. The term contextualisation and the verb contextualise were introduced into the debate about theological education within the Theological Education Fund (TEF) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1972 as a proposal for reform in theological education as a substitute to the term indigenisation. Whereas, the term inculturation comes from a play with the term “enculturation” from cultural Anthropology and “incarnation” from theology. It was used for the first time in 1962 by a professor of the Gregorian University of Rome and became later very prominent in Vatican Council II where it represented a criticism to the too Western character of the church in the non-Western world.

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1 Herman Brandt says that in 1971 there was a congress in Bossey about contextual theology in H. Brandt, ‘O povo como portador da promessa de Deus. A contribuição da teologia contextual’ in Estudos Teológicos 39/2 (1999), 167-185, esp. 169.


Despite the fact that both terms have only recently been used to qualify theology, it does not mean that the process of inculturation or contextualisation has only begun in the second half of the last century. Theology was always contextual not only in the sense that it was produced in a determined context, written in a specific language and conditioned by its own worldview, but also as a theology that responds to and challenges its particular context. The various portraits of Christ in the history of the church and of the arts are clear examples of new developments in the representation of Christ for and from different contexts and of how different cultures understand and represent Jesus in significantly different ways. All the formulations and theological Christian statements are contextual and at the same time are results of an encounter between a determined culture and the gospel’s message. Theology was, from the beginning, contextual. In the words of Bevans, ‘There is no such thing as “theology”; there is only contextual theology.’

The first big challenge for the Christian church was to relate its Jewish origin and its basis on the Hebrew Bible to the increasing presence of gentiles and their Greek philosophical mindset. In retrospect, the main role of the ecumenical councils was to express the Christian doctrine in a way that did not betray its Jewish origin as well as the Old Testament’s full account of the expectation of the Messiah and, at the same time, to find a language that could be understood by people influenced by the Greco-Roman worldview. All of the following developments in the Christological dogma came from this difficulty of articulating these two realities in a way that was acceptable for the

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whole church and faithful to the biblical witnesses. The richness of Christian mission was its ability to speak to different cultures and contexts. However, this process was very complex. On the one hand, the Christian message was not circumscribed to the Jewish community because it had been able to incorporate other worldviews and enlarge its horizons toward the Greco-Roman world. The Apostle Paul points to the deep grounds of this missionary strategy: ‘... I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.’ Nevertheless, on the other hand, the Greek philosophy and the Roman law ended up having a strong impact on Christian theology. In other words, it was always a process of double transformation. The Christian faith influenced the Greco-Roman culture and the Western world in a very remarkable way whilst being equally influenced by that context. It does not mean that the Christian faith surrendered to the Greek philosophy. This relationship was very often complicated, but the outcome is neither a pure Greek philosophy, nor a pure Judaism. Likewise, there was not a pure gospel that entered in contact with the Gentiles’ culture, but a gospel, which was formed through the telling and retelling of Jesus’ stories in different contexts and to different audiences and which was also influenced by those cultures.

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8 M. E. Brinkman, ‘Where is Jesus “at home”? Hermeneutical reflections on the contextual Jesus’ in: *Journal of Reformed Theology* 1 (2007), 107-119. He says: “In the Greco-Roman world, Jesus was never proposed as a purely local hero who was so bound up with his immediate environment that his significance was also limited to his direct vicinity. Had that been the case, his significance would never have been proclaimed in other cultures.’
9 I Corinthians 9:22
biblical canon is already a kind of syncretism or a result of this encounter between Jesus’ message with the culture or cultures of the first century of the Common Era. The first Christians needed to include and adapt the gospel’s Jewish background to new contexts and find ways of discovering what was essential and communicate it to other peoples. In sum, theology was and still is contextual.

What is relatively new is the awareness of how much theology in general and Christologies in particular are influenced by context and culture. What is important at this point is to understand why this consciousness of the contextualisation of theology took place only in the last decades, or in other words, what are the motivations that have led theologians to acknowledge that theology is contextual.

To affirm that theology is contextual and that it is influenced by the surrounding culture was a heretical statement for many centuries. Pelikan in his introduction to his *The Christian Tradition: a history of the development of doctrine* speaks about the strangeness for many orthodox Christians of a history of the doctrine. He illustrates it by citing Eusebius who said that "orthodox Christian doctrine did not really have a history, having been true eternally and taught primitively; only heresy had a history, having arisen at particular times and through the innovation of particular teachers". From Eusebius’ point of view a contextual theology is heretical. Theology needs to be universal, catholic, apostolic, i.e. taught by the first great apostles and theologians, in case it intends to be considered legitimately orthodox theology. However, a contextual theology affirms categorically that its development takes place in a specific context and that that theology is relevant for that context. Thus, it is clear that contextual theology works with other perspectives on orthodoxy, culture, place, syncretism, and so forth. Then, the first issue is to try to understand which developments have guided the theological thinking to these changes of perspective.

Vatican Council II gave the most important impulse to thinking theology as contextual in the Roman Catholic Church. The Council of Trent was an obstacle to inculturation because it was held within a context of combat against the Reformation’s
emphasis on National churches with their different languages and specific cultural accents. On the other hand, Vatican Council II as a whole had a clear concern for the updating (aggiornamento) of the faith to the new situation and context of the second half of the 20th century in Europe and abroad. The decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* recognises that culture has always influenced the reception of the gospel. The decree *Ad Gentes* emphasised the need to adapt the theological thinking to the various social circumstances. The pastoral document *Gaudium et Spes* looks at the relationship between gospel and culture positively. The encounter between gospel and various cultures is seen by the first time as a beneficial process that has enriched the comprehension of the gospel by the church. The apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI in 1975 *Evangelii Nuntiandi* recognises the importance of particular churches to the universal church. These four documents opened the space for the awareness of the contextuality of theology.

In Protestant's circles, the ecumenical councils and debates were the channels that made the churches aware of the importance of recognising contextuality in theology and of contextualising the theological reflection. The ecumenical discussions helped churches to perceive each other as part of a unity in diversity and appreciate that their distinctive doctrines are very often complementary. In the discussion about theological education, contextuality was seen as an important concept, mainly due to discussions within the several committees of theological education around the world that the TEF of the WCC supported during that period.

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17 R. J. Schreiter, *Constructing local theologies*, Marynoll, New York: Orbis, (1985) 2008, 1-2; M. F. Miranda, *Inculturação da fé*, 25-29; J. Pelikan, *Jesus through centuries*, 231. Pelikan alludes to another decree of Vatican Council II: *Nostra Aetate*, which emphasises the importance of approaching other religions more positively, thus, drawing the attention to the fact that the relationships between gospel and culture and between gospel and other religions are inextricably connected.
It is interesting to note that for the Protestant churches locality was not an issue, because since the beginning Protestant churches were national and, very often, local. The particularity and the differences among churches were not as important as for Roman Catholics. In other words, Protestants were already used to speak in terms of ‘churches’ in plural meanwhile Roman Catholics were used to speak about the ‘Church’ in the singular. When Protestants began to look for unity in the ecumenical movement, they realised the importance of contextuality in the theological reflection.\textsuperscript{20} Meanwhile within the Roman Catholic Church it was the recognition that the churches existed in a plurality of forms that led Catholics to perceive contextuality.

Obviously, inculturation and contextualisation did not appear suddenly in the theological scenario. The Council Vatican II and the discussions of the TEF were part of an ongoing process rather than the starting point of inculturation and contextualisation. It is necessary to go a step back to understand this process. Firstly, it is important to highlight the importance of decolonisation in those discussions about context and local churches.

The growth of Christian churches around the world is the result of missionary work from the Western world, mainly in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries. This missionary impulse came from the idea that it was necessary to do something for people who were living and dying without access to the benefits of the Western social, economic, political and spiritual developments. Education, democracy, capitalist system of production and theological reasoning were considered indispensable for every nation of the world and the only possible way to achieve a welfare society; a society where all the people could have means to live peacefully and happily together. Many people in the West regarded these aspects as an outcome of living according to Christian values and they believed that without Christianity these developments would not have taken place in Western society. Despite good intentions, the missionary work went hand in hand with colonialism.\textsuperscript{21} At the end of the period of colonialism, many churches became independent. The decline of colonialism in the political arena went together with the independence of the colonial churches and the belief that churches in the Third World

needed to be administrated by national leaderships. Initially, this independence was neither theological nor intellectual, but rather it only meant that these churches were run by nationals.\(^{22}\) However, this new situation of independence and national leadership gave space to the creation of a new sense of identity. Several non-Western churches around the world began to criticise the missionary model as part of an entire colonisation project and to fight for a new reframing of those local churches according to their own context in all areas rather than in the administrative area only. Moreover, they communicated with each other more frequently. The relationship, which was always from North to South, from missionary agencies to missionary fields, began to be more intensified along the lines of South to South. Churches of the Global South began to have meetings and conversations discussing the issues present in their own contexts and how they could work together to face the challenges that were their own.\(^{23}\) To continue this process a new discourse and hermeneutics were necessary. Thus, a postcolonial hermeneutics became necessary which would give voice to the voiceless in the former colonies. Peoples that were considered unable to produce their own theological reasoning began to reflect on and from their own context.\(^{24}\) The postcolonial hermeneutics had an influence not only on the way that ex-colonies interpreted themselves but also the way ex-colonisers comprehended the role of power in interpretation and in the standards of Western scientific knowledge.\(^{25}\) Owing to this, the emergence of a decolonising enterprise of the churches in the South urged those


churches in the Western world to criticise their own imperialism, including their theological imperialism. Consequently, they tried to develop a new methodology and hermeneutics more appropriate to their context, i.e. a postcolonial discourse and hermeneutics. Thus, Western theologians began to reflect more critically on their eurocentrism and orientalism and imperialistic attitudes and thinking present in their missionary work.

Another factor that contributed to the awareness of context’s role in the construction of theologies was globalisation. There are different approaches to and definitions of the character and extension of globalisation. Some authors are very critical of globalisation seeing it as a new form of domination and colonialism. But despite all the criticisms, globalisation is a real contemporary phenomenon. ‘It points to the process that results in undermining the nation state and its sovereignty by transnational economic networks, alliances and businesses’.

Globalisation has to do with world economy, however it influences strongly all the cultural and social aspects of different nations. There is not only a globalised economy but also a globalised society. Values and habits are spread throughout the world in a way that an African can eat an American sandwich and a European can buy South American costumes. As a reaction or consequence of globalisation, a search for identity arose among different nations. People see a huge amount of products and habits from other nations entering into their lives through the free market and the media and, therefore, they react trying to define or redefine their identity more sharply. A globalised world is a world without borders, where people from different origins know, communicate and interact with each other, but at the same time the differences among them are not more as clear or evident. At this point, many cultures began to look for their own identity and this phenomenon is not only perceptible in the ex-colonies of the

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26 C. Furtado, ‘Globalização das estruturas econômicas e identidade nacional’ in: Estudos Avançados, 16/6 (1992), 55-64.
South but also in the nations of the North. In the global North, in addition to the process of globalisation there is a considerable number of immigrants from the former colonies or poorer countries in search of better opportunities of work and welfare. Those immigrants struggle for defining or re-defining their identity in the Western world and make western people to question themselves about their own identities as well.

In a globalised society where the communication is intense and contact with people from different continents and languages is quite normal, it is necessary to develop new strategies and skills to overcome communication barriers. For this purpose, it was and still is important to work with an intercultural hermeneutics. Intercultural hermeneutics is a way to bridge the gap between the sharp cultural differences in meaning. In this process, it becomes clearer that difficulties in communication are, very often, the result of different meanings and perspectives, which are shaped by culture, rather than only the result of using different languages. Nevertheless, intercultural hermeneutics is not an isolated phenomenon, but rather an outcome of a long process of developments in the hermeneutics studies in general. In this development, hermeneutics turned its attention to the role that senders’ and receivers’ pre-understandings play in the communicative process.

Undoubtedly, this hermeneutical awareness of the role of the reader and his context in the process of communication has its own background as well. The crisis of

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31 R. Schreiter, A nova catolicidade, 31-50. H. M. Vroom, ‘Conclusion. Contextual theology revisited,’ 225-229. Vroom points to the fact that until the 20th century philosophers and theologians recognised the differences of understanding in different cultures but they thought that these differences were not an obstacle to a clear understanding of what the others meant to say, esp. 225-226.
the epistemology of the Enlightenment is, in great part, the base for the emergence of this new hermeneutics called post-modern. The awareness of the weakness of paradigms of modern Western science as the neutrality of scientists, the scientific objectivity of knowledge and the ideal of seeking the absolute Truth lost much of their estimation in the academy. However, some critics attacked the contextualisation and inculturation of theology as being too relativist and a natural outcome of postmodernism, which those critics considered a negative development. In fact, contextualisation cannot be reduced to a mere effect of postmodernism. However, theologians engaged in contextual theology must avoid relativism or contextualism.

There are two important historical processes behind contextual theology. The first historical event was the decolonisation and the redefinition of the space and influence of the West in the configuration of the world both economically and intellectually. The second historical development was the globalisation and consequently the intense contact among different nations, and the need for a redefinition of boundaries and identity.

Along with this historical process, at the intellectual level, there were changes of perspectives on the role and definition of hermeneutics. Firstly, there was the emergence of postcolonial discourse, which criticises the imperialism of the West and intends to give voice to the marginalised people of the world that were voiceless during the domination period. This perspective was parallel to decolonisation. The second development is the intercultural hermeneutics, which highlights the differences of meanings that shape a specific culture and the impossibility of bridging completely this

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36 H. M. Vroom, ‘Understanding the gospel contextually,’ 39-41. Vroom emphasises Marx’s critique of culture as one of the two most important bases for the awareness of contextuality in theology. I believe that it is possible to trace a parallel between Marx’s critique of culture and postcolonial discourse. J. Rieger relates postcolonial discourse to Marxist critiques in his article: ‘Libertando o discurso sobre Deus: Pós-colonialismo e o desafio das margens’ in: *Estudos de Religião* 22/34 (2008), 84-103, especially page 93.
gap. Intercultural hermeneutics can be linked to globalisation and the intensification of communication among different cultures. Both have their turning point in the discredit of the modern scientific ideal, mainly, the neutrality and objectiveness of the knowledge and, consequently, a change of focus from the object to the subject and from empiricism to hermeneutics.\footnote{H. M. Vroom, ‘After the Christian era: the European context’ in: One gospel – many cultures: case studies and reflections on cross-cultural theology. Amsterdam - New York: Rodopi, 2003, 63-81; R. Schreiter, ‘Globalization, postmodernity, and the new catholicity,’ 20-22.}

In sum, the awareness of the contextuality of theology originated, on the one hand, from decolonising and postcolonial discourse and, on the other hand, from globalisation and intercultural hermeneutics.

**1.2. Contextualisation or Inculturation?**

Many scholars either use the terms contextualisation and inculturation interchangeably or do not perceive sharp differences in meaning between them. However, there are important differences and they were already the reason for disagreements among Latin American theologians and other third world theologians.\footnote{J. H. Cone, ‘From Geneva to São Paulo: a dialogue between black theology and Latin American liberation theology’ in: Black theology: a documentary history, vol 2: 1980-1992. Markinoll: Orbis, 1993, 371-387; J. van Nieuwenhove & B. Klein Goldewijk, ‘Derde wereldtheologie,’ 15-17.} Nowadays, there are efforts to overcome the differences and try to look at them both as two sides of the same coin or two important emphases or methods to work on the context.\footnote{J. J. Tamayo-Acosta, Nuevo paradigma teológico, Madrid: Trotta, 2004, 37-43; R. J. Schreiter, Constructing local theologies, 12-16; D. B. Stinton, Jesus of Africa: voices of contemporary African christology, New York: Maryknoll, 2004, 49-51.} Tamayo-Costa, for example, looks at the difference between Liberation theology in Latin America and inculturation in Africa and Asia as two models or tendencies of contextual theology.\footnote{J. J. Tamayo-Acosta, Nuevo paradigma teológico, 38.} Undeniably, to understand the whole discussion, it is important to trace the dissimilarities.

Historically, both terms were used to replace the term indigenisation, which emphasised the acceptance of the gospel in traditional cultures.\(^{41}\) Indigenisation seemed for many theologians in Latin America, Africa and Asia a paternalistic and stigmatising term that carried the connotation of superiority of Western culture.\(^{42}\) However, they arose in different contexts. Meanwhile, the term inculturation appeared in the discussions of Vatican II and contextualisation appeared in the ecumenical debates about theological education in the TEF within the WCC, dominated by the Protestants and the Orthodox Church.\(^{43}\) Nowadays, it is no longer possible to classify inculturation theology as a Roman Catholic theology and contextual theology as a Protestant one. Nevertheless, their past origins can help to explain specific nuances and the emphases of these two approaches.

Theologically, they have two distinct starting points. On the one hand, contextualisation emphasises the contrasts between sin-redemption and the distance between God’s Kingdom and the human world while, on the other hand, inculturation defends a more positive vision about humankind based on the creation-incarnation doctrines, where the beauty and goodness of the world is emphatically maintained and sin is not perceived as determinant.\(^{44}\) It is possible to find a link between the Protestant line of thinking from Luther to Barth, namely of a sharp distinction between sin-grace and the more usual Catholic perspective of continuity between nature-grace.\(^{45}\) Another way of expressing this theological difference in the relationship between religion and culture is comparing them with the Christ’s offices. In inculturation the offices of priest
and king are accentuated while in contextualisation the emphasis falls on the prophetic office.\footnote{M. E. Brinkman, \textit{De niet westerse Jezus}, 19-20 [\textit{The non-western Jesus}, 3-4]; See also: M. E. Brinkman, 'Church and politics: remaining ecumenical divergences?' in: D. van Keulen \& M. E. Brinkman (eds.), \textit{Christian faith and violence}, Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2005, vol.2, 247, for the prophetic role of church in the world.}

From the hermeneutical standpoint, contextualisation is related to postcolonial discourse and the criticisms of culture and the question of power behind cultural discourse in general and theological discourse in particular,\footnote{J. Rieger, 'Theology and mission between neocolonialism and postcolonialism,' 211. Rieger criticises inculturation for not challenging cultural power.} while inculturation is better understood from the perspective of intercultural hermeneutics\footnote{Antonio relates postcolonial discourse to inculturation, however his definition of inculturation is very broad and includes what here is named as contextualisation. E. P. Antonio, 'Introduction: inculturation and postcolonial discourse' in: E. P. Antonio (ed.), \textit{Inculturation and postcolonial discourse in African theology}, New York: Peter Lang, 2006, 1-28.} and the need to comprehend the differences between cultures and to find out the parameter for defining identity. Pranger says, 'while inculturation tends to locate theology in terms of “culture”, i.e., in relation to patterns of cultural differences and similarities, contextual theologians generally perform their analysis in socioeconomic and political terms, i.e., in terms of social, political, and economic influences and differences of power and control over the lives and consciousness of persons and their communities.'\footnote{J. H. Pranger, \textit{ Redeeming tradition}, 168. See also M. E. Brinkman, \textit{De niet westerse Jezus}, 22 [\textit{The non-western Jesus}, 6].}

From the definition of culture, contextualisation speaks about culture as a more dynamic process where struggles for power, hegemony and final authority play a very important role, while inculturation tends to look at culture in a more static way viewing it as a given reality.\footnote{R. Schreiter, 'Globalization, postmodernity, and the new catholicity,' 27.} This does not mean that inculturation ignores the issue of power within the culture or that the contextualisation is restricted to Marx's critique of culture.\footnote{M. E. Brinkman, 'Contextual theology,' 118-120; M. E. Brinkman, \textit{The non-western Jesus}, 3-6; M. Frederiks, 'World Christianity,' 11-12; J. H. Pranger, \textit{ Redeeming tradition}, 176-178.} The issue is not restricted to differences between positivistic or negativistic
views of culture using the terminology consecrated by Niebuhr of “Christ against culture” or “The Christ of culture,”52 but rather a difference of emphasis.

Geographically, contextualisation is associated with Latin American theology and Liberation theology. Liberation was very often used as a synonymous for contextualisation in contrast to inculturation.53 Surely, there is a correspondence between the criticisms of the economic, social and political systems inside the culture in the contextualisation and the perspective of liberation theology.54 At least regarding its origins, there is a connexion between Latin America and the model of contextual-liberation theologies, while, Asian and African contextual theologies are related to the model of contextual-inculturation.55 The Latin American context and particularly that of Brazil are formed by different cultures, namely, African, Indian and European, living in the same space. In Brazil, the Christian faith was imposed on African and Indians through a long process that spanned over five centuries. This process included cultural negotiations and concessions and culminated in a consolidated Christian majority.56 While in African and Asia the cultures are locally more uniform. In several places Christianity flourished, but not without disputes and tensions, and in many places, Christians still form a minority group.57

The goal of presenting this dissimilarity is not to make a clear cut between Latin America and Africa/Asia, but rather to point out that there were differences of emphases between these two models of doing contextual theology. It is very important that the way of defining or naming the theological approach comes from the specificity of each context. Given the Brazilian history of Christianisation and its present context, contextualisation seems to be more appropriate.58

However, it is not possible to speak about contextualisation in Brazil without referring to syncretism. Missionaries and theologians in the past considered syncretism as a deformation of the pure Christianity forming an amalgam with other religions. Only

53 D. B. Stinton, Jesus of Africa, 49-51.
54 R. J. Schreiter, A nova catolicidade, 132.
55 M. Frederiks, ‘World Christianity,’ 11.
57 M. E. Brinkman, ‘Church and politics,’ 258.
recently, the term came up again in the theological discussion as a concept that could be useful to facilitate the comprehension of the process of interreligious dialogue and of intercultural communication.\textsuperscript{59} There are different uses for the label syncretism.\textsuperscript{60} Firstly, syncretism is used as a synonym for impure religion or adulterate religion. In fact, this is the most common sense of the word. Since the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century, the Protestant missionaries and Roman Catholic Church in Brazil used the term in this way when they labelled Christianity in Brazil as syncretic.\textsuperscript{61} The Roman Catholic Church in Brazil, from the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, also began to combat against the popular religiosity in Brazil labelling it as syncretistic.\textsuperscript{62} Nevertheless, syncretism in this negative sense was not only used by Protestant missionaries or Catholic priests, who wanted to reform Brazilian religion, but also by scholars that intended to describe the character of Brazilian religiosity from a neutral approach.\textsuperscript{63}


\textsuperscript{60} For didactic reasons will be presented three different uses of the term syncretism that are helpful to describe the way that popular religions were (are) looked at in Brazil. ‘Religions’ in plural here points to different religions among Brazilian people, such as Catholicism and Candomblé. For a detailed discussion of syncretism applied to Afro-Brazilian religions see A. M. L. Soares, \textit{Interfaces da revelação: pressupostos para uma teologia do sincretismo religioso no Brasil}, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2003, 45-69; For a broader analysis of the concept of syncretism see L. Boff, \textit{Igreja carisma e poder}, 193-223.


\textsuperscript{63} M. A. Camurça, ‘Entre sincretismos e “guerras santas”: dinâmicas e linhas de força do campo’ in: \textit{Revista USP} 81/março-maio (2009), 173-185. The idea of neutrality in academic research is considered, nowadays, an ideal rather than a reality. What is important for assuring the academic character of theology is that the norms or theological statements are held not as unquestionable principles but rather as principles that are open to discussion and to possible corrections or emendations. About the neutrality and normativity in the study of religion see T. A. Lewis. ‘The inevitability of normativity in the study of religion: theology in religious studies’ in: D. L. Bird & S. G. Smith, \textit{Theology and religious studies in higher education: global perspectives}, London: Continuum, 2009, 87-98; H. M. Vroom ‘Theology and religious studies: progress and relevance’ in: M. E. Brinkman, N. F. M. Schreurs, H. M. Vroom & C. J. Wethmar, \textit{Theology between church, university and society}, Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003, 88-105; H. M. Vroom, ‘Is not all contextual understanding of the gospel syncretism?’ 274-287.
More recently, anthropologists and sociologists began to use the term syncretism more positively as just a description of the encounter between two or more religions. For them, syncretism points to a specific group coping with another religion. Syncretism explains how they responded to new demands and challenges that were put before them. Thus, it implies a hermeneutical process of re-reading and perceiving anew what their own tradition had to offer as well as to absorb as ideas and experiences that were offered by the other religion. In this way, syncretism points to the creativity of a group in a changing situation. In recent decades, some studies are seeking to explore the whole process of syncretism in greater depth. They are asking why is there this form of syncretism and not another one. Thus, they are going a step further than just describing syncretism and appreciating the creativity involved in it.

The third use of the term has a more theological meaning. It is used as a substitute to inculturation. It recognises what anthropologists say about syncretism and they accept it, moreover, they are interested in the theological implications of syncretism in general and also of each particular syncretism. In this regard, these theologians are interested in thinking about criteria for syncretism; should there be criteria at all and if so which criteria must be supported? In addition to that, they want to analyse critically the strong and weak points of a specific syncretism. They do not criticise syncretism per se, on the contrary, they believe that a syncretism between two

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67 Diego Irarrázaval recognises the value of the concept but he is afraid of negative connotation that the term has. Therefore, he prefers the term symbiosis. See D. Irarrázaval, ‘Salvação indígena e afro-americana’ in: L. E. Tomita, J. M. Vigil & M. Barros, Teologia Latino-Americana pluralista da libertação, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2006, 61-88, esp. 84-87.
religions can be more appropriate to cope with a specific context than what each of them were before their encounter.\textsuperscript{68} Walter Hollenweger, for instance, developed the concept of ‘Responsible Syncretism’.\textsuperscript{69} Hollenweger fundamentally states that every church and consequently its theology are syncretistic. Even the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament alike, presents forms of syncretism.\textsuperscript{70} The issue, then, is not to avoid any sort of syncretism which is effectively impossible, but rather to use the methods of biblical authors who are in constant dialogue with their culture. These authors would very often accept their language and mythological background, whilst, at the same time, modifying and correcting them to make the Christian core values to resonate. For Hollenweger ‘there needs to be not only one syncretism but many, depending on the partners with whom we speak.’\textsuperscript{71}

Syncretism can be used as a substitute for inculturation, especially in some contexts. Inculturation gives the idea that there was a pure religion that was received by a pure culture.\textsuperscript{72} Of course, theologians that work with inculturation issues are aware of that and, in spite of continuing to use the term, they clearly state that there is no pure religion, because every religion is already inculturated and that every culture has already encountered one or more religions. In fact, dialogue among cultures is always an interreligious dialogue because all the cultures are profoundly influenced by religious

\textsuperscript{68} D. Irarrázaval, ‘Salvação indígena e afro-americana,’ 86-87.
\textsuperscript{72} ‘The bondage between religion and culture is intrinsic. Therefore, the phenomenon of inculturation of a new religion must be considered problematic, since religion and culture do not exist in abstraction or isolation. Quite to the contrary from the union of a new religion and an old culture, in reality, a new and diverse culture should be born.’ M. C. L. Bingemer, ‘Religions and the dialogue among cultures: The Brazilian challenge’ in: Studies in Interreligious Dialogue 16/1 (2006), 72-88, esp. 77; See also A. M. L. Soares, Interfaces da revelação, 83-91; A. M. L. Soares, ‘Valor teológico do sincretismo numa perspectiva pluralista’ in: J. M. Vigil, L. E. Tomita & M. Barros (orgs.), Teologia pluralista libertadora intercontinental, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2008, 113-135, esp. 115-117.
systems. The results of a deep concern for the culture and its religious framework will involve in any sense a study of syncretism.\textsuperscript{73} Syncretism and inculturation could be viewed as complementary. The ecclesial community proposes to inculturate the message while syncretism points to the way that the people received the message.\textsuperscript{74}

In sum, contextualisation is a suitable term to apply to the studies of Brazilian religious situation because it helps to deal with the complexities of the Brazilian reality with different cultures and religions that were, and very often still are, forced to accommodate to the new context.\textsuperscript{75} Nevertheless, this accommodation resulted in a syncretism, which needs to be taken seriously when building a contextual theology in Brazil.\textsuperscript{76} To take it seriously means that this syncretism is not regarded as a negative thing in itself, but rather that this syncretism needs to be approached from different perspectives to be well evaluated.\textsuperscript{77} In order to analyse the different cultures present in Brazil and the syncretism that was developed, it is helpful to use tools of intercultural hermeneutics and intercultural theology.\textsuperscript{78}

An issue that needs to be addressed is the methodology that will be used. Bevans and Schreiter wrote brilliant works about the different methodologies for building


\textsuperscript{74} A. M. L. Soares, \textit{Interfaces da revelação}, 246. In this context Soares uses the Andrés Torres Queiruga neologism ‘inreligionisation’.


\textsuperscript{77} This theme is explored in Chapter 5 and 6.

contextual theology. Bevans concludes his book saying that the choice of a method for contextual theology depends on the context too. Thus, what is important in this study is to find a method that is appropriate when working with the Brazilian context. Therefore, it needs to be highlighted that in other contexts other methodologies may probably be more appropriate.

Brazil is a multicultural nation inhabited by African, Indigenous and Western peoples who came in different times and for different reasons to live in this country of continental dimensions. Social mobility and fast urbanisation processes are the marks of this country in the last century. The traditional religiosity and popular culture struggle to survive in an environment strongly influenced by the modern Western patterns of life and its values. In order to understand this context it is necessary to use more than a simple methodological tool. It is necessary to give attention to the changing social structures and the reframing of identity(ies) of many people who live in constant transformation.

1.3. The plan of a Brazilian Protestant contextual Christology

The first two sections of this introduction spoke about the meaning of contextuality and what contextual methodology is more suitable for the Brazilian context. This dissertation is a work on contextual Christology for the Brazilian context, specifically. A contextual Christology for Brazil needs to answer the issues of the Brazilian people. Thus, it is important to understand what the issues are and how to address them. Then, each one of the following chapters explores the issues present in Brazil and how these issues relate to religion. The issues in Brazil are many because of the size of the country, but also, because Brazil is a country where many different cultures meet and mix. A Protestant Christology in Brazilian context, therefore, means a Christology that helps to make sense of all the varieties and different contexts in Brazil. It must acknowledge the cultural aspects and the dilemmas of the Brazilian people and it has to address their main struggles. It needs to engage with the social and political aspect of their faith as

well as to reflect on the public consequences of the discourse. The main questions are what Christology or Christological scheme can help Brazilian Christians to comprehend their own context, the Christological shifts, and the many Christologies that are present in Brazil and what are the responses to those issues that Christology has given and which ones it may still give.

Brazil is marked by divisions and antagonisms between the different Christian churches and, very often, within the churches themselves, thus a contextual Christology needs to address these issues as well. The question is, then, what kind of Christology can help to overcome the divisions and antagonisms present in the Brazilian religious context.

A contextual Christology needs to address the issues of a determined context, but it also needs to keep in dialogue with the whole Christian church spread over the world. Thus, a contextual Christology also speaks to the broader context and deals with the interpretation of Christ’s message in the history of Christian faith, confirming, amending or challenging the traditional Christologies. The question, then, is how a Brazilian Christology relates to the traditional Christologies. What does it challenge, confirm or amend in its dialogue with the Christology of other contexts, some of them already received and held by the church for centuries. There are different Christologies in Brazil and each chapter deals with one of them. Context is not static and in Brazil it is not different. There were important shifts in the Brazilian context and, interestingly, new Christologies or new emphases on Christology emerged to address these different contexts.

1.4. Main research question

This plan and these initial considerations give an idea of the plan we intend to follow in this dissertation. The main goal of this dissertation is to find an answer to the question how the shifts in the development of Protestant Christology can contribute to understand Brazilian Protestantism and how they can help to shape the contours of a Protestant Christology for the Brazilian context. Hence, my central research question is: What could be the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context?
The goal is not to develop a single way of Christological thinking, as if there was only one right way of doing Christology in Brazilian context, but rather, to build a model which helps churches and theologians to recognise the different Christological viewpoints and encourages an open and fruitful dialogue between them.
2. Methodological Standpoints and Criteria

In this chapter the theological criteria and standpoints that guide the analyses of the whole dissertation are presented. This dissertation is a work of contextual theology, trying to point out the main components of a Protestant Christology for the Brazilian context. Nevertheless, even though the Brazilian context in general is the focal point, the context of the author is fundamental to understand the perspective and the criteria adopted. As Graham Ward says, 'theological discourse always comes from somewhere, is spoken by someone, and is legitimated or delegitimated by some institution implicated in particular sets of social and cultural relations. But theological discourse can ignore its context. It can pretend it comes from nowhere.' Therefore, the goal of the first section is to answer the question about the theological context of the author of this dissertation. What are his historical background, developments and present standpoints? For this reason it is also a section where the pronoun 'I' is used more often. It is the space where the 'I' behind this theological discourse reveals himself.

The next sections deal with the criteria and the standpoints which will be used as calibration points (points of departure) for the construction of the Christology we will offer in this dissertation. This dissertation deals with different Christologies which emerged in very distinct contexts. It uses ethnographic, phenomenological, historical, and more deductive approaches. In order to be able to combine these so different Christologies and approaches, it is necessary to have a view of theological language, truth and hermeneutics which gives space for such an analysis. We will have to find an answer to the question what kind of theological language is the most adequate for theological discourse. Particularly, what is the importance of literal, analogical and metaphorical language for theological discourse. Since theology always has to do with truth, it is important to define the concept of truth we will use here. The question is what theory of truth is appropriate to a contextual theology. To answer this question, different theories of truth are briefly presented and discussed. The next question to be dealt with is the hermeneutical one. What concept of hermeneutics fits to a contextual Christology? The last question is that about the criteria for any Christian contextual theology. What are the criteria to analyse and judge theological discourse and doctrines?

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The last section introduces the threefold office. This scheme is used in the whole dissertation to find, describe and evaluate the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context. The main questions that this section deals with are why the threefold office will be helpful to analyse Brazilian Christologies? What is the background of the threefold office and what are its main features?

2.1. Theological context of the author

Particularly, the goal of this section is to answer the question about the theological context of the author of this dissertation. What are his historical background, developments and present standpoints? To answer those questions it is necessary to look at the theology of the Brazilian Presbyterian Church, which is the church where I was brought up. My family was among the smallholders who left the Roman Catholic Church as a reaction to the process of Romanisation within the Church and became Presbyterian in the second half of the 19th century.83

Almost all Presbyterian missionaries who worked in Brazil were educated in Princeton or in schools influenced by the theology of Princeton.84 The Old School emerged as a reaction to the strong Arminianism present in most of the congregations influenced by the North American awakening85 as well as a reaction to critical studies applied to the Bible and, consequent devaluation of the importance of Holy Scriptures in matters of faith. While maintaining the value of religious experience for Christian believers and the needs of dialogue with natural sciences, the Old School rejected religious experience as a criterion to judge the validity of a doctrine and Natural

83 For a brief history of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil see Chapter 3 below.
85 The anti-Arminianism of the theology of Princeton is well attested by Noll in M. Noll, Theology of Princeton (1812-1921): scripture, science, and theological method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983, 27-30. Nevertheless, this was not emphasised or incorporated in Brazilian Protestantism according to A. G. Mendonça, O celeste porvir, 169-179 and against A. Dias Casimiro, ‘O discurso presbiteriano: a teologia de Princeton e sua influência na formação de pastores nordestinos’ in Ciências da Religião – História e Sociedade, 1/1 (2003), 157-180. Dias Casimiro supported his standpoint by pointing to the manuals of systematic theology that were adopted by Brazilian theological seminaries, however there is no evidence that distinctive doctrines such as predestination or covenant were part of preaching and teaching of ministers in that period, at least, until to the 1930’s.
Sciences as the basic authority to analyse reality and find the truth. Based on the Scottish philosophy of common sense, the Old School theologians believed that with the help of an inductive method it would be possible to find what the Bible really says and, consequently, the irrefutable truths of God to his people.\textsuperscript{86} If Natural Sciences contradicted the Bible, there should be a mistake either in the interpretation of the Bible or in the collection or interpretation of the scientific data. As a consequence, this theology had a very high view of the Bible, which included biblical inspiration and its use as the only rule of belief and practice.\textsuperscript{87} This was one of the main points of preaching and apologetic against the role of tradition and hierarchy in Roman Catholic Church in Brazil.\textsuperscript{88}

The missionaries organised the first theological Seminary and formed the first Protestant ministers that became professors and maintained the Old School theology in the Brazilian seminaries.\textsuperscript{89} Following this line, the Presbyterian Church of Brazil adopted in most of its theological seminaries the Systematic Theology of Louis Berkhof, whose theology was in accordance with Old School principles and yet with a more evangelical accent, which is another characteristic of the Brazilian Protestant Church.\textsuperscript{90} The \textit{Systematic Theology}\textsuperscript{91} of Louis Berkhof is firmly grounded in the Reformed tradition, but its method of presentation seems to be at odds with other traditions. Christian theology before the Reformation is presented as undeveloped theology. The controversies are presented as part of a process of development until orthodox consensus, which, according to Berkhof’s view means, most of the time, Reformed orthodoxy. The Reformation period is described in an apologetic way, very often, enriched with biblical quotations and subsequently the post-Reformation period is described as a departure from the Orthodox theology, normally citing the philosophical influences that led it to

\textsuperscript{89} B. Ribeiro, \textit{Igreja evangélica e república brasileira}, 193-264.
depart from Christian biblical faith. What is lacking in Berkhof’s theology is the highlighting of the philosophical influences on the reformed theology as well as the acknowledgement that all theology, including Reformed theology, is human and even though it may be strongly committed to the Bible, it is still contextual and needs to be critically assessed and revised.

The Old School theologians as well as Berkhof affirm that the Bible is inspired by God and his revelation to his people, the only rule of practice and belief. Moreover, they seem to believe that it is possible to disclose what precisely the inspired authors of the Bible wanted to communicate. In other words, what the Bible says is God’s will and truth to his people and when it is read seriously and correctly, it is possible to disclose it

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92 See e.g. his description of the doctrine of Justification: L. Berkhof, *Systematic theology*, 510-526.


94 Berkhof acknowledges the axiom that theology is human and limited and he points it out extensively in other theological branches; however he fails to demonstrate this weakness in Reformed theology. Ironically, in the section on ‘the knowability of God,’ he introduces the weaknesses of other perspectives about the matter from Scholasticism to Modernism, which are influenced by philosophy. Subsequently, he affirms that the Reformed vision that knowledge about God is possible, though limited and dependent on God himself, is the only right position. See L. Berkhof, *Systematic theology*, 29-40.

95 According to the spirit of the Reformation, the main Reformed confessions state their own limitations as well as of creeds and councils. Hence, the Westminster Confession XXXI.4: "All synods or councils, since the apostles’ times, whether general or particular, may err; and may have erred. Therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice; but to be used as a help in both." Or Belgic Confession, chapter 7: "Therefore we must not consider human writings – no matter how holy their authors many have been – equal to the divine writings; nor may we put custom, nor the majority, nor age, nor the passage of time or persons, nor councils, decrees, or official decisions above the truth of God, for truth is above everything else. For all human beings are liars by nature and more vain than vain itself."


97 Of course, the Old School theologians as well as Berkhof accept the Reformed doctrine of the limitation of human knowledge about God as presented here above. Nevertheless, they present their work in an apologetic way that makes it harder to understand what they mean by 'limitation of human knowledge' in their own work.
with confidence. Moreover, this truth is valid for every single place and time, thus a-contextual and a-temporal. There are two main standpoints behind Old School theology which are also reflected in Berkhof’s theological work: (1) a concept of neutral or scientific hermeneutic in general and of the Bible in particular, and (2) a concept of correspondence of truth, where the biblical words correctly interpreted correspond to the divine truth.

The theology in Presbyterian circles in Brazil was strongly influenced by the Princeton Old School for a long period and is still dominant in several theological seminaries until the present day. I was educated in the Old Princeton School principles as well and Louis Berkhof’s theology was the main source of theological reflection. After the realisation that Berkhof’s theology presents a closed system and an a-contextual theology that did not do justice to the broad spectrum of the Christian tradition, I started to look for alternatives.

Then, after my graduation I found in the writings of the VU theologian and philosopher of religion H. M. Vroom (1945-2014) a very useful criticism of the presuppositions of this theological model of thinking that I had found in the Old Princeton Theology. Vroom presents the main criticisms against the ideals of empiricism and rationalism in the 20th century. Firstly, the possibility of a neutral interpretation was denied, rather it was affirmed that every interpreter interprets a text, be it verbal or non-verbal, from his context and intellectual perspective. Secondly, the absoluteness of rationality was put in doubt, rather it was affirmed that what is called rational

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98 L. Berkhof, Systematic theology, 34 says that ‘...by the application of sanctified human reason to the study of God’s Word man can, under guidance of the Holy Spirit, gain an ever-increasing knowledge of God.’ With a nuanced accent is that also the view of H. Bavinck, who was a source of inspiration for L. Berkhof. See H. M. Vroom, ‘De gelezen schrift als principium theologiae’ in: M. E. Brinkman(ed.), Honderd jaar theologie. Aspecten van een eeuw theologie in de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (1892-1992), Kampen: Kok, 1992, 96-160, esp. 127


100 Following the Anglo-Saxon tradition the terms Presbyterian and Reformed, when applied to a theological school, are used in this dissertation as synonymous.


thinking is a complex intellectual construction of Western theology and philosophy that in spite of being very useful for the development of sciences and technology it is not universal or self-evident. All discourses, including scientific discourse, are in a large part metaphorical and, therefore there is no discourse that perfectly points to or describes the reality beyond language.

2.2. Theological language

The understanding of theological language in this dissertation is that it is metaphorical. Therefore, firstly, it is necessary to say what is meant by metaphorical language. There are many studies demonstrating the metaphorical character of scientific discourses in general and of theological discourse in particular. Nevertheless, many studies still define metaphors as a trope only. To say that metaphor is a trope means that the metaphorical meaning is a deviation from the literal meaning. Keith Ward affirms that ‘it is essential to the function of metaphor that there must be a literal description, which in this case is negated. Metaphor is parasitic upon literal description.’ Thus, metaphor is always subsidiary to the literal meaning of the words. Thus, there is a hierarchy between the different ways of saying things and the literal sense is the main one. Richard Swinburne states, ‘if speaker and hearer both have available to them words with the requisite senses, senses are clear and as precise as the speaker needs to transmit his message, the use of sentences employing such words written or spoken is the obvious way to transmit the statement; it is the way made for the job.’ Secondly, there is the analogical sense. For Swinburne, ‘words have been given analogical senses, which continued use has made clear and precise.’ Then and only then ‘if there is not available such an analogical sense, a statement may be expressed by a

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105 K. Ward, Religion and Creation, Oxford: Oxford University, 1996, 129. Italics are not in the original
sentence using language metaphorically.' It is important to highlight that Muis speaks about metaphors in a very positive way. He states that 'established metaphors for God give stability, while unexpected metaphors give dynamism. Both are highly necessary for a living faith. In theology metaphors can be used to develop models with which we can reflect about (doordenken) the relationship between humans and God.' That is a way to point out the importance of metaphorical language, but that is not everything. Metaphorical language is not only a subsidiary language to bridge gaps when literal language fails. For example, Muis' proposition that the expression 'God is love' should be interpreted as literal is not convincing. He affirms that the Bible states that God establishes a covenant of love and trust with his people. Then he states, 'a covenant is reciprocal. Love between God and people can be reciprocal only if God’s love is not totally different from people’s love.' Thus, what we understand about love reflects what God’s love literally (analogically) means. Muis’ reasoning is that the word ‘love’ in the expression ‘God is love’ is being used in its standard meaning. It is perfectly agreeable that there is a relationship between God and his people and that a way that this relationship is described in the Bible is with the word ‘love,’ but what does ‘love’ mean? Muis says that love in general means longing for closeness, attachment and care. There is nothing wrong with this definition and many people would agree with it, but it is far from being unanimous. The meaning of the word ‘love’ depends on cultural, sociological, religious, and psychological aspects. My point is that the expression ‘God is love’ is metaphorical not because God’s love is totally different from people’s love but rather because there is not an unquestionable literal meaning for the word ‘love’ and, even, when we talk about people’s love we are already using a

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107 J. Muis, *Onze Vader: Christelijk spreken over God*, Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2016, 134. Keith Ward would agree that most of human language about God is analogical and that analogical language is superior or more precise than metaphorical language, but for him there is an important difference between analogical and literal language. See K. Ward, *Religion and Creation*, 146-155.
metaphorical language. Most of our talking about God is analogical, because we apply human feelings and features to God. But also because God is greater than us and our language always falls short; so it is metaphorical in the sense that it opens up to multiple relations.

Thus, metaphors express a deep connection between words and reality. And that connection is open and must be so. Swinburne says that metaphors ‘have very vague meanings, and to make new precise statements with deep meanings, we may need to introduce new words, or give new senses to old words. One way to do this is to use a word in a metaphorical sense and then let that metaphorical sense become established, become a dead metaphor.’ In other words, for Swinburne a dead metaphor is better than a living one, because it has a more precise sense. What Muis describes as an analogy which has a standard meaning and therefore a literal sense is nothing more than a dead metaphor. For Swinburne, Keith Ward, Muis, and all the authors that look at literal language as the primary language, metaphorical language may be necessary but it is not the most appropriate language to transmit knowledge about God. On the other hand, Rowan Williams says, ‘the “crudest” metaphors for God are often the most successful, just because no-one could mistake them for accurate depictions.’ Graham Ward says that ‘a metaphor is a linguistic act in which difference and similarity are negotiated through a silence, through an unexplained though nevertheless performed relation. It is the relation that “establishes,” and it is a relation about which nothing is said and everything is inferred.’ Many theologians seek to avoid metaphors because they are vague, open to multiple interpretations, and uncontrollable. However, it is precisely the openness, the multiplicity, and the unconventional of the metaphorical language that makes the speaking about God richer and deeper. Vroom says, ‘metaphors concerning God are open-ended in several respects. They do not define but call up an

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112 H. M. Vroom, *A spectrum of worldviews*, 107; S. McFague, *Metaphorical theology*, 42. McFague says that ‘a metaphor is an assertion or judgment of similarity and difference between two thoughts in permanent tension with one another, which redescribes reality in an open-ended way but has structural as well as affective power.’


image of God and a possible experience of God; they are evocative.’

Precisely, the evocative character of religious metaphorical language is pivotal in this dissertation.

It was said that there is no standard meaning for the expression ‘God is love’. However, that does not mean that it can mean anything, rather, it means that there are many possible meanings for that same expression. There must be limits for speaking about God and it is the task of theology to try to identify the limits. The academic language is still very important in maintaining and creating connections between different stories and in offering an explanation of reality that, although not conclusive or exhaustive, must be coherent and meaningful in its own context. As Vroom says, ‘the openness and relative indeterminacy of the religious use of language does not end the matter, for the (re)interpretation of myths, symbols and metaphors does have boundaries.’

Every time that metaphor is dealt with as if it were a literal description of the reality as is the case in the Old Princeton Theology the evocative power of the metaphor is lost and it becomes a rational concept only, void of its transformative character and is incapable of enhancing its deeper meaning.

2.3. Truth

Many authors would say that metaphor is literally false and, consequently, untrue. But metaphor does not undervalue the truth. What metaphor does is questioning the


H. M. Vroom, *Walking*, 115. The criteria that are used in this dissertation are described below.

Vroom says, ‘metaphors cannot be translated into literal language, it is impossible to forge them into concepts. The formation of concepts within theism and philosophical theology sometimes leads to contradictions that cannot be resolved.’ H. M. Vroom, *Walking*, 120.

rationalist concept of truth. Rowan Williams speaking of the metaphorical ‘extremes’ of language says, ‘they are an attempt not to replace or sideline truth claims but to extend the territory of what we are claiming truthfulness for.’ Therefore, it is important to explore a bit more the meaning of truth. What do we mean by truth in this dissertation? Basically, there are four main theories of truth: 1) Correspondence Theory. ‘The central insight of the correspondence theory is that a belief (statement, or whatever) is true if it corresponds with reality, the world, the facts or how things are.’ 2) Coherence theory. ‘The best test of the truth of a certain belief in light of our incomplete knowledge of the world is to see whether it fits coherently in the web of other, already accepted beliefs.’ 3) Pragmatic Theory. ‘The theory says that an idea (belief, assertion or theory) is true if it “works” and false if it does not.’ 4) Performative and attributive use of truth. ‘According to the performative theory, “true” or “false” are not used to describe a property of a statement but rather to appraise that statement.’

The correspondence theory is certainly the one that best describes the view of the Old Princeton theology and it was the view of most Western theological reflection until the second half of the last century, but this view of truth fails to do justice to the multiplicity of contexts and perspectives in the world. Truths are perceived and given contextually. As Ward says, when theology ignores its context ‘it can forget the multiple mediations that both affect and provide the possibility of its productions. When this happens, dogmatics becomes abstract and its truth-claims propositional. This manifests itself in confessionalism.’ And that, precisely, is what happened with Old Princeton theology, it transformed itself in confessionalism. Moreover, Religious truths are not empirically verifiable. It is an illusion of the modernity to believe that it is possible through serious Bible studies and a correct use of the reason to achieve the

122 R. Williams, The Edge of words, 129.
125 A. F. Sanders, ‘Religious truths,’ 139.
126 A. F. Sanders, ‘Religious truths,’ 141.
religious Truth. The fundamental error lies in the presupposition that religion has an essence that reveals itself to the researcher, that determines the whole religious tradition in every way and at all times. The consequence of this concept of truth was to create a closed system in theology. In addition as Vroom warns, ‘systematic theology cannot arrive at a closed system of religious truths. Whoever wants a theological system is finally confronted with the question asked of Job, “Where were you...?” and with Paul’s confession that what we see is like a vague reflection in a mirror.

Having said what truth is not, it is necessary to say what truth actually is. First of all, in the Christian religion the truth is not a theory, but rather a person – Jesus Christ. To affirm that the truth is a person has several implications to theological reflection. Firstly, if the truth is a person it means that we will never understand it in its totality. To use Ward’s words, ‘systematic theology sets out towards a new epistemology. It will never get there. It will never have the certainty of that truth that it seeks. Only God as Truth has that certainty. It will never realize the desires and dreams that lie behind secular reasoning: transparency, total accountability, pure reason etc. But the whole project is orientated towards and engages with a way of seeing and understanding the world differently, theologically; the world as God sees it.

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131 At this point Vroom is speaking of Karl Barth’s use of the phenomenology to define what religion is. Furthermore, Vroom criticises Barth’s affirmation that Religion is unbelief. Nevertheless, the idea that religion has ‘an essence that reveals itself to the researcher’ is closely related to a concept of correspondence truth. H. M. Vroom, *Walking*, 191-205, esp. 200.


134 It does not mean that these consequences are only valid because Jesus is identified as the truth in the Bible (John 14:6), or even that they are solely valid for Christianity. What it is being said instead, is that these consequences are made or should be made stronger in the Christian reflection because in Christian faith, according to John’s Gospel, the truth is a person.

135 G. Ward, *How the light gets in*, 135-44, esp. 135. I personally think that the statement ‘the world as God sees it’ is misleading, since it suggests that God’s view is available to the theologian, but within the context of Ward’s whole book it is clear that he does not mean that. On the contrary, he means to say that our knowledge is personal, humble, and aimed at ethics.
not to say that there is no absolute truth but rather that we cannot fully grasp the truth. In consequence of human limitations and also, in the case of theology, the total difference between God and humans,\textsuperscript{136} it is impossible to know the truth completely and each criterion to judge the truth is already culturally limited and determined.\textsuperscript{137} We always know from our own perspective as well as we always know only partially.

Secondly, it also means that truth has a relational aspect. As Liuwe Westra says, ‘Christian truths are not objective truths of fact or subjective truths of interpretation, but rather relational truths of communication.’\textsuperscript{138} And therefore, it involves our actions and responses to that truth. We know the truth from our own context and perspective, but at the same time, we are challenged by the truth to live in a different way. It is not a truth to know only, but rather it is a truth to do.\textsuperscript{139} As Kierkegaard says, ‘Christianity understood, truth is obviously not to know the truth but to be the truth.’\textsuperscript{140} In this sense, it is clear that the perspective of truth in this dissertation is in line with performative theory, because it ‘makes ample room for the contention that religious truth is more than merely a matter of propositional truth: it emphatically takes into account the perspective and situation of the speaker.’\textsuperscript{141}

Thirdly, truth also has an evocative aspect, ‘people have to interpret social reality not strictly in empirical but in evocative terms in order to disclose a “true reality” below the surface of how “common sense” has been defined in their culture. Furthermore, people need to use their imagination to invent alternatives for what they “see” as wrong. If we are mistaken, we have to learn to see things otherwise.’\textsuperscript{142} Thus, ‘the truth of

\textsuperscript{136} H. M. Vroom, \textit{A spectrum of worldviews}, 108-110; McFague, \textit{Metaphorical theology}, 13. Following McFague, this distinction between God and human beings is important concept for Protestant theology.

\textsuperscript{137} H. M. Vroom, \textit{Religious and the truth: philosophical reflections and perspectives}, Grand Rapids: Eerdamans, 1989, 249-254. Vroom presents here Barth’s position, which is in many points in accordance with this description.


\textsuperscript{139} M. Kalsky, ‘Tussen waarheid en wijsheid’ in: M. Kalsky en A. van der Braak, \textit{Tussen waarheid en wijsheid: De waarheidsvraag in het licht van religieuze diversiteit}, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University, 2016, 243-260, esp. 251-8.

\textsuperscript{140} S. Kierkegaard, \textit{Practice of Christianity}, 205. See also G. Ward, \textit{How the light gets in}, 182.

\textsuperscript{141} A. F. Sanders, ‘Religious truths,’ 142.

\textsuperscript{142} H. M. Vroom, ‘Religious truth,’ 125-6. See also A. Roothaan, ‘Een wijkend begrip,’ 37.
religious reflections does not lie in the statements themselves but in the fact that they can be used to reveal reality as it really is. Truth is showing how things truly are. In sum, truth is contextual, relational, and evocative. It is impossible to know or hold the truth in its totality; the perception of the truth is always contextual. Likewise the truth informs and challenges us to perform in a specific way, a true way. And finally, the truth is not propositional or reducible to statements, on the contrary, it evokes emotions, feelings, and images, it is a way of seeing and perceiving the world.

2.4. Hermeneutics

The question that follows from seeing truth as presented above is the hermeneutical question. How to get to the truth? Rather than looking for truths behind the religions, it is necessary to understand that religious truths are not simply expressions or the rationalisation of experiences of the Real. For instance, not only culture determines experience, but also experience conditions culture. The relationship between the interpreter and text is dynamic and not only interpreters analyse texts and disclose their truth, but in their interaction with texts, interpreters may be confronted with their own presuppositions and the text’s presuppositions.

Thus, hermeneutics in general and theological hermeneutics in particular need to look at different religions and cultures critically and try to disclose their context and presuppositions, but at same time, it needs to recognise its own limitations and presuppositions. There is no possibility of neutral hermeneutics or a hermeneutics that can be applied to any text in any context to give us the absolute truth. On the contrary, all interpreters are contextually conditioned and what they will find are only

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144 H. M. Vroom, ‘After the Christian era,’ 66-68; H. M. Vroom, A spectrum of worldviews, 64-78.
147 H. M. Vroom, ‘Theology and religious studies,’ 87-105.
contextual truths, rather than the unique truth. Moreover, any religious hermeneutics needs to recognize the validity of all religious discourses as expressions of a determined culture and their aptness to give meaning to their adherents in a determined place and time. Due to the limitations of human beings, there is no hermeneutics capable of offering a permanent interpretation on religion as well as there not being any language able to give a precise description of God or even about the relationship between humans and God.

Another important point is to understand the Bible’s role in theological production. Princeton Old School and Berkhof believe that the Bible is the only rule of belief and practice. The point here is not to discuss the role of the Bible as inspired by God’s revelation, rather it is to affirm that it is not a scientific book. It contains poetry, stories, laws, wisdom sayings, and so forth. To recognize that the Bible is in a large part formed by stories is not to say that it is not historically accurate, even though it is certainly not accurate in the sense that modern historiography defines accuracy. Rather, it is to say that stories, and narratives, are the most appropriate means to express the relationship of God with his people. Of course, there are many passages that point to historical facts that cannot be easily dismissed. However, even in those cases when biblical passages seem to give historical details, they present these historical descriptions in a literary way. These passages are history-like rather than historical in a modern sense. It is clear that the language preferred in the Bible is not scientific but rather metaphorical and literary. Bearing this in mind, it is still possible to speak of the

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149 H. M. Vroom, A spectrum of worldviews, 90-91.

150 Jaroslav Pelikan suggests that fundamentalists and modernists have interpreted the Bible in a way that led to its impoverishment. J. Pelikan, Maria através dos séculos: seu papel na história da cultura, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996, 58.


Bible as God’s word and rule of belief and practice. Accentuating that hermeneutics plays a very important role in any biblical reading. What is true about the interpretation of scientific books such as books of biology and archaeology is still deeply truer about a book replete with stories and poetry.\textsuperscript{153}

2.5. Criteria

Even though theological language is metaphorical, theological hermeneutics is contextual and doctrines are not definitive, it is important to affirm that theology must have criteria. Martha Frederiks says that it is necessary to avoid ‘contextualism’ when contextual theologies become ‘tribal ideologies.’ Therefore, there must be criteria that may be applied to judge what is appropriate or inadequate in theological discourse.\textsuperscript{154}

The question is, then, what are the criteria to analyse and judge theological discourse and doctrines?

Instead of being universal claims, criteria must always be contextual as well, since they are conditioned by time and space.\textsuperscript{155} In the Christian tradition it is possible to establish some important guidelines. Efforts for specifying criteria for theological statements were very often the reason for divisions among Christians. Nonetheless, looking at the Christian History of theology, it is possible to recognise three main criteria which came from Irenaeus and were used to determine and define Christian doctrines: Bible, Church and tradition.\textsuperscript{156} The Roman Catholics emphasised Church as the most

\textsuperscript{153} For an excellent presentation of the Bible as narrative and how to understand it in theological reflection see M. Wisse, ‘Narrative Theology and the use of the Bible in Systematic Theology’ in: \textit{Ars Duputandi} [http://www.ArsDisputandi.org] 5 (2005).


\textsuperscript{156} J. Pelikan, \textit{The Christian tradition}, vol. 1, 107; vol. 4, 305. Brinkman states differently: Bible, Church history (tradition), and liturgy. Nevertheless, what he states as liturgy i.e. the gathered community that worships God is an interesting way of maintaining the importance of the present church spread over the world without rendering a decisive authority to any Church’s hierarchy or ecclesiastical power. M. E. Brinkman, ‘Where is Jesus “at home”?’ 115; M. E. Brinkman, \textit{De niet-westerse Jezus}, 33 [M. Brinkman,\textit{The non-western Jesus}, 15]. See especially M. E. Brinkman, ‘Nieuwe Latijns-
appropriate criterion, whereas Orthodox preferred tradition as the most important
criterion and finally Protestants consider rather the Holy Scriptures as the supreme
authority. In spite of these differences, it is better to speak of different emphases in the
use of the criteria rather than of different criteria. Pelikan says that 'Historically, if not
also theologically, it is a distortion to consider any one of the criteria apart from the
others or to eliminate any one of them from consideration.'\textsuperscript{157} Even the great Reformers
of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century that were radically against any criterion next to the criterion of the
Holy Script developed their own traditions that were to be used in the guidance and
correctness of biblical interpretation.\textsuperscript{158}

Any new metaphorical theology has to be comprehended by the whole church. If
a new metaphor is applicable to a determined context but cannot be understood by
other Christian communities it is not a good metaphor, because contextuality should not
prevent communication between different Christian churches and denominations. The
Christian message's power is precisely that it can be preached and understood in very
different places and periods. If a new metaphor cannot be understood or is not
communicable throughout the whole Christian world, then it is limiting and not
enriching Christian preaching.\textsuperscript{159}

Liturgy as an expression of the contemporary community of Christians played a
fundamental role in the use and development of metaphors.\textsuperscript{160} Protestant churches
affirm that worship must reflect theology, thus theology must inform what can or cannot
be part of worship. Nevertheless, very often in history the opposite occurred, i.e.
thology reflects worship rather than worship reflects theology. Christian congregations
worshipped in a determined way and thereafter theology sought to explain and give

\textsuperscript{157} J. Pelikan, \textit{The Christian tradition}, vol. 4, 305; J. Pelikan, \textit{The Christian tradition},
vol. 1, 119.

\textsuperscript{158} J. Pelikan, \textit{The Christian tradition}, vol. 1, 119; vol. 5, 86; A. E. McGrath,

\textsuperscript{159} R. J. Schreiter, \textit{A nova catolicidade}, 148-150; R. J. Schreiter, \textit{Constructing local
thelogies}, 36-38; M. E. Brinkman, ‘Contextual theology,’ 24-25; M. E. Brinkman, ‘Where
is Jesus “at home”?’ 114-115; M. E. Brinkman, \textit{De niet-westerse Jezus}, 30-34 [M.

\textsuperscript{160} R. J. Schreiter, \textit{Constructing local theologies}, 118-119.
biblical evidence for those practices.\textsuperscript{161} Theology may correct practices and there are examples of some practices that were abandoned or reformed. For example, the great Protestant Reformers inspired by new readings of the Bible and tradition reshaped Christian worship in many ways.\textsuperscript{162} Nevertheless, even in Reformed theology, liturgy continued to be a criterion to judge and define the true Church. The Reformed marks of the Church, which are the pure preaching of the Word and the pure celebration of the sacraments, are and should be expressed in worship.\textsuperscript{163}

The worldwide Christian Church developed a rich tradition that represents the outcomes of centuries of debate and discussions about many issues that came to the fore. Thus, creeds, confessions and liturgical practices indicate those historical outcomes. Owing to this, each new theological metaphor has to be in dialogue not only with the present Church, but also with the past Church. History, liturgy and tradition demonstrate the way that the Church has interpreted the Bible throughout the centuries.\textsuperscript{164}

The Holy Scriptures were always used to decide any discussion or debate in the Church. Tradition is not a source apart as Protestants sometimes seemed to affirm, rather, it is the expression of centuries of Bible reading. Liturgy and tradition are profoundly related to the Bible and could not be different. The Christian Church was formed by Jesus and apostolic preaching, which are in the Scriptures. According to Christian theology, the Old Testament speaks of God’s promises to his people and the


\textsuperscript{162} J. Pelikan, \textit{The Christian tradition}, vol. 5, 268-271; A. E. McGrath, \textit{Reformation thought}, 170-171. McGrath says that ‘Altering the ideas contained in the liturgy meant, of course, altering the theology of the sacraments, which is precisely what we find happening in the first decade of the Reformation.’

\textsuperscript{163} Belgic Confession, Art. 29.

New Testament describes how these promises were fulfilled in the person of Jesus and enacted in the Church.\textsuperscript{165}

These criteria are not universal, i.e. they are not valid for every religion,\textsuperscript{166} but they represent the outcome of an ongoing process of the construction of worship, belief and practice within the Christian Church. They are deeply interrelated and it is impossible to separate one from the others. Keeping this tension between them is important and can help the Church to be faithful to God while it also enables it to face new challenges and engage with new contexts in a fruitful way. These criteria must function as correctives to new ideas, even though they should not forbid new metaphors that may enrich and enlarge the spectrum of Church tradition and worship and shed new light on the reading of the Bible. Thus, a contextual theology can bring new elements to light and be very innovative. However, at the same time, it needs to be able to communicate to the whole Church, taking into consideration present and past tradition. Similarly, contextual theology needs to be in consonance with the way that the Church expresses its faith in worship. In this way, religious experiences from the past and present are brought together in combination with each other favouring enrichment. Finally, contextual theology is informed by the Bible, which witnesses God's way to salvation for his people.

The Scriptures, Church and tradition present a very rich account of the experience of Christians throughout the centuries. They provided believers with many metaphors that encourage, challenge and inspire them in their journey of faith. Some images or metaphors were very prominent in a determined period and thereafter, when the context changed, declined in importance, while other metaphors survived almost intact throughout all contexts and periods.\textsuperscript{167} This has to do with the potential of


\textsuperscript{166} H. M. Vroom, \textit{A spectrum of worldviews}, 2-10.

determined metaphors of being brought up to date in different contexts. Some metaphors were not understood in some contexts and others were considered counterproductive because of these metaphors’ specific cultural associations.\textsuperscript{168} In this dissertation three metaphors in particular are highlighted as useful heuristic tools to understand and analyse Brazilian Christology. The next session explores the meaning and importance of these metaphors for the Christian Church in general and for Reformed tradition in particular.

2.6. Threefold Office

In Christology metaphors played a meaningful role. Different metaphors show particular aspects of Jesus' life and how his followers experienced him. The great variety of metaphors gave Christianity the possibility of adapting to very different contexts and updating Christ's message to new audiences. The question that this section answers is which metaphor or metaphors can help to find and analyse distinctive characteristics of existing Christologies in Brazil.

The short answer is that three metaphors in particular are fundamental in this dissertation for describing and analysing Brazilian Protestant Christology: Jesus as priest, prophet, and king.\textsuperscript{169} Because they present a framework to understand the role of Jesus in the Bible, in the Christian tradition in general and in the Reformed tradition in particular, and mainly because they show the different emphases and accents of the different movements in Brazilian Protestantism. They form a very suitable heuristic tool to analyse the imbalance in the various movement's Christologies as well as calling attention to the needs of dialogue and the mutual enrichment between them.

These metaphors correspond to the three offices of Jesus or the threefold office of Jesus, in Latin, \textit{munus triplex}. Some authors argue that it should be a threefold office and

\begin{itemize}
  \item An useful description of the theme is presented in F. G. Immink, \textit{Jezus Christus, profeet, priester, koning}, Kampen: Kok, 1990. It was through the reading of Immink’s book that I had the insight that the threefold office could be a way of describing the different emphases in the Brazilian Christology and that it could be used as a heuristic tool to understand the lack of balance between these Christologies. He applies the threefold office to the analysis of different Christological emphases in his European (Dutch) reformed context.
\end{itemize}
not three offices because it is one office only expressed in three different ways, but in
this dissertation both expressions are used indistinctly. It takes the two different
expressions as affirming different emphases only.\(^{170}\) When ‘offices’ is used in the plural
it makes it easier to see that they are different metaphors with different meanings and
that one of them could overshadow the others. On the other hand, when the term
threefold office is used it makes it easier to see the importance of a balance between
them and that the reality of Christ is more complete when the three are seen together.

The idea of the threefold office comes from Jesus’ main title, Christ, messiah, the
anointed one. Christ was such an important title to Jesus that it became part of his own
name since the early decades of the Church.\(^{171}\) To see that Jesus was anointed draws
attention to the three offices in the Old Testament which were marked by anointment:
priest, king, and prophet (Exodus 28: 41; I Samuel 15:1; 1 Kings 19:16).\(^{172}\) And from the
analysis of Jesus’ ministry it is possible to see how the three offices relate to Jesus’ life
and work. For instance, there is a consensus among biblical scholars that the quotation
in the gospels that in the cross, where Jesus was crucified, was written ‘king of the
Jews’.\(^{173}\) This certainly points out that Jesus was identified as the Davidic messiah that
would restore Israel’s kingdom even though there may have been disputes about the
meaning of this kingdom.\(^{174}\) The gospels give testimony to different actions and
speeches of Jesus that indicate that Jesus was recognised as the promised king,\(^{175}\) even
though several texts show that Jesus did not stimulate the popularisation of this title.\(^{176}\)
Similarly, the title of Jesus as prophet was very widespread in his own time and it was
probably the title that best represents the perception of Jesus’ contemporaries about his


\(^{171}\) J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 617.

\(^{172}\) R. Sherman, *King, priest, and prophet: A Trinitarian theology of atonement*, New
York: T & T Clark, 2004, 63-5. The prophets were anointed only rarely. In fact, there is
only one reference (1 Kings 19:16) that makes reference to a literal anointment. The
other references Isaiah 61: 1-2 and Psalm 105:15 do not refer to actual anointments, but
rather they indicate that the prophets are chosen by God to fulfil their mission. See G. O’
University, 2012, 2 note 3.

\(^{173}\) J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus remembered*, 628-634.


\(^{175}\) J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus remembered*, 617-647.

\(^{176}\) J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus remembered*, 647-654.
ministry.\textsuperscript{177} In contrast, the title of Jesus as priest was adopted later, but it is present in Pauline writings and it is very dominant in the letter to the Hebrews.\textsuperscript{178}

Even though the offices are already present in the Bible, they were not used to describe Jesus’ work until later in Church History. Eusebius of Caesarea was the first theologian who in his \textit{Ecclesiastical History}, published in 324-5 uses the expression. ‘However, Eusebius’ main concern was not to develop the internal logic of the threefold office in a christological or soteriological way, but simply to argue that previous priests, kings, and prophets were typological foreshadowings of “the only true Christ of God.”’\textsuperscript{179} Other church fathers such as Chrysostom and Chrysologus make reference to the threefold office, but, until the Reformation, it is Thomas Aquinas who elaborates more on the meaning of the threefold office.\textsuperscript{180}

Even though it is present in Aquinas the doctrine was not used to structure his Christology.\textsuperscript{181} It was only in the Reformation that the threefold office became preeminent and started to be used to describe the whole salvation work in Jesus Christ. ‘Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and Andreas Osiander (1496/8-1552) were apparently the first to portray Christ in terms of the threefold office.’\textsuperscript{182} Calvin himself started with a twofold office only, including the teaching ministry in the priesthood, and it was Bucer who, probably, inspired Calvin to make use of this doctrinal scheme.\textsuperscript{183} But, certainly, the threefold description of Jesus’ ministry received a preeminent emphasis in John Calvin and has since then been an important model in Reformed theology to describe Jesus’ role as mediator.\textsuperscript{184} ‘For Calvin, a focus on Christ as the Mediator makes the

\textsuperscript{177} J. D. G. Dunn, \textit{Jesus remembered}, 655.
\textsuperscript{178} J. D. G. Dunn, \textit{Jesus remembered}, 654.
\textsuperscript{180} R. Sherman, \textit{King, priest, and prophet}, 64-5; G. O’ Collins, \textit{Jesus our priest}, 105-127.
\textsuperscript{181} S. Edmondson, \textit{Calvin’s Christology}, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004, 33 note 51. In this note, Edmondson refers to Aquinas as well as La Rochelle.
\textsuperscript{182} R. Sherman, \textit{King, priest, and prophet}, 65.
doctrine of Christ’s office in its relationship to Christ’s work the fundamental organizing principle in his Christology.’\(^{185}\)

It is Edmondson who presents the context of Calvin’s reasoning. According to him, Calvin was reacting to Stancarus’ affirmation that the Jesus’ work as mediator was only according to his human nature, because as God, Christ is equal to the Father.\(^{186}\) In fact, Stancarus’ position is in line with the Western theological tradition.\(^{187}\) Calvin’s response to Stancarus and to the tradition behind him is that mediation is ‘carried out by a person, not by his natures.’\(^{188}\) Thus, for Calvin the two natures are indispensable to Christ’s mediatorship. What is significant about Calvin’s model is that it does not split Christ’s person from his work.\(^{189}\) Kärkkäinen affirms that, ‘traditional ways of approaching the topic of soteriology are not only somewhat polemical and highly abstract, but there is also too clear-cut a distinction, if not a separation, between Christology and soteriology, the person and work of Christ.’\(^{190}\) With the threefold office, Calvin is opening up the possibility of structuring a Christology that avoids this separation between Christology and soteriology.

Calvin’s approach was very influential on all post-Reformation thinking,\(^{191}\) rather than in the Post-Reformation orthodoxy only. The threefold office framework was also employed by key Reformed theologians of the modern era. Some who deserve mention include Friedrich Schleiermacher, Charles Hodge, Emil Brunner, and Karl Barth.\(^{192}\) Some more recent dogmatics work on the theme as well. Wilfried Härle’s *Outline of Christian doctrine* and Gijsbert van de Brink & Kees van der Kooi’s *Christelijke dogmatiek* are only

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\(^{185}\) S. Edmondson, *Calvin’s Christology*, 5.


\(^{188}\) S. Edmondson, *Calvin’s Christology*, 31.

\(^{189}\) S. Edmondson, *Calvin’s Christology*, 36-7.

\(^{190}\) V. Kärkkäinen, *Spirit and salvation*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, 204. Kärkkäinen believes that his own model of what he calls a constructive theology solves that issue. I personally think that the threefold office is a useful framework to build a constructive Christology that deals with Christology and soteriology in a balanced way.


\(^{192}\) R. Sherman, *King, priest, and prophet*, 71.
two examples of this trend.\textsuperscript{193} Michael Welker is another important contemporary theologian that highlights the potential of the doctrine for a clearer understanding of Christology.\textsuperscript{194} There also are some books, which work extensively with the theme such as the already cited Methodist Geoffrey Wainwright’s book \textit{For our Salvation} as well as the Reformed Robert Sherman’s \textit{King, Priest, and Prophet}. Not only in the Protestant tradition, but also in the Catholic tradition the threefold office gained prominence in the recent times. Firstly, John Henry Newman (1801-1890), and then, Yves Congar (1904-1995), and even, Vatican II worked on the theme of the three offices as well.\textsuperscript{195} That is the second main reason to use the threefold office; it opens up many possibilities for ecumenical dialogue and mutual enrichment. Edmund Schlink says that ‘the spread of the doctrine of Christ’s \textit{munus triplex} involves an ecumenically singular phenomenon insofar as this particular doctrinal piece acquired its dogmatic shape \textit{after} rather than \textit{before} the various churches separated; that is, it cut directly through these church schisms in establishing its statements concerning the salvific work of Jesus Christ as a \textit{common} doctrine.’\textsuperscript{196} Especially in the Brazilian context where, for most Protestant churches, any kind of ecumenical relationship with the Roman Catholic Church is problematic and even cooperation between different Protestant churches is very rare, the three offices could help those churches to build bridges for a constructive dialogue between them.

However, firstly, it is important to analyse the criticisms that the doctrine of the threefold office has received in the last years. Wolfhart Pannenberg is a contemporary theologian who criticises the concept of the \textit{munus triplex}. For him, the biggest issue with this kind of model is that it represents a Christology ‘from above’ i.e. a Christology which starts from the belief in the two natures of Jesus, divine and human, and looks at Jesus’ life from birth to death and resurrection with this belief in mind.\textsuperscript{197} Pannenberg

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{194} M. Welker, \textit{God the revealed}, 216.
\item \textsuperscript{195} G. O' Collins, \textit{Jesus our priest}, 208-38.
\item \textsuperscript{197} W. Pannenberg, \textit{Jesus}, 221-225. See also G. Wainwright, \textit{For our salvation}, 104-105.
\end{itemize}
proposes, on the other hand, that Christology should always start ‘from below’ i.e. from Jesus’ life and ministry, and only afterwards could it come to the idea of two natures.\(^{198}\) Thus, for him, the threefold office is artificial and abstract, because it does not emerge from the historical Jesus and it separates the person and work of Christ.\(^{199}\) Moreover, according to Pannenberg, it does not deal with the four gospels in their entirety, but, on the contrary, it picks out the elements of traditional Christology, especially the doctrine of the two natures and trinity, and uses them as the perspective to look at Jesus’ life and ministry.

Hendrikus Berkhof criticises the threefold office in a similar way. Nevertheless, he points out some nuances. Firstly, he affirms that a Christology from below starts from Jesus’ humanity and its extreme deviation is the adoptionism and a Christology from above starts from Jesus’ divinity and its extreme deviation is the monophysitism.\(^{200}\) But thereafter he says that a Christology from below was used differently by Pannenberg, who starts from a Christology from below and then goes on to a Christology from above, in other words, Pannenberg, according to Berkhof, does not deny the doctrine of the two natures or trinity but he takes a different starting point, i.e. the Historical Jesus.\(^{201}\) Berkhof also values Calvin’s efforts to build a Christology based more in Jesus Christ’s work than in his person and also to comprehend Jesus’ ministry through the lens of the Old Testament, which precisely led Calvin to the use of *munus triplex*.\(^{202}\) Thus, Berkhof admits that the threefold office may open more space for a Christology which is more functional, historical and deeper related to the Old Testament and to the doctrine of the Covenant.\(^{203}\) However, he affirms that it easily takes to an artificial differentiation. Moreover, the prophetic role of Jesus in particular is being detached from the Historical Jesus and is very often described as only Jesus’ proclamation and teaching and how this

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\(^{198}\) For a very good presentation of the meaning and importance of Christologies ‘from below’ and ‘from above’ see: V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and reconciliation*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013, 37-42.

\(^{199}\) See V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and reconciliation*, 41.


\(^{201}\) H. Berkhof, *Christelijk geloof*, 288.


\(^{203}\) H. Berkhof, *Christelijk geloof*, 292.
proclamation and teaching continues in the teaching and sacraments of the Church. And the other two offices, according to Berkhof, are barely related to the life of Jesus.\textsuperscript{204}

Paul Tillich also recognises the usefulness of the threefold office in liturgical or homiletical terms, but he does not see any systematic value for this distinction, since the offices ‘are not special “offices” connected with his “work”. Jesus as the Christ is the Saviour through the universal significance of his being as the New being.’\textsuperscript{205} In other words, he considers it a superficial way of looking at Jesus Christ’s work and also for him the three offices are too focused on a distinction between the person and work of Christ, while Tillich believes that both aspects are inseparable.

These criticisms are very important and must be taken seriously. The first criticism to be addressed is that the threefold office schema is artificial. Although, it is in great part artificial indeed. As it was presented the priestly office was mainly developed in the Epistle to the Hebrews and it is not present in the gospels as such, even the idea of a sacrificial death is, mainly in the text of the Last Supper.\textsuperscript{206} In Qumran there was the concept of a Messianic priest, but it is not certain that Jesus was identified with that figure from the beginning. At the same time, the kingly office may be related to Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and with his crucifixion, but it is not evident that Jesus was a royal figure and definitely his royal role was very different from the Jewish expectations of a messianic king.\textsuperscript{207} Certainly, the three offices are present in the Old Testament as activities that were marked by anointment and very likely they correspond to messianic expectations from Jesus’ times.\textsuperscript{208} Nevertheless, it is hard to affirm, as Calvin does, ‘that faith may find in Christ a solid ground of salvation, and so rest in him, we must set out with this principle, that the office which he received from the Father consists of three parts. For he was appointed both Prophet, King, and Priest.’\textsuperscript{209} The threefold office should not be made absolute. It is more sensible to use John Howard Yoder’s words that the threefold office ‘serves as a criterion of balance,

\textsuperscript{204} H. Berkhof, \textit{Christelijk geloof}, 293.
\textsuperscript{206} Matthew 26: 17-30; Luke 22: 7-38; Mark 14:12-26.
\textsuperscript{207} See below about the Prophetic role of Jesus in the gospels.
\textsuperscript{208} J. Dunn, \textit{Jesus remembered}, 617-618.
\textsuperscript{209} J. Calvin, \textit{Institutes of Christian religion}, II, XV. Italics added.
completeness, and coherence, more than truth.\textsuperscript{210} It helps to ask “Have we forgotten anything?” rather than “What shall we say?”\textsuperscript{211} The threefold office is simply one way of classifying the material, one way to remind yourself to check whether you have missed anything, or to check for balance, completeness, and coherence. It is not in any sense a sacred outline. It neither guarantees that, when we have said everything under these three headings, we are finished, nor that we are right.\textsuperscript{212}

A. J. Johnson\textsuperscript{213} affirms that even when Barth used the \textit{munus triplex} in his vision of reconciliation it is not determined by the schema and it serves more as a gloss for his own Christological framework. Johnson himself seems to see it as negative. I believe that precisely the creative way that Barth uses it opens up many possibilities and that is what makes the schema helpful, i.e. its flexibility to understand the relationship between the Old and New Testament and the different aspects of Christ’s work. In other words, the fact that Barth uses the schema more freely and does not strictly follow the traditional view of the doctrine is perfectly acceptable and it actually makes the schema more useful for different contexts. Nevertheless, Johnson is right in pointing that it does not exhaust everything that the Bible says about the work and person of Christ.\textsuperscript{214}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{210} I suppose Yoder is using the term ‘truth’ in the sense of ‘correspondence to reality’. However, if ‘truth’ is used in terms of ‘coherence’ or ‘performartive’ it is perfectly possible to affirm that the threefold office serves as a criterion of truth.
\item \textsuperscript{211} J. H. Yoder, \textit{Preface to Theology: Christology and theological method}, Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002, 237. In this passage, Yoder also points out that the threefold office was very important in the context of the Reformed polemic against Roman Catholic Church. Since, if Jesus Christ was the king and prophet then the church was not. And also, Jesus’ priesthood highlighted the fact that the salvation comes from Jesus Christ and his sacrifice and not through the Roman Catholic Church.
\item \textsuperscript{212} J. H. Yoder, \textit{Preface to theology}, 238.
\item \textsuperscript{213} A. J. Johnson, ‘The Servant Lord: a word of caution regarding the \textit{munus triplex} in Karl Barth’s theology and the Church today’ in: \textit{Scottish Journal of Theology} 65/2 (2012), 159-173.
\item \textsuperscript{214} I do not agree with Johnson, on the other hand, when he rhetorically asks, ‘why omit a consideration of Jesus as shepherd, wisdom and husband?’ Because I believe the answer to this question is simple. The threefold office has to do with the title Christ or Messiah, which means anointed. And prophets, kings and priests were figures, the only ones, which were anointed in the Old Testament. Shepherd, wisdom and husband are interesting and rich metaphors but they did not involve anointment and therefore they are not directly related to the figure of Jesus as Christ or Messiah. See A. J. Johnson, ‘The Servant Lord,’ 170.
\end{itemize}
Geoffrey Wainwright says that they may function as archetypes.\textsuperscript{215} According to Michel Welker it offers a point of orientation\textsuperscript{216} and that is the way that the schema must be used. Thus, Berkhof and Pannenberg are right when they say that the threefold office leads to an 'artificial' distinction, if artificial is taken in the sense of manmade,\textsuperscript{217} but not necessarily in the sense of false or forced. Precisely, the task of who uses it is to be careful not to force or misuse the schema. The point is that it may be very useful as a heuristic tool to describe the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, their relationship to the Old Testament context, and it also serves to describe the different aspects of the relationship between humans with God that is realised in the person and work of Christ. In his Systematic Theology Pannenberg recognises that the schema has primary typological significance as it points to the fulfilment of the old covenant in Jesus' history.\textsuperscript{218}

Another criticism to the threefold office is that is presents a separation between the person and work of Christ. The danger of separating person and work is present in any Christology and, in fact, most of the traditional Christologies make quite a rigid distinction between the person and work of Christ and between Christology and Soteriology.\textsuperscript{219} On the contrary, Barth has already used the \textit{munus triplex} as a way to overcome this distinction and calls attention to the fact that the work and the person of Christ are inseparable.\textsuperscript{220} Indeed, there is an emphasis on the work of Christ in the doctrine, but it does not deny the inseparable unity between person and work.\textsuperscript{221} To

\textsuperscript{215} G. Wainwright, \textit{For our salvation}, 172.
\textsuperscript{217} In actual fact, this statement serves to define all theology, since every theological speech is manmade and metaphorical. In this regard, see above.
\textsuperscript{218} W. Pannenberg, \textit{Systematische Theologie 2}, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015, 493 [English translation \textit{Systematic Theology 2}, 446]. On the other hand, I disagree with him when he says that it has 'more poetical than dogmatic value.' As it was discussed above, dogmatics is or should be metaphorical and consequently poetical as well. The point he seems to make that poetics is less valuable than dogmatics is not, to say the least, indisputable. In this regard, I also disagree with Kärkkäinen when he, citing this passage from Pannenberg, says that for Pannenberg the three offices have 'only "typological significance".' I presume that with this \textit{only} he agrees with Pannenberg that 'typological' means less valuable. See V. Kärkkäinen, \textit{Christ and reconciliation}, 41 (italics added).
\textsuperscript{220} C. Gunton, ‘Salvation’ in: J. Webster (ed.), \textit{The Cambridge companion to Karl Barth}, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000, 144.
\textsuperscript{221} Van den Brink & Van der Kooi, \textit{Christelijk geloof}, 410.
affirm the integral connection between both is not incompatible with the threefold office.\textsuperscript{222} Again, it is a task of who uses this schema to be aware of this danger and to avoid it.\textsuperscript{223}

The risk of separating person and work is deeply related to another one, namely the excessive focus on the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. In other words, to present a Christology from above, a Christology which presumes the two natures of Jesus Christ from the beginning. It is time to turn to this important criticism. Pannenberg is right on saying that Calvin’s Christology, for instance, starts from the principle that the divine-human person of Jesus holds the role of mediator.\textsuperscript{224} In spite of the fact that Calvin, through the threefold office schema, puts the emphasis on the work and not on the person of Christ, his Christology is still centred on the two natures doctrine as well.\textsuperscript{225} The way that Calvin speaks about the prophetic office is an example of this interpretation. For Calvin, it consists of the teaching and doctrine of Christ about himself as mediator of God’s covenant of grace and in its presence in the teachings and doctrines of the Church.\textsuperscript{226} In other words, for Calvin, Jesus Christ’s revelation, his prophetic message, is that he himself is the mediator of God’s grace to human beings.\textsuperscript{227} So, Jesus is revelation itself. Stephen Edmondson says that ‘one of Calvin’s favourite epithets for Christ is: “God manifest in the flesh.”’\textsuperscript{228} The prophetic role is reduced to the teachings about his work as priest and king, which continues in the Church through its doctrine and sacraments, since all believers share in this ministry of announcing God’s grace and covenant fulfilled in Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{229}

\textsuperscript{222} V. Kärkkäinen, \textit{Christ and reconciliation}, 41-42.
\textsuperscript{223} Doing justice to Barth, it has to be highlighted that even Barth does not show interest in the historical Jesus scholarship, his Christology is deeply concerned with Jesus’ humanity. The problem with Barth is that he speaks about the humanity in Jesus more in general or universal terms and not in terms of the Jesus of Nazareth. See P. Dafydd Jones, \textit{The humanity of Christ: Christology in Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics}, London: T&T Clark, 2008, esp. 52-59; 126-129.
\textsuperscript{224} W. Pannenberg, \textit{Jesus}, 222. See also J. Calvin, \textit{Institutes II, XIV, 3}.
\textsuperscript{225} H. Berkhof, \textit{Christelijk geloof}, 288. Berkhof says that Calvin, especially in his commentaries, sometimes comes closer to a distinction of the two natures similar to a Nestorian separation of the two natures.
\textsuperscript{226} H. Berkhof, \textit{Christelijk geloof}, 292.
\textsuperscript{227} J. Calvin, \textit{Institutes II, XV, 2}.
\textsuperscript{228} S. Edmondson, \textit{Calvin’s Christology}, 176.
\textsuperscript{229} S. Edmondson, \textit{Calvin’s Christology}, 154-181.
Karl Barth's Christology is not very different from Calvin's in this regard. For him, the base for Jesus Christ's prophetic office is his work and being as very God and man. Like Calvin, Barth sees the prophetic office as mainly his revelation of himself. Barth says, 'His prophecy is the direct self-declaration of His life of grace and salvation, of the life of the God who has condescended to man and of the man exalted to God. It is the revelation of His life in the fulfilment of the act of reconciliation.' Colin Gunton says that there is an overturning of the two natures doctrine in the treatment of the three offices in Barth.

As it was demonstrated above, the Christology of Barth and Calvin as well as most of the traditional Christologies are centred on the two natures doctrine. And this has an impact on their perspective on the threefold office, which is especially clear in the description of the prophetic office. The effect is that these Christologies tend to emphasise that Jesus' role as prophet was to teach about himself and to announce himself as the mediator of God's covenant of grace. Consequently, Jesus' ministry is reduced to a preparation and proclamation of his role as priest. As a result, the historical Jesus does not play a distinct role in this description and the impact of his life and ministry in his own context is reduced to their impact on the drama of salvation.

Therefore, any theologian who uses this schema needs to be aware of this danger and to avoid it.

In this dissertation, the three offices are dealt with as three metaphors for the relationship between humans and God. The three offices doctrine enables us to see that every office points to one of the main characteristics of the relationship between God and us in Jesus Christ. Thus, the three together give a complete picture of the meaning of Christ to human beings' relationship with God. Each one points to a different aspect of this relationship. Wainwright says, 'the prophetic office of Christ addresses the human questions of knowledge and meaning. The priestly office of Christ deals with human alienation and estrangement by providing a divine reconciliation and atonement. The

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230 K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV. 3. 1*, 13.
231 K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV. 3. 1*, 46-47.
234 Liberation Theology brings the historical Jesus to the Christological reflection in an enriching way and overcomes this difficulty. See Chapter 4 below.
royal office of Christ addresses the human questions of power and authority. The priestly office points to the role of Jesus as a representative of the people before God. It is the vertical relationship from humans to God, through Jesus Christ. Secondly, the prophetical role asserts the role of Jesus as a lawgiver, a new Moses that tells how to behave toward God and other people. It is the horizontal relationship between humans and humans, as it should be according to Jesus Christ’s words and deeds. Thirdly, the kingly office points to the role of Jesus as the mediator that brings God to men, a heavenly king that judges, rewards, forgives, and gives what his followers dream of. It is the vertical relationship but in the opposite direction, from God to humans, the blessings that flow from Jesus Christ’s victory.

Van der Kooi and Van den Brink, following Karl Barth, speak about three aspects as well. In the priestly office the way is presented from high to low, from God to humanity. In the kingly office, on the other hand, the way is from low to high, from humanity to God. Whereas, in the prophetic office through the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus reveals himself to human beings. Also following Karl Barth, Yoder comes to a different description. According to his description, in his priestly office Jesus the true human being moves toward God so reconciling humans with God, while in the kingly office, Jesus Christ moves to the other direction from God towards human beings. And in the prophetic office the double movement, from God to humanity and from humanity to God is itself revelation. It is needed to recognise that Barth clearly emphasises the

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236 There were other visions about the role of prophet in Jesus’s times that are centred in the figure of an eschatological prophet. Nevertheless, the role of Jesus as new Moses was preeminent in his identification as the Messiah. See A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, 23-32.

237 Some theologians like Karl Barth, Van der Kooi and Van den Brink have described differently the relationship between God and human beings in the threefold office. The reason why I use this (above mentioned) particular view is that it helps us to see that every Christological shift is responding to shortcomings of the relationship between Brazilian people and God.


movements from below to above in the way that van der Kooi and van den Brink describe them. The titles Barth uses make that clear. For instance, for the priestly office Barth chose the title ‘Lord as Servant’ and for the kingly office he has ‘The Servant as Lord’. On the other hand, the description Yoder gives emphasises more the consequences of Christ’s work. And this is the main point of this dissertation i.e. to point out how the three aspects of the relationship between humans and God are found in Jesus Christ’s life and work and how they relate to the Brazilian religious context.

Actually, these metaphors speak of the core of the experience with the Real in every religion. Religion is always about the human relationship with God, the relationship between God and human beings, and about the relationship between humans. Undoubtedly, certain religions emphasise one aspect more than others to the point that one aspect can be left out, however in the Christian tradition these three aspects are an integral part of Christology and balance among them is essential.

They can also be related to the three main atonement views or views about the meaning of the death of Christ. The priestly office points to the view of redemption through vicarious sacrifice; the prophetic office points out the moral exemplar theory; and the royal or kingly office points to the theory of Christus Victor. Therefore, the three offices are useful to perceive that the different theories are complementary rather than exclusive. Therefore, another main reason to use the threefold office to analyse Brazilian Protestant Christology (ies) is that those three metaphors point out the different emphasises that are present in Protestant Brazilian Christology. They help to perceive the changes in Christological preaching and teaching as well as helping to develop a framework which gives ground for mutual enrichment between different traditions. Thus, as we will see in the next chapter, the missionary movement emphasises the priestly office and the vicarious sacrifice theory; Liberation theology, for

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241 See also C. Gunton, ‘Salvation,’ 143-158.
242 M. E. Brinkman, *De niet-westerse Jezus*, 19-20 [M. Brinkman, *The non-western Jesus*, 3-4]; M. E. Brinkman, ‘Intercultural theology’, 593-595. Brinkman says that western theology has put Jesus in ‘a historical isolation.’ Nevertheless, this historical aspect, even it carries the danger of historical isolation, is the most important point in the construction of a Christology in a social context. This historicity has to do with the relationship between human beings in a determined historical period and their context.
243 R. Sherman, *King, priest, and prophet*, 1-23. Sherman also draws attention to the potential to see the threefold office in light of Trinitarian theology. Kärkkäinen criticises Sherman’s trinitarian approach because it seems to present atonement as a work of a three-member team. See V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and reconciliation*, 345-6.
instance, highlights the prophetic role and the moral exemplar theory and Neo-Pentecostal churches, such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG), in its turn, emphasise the kingly office and the *Christus Victor* theory.\textsuperscript{244}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{244} Liberation Theology is discussed in the Chapter 4 while the Christology of the UCKG is analysed in the Chapter 6.}
3. The Jesus Christ of the Missionaries: Jesus Christ as Priest

The main focus of this study is to identify theological elements that are useful in the construction of a theologically consistent Protestant Christology for the Brazilian context and the main focus of this chapter in particular is to identify and analyse the Christology of the missionaries that marked the first phase of Protestantism in Brazil. The question is what Christological emphases and standpoints were preached and appropriated by Brazilian people. However, to understand the 19th century Brazilian context that the missionaries encountered, it is important to analyse the Brazilian religious background and also what happened that facilitated and opened space to their preaching. As early as the 16th century there were attempts to make Brazil a Protestant country. Thus, before analysing the 19th century Protestant enterprise it is interesting to assess the first two frustrated attempts in the 16th and 17th centuries. The first section frames the background of the missionary context. What kind of religiosity did these Protestants encounter when they arrived in Brazil? To answer this question, Anchieta and Vieira are taken as examples of Brazilian missionary strategies and points of view in the 16th and 17th centuries respectively. It is then possible to answer what were the French and Dutch views on Brazilian people and religiosity and what are the differences between them.

The second section deals with the 19th century missionary efforts to bring Protestantism to Brazil and tries to assess why it was successful and which are its main features. Thus, the first question is what are the changes and developments in Brazilian culture that facilitated the establishment of Protestant faith on Brazilian soil. The next questions are related to the characteristics of the North-American faith that was established in Brazil. What are the main features of Protestant preaching that were brought to Brazil and what are their relationship to the Brazilian context.

The third section deals with the Missionary christological perspective. Firstly, who was Jesus for the Brazilian people before the missionaries came? Then, secondly, it analyses who was the Christ that the missionaries preached about. What was the main focus of their message on Christ’s work? Thereafter, thirdly, the first Protestant Brazilians’ reception of the missionaries preaching is evaluated. The question is how the
Brazilians received that message, how the first converts understood the missionaries’ preaching?

The fourth section analyses the theology of the missionaries according to the criteria and standpoints presented in chapter 2. Since the standpoints of the theology of the missionaries were equally part of my theological education, they have already been discussed in the previous chapter about my own theological point of view. Therefore, this section is rather a summary of those standpoints and in line with that section it answers the question about the position of the missionaries in relation to the concept of theological language, hermeneutics and truth. Subsequently, it analyses this same theology according to the threefold criteria that were presented.

The fifth and last section deals with the critical assessment of the priestly office as it was preached and received in the Brazilian culture, as well as its possibilities in the building of a contextual Protestant Christology. The section answers the main criticism to the doctrine of justification by faith through Christ’s sacrificial death. Thus, the section evaluates whether speaking of Jesus as an offering and priest is still reasonable and suitable for the present context?

3.1. Brief history of Missions in Colonial Brazil

Brazil is the largest Catholic country in the world. Despite the decreasing number of Catholics in the last decades there still are 123 million Catholics in Brazil according to the last census in 2010, which corresponds to 64.6% of the Brazilian population. Nevertheless, Brazil is also the largest evangelical country of Latin America amounting to more than 42 million evangelicals or Protestants according the same census. It is hard to guess how much the Brazilian Evangelical movement may still grow.

Protestantism was established in the second half of the 19th century and its membership drastically increased only from the second half of the 20th century onwards. Brazil has a long history of Roman Catholic presence and it is closely identified with Portuguese culture and Roman Catholic religion. However, the history could have been very different. There were two Protestant missionary enterprises still in the colonial period.

The first Portuguese navigation anchored in Brazil on 22 April 1500 and four days later the first mass was celebrated in Brazil. This mass is described in a letter written by one of those present and it forms part of the first document written in Brazil, which tells the stories about the first adventurous Portuguese journey to the New World. The Indigenous people were invited to go to that first Mass and many of them went and took part without constraints.\(^{246}\) Certainly, they did not understand a word, but they remained silent during the mass. However, after the mass, during the sermon, they stood up and began to dance, sing and play their instruments.\(^{247}\) During the first encounters there was no animosity between Indigenous and Portuguese people. Unfortunately, this friendly atmosphere of the first moments did not continue in later encounters. Slavery, exploration, violence and discrimination set the tone of much of the following events and in a few decades, the Portuguese became dominators and enemies instead of friendly visitors.\(^{248}\) Father Anchieta, the most important missionary in Brazil’s Colonial period, began his work among Indigenous people in the 16th century. He demonstrated constant efforts to bring all Indigenous people to the truth of the Christian religion peacefully. Anchieta considered evangelisation as a way to save thousands of souls that were condemned to hell. His efforts included learning Tupi, the language of most of the Indigenous people of Brazil, and using Indigenous mythology to speak of the gospel. In a way that echoes Paul’s speech in Athens (Acts 17:16-34), he used their Indigenous mythology to deconstruct their own religion.\(^{249}\) More creatively than Paul, however, he wrote and produced plays to communicate his religious ideas to the Indigenous people. Moreover, he also incorporated some of the basic ideas of the


\(^{247}\) J. F. de Almeida Prado, 1898 – A carta de Pero Vaz de Caminha, 51-52.


\(^{249}\) A. Bosi, Dialética da colonização, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992, 64-93.
Indigenous religiosity in his preaching and catechisation. Looking at his own context it is possible to say that Anchieta’s missionary approach was an interesting work of acculturation. In addition, he influenced all missionary work in Brazil afterwards and, perhaps, much of the syncretistic religiosity in Brazil is due to his methods and insights as well.²⁵⁰

Besides his missionary activity among the Indigenous peoples, Anchieta had another important task. He was involved in combating the French Protestants that had settled in Rio de Janeiro since 1555.²⁵¹ Just a few decades after the celebration of the first mass, the first Reformed worship in Brazil was celebrated, which was the first Protestant service outside of Europe.²⁵² The Portuguese government was struggling to occupy Brazil’s immense area, since there were not so many people willing to leave Portugal and, moreover, it was also very expensive to locate new habitants in an unprotected and wild environment as was the case of Brazil. As a consequence of Portugal’s difficulties of protecting Brazil from invasions, some French people tried to occupy Brazil. Many of the first French people that came to the France Antarctique as they named Brazil, were Protestants. They were Huguenots, who wanted to find a safe place to practise their new religious ideas.²⁵³ A reformed minister travelled with them and from the beginning, both Calvinist worship and reformed education were arranged. Calvin himself maintained contact with that group and had personal involvement in that enterprise sending two ministers.²⁵⁴ He believed that it could be the simplest solution for French Protestants that were suffering persecution from the Catholic Inquisition in France, including thousands of French Huguenots refugees that were living in Geneva.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁰ A. Bosi, Dialética da colonização, 92-93.
²⁵² The Service was celebrated on 10th March, 1557. See J. Bitencourt Filho, Matriz religiosa brasileira: religiosidade e mudança social, Petrópolis: Vozes, 2003, 95-6.
²⁵³ M. F. B. Bicalho, ‘A França Antártica,’ 33.
The Huguenots in Brazil also made efforts to evangelise the Brazilian Indigenous people and, therefore they tried to learn Tupi in order to communicate with them. In spite of so many differences, Protestants as well as Catholics believed that the religion of the Indigenous peoples was a form of paganism, which should be removed completely or all those Indigenous peoples would be destined to eternal damnation. Unfortunately, besides the troubles fighting against the Portuguese military forces, Huguenots also had internal difficulties of relationship as well, mainly, regarding the Navigation captain Villegagnon. At the beginning, Villegagnon was favourable to the Calvinist new religion and had personally sent letters to Calvin to convince him of his project of a French Reformed colony outside Europe. However, after a while he became afraid of the Inquisition in France and changed his mind drastically. In the end, he personally executed some Huguenots in Brazil. The Catholic Inquisition in Brazil hanged the last Huguenot in 1567 by the hand (literally) of Anchieta. From this missionary Protestant enterprise in Brazil remained only a confession of faith that those Huguenots wrote to Villegagnon as a defence of their theological point of view and was called 'Confissão Fluminense' or 'Confissão da Guanabara,' which became the first Reformed confession written outside of Europe.

The first great missionary in Brazil was Anchieta and he was considered a very important Portuguese writer. His texts are not only studied from the perspective of Theology or History but also of Literature and Language studies. He was involved in the process against the French Protestants in Brazil and he took part in the execution of a Protestant condemned by the Inquisition. His involvement in this execution was an

\[256\] M. C. A. Sameshina, 'As cartas da França Antártica,' 4-7.
\[257\] F. L. Schalkwijk, 'O Brasil na correspondência de Calvino,' 101; J. Grath, 'Polemic and history in French Brazil, 1555-1560' in: *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 27/2 (1996), 385-397. Grath criticises the idea that Villegagnon had been a Calvinist. According to Grath, he only flirted with Calvinist's propositions and that his interests were always economic and at the service of King of France, who was anti-Protestant. At any rate, it is difficult then to explain why so many, probably more than 20, Reformed people accompanied Villegagnon had he not been, at least in part, convinced that Huguenots were good companions.

\[259\] F. L. Schalkwijk, 'O Brasil na correspondência de Calvino,' 103.
obstacle for his canonisation and made his canonisation process one of the longest processes in Roman Catholic History, which lasted for 417 years.  

Another very important missionary and writer in Brazil was Father Antonio Vieira (1608-1697). He was born in Lisbon and went to Brazil as a missionary priest. His sermons are considered great literary masterpieces and literary critics to the present day appreciate his communication skills and rhetoric. Father Antonio Vieira wrote and preached famous sermons that explored political, spiritual and social issues. Among them, were the sermons that defended the cause of the Indigenous peoples and preached emphatically against them being enslaved. Vieira fought this cause during all his life and which resulted in great discontentment towards him from the side of the landowners. Vieira had exotic millenaristic ideas such as that the Portuguese king, D. John IV, would rise from the dead and would make Portugal at the end, the fifth kingdom, the last of Daniel’s prophecy (Daniel 2: 29-45), which would precede the last judgment described in the book of Revelation. He was condemned by the Inquisition, but after a period in prison he received permission to go back to Brazil and preach there, even though he was not allowed to preach in Portugal again and, therefore, his influence in Portugal declined drastically.

In fact, Vieira had a double discourse about slavery. In principle, he was against any sort of slavery but his sermons were harder against Indigenous slavery than against African slavery. He preached to Black people that in their suffering and injustice they could identify themselves with Christ and by doing this they could find comfort, whereas he clearly preached against the slavery of the Indigenous peoples. He accepted Indigenous people’s slavery in some circumstances, however this should be interpreted in light of his political agenda. He was willing to accept Jews in Brazil as a way to finance

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260 He was finally canonised by Pope Francis on 27th February, 2014.
263 A. Bosi, ‘Antônio Vieira, profeta e missionário. Um estudo sobre a pseudomorfose e a contradição’ in: *Estudos Avançados* 22/64 (2008), 241-254, esp. 241-248; A. Máspoli de Araújo Gomes, ‘O messianismo milenarista no Brasil e o mito do eterno retorno: limites e possibilidades de reflexão’ in: *Ciências da Religião – História e Sociedade* 6/2 (2008), 13-35. The author speaks specifically about the influence of millenarism in Brazil and Vieira as one of the most important figures in this movement (esp. 29-30).
Brazil’s economy, African slavery as a condition necessary to have enough workers to develop the country as well as tolerating Indigenous slavery as part of his negotiation with Brazilian authorities.\textsuperscript{265} In spite of his inconsistency on slavery, Vieira was a key figure in fighting against Indigenous people’s slavery.

Looking at these important personalities of missionary work in Brazil it is possible to perceive a different theological perspective and emphasis. Anchieta was also against the Indigenous’ slavery but his main issue was the Indigenous people’s acculturation, while for Vieira the main issue was the Indigenous people’s liberation. There is another important parallel between Anchieta and Vieira. Both struggled against efforts of Reformation insertion in Brazil. Whereas Anchieta faced the French Huguenots, Vieira was engaged in the struggles against the missionary efforts of the Dutch Christian Reformed church.

The Dutch invasion, as it is named in Brazil, occurred in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, initially for a short period in Bahia from 1624 to 1625, and, afterwards, for a more stable settlement on other provinces of Northeast of Brazil between 1630 and 1654.\textsuperscript{266} It was sponsored by the \textit{West-Indische Compagnie}, which had obvious economic interests in Brazil. However, the sincere religious convictions of those missionary reformed ministers who helped to organise the expedition and project of occupation of the Northeast cannot be discarded. It counted at the best moments with 47 ministers besides teachers, proponents and comforters, including seven ministers responsible directly for missionary work among Indians. They formed 22 congregations, two presbyteries (\textit{classis}) and even organised a Synod.\textsuperscript{267}

During that period there was a significant African presence and Dutch Reformed congregations in Brazil included Afro-descendents and a few Portuguese people, though not in great numbers.\textsuperscript{268} Like Anchieta and Vieira, the focus was always on the Indigenous peoples.\textsuperscript{269} They believed that as they were the first inhabitants, they

\textsuperscript{266} The History of this occupation is described in F. L. Schalkwijk, \textit{Igreja e Estado no Brasil holandês}, Recife: Fundarpe, 1986.
\textsuperscript{267} See also E. Dussel, \textit{Resistencia y esperanza}, 450-1.
\textsuperscript{268} F. L. Schalkwijk, \textit{Igreja e Estado no Brasil holandês}, 221-228.
\textsuperscript{269} There is a specific article written by Schalkwijk about evangelisation of Indigenous people in that period in F. L. Schalkwijk, ‘Índios evangélicos no Brasil
deserved care and respect. What is innovative in the Dutch missionary work was the strategy of preparing Indigenous leadership. The first project included to send 25 Indigenous people to the Netherlands to study theology, who would come back to lead indigenous Brazilian congregations. This project was not rejected but it was never put into practice. Another interesting point is that Dutch Reformed ministers in Brazil wrote a catechism in three languages (Dutch, Portuguese and Tupi). Curiously, the Presbytery of Amsterdam did not approve the catechism because they considered it too simple and they apparently preferred rather to wait for a translation of Heidelberg’s Catechism. Unfortunately, no copy of this three languages catechism survived, which was the first Reformed catechism written in Brazil and the first in Tupi.270

Nevertheless, the Dutch missionaries like the Catholic priests had done before them considered the Indigenous’ religion as a kind of paganism or, for some of them, as a non-religion. Their first missionary project involved separating Indigenous children from their parents for Christian education purposes. They believed that that was the only way to avoid syncretism, which was already present in the Christianity that grew among Indigenous people through Portuguese missionaries. This strategy was put into practice but the results were not very successful because when these children had eventual contact with their parents they soon learned to dance and to behave as their parents did. Interestingly, several Indigenous people took the Dutch’s side and fought with the Dutch soldiers against the Portuguese army. After rendition, the Dutch ships turned back to Europe and Indigenous people went to distant places. An important Indigenous leader with two children went to Holland and became the contact person between the group of Reformed Indigenous people and the Dutch church. Vieira met the group of Reformed Indigenous people that went to the countryside and he said that their settlement was a perfect Geneva in the Brazilian Northeast and recommended to his

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Jesuit brothers to work patiently on their reconversion and actually all of them or their descendants turned back to the Roman Catholic Church.²⁷¹

What are the main features of the Catholic missions in Brazil? The conclusion of this period is that many Roman Catholic missionaries, Anchieta and Vieira among the most important of them, worked hard to evangelise Indigenous peoples, including efforts to share the gospel in their language and worldview. It is possible to say that their strategy was that of acculturation. They fought for the Indigenous peoples' liberation from slavery even though they did not fight for the Africans’ liberation, at least not with the same vigour. African people and culture were never dealt with the same empathy. They rejected Indigenous people’s religion, which for them was paganism and for many of them it could not even be considered a religion, but they recognised the importance of speaking in a language that was accessible to them. The main outcome of this process of acculturation is the syncretism of religious forms and beliefs that mark religiosity in Brazil. On the other hand, there also were a lot of priests, who accepted and practised the conversion by force and were able to kill Indigenous people and Africans that did not want to become Christians.

What are the differences, if any, between the Reformed and the Catholic missionary work? In reference to the Reformed missionary enterprises it could be stated that both were related to a desire of domination as well as a politico-economic empire. None of them were part of a greater missionary project, rather both were part of a politico-economical project of domination and conquest. Similarly, both were more interested in evangelising Indigenous people. Both also were clearly against Indigenous people’s slavery but for the Dutchmen African slavery was not an important issue.²⁷² They wanted Indigenous people’s loyalty and both, Frenchmen and Dutchmen, achieved it, at least in part.²⁷³ The Dutch missionaries tried to develop an indigenous leadership,


²⁷² The Frenchmen came to Brazil before African slavery.

²⁷³ The Dutchmen received the loyalty of some Africans and Portuguese people as well. Bittencourt draws attention to the fact that under Dutch dominion there was freedom of religion and even Jews were free to follow their own beliefs and practices. See J. Bittencourt Filho, Matriz religiosa, 99-102. See also R. E. Zwetsch, Missão como
but all Protestants agreed that Indigenous religion was not a proper religion and they were even stricter than the Catholics in terms of syncretism or inculturation. The practice of separating indigenous children from their parents to avoid any kind of syncretism is the strongest example of this attitude. Another example is that they did not publish the three languages catechism because it was not detailed enough. These examples show that Dutch missionaries wanted to reproduce a Dutch Reformed church among the Indigenous people. Ironically, the fact that Vieira compared the Protestant Indigenous settlement to Geneva points and exemplifies the missionary strategy of the Dutch colonisers in Brazil. They did not allow Indigenous people to express themselves and worship in ways borrowed from their own culture.\textsuperscript{274} They worked in great part with Indigenous people that were at least nominally catholic and they combated strongly the syncretism that they perceived among these Christian baptised Indigenous people. Finally, there are no verifiable religious outcomes in Brazilian culture of these enterprises.\textsuperscript{275} In other words, their strategy did not have an impact on Brazilian culture as a whole. It was more an effort to transplant a European Protestant worldview and theology to a Brazilian context.

### 3.2. The 19th century Protestant Missions

The first two efforts to bring Protestantism to Brazil failed mainly because Protestants were considered invaders that wanted to occupy Brazil and, therefore, they were combated, opposed and expelled from Brazil or killed as enemies.\textsuperscript{276} During that period, Brazil was one of Portugal’s colonies and followed the rules of Counter-Reformation prevailing in Portugal which forbade any religious expression apart from Roman Catholicism. In sum, there was no religious freedom and other religions, including Protestantism, were not tolerated. The Protestant presence was an issue of military defence and not a question of theological debate. What happened that transformed this scenario? What were the factors that opened space for a Protestant presence in Brazil?

\textsuperscript{274} L. E. Wirth, ‘Protestantismos latino-americanos,’ 115-117; See also S. Buarque de Holanda, \textit{Raízes do Brasil}, Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1981, 35.

\textsuperscript{275} R. E. Zwestch, \textit{Missão como com-paixão}, 31-3.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the situation started to change. The Portuguese Royal Family came to live in Brazil in 1808 escaping from the pressures in Europe under Napoleon and in the same year a decree was signed opening Brazilian ports to friendly nations, especially United Kingdom, who protected Portugal from French attacks and headed Portuguese commerce and economy. In 1810 the Treaty of Navigation and Commerce was signed ruling the commerce between Britain and Brazil, which was at that time the Portuguese empire's capital. With this treaty, it was evident that Brazil would receive many British Protestants. Thus, it was necessary to create space in Brazilian legislation for a Protestant presence and since 1810 were guaranteed religious liberty to foreign people. Nevertheless, it was a very restricted liberty, once it was circumscribed to practitioners of other Christian denominations, excluding non-Christian religions. Moreover, it excluded completely Brazilian people, who were prohibited to convert to Protestantism. It was a liberty only to Protestant foreigners that could continue their alien devotion in Brazil.

Since then, migrant Protestant communities were formed in different parts of Brazil, but until that moment there was no strong missionary activity. Nonetheless,

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279 Among these churches, two of the most important were the Anglican and the Lutheran Church and, especially the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession (Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana – IECLB) is still a very important Church mainly in the South of Brazil. The impact and influence of the IECLB, however, is not discussed in this dissertation because it did not have an impact on Brazilian Protestantism as a whole until the second half of the 20th Century. The Church continued to be a migrant church focused solely on the German population. Brazilian Lutheran ministers were formed in Germany and only after the Second World War they organised their own Theological Faculty, almost one century after the first Presbyterian Theological Seminary was founded in Brazil. Nevertheless, from 1970’s onwards the Lutheran Theological Faculty, called EST, became an important centre of contextual theological reflection and, nowadays, it plays a distinctive role in the Brazilian context. Due to its importance many of its scholars are quoted in the Chapters 4, 5 and 6 regarding the developments of a Public Theology for the Brazilian context. See R. Gaede Neto, ‘A formação teológica na Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil através da EST’ in: *Revista Caminhando* 14/2 (2009), 43-54; M. Dreher, ‘Transformações do luteranismo brasileiro’ in: *Estudos Teológicos* 24/1 (1984), 4-26. For the importance of ethnic churches for Latin
Brazilian legislation was changing very quickly opening more and more space for the presence of Protestants and, finally, the 1824 Constitution conceded liberty for other Christian denominations while it still maintained the Roman Catholic church as the official church and the only one supported by the Brazilian State.\(^{281}\) At first sight, it seems contradictory that when French or Dutch Calvinists were living in Brazil there was no liberty for non-Catholics, whereas in the 19\(^{th}\) century when there were no Protestants living in Brazil, new laws conceded religious freedom. However, it is possible to explain this paradoxical situation pointing out three different reasons. Firstly, as it was mentioned above, there was a new relationship with the Protestant Great Britain which was the new partner of Portugal in commerce and had a strong influence on politics, social issues and, last but not least, security issues.\(^{282}\) Secondly, it was clear that the commerce of slaves was declining and it would stop soon and thus it was necessary to find workers to maintain the economy.\(^{283}\) The policy was to try to attract European Catholics such as Italians or Spanish men, but Protestants were not discarded and, in actual fact, some politicians would rather have Protestant migrants.\(^{284}\) The third reason was that an important movement for Brazil's modernisation was being initiated at that period.\(^{285}\) Brazil had become the empire's capital and its new status should be accompanied by a profound modernisation in its different sectors. It was necessary to leave behind that colonial culture of a second-class country only serving to metropolis' interests and move closer to a model of western culture and development. For many Brazilian politicians, modernisation was directly linked to Protestantism and thus Protestants were not considered as enemies anymore but as allies to help in the process of modernisation.\(^{286}\) Obviously, the admiration for Protestantism was not

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\(^{281}\) B. Fausto, *A concise history of Brazil*, 78-81.


unanimous, many Roman Catholic politicians, especially priests,\textsuperscript{287} wanted Brazil to remain a solely Catholic country.\textsuperscript{288} Nevertheless, even among Catholics there also was a severe criticism of Brazilian Catholicism, which was considered too syncretistic and undeveloped.\textsuperscript{289}

The relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Portugal was marked by specific characteristics that differentiated Portugal from other western countries in Europe. In several European countries the Reformation was a decisive movement for change, while in other countries such as Spain and Italy its impact was weaker, but it surely played an important role in the construction of a Counter-Reformation identity. However, Portugal knew no Reformation movement in its area. It adhered to Counter-Reformation without experiencing what Reformation was.\textsuperscript{290} Secondly, the relationship between Portugal and the Vatican was not of subservience. Portugal and later also Brazil had a system of patronage, which gave the emperor rights to name priests and bishops, even against the Pope’s wishes.\textsuperscript{291} Thirdly, Marquis of Pombal, minister in Portugal in the second half of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, introduced several reforms in the Portuguese economic, political and educational systems.\textsuperscript{292} He was very critical of the role of religious institutions that were governed by rules defined outside Portugal and rulers chosen by non-Portuguese governors. Keen on a stronger Portuguese autonomy he banned Jesuits from Portugal and Brazil, who were the most important figures on education.\textsuperscript{293} At that period, most of the politicians distrusted those religious orders’

\textsuperscript{287} A. G. Mendonça, \textit{O celeste porvir}, 42. Mendonça informs that 19 of the 90 members of the parliament were Catholic priests.
\textsuperscript{288} B. Ribeiro, \textit{Protestantismo no Brasil monárquico}, 32-34.
\textsuperscript{289} Many critics, at that time, pointed out to a lack of moral standards among Brazilian Catholic priests. See H. M. Pereira Costa, \textit{Raízes da teologia}, 366-368.
\textsuperscript{290} A. G. Léonard, \textit{O Protestantismo brasileiro}, 40-42.
\textsuperscript{292} H. M. Pereira da Costa, \textit{Raízes da teologia}, 337-349.
\textsuperscript{293} B. Ribeiro, \textit{Protestantismo no Brasil monárquico}, 23-27; E. G. Léonard, \textit{O Protestantismo brasileiro}, 40-45. Both authors indicate the importance of Jansenism in Brazil, which regarding the doctrine of justification by faith has several similarities to the Calvinistic idea of justification and, therefore, is discussed in more details below.
loyalty and they clearly rejected any policy that came from abroad, including the Vatican’s policies.²⁹⁴

This dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church led to different reactions. On the one hand, many politicians wanted lesser influence of the Catholic Church in Brazil and many of them favoured a laic State. This line was consolidated in the proclamation of the Republic in 1889, when total separation between Church and State was declared in Brazil. On the other hand, some wanted to control the Roman Catholic Church and keep the Vatican influence to a minimum. Nonetheless, the Vatican worked very hard to maintain the Brazilian Catholic Church under its control and since the second half of the 19th century it began efforts to reform the Brazilian church and bring it closer to its control. To reform the Brazilian church, the Vatican’s agents combatted against popular practices and any form of autonomous leadership, i.e. leaders not aligned with Vatican policies.²⁹⁵ The Vatican’s efforts to bring the Brazilian Roman Catholic Church closer to its policies is called Romanisation.²⁹⁶

During the second half of the 19th century the first North American missionaries came to Brazil. These missionaries had been profoundly influenced by the great awakening in the United States and by the Manifest Destiny.²⁹⁷ At that time, spiritual renewing and social development were deeply related and American missionaries could not distinguish them clearly. They believed that their mission was to convert Brazilian people from superstition and paganism to real Christian faith and consequently Brazil would become a well-developed country. Nevertheless, there were differences of emphasis and strategy among them. Some of them were more concerned with evangelisation and conversion, while others would also want to create model schools, which could influence the Brazilian elite as well as form a new mentality in the nascent Protestant Church of Brazil.²⁹⁸ These two different emphasises characterised Brazilian

²⁹⁴ B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo no Brasil monárquico, 44.
²⁹⁵ B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo no Brasil monárquico, 44-48.
²⁹⁶ E. Dussel, Resistencia y esperanza, 303-9; J. Bittencourt Filho, Matriz religiosa brasileira, 105-6; R. E. Zwetsch, Missão como com-paixão, 40.
²⁹⁷ A. G Mendonça, O celeste porvir, 82-99.
Protestantism and very often were the reason for controversy. Actually, the split of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil in 1903 was mainly caused by divergences in the function of the Presbyterian schools in Brazil, i.e. whether these schools should be vehicles of Presbyterian propaganda or vehicles of social transformation.  

Protestantism was definitively implanted in Brazil even though it would continue to be a marginal force in the Brazilian religious scenario. The adherents to Protestantism were mainly of two very distinct groups in two very distinctive contexts. The first group was formed by smallholders that worked in association with the owners of coffee plantations in the countryside of the southeastern provinces, mainly São Paulo and Minas Gerais. The other group was that of middle class families and some women of the higher class, who were not accompanied by their husbands yet supported by them, in the big cities, mainly São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. These two groups point to two of the main reasons that led Brazilians towards Protestantism. The former group was reacting to Roman Catholic efforts to bring Brazilian Catholicism closer to Vatican Catholicism. Those smallholders were poor people, but used to be free, and their religiosity was characterised by independence of clerics and institutional rules. In the free examination of Scriptures and the laic leadership of Protestantism they have encountered a movement that guaranteed they would continue free and anti-cleric. The latter group was convinced that Catholicism was not suitable for the new urban life and the necessary modernisation of the country. The Protestant schools and the rationality of

299 The split in the Presbyterian Church of Brazil and, consequently, the formation of the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil was painful and hindered Presbyterian development. The main reasons for the split were fourfold: 1) the role and strategic view for the church schools; 2) the question about the compatibility of being at the same time member of a Masonic Lodge and of a Kirk Session; 3) the presence and leadership of North-American missionaries; 4) the place and direction of the Theological Seminary. The group who split from the Presbyterian Church of Brazil and formed the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil, wanted the church schools to be used as vehicle for evangelisation; was against the presence of Freemasons and Missionaries and wanted the Theological Seminary in São Paulo instead of Campinas. Nevertheless, theologically there were no important differences between both groups and they continued to cooperate with each other for a long period. See B. Ribeiro, A igreja presbiteriana no Brasil, da autonomia ao cisma, São Paulo: O Semeador, 1987, 223-424.


301 J. de Souza Martins, Prefácio, 23; B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo no Brasil monárquico, 55-56. The latter says that in the absence of Catholic priests those Catholic smallholders had developed a priesthood of all believers.
Protestant ministers expressed in preaching and literature convinced them that Protestantism could bring the Reform that Brazil needed most.\footnote{J. de Souza Martins, Prefácio, 20. B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo e cultura brasileira, 183-256.} Freedom, rationality, simplicity, laity were recurrent reasons used by Protestants for justifying conversion from Catholicism, which was termed as pagan, undeveloped, authoritarian, and syncretistic.\footnote{B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo e cultura brasileira, 174-182; A. G. Mendonça, ‘Protestantismo no Brasil: um caso de religião e cultura’ in: Revista USP 74/3 (2007), 160-173.}

At the same time, the traditionalism of smallholders and middle class families was evident and Brazilian Protestantism was far from being such an innovative force capable of modernising society and culture.\footnote{A. G. Mendonça, ‘Vocação ao fundamentalismo: introdução ao espírito do Protestantismo de missão no Brasil’ in: A. G. Mendonça & P. Velasques Filho, Introdução ao Protestantismo no Brasil, São Paulo: Loyola, 2002, 133-170; R. Alves, Religião e repressão, São Paulo: Loyola, 2005, 343 passim. Mendonça relates Protestant conservatism to North American fundamentalism. Nevertheless, it seems that conservatism is a widespread phenomenon in Brazil. For example, Rubem Alves’ book Protestantismo e Repressão’ (Protestantism and Repression) was later published by a Catholic press as Religião e Repressão (Religion and Repression) because the editors thought that Alves’ description could be applied to Catholicism as well. In fact, the Brazilian Protestant fundamentalism is a very complex phenomenon and therefore, it will be analysed in more detail below.} Protestantism, yet clearly opposed to Catholicism and everything that could be identified as catholic, presents the same dialectical structure that characterises Brazilian culture in general.\footnote{This dialectical structure of the Brazilian context is shown by different authors from different areas that analysed Brazilian culture, for example, the Catholic literary critic Alfredo Bosi in A. Bosi, Dialética da colonização; the Presbyterian French anthropologist Roger Bastide in R. Bastide, Brasil, terra de contrastes, Rio de Janeiro: Difel, 1980; and the Presbyterian sociologist José de Souza Martins in J. de Souza Martins, A sociabilidade do homem simples: cotidiano e história na modernidade anômala, São Paulo: Contexto, 2010. All of them were professors at the Universidade de São Paulo, the most important Brazilian university. See also J. Bittencourt Filho, Matriz religiosa, 68.}

Secularised and religion-centred, individualist and traditionalist, liberal and conservative, progressive and reactionary are very so often two sides of the same coin in the Brazilian context.

From the beginning until the first decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the Presbyterian Church was the most influential Protestant Church in Brazil and gave the tone of the implantation of Protestantism in Brazil. Thus, very often, when we talk about
Protestantism we refer to Presbyterianism and when we talk about Protestant North-American missionaries we are referring to North-American Presbyterian missionaries. Nevertheless, in that period the Presbyterian Church in North America was not so sharply distinguished from other Protestant groups such as the Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists. The theology of the awakening had spread throughout the denominations, turning distinctive doctrines of these churches into secondary issues. What characterised these denominations were different government systems, i.e. Presbyterian, Congregational or Episcopal, rather than specific doctrines. Experience of conversion and millenarianism shaped the missionary theology and consequently Brazilian Protestantism.

It is safe to say that from the second half of the 19th Century until the first decades of the 20th Century there is no theological difference between the different Protestant denominations in Brazil. The Presbyterian Church of Brazil was the key actor for Christian education, theological training, Christian literature, including newspapers, devotional and theological books, and material for religious education.

The theological standpoints of the Protestant missionaries were very clear. Their main emphases were free examination of Scriptures and its decisive role on religious matters, i.e. the only rule of belief and practice, and Christ as the only mediator. Protestant doctrinal differences were not important in Brazil and, therefore, they did not play an important role in theological debates. For example, the main reason why the three-languages Brazilian Catechism was not accepted during the Dutch period in the 17th century was because it lacked in clarity in its formulation of Predestination or Free-will. These disputes were very important in the Netherlands at that time. But they were not relevant in Brazil either in the 17th century or in North American and Brazilian 19th Century Protestantism. Mainly in the first decades of missionary work in Brazil the different Protestant denominations sought to cooperate with each other and together fight against Catholicism. Another example of this strategy is that Brazilian missionaries

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306 A. G. Mendonça, O celeste porvir, 74-79.
307 A. G. Mendonça, O celeste porvir, 265.
308 The Presbyterian Church was the most influential church until the 1950s, though it was not the biggest church any more by the 1930s. B. Ribeiro, Igreja evangélica e república brasileira, São Paulo: Semeador, 1991, 295-301; E. G. Léonard, O Protestantismo brasileiro, São Paulo: Aste, 2002, 25.
309 B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo no Brasil monárquico, 65-78. The role of Jesus as mediator due to its importance to this study will be discussed separately in more detail in the next section.
perceived that there was a severe criticism against the behaviour of a large part of Catholic priests, therefore they made all the efforts to show a kind of model behaviour, encouraging a moralistic behaviour.\textsuperscript{310} In actual fact, Protestantism shaped its identity as being non-Catholic or anti-Catholic.\textsuperscript{311} Extreme examples are Brazilian Protestants that do not recite the Apostle’s Creed or even pray the Lord’s Prayer because they are identified with Catholicism.\textsuperscript{312} In sum, various aspects of doctrinal theology did not play a role in the debates with Catholics, but rather moral aspects and general critics to the Catholic traditionalism. However, there were clear theological arguments to justify the Protestant view on moral and anti-traditionalism and this theology must be analysed.

Theology of Protestant churches in Brazil has been shaped by North American missionaries and especially until the first half of 20\textsuperscript{th} century it is hard to identify elements that are Brazilian in origin.\textsuperscript{313} Nonetheless, the theology of the missionaries was clearly shaped by the religious context in North America of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, mainly the great spiritual awakening and, secondarily, the need of preventing the fact that denominationalism might fragment American Society to the point of putting at risk its national identity.\textsuperscript{314} Three basic features emerged from this scenario.

Firstly, almost all the North American denominations maintained a strong emphasis on religious experience. Dramatic experiences very often defined what conversion was and became a kind of proof of a restored spiritual life. Religious experiences were not an exceptional happening in the lives of few special believers, but rather the rule that should make part of the personal story of every genuine Christian. Religious experience or the need for religious experience as evidence of conversion was


\textsuperscript{313} A. G. Mendonça, ‘O Protestantismo no Brasil e suas encruzilhadas.’ Mendonça believes rather than Protestantism in Brazil, it should be Brazilian Protestantism, because Protestants never identified themselves with Brazilian culture.

\textsuperscript{314} A. G. Mendonça, \textit{O celeste porvir}, 74-106.
a characteristic of Protestantism in the United States during the awakening and particularly important for the missionaries.\(^{315}\) In Brazil, where the Roman Catholic Church was the official church and closely tied to Brazilian culture and personal background, it was to be expected that something very special should happen for Catholics to decide to leave Catholicism and convert to Protestantism. Thus, religious experiences, often dramatic experiences, were common among the Brazilian converts to Protestant churches. Usually, to give testimonies of these experiences of conversion or narrate them were necessary conditions for someone to be accepted as member of a Protestant church or to participate in the Lord’s Supper.\(^{316}\)

Secondly, given the need to cooperate with other denominations in the missionary work as well as the need to avoid fragmentation of Christian religion in America, Christian denominations were not so much concerned with particular doctrinal debates that could lead them to further divisions or put cooperation at risk. The former period had been a time of crisis for Protestant churches in America and the awakening offered an opportunity for improvement and growth. Denominational divergences and internal conflicts had to be mostly avoided and a compromise always was the best alternative.\(^{317}\) This tendency to uniformity was transplanted to Brazil as well. There were few missionaries working in Brazil, which was a very big country and with a sharp Catholic identity. Cooperation was adopted as the necessary strategy to try to occupy the whole territory. In the same way, uniformity in themes and emphases in preaching worked as a sign of union among Protestants, which was essential to protect them from fragmentation and division.\(^{318}\) In Brazil, they had a common enemy, i.e., the Roman Catholic Church, and consequently Protestants formed a unique group to combat Catholicism, which was paganism and the only one responsible for Brazilian


\(^{318}\) E. G. Léonard, *O Protestantismo brasileiro*, 140-144.
underdevelopment.\textsuperscript{319} In this sense, there is a peculiarity in the relative uniformity in Protestant theology. Whereas, in the United States the union was important in order to face secularism and modernism, in Brazil it was necessary in the struggles against the Roman Catholic Church. Nonetheless, all American evangelical denominations also nurtured suspicions against Catholicism because the Roman Catholic Church was seen as hegemonic and undemocratic, which seemed to be against American principles.\textsuperscript{320} Nonetheless, Catholicism was not the principal reason for the Protestant churches to join forces in North America even though it was not out of place.

Thirdly, 19\textsuperscript{th} century North-American Protestantism in its revivalist version was reacting against modernism and critical attitudes to biblical studies that came from the Enlightenment in Germany and England and, therefore, it developed a very conservative theology. This theology was best exemplified in the Old School theology of the Seminary of Princeton.\textsuperscript{321}

In sum, these three characteristics, i.e. lack of concern for theological definitions, allied to anti-Catholic attitudes; biblical conservatism and emphasis on personal religious experience were brought to Brazil and embraced by the emerging Brazilian Protestant churches. Another important point in the missionary preaching was the second coming of Christ.\textsuperscript{322} It was a secondary concern in comparison with the theme of Christ as mediator, but still very prominent. Millenarianism was a strong impulse for missionary work in the United States\textsuperscript{323} and played an important role in the lives of missionaries that served in Brazil.\textsuperscript{324} This aspect is important because millenarianist ideas were prevalent in the history of Portugal and thereafter in Brazil.\textsuperscript{325}

\textsuperscript{319} A. G. Mendonça, \textit{O celeste porvir}, 287-298; L. E. Wirth, ‘Protestantismos latino-americanos,’ 123.
\textsuperscript{320} A. G. Mendonça, \textit{O celeste porvir}, 115-118.
\textsuperscript{321} For the theology of the Princeton Theological Seminary see also Chapter 2 above.
\textsuperscript{322} A. G. Mendonça, \textit{O celeste porvir}, 349-357.
\textsuperscript{323} A. G. Mendonça, \textit{Protestantes, pentecostais & ecumênicos: o campo religioso e seus personagens}, São Bernardo do Campo: Metodista, 2008, 66. Mendonça points to the fact that Protestant millennialism was more pacific and acquiescent.
\textsuperscript{324} J. de Souza Martins, ‘O celeste porvir: uma resenha em forma de carta’ in: \textit{Estudos de Religião} 22/34 (2008), 249-256, esp. 253-255.
\textsuperscript{325} T. A. Diacon, ‘Peasants, prophets, and the power of millenarian vision in twentieth century Brazil’ in: \textit{Comparative Studies in Society and History} 32/3 (1990), 488-514; A. Máspoli de Araújo Gomes, ‘O messianismo milenarista no Brasil,’ 13-35. The
These characteristics and these themes were not only present in the first decades of Protestantism in Brazil, but also, to some extent, they were still present until to the first half of the 20th century and in several Protestant Churches up to the present day. Lack of clear theological definition continues in most Brazilian churches. However, cooperation declined and a rivalry grew in the first decades of the 20th century. Despite occasional reactions in favour of a more critical reading of the Bible, Conservatism, mainly biblical conservatism, was the rule at least until the end of the 1950s. Religious experience has always been a distinctive mark of Brazilian Protestantism, and the Pentecostal movement emphasised the need for personal religious experience for a genuine faith even more. The centrality of Jesus as mediator in doctrine and practice among Protestants still is a prominent point and certainly was the core of the preaching of all denominations until the 1960s.

North American society, as it was already said, looked at Roman Catholicism with reservation because the Catholic Church was seen as authoritarian and retrograde. For most Americans, there was no place for Catholicism in a society that had been based on values such as democracy and freedom. Nevertheless, at the end of the 19th century the story had changed. Catholics were assimilated to the North American culture and way of life. In contrast to its status in several countries in Europe and Latin America, the Roman Catholic Church was accepted and recognised in American society as a Christian denomination among others. Nevertheless, in Brazil, Catholicism would continue to be associated with paganism, authoritarianism and social underdevelopment, whereas

latter author relates Iberian millennialism to the Medieval theologian Joachim of Fiore and its spreading to Brazil through the priest A. Vieira mentioned above. Nevertheless, millennialism in Brazil, although always religious, was not always related strictly to the return of Jesus, the Messiah, but very often to the return of a specific Christian leader as it was demonstrated in the case of priest Vieira. This is typical of a religiosity popular that considers other saints and Christian leaders as important as Christ. See L. Nogueira Negrão, ‘Revisitando o messianismo no Brasil e profetizando o seu futuro’ in: Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais 16/46 (2001), 119-129.

328 A. G. Mendonça, Protestantes, pentecostais & ecumênicos, 71-72.
329 B. Ribeiro, Igreja evangélica e república brasileira, 171-176.
Protestant churches wanted to reform Brazilian religiosity offering a religion that was based on the free examination of the Word of God and that was successfully implanted in Europe and North America helping those countries to become models of modernisation and development. Instead of superstition and magic of a countless number of Saints, the Protestants believed to proclaim the simple gospel of Jesus Christ as the only mediator. For the missionaries, at that point, Brazilian culture and Catholicism were two sides of the same coin and needed to be confronted conjointly. Thus, Brazilian Protestantism was meant to be a counter-culture.

In sum, Protestantism in Brazil can be characterised, from the social point of view, as part of a movement of modernisation and desire for religious reform. This process has begun in the 19th century influenced by the arrival of the Portuguese Royal Family to Brazil in 1808, reinforced by Brazilian Independence in 1822 and later by the proclamation of the Brazilian Republic in 1889. Brazil was and still is a country of paradoxes and contrasts, modern and archaic, conservative and liberal, secularised and profoundly religious. From the theological perspective, Protestantism introduced the free examination of Bible, which did not form part of Brazilian religiosity — it was Vozes, 2006, 89-110, esp. 102-3. It is interesting to note that ministers sent by the missionary agency of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) visited Brazil in 1959 and after personal observations and contact with Presbyterian ministers they concluded that paganism, syncretism, secularism and spiritism were the more appropriated terms to depict Brazilian religiosity in general and Catholicism in particular. Thus, GKN accepted in that period the traditional analysis of Brazilian Protestantism on Brazilian Catholicism. See J. F. Rickli, Negotiating otherness in the Dutch Protestant world: missionary and diaconal encounters between the Protestant Church in the Netherlands and Brazilian organisations, PhD dissertation, Vrije Universiteit – Amsterdam, 2010.

Among the ministers in Brazil there were diverging opinions on the main goal of missionary work in Brazil, José Manoel da Conceição and other Brazilians wanted to reform Brazilian Roman Catholic Church, while North-American missionaries were satisfied with the implementation of a Protestant denomination in Brazil that could transform Brazilian culture by presenting a transformation model to the broad society. See especially: B. Ribeiro, Igreja presbiteriana no Brasil, da autonomia ao cisma, 439 passim.

J. Bittencourt Filho, Matriz religiosa brasileira, 43-44.

J. Bittencourt Filho, Matriz religiosa brasileira, 87-90; A. G. Mendonça, Protestantes, pentecostais & ecumênicos, 65. It is evident that for those that adhered to Protestantism, it became an expression of their culture as well. Therefore, in this sense Protestantism is not contra-culture, but rather a sub-culture. See: B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo e cultura brasileira, 333-336; A. Dias Casemiro, ‘O discurso presbiteriano,’ 179.
mainly used as a magical book. Besides, from the beginning, Protestantism was anti-Catholic and this characteristic became part of the identity of all Protestant churches in Brazil. From the cultural standpoint, Protestantism was always considered an alien religion, first when some Huguenots came to Brazil in the 16th century, later in the 17th century with the coming of reformed Dutchmen following West Indian Company, and in the beginning of the 19th century with the migrants that came following the new treaty with Great Britain or later, at the second half of the 19th century, to replace slave workforce. Brazilian Protestantism was born in large part due to the North American missionary work. From the early years, Brazilian churches’ leadership was shared between North-American missionaries and Brazilian ministers. However, regarding popular religiosity and culture, Brazilian leaders maintained the same negative view of the North-American missionaries, i.e. for them Brazilian popular religiosity was paganism. At the beginning of the 20th century Protestant churches in the United States had changed their perspective about Catholicism and wanted to be more cooperative and ecumenical, but the Brazilian church did not accept this change and stayed sharply anti-Catholic. A very important theological aspect that the missionary brought to Brazil was the priesthood of Jesus Christ, which was deeply different from the weak Christology present in that period. Due to its importance, it is dealt with in more detail in the next section.

3.3. The Christ of the missionaries: Jesus Christ as Priest

The main focus of this study is to identify theological elements that are representative in the construction of a Protestant Christology for the Brazilian context. The missionaries preached about Jesus, but Jesus was already known and played an important role in the Brazilian popular devotion. Then the question is what are the characteristics of the missionary preaching about Jesus that differed from the Jesus that the Brazilian people were used to? To answer this question it is necessary to analyse the images and concepts of Jesus that shaped the Brazilian popular devotion first. Who was Jesus for the Brazilians before the missionaries’ new preaching?

The Christology in Latin America during the colonial period is not written in handbooks or theological treatises, rather it is present in pamphlets, hymns, sermons,
popular arts and folkloric music.\textsuperscript{334} Míguez Bonino says that ‘we have to “explicate” the Christology that is implicit in the Latin American ecclesiastical process.’\textsuperscript{335} Even though this Christology is not explicitly stated, the main ideas are spread over the whole continent and are easily identifiable. Consequently, there is a strong consensus on what are the main features of this Christology. There were two very distinct images of Jesus in Latin America.\textsuperscript{336} Firstly, there was that of the monarch celestial Christ. It is the Christ who is identified with the figure of the king, the warrior, the conqueror, \textit{el conquistador}. He ‘is seen in the image of the king (of Spain or Portugal). His glory and power, however, are transferred to the heavens. Like the king on earth, Jesus rules as the monarch in heaven.’\textsuperscript{337} He is the victorious Christ that inspired the Spanish settlers that came to Latin America to subjugate pagan Indigenous peoples. This Jesus’ image worked as a model that inspired the Spanish settlers that had left Europe behind and came to conquer the New World. ‘Christ was thought of as a heavenly monarch, to whom all things, and authority over all things, spiritual and temporal, are now transferred.’\textsuperscript{338} It was the elites and the great colonisers who identified themselves with this Christ figure. For them, Christ was an example and assurance of victory over all enemies. It is an image that is admired by his power, especially military power. He is invincible and capable of destroying all his enemies. The poor people who were descendants of Spanish peasant farmers, the \textit{campesinos}, and especially the Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants did not identify themselves with him, however, they would fear him, acknowledging his power and authority.

The celestial monarch Christ was the Christ of the elites and was not embraced by the majority of Latin American people. Moreover, this image was more influential in the


\textsuperscript{337} W. Altmann, \textit{Luther and Liberation: A Latin American perspective}, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015, 50.

\textsuperscript{338} S. Trinidad, ‘Christology,’ 52. Trinidad states that this transference of power was understood as going from Christ to the Pope and from the Pope on to the new conquerors.
Spanish Latin American countries rather than in Brazil. For the majority of the Latin American people and especially in Brazil, the main figure was the opposite figure of a dead Christ. The Brazilian theologian João Dias de Araújo writes specifically about the Brazilian Christ. He describes him using five images, namely, a dead Christ, a distant Christ, a powerless Christ, a Christ who inspires no respect, a docetic or disincarnate Christ. Altmann says, ‘the sculptured images of the dead Christ show him laid out, totally defeated and impotent, bleeding and with an expression of unspeakable suffering.’ He is powerless, weak, ‘wasted by the forces of evil – defeated.’ It is the Christ of Good Friday. Jon Sobrino reminds that the great feast for peasants and oppressed in Latin America is Good Friday rather than Christmas or Easter. Azzi draws the attention to the fact that in Brazil specifically the death of Christ is much more important than his resurrection. Until now, Good Friday is the most important holiday in most parts of the country. He is the Christ of the cross rather than the Christ of the empty tomb. He does not offer any hope. Küster says that ‘the dying or dead Christ is an offer of identification in suffering without arousing hope – the resurrection is distant.’ And, besides being a Christ without resurrection, he is also a Christ without earthly life. There is nothing of his life before his crucifixion. It seems that he was born and went

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339 W. Altmann, ‘Is there hope in the midst of suffering?’ 199. Altmann says that ‘it may well be that the tradition was not as strong in Portugal’s colonies. Nevertheless, you can find, of course, the identification of the holy with wealth and power, for example in the richly decorated churches from the time of the great gold discoveries in the eighteenth century.’

340 J. Dias de Araújo, ‘Images of Jesus,’ 32-38. Even though the first four characteristics or different Christs are present in the Brazilian popular religion before the Missionary Protestant enterprise the last one, the docetic Christ, is rather the Christ of popular Protestantism posterior to the missionary work.


342 J. Dias de Araújo, 'Images of Jesus,' 32.


345 J. Dias de Araújo, 'Images of Jesus,' 33.

straight to the cross to die and there he stays until to the present time. Trinidad says, 'he was born, he died, but he never lived.'

Christ evidently was very important in the Brazilian popular devotion, however his status was comparable to the statuses of other saints, and even the saints were closer to the people's devotion than Christ himself. Christ was frequently considered as a mediator, healer, and exorcist in popular imaginary, but not superior to any of the other Catholic saints. It was the Virgin Mary who played the role of a powerful mediator capable of saving people in their suffering. An interesting example is found in an inscription, in the colonial church of Cuzco, Peru, but which is valid for her role in the whole Latin America. The inscription says, 'Come to Mary, all ye who toil and are overburdened, and she will give you rest.'

These two images are very distinct but they also are very close to each other. Volker Küster says that 'the two images are to some degree two sides of the one coin of colonialist propaganda.' Similarly, Saul Trinidad says that 'both images, the defeated Christ and the heavenly monarch, are faces of a christology of oppression.' And Casalis affirms that 'the production and distribution of such representations and images corresponds to the dearest interests of established power.' Nevertheless, it is necessary to highlight that the image of the dead Christ has been important for the

347 S. Trinidad, 'Christology,' 51.
349 L. de Mello e Souza, The devil and the land of the Holy Cross: witchcraft, slavery, and popular religion in colonial Brazil, Texas: University of Texas, 2003, 53-78; P. A. Ribeiro de Oliveira, 'Catolicismo popular no Brasil' in: Estudos Sócio-Religiosos 9, Rio de Janeiro: Feres/Ceris, 44-46, without date. Ribeiro de Oliveira presents in this research that for many Catholics from popular religiosity saints are the Christians officially canonised, but also holy trinity, souls, and other 'unofficial' saints.
350 Cited in S. Trinidad, 'Christology,' 60.
351 V. Küster, The many faces of Jesus Christ, 42.
352 S. Trinidad, 'Christology,' 60.
essential survival of a critical conscience.'

It helped the suffering people to find meaning in the midst of despair. It enabled them to see Christ as a victim of injustice in a corrupted system as they saw themselves victimised by an unjust, corrupted and oppressive system. Thus, they could resist accepting that that system was not natural or ideal. It is possible to say that the image of the dead Jesus was an answer to the monarch celestial Jesus of the conquerors. Their dead Jesus could well be a victim of the monarch Christ. Nevertheless, this image did certainly not help the people to overcome suffering or even find relief in their suffering. It never went beyond identification with his despair, suffering and death.

Having showed the Christological view present in Brazilian popular religiosity, it is time to look at what the Christology the North-American missionaries, who worked in the 19th century Brazil, preached and taught. Who was the Christ that they preached about? First of all, it is important to highlight that the missionaries did not develop a systematic Christology. Nevertheless, it is not hard to know what their Christological views were. An analysis of their sermons and articles in popular church newspapers is sufficient to give a good idea of their emphases and perspectives. Indubitably, they introduced a new image of Jesus Christ to the Brazilians. Instead of the celestial monarch Christ or the dead Christ, the missionaries preached about the saviour Christ, who died for our sins. Boanerges Ribeiro gives a list of sermons of Ashbel Green Simonton, who was the first Presbyterian missionary to arrive in Brazil, about the theme of Jesus as the mediator whose blood saves us from our sins. However, almost every single of Simonton’s sermons speaks of Jesus’ sacrifice. There is one of Simonton’s sermons published in his journals. The theme is Pilate and his accusers and is based on St. Luke 23: 24, ‘So Pilate decided to grant their demand.’ The sermon started describing the paganism of Pilate and how he struggled to deal with Jesus’ trial. Then, he compares the

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354 W. Altmann, Luther and Liberation, 50-52.
355 A good example is Antonio Vieira’s preaching to African slaves mentioned above. He comforted the Afro-Brazilian slaves saying that their experience of suffering was similar to Jesus’ own experience of oppression.
356 W. Altmann, Luther and Liberation, 63-64. Altmann believes that the rediscovery of the historical Jesus helped Latin American theology to deal with that passivity. The importance of the rediscovery of the historical Jesus in Liberation Theology is discussed in detail in the next chapter.
357 B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo e cultura brasileira, 135-6.
Brazilian people to Pilates, he says, ‘You and he, embraced, could participate in the same worship service and together make the cross sign. You and he are coreligionists.’ And then, he compares the religion of the Jewish priests in Jesus’ times with the Roman Catholic Church saying that they are mostly the same. In other words, the Brazilian Roman Catholic church is at the same time similar to the Greek pagan religions in Jesus’ times as well as to the religion of the Jewish priests that wanted Jesus to be crucified. Finally, in his conclusion Simonton says, ‘To confess Jesus Christ, as your saviour and God as the only name under the heavens which was given to the humans so they may be saved? That is what Pilates did not have the courage to do. Are you, sinners, more courageous?’

Blackford the second missionary to come to Brazil and Simonton’s brother-in-law says that, ‘the only sacrifice that the true Christianity recognises is that which was accomplished on Calvary’s cross 1800 years ago, when Jesus offered himself in holocaust for our sins.’ Another important Presbyterian missionary F. J. C. Schneider says that, ‘Jesus... is God’s ineffable gift to the human beings, because it is in him that we have forgiveness’ (Schneider’s italics). ‘It is because of that in particular, i.e. that Jesus brought forgiveness, and through whose sacrifice we are justified of all our sins, that Christ becomes God’s ineffable gift to the repented sinner.’ ‘... Jesus Christ already suffered, in his body on the cross, the due penalty for the sins of all people.’ The message is clear. Jesus is the priest that offers himself as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of the sins of all people. This perspective was the theological framework of the Old Princeton School and it shaped the Christology and soteriology of the first missionaries. Kärkkäinen says that in the ‘Princeton orthodoxy at the turn of the twentieth century, the consolidation of the penal substitution hermeneutics often becomes the test of orthodoxy.’ For Kärkkäinen that was the way that many orthodox Reformed theologians, such as Charles Hodge and the Old Princeton, read Calvin’s work, especially his Institutes. In Calvin’s framework it is described as the Christ’s priestly office. Thus, it is possible to sum up the missionaries’ Christology as centred on

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359 A. G. Simonton, Ashbel G. Simonton, 225.
360 A. G. Simonton, Ashbel G. Simonton, 231.
361 Cited in B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo e cultura brasileira, 137.
362 Cited in B. Ribeiro, Protestantismo e cultura brasileira, 137.
364 V. Kärkkäinen, Christ and Reconciliation, 306-7.
Christ’s work of redemption, his sacrifice for the atonement of sins. The main theme is Christ’s priestly office, in other words, they preached Jesus Christ as Priest.

Certainly, this message was very different from the one that the people were used to believing. The missionaries preached Jesus Christ as priest. He died, but his death was neither meaningless nor one more tragedy in human history. His death was a sacrifice that brings forgiveness and salvation to all who believe in him. The missionaries understood that the Brazilian Roman Catholic Church was not preaching the saviour Christ who requires only faith in him, but rather its teachings spoke of penitence, rites, and church demands that were necessary for someone to be purified of sins. The missionaries looked at the Catholic Church’s rites and ordinances as obstacles for the sinners’ salvation. They contrasted their own preaching summarised as salvation by faith in Christ’s sacrifice with the Catholic preaching which, according to the missionaries, was salvation through the good works prescribed by the Church’s hierarchy.\textsuperscript{365} The Jesus who was preached and taught by the missionaries was the mediator, the lamb and priest, the only one that could reconcile human beings to God. The priesthood of Jesus was being brought to the Brazilian Christianity for the first time as the central point of Christian belief and doctrine.\textsuperscript{366} Nevertheless the question is how the Brazilians received that message, how the first converts understood the missionaries’ preaching?

José Manoel da Conceição was the first Brazilian to be ordained as a Protestant minister. He was a Roman Catholic Priest before converting to the Presbyterian Church and many Presbyterian congregations were formed with people who were formerly his parishioners. After his excommunication and deposition from priesthood in the Catholic Church, Conceição wrote a short text in 1867 as his answer to the Roman Catholic Church justifying his decision to become Presbyterian.\textsuperscript{367} Clearly, the main point of his defence is the role of Christ as the unique mediator between human beings and God and that Protestant doctrine inspired him to rebel against Catholicism. The text starts with a brief account of his spiritual dilemmas and struggles before meeting the

missionaries, thereafter, he criticises the rites, indulgences, penitences, auricular confession, that, according to him, the Church added as a burden to the simple people who are looking for salvation and then, he criticises some dogmas especially the Pope’s infallibility. He then presents the message that changed his mind and gave him comfort in the midst of despair. He says, ‘I found in Jesus Christ, crucified, resurrected, glorified and preached to everyone in the Gospel, a compassionate saviour and a powerful advocate, and I could not do anything but to follow his kind voice.’ After that, he presents a more detailed exposition of the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. His main point is summarised, ‘By his death on the cross Jesus Christ paid the debt of everyone who is saved, and therefore, they do not have to expiate themselves, or Christ’s sacrifice is repeatable.’ He extensively cites biblical passages especially from Hebrews to justify his reasoning about the meaning of Jesus’ sacrifice and priesthood and he quotes passages from Paul’s letters to justify that salvation is by faith alone. Finally, in his conclusion he affirms that what the Brazilian people need is the message of salvation in Jesus and if they have access to the Bible and its teachings the salvation of Christ will become a reality in their lives.

Thus, it is evident that Conceição had absorbed the core of the missionary message, which was the centrality of Scriptures in matters of religion and the role of Christ as the only mediator. Jesus Christ, at the same time, as priest and sacrifice; the mediator who allows access to God and assures eternal life touched the life of Conceição and through him the lives of hundreds of Brazilians. Nevertheless, the reason why the missionaries contacted Conceição was because many people told them that Conceição would identify himself with their Protestant ideas. In fact, before the arrival of the missionaries in Brazil Conceição already had the epithet, the Protestant priest. Many of the Conceição’s sermons were already considered Protestant by the ecclesiastical authorities and by his parishioners. In actual fact, José Manoel da Conceição had read some Lutheran literature, but the main reason seems to be Conceição’s strong Jansenist’s education during his time in primary and secondary education as well as in

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his catholic theological studies. The Catechism of Montpellier, condemned as Jansenist, had a strong influence on Brazilian priests and specifically on Conceição. This Catechism was in line with the theology of Jansen and presented ideas about justification by faith that were different from the general perspective of the Trent Council. Jansen was a 17th century catholic theologian of the Augustinian tradition. He ‘argues that Augustine never uses the term “grace” unless he intends it to mean “efficacious grace”: if grace is given, the performance of the work for which it was given necessarily follows; if no such grace is given, no corresponding work results.’ Jansen also states that ‘although Christ’s work is sufficient for all men, it is efficacious only for some.’ Surely, Jansen was speaking from the Catholic tradition and his soteriology was not Protestant. For instance, he ‘continued to regard Justification as a process in which man was made righteous, involving the actualisation rather than the imputation of righteousness.’ However, it is not hard to notice the similarities between Jansen’s ideas and the Calvinist view of the missionaries.

Thus, it is possible to perceive the resonances between the missionaries’ main views and Conceição’s ones. Conceição had already struggled with the lack of biblical exegesis in some catholic doctrines and with the catholic emphasis on the necessity of rites, indulgences and penitences for the people’s salvation. Influenced by the Catechism of Montpellier, Conceição could see the doctrine of justification by faith as the true exposition of Christ’s work and at the same time he could endorse the appeal to the Scriptures as the sole judge of theological disputes. To become a Protestant minister was a hard decision but a decision that brought peace to him, especially when the Roman Catholic Church was working hard to bring the Brazilian Catholic Church closer to the Vatican’s theology and discipline. However, he would not support the missionaries’ view on Brazilian religiosity. In their anxiety to fight against popular religiosity, the missionaries were profoundly critical against Catholicism and Brazilian culture in general. They saw Brazilian Catholicism as an archaic religiosity similar to Medieval

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Christianity and so strongly syncretistic that in almost nothing could it be differentiated from paganism. José Manoel da Conceição, on the other hand, believed that it was necessary to reform Brazilian religiosity, however he thought that this reform needed to take Brazilian culture into consideration. He wanted to separate the errors of Catholicism that impregnated Brazilian religiosity from Brazilian culture itself. Conceição would say instead, ‘Oh my God! I will respect the religion of the ignorant people – the faith of those who do not have many opportunities to know you, praise you in a more dignifying way. I will never serve either vanity or arrogance, so that with words or unconsidered deeds the pious faith of others may be shaken.’ Although an important voice, Conceição was not able to convince North American missionaries who were shocked with some practices used in Brazil. At the end of the 19th century the identity of Brazilian Protestant churches as anti-Catholics was unanimous, even though in Europe and North America there began an important movement of reconsideration of this dichotomy between Catholicism and Protestantism. The relationship with Brazilian culture continued to be an issue for Brazilian Protestantism and it may explain why Protestantism did not reach out the masses. Nonetheless, the view of Jesus Christ as Priest was preached by the missionaries, accepted by a part of the Brazilian people and became the main focus of Protestant preaching ever since.

3.4. Criteria and Standpoint

Many responded positively to that message as Conceição’s conversion and testimony attest. Nevertheless, one could discuss the theological framework of the missionaries as I did in my analysis of the Old Princeton’s theology. It was the theology in which I was educated. The position defended in this dissertation is actually a response to the Old

A. G. Mendonça, O celeste porvir, 121-139.
R. E. Zwetsch, Missão como com-paixão, 41-3.
B. Ribeiro, O padre Protestante, 207.
B. Ribeiro, Igreja evangélica e República brasileira, 171-6.
J. Bittencourt Filho, Matriz religiosa brasileira, 43-6. In chapter 6 of this dissertation it is argued that it is the Neo-Pentecostal movement which deals with the Brazilian religiosity in a more successful way.
Princeton theological model. In this short section only a summary of the discussion of the last chapter will be presented.

The language that the missionaries used in their theological discourse was literal and descriptive in the sense that it seemed to describe irrefutable truths, instead of acknowledging the metaphorical character of theological language. In the Old Princeton Theology, theological language is dealt with as able to deliver a literal description of the divine reality. The evocative power of the metaphor is then lost and language becomes only a rational concept, void of its transformative character and incapable of enhancing its deeper meaning. The Old School theology believes that through reason it is possible to find the truth of God, which was revealed in the Bible. Therefore, it is a theology deeply grounded in the ideal of rationalism that was inaugurated by Descartes and that was the base of the Enlightenment and it continues its influence up to this day. In the Enlightenment added the importance of empirical research as the most adequate method to judge, justify and support hypotheses. This combination between Cartesian rationalism and empiricism gave birth to the philosophy of common sense that framed the Old School Theology of Princeton. It explains its strong confidence in the power of reason for judging and finding the truth. It presents a hermeneutics that intends to interpret the Bible literally and to find absolute truths.

In this approach one believes that truth corresponds to the reality, i.e. God’s truth revealed in the Bible. Moreover, this truth is valid for every single place and time, thus a-contextual and a-temporal. In Berkhof’s theological work there is a concept of correspondence of truth, where the biblical words correctly interpreted correspond to the divine truth. However, despite these criticisms, their preaching was in consonance with the main criteria of the Christian faith. Their view of Jesus is based on the Scriptures and their theology has a very high view of the Bible, which includes biblical inspiration and its use as the only rule of belief and practice.

It also is in agreement with the Christian tradition. It is firmly grounded on the Reformed tradition, although its method of presentation seems to be at odds with other Christian traditions. It tends to overemphasise the Reformed view about almost every

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doctrine and to consider as non-biblical any other tradition that disagrees with the Reformed tradition. Regarding their view on the Church, the missionaries tried hard to keep up the cooperation between different Protestant denominations in Brazil, following the North-American pattern. They were even able to give up some of their theological views to maintain that cooperation. However, they were strong anti-Catholics and that characteristic became one of the main characteristics of the Brazilian Protestantism.

Nevertheless, after two frustrated enterprises to establish Protestantism in the Brazilian culture in the colonial period, in the 19th century, the North-American missionaries finally succeeded. Christology was the main theme in their preaching and their emphasis was that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross brought salvation to all believers. They preached Jesus as a priest and victim that redeems all sinners. They brought Jesus Christ’s priestly office to the fore in the Brazilian context. That christological message was very different from the Christology of the dead Christ that was an integral part of Brazilian culture.

3.5. Jesus Christ as Priest: Critical Assessment

Actually, the priestly office is one of the main doctrines in the Protestant tradition and for many it is the main doctrine of the Christian church. And it was also part of Church worship in that context and still is today. Nevertheless, many have objected to the validity of the doctrine for our contemporary context and, certainly, these objections must be assessed. That is the main question of this section, is to speak of Jesus as an offering and priest still reasonable and suitable for the present 21st Century context? To answer this question it is necessary to look at the main criticisms against the doctrine of Jesus as sacrifice for the atonement of sinners and the related doctrines of justification by faith and reconciliation.385 Firstly, there is the old Socinians’ criticism that the doctrine seems to present God and Jesus in contrast. Thus, while Jesus is merciful and

385 There are different specific meanings associated to atonement, justification by faith, and reconciliation. However, in this dissertation these differences are not explored in detail. It only assumes reconciliation as the broadest term to describe God’s work to reconcile us in Jesus Christ, in addition, justification by faith as the main Protestant framework doctrine to explain the doctrine of reconciliation and, finally, atonement as the main doctrine that frames the doctrine of justification by faith.
full of love and grace, God demands justice and punishment to the guilty.\textsuperscript{386} The question, therefore is does the doctrine of atonement do justice to the concept of God as love? Secondly, the Enlightenment criticism that ‘sin and guilt, and therefore also atonement, are among things in which a person cannot be represented by another.’\textsuperscript{387} In which sense is it possible to speak of Jesus Christ as a representative? In other words, what is meant with the expression ‘Christ died for our sins’? Thirdly, the New Testament presents different models to explain the meaning of Christ’s life, death, resurrection, and ascension and to focus on atonement and Justification by faith seems not to do justice to the whole New Testament.\textsuperscript{388} The question is should justification by faith be considered the central theme of biblical soteriology? Fourthly, another important criticism against the doctrine of justification by faith is that it is too individualistic and consequently it fails to enable Christians to fight against injustice.\textsuperscript{389} Is it still helpful to speak of justification by faith or must the concept be replaced by another that may help Christians to work for justice? In other words, is it not more suitable to speak only of social justice rather than speak of Christ’s sacrifice for the sinner? Fifthly, the doctrine is being strongly criticised for being too forensic. This criticism is closely related to the former one. The fact that the doctrine is viewed as an external forensic act leads to ‘an overindividualistic account of atonement’\textsuperscript{390} as well as the individualistic view of the doctrine strengthens the forensic view. The question, then, is whether it still is appropriate to speak of atonement as a forensic act? And if so, in which sense is it forensic? Sixthly, another criticism against the doctrine of justification by faith, which is related to the last two ones is that it leads to passivity. Since, it is viewed as individualistic and forensic, Christian believers are not led to action, but rather to accept its benefits only. One of the central themes of Protestant preaching in Brazil was that salvation was by faith alone and that God does not demand any good works or penitence whatsoever. In fact it seems that to be saved it was only necessary to believe that the doctrine of justification by faith alone is true. Thus, the question is how to hold the doctrine without leading Christians to passivity and lack of involvement in world


\textsuperscript{387} W. Härle, \textit{Outline}, 273.


\textsuperscript{389} M. E. Brinkman, \textit{Justification}, 11.

\textsuperscript{390} V. Kärkkäinen, \textit{Christ and Reconciliation}, 343-4.
Seventhly, many argue that the concept of Christ’s sacrifice inspires and justifies violence. René Girard was one of the main critics of the idea of violence in relation to the event of Jesus Christ. Especially in the Latin American context, where violence was very often theologically justified using Jesus Christ’s sacrifice as an excuse for violence, it is important to question if atonement is somehow helpful in the Brazilian Protestant context. Eighthly, there is a spread consensus that Anselm was speaking from and to his own western Medieval context, thus the question is how could that concept be valuable to very different contexts such as 21st century Brazil. Is the doctrine of atonement not a contextual construct that lost its significance and relevance to contemporary context? Finally, another criticism, which also has to do with context is that the doctrine is not relevant to the Western context anymore. In the contemporary secularised Western culture, many doubt the existence of God in general. Thus, there is no point of speaking of a righteous God who is willing to justify man when many do not even believe that God exists. In contemporary western society the main question is about the existence of God rather than about God’s righteousness. However, this last question is not so preeminent in the Latin American context. In Brazil, for instance, the crucial question is idolatry rather than atheism.

To assess the importance and relevance of this doctrine to the Brazilian context it is necessary to deal with all these questions that were presented. The first one is about the contrast that the doctrine seems to indicate between God and Jesus, as if God was incapable of forgiving without punishing first, whereas Jesus is the one who is merciful

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395 W. Altmann, *Luther and Liberation*, 30. Altman says, ‘in Latin America context the question is not one of the existence or non-existence of God. The question is rather, whom do we name when we talk of “God”: the God of life or one of the many gods of death? That is to say: the question is not about the existence of God, but about God’s justice. Thus, in Latin America the question has been placed again in the context of the long historical tradition of the true God over against the false gods, or of God over against the idols.’ (Watmann’s italics). See also E. J. Bortoleto & R. G. K. Meneghetti, ‘Dos conceitos de Ciência da Religião e de Ensino Religioso: Diálogos necessários’ in: *Numen* 17/1 (2004), 15-50, esp. 28-36. For a good analysis of the question of the existence of God and justification by faith presenting possible answers see M. E. Brinkman, *Justification*, 17-35; E. Jüngel, *Justification, the heart of Christian faith: A theological study with an ecumenical purpose*, London: T & T Clark, 2006, 44-7.
and forgiving. The issue behind this criticism is the idea that God punished Christ because of our sins. Daniel Hill and Joseph Jedwab, for instance, defend what they call “the strong version,” that God did indeed punish Christ.\(^{396}\) The affirmation that God punished Christ is biblically and theologically mistaken. It is biblically inaccurate because there is no passage in the Bible that affirms that ‘Christ, in his suffering and death on our behalf, bore the wrath and punishment of God.’\(^{397}\) In Romans 8: 3, Paul declares that God “condemned sin in the flesh” (note, he does not say that God “condemned Jesus,” but that he “condemned sin in the flesh” of Jesus).\(^{398}\) The biblical idea of sacrifice was framed by the Jewish way of thinking\(^{399}\) and it becomes an issue when western theologians try to explain it in more detail.\(^{400}\) As Jenson says, ‘none of this becomes a problem requiring theoretical resolution until the mission moves into a world whose discourse is not shaped by the Scriptures.’\(^{401}\) The Apostle Paul does say ‘that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.’\(^{402}\) He also says that ‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of law by becoming a curse for us.’\(^{403}\) Paul also uses the metaphor of a ransom in passages such as 1 Corinthians 6: 20, ‘you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies’ and also 1 Corinthians 7: 23, ‘You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.’ However, Paul does not say that Jesus paid God the price and he does not say God cursed Jesus either. Paul ‘used an image, but he does not describe the reality. Christ died for us and for our sins, so he bought our freedom from slavery of sin and guilt, the price that he paid for that was his death on the cross. To this extent, the metaphor can and may be interpreted. Paul does not say that the death of Jesus would be a “payment” to God that accomplishes that God’s


\(^{397}\) G. van den Brink & C. van der Kooi, Christelijke dogmatiek, 425; See also H. Berkhof, Christelijk Geloof, Kampen: Kok, 2002, 302-4.

\(^{398}\) N. T. Wright, Justification: God’s plan and Paul’s vision, London: SPCK, 2009, 84.

\(^{399}\) Tom Wright explores how the Jewish reasoning structured Jesus’ symbolic acts in his ministry and his sacrificial death on the cross. See N. T. Wright, Jesus and the victory of God, 579-611. See also F. M. Young, The use of sacrificial ideas in Greek Christian writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom, Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1979, 164-6.

\(^{400}\) T. F. Torrance, Atonement, 88.

\(^{401}\) R. W. Jenson, Systematic Theology vol. 1: The triune God, Oxford: Oxford University, 1997, 185. See also R. Sherman, King, priest, and prophet, 173.

\(^{402}\) 1 Corinthians 15: 3.

\(^{403}\) Galatians 3: 13.
wrath is appeased.

Paul says 'that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.' Jenson says, 'the New Testament speaks of God's action to reconcile us to himself, and nowhere of God's being reconciled to us.' As Jüngel says, 'it is not God who sacrifices the human Jesus – this is not a human sacrifice! No, God so identifies himself with the human Jesus put to death by humans, that we must affirm that this human being was God's son.' Alternatively as Frances Young says, 'the high-priest, Jesus Christ, does not propitiate God, but expiates sin.' The idea that God punishes Jesus to reconcile us to him is not biblical, but rather it emerged when the early western Church tried to explain what the rationale was behind the biblical metaphors. And that is the problem with most of the evangelical theology in the Brazilian context even today. They tend to force the metaphors to say more than that they were aimed for.

Besides its lack of biblical fundament, the affirmation that Jesus is punished by God is also theologically mistaken, because it opposes love to wrath and consequently Jesus to God. Therefore, it presents a deficient concept of God. Even Bavinck who says that 'Christ himself considered his suffering a punishment laid on him by God on account of our sins' would also say that 'the satisfactory nature of Christ's obedience, accordingly, does not consist in that Christ by his blood satisfied a vengeful deity and stilled his hatred and spite by a quantity of suffering.' It has been an issue for many

405 V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and reconciliation*, 310 note 46.
406 2 Corinthians 5: 19.
407 R. J. Jenson, *Systematic theology*, 186. (Jenson's italics)
408 E. Jüngel, *Justification*, 163.
Christians in Church history to maintain the validity of God’s wrath which the Scriptures make references to, as well as also the biblical teaching that God is love. However the idea that God punished Christ is not necessary to keep both terms together. Some authors such as Eric Yang and Stephen Davis take the humbler strategy of minimising the importance of divine wrath in the Bible. They affirm that divine wrath is not ‘central or fundamental to atonement’ and that ‘the manifestation of divine wrath reminds us of moral standards and the consequences of both right and wrong actions.’ But they do not go further to explain how both are related. Yang and Davis prefer to speak that ‘hatred is not opposed to love.’ Miroslav Volf, reflecting on the final judgment described in the book of Revelation, says that the polarity between the patient love of God against the fury of God’s wrath exists ‘not because the God of the cross is different from the God of the second coming. After all, the cross is not forgiveness pure and simple, but God’s setting aright the world of injustice and deception. The polarity is there because some human beings refuse to be “set aright.”’ There are many ways of understanding God’s wrath. ‘Some scholars suggest that God’s wrath refers to his handing people over to the (natural) consequences of their unfaithfulness. Others interpret God’s wrath as God’s holy opposition to sin. The issue is whether God’s wrath needs to be propitiated or it is itself the force that expiates and destroys sin.’ In other words, there are different ways of dealing with the relationship between God’s wrath and love. It is possible to speak of a paradox or a polarity. It is also possible to emphasise that wrath is the way that God deals with those that respond to love with violence. However, the issue gets complicated when God the Father is associated with wrath and God the Son with love. Despite possible different interpretations about the meaning or reasoning of God’s wrath, it is necessary to affirm that God is love and he is the subject of

418 M. Volf, Exclusion and embrace, 299.
reconciliation. Kistemaker says that 'both OT and NT teach that God expresses his wrath from heaven. And yet it is God himself who initiates propitiation by having Jesus Christ turn aside divine wrath and take away sin out of love for lost humanity.'

The fact that in Brazil, God was associated with wrath leads many people to look for mercy in the Virgin Mary as well as look at Jesus as a victim. As O’ Collins says, ‘we also need to recall love when expounding other salvific relationships invoked by the New Testament – for instance, the high priest in deep solidarity with those he represents.’ In sum, to make a strong separation between God’s wrath and a loving Jesus is mistaken. In the same way, to appeal to God’s wrath to justify the idea that God punishes Christ is also misguided. The divine wrath could be related to the concept of God’s love in different ways. The main point is to emphasise God’s love on the doctrine of justification and that God was reconciling us in Jesus Christ and that God and Jesus Christ are active in the process of justification.

It is necessary to answer the second criticism, in which sense is it possible to speak of Jesus Christ as a representative? What does the expression ‘Christ died for our sins’ mean? It may seem shocking to say that Christ died for our sins and since Socinus the western Church has dealt with this question. In fact, it was already an issue for the first gentiles who considered the doctrine as foolish (1 Corinthians 1: 18-25).

Nevertheless, even though it may be unacceptable rationally, it is part of the core of the Christian kerygma, the core preaching of the early Church. There are two concepts that frame the expression. Firstly, it is based on the concepts of sacrifice present in the Old Testament writings. The idea that through sacrifice God deals with sins is already present in Old Testament. The people of Israel were used to seeing sacrifices as an integral part of their relationship with God. Secondly, there is the idea of

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421 H. Bavinck, Reformed dogmatics III, 399.
422 E. Jüngel, Justification, 160-1.
423 F. M. Young, The use of sacrificial ideas, 139.
representation, which is essential to the concept of covenant and is integral to the biblical mindset. The God of Israel is a God who enters into a relationship with his people through covenants. In Christianity both ideas are put together and consequently, it presents the idea of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the launching of the new covenant. The new covenant, which was promised by God and announced by the prophets, was meant to replace the Old Testament covenant\textsuperscript{426} fulfilling it and accomplishing God’s plan to the whole world.\textsuperscript{427} In Qumran the idea of a suffering messiah, based on Isaiah 53, who would suffer on people’s behalf is already present and may have been spread over Israel in Jesus’ times.\textsuperscript{428} And it is very likely that Jesus had seen himself as the messiah who would suffer and be killed to redeem Israel.\textsuperscript{429} ‘We may say that the sacrifice of Christ was first and foremost God’s way of dealing with sin.’\textsuperscript{430}

It was said above that the Greeks struggled to accept the idea that a man could die for the saving of others, but the ideas of sacrifice and priesthood were not strange to them.\textsuperscript{431} They were very familiar with the practice of sacrificing, but their concept of sacrifice was very different from the Jewish one. Many Christians from a Greek-Roman background who were not familiar with the Jewish concept interpreted Christ’s sacrifice in light of their pagan context. For them sacrifice was a way of placating an angry God and it was the way to gain favours from God in an act of exchange. In general terms, Christianity has developed an idea of sacrifice that presents characteristics of both, the Jewish-biblical worldview as well as the Greek-Roman one. Many of the issues about the idea of sacrifice and with the expression that ‘Jesus died for us’ come from the fact that

\textsuperscript{426} F. M. Young, \textit{The use of sacrificial ideas}, 148.
\textsuperscript{427} Young says that, ‘once the death of Christ was connected with forgiveness of sins and expiation, it was inevitable that actual sacrifice language should be used of it, especially as the Old Covenant came to be regarded as a complete forshadowing of the New. The whole sacrificial Law was soon understood as an acted prophecy or symbol of the death of Christ, the perfect martyr and sacrificial victim.’ F. M. Young, \textit{The use of sacrificial ideas}, 140. Wright says, ‘Paul’s doctrine of justification is therefore about what we may call the covenant – the covenant God made with Abraham, the covenant whose purpose was from the beginning the saving call of a worldwide family through whom God’s saving purposes for the world were to be realized.’ N. T. Wright, \textit{Justification}, ix.
\textsuperscript{428} For a different view see F. M. Young, \textit{The use of sacrificial ideas}, 140 note 4.
\textsuperscript{429} N. T. Wright, \textit{Paul} 1343-44. See also F. M. Young, \textit{The use of sacrificial ideas}, 139 note 3.
\textsuperscript{430} F. M. Young, \textit{The use of sacrificial ideas}, 217.
\textsuperscript{431} N. T. Wright, \textit{Paul}, 1339-40.
the western Church confuses the biblical idea of sacrifice with the pagan one. There are different ways of interpreting how Christ’s death expiates humans’ sins, and it is not clear what analogy describes Jesus’ sacrifice best. Thus, the statement that Jesus died for our sins can be helpful, even the details of how his death expiates sins are not so clear. In the Brazilian context, however, the biggest issue was not that sin is personal and cannot be put on the shoulders of someone else; on the contrary, the issue was more with whose shoulders they should put their afflictions on. In the period before the missionaries, the Virgin Mary seemed to be the chosen option for the majority. They did not have problems with the necessity of either sacrifice or mediators. Even though they were not used to the practice of animal sacrifice, they would pay penances, very often painful ones, and many other kinds of sacrifice to get favours from God or to placate his anger. Thus, in this regard their way of thinking was very similar to the Greek mindset of the New Testament period. They also believed that they needed someone to help them to get access to God, but Jesus Christ was not the only mediator in their belief system. All sorts of saints were invoked to draw God’s attention to them. In other words, the issue in Brazil was not whether the sins could be forgiven through the sacrifice of someone else, even though that message was in some aspects new to them until the Protestant missionaries came. The point is rather to preach to them that Jesus died for them rather than died as one more victim of an unjust world. The office of Jesus Christ as priest was and still is relevant to the Brazilian context in this regard. Christ as priest brings human beings to God and as mediator and sacrifice at the same time leads them to a loving God who wants to be in a relationship with them. As Edward Schillebeeckx says, ‘the love of the human Jesus who suffers for others, in faithfulness to God and in solidarity with the history of human suffering, is priesthood in the true sense of the word: bringing men to God.’

The third criticism that needs to be addressed is, since New Testament presents different models to explain the meaning of Christ’s salvific work, should justification by

432 N. T. Wright, Justification, 84.
433 F. M. Young, The use of sacrificial ideas, 159-60; H. Bavinck, Reformed dogmatics III, 328-40.
434 The idea of exchange in Brazilian religiosity is a very important point and it is explored in detail in the Chapter 5 and 6 of this dissertation.
435 E. Jüngel, Justification, 162-5.
faith be considered the central theme of biblical soteriology? This is a very important question because in Brazil, until now, justification by faith is, for many, the core of Christian preaching, the shibboleth of evangelical faith. Karl Barth rightly responds to this criticism when he says, ‘in the Church of Jesus Christ this doctrine has not always been the Word of the Gospel, and it would be an act of narrowing and unjust exclusiveness to proclaim and treat it as such.’ In actual fact, the doctrine of atonement was not important to the Apostolic Fathers. Even, in some recent Lutheran debates people also ‘agree upon the idea that justification is not the predominant theme of the New Testament.’ It was Martin Luther, according to Barth, who regarded and described the doctrine of justification by faith as the central and decisive point of the whole Evangelical theology. By the beginning of the 17th century the doctrine of justification by faith ‘appears to have been generally regarded as the articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae, the “article by which the church stands or falls.”’ But to do justice to the New Testament and to the whole Christian tradition it is necessary to affirm that there is a wide variety of images of atonement in the New Testament and to overemphasise one of them is not right or constructive. Robert Jenson rightly affirms, ‘it is one of the more remarkable and remarked-upon aspects of theological history that no theory of atonement has ever been universally accepted.’ Multiple views and multiple metaphors were present in the early Church and ‘there was no accepted or consistent “doctrine” or “theory in patristic times.”’

In conclusion, it can be stated that there is still a place for the vision of Jesus Christ’s work as priest, as long as the priestly metaphor is read as one metaphor among

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439 M. E. Brinkman, Justification, 17.
440 K. Barth, Church dogmatics, IV. 1, 521.
441 A. McGrath, Iustitia Dei, 188. According to Jüngel, the expression ‘does not actually occur in the Reformers’ writings. However, the fact remains that it is genuinely reformed in its content.’ E. Jüngel, Justification, 16. Barth says the expression ‘does not seem to derive from Luther himself, but it is an exact statement of his view.’ K. Barth, Church dogmatics, IV. 1, 522.
442 M. E. Brinkman, Justification, 128-9; N. Vorster, ‘Christ in context’ in: Journal of Reformed Theology 7/3 (2013), 257-266, esp. 263.
443 R. Jenson, Systematic theology, 186.
others. As Dalferth says, ‘although sacrificial language may be used, there is much more to the total soteriological event than sacrifice.’ Alternatively as Vanhoozer says, ‘no one metaphor should be allowed to dominate the others.’ In this regard, the threefold office is very helpful because it emphasises the variety of meanings of Jesus Christ’s work for human salvation. Bavinck says, ‘the truth is Scripture is so many-sided in its description of that (Christ’s) work that in the history of theology there has emerged an array of views on the work of Christ, all of which contain a core of truth.’ ‘From the beginning Christ was viewed not only as a prophet but also as a king and priest.’ Another important reason to point out that Christ’s priestly office, and consequently sacrificial atonement, is not the only way of looking at the Scriptures as well as the tradition is that it facilitates ecumenical dialogue. In the Brazilian context, where ecumenical relations are very weak it is very important to highlight that Jesus Christ as priest is one metaphor among others. The Protestant centrality of Justification by faith hindered ecumenical relations between Catholics and Protestants since the beginning of the Reformation. To facilitate the dialogue and improve the relationship between Christian churches it is important to acknowledge that justification by faith is not the “article by which the church stands or falls.” On the contrary, it is necessary to understand how different views can be complementary and engender mutual enrichment.

The fourth criticism which needs to be dealt with is that the doctrine of justification by faith is too individualistic and as a consequence it fails to enable Christians to fight against injustice. The question is then, whether it is still helpful to speak of justification by faith or should the doctrine be replaced by another one that may encourage Christians to work for justice? In other words, is it not more suitable to

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450 V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and reconciliation*, 298.
speak of social justice only rather than speak of Christ’s sacrifice for the individual sinner?

Since the Reformation the doctrine of justification by faith took a strong individualistic character and the doctrine came to Brazil with a very sharp individualist tone. Rather than ‘Jesus died for us,’ the Protestant churches in Brazil preach, sing, and pray that ‘Jesus died for me.’ Many authors have pointed to the fact that Luther’s personal experience shaped his theological thinking and gave to his reflection on the doctrine of Justification by faith in particular its contours, which marked the whole history of Protestant theological reasoning since then. It is comprehensible that personal experience has a strong influence on one’s own theological reflection. That is true to everyone rather than a feature of the theology of Luther and Calvin only. However, it is necessary to maintain a critical view and try to counter-balance so that different experiences may have a voice in theological reflection as well. Luther’s view in particular has been criticised not only among Systematic theologians, but also among biblical scholars more recently. They point out that Luther looked at Judaism in Jesus’ time as if it were the same as the Roman Catholic medieval Church. Wright says, ‘I am not a specialist in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it does seem to me that in general terms the Reformers and their successors were thus trying to give biblical answers to medieval questions.’ This affirmation is interesting not only because it points out the Reformer’s context but also because Wright recognises that he is not a specialist in the theology of Reformation. It is interesting because it calls attention to the question that who should have a greater impact on the shaping of the doctrine Justification by faith: systematic theologians or biblical scholars. Alister McGrath rightly says, ‘the “doctrine of justification” has come to bear a meaning within dogmatic theology which is quite independent of its Pauline origins, so that even if it could be shown that it plays a minimal role in Pauline soteriology, or that its origins lie in an anti-Judaising polemic quite inappropriate to the theological circumstances of today, its significance would not be diminished as a result.’ The debate between biblical

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452 M. E. Brinkman, Justification, 57-77; V. Kärkkäinen, Spirit and Salvation, 325-330.
453 N. T. Wright, The day the revolution began: Rethinking the meaning of Jesus’ crucifixion, London: SPCK, 2016, 32 (Wright’s italics).
454 A. E. McGrath, Iustitia Dei, 2-3.
scholars and systematic theologians has proved McGrath right, but it does not mean that
dogmatic theology can ignore biblical scholarship. The doctrine should be criticised and
analysed using different disciplines and biblical scholarship must be one of them. And an
important point that biblical scholars have called attention to is that the doctrine was
not as central in the Bible as dogmatics wants us to believe and also how individualistic
the idea of salvation is to many heirs of the Reformation. Tom Wright says, ‘the
theological equivalent of supposing that the earth goes round the sun is the belief that
the whole of Christian truth is all about me and my salvation.’ On the contrary, the
Bible is about the salvation of the whole world and new creation rather than individual
salvation and about going to heaven. ‘The narrowing down of God’s action in
justification to the spiritual sphere of piety denies the goal the coming Kingdom intends
for the world.’ Using Wright’s words, ‘Jesus died for our sins not so that we could sort
out abstract ideas, but so that we, having been put right, could become part of God’s plan
to put his whole world right.’ Or yet, ‘the New Testament, with the story of Jesus’s
(sic) crucifixion at its centre, is about God’s kingdom coming on earth as in heaven.’
It is possible to conclude with Gunton’s words, ‘Sacrifice has to do with the rightful
ordering of life in the world, and that involves us in taking seriously notions of pollution
and uncleanness which extend beyond the merely moralistic. Western theology has by
and large lost this dimension and shown a repeated tendency to overmoralize its
understanding of the atonement. Its vision has become increasingly anthropocentric and
individualistic, at the expense of aspects of the tradition which see salvation as being in
and with the whole created order.’

Thus, it is possible to say that the doctrine of justification by faith and the
document of atonement, which is its base, do not need to be dismissed or replaced by a
view that emphasises more social justice. The individualism of the doctrine is strongly
attached to the doctrine but it is possible to expand its meaning. The threefold office
enables such expansion. Thus, the prophetic role of Jesus Christ which is strongly
emphasised by Liberation Theology is an important movement to deepen the social

455 N. T. Wright, Justification, 7 (Wright’s italics).
456 M. Volf, Exclusion and embrace, 294-5.
457 M. E. Brinkman, Justification, 25.
458 N. T. Wright, The day, 22. See also N. T. Wright, Justification, 72-87.
459 N. T. Wright, The day, 40, (Wright’s italics).
aspect of Salvation in Christ. At the same time, the idea of the Jesus Christ as King which is expressed in the view of Christus Victor highlights the cosmic dimension of Jesus’ salvation. Robert Sherman affirms, ‘Christ’s vicarious sacrifice had too often been construed in strictly individualistic terms, as if God were concerned only with saving certain persons here and there while writing off the rest of humanity and even creation. Understanding the Son’s vicarious sacrifice in the context of the Father’s victory in Christ over the principalities and powers gives a more appropriately balanced construal of God’s larger concerns.’ Christ’s priestly office and, consequently, the doctrine of his sacrifice for us is still helpful in the Brazilian context as long as its individualistic aspect is suppressed and the doctrine is balanced with the other two offices. Therefore, Christ’s death may be viewed as bringing change to the whole world rather than to individual Christian believers only.

The fifth criticism to be addressed is deeply related to the former one. It is affirmed that the doctrine of justification by faith is too forensic. The question, then, is whether it is still appropriate to speak of atonement as a forensic act? And if so, in which sense is it forensic? Many Latin Fathers were lawyers who expressed the relationship of God and humanity in legal terms. Thus, there is a long tradition of legal and forensic reasoning in the doctrine of the atonement. Of course, Anselm helped to establish the doctrine in legal terms. However it was Calvin that became the fundamental theologian associated to the forensic aspect of the doctrine in Protestant theology with his emphasis on penal substitution. Even for Calvin himself it is the Unio mystica that plays the decisive role in his view of Salvation rather than the forensic aspects of justification, it is undeniable that in Calvin the priestly office had a very strong forensic base. Edmondson says, ‘Calvin will frequently argue that Christ paid the price we owed to God by suffering our punishment in our place’ and also ‘it is important for Calvin that Christ did not merely die, but that he died having been judged and

\[\text{V. Kärkkäinen,} \ Spirit and Salvation, 205; V. Kärkkäinen, Christ and reconciliation, 372-9. The prophetic role and its relation to Liberation Theology is the theme of the next chapter.} \]

\[\text{R. Sherman,} \ King, priest, and prophet, 211. The kingly office and its relation to the concept of Christus Victor is the theme of Chapter 6.} \]

\[\text{C. E. Gunton,} \ The actuality of atonement, 85-7.} \]

\[\text{V. Kärkkäinen,} \ Spirit and Salvation, 321-3.} \]

\[\text{S. Edmondson,} \ Calvin’s Christology, 99.} \]
condemned, though righteous, so that it was clear that he had taken on our guilt.'

Thus, if, on the one hand, the individualistic tendency is associated to Luther, on the other hand, the forensic aspect is related to Calvin. A robust Christology has to avoid this overemphasis on the legal aspects of Christ's priestly work. Colin Gunton rightly asserts, 'it is undoubtedly true that theologies centred on a legal or commercial metaphor can degenerate into what appears to be a kind of mathematical balancing of evil: Jesus bears so much evil as a counterweight, so to speak, to ours.' However, that does mean that there must not be any reference to legal issues on the meaning of Christ's death. Gunton also rightly says, 'Justification is not a legal fiction but a new relationship. The juristic connotations, however, continue to have a part to play, because they prevent Paul from lapsing into antinomianism – for justice in the narrower sense matters – or into ahistorical forms of piety.' The issue is not that there are no legal elements in the doctrine but rather it is how to interpret them. Kärkkäinen says, 'the presence of legal notions in the explanation of the sacrificial death on the cross is not the problem; the problem is how law and legality are understood. This juridizing tendency of atonement, owing not little to Augustinian and Calvinistic traditions, tended to trump the trinitarian unity of the work of salvation, cast it in a semimechanistic economy of exchange, an effect of which is the typical Protestant notion of forensic justification.' Kevin Vanhoozer suggests 'that the biblical framework for interpreting the saving significance of Jesus’ death is covenantal rather than merely legal.' Wright, in the same line, says that 'Paul’s doctrine of justification is focused on the divine lawcourt. God, as judge, “finds in favour of”, and hence acquits from their sin, those who believe in Jesus Christ. The word “justify” has this lawcourt as its metaphorical home base.' The legal aspect, then, should be balanced with the idea that God is a merciful judge, instead of a figure of

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466 S. Edmondson, Calvin's Christology, 100.
467 C. E. Gunton, The actuality of atonement, 128.
468 C. E. Gunton, The actuality of atonement, 104.
469 V. Kärkkäinen, Christ and reconciliation, 343.
470 K. J. Vanhoozer, 'The atonement in postmodernity,' 380-1. It is important to remember that Calvin's concept of Christ's priestly work is also based on the idea of Covenant. The issue with Calvin, on my view, is his emphasis on penal substitution. See S. Edmondson, Calvin's Christology, 91-101.
471 N. T. Wright, Justification, x.
an angry judge keen to punish and condemn.\footnote{In this regard, Karl Barth’s metaphor of God as ‘the judge judged in our place’ is very helpful. K. Barth, \textit{Church dogmatics}, IV. I, 211-83. See also C. E. Gunton, \textit{The actuality of atonement}, 109-11} According to van den Brink and van der Kooi God’s righteousness is not the opposite of mercy, but rather both are deeply related.\footnote{G. van den Brink & C. van der Kooi, \textit{Christelijke dogmatiek}, 422.} Therefore, even though present, the forensic aspect should not be overemphasised.\footnote{In this regard, Jüngel’s statement that ‘the doctrine of justification has this strength of a hermeneutic category because it brings all of theology into the dimension of a legal dispute: that is, the legal dispute of God about his honour, which is at the same time a legal dispute’ seems to be an exaggeration of the importance of the legal aspect. See E. Jüngel, \textit{Justification}, 48.} The priestly office should not be interpreted as an exercise of bookkeeping.\footnote{R. Sherman, \textit{King, priest, and prophet}, 213-4; K. J. Vanhoozer, ‘The atonement in postmodernity,’ 378-9; C. F. D. Moule, \textit{Essays in the New Testament interpretation}, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2013, 251-60.} Moule is right to the point when he says, ‘forgiveness is not logical and quantitative: it is always a miracle of free grace.’\footnote{C. F. D. Moule, \textit{Essays}, 252.} ‘Forgiveness is costly,’\footnote{C. F. D. Moule, \textit{Essays}, 253.} ‘but it is not the cost of a debt paid by the debtor to a creditor.’\footnote{C. F. D. Moule, \textit{Essays}, 254.} ‘Christ, as the utterly obedient ultimate Adam, is in this sense the representative of man’s costly repentance, as well as of God’s costly forgiveness.’\footnote{C. F. D. Moule, \textit{Essays}, 258.}

This aspect is very important for the Brazilian context, since, quite often, evangelical preaching in Brazil seems to give the idea that to be saved one needs only to believe that the doctrine of atonement is true and an accurate description of what the Bible says. The idea of substitution and its objective aspect should be balanced with the subjective aspect and consequently salvation should be viewed as a new relationship with God that leads to a different involvement in the world. It is also important because it addresses another criticism against the doctrine of atonement, i.e. that it leads to passivity, which is discussed next.

With the discussion about the dangers of a too individualistic and too forensic view of Christ’s work in mind it is possible to approach the criticism that the doctrine of justification by faith leads to passivity. The question is how to hold the doctrine without driving Christians to passivity and lack of involvement in world affairs? The Uruguayan theologian Juan Luis Segundo affirms that Luther’s view on justification by faith leads
Christians to passivity and Segundo proposes a synthesis that holds the Protestant idea of salvation by faith as well as the Catholic view of salvation by good works.\textsuperscript{480} In the Protestant theology, especially Lutheran’s, there is some confusion about the right relationship between faith and justification as well as the objective and subjective aspects of salvation and consequently, the passive and active justification. In the Reformed tradition that distinction is clearer, nevertheless, many Christians in the Reformed tradition struggle to understand what the responsibilities of a Christian are in this world.\textsuperscript{481} The issue of the relationship between grace and works is a very ancient one, going back to Augustine’s criticisms against Pelagius. The solution is neither to abandon the doctrine of justification by faith nor meld it with the concept of salvation by good works as suggested by Segundo, but rather it is to avoid a too individualistic and too forensic view of the doctrine.\textsuperscript{482} It is necessary to emphasise that Christ’s sacrifice was not meant to save me from hell, but rather it renews and enables the transformation of all creation. At the same time, it is important to point out that Christ’s death was not God’s act punishing Christ in our place, but rather it is based on God’s Covenant which involves all creation and demands our commitment to this new Covenant and its purposes of renewing and transformation of the whole world.

Seventhly, many argue that the concept of Christ’s sacrifice inspires and justifies violence. Especially in the Latin American context, where violence is a very sensible issue, it is important to question whether atonement is helpful to overcome violence or, on the contrary, it enhances violence and violent practices. René Girard was one of the main critics of the idea of violence in relation to the event of Jesus Christ. He ‘maintains that religious violence in the form of sacrifice in fact provides the ultimate key to understanding cultural development and the stabilization of social order.’\textsuperscript{483} Thus, the social order is based on the idea of sacrifice and of a scapegoat. The concept of a scapegoat justifies violence in two different ways. Firstly, it assumes that violence is the

\textsuperscript{480} J. L. Segundo, \textit{The liberation of theology}, New York: Orbis, 1979, 149-51. Segundo’s view is discussed with a few more details in the next chapter which deals with Liberation Theology.

\textsuperscript{481} A. E. McGrath, \textit{Iustitia dei}, 231-2; M. E. Brinkman, \textit{Justification}, 91.

\textsuperscript{482} W. Altmann, \textit{Luther and liberation}, 82-9.

\textsuperscript{483} M. Welker, \textit{God the revealed}, 202-3, n 33.
only way possible to overcome violence. Violence is justified because it was God’s mechanism to deal with sin. For justice to be achieved someone must be punished as Jesus was punished by God. Secondly, it assumes that there will be victims and the role of the victims is enhanced by the figure of Jesus and his sacrifice on the cross. It is not difficult to see how strong both ideas are present in the Latin American context in general, and the Brazilian context in particular. On the one hand, leaders in positions of power are enabled to use violence in God’s name to maintain or restore order and, on the other hand, victims of violence have to accept that violence is part of their lives as Jesus also endured violence. The main figures of Christ in Latin America, the celestial monarch and the dead Christ, point out that this mechanism is deeply present in Latin America.

To deal with this criticism, however, it is not necessary to abandon the doctrine of atonement altogether. Rather, it is fundamental to emphasise that Christ’s sacrifice does not legitimate sacrifice. On the contrary, his sacrifice is the end of all sacrifice. As Kärkkäinen says, ‘the “scandal of the cross” must remain, not as a way of affirming the legitimacy of violence, let alone abuse, but rather as a way to embrace the “promise of the cross:” redemption, liberation, salvation, and finally the end of violence.’ Or as Volf says, ‘the biblical texts narrate how God has necessarily used the sacrificial mechanism to remake the world into a place in which the need to sacrifice others could be eschewed – a new world of self-giving grace, a world of embrace.’ In Christ’s sacrifice, ‘the religious practice of sacrifice comes to an end; it is itself “sacrificed.”’

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484 Girard himself defended that the Gospel ‘demask the mechanism of scapegoating.’ See M. Volf, Exclusion and embrace, 292. Vanhoozer rightly says, ‘However, the scapegoating delusion is so powerful that even Christians have mistakenly read the Gospels as affirming the idea of sacrifice.’ See K. J. Vanhoozer, ‘The atonement in postmodernity,’ 387 (Vanhoozer’s italics).

485 For a very good analysis of Girard’s view see W. Wink, Engaging the powers: Discernment and resistance in a world of domination, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992, 144-55; K. J. Vanhoozer, ‘The atonement in postmodernity,’ 382-90.

486 Regarding these two figures see above.

487 G. van den Brink & C. van der Kooi, Christelijke dogmatiek, 432-40.

488 V. Kärkkäinen, Christ and reconciliation, 341.

489 M. Volf, Exclusion and embrace, 295 (Volf’s italics).

490 W. Härle, Outline, 281. See also E. Jüngel, Justification, 166-7. Jüngel says, ‘with the sacrificial death of Jesus, the category of sacrifice has essentially lost its religious context. It has been reduced to a metaphor.’ I personally appreciate Jüngel’s view that through Jesus’ sacrifice, it has lost its religious context; however, I do not believe that it
sacrifice puts an end of sacrifice and violence and whoever uses his sacrifice to legitimate violence is abusing the idea of sacrifice. ‘The cross was not a tragic result of the kind of self-denial that underwrites violence, but a predictable end to a life of struggle for God’s peace in a world of violence.’

The eighth and last criticism that needs to be addressed is how a concept deeply rooted in the middle ages could be valuable to other contexts such as 21st century Brazil. Is the doctrine of atonement not a contextual construct that lost its significance and relevance to contemporary context? Anselm definitely speaks from his medieval theological and philosophical context. But that is the case with any Christian doctrine rather than the case of Anselm and the doctrine of atonement only. Every doctrine or theological concept is contextual. As Vanhoozer rightly says ‘that every doctrinal formulation that purports to explain the significance of Jesus’ death actually tells us more about the history and culture of the people who devised it than it does about the cross.’ The issue with the doctrine of Christ’s priesthood is not that it was formulated in a context, which is far different from ours, but rather it is how to best contextualise means that sacrifice was reduced to a metaphor since, sacrifice was always a metaphor. Moreover, the idea that sacrifice was ‘reduced to’ gives the idea that as a metaphor it has an inferior value. See also W. Wink, Engaging the powers, 152-5. Wink says, ‘Paul has apparently been unable fully to distinguish the insight that Christ is the end of sacrificing from the idea that Christ is the final sacrifice whose death is an atonement to God. And Christianity has suffered from this confusion ever since.’ (esp. 153-4, Wink’s italics). I disagree with Wink that there is a sharp distinction between Christ’s death as the end of sacrificing and as the final sacrifice. In this regard, I agree with Kärkkäinen who says, ‘the point of biblical story of Jesus’ obedient self-sacrifice is that that is the ultimate and last sacrifice. Christ’s sacrifice is once and for all (Heb. 7:27). No more sacrifices or shedding of blood – that has ceased to be a means of atonement (10: 14; 9: 14).’ V. Kärkkäinen, Christ and reconciliation, 320-1.

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491 M. Volf, Exclusion and embrace, 291.
492 M. E. Brinkman, Justification, 11.
493 A. van de Beek, Jezus Kurios, 186-8.
494 N. Vorster, ‘Christ in context,’ 257-9. See also S. Edmondson, Calvin’s Christology, 12-3. Edmondson speaks in the same line on how Calvin’s Christology was contextual. See also F. Young, God’s presence, 248. Young says, ‘for diverse persons and multiple cultures the pluralism of image and symbol, parable and metaphor found in the fathers is precisely what is needed in our post-modern, multi-cultural context. Our “felt needs” differ and demand different solutions; and so do our hidden, unconscious, unhealed wounds.’
the doctrine in a different context. Walter Altmann in regard to the contextualisation in the Latin American context says, ‘it is necessary in our context to rediscover the doctrine of justification in the materiality of life, specifically in the relations of class antagonism. Only then can we recover the indispensable reference to God’s law, accuser of human sinfulness, and re-understand justification by grace and faith, and “not by works.”’ This dissertation intends to present a critical framework to a helpful contextualisation of Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context. Therefore, it wants to reflect on the meaning of the doctrine of Jesus Christ’s threefold office from the perspective of the Brazilian context. This chapter focused on the priestly office and how the related doctrines of atonement, justification by faith, and redemption could be viewed in that context. The main points are that that model should not be overemphasised. The Scriptures as well as the Christian tradition present different models and these models should be kept in balance. The threefold office is held here as a model that can bring to the fore that diversity. The doctrine of atonement does not need to be ruled out, but it should be complemented with the other two offices. The point is not that Jesus cannot be preached as priest and lamb, but rather that he should be preached as king and prophet as well. He also is the king, the Christus Victor, who brings God’s blessing to a world under the influence of evil powers. He is not only a victim and one more oppressed in a world hit by violence, but also the one that empowers and enables his disciples to a new life with God, a life full of blessings. Jesus is not the saviour of individuals only, but also the prophet who preaches about God’s Kingdom. He is not the saviour of sinners only but he also is the liberator, and the beginning of New Creation, the example of a life committed to God’s will for this world. Now it is time to turn, in the next chapters, to the other two offices.

4. The Jesus Christ of Liberation Theology: Jesus Christ as Prophet

The history of Liberation Theology coincides in many aspects with the history of contextual theologies, which is succinctly described in the introduction. In actual fact, several authors consider liberation theologies as a synonym of contextual theologies. For these authors this chapter about Liberation Theology would be considered redundant or superfluous apart from the introduction about contextual theology. The reason for this chapter is justified by the fact that Liberation Theology emerged in Latin America and, therefore, any Brazilian contextual Protestant Christology, which intends to be pertinent to its context, has to take into consideration Liberation Theology.

Some people may object to the inclusion of Liberation Theology in this dissertation for a different reason. They would argue that Liberation Theology is identified with the Roman Catholic Church and its theology and this dissertation is about a Protestant Christology. Thus, the first section deals with this issue, and the questions that it seeks to answer are: Is Liberation Theology only a Roman Catholic theology? If it is Protestant or influenced by Protestantism, which are the Protestant characteristics in this theology? The claim of this section is that Liberation Theology, especially in Brazil, emerged in Protestant circles or in dialogue with Protestants. After that, it intends to show some of Liberation Theology’s characteristics that could be linked to Brazilian Protestantism. It has also been questioned if Liberation Theology is in fact a contextual theology. These critics say that Liberation Theology is a political Western Theology applied to the Latin American context and that it does not take the cultural Latin American elements fully into consideration. These questions have to be addressed in this dissertation, because if it proposes to build a framework for understanding Christology in the Brazilian context, it has to analyse the grade of the contextualisation of Liberation theology, which is deeply related to the Latin American context in general and the Brazilian context in particular. The main question in this part is to what extent is Liberation Theology a contextual theology?

The following section deals with the criteria and standpoint presented in the second chapter. The questions here are: is Liberation Theology a Christian theology or is it so strongly influenced by other ideologies that it lost its Christian identity? Is Liberation Theology a positive development in Christian theology in general?
The following section reflects about Liberation Theology’s reception by the Protestant churches in Brazil, especially by the Brazilian Presbyterian Church. It is clear that the Presbyterian Church of Brazil did not accept Liberation Theology. Why did they not accept a theology that was formed and built in the Brazilian context and influenced by Protestants?

The last section deals with the main questions of this chapter because they are related to the main goal of this dissertation that is to find the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context. The main questions are: Does Liberation Theology present a distinguishable Christology? Then, if this is the case, what are the main features of this Christology? And from the perspective of the threefold office, which is the framework of this dissertation, what are the main contributions of Liberation Theology to understand and to analyse theologically the Brazilian context not only in its origins but also in the current context? And what are the main criticisms of Liberation Theology from the threefold perspective adopted in this dissertation? Thus, the questions in this last section are fundamental to the construction of this dissertation’s argument.

4.1. The Origins of Liberation Theology

The first question to be answered in this section has to do with the origins of Liberation Theology. Has Liberation Theology emerged from within Roman Catholic circles? Was it only Roman Catholic theology that formed the foundation of Liberation Theology? A large amount of scholars link the origins of contextual theology in general and Liberation Theology in particular to the Second Vatican Council. Undoubtedly, Liberation Theology was strongly inspired by Vatican II and especially the regional post-Vatican conferences in Latin America, the Episcopal conference of Medellin in 1968 and of Puebla in 1979, which gave a still greater impulse to the specific Latin American contextual theology. These conferences, far from being free of disputes and struggles,

498 About this topic see the Chapter 1 of this dissertation.
tried to apply the principle of *aggiornamento* to the Latin American context. However, Liberation Theology in Latin America is not exclusively Roman Catholic and Vatican II and its regional conferences in Latin America are not the sole influences on Liberation Theology.

Latin America was and still is identified as a Catholic continent; nevertheless, the small Protestant groups have impacted some Latin American countries in certain ways, especially in Brazil. The influence of Protestantism on Liberation Theology is completely ignored by various authors and introductions to Liberation Theology. Some of them simply do not mention any Protestant theologian or movement in its origins. For example, Christopher Rowland says that ‘Liberation theology has emerged within the wider context of Catholic social teaching and, in particular, the significant development of Roman Catholic theology based on the Second Vatican Council, and the encyclicals associated with it.’ But then afterwards, he says that ‘the approach to Bible reading in the CEBs has many similarities with Protestant forms of Bible study which are

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503 Comunidade Eclesial de Base, translated in English is Base Ecclesiastical Community.
increasingly prevalent in Latin America. Rowland sees the similarities between the approaches to Bible reading from Protestantism and Liberation Theology, but he does not see any causal relationship between Protestantism and Liberation Theology. The same could be said about the CEBs themselves. In the same book edited by Rowland, Andrew Dawson describes the origins of CEBs without any reference to Protestant ecclesiology and Richard Shaull’s experiments in Brazil, even though he recognises that CEBs were shaped in the Brazilian context. Dawson’s position relates CEBs to efforts to overcome the lack of priests in the Brazilian Roman Catholic Church. If that was the case, it is hard to imagine that it would receive so great opposition from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The main issue is that the CEBs presented a different and much more radical ecclesiology than that which the traditional Catholic doctrine permitted. Nevertheless, in an endnote, he makes reference to Boff, Libanio and Mesters as second generation Liberation theologians while Rubem Alves among others ‘can be counted among the first generation.’ But again, he does not see any causal relationship between Ruben Alves’ Protestant ecclesiology and CEBs’ origins. Alves’ ideas about church and church community are very present in CEBs and they can already be found in his book *Dogmatismo e Tolerância*, which assembles articles from 1970, thus, even before the publication of the book of the Roman Catholic Peruvian Gustavo Gutiérrez *Teología de la liberación*, which dates from 1971. The point here is that the scholars that exclude Protestantism, especially Brazilian Protestantism, from their analyses about the origins of Liberation Theology do not do justice to some important elements in this theology that were embedded in Brazilian Protestant theology at that time. A similar approach is present in R. A. Schiavo. Schiavo describes the CEBs as part of a missionary plan of the Roman Catholic Church to include laity in parish life, but then to explain the influence of Liberation theology on the CEBs he affirms that the CEBs (most of them) adopted Liberation theology at the end of the

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505 About the CEBs see the discussion below.
507 A. Dawson, ‘The origins and character of the base ecclesial community,’ 140.
508 A. Dawson, ‘The origins and character of the base ecclesial community,’ 139-143.
Moreover, Schiavo acknowledges that the power of the CEBs was the way in which ordinary people met to read the Bible and interpret their own context and try to transform their social reality. However, Schiavo cannot explain the connection between these two models, the CEBs of Liberation theology and the CEBs which are part of a missionary project to facilitate the work of Roman Catholic parishes in Brazil. The transformative power of the CEBs did not come from this pastoral strategy to solve the problem of the lack of Catholic priests in Brazil or of a missionary project, but rather from a more participative ecclesiology with emphasis on contextual Bible reading. In a lecture of 1960, for instance, Richard Shaull says that to express the community relationship that we have with Christ we need three things: 1) ‘to cultivate our relationship with God through prayer and Bible studies, participation in the worship and sacramental life of the Church;’ 2) ‘to find out how to concretely express our responsibility of bearing the burden of each other, i.e. how to share concerns and problems with a brother; how to support him and help him in the face of decisions that he has to make daily... accepting the responsibility of solidarity towards him, including in economic affairs;’ 3) ‘to find forms of working together in our Christian witness in the world, sharing the issues and responsibilities that derived from there.’

Another important point is the relationship between Liberation Theology and the Roman Catholic post-Vatican conferences. Even though these conferences were very important for the movement, in order to appreciate the development of Brazilian Liberation Theology it is necessary to look at the ISAL (Igreja e Sociedade na América Latina). If Medellin and Puebla, including their preparatory meetings, were very significant for the development of Liberation Theology in Roman Catholic circles, on the Protestant side, ISAL represented an equivalent push. ISAL was organised in 1961 and was composed by theologians and lay Protestant intellectuals that discussed various issues that affected the development of Latin America and the answers that theology and

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511 In my point of view, even though the origins of a project of the so-called CEBs could be traced before the origins of the CEBs of the Liberation Theology’s movement, they were different and it is hard to say what the similarities are.


514 The translation English would be Church and Society in Latin America.
the church could offer to face these issues. Several Catholic theologians recognise the ISAL's important role in the beginning of Liberation Theology. Thus, the thesis of this section is that there were two parallel developments in Latin America contexts at that time, namely, the regional post-Vatican conferences in the Roman Catholic circles and the ISAL in Protestant circles. Both developments converged to form what is known as Liberation Theology.

In the same way, two names are linked to the beginning of Liberation Theology: the Peruvian Roman Catholic theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, who wrote a book entitled *Teología de la Liberación* (A Theology of Liberation) in 1971 and the Brazilian Presbyterian theologian Rubem Alves, who wrote his dissertation at Princeton entitled *Towards a Theology of Liberation* in 1968. Unfortunately, Alves' editors, when the dissertation was to be published, thought it was better to choose another title for the book, since Liberation Theology was completely unknown. From the beginning, Liberation Theology is related to Protestant as well as to Roman Catholic theologians. It is better to say that Catholic and Protestant developments were parallel. Nevertheless, especially in Brazil, due to the presence of Shaull and the great impact of ISAL and Rubem Alves's work, it is possible to speak about a major Protestant influence in the development of Liberation Theology from the first moment. It would not be an exaggeration to affirm that Brazilian Liberation theologians received an important influence from their Protestant colleagues, mainly concerning an ecclesiology which was

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518 Rubem Alves and Gustavo Gutiérrez had met each other in Switzerland in 1969 and at that opportunity both agreed that oppression and liberation should be the focal points towards a contextual theology for Latin America. See L, Cervantes-Ortiz, ‘Una Teología de la alegria humana: La teología liberadora, lúdica y poética de Rubem Alves’ in: *REFLEXUS* 12/2 (2014), 45-77, esp. 51.

519 The role that Richard Shaull played in Liberation Theology is discussed below.
less hierarchical and closer to an idea of the priesthood of all believers,\textsuperscript{520} the central role of Scriptures, a proposal of Bible studies for simple people and the assurance of free examination of Scriptures independent of official or ecclesiastical formulations, and Christology, Jesus as liberator, as the core of theological reflection.\textsuperscript{521} This influence from Protestantism in Liberation Theology is notable mainly in Boff, one of the greatest Liberation theologians and one of the most prominent theologians in Brazil.\textsuperscript{522} For example, part of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger’s\textsuperscript{523} criticism of Boff, as a Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, stemmed from the latter’s positive evaluation of Protestantism, mainly regarding the Church’s prophetic role of true criticism.\textsuperscript{524} Thus,

\textsuperscript{520} Shaull and ISAL proposed a different ecclesiology in the lines of the CEBs long before Roman Catholic’s adopted their practice. See L. Longuini Neto, \textit{O novo rosto da missão}, 145. In one of the main books about the theology of CEBs, Leonardo Boff highlights that Luther’s theological view may enable a new consciousness of liberation based on the power of the gospel and the Bible. L. Boff, \textit{E a igreja se fez povo, Eclesiogênese: a igreja que nasce da fé do povo}, Petrópolis: Vozes, 1986, 164-79.


\textsuperscript{523} Pope Benedictus XVI from April 2005 to February 2013.

\textsuperscript{524} See the official documents and Boff’s answers in L. Boff, \textit{Igreja: carisma e poder}, 333-472. Ratzinger, in his letter to Boff says, ‘you affirm that Jesus did not determine a Church structure; it would be more precisely the outcome of an unavoidable sociological need. The Catholic Church structural model would not be the only possible and it should not pretend to identify itself to Christ’s Church exclusively, because it may also be found in other Christian churches. From there it derives a relativising conception from Catholicism before Protestantism.’ ‘It would have been a mistake the Protestantism’s exclusion, because, at the same time, it also excluded a possibility of true criticism within the Church.’ (p. 336). Boff answers, ‘Both [Protestantism and Catholicism] are historic facts. Sociologically, each one presents emphasises and diverse ways of living the totality of Christianity.’ (p. 381). See Boff’s own analysis about his relationship with Protestantism in L. Boff, ‘Balanço e reconhecimento’ in: \textit{Estudos Teológicos} 48/2 (2008), 177-192. Among the main points of Luther’s legacy to Christianity, Boff highlights, ‘...Church ministries as services rather than ontological realities disconnected from the community; the universal priesthood of all the baptised; the experience of prophecy by Luther practised within the church itself; the individual consciousness as the last instance and subjected to God only, so that no religious authority as the Pope or civil
even though up till the present day, Liberation Theology is very often related to Roman Catholicism, it was significantly influenced by Latin American Protestantism. Shaull inspired ISAL and, subsequently, Shaull and ISAL influenced Alves, who gave the first impulses to the construction of Liberation Theology in Latin America.

The next question is whether it is possible to trace the theological influences on Liberation Theology, which are these theological features and who are the most influential theologians of these two distinct perspectives? What are the Protestant influences and what are the Catholic ones? Certainly, there are different theological influences present in Protestants and Roman Catholics in Latin America in their inspiration to conduct this new reflection. Catholic theologians were influenced mainly by French theologians such as Yves Congar and De Lubac and political theologians such as Johan Baptist Metz, whereas Protestants were mostly influenced by Barth, Bonhoeffer and Moltmann. These European theologians formed a framework for understanding and applying several theological concepts in social analysis. Nonetheless, in spite of the influence of these European theologians, a North-American Presbyterian theologian was very prominent in this development: Richard Shaull. Shaull had worked for several years in Colombia and, after going back to the USA to complete his authority as the emperor may subjugate it. Because of all this, Luther is among the icons of the history of freedom.’ (p. 178-9) Boff also says that Liberation Theology was, from the beginning, ecumenical and many Protestant theologians worked together with Catholics to its development. He mentions Rubem Alves, Míguez Bonino, Julio de Santa Ana, Jether Ramalho, Walter Altmann as the main names. (p. 179)

In this sense, I fully agree with Zwetsch who says that the neglect of the Protestant origins of Liberation Theology may have affected the way that Liberation Theology analyses new movements as Pentecostalism and the religious plurality present in some Latin American contexts. I think that it is possible to say that there was a ‘Roman-catholicization of Liberation Theology’ and this has made more difficult for Liberation Theology to re-contextualise itself in the new Latin American contexts. See R. E. Zwetsch, ‘Teologias da libertação,’ 32-49, esp. 32-34.

L. Boff & C. Boff, Como fazer teologia da libertação, 109.
T. de Boer, Hoe zullen wij over God spreken?, 120-123.
post-graduate studies, he returned to South America to work as a professor in the seminary of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil in Campinas, where he taught Rubem Alves. Shaull brought ideas of the Theology of Revolution, which were influenced by Paul Lehman and were very attractive to Latin American Protestants that were searching for a radical change in society. However, Shaull's most determining influence was through his personal involvement with Brazilian students, parish ministers and intellectuals, leading and participating in discussions, and encouraging them to engage deeply with the Latin America reality. Besides the influence of his supervisor Lehman and the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, Shaull was also influenced by Barth and the theology of neo-orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{531} It is possible to say that to some extent he mediated European theology to the Brazilian context. His counterpart in the Roman Catholic groups was Comblin, a Belgian theologian and professor that worked in Brazil until his recent death, and Mesters, a Dutch theologian who was, and still is, professor of biblical theology in Brazil.\textsuperscript{532}

It is plausible to point out that Liberation Theology was influenced by European political theology, neo-orthodoxy and the theology of Social Gospel. It is also possible to identify the different North American and European influences on Liberation Theology, which leads to the question: what is particular in the Liberation Theology? In fact, there are important elements that characterise Liberation Theology and that differentiate it from those Western theologies. Firstly, the emphasis on the use of social sciences as methodological tools and, consequently, a change of perspective on theology from a discipline very close to philosophy to a discipline that is in dialogue with a broader spectrum of disciplines among the social sciences.\textsuperscript{533}


\textsuperscript{532} T. de Boer, \textit{Hoe zullen wij over God spreken?}, 114-116.

Secondly, it is the recognition of the importance of context in the theological and biblical hermeneutics. Liberation Theology points to its specific third world sub-continent context as the hermeneutical standpoint and it elects the poor and marginalised people or the people that are close to them as privileged interpreters of the Bible in the sense that they occupy a special and advantaged position as Bible readers.

In addition to these two characteristics previously mentioned, there was the idea of theology as an instrument of social transformation: a theology that inspires the marginalised people to struggle against the powers that are responsible for their marginalisation, which denounces abuses and challenges these powers. It is clear that post-colonial discourse had a great influence on this kind of analysis; but the dependence theory was equally important and a more specific perspective for analysis of the Latin American situation. Dependence theory was strongly influenced by Marxist ideas. It stated that the capitalist economic system created a structure of dependence that maintained the separation between rich and poor within the world scenario and reinforced a separation within these countries themselves between a very small group of rich countries that becomes richer and richer and an enormous amount of poor people that become poorer and poorer. In other words, the new global capitalist economic system was creating and reinforcing a neo-colonialist system, which generated and maintained the dependence of the countries in development on the developed countries. This dependence theory was the intellectual base of the social analyses that grounded the hermeneutical principles of Liberation Theology.

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534 As it was put earlier, the developments in the field of hermeneutics and of the role of the reader and his context were notorious in the previous years before the emergence of contextual theology. See Chapter 1 above.
535 J. H. de Wit, Leerlingen van de armen, 42-55.
536 For the relationship between postcolonial biblical criticism and Liberation hermeneutics see R. S. Sugirtharajah, Postcolonial criticism and biblical interpretation, Oxford: Oxford University, 2002, 103-23. Regarding postcolonial discourse influence on contextual theologies see Chapter 1 above.
Now it is possible to turn to the question whether Liberation theology is, in fact, contextual. The main goal of Liberation Theology was a concern with the application of Church’s dogmas and traditions to its specific context rather than a radical reinterpretation of them.\textsuperscript{539} These theologians spoke of the importance of concentrating more on \textit{orthopraxis} than on orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{540} Therefore, it is unfair to state that Liberation theology is not innovative enough or that it did not break away from Western theology. Because, at least at the beginning, the goal was not to break away from traditional theology, but to apply it to the context of poverty and read it from the poor’s standpoint.\textsuperscript{541}

Jürgen Moltmann\textsuperscript{542} criticised a Liberation theologian’s allegation that Liberation Theology was developed in the Latin America context and, therefore was not influenced by European theologians such as Moltmann himself or other European theologies, including political theologies.\textsuperscript{543} This criticism needs to be assessed. Moltmann’s criticism became very popular and a strict connection of dependence from Liberation Theology to Political theology (from Metz and Moltmann) became widely established.\textsuperscript{544}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item R. Shaull, ‘Entre Jesus e Marx,’ 202-204; M. Löwy, \textit{A guerra dos deuses}, 111-134. See esp. Löwy about the relationship between Marxism and Liberation Theology.
\item J. H. de Wit, \textit{Leerlingen van de armen}, 171; L. Boff, \textit{Jesus Cristo libertador}, 29; 233-234; R. Alves, \textit{Religião e repressão}, 259.
\item Indeed, many liberation theologians used to say that Western Political theologies were produced in the context of the oppressor and not of oppression.
\item T. de Boer, \textit{Hoe zullen wij over God spreken?}, 110-113.
\end{itemize}
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He points to three issues. Firstly, he questions whether Liberation Theology is, in fact, Latin American and contextual. Moltmann says that it is not clear in which sense this theology could be distinguished from other political European theologies. Secondly, he criticises the way that Liberation Theology uses Marxist ideas and he again sees problems in this identification between Marx and Latin America, since Marx was born and wrote his texts in Europe and not in Latin America. Thirdly, he criticises the uses of the term orthopraxis without a definition on what is specific to each context, otherwise praxis becomes dogmatised and is made uniform.\(^{545}\)

In actual fact, both sides are partially right and could be better viewed as two sides of the same coin. Posteriorly, Moltmann said that due to his intense contacts with different liberation theologians he understood that for Latin American theologians that was a moment of distancing in order to achieve independence, and that the Latin American context as a context of struggle with poverty and injustice was very different from the European and North-American context and that Liberation theology reflected these differences.\(^{546}\)

Undeniably, Liberation theology, mainly Protestant Liberation theology, was influenced by European and North American theologians. Rubem Alves’ PhD dissertation in Princeton, for instance, was deeply influenced by European and North American theologians. In fact, in this dissertation he does not present a clear vision of the Brazilian situation and context. Even though, he speaks about the importance of overcoming philosophy as the only partner for theological reflection, his work is still deeply philosophical. Indeed, the importance of Alves’ piece of research was that it pointed to a new way of thinking of theology in a specific context\(^{547}\) and not its realisation. Liberation Theology did not appear in a vacuum and, indeed, it wanted to be a theology for the whole church, not only for the Latin American people. Likewise, at


\(^{547}\) T. de Boer, Hoe zullen wij over God spreken?, 110-113; M. Löwy, A guerra dos deuses, 177-181; R. Alves, A theology of human hope, 122-132.
that first moment it was very important to maintain a constructive dialogue with theologians in other parts of the world, including theologians from the wealthy Western countries. The relationship between Liberation Theology with other Western theologies was not an issue at first. The distancing, it seems, was part of a process of development, like a son that rebels against his father.

Nevertheless, there are distinctive points and perspectives in Liberation theology that differs from Political theologies and from the theology of social gospel. It opened the way to a new theological reflection, which was more aware of its own context and capable of speaking contextually as well. The two main features were, firstly, the role of the poor people as subjects of their liberation and, secondly, the use of social sciences to analyse and understand the context in which theology originates. In the Brazilian situation, this context was at that moment of economical oppression and injustice. It is important to emphasise that several countries in Latin America were under political and economic pressure and Brazil, among others, was under a military dictatorship, and there was also a hope of a revolution similar to the Cuban revolution. Likewise, social scientists thought, based on the dependence theory, that as long as Latin America continued to be under a globalised capitalist system, there would be no possibility for changing this situation of oppression and injustice. Therefore, this emphasis on the political-economic context and this rupture with the Western theologies occurred due to that original context of criticisms against Western influence on Latin America.

In order to summarise this section, it is useful to recapitulate the main questions formulated and their answers. First of all, is Liberation Theology a Roman Catholic theological development only? The answer is that from the beginning Liberation Theology has been influenced also by Protestantism and especially in Brazil, Protestant theologians such as Shaull and Alves played their part in the building of Liberation Theology. Secondly, which are the most important Protestant perspectives that are present in Liberation Theology? Three characteristics are preeminent: the formation of

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small communities led in great part by lay people, which is the main characteristic of the CEBs, a priesthood of all believers; the role of the Bible, which was read and used also by clergy and lay people for analysing and transforming the context, a free examination of the Scriptures; an emphasis on Christology, the role of Jesus Christ as Liberator. Thirdly, what are the main theological influences on Liberation Theology? Basically, the European Political Theologies of Metz and Moltmann as well as the theology of Barth and Bonhoeffer, mediated through North-American influences transmitted to Brazil and applied to the South American context through the figure of Richard Shaull and the reflections of the ISAL. Fourthly, is Liberation Theology a contextual theology? Certainly, it was influenced by Western theologians and ideas and did not consider the cultural Latin American context very deeply, but in spite of that, it introduced new elements in theological reflection, especially, the use of social sciences in theological reflection; a hermeneutical perspective that privileged the role of the poor as the best interpreters of the biblical text; and the use of theology for analysing and transforming context.

Nevertheless, Liberation Theology was not easily accepted in the Latin American context and even later when it became influential it was subjected to many criticisms. How Liberation Theology was received in the Latin America context is an important issue. The acceptance and rejection of this theology and its developments in the next decades are the subject of the next two sections.

4.2. Criteria and Standpoint

The first question to be answered in this section is whether Liberation theology may be considered a legitimate development within Christian theology. To verify this legitimacy, it is necessary to have some criteria. The criteria are the classical threefold criteria, which were already introduced in the second chapter, namely, the Bible as the basis or reference for any theological discourse; the tradition as the history of biblical interpretation and performance of Christian faith in history; and the Church, or more

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550 Shaull already propounded that in his lectures on 1960. See R. Shaull, Alternativa ao desespero, 73-83.
551 Boff specifically alludes to that influence in his book about the theology of the CEBs as well as in his evaluation of the Protestant influences on his theology. See L. Boff, E a igreja se fez povo, 164-79; L. Boff, 'Balanço e reconhecimento,' 179.
specifically, the liturgy as the expression of this faith by the contemporary church.\footnote{M. E. Brinkman, ‘Nieuwe Latijns-Amerikaanse beelden van Jezus,’ 281-283, [English version in M. E. Brinkman, ‘Intercultural theology as the integration of ecumenism and missiology,’ 579-98]} The point is that even though there should be space for creativity and innovativeness in Christian theological thinking, it is important to maintain some criteria. Otherwise it becomes impossible to affirm that Liberation Theology is a development within Christian tradition, since development presupposes an earlier stage or a starting point.

Concerning the first point listed, the importance and use of the Bible in theological method, it is absolutely clear that Liberation theology had a deep concern with the Bible.\footnote{L. Boff & C. Boff, \textit{Como fazer teologia da libertação}, 56-62; J. H. de Wit, \textit{Leerlingen van de armen}, 1-14; E. S. Gerstenberger, ‘Que libertação? O caminho da teologia desde a América Latina da perspectiva europeia’ in: \textit{Estudos Teológicos} 50/2 (2010), 333-347, esp. 339-340.} As it was put earlier, the strong emphasis on biblical exegesis in Liberation Theology is probably a consequence of its Protestant influence.\footnote{It is not easy to find direct references to the Protestant influence in Roman Catholic scholars linked to the Liberation Theology. However, there are important Protestant theologians in the Latin American Liberation biblical scholarship such as Milton Schwantes, Elsa Tamez and Jorge Pixley, who frequently work together with Catholics in ecumenical institutions such as the Departamento Ecumênico de Informação (DEI) [Ecumenical Department of Information] in Costa Rica, the Centro Ecumênico para a Evangelização e Educação Popular (CESEP) [Ecumenical Centre for Popular Evangelization and Education], in São Paulo, or the Centro Ecumênico para Documentação e Informação (CEDI) [Ecumenical Centre for Documentation and Information] in Rio de Janeiro. For these references see M. Löwy, \textit{A guerra dos deuses}, 176-183, esp. 177. Hans de Wit demonstrates that the main elements of Liberation hermeneutics were already present in John Calvin, even though Liberation theologians do not acknowledge any influence of Calvin’s hermeneutics on theirs. See H. de Wit, ‘La hermenéutica libertadora de Calvino,’ unpublished article.} The Bible occupies a central place not only among Liberation scholars and great thinkers, but also among the members of base communities.\footnote{L. Boff & C. Boff, \textit{Como fazer teologia da libertação}, 25-33, esp. 30-31.} Small groups of Bible studies were very often the founding ground of these communities. In these Bible study groups, the role of the poor as readers of the Bible, and not merely listeners of authorised interpretations, was remarkably important. It is, then, not an exaggeration to affirm that through these groups the Liberation Theology’s ideal of giving voice to the voiceless was partially achieved. ‘Partially’ because the leaders of these groups criticised any other pattern of reading which was not their own. Quite often they led these groups to read selected
texts and to interpret them in determined ways, i.e. the poor people needed to be conscious of their situation of oppression and of the importance of struggle for liberation. However, it is remarkable the way in which these groups began to develop their own interpretative strategies and the way they learned to perceive Bible reading as a constitutive part of their faith, thus becoming less afraid of misinterpreting the text.

There are many romantic stories about the effects of popular Bible reading among the base communities. For instance, Hans de Wit regrets the lack of empirical research on the way these communities do really read the Bible. He says, 'precisely the lack of empirical research leads to all kinds of romantic and essentialist statements about how the Bible is read among the poor. Sometimes, descriptions of the relationship between people and the Bible correspond more to the desires of the socially engaged exegete than to the reality.' There were many ideological ways of interpreting the way that the poor people were reading the Bible. However, this has to do with that context where it was believed that a revolution was near. The new situation asks for more openness for different realities, different social and political contexts and different sorts of marginalised people such as women, indigenous people, afro-descendents, gays, etc.

For example, regarding the role of mass media in the new Latin American context, Darío Barolín, who is a Presbyterian minister in Uruguay, says 'this situation puts Popular Reading of the Bible in a radically different context because in its beginnings it was shaped by the feeling that the “revolution was around the corner” and revolutionary practices provided the framework. Today, the context is “the end of utopia”, where a possible alternative to this way of being, to these colonized dreams, to this way of relationship plus the powerful mechanisms of permeating human subjectivity given by the mass media is lacking.' Nonetheless, in spite of some romanticism about the results of popular reading, as well the need for a broader way of defining the marginalised and a more open way of approaching and recognising the interpretation of these marginalised people, the role of Bible reading in Liberation Theology from its beginnings was very pre-eminent. Thus, it is clear that Liberation Theology was not dismissing the role of the Bible, quite the contrary, it put the Bible text and Bible reading

556 J. H. de Wit, Leerlingen van de armen, 39-42.
557 H. de Wit, ‘ “My God”,’ 20. (italics in the original)
as a central part of its reflection.

Secondly, from the outset, Liberation Theology was also concerned with tradition.\textsuperscript{559} Its first goal was not to develop a new tradition or a theology out of nothing, but to find in the Christian tradition elements they judged as having been forgotten, namely the centrality of the poor in the gospel message and in the church’s life and practice. Their first criticism was not against the doctrines that were considered orthodox, but about the way that these doctrines were being used to lead the Church away from its mission and vocation.\textsuperscript{560} In other words, the issue was not about the correct expression of these doctrines, as expressed in the tradition, but about how these doctrines were being used to sustain elites in power and to silence people from criticising and speaking out on their lack of freedom and dignity. In sum, the focus was on orthopraxy rather than on orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{561} Nevertheless, this focus on praxis did not mean completely renouncing the doctrines; on the contrary, they tried to rewrite the formulations of some doctrines such as Christology. However, this rewriting and reproaching were deeply concerned with the Christian tradition.\textsuperscript{562}

In respect to the third criterion, the Church, there is a more complex development, because there were two movements\textsuperscript{563} within Liberation Theology. There was a movement that envisioned liberation from social and political powers, including ecclesiastical power. In other words, they criticise every power that caused injustice and poverty and they confronted and criticised the injustices within the church as well. However, they did not abandon the Church, since they believed that any Christian

\textsuperscript{560} J. S. Croatto, ‘Befreiung und Freiheit,’ 40-43
\textsuperscript{562} L. Boff & C. Boff, \textit{Como fazer teologia da libertação}, 117-119.
\textsuperscript{563} The use of the word ‘movements’ points out to tendencies within Liberation Theology. There are not two specific groups, but two different visions that very often were present in the same author or reflected the condition of the moment. In many stances, these two movements reflected the Church’s different attitudes to Liberation Theology and represented more a reaction to the pressures or support from the Church. For the complex relationship between Church and Liberation Theology in Brazilian Catholicism see: H.-J. Prien, ‘Länderspezifische Fallstudien’ in: H.-J. Prien (ed.), \textit{Lateinamerika: Gesellschaft – Kirche – Theologie, Band 1. Aufbruch und Auseinandersetzung}, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981, 115-303, esp. 149-219. See also P. Richard, ‘Em qual Jesus a Igreja crê?’ in: J. M. Vigil, \textit{Descer da cruz os pobres: Cristologia da Libertação}, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2007, 237-243, esp. 239.
transformation needed to be critical against the Church, but not necessarily divided from the Church. Roman Catholic Liberation theologians were motivated by Vatican II and Puebla and Medellin and believed that the Church would be the main ally in this enterprise and not an enemy or obstacle in their struggle for human dignity.\footnote{J. Comblin, 'Kurze Geschichte der Theologie der Befreiung,' 17-20; L. Boff & C. Boff, \textit{Como fazer teologia da libertação}, 119-124.}

On the other hand, as put earlier, the Protestant ISAL was also a fundamental thrust for this new theology. Likewise, it was formed basically by lay intellectuals and theological students with the assistance of a few professional theologians. Thus, they were, in a certain way, independent of churchly bodies.\footnote{L. Longuini Neto, \textit{O novo rosto da missão}, 139-143; T. de Boer, \textit{Hoe zullen wij over God spreken?}, 118-126.} At the same time, the base communities, which were the ground and the engine of this movement, were not always aligned with church structures.\footnote{Base communities were formed from Roman Catholics or Protestants or both. R. Alves, \textit{Dogmatismo e tolerância}, 25. Alves says that these base communities represented a genuine Protestant ecclesiological model.} As a result, these groups believed that challenging ecclesiastical power structures, which normally detained the movement of liberation, was part of their struggles for liberation. Thus, the relationship between Church and liberation was for this part of the movement very problematic and they maintained a deep distrust of the Church as an institution.

Roberto Zwetsch calls attention to the fact that these two movements were present in Liberation Theology from the beginning. Citing a lecture from Juan Luis Segundo in Porto Alegre, Brazil, he names the movements as ‘church of the poor’ and ‘church for the poor.’\footnote{R. E. Zwetsch, ‘Teologias da libertação e interculturalidade,’ 41-43.} Interestingly, since the Protestant influence on Liberation Theology decreased and the presence of lay intellectuals diminished as well, the group more inclined to support Church’s structures (i.e. the movement ‘church of the poor’ which wants to be accepted and recognised by Church, indeed by the Roman Catholic Church) became more dominant. Historians and theologians that link Liberation Theology only to Vatican II and the regional councils of Puebla and Medellin are not seriously considering the critical element against the institutional Church that Liberation Theology draws attention to, since they put Liberation theology as a movement proposed by the Roman Catholic Church which originated in Rome and
instead of Latin America. When the Protestant element is upheld, the critical engagement with the Church will be more highlighted. The point is that for some Liberation theologians the relationship with the institutional Church was very important, while others, especially those linked to the Protestant Liberation theology, understood that Liberation Theology should criticise the Church denominations as well. Rather than against the Church, they were critical of religious institutions that were lenient with the powers and structures that were oppressing the Latin American poor. Rubem Alves, for instance, was thrown out of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), but he decided not to join the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPU), which was formed by his friends that had also left the IPB. Interestingly, he kept close contact with the ministers of IPU and preached in many of its congregations but decided to stay away from the denominational structure.

It is important to keep in mind that for Protestants from ISAL and Base Communities to distrust the Church as an institution did not mean to be anti-Church. On the contrary, the Reformation had already pointed out that being against the institution sometimes is the only way to be the real Church, i.e. the body of Christ. Criticism of the Church as a whole, was more problematic for Roman Catholics, to whom the Church as the body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church were viewed as intrinsically imbricated. For Roman Catholic Liberation theologians the issue of ecclesiology

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569 The United Presbyterian Church (Igreja Presbiteriana Unida – IPU) was formed in 1979 as a reaction to the conservatism of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil. The IPU had names of importance among its ministers and members, some of them were important theologians and intellectuals in Brazil, but the Church itself was never relevant in terms of membership. Presently, it counts with a membership of around 3500. For the history of the conflicts that led to the split with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil see J. Dias de Araújo, *Inquisição sem fogueiras: a história sombria da Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil*, São Paulo: Fonte Editorial, 2010, 222 passim. See also IPU’s website http://ipu.org.br/
572 Leonardo Boff declared, after he had received a sentence contrary to some of his theological ideas from Cardinal Ratzinger, then chair of commission Doctrine of Faith: “I prefer to walk with the Church than walking alone with my theology.” See L. Boff, *Igreja, Carisma e poder*, 406.
turned out to be the main factor of discord.\textsuperscript{573} Whereas, among Protestants, even though, crises and a turbulent relationship were equally present between Liberation theologians and Protestant ecclesiastical structures in their denominations, mainly in the Presbyterian Church of Brazil,\textsuperscript{574} the issue against them was not about the role of the Church on the theological reflection or whether they were taking the Church seriously. On the contrary, the ecumenicity of the liberation theologians was considered by church structures as much more problematic.\textsuperscript{575}

In sum, in spite of possible criticisms against the use of certain hermeneutical tools, the selective use of the Bible and tradition, the difficulties in the relationship with ecclesiastical authorities, and the use of a specific perspective of social sciences,\textsuperscript{576} there is no doubt that Liberation Theology sought to ground its perspectives on the Bible, tradition and the Church. Of course, the use of these sources and criteria can be so controversial that it is not possible to say that the simple use of these criteria would guarantee that a theology was a positive development within the Christian theology. Nevertheless, this is a solid base for affirming that Liberation Theology is a theology concerned with Christian roots and developments. It has the right to be heard and taken seriously.

The second question to be answered in this section concerns the standpoints of Liberation Theology about the three topics which were introduced in the second chapter, namely, the concept of truth; the function of theological language and the hermeneutical principle. Without any doubt, hermeneutics was a very important theme for Liberation theology. This theology was influenced by the hermeneutical developments in that period, mainly the postcolonial discourse,\textsuperscript{577} but also the analysis

\textsuperscript{573} See documents about Boff’s ecclesiastical process in L. Boff, \textit{Igreja: carisma e poder}, 333-472.

\textsuperscript{574} For a testimony and a critical assessment of political and ideological attitudes against Presbyterian theologians in the period see J. Dias de Araújo, \textit{Inquisição sem fogueiras}.


\textsuperscript{576} There is a brief discussion about these criticisms in the next section.

\textsuperscript{577} Even though postcolonial studies had an influence on the way of thinking about reality in Liberation Theology, the postcolonial hermeneutics applied to Bible texts came to be used by Liberation theologians only at a later stage. For a detailed analysis of the relationship between postcolonial biblical criticism and Liberation hermeneutics
of the role of the reader and the legitimacy of reading. In this sense, the hermeneutical
standpoint of this theology suppressed the dilemma of fundamentalism versus
liberalism, both grounded in the Enlightenment views, which was present in the
Brazilian context. Instead of looking for the only possible meaning of a biblical text,
Liberation Theology, even though it favours the readings that demonstrate the binary
oppression-Liberation, recognises that there are other possible meanings which are
related to the context of the reader. It recognises that there is no neutral interpretation,
but that any interpretation presupposes an ideology and an intellectual framework.

There are some intriguing issues in Liberation Theology's hermeneutics,
however. An important aspect of these hermeneutics is the role of the poor or
marginalised people as better interpreters of the Bible. For this theology, the
marginalised people are the best-qualified people to interpret the Bible, because there
are many similarities between the context of the Palestinian people in Jesus' times and
those in Latin America at the end of the 20th century. To understand their own
situation properly, however, the poor people should read it from a sociological, i.e.
Marxist, perspective. And the use of these Marxist tools for analysing the socio-
political context was a very controversial point in Liberation theology. It has already
been said that this Marxist use was mediated by the theory of dependence, which was an
application of the American new-Marxist perspective for the newly developed colonial

including points of agreement and disagreement see R. S. Sugirtharajah, Postcolonial
criticism, 103-23.

For the influence of Enlightenment on fundamentalist hermeneutics see Chapter
2 above.

J. L. Segundo, The liberation of theology, New York: Orbis, 1976, 7-38; H. M.
Vroom, 'Contextual theology revisited,' 225-234; E. S. Gerstenberger, 'Que libertação?'
337-340.

J. H. de Wit, Leerlingen van de armen, 39-42.

R. Shaul, 'Entre Jesus e Marx,' 202-205; E. Müller, 'Um balanço da teologia da
Latina: prospectivas, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2000, 49-51. Shaull had already said that
Marxism was important for a new reflection of the Latin American situation, but he had
also affirmed that no theology should be totally identified with an ideology. In similar
lines, Müller and Gutiérrez have pointed out that the Liberation theology's centre was
love for the poor rather than Marxism. Marxism was only a tool to understand the poor’s
economic situation.

J. Moltmann, 'An open letter,’ 62-65. See also M. Löwy, A guerra dos deuses, 111-
134.
situation in the post-colonial period in Latin America. This theory presented a relevant criticism to the system of oppression that favoured a small group and led a large number of people to a situation of greater poverty. Nevertheless, it was a social construction important in that specific context of the 60’s and 70’s, but it was not universal and atemporal. The issues of poverty and injustice in Latin America, as well as in any country in the Third World, are results of many mechanisms rather than the result of a capitalist system only, which would suggest that all problems had to do only with the economy. The theory of dependence and its applicability to the interpretation of the Bible were useful to generate awareness of specific aspects of poverty and injustice in Latin America but it was reductionist and limited in its analysis of the complexities of the Brazilian context.

At the same time, the insight that Marxist tools or certain critical social points were essential for a relevant interpretation of the Bible generated a paradoxical situation in Liberation Theology. On the one hand, the marginalised people were the best-qualified people to interpret the Bible in their own context, but to interpret the Bible they needed to look at the text from a particular perspective which had to be taught by Liberation theologians, in other words, the poor people should interpret the Bible by themselves, but they should interpret it from a particular perspective given by other people, i.e. by the Liberation theologian. Thus, the hermeneutics of Liberation Theology presented an advance in the recognition of the role that context, especially political, social and economic aspects of the context, played in the interpretation of the Bible. There was equally no neutral interpretation, on the contrary, all interpreters have

584 J. H. de Wit, Leerlingen van de armen, 232-244. Gerald West, who is a biblical scholar working with contextual Bible reading in South Africa’s poor communities affected by HIV/Aids, calls the attention to the dilemma of the role of the facilitator in contextual Bible reading. According to him, there have been always two responses to this dilemma. One group which finds that the role of facilitator should be held to a minimum, while another group thinks that the facilitator ‘should use her power to conscientise ordinary readers both to the structural dimensions of their reality and their Bibles.’ See G. West, ‘Locating contextual Bible study within praxis’ in: Diaconia 4/1 (2013), 43-48, esp. 46. See also G. O. West, ‘Locating “Contextual Bible Study” within biblical liberation hermeneutics and intercultural biblical hermeneutics’ in HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies 70/1 (2014), 10pp. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2641.
specific interests and perspectives that guide their interpretation. These interests and perspectives need to be deeply criticised. Nevertheless, the theory of dependence made Liberation Theology hermeneutics to concentrate on economic aspects and disregard cultural aspects such as gender, race, or sexuality. Moreover, it valued the role of the reader and especially of the poor people reading the Bible, but quite often Liberation theologians wanted these poor people to understand their own situation looking at the text through Marxist lenses.

In regard to the theological language, Liberation theology presents an advance as well. It perceives the potential of theology as a source of inspiration for a better life and a proper relationship with God and the world. It recognises the power of theological language for challenging and transforming views of reality. In this sense, it suppresses the idea that theology is a descriptive language of an empirically verifiable truth or as a simple and pure description of reality. Liberation theology understands that theology is a metaphorical language that inspires a true behaviour and a true attitude towards God and other people, mainly the marginalised people as well as describing reality with the purpose of transforming the it. Rubem Alves especially emphasised the metaphorical aspect of theological language.

The last chapter of Alves’ A theology of human hope is entitled ‘Theology as a language of freedom.’ In this chapter he already exposes his ideas about theology as a transformative language. However, his concept of theology as a metaphorical language would be further developed in his book Tomorrow’s child which was published in 1972. Alves clearly believes that the power of theology is not its closeness to a disinterested truth, but a transformative language capable of inspiring, challenging and

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586 The theory of dependence is the economic expression of a more encompassing (Marxist) way of looking to reality and asymmetry. However, in the first phase, Liberation theologians tended to concentrate on the economic aspects only and other important oppressive aspects such as gender, race, and sexuality were left almost untouched.
empowering people to the full realisation of their freedom and liberation. Iuri Reblin describes Alves’s view accurately, ‘Theology is before sapientia (wisdom intimately linked to the pursuit of meaning and reason for living and dying). That does not mean that a part of theology cannot be science at all, that it cannot think about itself. It depends on the kind of science that we are referring to. However, it does mean that, as a science, theology needs to realise that it is, first, an activity inherent to every human being and that it seeks, first, to answer the human quest for meaning, a home, a horizon to which people can be guided. It is a speech about hope in the face of the dissatisfaction with the reality of suffering which stands among us.’

Lastly, in respect to the concept of truth, Liberation theology presents a more contextual concept of truth, avoiding and criticising the idea that it is possible to attain the whole truth or the final Truth. It is more open to criticism and to be criticised by different points of view. However, very often Liberation theology developed a kind of fundamentalism, by which all other perspectives were considered untrue and the only true or legitimate way of interpreting the Bible and to formulate the faith was the way that it presented. In that way, it is pertinent to ask whether Liberation theology overcame a fundamentalist concept of truth or if it proposed the substitution of a fundamentalist concept of truth for another. This debate was present throughout its history both within and outside the Liberation theological circles. Nevertheless, it is possible to affirm that since the beginning, there was openness to a contextual concept of truth that looked for coherence within the Bible, tradition and the Church and, at the same time, conscious of its contextual character and, consequently, of the limitations of

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591 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 167-173;

592 I. Petrella, Beyond Liberation Theology, 84-92.
theological truth.\textsuperscript{593} Again, Rubem Alves is right to the point in this regard. He wrote a book about the philosophy of sciences and in the last chapter of the book which is entitled ‘Truth and goodness’ he states that ‘the scientific instruments must be comprehended as being \textit{socially built}, keeping themselves social until to the end.’\textsuperscript{594} In other words, they never cease to be social discourses. And ‘theories and methods only effectively exist as systems of ideas and instrumental of \textit{communities}.’\textsuperscript{595} Thus, it is possible to say that at least some Liberation theologians overcame the idea of truth prevalent in the Brazilian context which was derived from the Enlightenment concept of neutral truth.\textsuperscript{596}

\textbf{4.3. The Reception of Liberation Theology in Brazil}

Now, it is important to turn to the reception of this theology in Brazilian Protestantism. The Presbyterian Church of Brazil clearly rejected Liberation Theology. Richard Shaull returned to the United States and later to Central America; Rubem Alves and other Presbyterian theologians were dismissed or simply left the Presbyterian Church as a result of the pressure to which they were exposed. The situation was not different in the Pentecostal churches and the Baptist Church. Precisely, the largest and most influential Protestant churches in Brazil did not accept Liberation theology.\textsuperscript{597} The goal of these paragraphs is to try to understand the reason for this rejection.

One of the most important points that Protestantism addressed was the necessity and importance of modernisation in Brazil. The space created for Protestantism in the Brazilian political and cultural system was derived in great measure from the

\textsuperscript{593} One of the Liberation theologians that most work with the theme of truth is J. L. Segundo. See his J. L. Segundo, \textit{O dogma que liberta: fé, revelação e magistério dogmático}, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2000, esp. 199-212.
\textsuperscript{595} R. Alves, \textit{Filosofia da ciência}, 210, italics in the original.
\textsuperscript{597} A. G. Mendonça, ‘O Protestantismo no Brasil e suas encruzilhadas,’ 61-67. The Lutheran Church (IECLB) accepted the Liberation Theology more easily, but, as it was said earlier, the Lutheran is considered a migrant church and, at least, at that time it did not have much influence on Brazilian culture excepting parts of South of Brazil.
expectations of a more modern country.\textsuperscript{598} In this regard, the relationship between Liberation theology and modernity was very complex and in many significant ways, ambiguous, mainly for the Brazilian Presbyterian church. On the one hand, Liberation theology was a welcomed development in the transformation process of a modernised country, since it intended to correct distortions of the modern capitalist model that was being created. This model reinforced separation between rich and poor and sustained a society where a very small elite profited from all the benefits of modernisation while the great majority of the population was condemned to only producing these benefits for the rich people while living in a situation of extreme poverty. It was possible to say that what was happening in Brazil was not modernisation at all, but only a move from an agricultural production system to an industrial one, while the social situation was getting still worse, i.e. rich people becoming richer and richer and the poor people, poorer and poorer. Moreover, there was no emancipation or sharing of benefits, and no substantial improvement of education or health systems for the great majority of the population. In this sense, Liberation theology represented a significant criticism that could contribute to the development of a profound modernisation of Brazil in the second half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{599} On the other hand, due to its criticisms of the kind of modernization that was being developed in Latin America, especially in Brazil, Liberation theology, based on neo-Marxist analysis and the dependence theory, very often considered the whole capitalist system as deeply wrong and, to some extent, rejected modernity as a whole.\textsuperscript{600} In some cases, this withdrawal from the modernisation project included honouring the system of small independent holders of small farms as the best model for Brazil.\textsuperscript{601} Thus, there was a tension within this theology, sometimes it was favourable to modernisation, wishing only to guarantee that the whole population, and not only a small elite, could have access to the benefits of a modern society, and, at other times, it was anti-modern, understanding that


\textsuperscript{600} M. Löwy, \textit{A guerra dos deuses}, 103-104.

\textsuperscript{601} M. Löwy, \textit{A guerra dos deuses}, 87-111.
modernisation was part of a great capitalist project that created a new form of colonialism in Latin America.\textsuperscript{602}

The reception of this perspective of Liberation theology concerning modernisation was also ambiguous. It is important to remember that the Presbyterian Church was formed basically from two different groups that continued to constitute the base of the Presbyterian Church for a long time: the small holders that worked in partnership with great farmers in coffee production and some women that belonged to the elite. This latter group was evidently satisfied with the modernisation that was happening in Brazil during that period. Nevertheless, Liberation theology emerged during the 1960’s and in that period the children of these elite families were students at the best Brazilian universities and were being influenced by student movements and the Cuban revolution. Therefore, they were inclined to resist against that system that they considered oppressive. Precisely, these students were the group that formed ISAL and who were the most sympathetic to Shaull’s ideas on revolution and politics.\textsuperscript{603} The other group, of small holders, had largely moved to the big cities after the coffee crisis of the 1930s. In fact, they were not only moving from a place to another, but assuming also the mentality of the Presbyterian congregation from the big cities, which were formed by the presence of some people from the elite and by many adherents of the model of modernisation characterised by the American schools. These people were also learning to live in the cities and looked at that modern system as a good outcome of the Protestant presence. They interpreted the poverty of the large majority not as a fault of the system, but as the fault of the poor people themselves that did not work hard

\textsuperscript{602} José Comblin calls attention to the fact that modernisation has constantly been an issue for Roman Catholic Church which was so inculturated into the Medieval culture that centuries later it still struggles to overcome its medieval background. Comblin points out that this problem persists in the Liberation Theology. Even though Vatican II was an effort to adapt the Church to the new cultural context, the Roman Catholic Church continues to be an anti-modern Church in many aspects as well as Liberation Theology. See J. Comblin, \textit{Cristãos rumo ao século XXI: nova caminhada de libertação}, São Paulo: Paulus, 1996, 249-299.

\textsuperscript{603} It is important to point out that not all these students were from the elite classes. There were also other Presbyterian students that came from a new and small middle class that began to be formed in the big cities of Brazil. Nonetheless, they were influenced by this spirit and concept of modernisation that was present from the outset. R. Shaull, ‘Entre Jesus e Marx,’ 188-201. See also L. Longuini Neto, \textit{O novo rosto da missão}, 136-142; A. G. Mendonça, ‘O Protestantismo no Brasil e suas encruzilhadas,’ 59-61.
Moreover, they understood that those people did not work hard because of their Catholic background. According to the Protestant view that they had learnt, working hard was a form of worship to God. Christians should work very hard not only because of the possible benefits or rewards of working hard such as better income or promotions, but also as an expression of faithfulness to God’s covenant. They had left the rural way of life and now they were looking at modernity in the big Brazilian cities, especially São Paulo, as an expression of what a Protestant way of life should be like. Theology of Liberation, on the contrary, was encouraging the agriculture of subsistence and a way of life based on family farming and small communities. Therefore, in spite of the great enthusiasm of a considerable group of Protestant students, the great majority of the Presbyterian Church did not see the position of Liberation theology as a necessary corrective to the modernisation process that was taking place in Brazil.

Brazilian Protestantism was not subservient to North-American Protestantism. Thus, it was not difficult for the Presbyterians to send off the North-American Richard Shaull. It was clear, that the modernisation that was considered as the best option for Brazil in general, and for the Protestants in particular, included the capitalist system and the individualism of North-American society. In this specific point, Liberation theology was used to refer to the people as a whole, giving the impression that society was not formed by individuals, which were different in very significant ways, but as a

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606 M. Löwy, A guerra dos deuses, 126-130.
607 These Protestants were not only Presbyterian, but Shaull himself viewed in the Presbyterian Church of Brazil the biggest potential to begin a revolutionary project. R. Shaull, ‘Entre Jesus e Marx,’ 184; 190.
608 R. Shaull, ‘Entre Jesus e Marx,’ 190. Shaull himself says that Presbyterian Church was an outcome of North-American missionary work but it maintained an independent life. This is an important point because it circulated and still circulates in Brazil the idea that the resistance against Liberation Theology was an outcome of political influence of United States. Actually, there were distinct efforts from North-America to lead Brazil to both directions, pro or against Liberation theology. The reason for rejection of Liberation Theology was more complicated than that and it will be explored below. See also R. Alves, Dogmatismo e tolerância, 102-104, where he asserts that Brazilian Protestants were conservatives before 1960’s.
610 F. H. de Abreu, ‘Mensagem e situação,’ 51-52; R. Alves, Dogmatismo e tolerância, 130-131;
monolithic group.\textsuperscript{611} Whereas, Protestants spoke in terms of ‘we’ and ‘they’, ‘Protestants’ and ‘Catholics’ and even ‘Protestants’ and ‘Brazilian people’, Liberation theology spoke more inclusively referring to the Brazilian people and even speaking of Latin America as a unique people.\textsuperscript{612} This individualism of Protestants was theologically justified because, for them, it was evident that different people gave different answers to Jesus’ call to repentance and faith. The relationship between people and God was characterised by an individual answer to the reality of sin and condemnation and to the possibility of new life in Jesus Christ, i.e. the response or position in relation to Jesus as priest.\textsuperscript{613} The Marxist ideas presented in the theology of the Revolution, ISAL and, subsequently, in Liberation theology, were contrary to the idea of individuality and freedom that the Protestants maintained, meanwhile, the capitalist system seemed to be a clear expression of Protestant principles. For the Brazilian Protestants, any social transformation would only be established through individual conversion and not through a movement of transformation.\textsuperscript{614} Then, the rejection of Liberation theology was a defence of Protestantism against alien ideas.

Another important raison d’être of the Brazilian Reformed movement was disenchantment with the Roman Catholic Church. They viewed the Protestant church as

\textsuperscript{611} For an extensive treatment on the ecclesiology of the Liberation Theology see: L. Boff, Igreja: carisma e poder, 472 passim. Comblin calls attention to the fact that Liberation Theology did not consider the importance of individual freedom and that it tends to overemphasise the collective aspect of the people and neglect the individual aspect. See J. Comblin, Cristãos rumo ao século XXI, 302-351.

\textsuperscript{612} In general terms, there were some elements that distinguish Brazil from other Latin America countries, such as being colony of Portugal and consequently speaking Portuguese, but mainly because Brazil was for a period in the 19th century the Portugal Empire’s capital.


\textsuperscript{614} R. Alves, Religião e repressão, 257-283; A. G. Mendonça, ‘O Protestantismo brasileiro e suas encruzilhadas,’ 60-61. Rubem Alves, as a Protestant, emphasised the individual aspects of human liberation, but his emphasis was not on conversion to Christ as redeemer, which was, and still is, the main emphasis of the Brazilian Presbyterian Church. See also L. S. de Souza, ‘Pensamento sobre ação social,’ 154-168. Souza calls attention to the fact that there were different voices among Protestants but after the instauration of the military regime in Brazil in 1964 these dissident voices were silenced.
an alternative to the Roman Catholic Church and to the kind of society with which it was identified. There were two main different reasons for this disenchantment and they point to two different groups. Firstly, there was the group that was concerned with the country’s modernisation and believed that Catholicism was an anti-modern force within the Brazilian society. For this group, Catholicism was one of the reasons why Brazil was not a modern nation yet and they believed that Brazil needed a strong Protestant presence to build a modern society. The other group formed by small landholders did not accept the movement within the Brazilian Roman Catholic Church of following the Vatican’s direction. This Romanisation had led to a more liturgical, hierarchical and centralised Church. In these points there were different positions within the Liberation theology movement as well. There was an important group that was very critical to the church’s hierarchy and its centralised power, the Church for the poor, and, in this sense, could be identified with the small holders’ perspective. On the other hand, there was a group that wanted to fight for liberation from within the Church and not apart from the Church, the church of the poor. Nevertheless, both groups, the more anti-ecclesiastical and the one closer to the church, understood that the Protestants and the Catholics could and should work together, either to criticise or to rebuild the Church. It was the first time that some Brazilian Protestant thinkers and theologians began to use the term ecumenical positively, but for the established Protestant churches any kind of ecumenism was unacceptable. Ecumenical relations with the Roman Catholic Church seemed to deny the own raison d’être of the Protestant Church in Brazil, since, from the outset, Protestantism was presented as an alternative to the Roman Catholic Church.

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615 As put earlier, the men that represented these elites wanted to see a strong Protestant presence in Brazil, but most of them did not adhere to Protestantism, except sometimes their wives.
616 See Chapter 3 above.
617 See the discussion above.
619 R. Alves, *Dogmatismo e tolerância*, 133-134;
620 There were cooperation and ecumenical efforts through the whole history of the Brazilian Protestantism but ecumenism was never hegemonic and after 1964 all ecumenical efforts were strongly combated by conservative groups. For a whole history of the ecumenical movement among Protestants and the reaction against it see the excellent article from Barreto Jr., R. C., ‘O movimento ecumênico e o surgimento da
Another possible reason for the resistance from Protestant churches to Liberation theology has to do with their missionary strategy and mentality. Earlier in the History of Brazilian Protestantism there were two strategic models for missionary work in Brazil, a group that believed that the missionary work should concentrate on evangelisation and that any desirable transformation in society would come as a natural consequence of the presence of more converted citizens in society and another group that believed that Protestant institutions, churches, but also schools, and press, could have a strong influence on Brazilian society by creating a new mentality, more modern and developed, among the elites and, eventually, in the whole society. However, the evangelistic model widely prevailed and, after the *modus operandi* of 1916 and the withdrawal of North-American missionaries from the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, it became widely accepted by church structures that evangelisation as proselytism was the main task of the Church. Furthermore, the belief that social transformations would happen only as long as more Protestants would participate in the Brazilian social, economic and political leadership became the main view. Consequently, the insights of Liberation theology that defended the need to strive for the transformation of society without a clear connection to evangelisation were out of place.

During a long period, until the 1930s there was a strong sense of evangelical cooperation and almost all Protestant churches had worked together in publications, schools, including theological education as it was the case of the *Seminário Unido*. Nevertheless, after the death of Alvaro Reis and mainly of Erasmo Braga, the spirit of cooperation was declining and Brazilian Protestant churches were becoming more and more individualistic. The ISAL was one of the last outcomes of that early spirit of cooperation. Nonetheless, this cooperation was not considered vital anymore for Brazilian Protestant churches because these churches thought that they could, or even, that they should live for and by themselves. Then, the reception of a theology that was seeking to become a representative of all Protestant churches and yet representing all

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621 See Chapter 3 above.
622 See Chapter 3 above.
625 L. Longuini Neto, *O novo rosto da missão*, 139-143.
the Brazilian people including even other Latin American countries, as it was the case in the Liberation theology, seemed out of place as well.

The messianic expectations were also part of the Brazilian culture\(^{626}\) and both Protestant Brazilian theology and Liberation theology addressed this issue in their speeches. For Protestant missionaries these messianic expectations would be fulfilled in the future, when Jesus would come back to his people, the Church.\(^{627}\) For Liberation theology, however, Jesus as a messianic figure was a source of inspiration and his messianic kingdom should be fulfilled with the help of the Christians in this moment in time.\(^{628}\) There are certain things that will be fulfilled only in the future, but many things had to be done presently by all believers who, inspired by Jesus Christ’s words and deeds, would strive for the realisation of God’s Kingdom. Thus, both theologies modified radically the messianic point of view present in Brazilian culture,\(^{629}\) namely, Protestant churches set the outcome of the messianic activity only in Jesus and in a distant future, not in this present world. On the other hand, Liberation theology stated that, in great measure, the realisation of the messianic expectations was for this world, but its fulfilment depended on the activity of present Christians.\(^{630}\)

Another topic that needs to be addressed is the role of popular religiosity in Brazil. For the Presbyterian Church, the popular religiosity was a kind of crude syncretism and was described as paganism. For the Protestants, this religiosity did not recognise the central role of Jesus Christ as priest and his sacrifice as the only way to redemption, nor the Bible as God’s word and the only rule of faith and practice. On the other hand, in the Liberation Theology they had different perspectives on the meaning of popular religiosity, but, in general terms, they had a more positive view about popular religiosity. Some of the Liberation theologians had a very positive view on the role of the

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\(^{626}\) See Chapter 3 above.

\(^{627}\) A. G. Mendonça, ‘O Protestantismo no Brasil e suas encruzilhadas,’ 54.

\(^{628}\) This idea is already present in Shaull’s theology of Revolution. See T. de Boer, *Hoe zullen wij over God spreken?*, 100-104; R. Shaull, *Heralds of a new reformation*, 56. See also J. Costodoat, ‘Cristo liberador,’ 107-110.

\(^{629}\) Afro-Brazilian culture holds different views about eschatology and these views are present in the Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé, which is discussed in the Chapter 5 below, as well as in the Neo-Pentecostal churches such as the UCKG (IURD), which is discussed in the Chapter 6.

marginalised people’s religion. In Argentina, for example, theologians as Juan Carlos Scannone and the Movimiento de Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo (Priests Movement for the Third World) developed the Teología del Pueblo (Theology of the People). This theology defends that ‘a right Liberation Theology thus arises when the theologian converts himself to the people and makes the people’s culture as the starting point of his theological reflection.’

Gustavo Gutiérrez himself wrote a book arguing for a deeper engagement with the poor people’s religiosity, whereas, some Liberation theologians presented a more negative view, and considered popular religion a syncretism that took Brazilian people to accommodate a situation of oppression and did not inspire them to struggle for liberation. For them, popular religion presented both a criticism, as well as, an accommodation to the situation of oppression and, therefore, became an obstacle for a revolutionary transformation of society. It may eventually inspire the people to fight for better social conditions but it may also become an obstacle in the efforts of making people conscious of the importance of a revolutionary movement of transformation. The other group recognised the popular religiosity as a genuine expression of Latin America culture and as a powerful criticism against the oppressors. As put forward by Sobrino, ‘In Latin America the theology of liberation has been very attentive to spirituality, and the performance of its task has been steeped in a particular spirit from the very start.’ Perhaps, it is an exaggeration to affirm that Liberation

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632 H. W. Vijver, Theologie en bevrijding, 75. Vijver also calls attention to the fact that Scannone idealised and romanticised the concept of people (p. 77-78).


635 R. J. Schreiter, Constructing local theologies, 122-143.


Theology ‘has been very attentive to spirituality’ but, certainly, many theologians emphasised the importance of the spirituality of the poor people in the fight for justice. From the outset, there were Liberation theologians that did not despise popular spirituality. Again, Sobrino is helpful here, ‘the old division – the language used until very recently – between the faith of an “enlightened” believer and the faith of the “man of the street,” if presented as a hard and fast division, is scarcely a Christian one.’ Nevertheless, Liberation Theology struggled to accept the rationale of popular religiosity, its view of spiritual forces acting on the world, i.e. its worldview. Even the Theology of the People’s movement, who was very enthusiastic about the spirituality of the poor people, looked for the values that were present in the popular religiosity rather than its worldview. That is an interesting point, because here Protestant churches and the new movement of Liberation theologians agreed. But it may also explain why both Protestantism and Liberation theology have had difficulties to attract a larger part of the Brazilian population. Both had rejected the mindset of the religiosity of the people that they wanted to attract, either because the mainly Protestant churches, considered Brazilian popular religious expressions unacceptable or because the Liberation theologians, in this case, did not consider the mindset of the popular religiosity adequate to transform Brazilian society. Therefore, this was an important point on which orthodox Protestants and Liberation theologians agreed, namely, the criticism against the mindset of the popular religiosity.

4.4. Developments of Liberation Theology in Brazil

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638 J. Sobrino, ‘Spirituality and the following of Jesus,’ 255.
639 Vijver says that for Scannone ‘the people have preserved the fundamental values of the Christian faith in their piety and culture.’ H. W. Vijver, Theologie en bevrijding, 74 (my italics).
640 An interesting example of how pre-enlightment Christian theologians dealt with the idea of spiritual forces and a public theology is found in Eusebius of Caesarea. See H. Johannessen, The demonic in the political thought of Eusebius of Caesarea, Oxford: Oxford University, 2016.
641 The mindset or worldview of a great part the Brazilian marginalised people is expressed in the Afro-Brazilian religions and it is discussed in more details in the chapters 5 and 6 below.
It was already said that there are two important streams within contextual theology, namely contextualisation, also named liberation, and inculturation.\footnote{See chapter 1 above.} It was said that contextualisation and inculturation are very similar, but they maintain different accents and perspectives. Liberation theology was a kind of contextualisation and, therefore, following the interpretation given in this dissertation, it has more to do with postcolonial discourse than with intercultural hermeneutics, and more with Protestantism than with Catholicism. In fact, that is the case in the Latin American context. It was already shown that Liberation theology was ecumenical from the outset and that in Brazil, at least in the beginning, it showed also influences from Protestantism. Several elements in Liberation Theology in general, and in Liberation Theology produced in Brazil in particular, are identifiable with Protestant theology.\footnote{See above. See also: E. Graham, ‘Power, knowledge and authority in Public Theology’ in: \textit{International Journal of Public Theology} 1/1 (2007), 42-62, esp. 46-47.}

The relationship between theologians at each end of the spectrum caused them both to be in conflict, as well as, to deepen their perspectives. There were criticisms on the one hand, from Liberation theologians that inculturation theologians were favouring the maintenance of a system of oppression and supporting a theology that did not help people to be freed from oppression and, on the other hand, from inculturation theologians that Liberation theologians were disregarding the culture of the people and, therefore, it was a theology of domination and oppression.\footnote{E. Martey, ‘Teologia e libertação: a agenda africana’ in: L. C. Susin (org.), \textit{Teologia para outro mundo possível}, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2006, 25-39.} Fortunately, there is now a constructive dialogue between these two streams and the theology of inculturation was being produced in Latin America as well.\footnote{The next chapter will discuss some perspectives of inculturation theology in Brazil.} Similarly, there is a constant awareness among inculturation theologians around the world for the need of Liberation. Gutiérrez and Boff, for example, said that these new themes such as, indigenous and afro-descendant cultures, are natural developments within Liberation theology.\footnote{See above. See also: G. Gutiérrez, ‘Situações e tarefas,’ 66; L. Boff, ‘O pobre, a nova cosmolgia e a libertação: como enriquecer a Teologia da Libertação’ in: L. C. Sousin, \textit{Sarça ardente: teologia na América Latina: prospectivas}, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2000, 189-207. Boff also includes the theme of Ecology as a new theme that is part of a natural development of the sensitiveness of Liberation Theology.} Surely, the popular religiosity and the popular culture came to the fore in the Liberation Theology.
debate only at a later stage. This is not so surprising, because the first years were of profound social effervescence. Inspired by the Cuban revolution and living under military dictatorships, Latin America theologians wanted to address a context markedly influenced by political, economic and social pressures and thus they left other aspects of the culture for a later step.

Besides, this interest for culture was not the only change in Liberation Theology in Latin America. There was a sharp crisis within Liberation Theology mainly after the fall of the communist regimes in Europe, symbolised by the fall of the Berlin wall and a re-democratisation that occurred in several Latin American countries, including Brazil. A theology that was grounded in a criticism lent from dependence theory, strongly influenced by Marxist analyses, and profoundly concerned with struggles for social emancipation needed to review its main ideas after these historical events just mentioned. Precisely, in the same year (1989) that the Berlin wall had fallen, Brazil had its first democratic election for the President of the Republic after more than 25 years of dictatorship. From this crisis, it became necessary to rethink several elements within Liberation Theology. Its focus on the poor and the marginalised needed to be expanded and it needed to change from an attitude of denouncement to a more constructive perspective. In this sense, a new perspective was raised, namely, Public Theology.

Thus, after a period of intense production on political and social themes, and the concern for social revolution, Liberation Theology in Latin America generated two daughters, namely an indigenous/negra Theology and Public Theology. Certainly, this does not mean that in each country this process was the same. In other countries, for example, culture and identity played a preeminent role and, only later, social and

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647 Military regimes were spread throughout Latin America in that period. In Brazil a military regime was instituted in 1964.
651 Here it was used the term negra, which literally means Black, for a didactic differentiation from North American Black Theology.
political aspects became more important. This does not mean that Liberation theology failed either, since if a given theology intends to be faithful to its own context it needs to be open to contextual changes. Deep changes in the Latin American context had to lead to changes within Liberation Theology as well. Rudolf von Sinner, a Swiss theologian living in Brazil, speaks in terms of a recontextualisation of Liberation Theology.

It is not simple to define what Public Theology is. Several approaches and goals were already proposed and so far, no concise definition has been widely accepted. The approach that will be adopted here is that Public Theology maintains the same focus of Liberation Theology on the marginalised people and stands closer to the social sciences than to philosophy. Nevertheless, it seeks for a more cooperative work within society, solving more concrete problems and it avoids a clear identification with a particular school.

Liberation Theology was not totally identified with Marxism, but Comblin does not agree that indigenous/negra theology comes out from Liberation Theology. For him, Liberation Theology does not have to do with a clash between Christian faith and an exterior human reality as culture for example, but it has to do with the Christianity’s core beliefs and practices. According to Comblin, Liberation Theology wants to come back to the Christianity of the origins. On the other hand, Feminist Theology, for example, has to overcome prejudices and patriarchal issues that are present in the Christianity of the origins as well. I appreciate Comblin’s point, but I see important links between Liberation Theology and these other contextual theologies, such as, they are all looking for a theological response to a contextual problem, they also use other social sciences as tools to analyse and interpret the issues at stake and they also see theology as a hermeneutical science. See J. Comblin, Cristãos rumo ao século XXI, 369-370.


certainly it is closer to that than it is to Public Theology. At the same time, Public Theology continues to make sharp criticism against the injustices generated by the capitalist system, mainly because the injustice and oppression were not less evident than before the fall of the Berlin wall, and the inequality between poor people and rich people is still stronger.

Thus, Public Theology could be identified as the recontextualisation of Liberation Theology in the Brazilian context. However, Public Theology in Brazil seems sometimes to go away from its principles. Due to the persecution within the Church against Liberation theologians, both Catholics and Protestants, and a kind of secularisation of theological thinking in Brazil, which originated from the Pombal project of education reform, Public Theology could leave behind its core fundament as Theology and became only Public discourse. In this sense, it does not use social sciences in its discourse, but only repeats social sciences. It is important for a country where more than 90% declares to believe in God that a theology could be built that addresses this large section of the population.

In sum, any contextual theology in Brazil that intends to be relevant needs to listen to Liberation theology and to these two developments: Indigenous/negra theology and Public Theology, because these theologies are a response of Liberation theologians themselves to the criticisms that Liberation Theology was not sufficiently contextual.

4.5. Jesus Christ as Prophet: Critical assessment

658 G. Gutiérrez, ‘Situações e tarefas,’ 49-77, esp. 50; M. I. Aguilar, ‘Public Theology from the periphery,’ 331.
659 Pombal wanted to preclude the Roman Catholic Church and all Catholic orders which had their headquarters outside the Portuguese Empire from influencing Portuguese government and its colonies. To read more about Pombal and his influence in Brazil see Chapter 3 above.
The main goal of this section is to analyse the contribution of Liberation Theology to the Brazilian contextual scenario. The main question is: does Liberation Theology present a distinguishable Christology? Then, if it does indeed present a specific Christology, what are the main characteristics of this Christology? And, finally, what are the contributions of this Christology to the Brazilian context nowadays?

As it was presented in chapter 2, most of the traditional Christologies are centred on the two natures doctrine and they tend to emphasise that Jesus’ role as prophet was to teach about himself and to announce himself. Consequently, Jesus’ ministry is reduced to a preparation and proclamation of his role as priest. As a result, the Historical Jesus does not play a distinct role in this description. Precisely, one of the main characteristics of the Christology of the Theology of Liberation is that it is a Christology from below. And so it seeks to overcome this excessive reductionism of Christ’s prophetic office to a proclamation of himself as mediator of God’s salvation and to look more deeply at the meaning of Jesus’ life and ministry on earth. That is not to say that Liberation Theology neglects the Chalcedonian creedal statements. Berkhof states that Sobrino’s Christology, for instance, is an example of a Christology that starts ‘from below’ towards ‘from above’. In other words, not a Christology that ignores what the rest of the Bible, Church Fathers, or posterior theology had said about Jesus, but one that takes the historical Jesus as its starting point. The main point of Liberation Theology is not to abandon Christological dogmas, but to rethink Christology in light of the Historical Jesus. Leonardo Boff says ‘incarnation is the endpoint and not the starting point.’

Jon Sobrino affirms that ‘in traditional Catholic theology it has been customary to start with the dogmatic formulation of the Council of Chalcedon, which affirms that Christ is a divine person with two natures – a human nature and a divine nature. It is certainly a fundamental affirmation that should be taken into account by any Christian theology;

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662 The most important liberation Christologies are from Leonardo Boff and Jon Sobrino and, therefore, they are analysed more deeply in this chapter, even other Christologies are also cited, Boff’s and Sobrino’s are more significative and more representative. Volker Küster argues in favour of the importance of Boff’s and Sobrino’s Christologies as well. See V. Küster, The many faces, 48-50.
663 V. Kärkkäinen, Christ and reconciliation, 44-47.
664 H. Berkhof, Christelijk geloof, 288.
665 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 133-134.
but it hardly seems suitable or adequate as a point of departure. Leonardo Boff, for instance, presents an interesting way of combining the two natures of Christ. He says that ‘the God that is revealed in Jesus is human. The man that is revealed in Jesus is divine.’ And in another text he said ‘only God could be so human.’ For Boff to affirm that means that God reaffirms the dignity of the human as well as it communicates something new about God himself and even new for God i.e. a human face for God. In other words, when the Christology starts from below, from the humanity of Jesus, the divinity takes a different meaning. Jesus does not only reveal the God we already knew, but also a totally new dimension of God is revealed through his human presence in Jesus. Jesus reveals God’s divinity, but he does that through his own humanity. Thus, it is in his earthly ministry and life that it is possible to know God.

Kärkkäinen affirms ‘that the divide between From Below and From Above can only be held heuristically and cautiously.’ He cites Liberation Christologies as examples of Christologies that try to overcome this rigid distinction. Nevertheless, the point is made that the issue is not to affirm or deny the Chalcedonian dogmas, but it is about the starting point and mainly the role of the Historical Jesus in Christological thinking. The traditional Christologies, which include Calvin’s and Barth’s, tend to understate the importance of Jesus’ ministry in his context. They tend to go from Jesus’ birth to his death and resurrection too quickly.

One of the main implications of an approach to Christology from below and from the Historical Jesus is a different view of his role as prophet. Instead of focusing on Jesus’ announcement of himself as mediator of salvation the focus is on Jesus’ proclamation of

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668 L. Boff, ‘Cristologia a partir do Nazareno,’ 33.
671 V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 50.
672 V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 45.
673 Regarding Calvin’s and Barth’s Christologies about this point see Chapter 2 above.
674 V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation*, 52-53.
the Reign of God. Boff says that ‘Jesus did not preach neither himself nor the Church but the Reign of God.’ Even though it is not possible to know God’s Kingdom but only as it is revealed in Jesus Christ’s existence, the accent is on the Reign of God, which Jesus proclaimed, performed and realised in his life. In this way, Liberation Christology brings a new light to the understanding of Christ’s prophetic office. It follows that, when the focus is on the Historical Jesus the prophetic role of Jesus strongly emerges. Even Wolfhart Pannenberg, who is a critic on the use of the threefold office of Christ, recognises Jesus was primarily a prophet. Jesus was recognised as prophet even by outsiders during his ministry on earth. Barth and Calvin also recognise that the prophetic office has primarily to do with Jesus’ ministry. The problem is that this acknowledgement does not keep them from building a Christology from above. On the other hand, although Pannenberg recognises that Jesus was a prophet, for him Jesus Christ was not a messianic prophet. According to him, Jesus probably did not understand ‘himself as a prophet in the sense of the prophetic traditions and expectations of his time.’ Thus, the main issue is not whether Jesus was considered a prophet or not according to the historical and theological research, since that is abundantly recognised, but what kind of prophet Jesus was, how he understood this role and what the Jewish expectations were. Then, if the prophetic office is to be built from

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676 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 38.
677 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 38-59.
678 W. Pannenberg, Jesus, 221. He says ‘only one of the three offices, namely, the “prophetic one,” to some extent properly characterises the earthly work of Jesus.’ See also G. Wainwright, For our salvation, 118.
679 V. Kärkkäinen, Christ and reconciliation, 97. See also, I. Ellacuría, ‘The political nature of Jesus’ mission’ in: J. Míguez Bonino, Faces of Jesus: Latin American Christologies, Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1998, 79-92. Ellacuría says, ‘Leaving aside certain discussions, not altogether out of place, on the precise nature of Jesus’ propheticism, it can nonetheless be asserted that the prophetic dimension is a very important dimension of the Jesus depicted in the New Testament.’ (p. 81). These ‘certain discussions’ on the precise nature of Jesus propheticism are analysed below.
680 K. Barth, Church dogmatics IV. 3. 1, 48-53.
681 J. Calvin, Institutes, II, XV, II.
682 W. Pannenberg, Systematische Theologie II, 491-496.
683 W. Pannenberg, Jesus, 216.
the Gospel narratives, it is necessary to look at the Historical Jesus studies to answer these questions.\footnote{684}

There is no doubt that the title Christ or Messiah, the anointed one, was from very early associated to the name of Jesus in a way that it turned to be part of his name.\footnote{685} It is doubtless that Jesus was condemned as a Messiah pretender and his messianic role was not built after his resurrection, but on the contrary resurrection was the vindication of a title which had already played a role in his ministry.\footnote{686} It is also certain that Messiah was associated with the three roles which included anointment in the Old Testament, king, priest, and prophet.\footnote{687} Nevertheless, these three figures played a different role in the expectations of the Jewish people.\footnote{688} Thus, the main expectations were of a royal messiah, secondarily that of a priest and to a lesser degree, a prophet.\footnote{689} Nevertheless, in Qumran, there were some clear indications of the expectations of a messianic prophet. And it is very likely that in Jesus’ times ‘the role of a prophet was almost as prominent as that of a royal messiah and more widespread than the hope of an anointed priest.’\footnote{690} This prophetic messiah was mainly inspired by the text of Malachi 4:5-6, which speaks about the return of Elijah; Deuteronomy 18: 15; 18, which speaks

\footnote{684} For the following comments about the Historical Jesus I refer mainly to James Dunn and Tom Wright. The reason for that is that besides their extensive analyses of the data they work with the theological rationale behind the texts and its consequences for the description of the whole picture. Wright, for instance, affirms that Jesus should be viewed as a ‘thinking, reflecting, creative and original theologian.’ See N. T. Wright, Jesus and the victory of God, London: SPCK, 1996, 479. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen also uses Wright abundantly for the same reason. See Christ and reconciliation, 97-105.

\footnote{685} J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 617.

\footnote{686} J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 627.

\footnote{687} J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 618. Prophets were not necessarily anointed in the Old Testament, even it is a clear reference of the anointment of Elisha to succeed Elijah in 1 King 19: 16. Nevertheless, Isaiah 61: 1, which does not speak of a concrete anointment but a spiritual one, speaks about being anointed by the Holy Spirit and it was used by Jesus himself (Luke 4: 16-21) to describe his ministry and it was also used to point to his prophetic office by John Calvin. See G. Kittel & G. Friedrich, Theological dictionary of the New Testament IX, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, 501, and J. Calvin, Institutes II, XV, 2.

\footnote{688} There were also eschatological expectations of a messianic kingdom without a figure of a Messiah. See J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 618.

\footnote{689} J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 618.

\footnote{690} J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 655.
about the coming of a prophet like Moses; and also a less definable expectation of an
unnamed prophet that was inspired by the text of Isaiah 61: 1–3.691

Jesus was primarily pointed and described as a prophet during his ministry.692 When Jesus asked about what people were saying about him the response was 'John the
Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.'693 In his triumphal entry
in Jerusalem the whole city asked who Jesus was and the crowds answered, 'This is
Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'694 Matthew also says that the Chief Priests
and Pharisees want to arrest Jesus but they did not because 'the people held that he was
a prophet.'695 After the healing of the widow's son of Nain the crowds say, 'a great
prophet has appeared among us.'696 The Samaritan woman also recognises that Jesus
was a prophet.697 And finally, when the disciples on the road to Emmaus speak about
Jesus, they describe him as a 'prophet powerful in word and deed before God and all the
people.'698 Moreover, Jesus saw himself as a prophet. He said, 'only in his hometown and
in his own house is a prophet without honour.'699 And when Jesus was warned about
Herod's intentions, he replied, 'for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem.'700

Interestingly, 'apart from Acts 3: 22 there is nothing in the New Testament,
outside the gospels, about Jesus as a prophet.'701 It seems, that the figure of Jesus as a
prophet was more prominent before resurrection,702 which could explain why
theologians speak less about the prophetic office than the other two, as, for example, in

691 J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 655-657.
692 J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 655; N. T. Wright, Jesus, 150.
693 Mark 8: 28.
694 Matthew 21: 11.
695 Matthew 21: 46.
697 John 4: 19.
700 Luke 13: 33. For all these biblical quotations see N. T. Wright, Jesus, 164-165. See
also J. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 657-666.
701 N. T. Wright, Jesus, 165. For Wright that is a strong argument to point that the
tradition of Jesus as a prophet is authentic and not built by the Christian Church, since if
it were a Church idea it would be more explored by other NT writings.
702 Stating that we are assuming that the references to Jesus as prophet are derived
from pre-Easter stories, even these stories in their final redaction are post-Easter. This
point is reasonable since if it were a common post-Easter theological reflection it was to
be expected to be more used and elaborated in other New Testament writings.
the theology of Luther.\textsuperscript{703} Perhaps, the Church after the resurrection thought that many people looked at Jesus during his ministry as a prophet because they did not comprehend the deeper meaning of his ministry and of his person. In this way, prophet was not one of the most important titles attributed to Jesus. Nevertheless, in the gospel tradition itself it is already possible to say that Jesus was ‘more than a prophet’ in the sense that he considered himself as the eschatological prophet.\textsuperscript{704} Thus, being more than a prophet does not exclude his prophetic ministry. It is now time to ask what kind of prophet Jesus was.

Tom Wright describes Jesus’ prophet characteristics in a fourfold manner. Jesus is a ‘leadership’ prophet; an oracular prophet; an itinerant prophet; and a mighty in deed and words prophet. His ministry challenged the status quo, presenting a clear political agenda. It was because of this that he was condemned to death. He was seen as a threat to the political and religious Establishment. His parables were subversive, since they were ‘designed to break open worldviews and to create new ones.’\textsuperscript{705} His mighty works and exorcisms were signs that the Kingdom of God was already manifest and was inaugurated with him. Similarly, they were also subversive in the sense that they presented a different world where those who were ill or possessed or both were cured and reintegrated to form a new fellowship.\textsuperscript{706} The exorcisms were also part of a major plan as they showed that Jesus had won the battle against Satan, who had usurped God’s authority and rule of the world. From those signs, it was becoming manifest that the reign of God was being restored and therefore, evil political and spiritual powers had come to an end.\textsuperscript{707} Nevertheless, although Jesus had a political agenda and a message which challenged the status quo, his message was focused on table fellowship, eating and drinking with sinners and marginalised people, as a form of celebrating God’s

\textsuperscript{703} See about Luther in R. Sherman, \textit{King, priest and prophet}, 75; W. Pannenberg, \textit{Jesus}, 212-213.
\textsuperscript{704} J. Dunn, \textit{Jesus remembered}, 664-666; N. T. Wright, \textit{Jesus}, 196-197.
\textsuperscript{705} N. T. Wright, \textit{Jesus}, 182.
\textsuperscript{706} N. T. Wright, \textit{Jesus}, 147-197.
\textsuperscript{707} N. T. Wright, \textit{Jesus}, 446-465. Interestingly, in this regard Wright, who normally criticises Richard A. Horsley vision of Jesus’ political agenda, agrees and recognises that Horsley is right to the point. See also R. A. Horsley, \textit{Jesus and the spiral of violence: popular Jewish resistance in Roman Palestine}, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993, 149-166. It is important to mention Horsley since he is used and cited a lot by Liberation theologians.
Kingdom and also expressing what this Kingdom looks like.\textsuperscript{708} In the same way, his message was strongly against violence. ‘Evil would be defeated, not by military victory, but by a \textit{doubly} revolutionary method: turning the other cheek, going the second mile, the deeply subversive wisdom of taking up the cross.’\textsuperscript{709}

Thus, if the Historical Jesus is taken seriously in the construction of a Christology a clear picture emerges. During his ministry, Jesus was primarily a popular, political, and eschatological\textsuperscript{710} prophet. If any Christology intends to start from below, from the Historical Jesus, it needs to address the prophetic role of Jesus Christ as well as its political consequences and implications. Van den Brink and Van der Kooi call attention to the fact that ‘the central place that the Kingdom of God holds in the classic dogmatics as the fulfilment of the prophetic expectations in the preaching and activity of Jesus is quite often underexposed.’\textsuperscript{711} Jesus was a prophet of God’s Kingdom and his ministry had a clear public character. The prophetic office has to do with the way that Jesus addressed and criticised delimitations and prejudices of the powers in his time.\textsuperscript{712} Likewise, Michael Welker highlights that Christ’s prophetic office should not be reduced to warnings about moral criticism, on the contrary, it should focus on the theological task of criticising any distortions and unbalances in religion, society and politics.\textsuperscript{713} Moreover, according to Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, the message of Jesus was not addressed to cultivate ‘the inner life of individuals and communities, the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels announced a public message.’\textsuperscript{714} Therefore, looking at the evidence, the gospel narratives, the most recent historical Jesus research as well as recent dogmatic analyses, Jesus was a prophet and his prophetic ministry had a clear political agenda. The classical Christologies that transform Christ’s prophetic office in announcement of salvation through Christ’s mediatorship are, at least, incomplete. On the contrary, the prophetic office should be presented through the perspective of Jesus Christ as a political, eschatological and apocalyptic prophet.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{708}{N. T. Wright, \textit{Jesus}, 149-150; 466.}
\footnotetext{709}{N. T. Wright, \textit{Jesus}, 465. Italics in the original.}
\footnotetext{710}{Eschatological in the sense that he considered himself to be \textit{the} prophet.}
\footnotetext{711}{Van den Brink & Van der Kooi, \textit{Christelijk geloof}, 429.}
\footnotetext{712}{Van den Brink & Van der Kooi, \textit{Christelijk geloof}, 430-431.}
\footnotetext{713}{M. Welker, \textit{God the revealed}, 307-310.}
\footnotetext{714}{V. Kärkkäinen, \textit{Christ and reconciliation}, 58.}
\end{footnotes}
Precisely, the prophetic dimensions of Jesus’ ministry and the political meaning of his deeds and words are one of the main points of all Liberation Christologies. Leonardo Boff is very cautious about the use of titles in Christology, this because he is concerned about a Christology ‘from above,’ which is deeply related to a Christology of titles. His approach points out that the titles attributed to Jesus are efforts to describe someone who is beyond description. Despite all of that, he still affirms, ‘his (Jesus’) way of speaking resembles very much a prophet. And in fact he was several times called a prophet: “Who is this?” – the whole city of Jerusalem asked – “the crowds answered, this is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee” (Matthew 21:11; Luke 24:19; Matthew 21:46; Mark 6:15; 8:28; 14:65). Jesus himself looks at himself as being in the prophetic line (Mark 6:4; Luke 13:33), but he is conscious of going beyond: “one greater than Jonah is here.” (Matthew 12:41) because “the law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John” (Luke 16:16; Matthew 11:12). And also when Boff compares Moses, the first liberator, to Jesus, the last one, he says that Jesus ‘is the Liberator-Messiah expected and the eschatological prophet.’ Another important Liberation theologian, Juan Luis Segundo emphasises in his Christology that Jesus was a prophet. According to him, Jesus was anointed as a prophet to proclaim the good news of the Reign of God to the poor (Luke 4:16ff). He emphasises that Jesus’ message of good news was directed towards the poor and that the good news to the poor was that they would not continue to be so forever. He also prefers to use the expression ‘Reign of God’ to ‘Kingdom of God’ because he believes that the latter points to an abstract system whereas the former indicates that God would be ruling over the world. Therefore, with the title prophet Segundo emphasises the political dimension of Jesus’ ministry. In similar lines, Jon Sobrino draws attention to Jesus’ prophetic praxis. Sobrino emphasises that Jesus announces the Kingdom of God, but, at the same time, he denounces the anti-

715 Jon Sobrino also speaks against the dangers of a Christology of the titles. See J. Sobrino, ‘Systematic Christology,’ 131.
716 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 102-115.
717 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 106 (italics in the original).
718 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 127.
721 J. L. Segundo, A história perdida, 150-156.
Kingdom, all forces and powers that work against God’s Kingdom. Therefore, Sobrino tries to overcome the lack of political awareness of the traditional discussions about Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God, since, whereas Jesus’ ministry had a positive side of announcing what the Kingdom of God looks like, it also had a negative side of denouncing spiritual, political and religious powers which work against the Kingdom, i.e. the anti-Kingdom. Jon Sobrino also highlights, in the same way that Segundo did, that the Kingdom of God is for the poor. In spite of some different emphases, the most important Liberation Christologies of Boff, Sobrino and Segundo clearly point to Jesus’ role as prophet who announces the Kingdom (Reign) of God.

The title of Leonardo Boff’s Christology ‘Jesus Christ Liberator’ became a metaphor to describe the whole project of Liberation Theology. The figure of Jesus Christ as liberator, or revolutionary, or political leader became the most important theme in the debates about Liberation Theology. Nevertheless, the figure of Jesus as liberator is deeply related to the role of Jesus as a prophet. Jesus Christ is presented as a messianic prophet, who was not mainly concerned with the salvation of damned souls, but with the announcement of God’s Kingdom. Jesus’ life, preaching, healing, exorcisms, death and resurrection point to the realisation of this promised Kingdom. Jesus was the messianic prophet who announced and brought about God’s promises to the poor and marginalised people and challenged powers and political structures of his time. Sobrino even says that Liberation Theology ‘is a prophetic theology, centrally concerned with denouncing and unmasking historical sin.’ There is no shadow of a doubt that the prophetic role of Jesus Christ as well as the prophetic role of theology as a whole is central to Liberation Theology.

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722 \text{J. Sobrino, } \textit{Jesus the liberator, } 160-179. \\
723 \text{J. Sobrino, } \textit{Jesus the liberator, } 79-87. \\
724 \text{In regarding to the meaning of Jesus’ signs, healing and exorcisms and their relationship to the Kingdom of God and their political implications see J. Sobrino, } \textit{Jesus the liberator, } 87-104. \text{ See also J. L. Segundo, } \textit{A história perdida, } 241-249. \\
725 \text{J. Sobrino, } \textit{Jesus the liberator, } 122-123 \text{ (Italics in the original).} \\
726 \text{Rubem Alves, for instance, does not explicitly refer to Jesus’ prophetic role, but the idea is present in his work. He says, ‘God’s historicity, revelation, accordingly takes shape as power for salvation. And this means, in the first stage, power against the politics of the Antichrist, the politics of bondage. Through God’s will to liberation the powers that keep the world in bondage – principalities, the world rulers of this present darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness (Eph. 6: 12) – are reduced to nothing. God’s}
Looking at the various Latin American Christologies in regard to this prophetic role of Jesus, three characteristics emerge. Firstly, Jesus’ ministry has got political implications. He announced the Kingdom of God and denounced the powers which work against God’s Kingdom, using Sobrino’s words, the anti-Kingdom. Moreover, healing and exorcisms have political connotations as well, since they point to a formation of a new fellowship where the excluded and marginalised people are reintegrated. In the same way, he announces the good news to the poor and preached against the political and religious powers. It is important to remember that in Jesus’ times religious authorities also held political power. Liberation theologians recognise that Jesus was not a revolutionary as, for example, the Zealots were but his words and deeds certainly had political implications and challenged the status quo. He was killed as a political agitator, even though his intentions were not a political revolution. Pharisees, Sadducees and Roman authorities understood the political implications of Jesus’ speeches and actions and feeling threatened by them could not do anything but crucify him as a political rebel.

Leonardo Boff highlights that Jesus ‘overcame the political messianic temptations’ which consisted of prophetic, priestly and political messianic temptations. Liberation Theology, in this regard, is in accord with the presence in the world is like a bomb, to be set exactly under the powers of the old. They are to be objectively and subjectively exploded. God’s politics, thus, is subversive of the stability created by the violence of the old. The false peace of unfreedom is put out of balance and its walls of defense are made to crumble.’

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729 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 32-33.

730 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 46. Surely, political is the same as kingly in this context. Thus, according to Boff, Jesus avoided the messianic expectations expressed in the three offices. James Dunn presented in his study about the historical Jesus that Jesus declined the role of royal messiah and the priestly messiah and even he considered himself as a prophet it seems that more than a prophet was the way that Jesus thought of himself. In this sense Dunn agrees with Boff’s analyses. See J. D. G. Dunn, Jesus remembered, 615-666.
recent historical research in pointing to the political dimensions of Jesus' ministry. Thus, Liberation Theology accurately brings to theological discussion elements of the historical Jesus and in building a Christology 'from below'. As it was said above, any Christology 'from below,' with its emphasis on the historical Jesus, must take into account the political dimensions of Jesus' whole ministry. Liberation Christology does that very accurately.

Secondly, Liberation Christologies point to the primacy of following Jesus. Praxis is the best way to comprehend Jesus' life. It is in following Jesus that it is possible to recover the historical Jesus. It is in the praxis of following Jesus' principles and example that it is possible to understand his mystery. Boff says, 'it is by following Jesus, by trying to live what he lived and experience what he experienced, by struggling for what he struggled for, and was rejected, tortured, and crucified for, that we begin to grasp his true and profound mystery.' Sobrino says, 'we can come to know Jesus as the Christ only insofar as we start a new life, break with the past and undergo conversion, engage in Christian practice and fight for the justice of God's kingdom.' In fact, for Liberation theologians any Christology that does not put discipleship and following as central themes are leading people astray from the historical Jesus. According to them, traditional Christologies are concerned with the appropriate way to talk about Jesus Christ, but too little concerned about the appropriate way to follow Jesus, which was precisely Jesus' main concern.

Thirdly, Liberation Christologies defend the historicisation of the following of Jesus. To take into account the historical Jesus means to apply his teachings and examples to the present context. Sobrino says, 'Liberation theology starts from the Kingdom of God preached by Jesus, but applies it historically to the present for the obvious reason that the Kingdom did not come in Jesus' time and the present requires

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733 L. Boff, 'Images of Jesus,' 13.
734 J. Sobrino, Christology at the crossroads, xxiv.
735 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 114-115.
736 J. Sobrino, 'Systematic Christology,' 131-145.
737 L. Boff, 'Cristologia a partir do Nazareno,' 34. See also L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 162-164; J. Sobrino, Christology at the crossroads, 34-37; I. Ellacuría, 'The political,' 81.
that we set it in history. We are conscious of the risks inherent in doing do (sic), but
believe it better to run these risks.\textsuperscript{738} Boff also emphasises that Jesus ‘continues to wait
for the growth of the kingdom of God among the men.’\textsuperscript{739} The logic of the argument is
that if Jesus’ words and deeds were political and Christians are challenged to follow his
steps then Christians’ praxis should be political as well. Jesus challenged the status quo
of his times, which were characterised by oppression and marginalisation, and so, in a
similar way, contemporary\textsuperscript{740} Latin American Christians have to challenge governments
and powers which oppress and marginalise the Latin American people. Thus, a relevant
Christology must look at Jesus’ historical context, analyse the way he was inserted in
that context and then translate him into the present context.\textsuperscript{741} Commenting on
Sobrino’s Christology Vera Ivanise Bombonatto says that for Sobrino ‘to recover the
historical Jesus is to reproduce his life in the most varied historical circumstances.’\textsuperscript{742}
Lee Cormie says, ‘Sobrino has urged that we must become more historical in doing
Christology.’\textsuperscript{743} Two other principles are behind this idea. Firstly, there is a clear
similarity between Jesus’ context of oppression and that of Latin America.\textsuperscript{744} Many
issues that Jesus addressed in his speeches and challenged through his deeds are also
present in the Latin American context.\textsuperscript{745} Secondly, the fact that Jesus did not have a
political project does not mean that it is not possible or desirable to have one. The first
Christian disciples did not know of democracy for all people or free and independent
states, but Latin Americans do and in the 1970s political revolution was a real

\textsuperscript{738} J. Sobrino, \textit{Jesus the liberator}, 125.
\textsuperscript{739} L. Boff, \textit{Jesus Cristo libertador}, 194.
\textsuperscript{740} Contemporary here refers to the time when Boff’s and Sobrino’s Christologies
were written. Even though the task of challenging powers may still be needed, it should
take different contours in the second decade of the 21st Century.
\textsuperscript{741} B. Ferraro, ‘Jesus Cristo libertador: cristologia na América Latina e no Caribe’ in:
J. M. Vigil (org.), \textit{Descer da cruz os pobres: cristologia da libertação}, São Paulo: Paulinas,
2007, 132-145, esp. 132-133; J. M. Sung, ‘O que está por trás da notificação sobre Jon
Sobrino?’ in: J. M. Vigil (org.), \textit{Descer da cruz os pobres: cristologia da libertação}, São
\textsuperscript{742} V. I. Bombonatto, ‘O compromisso,’ 44.
\textsuperscript{743} L. Cormie, ‘O Jesus da história, os cristos da fé e a esperança de que outro mundo
é possível’ in: J. M. Vigil (org.), \textit{Descer da cruz os pobres: cristologia da libertação}, São
\textsuperscript{744} Sobrino says that ‘there is a clearly noticeable resemblance between the
situation here in Latin America and that in which Jesus lived.’ J. Sobrino, \textit{Christology at
the crossroads}, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{745} L. Boff, \textit{Jesus Cristo libertador}, 25-26.
possibility. It is necessary to overcome Jesus’ contextual limitations. Segundo says, ‘to follow Jesus is not to sacralise the ideology that he used’ but instead it is ‘to “create” gospels to express the faith of Jesus with the ideologies which may transmit it best, here and now.’ In other words, Jesus was a man of his time and even though there are many similarities between Latin America’s context and his, there are also dissimilarities and these differences call for a recontextualisation of his praxis.

Thus, to assume the historicity of Jesus is important not only as an academic effort to understand Jesus, but as a criticism of any Christology that neglected the importance of history in its analysis. Jesus’ incarnation meant that each context is a place for God’s revelation, and understanding Jesus’ relationship with his own context of poverty and the marginalisation of Palestine under the Roman Empire is fundamental to construct a relevant theology for the marginalised people in Latin America, who suffer under the Western capitalist Empire. The historical conscience becomes the hermeneutical starting point of any theological interpretation and, therefore, any theology that neglects the historical context is not good theology, instead, it serves to sustain oppression and maintain elites in power.

Any Christology that neglects the political implication of Jesus’ ministry is serving the status quo. Sobrino says, ‘for centuries, the “charitable” or purely “assistentialist” Christ made us ignore or even reject Jesus the prophet of justice. The consequences of

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746 L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 28-31.
747 J. L. Segundo, A história perdida, 179.
751 Jürgen Moltmann says, ‘when they (Christian churches) regard themselves as being either unpolitical or apolitical, this is only because of the blindness which their social position inflicts on them.’ J. Moltmann, The crucified God, 331-339, esp. 337.
this serious reduction was an advantage for a minority and a neglect of justice for the majority.\textsuperscript{752} Juan Luis Segundo affirms that there is no faith without ideology. Any profession of faith is also an ideological view of the world and politics.\textsuperscript{753} Any Christology that pretends to be non-political, ignoring the political implications of Jesus’ ministry, is favouring the status quo because it does not challenge the current political system.\textsuperscript{754}

As it was said above, many theologians defend that Christology should be done from below and start with the historical Jesus. Moreover, many recognise the political implications of Jesus’ ministry as well as that his prophetic role has a political dimension. What are, then, the distinguishable elements of Liberation Christologies? Before answering this it would be interesting to look at Stanley Hauerwas’ theological thinking.\textsuperscript{755} Hauerwas agrees with Liberation Theology that Christology has to start from the historical Jesus, which is the basis of Liberation Christology, as well as that he agrees that Jesus’ ministry has clear socio-political implications. Any Christology, according to Hauerwas, which neglects the social meaning of Jesus’ life fails to do justice to Jesus’ life.\textsuperscript{756} He also appreciates Liberation Theology’s emphasis that to know Jesus’ mystery is necessary to follow him.\textsuperscript{757} He also accepts the idea that by neglecting these political aspects of Jesus’ life, much of the Western Christology has served to maintain the status quo.\textsuperscript{758} However, what Hauerwas does not agree with is the historicisation or recontextualisation of Jesus’ political views. His rationale is twofold. Firstly, there are two histories, the worldly history and the eschatological history. Christians are called to

\textsuperscript{752} J. Sobrino, Jesus Christ liberator, 15.
\textsuperscript{753} J. L. Segundo, A história perdida, 80-97.
\textsuperscript{754} This theme is retaken in the postcolonial theology. Joerg Rieger, for instance, analyses the lack of political awareness in the discussion about the threefold office. For him, this unawareness of the political implications of any Christology, he cites in special European modern theology as that from Schleiermacher onwards, favoured middle class and colonial mentalities. J. Rieger, Christ & empire, 197-236.
\textsuperscript{755} Hauerwas, by his turn, follows John Howard Yoder in terms of Christology and eschatology. For Yoder’s Christology see his J. H. Yoder, The politics of Jesus: vicit agnus noster, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
\textsuperscript{756} He says, ‘a Christology which is not a social ethic is deficient. From this perspective the most “orthodox” christologies are inadequate when they fail to suggest how being a believer in Jesus provides and requires that we have the skills to describe and negotiate our social existence.’ S. Hauerwas, A community of character: toward a constructive Christian social ethic, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1981, 37.
\textsuperscript{757} S. Hauerwas, A community, 233 n4.
\textsuperscript{758} S. Hauerwas, A community, 234-235 n16.
live in two different histories at the same time. They have to live in this world but their politics is from the eschatological Kingdom. Secondly and as a consequence of the first point, Hauerwas believes that the Church is Jesus’ polity. The Christian community formed from Jesus’ story is the best expression of what Jesus’ life was meant to be. For Hauerwas, the way that the Christian community, i.e. the Church, lives the faith that Jesus preached is already a polity, which challenges the political status quo, but the Church does not have to be involved in revolutionary movements or in political disputes. The Church should be the Church and let the world be the world. Interestingly, instead of a historicisation of Jesus’ life and ministry, Hauerwas defends a ‘storicisation’ or ‘narrativisation’ of Jesus’ life. It is Jesus’ narrative that forms the community and its politics. But there is no space for a political construction based on the historical Jesus, in other words, no historicisation or contextualisation. The Church should apply Jesus’ political teachings to the way that it lives, but not try to transform the world into the Church.

Hauerwas follows in this regard Barth’s reluctance to find any identification of God’s revelation in history as well as the Barthian strict separation between salvation history and world history and also emphasising more on the eschatological aspect of God’s Kingdom. For Barth, that separation between two histories was important to give him a theological model to criticise the political choices and systems (fascism and communism) in his context. In this sense, there is a clear concern with the risk of a compromise between theology and ideology. This concern is quite comprehensible in Barth’s context, when some of his professors were supporting the Nazi regime. This fear

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762 He says, ‘Jesus is the story that forms the church’ and ‘the church is the organised form of Jesus’ story.’ S. Hauerwas, *Community*, 50.


764 For this topic see M. E. Brinkman, *De theologie van Karl Barth*, 231-240.

765 M. E. Brinkman, *De theologie van Karl Barth*, 237. See also K. Barth, *Church dogmatics IV.3.1*, 52-72; 101-111.
influenced most of the Western political theologies. According to Jose Míguez Bonino, most European theology intends to hold ‘a “critical function” which is able to remain above right and left, ideologically neutral, independent of a structural analysis of reality.’ Nonetheless, in Latin America the context was different and the concern with identification between theology and a determined historical project was not considered so decisive and a Marxist or socialist revolution was viewed by many as a possible solution for the problems of social injustice in several countries. Liberation Theology does not equate the Kingdom of God with any particular historical project, but, as Sobrino says, ‘although the Kingdom of God cannot be achieved on this earth, the ideal of the Kingdom serves to measure, on principle, how much of the Kingdom there is, in particular social developments; it also serves to avoid all such developments appearing infinitely remote from the Kingdom by the standards of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God certainly relativizes them, but it also grades them, and this is supremely important. The decisive point is how to measure, on principle, how much of the Kingdom of God exists as a social reality, and this is what many theologies fail to do.’

Thus, it is possible to answer the question about the distinguishable feature of Liberation Christology. It is how it relates the political implications of Jesus Christ’s ministry to the present political context. Whereas, many traditional Christologies do not reflect on the political implications of Jesus’ life and ministry, Liberation Theology puts the political aspect of Jesus’ life as its central theme. It starts from an adequate understanding of the historical Jesus and then it tries to historicise his social project of the Kingdom of God in the contemporary Latin American political context.

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767 Jung Mo Sung says, ‘The Kingdom of God is the horizon that brings meaning to our lives and struggle against the systems of oppression and exclusion. But, as in the case of any horizon, it is always ahead of us, no matter how much we walk.’ J. M. Sung, *Desire, market and religion*, London: SCM, 2007, 27.
768 J. Sobrino, *Jesus the liberator*, 115 (Italics in the original). The Dutch theologian with a longstanding Latin American experience, Henk Vijver, says that a democratic society and politics may be an *aperitif* or a *primeur* of God’s Kingdom. See H. W. Vijver, *Theologie en bevrijding*, 182.
769 See also V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and reconciliation*, 44-48, 87; J. Sobrino, ‘Systematic Christology,’ 142-145. With ‘contemporary Latin American context’ is being meant the context of 1970’s, 1980’s and the beginning of 90’s when these Christologies were written. One of the main goals of this dissertation is to update and apply the
inspired by Christ’s politics and ideology to transform the present context. It even goes beyond Jesus’ project, since Latin America is a different context and it demands its own appropriate contextualisation.\textsuperscript{770} There are no two histories i.e. a worldly history and an eschatological history, but only one history.\textsuperscript{771} God’s kingdom is to be a reality here and now.\textsuperscript{772} Therefore, Liberation Theology dared to present a historical project for Latin America. And that is a very important characteristic that distinguishes Latin American Liberation Theology from other political theologies i.e. it had a historical project.\textsuperscript{773} According to Jose Míguez Bonino, for progressive European and American theology ‘historical action is not really significant for the Kingdom; at most, it may succeed to

principles of Liberation Theology to the Brazilian context of the second decade of the 21st Century.

\textsuperscript{770} In this regard, Liberation Theology distances itself from Pannenberg, who says, ‘The imminent expectation of the Kingdom of God, which determined the activity and the life of Jesus, is no longer a live option for us in its original sense. Even holding to it literally would no longer succeed in repeating the attitude of Jesus and his first disciples. The two thousand years that lie between him and us make that impossible. The mere process of historical time makes every attitude that can be assumed today very different from Jesus’ imminent expectation.’ See W. Pannenberg, Jesus, 242. Pannenberg believes that eschatological expectations of God’s Kingdom was the central aspect of Jesus’ message and that could explain the lack of interest of the first Christian in political matters. See also W. Pannenberg, Jesus, 237-244.

\textsuperscript{771} G. Gutiérrez, Teologia da libertação, 204-205. See also V. Kärkkäinen, Christ and reconciliation, 372-379; V. Küster, The many faces, 52. J. Míguez Bonino, Doing theology, 132-153; I. Petrella, The future of liberation theology: an argument and manifesto, London: SCM, 2006, 33-34; R. von Sinner, The churches and democracy in Brazil: towards a Public Theology focused on citizenship, Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012, 104-106, 304-306. J. Sobrino, Jesus the liberator, 129-130; J. L. Segundo says that a basic theological issue is ‘how to synthesise, in a rich way, human, in Jesus of Nazareth’s way, the twofold dimension – eschatological and historical – of the man.’ See J. L. Segundo, A história perdida, 157 n9; Rubem Alves says, ‘the language of faith, as a language determined by and for history, does not speak about a meta-historical, meta-worldly realm in which hopes are fulfilled and sufferings are brought to an end. It remains historical through and through, both in its verbs and nouns, and it is within this historical and earthly context and content that it speaks about the reality and possibility of human liberation, about the reality and possibility of freedom for life.’ R. Alves, Theology of human hope, 160.

\textsuperscript{772} Sobrino says, ‘we cannot turn Christ into an “origin myth” of any sort, for he continues to unleash history here and now and move it toward the future. To put in another way, Jesus’ past can be recovered in the present only if it pushes us toward the future. The concrete relationship of Jesus to the coming kingdom of God imposes an obligation on all Christological reflection. In the name of Jesus himself, it can and must be oriented toward the future of history if our profession of faith in Christ here and now is to be meaningful.’ J. Sobrino, Christology, xxii-xxiii

\textsuperscript{773} I. Petrella, The future of liberation theology, 1-5.
project provisory images which remind us of it. These images must not be taken too seriously in order to avoid absolutizing them. The historical significance of the expectation of the Kingdom is preeminently to protect us from any too strong a commitment to a present historical project. However, Míguez Bonino believes, 'the gospel invites and drives us to make concrete historical options and assures them eschatological permanence insofar as they represent the quality of human existence which corresponds to the Kingdom. We can, therefore, within human history, engage with other men in action which is significant in terms of God’s redemptive purpose, of his announced and promised future Kingdom.

The same happens in regard to the two kingdoms doctrine. Martin Luther emphasised the difference between the Kingdom of God and the earthly kingdom. Karl Barth as well as the Dutch Neo-Calvinists are critical of this sharp differentiation of the two kingdoms and, on the contrary, they emphasise God’s sovereignty over the entire world in Christ. Nevertheless, especially Karl Barth is still very cautious about identifying the presence of God’s Kingdom within the earthly Kingdoms. Whereas, in Liberation Theology the Kingdom of God is brought about by the right action of Jesus’ followers. It cannot be forced by human actions, since ‘it is a loving initiative of God’, but ‘the will of God has to be put into effect now on this earth.’ At the same time, the concept of the Kingdom of God serves to substantiate the criticisms to

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774 J. Míguez Bonino, Doing theology, 140. For a similar critique to Moltmann’s view see J. Sobrino, Jesus the liberator, 117-120.
776 The most important names among the Dutch Neo-Calvinists are Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) and Herman Bavinck (1854-1921).
777 In this sense, I disagree with Segundo when he says, ‘Luther’s doctrine of the two kingdoms, by contrast, became the politico-theological foundation for the whole edifice of the Reformation. Segundo seems totally to ignore the sharp criticism from Reformed theology to the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms and he clearly considers Barth and Moltmann as well as Shaull and Alves as if all had been strongly influenced by Luther’s point of view in this regard. See J. L. Segundo, The liberation of theology, New York: Orbis, 1979, esp. 142 (italics in the original); and also 138-149.
778 Ivan Petrella calls attention to the fact that Moltmann was influenced by Barth’s Barmen Declaration. See I. Petrella, The future of liberation theology, 22 n75.
779 M. E. Brinkman, De theologie van Karl Barth, 226-228; R. von Sinner, The churches and democracy, 304-306; 312-317. For Barth’s own view see K. Barth, Church dogmatics IV.3.1, 151-153.
780 J. Sobrino, Jesus the liberator, 87.
781 J. Sobrino, Jesus the liberator, 77.
any empire which intends to dominate and oppress people, marginalising them. In this sense, Jesus’ action was a critique to the forces of the Anti-Kingdom, which included the Roman Empire as well, and it should be the base of the criticism to the current modern globalised capitalist empire.\footnote{N. Míguez, J. Rieger & J. M. Sung, \textit{Beyond the spirit of empire}, 2009, 147-167.}

Moltmann,\footnote{Even though Moltmann in his \textit{The crucified God} says, ‘in any \textit{theory of liberations} the universal must be understood \textit{in} the particular and the eschatological \textit{in} the historical.’ See J. Moltmann, \textit{The crucified God}, 346-352, esp. 351 (italics in the original). Moltmann recognises the particularity of the Latin American context and of the Liberation Theology analyses in his later works. See, for instance, J. Moltmann, \textit{Experiências de reflexão teológica}, 184-211.} as it was showed above, had already criticised the way that Liberation Theology was using Marxist ideas. With sharp irony, he said that it is important to remember that Marx was not a Latin American himself.\footnote{J. Moltmann, \textit{Experiências de reflexão teológica}, 185-186; J. Moltmann, 'Teologia Latino-Americana,' 225-231.} Many criticisms to Liberation Theology came from its use of Marx’s concepts and many say that after the fall of the Berlin Wall that Liberation Theology lost its strength and relevance.\footnote{In actual fact, in many cases Liberation theologians were too lenient to the errors and abuses of Socialist and Communist regimes. See O. Maduro, 'Fazer teologia para tomar possível um mundo diferente: um convite autocrítico latino-americano’ \textit{in}: L. C. Sousin (org.), \textit{Teologia para outro mundo possível}, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2006, 393-414, esp. 411-412; C. de Oliveira Ribeiro, \textit{A teologia da libertação morreu? Reino de Deus e espiritualidade hoje}, São Paulo: Fonte Editorial, 2010, 57-66; J. Comblin, \textit{Cristãos rumo ao século XXI}, 369.} However, Liberation Theology was not meant to be a Marxist theology, though, it certainly had a clear historical project of transformation of Latin American context.\footnote{J. Míguez Bonino, \textit{Doing theology}, 150-152; I. Petrella, \textit{Beyond liberation theology}, 135-140; I. Petrella, \textit{The future of liberation theology}, 11-16.}

In actual fact, the issue is that Liberation Theology lost its focus when it gave up its historical project to the present.\footnote{I. Petrella, \textit{Beyond liberation theology}, 117; J. M. Sung, \textit{Desire}, 53-55; 121-122. It is important to highlight that that does not mean that all Liberation theologians gave up the idea of a historic project. Petrella, Sung, and Assmann are examples of such Liberation theologians that did not abandon the idea of a historical project. Instead, this criticism highlights a tendency to speak of the preference for the poor in theological reflection in the absence of a historic project.} Without the historical project, Liberation Theology became a political theology as other Western political theologies before it or even only a theology which talks about the importance of the poor as a theme for
theological reflection, which, is not enough. \textsuperscript{788} Many theologians, including the Vatican critics to Liberation Theology, and even the IMF defend the importance of doing better for the poor. So, if Liberation Theology does not have a historical project it loses the characteristics that distinguished it from other political theologies. \textsuperscript{789} Liberation Theology still has a prophetic role to play in its context. Its task is not to criticise the capitalist economy using only its theological tradition, since with the separation of Church and State theological postulates are hardly accepted in a secular society as relevant or decisive. More significantly, it must criticise the theological assumptions behind economic discourse as well as the idolatry of the market. \textsuperscript{790} ‘It must be clarified that the critique of the idolatry of the market does not mean a critique of the market as such, but only of its sacralization, namely the absolutizing of its laws.’ \textsuperscript{791} From its origins, Liberation Theology, making use of socio-analytical mediations, \textsuperscript{792} elaborated the concept of ‘structural sin’ and that the fundamental issue in the capitalist economy is not that economic agents are bad people, but that the basic structure of this system generated social problems and caused suffering to millions of poor people. \textsuperscript{793}

Recently, several Roman Catholic liberation theologians seem to be very concerned with the respectability of Liberation Theology. Using Marcela Althaus-Reid’s words it became too decent. Ivan Petrella has already criticised that Liberation Theology

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\textsuperscript{788} J. M. Sung, \textit{Desire}, 100-101; I. Petrella, \textit{The future of liberation theology}, 12-13; 125. \\
\textsuperscript{789} I. Petrella, \textit{The future of liberation theology}, 126-128. \\
\textsuperscript{791} J. M. Sung, \textit{Desire}, 71. \\
\textsuperscript{792} For the importance of socio-analytical mediations for Liberation Theology see J. M. Sung, \textit{Desire}, 108-116. \\
\textsuperscript{793} J. M. Sung, ‘Teologia, espiritualidade e mercado,’ 341. 
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has become too concerned with its acceptability by the Vatican.\textsuperscript{794} It seems that the ecclesiology of these theologians have a very deep influence on their Christologies.\textsuperscript{795}

Liberation Theology needs to maintain a historical project if it wants to continue to be a relevant theology in the Latin American context, since poverty is still a big issue in the continent and the gap between the rich and the poor is getting bigger and bigger. However, the historical project needs to be adjusted to the new context after the fall of the Berlin wall and the recent events in the Latin American politico-social landscape.\textsuperscript{796}

In this sense, the example of South African Theology post-apartheid is very helpful.\textsuperscript{797} Reconstruction and collaboration should be important themes in the formulation of this new historical project. Particularly, in the Brazilian context, a public theology is needed which could interact with the broad Brazilian context making use of other social sciences as well, such as law, political sciences, anthropology. Liberation Theology also needs to broaden its concept of the poor and the marginalised.\textsuperscript{798}

In sum, a new and more inclusive project is necessary for the current context, but without abandoning the idea of a historical project altogether.\textsuperscript{799} The contextualisation that Liberation Theology

\textsuperscript{794} I. Petrella, \textit{The future of liberation theology}, 28-30; 42 n26; Hugo Assmann speaks of Liberation Theology’s “catholicocentrism” and “catholicist distortion.” See R. von Sinner, \textit{The churches and democracy}, 114 n96.

\textsuperscript{795} Here the issue about the relationship between Liberation Theology and the concept of Church, discussed above, is made clear.

\textsuperscript{796} See L. Cormie, ‘O Jesus da história,’ 96-97.

\textsuperscript{797} See an important joint study about public theology in South Africa and Brazil in: F. G. Koch Buttelli, C. Le Brunyns and R. von Sinner (Orgs.) \textit{Teologia Pública no Brasil e na África do Sul: Cidadania, Interculturalidade e HIV/AIDS-Volume 4}, São Leopoldo: Sinodal, 2014. These articles were published in English in the journal \textit{Missionalia} 43/3 (2015) available online in www.missionalia.journals.ac.za | http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/43-3-127 last access in 22/12/2015.


\textsuperscript{799} For an excellent proposal of a Public Theology which incorporates liberative theological aims of achieving social justice and transformation see R. von Sinner, \textit{The churches and democracy in Brazil}, esp. 100-120. Von Sinner, using Michel Foucalt’s typological distinction between prophet and parrhesiast, states that the prophetic role of theology, the role of denouncing the state of affairs, may be complemented by the role
brought to the fore was precisely the way that it looked at the Latin American politico-economic-social context and tried to build a theology that responded to that particular situation. It was not only concerned about the truth of Christian dogmas but how to relate the Christological thinking and, especially, Jesus Christ's approach to his own context to the Latin American scene of injustice and oppression.\footnote{Welker says that ‘within the context of proclamation, prophetic service not only needs to orient itself ever anew toward both Christology and scripture, it must also constantly be trained and cultivated anew through engagement in intensive interdisciplinary cooperation that focuses specifically on themes that serve to connect and otherwise bring various disciplines together within communities that seek truth and justice.’ See M. Welker, \textit{God the revealed}, 310.}

Liberation Theology needs to revise some concepts that are outdated. Mainly, as it was mentioned, its concept of the poor has to be widened. People should not be described only by their lack of economic means and the marginalisation of other groups is a very important theme as well. Gender, race, sexual orientation are determinant for the suffering of many people in Latin America. At the same time, the desire and aspirations of these people should be looked into more deeply.\footnote{H. Assmann, ‘Por uma teologia humanamente saudável,’ 115-130; See also R. von Sinner, \textit{The churches and democracy}, 114-117.} It is possible to say that because of this reductionism to the economic aspect and its negative approach to the present context, Liberation Theology may have lost its attractiveness to the poor and it is seeing the majority of them going to the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches, especially in Brazilian large cities.\footnote{See T. Noble, \textit{Keeping the window open}, 20-78 and also J. Comblin, \textit{Cristãos rumo ao século XXI}, 324-328. The impact of Neo-Pentecostalism on Brazil is discussed in the Chapter 6 below.} Another concept that must be re-evaluated is the concept of revolution. It was certainly very important in the 60s inspired especially by the relative success of the Cuban revolution but economic, social and political issues are much more complex in our present global society. Moreover, revolutionary's ideas had inspired and continue inspiring violent movements all over Latin America that have killed many innocent lives.\footnote{J. Comblin, \textit{Cristãos rumo ao século XXI}, 216-220. For a detailed analyses of the bad consequences of revolutionary's ideas on Colombian context but that applies to other Latin American countries as well see H. Vijver, \textit{De kolonel krijgt eindelijk post: verhalen over geweld en verzoening in Colombia}, Vught: Skandalon, 2015, 66-83.} The present context in Latin America is of democracy and the experience in many countries as it was the case in Brazil between 2003-2016 with
the Labour Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores) was that it is possible to achieve some important improvements in social matters. Even though it is clear that the improvement is not definitive and it is very likely that Brazilian process of social progress may witness setbacks.

What are the most important criticisms of Liberation Christology? According to the model presented in this dissertation, which is based on the threefold office, Liberation Theology brought to the fore the prophetic role of Jesus Christ. And that was a role which was almost ignored by the Protestant reflection in its first period of almost one hundred years. On the other hand, it becomes apparent that Liberation Christology runs the risk of neglecting the other two offices i.e. the priestly and the kingly offices. Firstly it is important to remember that the prophetic role is related to the horizontal dimension of Christology. In other words, it answers the question of how Christians inspired by Christ’s words and example should deal with other Christians as well as with non-Christians. The Prophetic role shows all Christians how to maintain Christ’s prophetic message and example alive in the world. In sum, it reminds us how to put Jesus Christ’s teachings in practice. The problem is that Liberation Christology seems to neglect the vertical dimension of Christology. It is a real danger that Liberation Theology becomes only a discourse about Liberation and less and less about Theology. Petrella says, ‘perhaps the task is that of disentangling the “liberation” from the “theology” in liberation theology. To work in liberation theology today could mean to work outside of it, by finding ways the epistemological and practical-moral elements can infiltrate, subvert, and transform other bodies of knowledge. Here the liberation theologian need not carry the label of “theologian” and works best under a different disciplinary guise.’

It is symptomatic that several authors from Michael Löwy onwards have preferred to use the label Liberation Christianity instead of Liberation Theology. Jung Mo Sung says, ‘the concept of “Liberation Christianity”, being broader than “theology” or “the Church”, and including both religious culture and the social network, seems to us to be the most appropriate one to use in treating a certain frustration which has settled in after decades of social and ecclesiastical struggles in the expectation of “building the Kingdom of God” or in the realization of utopia.’

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806 J. M. Sung, *Desire*, 130.
seems to be that the term ‘theology’ became an issue not only because it is narrower than Christianity, but also because of the frustration of many people involved in social or Church struggles. For Sung it is more than a theology; Liberation Christianity derives from a spiritual experience. Precisely, a separation or hierarchisation between a liberation theology and liberation spirituality is the risk that Liberation Theology should avoid, since its strength is to bring to the theological thinking themes and reflections that could help people to understand the political implications of Jesus Christ’s ministry and how Jesus’ own spirituality was transformed in deeds and words, i.e. action and thinking.

To avoid the risk just mentioned Liberation Christology has to maintain the three dimensions of Christ’s work, which are expressed in the threefold office. However, the two vertical dimensions are minimised quite often. For instance, Liberation theologians criticised the exaggerated emphasis on the role of Jesus as priest in the previous Protestant theology in Latin America. According to them, this kind of perspective led Christians to accept this situation of poverty and marginalisation, because what was important in fact was that their souls were redeemed by Jesus. It also combats the weak Christology from the colonial period and still present in the popular religiosity especially in its iconography, where Jesus identifies himself with the suffering of the

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807 ‘Spiritual experience does not call for coherence in relation to a particular theory or theology but coherence in relation to the foundational experience, “the first love,” the fundamental choice which has marked and modified one’s life.’ J. M. Sung, Desire, 140-154, esp. 149. On the contrary, I believe that people who had a spiritual experience look for coherence in relation to a particular theory or theology. Even though if they do not find that coherence they may change their theology to keep their experience. In this sense, it seems to me that Sung does not appreciate the importance of theology, or of an intellectual framework, to help people to comprehend their own experience. Sung explores in more details his view about Liberation Christianity and spirituality in J. M. Sung, Cristianismo de libertação: espiritualidade e luta social, São Paulo: Paulus, 2008.

808 Moltmann calls the attention to the fact that Christian theology has done that. He says, ‘man is not made righteous before God by works of the law, but by God’s grace in faith. Faith brings liberation from the compulsion of works. But a theological interpretation of the political dimension of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is absent.’ See J. Moltmann, The crucified God, 341. See also J. Costadoat, ‘Cristo liberador,’ 106-107. L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 96-98. Boff speaks that the interpretation of Christ’s death as sacrifice for our sins could not be absolutised. See also J. L. Segundo, The liberation of theology, 136-138. Even though Segundo describes the Protestant theology of Peter Wagner in that section, he affirms that the Roman Catholic authorities’ criticisms to Liberation Theology are based on the same rationale, but only that they are not explicitly indicated as such by the Wagner’s criticism.

809 J. Sobrino, Jesus the liberator, 13-16.
people but cannot help them to overcome this suffering. Thus, the Christology focused on the priestly office helped to maintain the social inequalities present in the Latin American context instead of confronting them, since it speaks about redemption and heavenly life but not so much about earthly life. For Liberation Theology, the Christian message was not only about redemption for the everlasting life, but also a message against injustice and oppression in this present life and context. What Jesus said about the place of the poor in God’s Kingdom was a prophetic message that spoke and speaks concretely against any powers, political, social, juridical or economical ones that created oppression and injustice and avoid the transformation and regeneration of society. Nevertheless, this criticism to the priestly office came to the point that Segundo says that a belief in salvation by faith only becomes a stumbling block to the building of a relevant Christology to Latin America.

In similar lines, Liberation Theology also criticised the classic Christology that presented Jesus as King, because this kind of Christology reinforces the role of “Caesars”

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810 João Dias de Araújo summarises the main elements of Brazilian Christology present in Brazil as follows: 1) a dead Christ; 2) a distant Christ; 3) a powerless Christ; 4) a Christ who inspires no respect; 5) a docetist or disincarnate Christ. See J. D. Araújo, ‘Images of Jesus,’ 30-38. See also V. Küster, The many faces, 42; J. Sobrino, Jesus the liberator, 11-12; W. Altmann, ‘Is there hope in the midst of suffering?’ 197-213; For a more detailed description and analysis of Brazilian Christology in the popular religiosity see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.


812 Sobrino says, ‘the historical Jesus surely appears as the liberator from sin, but what we must emphasise is that sin, sinner, and forgiveness are all understood in reference to the Reign of God.’ See J. Sobrino, ‘Systematic Christology,’ 138.

813 L. Boff says that Jesus overcame the temptations of a political messianism present in his time, which was sustained by three streams: prophetic, priestly and political (which, in my opinion, could be identified with the kingly aspect). Following Boff, Jesus was the Christ-Messiah but not only a political messiah. This statement is very interesting because it points out the problem of emphasising one aspect in detriment of the others and also avoiding a strictly concentration on the political aspect of Christology. See esp. L. Boff, Jesus Cristo libertador, 28-37; 46; 105-106; R. Shaull, Heralds of a new reformation, 56-57.

814 Segundo proposes that the Lutheran view of justification by faith alone should be reconciled with the Catholic idea of justification by good works. Both should be melded in a ‘fruitful and liberative synthesis.’ J. L. Segundo, The liberation of theology, 150-151. The same could be stated about Sobrino. For instance, Michael Welker calls attention to the fact that Sobrino’s ‘occasional use of metaphorical language can expose him to the charge of having mixed up God’s activities with those of human beings.’ See M. Welker, God the revealed, 241-243, esp. 241-242 n26.
and “Lords” on earth, who are precisely the powerful agents responsible for the oppression of the poor in Latin America.\textsuperscript{815} The critique of the oppressive role of the kings of the earth is a very important one, especially considering that Jesus was a victim of this sort of oppression, however, it is equally necessary to see the present role of Jesus as Lord and King. Any Christology should look at the historical Jesus, but Jesus’ pre- and post-Easter lives are equally necessary.\textsuperscript{816} The historical Jesus is mainly found in the Gospels, which are already post-Easter writings. Jesus was an eschatological prophet as well as he is a prophethical king.

There is no emphasis on the\textit{ Christus Victor} in the Liberation Christology either.\textsuperscript{817} And even though it considers and recognises similarities between Palestine in Jesus’ times and the current Latin American context, it believes that these similarities are only on a social level, but not in terms of thinking and believing. Thus, Liberation Theology does not speak about exorcisms and healing as something important for the present situation. In this sense, they neglect an important aspect of the Brazilian context where a large section of the Brazilian society believes in spirits and divine miracles or wonders and thus, the beliefs of these Brazilians are not taken seriously enough by Liberation theologians. For instance, according to Segundo, popular religiosity is anti-revolutionary, since it expresses the thoughts of masses who are alienated since they introjected the ideology of the oppressor. Thus, the religion, which is capable of liberating the masses and challenging the status quo, is and will always be a religion of a

\textsuperscript{815} J. Sobrino, \textit{Jesus the liberator}, 15.
\textsuperscript{816} M. Welker, \textit{God the revealed}, 248.
\textsuperscript{817} Kärkännen says that, 'The ancient idea of\textit{ Christus Victor}, the powerful Christ who rose from the dead and defeated the opposing powers, is obviously relevant to the African search for power. The victorious Christ is able to overcome the spell and threat of spirits, magic, disease, and death, and to transform the culture of fear into a culture of hope and joy.’ See V. Kärkkäinen, \textit{Christ and reconciliation}, 73 see also 379-380. The thesis in this dissertation is that the role of the\textit{ Christus Victor} is valid for Latin America, especially in Brazil, almost as much as in Africa. Therefore, the next two chapters explore this thesis further. The fifth chapter presents the influence of African people and African heritage in Brazil and the sixth chapter presents the way that the\textit{ Christus Victor} is recovered and retaken by Neo-Pentecostalism, being the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God taken as example. In this regard, my thesis is that the Brazilian Liberation Christology, at least in its first almost twenty years neglected, or did not give special attention to, the African roots of Brazilian culture and religiosity.
minority group, an elite group.\footnote{J. L. Segundo, \textit{The liberation of theology}, 183-207. Segundo’s rationale is quite paradoxal. He says, ‘the only way to reconcile qualitative change with numerical universality would be to assume that mass lines of conduct will turn into qualitatively minority lines of conduct in passing through a certain educational process. One must assume, in other words, that the masses, without ceasing to act with their customary mass characteristics insofar as numbers are concerned, can somehow acquire qualities and expend the efforts that are typical of minorities.’ (p. 204). Segundo, nevertheless, is aware that there are other perspectives among Liberation theologians in this regard. He points out, for example, other Liberation theologians were more optimistic about the role of popular religiosity to criticise and challenge the status quo. My point is that even Liberation theologians who are more sympathetic to popular religiosity do not take in full consideration that many Latin American people have a different rationale from the Western one. This point is more deeply analysed in the following two chapters.} Juan Luis Segundo states that Jesus’ original message was not aimed directly at the masses either but at a minority group who would play an essential role in the transformation of the masses.\footnote{J. L. Segundo, \textit{The liberation of theology}, 208-240.} Owing to this, to believe that the masses could understand their own oppression and transform it would, at least, be naive. Nevertheless, Jesus’ good news and ministry were able to attract the masses or, at least, many people among the masses to the core message of God’s Kingdom, which challenged the status quo. Jesus’ message and ministry were political and revolutionary but in a language that made sense to the masses because they took into consideration the way of thinking of those people. The thesis of this dissertation is that it is still possible nowadays to build a Christology which presents a historical political project based on the historical Jesus in a language that could be discernible by and respectful of the Latin American people’s rationale. Even though the Christian movement had leaders, as it was the case with any social movement, the role of these leaders was facilitated by an example and a message which seriously respected people’s basic beliefs as well as addressed their most important aspirations. The problem is that Liberation Theology maintains the Western rationale which, influenced by the Enlightenment, states that those supernatural deeds described in the gospels represent a way of thinking that it is not scientific and not credible.\footnote{Schleiermacher, for example says, ‘In those days the true recognition of Christ might in individual instances be evoked by miracles: elsewhere it found a confirmation in them; but it might never be properly based upon them. Hence, for us, so far as our faith is concerned, they cannot but be altogether superfluous.’ See F. Schleiermacher, \textit{The Christian faith}, Berkeley: Apocryphile, 2011, 448. See also J. Rieger, \textit{Christ & empire}, 209-210.} Actually, the meaning of these deeds is important for Liberation Theology because they show Jesus’ liberating activity, but nowadays their...
value is only of reminiscences that may inspire Christians for a more liberating activity in Latin America.

Thus, the role of Jesus as liberator, which was so important for this theology, was deeply related to Jesus’ office as prophet, and was critical to the way that the other two offices, priest and king, were used to withdraw from struggles for justice and liberty and to justify the oppression of economic and political power over the marginalised people. Therefore, a contextual Christology in Brazil must take into consideration Liberation Theology and its emphasis in Jesus Christ as prophet and his prophetic role in his own time as well as in the present. It always was and should continue to be a public theology, not a theology concerned only with individuals and their personal salvation, but concerned with the entire society and the politico-social meaning of Jesus’ ministry. But, a contextual Brazilian Christology must look at the other two offices as well, i.e. the priestly and the kingly, which present the vertical dimension of the relationship between human beings and God. Moreover, Liberation Theology and the communities influenced by its ideas must keep in dialogue with other Christian faith communities, since the lack of dialogue and the excessive competition between the different Christian groups make cooperation very difficult. The building of a contextual Protestant Christology in Brazil needs to include all Christian’s aspirations and dreams, and dialogue is the means to understand and recognise what Brazilian people dream of and aspire to.

In sum, if Liberation Theology gives up on presenting a historical project it also neglects what Liberation means and thus it compromises the Liberation aspect. On the other hand, if it neglects the vertical aspect of Christology, the kingly and the priestly offices, it compromises the theological aspect. In the former, it becomes only a theology, while in the latter it becomes only liberation. If both are kept in balance it continues to be a contextual Liberation Theology.

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821 M. Welker, *God the revealed*, 244-246.
5. The Jesus of Negra Theology: Jesus as Orixá

As put earlier in the former chapter, the indigenous and the negra theology are developments within Liberation Theology. It was a search for more interaction with the cultural context in its broadest sense and not only in its socio-political dimension. In fact, in Brazil, race was considered less important than economic status. In other words, if a black man became rich the question of his colour was less significant. According to a well-known proverb in Brazil ‘a rich negro is a white; a poor white is a negro’. This certainly was not the case in North America, where black people would continue to be discriminated independently of their economic status. This Brazilian context caused social analysts, including Liberation theologians, to look more at economic issues than at issues of race or colour. In Brazil the idea circulated that race was not an issue in the country; on the contrary, it was Brazil’s strongest positive quality. Nevertheless, it was evident that black people were considered second-class citizens. A rich black man was more valued than a poor white man, but he would still be inferior to a rich white man. Thus, the inclusion of race in theological speech was an important step in the recognition of this issue.


For example, in the Brazilian 1970 census, as it had been in 1900 and 1920, there was no data about colour or race, probably influenced by governmental racial democratic ideas. See J. B. Borges Pereira, ‘Negro e cultura negra no Brasil atual’ in: Revista de Antropologia 26 (1983), 93-105, esp. 102.
It is necessary to keep in mind that the main goal of this dissertation is to point to the shifts in Christology in Protestantism, especially Presbyterianism in Brazil and to contribute to the development of a model that enables the dialogue between theologians, churches and groups with different Christological viewpoints by finding the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context. The reason for writing this chapter is that a contextual theology in Brazil has to look at the African influences on Brazilian culture, because they have been constitutive for an important part of the existent cultural texture.

This chapter deals mostly with the question about black people, their religion and the new developments in *negra* theology in Brazil. The broad questions of this chapter are: who are the Afro-Brazilians? What is their context? What are the main theological elements of their religiosity? How have African theologians built a Christology in response to these same theological elements in their own context in Africa? How have Brazilian theologians answered to the Afro-Brazilian elements? What are the similarities and differences between African and Afro-Brazilian religiosity? The two broad questions that lead the whole chapter are: what are the theological elements from Afro-Brazilian religiosity that should not be missed when identifying the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context? And: How has the *Negra* theology identified and developed these elements?

The first section is about the presence of the African people in Brazilian culture. The main goal is to present who the Afro-Brazilians are. The second section focuses on African religions in the Brazilian context, as a syncretic element within popular Catholicism or as an independent religion separate from it. It describes the main theological elements of Candomblé, the most African of the Afro-Brazilian religiosities. In order to identify the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context, it is necessary to take into consideration the Afro-Brazilian religiosity, that is to say, to capture the main theological elements of this religiosity. That is the goal of this section. The third section analyses the way African theologians have built an African contextual theology. The idea behind this section is that a contextual theology that wants to analyse the African religious elements in Brazil has to take into consideration the analyses of African theologians. The issue is what contribution from Black and African theologies to the construction of a contextual theology should be considered. The fourth
section describes and analyses the different approaches to Afro-Brazilian religiosity in Brazil. Syncretism and double belonging are then put side by side, in order to clarify the peculiar Brazilian reality in terms of contact with its African heritage. Afro-Brazilian religiosity is not a pure African religiosity and it is important to understand what the differences are. The last section briefly describes the relationship with the indigenous element in Brazilian culture. The history of this relationship with the Indigenous people is very different in various aspects from that with the African people. Certainly, the impact of Indigenous religions on Christology, which is the main theme of this dissertation, was not so explicit. The approach is similar to that of the first part but significantly shorter. The scope of this section is to give only an idea of the impact of Indigenous religions in Brazilian context. The question that this section seeks to answer is very simple: Why, in this dissertation, are African elements considered important for a Brazilian Protestant Christology whereas Indigenous elements are not?

This fifth chapter must be viewed in connection with the next chapter, because the hypothesis in this dissertation is that Neo-Pentecostalism incorporates, yet quite often inverts and modifies these Afro-Brazilian religious features into its own theology in a way that is so successful that it is able to reach out to millions of Brazilians. Therefore, the fifth and sixth chapters form one set in the sense that both are dealing with the possibilities of incorporation of Afro-Brazilian elements into Brazilian religiosity.

It is important to highlight that at the beginning of my research I intended to write a dissertation about the role of Jesus as Orixá. After some time researching the literature about the Afro-Brazilian religiosity I realised that Neo-Pentecostalism, especially the United Church of the Kingdom of God, deals with these elements in an interesting way. Thus, instead of being the main chapter of this dissertation, following a more phenomenological approach, it describes the main elements of Afro-Brazilian religiosity, its history, and its relationship to the Brazilian culture, which are analysed in light of Brazilian Neo-Pentecostalism in the sixth chapter.

Indigenous is being used in this dissertation to identify the Indians who lived in Brazil before the Western colonisation.
5.1. Africans in Brazil

The aim of this section is to explore the origin of the Afro-Brazilians. The question that leads this section is: who are the Afro-Brazilians? African people were brought to Brazil for working in a slavery regime in place of the indigenous people since the 16th century. According to data from the 2010 census in Brazil (the most recent one), the percentage of black people is around 7.6%. The number of people who declared themselves as being black was not very impressive. However, 43.13% were pardos (coloured people, literally, brown people), therefore if both totals are added together, half of the population would be black or half-black. This kind of analysis is very complicated in Brazil, because the situation of the pardos varies enormously. They could be considered black in some situations and white in others. They were often considered as the true Brazilian, or a mix of the best of two races, but at other times they were discriminated against as if they were black people. There were a lot of romantic views about the pardos or mulatos. Sometimes they were used ideologically to create a sense of national identity or a sort of Brazilian ethnicity, while at other times they were used as a way to camouflage racism. For a long period of time in Brazil, there were ideas from encouraging the relationship between black and white people to the whitening of black people. At the same time, pardos can be used to describe a very different range of proximity with African races. In other words, pardo can be a wide range of black people (from very dark to very light) and therefore they will be identified as black people or almost white people - in which case they will be identified as white people. They probably had a white parent and this may mean that this white parent had a better social status. Normally, pardos do not want be identified with black people.

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828 There are a total of 14,517,961 black people in a total of 190,775,799 habitants. The data are available at the official site of the IBGE, Brazilian Institute in charge of collecting and showing these data. See the website address below: http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/censo2010/default.shtm


830 For this situation of a slightly black person, there is the label moreno in Portuguese that can be used to describe a white person with dark hair or a slightly black person.

831 It is important to be aware that a large number of these pardos were illegitimate children of white rich male farmers or their sons with black female slaves. It means that...
These preliminary comments are important to show that the number of Afro-descendants in Brazil can be analysed in different ways. This figure is around 50% of the population but at the same time, the figures of people who declare themselves as black people or direct descendants of African parents correspond to less than 8% of the population. This picture can explain the small number of adherents to Afro-Brazilian religions but equally, the large influence of African religious ideas in Brazilian culture and Brazilian Christianity. Syncretism or double belonging is not only a question of social imposition and an answer to this imposition, but also an outcome of a genetic heritage. It is not simply that Afro-Brazilians were obligated to be officially or formally Catholics, while in fact they were practitioners of African religions. Although it was true that Afro-Brazilians were forced to convert to Christianity, their double belonging is a much more complex phenomenon. Many of them are children of two races and therefore of two religions. While in some countries, such as North America, an Afro-American normally means an African descendant who was born in America, in Brazil, Afro-Brazilian may mean an African descendant who was born in Brazil, but normally it means someone who is the result of a mixture of two or more races, one of them being African.

Africans came to Brazil as slaves and this past of slavery deeply marked the identity of black people in Brazil. Racism may be not so strong in Brazil as elsewhere but it is still a sad reality, which has to be faced. The Brazilian negra theology deals with these issues and is related to African and Black Theologies, which are also discussed below. The Candomblé, analysed and described in the next section, is not an African religion, but an Afro-Brazilian religion. To be able to understand Candomblé as a response to a specific context in the 19th century, it is important to comprehend the relationship between Candomblé and Neo-Pentecostalism, which is discussed in the next chapter. Therefore Candomblé, the most important religious expression of these Afro-Brazilians, will be described in the next paragraph.

\[832\] Sometimes they could receive some benefits of being children of very rich fathers, but many times that situation did not change their status as children of slaved mothers.

Here ‘white’ and ‘black’ are used as if they pointed to two different races as it is presumed in the Brazilian census. But obviously race is a more complex term than colour indicates.
5.2. Candomblé

If the African heritage is as clearly present in Brazil as it was shown above, it undoubtedly has an impact on Brazilian religiosity. The main goal of this section is to highlight the main religious African elements that can be identified in Brazil. The best place to find the African religious perspectives is in the most African religion in Brazil: Candomblé. Therefore, the goal of this section is to describe Candomblé’s theology.\(^{833}\) The focus is not to describe its uses or practices, even though some practices are used as examples, but it is to offer a theological assessment of its belief system. The point here is to understand the Afro-Brazilian religions’ theological frameworks that are present in Brazilian culture and that influenced other religious expressions, such as other African religious syncretisms as Umbanda, popular religiosity and especially Neo-Pentecostalism, which is analysed in more detail in the next chapter. These theological elements formed a cosmology or a broad theology of Afro-Brazilians, which was ignored at large in Christian theology in Brazil until being taken up by Neo-Pentecostalism. The point of departure is that a Brazilian Protestant Christology cannot ignore these elements.

Candomblé is not the only Afro-Brazilian religion. There are others and certainly Umbanda has got more adherents than Candomblé.\(^{834}\) Umbanda\(^{835}\) will not be the focus

\(^{833}\) Volney J. Berkenbrock (1960 - ----) did his PhD in Theology in the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität (Bonn – Germany). His dissertation is about the experiences of the Orixás, ‘Die Erfahrung der Orixás – Eine Studie über die religiöse Erfahrung im Candomblé’ [translated to Portuguese as V. J. Berkenbrock, A experiência dos orixás]. It is a Christian theological study about this Afro-Brazilian religion and because of that it is quite unique. In fact there are a lot of very good studies about Candomblé written by authors from different countries: Brazil (Pierucci, Prandi and Negrão), France (Bastide), Netherlands (Droogers, van de Port). And it is important to add that this list of countries and authors could include many others names. Nevertheless, they are all anthropologists. The anthropology developed a real fascination with Candomblé, its aesthetics, power and History, but very few theologians have showed intellectual curiosity for this religion, but exceptionally, Berkenbrock cultivates a profound interest in it. And as a theologian he looks at Candomblé with a theological perspective and looks for its theological elements. Thus, yet ethnographic studies are of great significance for my study, Berkenbrock is a crucial source and he is cited abundantly.


\(^{835}\) For a description and analysis of Umbanda, even though critical in many aspects see R. Bastide, The African religions of Brazil, esp. 304-342.
of this subsection because it is more recent and it represents a syncretism from all the religions in Brazil: Indigenous religions, Christianity, Candomblé and spiritism (kardecism). Due to this open syncretism, Umbanda has attracted more white people and it is more acceptable in urban areas. It represents an interesting case of a pluralist religion and it deserves special attention. However, the aim in this chapter is to find the essential elements of African origin in Brazilian religiosity and, certainly, Candomblé is much closer to African religions than Umbanda. Apart from Umbanda, the differences between Candomblé and the other Afro-Brazilian religions, especially Xangô, is more at an organisational level than at a theological one. They reflect regional variations rather than different theological perspectives. Thus we find Xangô in Pernambuco and Alagoas, tambor de mina in Maranhao and Para, batuque in Rio Grande do Sul and macumba in Rio de Janeiro. There also are differences related to their different origins; Candomblé that has Bantu origins is from Angola; and also from Angola there is the Candomblé of Caboclo, which was also influenced by Indigenous religions. Finally, there is the Candomblé from Yoruba, especially its version from Bahia, which is the biggest and the best one documented among them, and generally accepted as the most faithful to the African religions. For these reasons, it will be presented in more detail.

The most important theological element in Candomblé is the harmony between Aiye and Orum. Aiye is the finite and material reality, while Orum is the infinite and

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836 V. J. Berkenbrock, A experiência dos orixás, 148-163. The Protestantism is not part of the spectrum of religions that formed Umbanda, possibly, following Berkenbrock, because Protestantism was very critic to Afro-Brazilian religions. See especially p. 152.


838 It is said about Umbanda that it is the most Brazilian religious expression, because it synthesises all the religions present in Brazil. See R. Prandi, ‘As religiões negras do Brasil,’ 66.


spiritual reality. In African mythology\(^{842}\) there was perfect harmony between both, but through the break of a taboo this former harmony was disrupted. All the religious practices and rites are intended to restore harmony.\(^{843}\) In Candomblé there is no concept of sin, even though there is a concept of taboo. In other words, there are forbidden foods and things or actions prohibited on a determined day or period. Nevertheless, the consequences of breaking a taboo are not moral or universal. What happens is disharmony, and only after the restoration of harmony may things go well again. There is no idea of repentance or change of life - instead it is necessary to perform some rituals or use some things to restore the former harmony and to prevent bad happenings.\(^{844}\) Taboo differs from sin in some distinct aspects. In general terms, sin is universal and has moral implications. In other words, everyone should avoid sin because to commit a sin is immoral, turning an individual into an immoral or bad person. Normally, sin has a moral rationale behind it, which explains and justifies it and applies it to everyone. Thus, good people do good things, while bad people do bad things, i.e. sinners commit sins. On the other hand, taboo has almost magical consequences and quite often has to do with gods' wishes, without any ulterior universal or rational explanation. Taboos should be avoided not because they affect the individual or social moral life,\(^{845}\) but because breaking taboos is contrary to the gods' will and will bring bad consequences to the people that have broken them.\(^{846}\) To avoid the consequences of a sin, the sinner should regret it and change his life. He should stop committing sins and do good things to repair his bad behaviour. On the other hand, to avoid the consequences of breaking a taboo, people have to perform some ritual to placate the gods' wrath.\(^{847}\)

\(^{842}\) Mythology is used here in its technical conception of stories about the origins of a religion or a people and not in its popular meaning of false or unreal.


\(^{845}\) Breaking a taboo does not make a person immoral or bad.


\(^{847}\) Following this distinction is possible to say that in the Old Testament, besides clearly universal laws that work in moral terms, such as the Ten Commandments, there
To explain this process of breaking harmony and restoring it, it is necessary to add the concept of exchange. 'Even the word “exchange” is not entirely appropriate, because what we are dealing with is a manipulation of the sacred, and this manipulation requires a balance between two parties.' The idea was developed by Marcel Mauss to describe different relationships among primitive cultures. It applies to social, economic and marital relationships. For the purpose of this study, it is important to highlight that the relation with Orixás is based on giving and taking or gifts and counter-gifts. It also works in other relations in Candomblé. For example, if someone wants to receive advice, or discover a religious secret, or ascend in the religious hierarchy, etc. he or she needs to offer something. This is not a monetary exchange; it may be a necklace or a piece of cloth, for example. In the same way, all the relations with the Orixás are based on gifts and counter-gifts. The rituals are a means to fortify the Orixás. Consequently they have the obligation to give retribution to these offers. Only with a gift, given by the performance of a certain ritual or religious practice, is it possible to please the Orixás and thus restore harmony, which is conceded as a counter-gift.

The main subjects in charge of maintaining this harmony are the Orixás. They are spirits that live in the Orum but they regularly visit and interfere with Aiye. They are the link between these two dimensions, because they were from Aiye and, due to their virtues, force and dedication, they were elevated to the level of Orixás and therefore they can live in Orum as well. In African theology these Orixás are not entirely good; they are also prescriptions or laws that work as taboos, such as most of the Holiness Code. See J. Rogerson & P. Davies, The Old Testament world, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1989, 233-252.

848 R. Bastide, The African religions of Brazil, 228.
850 Bastide shows that this “exchange” relationship is also valid for other relations such as economic, marital, etc. See R. Bastide, The African religions of Brazil, 220-239.
851 Yet nowadays a consultation with a famous babalorixá (honorable title of a Candomblé’s priest) may cost a fortune. See M. van de Port, Ecstatic encounters: Bahian Candomblé and the quest for the really real, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University, 2011, 241.
852 R. Bastide, O candomblé da Bahia, 64-65. See also J. R. de Carvalho Baptista, ’“No Candomblé nada é de graça...”: estudo preliminar sobre a ambigüidade nas trocas no contexto religioso do Candomblé’ in: Revista de Estudos da Religião 1 (2005), 68-94.
often very jealous and can also be wrathful. Thus, keeping harmony is imperative to praising and to pleasing the Orixás. If they are not satisfied, disasters or unhappy things will certainly happen and the only way of restoring harmony and stopping the consequences is by satisfying them through the appropriate rituals.

In Africa these Orixás were linked to ancestors and were also part of the groups’ and families’ identity. They kept the harmony of a family, a tribe or a people. Thus, the number of Orixás is considerably large because there are a lot of different groups in Africa; each group with their own Orixás or one shared between several groups or a whole people. They were elevated to this special condition due to some specific quality or act of courage and therefore there are also Orixás related to a specific characteristic or to specific stories of courage or braveness. For example, there is an Orixá for war, another for peace, etc. These more specific characteristics of Orixás as ancestors did not survive in Brazil, because the Africans here had not constituted families or groups based on ethnicity or religious lines. They were separated from their families and groups and brought together with Africans from different places, languages and religious practices. Thus, in Brazil, only the more general aspects of these Orixás related to specific virtues or dominions survived. For that reason, there are not so many Orixás in Brazilian Candomblé. While there are approximately 400 Orixás in Africa, in Brazil there are no more than 30.

Likewise there are many dissimilarities between Umbanda and Condomblé regarding the Orixás. In Candomblé they are not so strongly linked to ancestors as they are in the original African religions, whereas in Umbanda they are not related to ancestors at all. Thus, Umbanda’s Orixás are mostly related to the forces of nature. They still keep some characteristics of Candomblé’s Orixás so that they are associated with the dominion of elements of nature, for example, one rules over the sea, another over rocks, etc. One important difference is that in Umbanda there is also an influence of the

856 Bastide describes some rituals to attract Orixás in R. Bastide, O candomblé da Bahia, 31-44.
859 V. J. Berkenbrock, ‘Candomblé,’ 24.
features of the gods originated in India. Owing to this, Orixás acquire moral values, for example, ‘Ogun ceases to be the warrior of the Candomblés and becomes the champion of justice.’ Therefore, the traditional duality present in the Orixás in African religions and in Candomblé does not exist in Umbanda. In Umbanda the Exús are evil and are responsible for all the bad things that happen, while the Orixás are responsible for the good things. In that sense, Umbanda is similar to West Indian as well as to Christian dualism, which presents the idea of a good God in opposition to the Devil.

The most central experience in Candomblé is the trance, because through it the Orixá comes to stay with his children. So, in that moment there is perfect harmony, the world of Aiye and the world of Orum are present in the temple. The Orixás are present, not only in a general or spiritual way, but they are really inside their children. Through their presence in individuals, the energy, Axé, is liberated for everyone. They dance and eat with human beings. At the same time, the trance gives proof of the presence of the transcendent among human beings and it shows that they did not come to judge or punish but to play, dance, eat and drink. The trance seems very disturbing to an outsider, but it is an important moment of harmony within Candomblé theology, where both worlds, material and spiritual, and times, past and present, are being joined together.

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862 For a detailed description of the trance structure see R. Bastide, O candomblé da Bahia, 181-217.
863 There are male and female Orixás in Candomblé. See V. J. Berkenbrock, A experiência dos orixás, 223.
865 V. J. Berkenbrock, ‘Candomblé,’ 23.
866 V. J. Berkenbrock, A experiencia dos orixás, 260-264.
869 V. J. Berkenbrock, A experiência dos orixás, 223-224; 283; 356.
870 R. Prandi, ‘O candomblé e o tempo,’ 49.
To be a full participant of Candomblé, it is necessary to be initiated. The initiation period is no shorter than seven years. The first step is through the *buzios* game to identify the specific *Orixá* that this person is attached to and then the process starts whereby this person needs to learn about the wishes and rituals involved in serving this specific *Orixá*. There are no books to study; the necessary knowledge is passed orally through stories and myths about this *Orixá*. However, more important than stories or myths about the *Orixás* is learning how to please them and finding out what they do not like. For example, it is necessary to learn about their preferred colour, meals, plants, days of the week, days of the year, and about what the appropriate clothes or utensils are that their children need to wear during the feasts or during the trance. There is no moral discourse attached to specific *Orixás*, they do not demand other obligations besides the ritualistic ones.

Time, in African religions in general and in Candomblé in particular, is cyclic. There is no idea of future events as absolutely new ones. The future will be the past that will come back. There are divinatory practices, but to predict the future is not disclosing the future, but is finding out the past pattern that is happening now. If someone knows what events succeeded as part of a past pattern, then he is able to say what is going to happen soon. An important consequence of this idea of time is that Candomblé has no eschatological conceptions. There is no idea of a better world; on the contrary, a different world would be disharmonic. Therefore, there is no millenarianism in Candomblé. The history is not going towards a special fulfilment; instead, history is repeating the past itself and will continue to do so infinitely.

Candomblé is not a pure African religion. It emerged among African slaves that were living in Brazil for a long time with Catholic practices and devotions forced upon them. Until now in this section, only the similarities between Candomblé and African

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872 V. J. Berkenbrock, ‘O candomblé,’ 23.
873 R. Prandi, ‘O candomblé e o tempo,’ 52-57.
875 Yet candomblé has not got the same conception of time that other African religions, because it had to adapt to a Catholic context. Nevertheless, it maintains affinities with African conceptions of time. See R. Bastide, *O candomblé da Bahia*, 89-111.
876 R. Prandi, ‘O candomblé e o tempo,’ 52.
877 R. Prandi, ‘O candomblé e o tempo,’ 57.
religions have been presented, nonetheless there is equally evidence of many dissimilarities. The number of Orixás was already mentioned earlier, but there are several others. The identification of Orixás and Roman Catholic saints was very widespread. This was a very interesting case of double transformation, because not only did the Orixás receive names and characteristics of Roman Catholic saints, but the saints also received characteristics from the Orixás in the popular religiosity. The identification of Jesus as Orixalá or Oxalá, one of the most important Orixás, is notorious.\cite{berkenbrock1987} ‘He is the most important and the most powerful of the Orixás, as well he is the most worshipped Orixá in the Bahian Candomblé.’\cite{ bastide1973} He received the task of creating the world and, therefore, he has dominion over life and death. All creatures are under his protection and responsibility. He is identified with Jesus Christ; however, no traces of the historical person of Jesus were transferred on to him.\cite{berkenbrock1987} Jesus’ life, preaching, healings, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension are not dealt with. Due to this, Oxalá as Jesus is a core belief of Candomblé, but not the other way round. Jesus as Orixá is not part of people’s beliefs. Important Jesus’ characteristics are transferred to Oxalá such as protector, creator, dominion, and healer; nevertheless, Oxalá’s characteristics are not transferred to Jesus. The Orixá is a-a-historical figure whose life on earth is not decisive and does not define his identity and Jesus’ life does not add to his character.\cite{berkenbrock1987} Images of saints and other Catholic symbols are abundant in Candomblé temples. Many Candomblé members are still Catholics and they participate in Sunday Mass and Catholic feasts regularly. Some of the Candomblé rites are practiced in Roman Catholic churches.

There is an overwhelming richness in all the Candomblé rites, animal sacrifices, ceremonies, dance, music, and myths but the goal of this section is primarily to highlight

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{bastide1973} V. J. Berkenbrock, \textit{A experiências dos orixás}, 248.
\bibitem{berkenbrock1987a} V. J. Berkenbrock, \textit{A experiências dos orixás}, 248-250.
\bibitem{berkenbrock1987b} A reason may be the weak Christology of popular religiosity in Brazil. The fact that Jesus was seen as any other saint in popular religiosity could be the explanation why Jesus Christ’s whole ministry on earth is ignored in Candomblé as well as in Afro-Brazilian Christian religiosity. Jesus is the most powerful Orixá and protector of all, but these characteristics are not related to what Jesus did on earth. On the contrary, they look at the Oxalá and see that he holds many features that are attributed to Jesus. In that way, he is similar to Jesus. On the other hand, Jesus does not receive characteristics of Oxalá. Saints receive some characteristics of Orixás, but Jesus does not. For more details on the weak Christology of Brazilian religiosity see Chapter 3 above.
\end{thebibliography}
the theological aspects that could be picked up to explain the influence of African religiosity on the Brazilian religious context and these aspects can now be summed up. The basic theological principle of Candomblé is the harmony between the spiritual and the material realms. The theological agents of this harmony are the Orixás. They work as mediators from the two realities. Therefore, the trance expresses the moment when these Orixás come to the individual and consequently to the community and it is the most central experience. Applying a Christian analogy, trance is the centre of Candomblé’s liturgy. In that moment, the Axé, the energy, the force of the harmony is liberated. The harmony is broken when a taboo is broken and the way to restore it is performing some specific rituals. For that reason, the idea of exchange, gift and contragift, is fundamental to Candomblé. The initiation is the way to engage more deeply with Candomblé. In this long period of initiation, the disciples learn the rituals that should be performed to avoid breaking the harmony and to restore it when it is broken. This knowledge is transmitted through oral tradition and keeps an aura of secrecy. The centrality of harmony determines the conception of time, which is cyclic and harmonic. The future is not to be very different from the present, because it will bring disharmony. The future repeats the past indefinitely.

5.3. From inculturation to syncretism

In order to analyse how the African elements present in Brazilian culture are taken into consideration, it is necessary to evaluate the Negra contextual theology in Brazil. Owing to this, it is advisable to analyse how contextual theologies were formed in Africa and to verify how African theologians comprehended their context and which kinds of theological reflections they developed in Africa. Obviously, there are dissimilarities between Africans in Africa and Africans in Brazil as was already stated and therefore it is important to point out the dissimilarities that influence the theological enterprise in the two continents. Thus, the goal of this section is to briefly trace the history and context of African theologies, to point out which are the religious African core metaphors that these theologians are using to build an African theology, and finally to highlight the differences and approximations between these African theologies and the Negra theology in Brazil, calling attention to the way that the concept of Orixá is discussed and incorporated in these theologies.
Liberation theology, as put earlier, was concerned with contextualisation rather than with inculturation, which means that it prioritised social, economic and political structures rather than issues such as race or gender. These other themes came to the fore only at a later stage within Liberation Theology. When this issue was discussed more deeply in Latin America, there was already important academic research about it in other parts of the world. In this sense, it is possible to say that there is an interpenetration of these two theologies. Liberation Theology in Latin America inspired inculturation theologies in Asia or Africa. On the other hand, African theology inspired Negra theology in Latin America and especially in Brazil. Therefore, there are similarities in the approaches and themes between African theology and Afro-Brazilian theology; nevertheless, there are also dissimilarities that need to be highlighted.

There are two main theologies developed in the African continent: Black Theology (BT) and African Theology (AT). They have different backgrounds and contexts. Black Theology was inspired mainly by the Black Theology from the United States of America (BTUSA). BTUSA was, in its own way, an outcome of the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King and Black Power led by the Muslim convert Malcolm X. It dealt with issues of racism and its consequences in the United States. In principle, there was equality of rights in USA, but in practice, black people were openly discriminated against. BTUSA worked with a question of black identity and a critique about the role of the Western whites in Christian theology and biblical hermeneutics. Nevertheless, these theologians were not only concerned with theoretical issues, but

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883 See Chapter 1 above.
884 See Chapter 4 above.
885 There are other important developments in the Africa scenario such as the new AIC’s and charismatic theologies. These theologies are explored in more detail in the next chapter, which analyses Brazilian Neo-Pentecostalism theology.
888 A. A. da Silva, ‘Caminhos e contextos da teologia afro-americana,’ 24-26; V. Küster, The many faces, 137.
also with practical actions that could change situations and structures. James Cone was the main name attached to this movement. This theology emerged independently from Latin American Liberation Theology and more or less in the same period. It was also influenced at a theological level by theologians such as Karl Barth. Cone said, 'I have always thought that Barth was closer to me than to them [Barthians]’ and in this regard it is similar to Liberation Theology, which also came under Barth’s influence. However, it was less influenced by Marxist critics and social theory. Consequently, BTUSA criticised more specific aspects of rights and not the whole social system presented in the United States. In other words, BTUSA was not concerned with a social revolution and it did not see the capitalist system or economic injustice as the base of the social issues concerning Black people. After important achievements, BTUSA had diminished its influence and impact on American society, but it did not mean that it was abolished. Indeed, it had passed by the same crises like those of its other siblings in the third world.

BT emerged in South Africa and was mainly coping with the Apartheid. These South African theologians found a lot of similarities with the South African context in Cone’s analyses. Both were struggling for justice and equality in an unjust society. Nevertheless, there were dissimilarities. BT was more concerned with Black conscience than with Black Power as Black Power came to be associated with violent reactions, which were more negatively perceived in the South African context. Another difference between BT and BTUSA is that Apartheid was theologically legitimised by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Through their peculiar interpretation of Abraham Kuyper’s idea of spheres of sovereignty, the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa built a cultural separation between blacks and whites that was looked at as natural and therefore as a gift from God in creation. It was indispensable, then, to give a theological answer to this justification. Thus, the main issue in the South African context, Apartheid, had a theological justification and for the BT to combat its terrible

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889 Cited in V. Küster, *The many faces*, 140. Actually, James Cone was criticised for his dependency on Western white theologians. See T. Witvliet, *A place in the sun*, 69-74.
consequences, BT had to offer a theological critique to it showing that its theological base was fallacious. Apartheid maintained that the cultural differences are irreconcilable and even though the gospel is for the salvation of all, so including black people, the cultural differences will continue. Thus, BT had to present a doctrine of reconciliation that deals not only with the reconciliation of the soul with God, but also the reconciliation of human beings of different cultures and races with each other. In other words, theological issues, such as reconciliation and the relationship between gospel and culture had a stronger impact in South Africa than in the United States. On the other hand, due to the more intense contact among different countries of the Third World, BT was also significantly influenced by Latin American Liberation Theology.

What is called African Theology (AT) is the theology spread in other parts of the African continent and is more concerned with inculturation. One of the most important tasks in this theology is to build an African Christian identity. The African religions were completely rejected by the missionaries. The Africans that converted to Christianity were taught that African religions, which were the base of their culture, was pagan and that if they wanted to be saved they needed to depart from these religious ideas. Those African theologians, notwithstanding, sought to rescue elements from the original religions that could be embraced by African Christians.

AT delivered a very impressive contribution to Christology in particular as several concepts from African religions were analysed and considered useful for the building of a genuine AT. The African theologians identified two main metaphors: the Ancestor and the Healer. The ancestor was the most widespread because of its importance for African heritage and religiosity. The role of ancestors is vital for the

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African heritage. The idea of the individual in Africa is based on the idea of society or community, which is expressed by the clan and consequently linked to the ancestors, while in contemporary Western society, the opposite is true: the idea of society is based on the idea of the individual. John Mbiti says, "the individual can only say: ‘I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.’" In the African community, the dead continue to be of influence through the concept of the presence of ancestors. The ancestors are not present only in the memories of the living ones, but they are really present and still play an important role in community life. Jesus as an ancestor or as an elder brother are related metaphors that point out the mediating role of Jesus. Ancestors are responsible to bring divine presence to the people. It is necessary to highlight that even though the role of the ancestor as a mediator is pre-eminent; there is no idea of forgiveness or expiation linked to the concept of the ancestor.

There are three conditions for someone to be classified as an ancestor. He or she should have lived in a good way, showing an exemplary life; also having descendants; and finally, having a good death, i.e. a natural death. Obviously, Jesus does not fulfil all three conditions; actually he fulfilled only the first criterion, but Jesus could be considered an ancestor because he 'mediates in fullness the life given by God.'

The ancestor in African religiosity has the triple role of someone who relates human beings to God, God to human beings and inspires and challenges people to live in the right way with their neighbours. Thus, the same roles that are applied to Jesus Christ and expressed in the three offices are present. Christ brings human beings to God.

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899 V. Küster, *The many faces*, 71.
905 D. Stinton, 'Africa, East and West,' 127.
906 V. Küster, *The many faces*, 63.
(the priestly office), he brings God to human beings (the kingly office), and he teaches and challenges human beings to live in a loving and honest way with each other (the prophetic office). Nevertheless, sin is not a central theme in African religiosity and even the priestly and prophetic offices/roles are interpreted in a different way. In the African context ‘the priest contains within himself the “life force” which he mediates to his people.’ Similarly, the prophet speaks the divine word without referring to a distinctive written divine word. They have these powerful words in themselves and therefore they present creative religious changes many times. Thus, the priest as well as the prophet has a prerogative that is not usual in the Christian conception of these offices.

The ancestor and the *Orixá* in Africa are practically the same concept. The differences have more to do with their origins: the ancestor present in Bantu culture and the *Orixá* in Yoruba culture. Thus, what was said about the ancestors can be also said about the *Orixás*. Yet, as noticed earlier in the former section, the role of *Orixás* in Candomblé was no longer clearly identified with the ancestors, because in Brazil there were no clans or tribes living together. In Brazil, Candomblé has also got difficulties with linking the role of *Orixás* to the two dimensions, the human-God relationship and the human-human relationship, but it clearly highlights the God-human dimension.

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909 D. W. Waruta, ‘Who is Jesus Christ for Africans today?’ 59-60.
910 D. W. Waruta, ‘Who is Jesus Christ for Africans today?’ 59.
911 D. W. Waruta, ‘Who is Jesus Christ for Africans today?’ 57.
912 F. Kabasélé, ‘Christ as ancestor and elder brother,’ 117-119.
913 Irrazavala, reading the Brazilian theologian Toninho da Silva, pointed out that for Bantu culture in Latin-America the idea of ancestry was important to understand the figure of Jesus, while for those from Yoruba/Nagô culture Jesus was identified with Olorum. Thus, in Bantu culture there is a symbiosis while in Nagô culture a syncretism. See D. Irrazavala, *De baixo e de dentro: crenças latino-americanas*, São Bernardo do Campo: Nhanduti, 2007, 107-110. Pinheiro dos Santos and Ferreira de Jesus say that for Bantu culture Jesus is the centre of the community, the immortal ancestor, whereas for the Nagô culture Jesus is one of the *Orixás*. See A. Pinheiro do Santos & J. Ferreira de Jesus, ‘Uma cristologia libertadora negra no Brasil colônia e a mesa como espaço da partilha e da libertação’ in: *Revista Caminhando* 14/1 (2009), 45-56, esp. 47.
914 Prandi says some aspects of the African traditional religiosity, such as principles and justice were entrusted to Roman Catholicism, because Roman Catholic Church was the national church. See R. Prandi, ‘As religiões negras do Brasil,’ 67-68.
are those that bring God to human beings. There are also efforts in AT, like in Candomblé in Brazil, to extend the identification to Orixás or Ancestors to the figures of Saints.\(^915\)

It is possible to summarise the differences between the concept of Orixá in Brazil and Africa in regard to Christian tradition and African culture in the following way: In Africa, Orixás are linked to the ancestors, to Jesus and to the saints. On the other hand, in Brazilian Candomblé they are linked to the saints, while only one specific Orixá, the Orixalá is linked to Jesus\(^916\) and there is no religious idea of ancestor. Regarding the role of the Orixás as mediators, in Africa they are related to the three dimensions or, in Christian terms, the three offices: prophet, priest, and king, even though the king office is much more emphasised. In Candomblé, however, only the role of the king continues to exist; bringing God to human persons.

These differences between the concept of Orixá in Brazilian Candomblé and in the African religions become an issue for Negra theology. The reductionism of the Orixá figure to only one aspect of the relationship between God and human beings makes it difficult for this theology to talk about issues relating to social, political or economic issues as well as about the reconciliation between people and God. The understanding of salvation is another challenge. The distinction that is present in traditional Christian theologies of divine acts of creation and salvation is absent in African religious traditions. For these traditions, creation and salvation are found in one single divine act. God already gives salvation in the creative act. “God saves as God creates and God creates as God saves.” This view does not ignore ethical procedures, but it sets people free from the near obsession with salvation, as seen in some Christian groups. This attitude gives rise to religious forms of “bargaining” with God and human forms of exclusivism. The ethical commitment is based on a balance of good relationships between people, between people and nature and a fidelity to the divine rather than on an endless search for salvation.\(^917\) Thus, for example, Marcelo Barros says that Afro-Brazilian religions ‘valorise justice and solidarity as divine principles.’ Ethics ‘is not

916 This has to do with the fact that in popular Catholicism the role of Jesus was confused with the saints, as if Jesus was one saint among many others. As it was put in the Chapter 3, in the popular religiosity prevails a weak Christology.
explained in a law code or in a theology, but it is on the kernel of the deeper comprehension of the sacred belonging to *Orixás*.\footnote{M. Barros, *O sabor da festa que renasce: para uma teologia afro-latíndia da libertação*, São Paulo: Paulinas, 2009, 171.} The point is not that Candomblé does not have ethical principles. On the contrary, there is a spirit of solidarity that is present in every ritual. But these principles are not presented or taught in the way that they are in Africa. Therefore, it is hard to discuss ethics in Candomblé, especially social ethics.

In the same way, *Negra* theology has not overcome the difficulty of how to address the dimensions that for Candomblé’s adherents were structured according to the Christian faith. There are important issues that are never brought to the fore in Candomblé, because they were assigned to the Roman Catholic Church. In this dissertation the idea has been used that a contextual theology should inspire, challenge and motivate a responsible and constructive life. In this sense, *Negra* theology fails to address several issues that are important not only for the Afro-Brazilians but also for Brazilian society as a whole.

One fruitful aspect in Candomblé is the idea of community and solidarity. *Negra* theology has explored this potential but even the idea of solidarity and community, which is so important in the African context and could be very useful to criticise the individualism of Brazilian society, is weakened due to the lack of emphasis on the figure of *Orixá* as ancestor. Thus, when speaking about solidarity, the focus is more often on the fellowship in rituals, dances and feasts and not on the aspects of family and kinship.\footnote{M. Barros, *O sabor da festa*, 65-78; A. Pinheiro do Santos & J. Ferreira de Jesus, ‘Uma cristologia libertadora,’ 45-56.} Especially, in a context of fast and chaotic urbanisation and its individualistic characteristics as was the case in Brazil, the *Orixá* metaphor has not been able to help the Afro-Brazilians in their process of re-organising and re-structuring their lives in urban areas.

*Negra* theology has contributed to the valorisation of the African identity of many Afro-Brazilian people inspiring and challenging black people in Brazil to be proud of their African origins. For this reason it deserves attention and support. The metaphor of Jesus as *Orixá* is important as a valorisation of African heritage and identity. But it does
not engage with the full context of the great majority of Afro-Brazilians. It is needed to go beyond Jesus as Orixá. Thus, it is necessary to explore other metaphors that are being discussed in the African context.

Jesus as a healer is a very powerful metaphor for African People. Jesus as an ancestor links the people to their past, while Jesus as a healer relates to the present. In African heritage, illness is associated with disharmony, therefore healing is associated with fullness and harmony. It expresses African beliefs in the present life as a full life; healthy and happy. This metaphor has a clear teaching in the gospels. It is quite easy to justify the use of this metaphor biblically. However, there are differences between the figure of the healer in African religions and Jesus in the Bible. ‘Jesus employed traditional techniques of healing, but he relativised them and tried to warn his followers away from magical attitudes.’ It is necessary to emphasise that Jesus’ cures were signs of God’s kingdom and should not be isolated from the perspective of the future reality promised in the Bible, which is in sharp contrast with African reality and the African health system.

There are other metaphors that, despite, being less dominant than the former two, are still relevant in AT: Jesus as Chief and as the Master of initiation. The metaphor of the Chief points to authority and power. This metaphor is related to other minor metaphors such as the hero, strength or the son of the Chief of the universe. Jesus is also described as the Master of initiation because of analogies between Jesus and this figure in African religiosity. Jesus was also submitted to an initiation in the sense that he had to face a lot of challenges to fulfil his mission. He is also a master of initiation because he teaches his people how to live rightly and how to serve God. In this sense,  

there is a relation between initiation and discipleship. Another metaphor in this line is Jesus as Creator. It is explored in relationship with the idea of Jesus as King. Jesus, more than the king of land or of the people, is the Lord of creation and considered as the creator.

All these metaphors show that the figure of Jesus in AT is closer to the description of Jesus as Christus Victor. ‘Where the cross really comes into focus, it appears as a place of glorification.’ In this sense, it is a theologia gloriae, where the focus is more on the present life, here and now, and not on a future life. It lacks a theologia crucis and a stronger emphasis on Christus Patiens.

Martien Brinkman points out four different interpretations of Jesus’ cross in the Christian tradition. 1) the cross as a symbol of human suffering; 2) the cross as a symbol of conquest, the Christus Victor; 3) the cross as a symbol of the dying of one's own ego, ‘dying with Christ’ and 4) the cross as a reference to Jesus’ sacrifice made for us. In Africa the third element, dying of one's own ego does not come to the order, being more pre-eminent in Asian theology of the cross. The first element, a symbol of human suffering, is more central to BT, where mainly the oppression that the people suffered under Apartheid is identified with Jesus’ suffering. The fourth element, a substitute sacrifice, is lacking, even though the role of Jesus as priest, representing human to God, is present. In regard to the second element, Christus Victor, it is more complicated, because the idea of the cross as a synonym of victory in a broader sense, political and

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927 V. Küster, The many faces, 61-62.
929 V. Küster, The many faces, 58-59; C. Nyamiti, ‘African Christologies today,’ 4. Christus Victor could be named as the core metaphor or the rule metaphor of the African Christology. This theme is very important and is worked in detail in the next chapter in regard to Neo-Pentecostalism’s Christology. For a detailed analysis of Jesus as victorious see J. Quayesi-Amakje, Christology and evil in Ghana: towards a Pentecostal public theology, unpublished PhD dissertation, Amsterdam: VU, 2013, esp. 25-50. Quayesi-Amakje’s thesis corroborates the main thesis of Chapters 5 and 6 of this dissertation that Neo-Pentecostalism utilises African concepts in a Christian theological thinking frame.
930 V. Küster, The many faces, 76.
932 M. Brinkman, De niet-westerse Jezus, 276 [M. Brinkman, The non-western Jesus, 218].
social, was more present in Latin America than in Africa.\textsuperscript{933} Nevertheless, the idea of \textit{Christus Victor} as the conqueror of evil spirits and evil in general is central in AT’s Christology, which emphasises the role of Jesus as the mediator who brings God, his blessings and harmonic life, to human beings, the kingly office. In other words, for the AT, Jesus’ cross is a symbol of conquest, not in the political sense as a triumphant or eschatological event, but as a spiritual conquest of evil spirits by Jesus that, surely, brings material blessings as well.\textsuperscript{934} Thus, in AT the role of Jesus as \textit{Christus Victor} is above all; above everything else.\textsuperscript{935} In this regard, BT has been more fruitful in assuring black people’s dignity before God when it relates a person’s suffering to Jesus’ suffering.\textsuperscript{936} While in AT the expectations of victory, a blessed life and a broad sense of hope is more emphasised.

There were some tensions between theologians from BT and AT. BT criticised AT for not addressing the economic, political and social issues properly. They said that AT alienates people and does not help to break the system of oppression present in the African societies. On the other hand, there are elements of criticism that can be found in AT regarding BT’s concern with European issues and its employment of the Western way of thinking.\textsuperscript{937} Thus, it alienates African people from their own culture and values. In this way, for AT, the Black Theology was alienating and oppressive.\textsuperscript{938} Nevertheless, there were approximations between them and both are seeking to incorporate perspectives from each other.\textsuperscript{939}

\textsuperscript{933} The different perspectives about \textit{Christus Victor} from Spanish and Portuguese Latin America colonisations are discussed in the chapter 3 above.
\textsuperscript{935} This is a statement of the African theologian John Mbiti cited in D. Stinton, ‘Africa, East and West,’ 124.
\textsuperscript{936} V. Küster, \textit{The many faces}, 140.
\textsuperscript{937} A. A. da Silva, ‘Caminhos e contextos da teologia afro-americana,’ 33; T. Witvliet, \textit{A place in the sun}, 86-93.
\textsuperscript{938} The same tension existed in a global level between Latin American Liberation Theology and Asian and African Theologies. They reflect the different approaches and hermeneutics principles behind the two modes of contextual theology: contextualisation and inculturation. See Chapter 1 of this dissertation above.
\textsuperscript{939} These developments correspond to the developments in Latin American Liberation Theology discussed in the chapter 4. See also about African context V. Küster, \textit{The many faces}, 75-76; T. Witvliet, \textit{A place in the sun}, 98-103; H. Russel Botman, ‘Gospel
After the end of Apartheid, BT had to rethink some concepts and to change its focus. Apartheid as a political institution defined and supported by law did not exist anymore and more had to be thought in terms of forgiveness and reconstruction. An alternative had to be offered for the black population that was free from Apartheid but it was still living in poverty and with the stigma of pertaining to an inferior race. These theologians moved to a more constructive way of doing theology and became more aware of cultural issues. In this way it gave rise to a new development in African theology, especially in South African Theology, focused on the public dimension of Christian Theology. This emphasis on Public Theology is also present in Brazil and due to the similarities between the South African and Brazilian contexts and the desire of a scholarly South – South dialogue is beginning to produce a fruitful joint theological reflection on this topic.

BT is very important for the Brazilian context for two main reasons. Firstly, as it was mentioned earlier, Negra theology has difficulties addressing ethical and social issues, a criticism that had already been assigned to AT, but in the Negra theology case is still worse since Orixá is reduced to the role of bringing God’s blessings to human beings. In Candomblé, many social, ethical, political and economic aspects are not dealt with, on the contrary, they are delegated to the Christian religion. Thus, it is necessary that an Afro-Brazilian theology deals with these issues. For example, most of the poorest and uneducated in Brazil are amongst the Afro-Brazilian people. Thus, in Brazil the problem
is not only a question of black identity but also of a whole social system of exclusion. Liberation Theology is concerned with these social issues, but it did not give special attention to the fact that the majority of the most marginalised and poorest in Brazil were African descendants. Secondly, Liberation Theology was focused on revolution and a total transformation of society from a capitalist system to a Marxist one. This revolutionary ideal is, however, out of date and a more cooperative view is now needed, thus, the idea of the reconciliation and reconstruction of BT can certainly be of use.945 The theological reflection in the Brazilian context must have a public dimension and BT can support this reflection, especially in regard to issues of racism and social inclusion.

In the last decades, another important factor that has had a huge influence on African Theology, especially Sub-Saharan African theological reflection, is the HIV/AIDS epidemic.946 At the beginning of the 1980s, the African church kept silent about this issue and if there were any reactions, they were of disapproval towards infected people since the illness was linked to homosexuality and immoral sexual behaviour. Theologians and church leaders considered it as God’s punishment to these people and as a clear manifestation of his reproach to this kind of behaviour.947 In the 1990s this silence was broken and the discourse of stigmatisation was replaced by a more empathetic approach.948 Then, in the first decade of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, there was a deeper concern about this matter and many theological programmes have included HIV/AIDS in their curricula.949 The theme is being approached in the different theological fields such as Pastoral Theology, Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology. In Pastoral Theology the main task is to build a theology that may help to overcome discrimination, stigmatisation and isolation and try to integrate infected people into their own families, church, and society in general.950 In Biblical theology there are two main approaches. Firstly, there is a search for biblical texts that can be used to combat stigmatisation and

945 For an example of a Brazilian public theology in dialogue with BT see F. G. Koch Buttelli, \textit{E a luta continua.}
948 E. Chitando, ‘Expanding and expounding resilience,’ 399-401.
949 E. Chitando, ‘Expanding and expounding resilience,’ 401-405.
950 M. T. Frederiks, ‘HIV and Aids,’ 10-12.
try to affirm the dignity of all people, especially people living with HIV/AIDS. It looks at rereading the Bible in light of HIV and AIDS. Secondly, there are projects of reading the Bible with infected people, listening to their stories and, for example, letting them choose the biblical texts and interpret them in light of their own experiences. In Systematic Theology one area is particularly explored, namely that of ecclesiology. The insight that the body of Christ has HIV/AIDS is reflected in deep ways and with different perspectives and implications. The impact of this reflection in the area of ecclesiology on the Western world is beginning to bear its first fruit. Van Klinken analyses the impact and meaning of HIV/AIDS to western theology from the perspective of the discipline of Intercultural Theology. His aim is to reflect on what sense should the statement ‘the Body of Christ has AIDS’ be thought about in western theology. Gerald West says that it is still uncertain if HIV/AIDS will give rise to a new form of African biblical hermeneutics, but it has certainly changed the theological scenario in Africa.

These two last developments in the African Theology, namely an African theology of reconstruction with focus on Public Theology and theology in light of HIV/AIDS are very important phenomena and are important to Brazilian theological thinking. Nonetheless, they are not deeply analysed in this chapter because its focus is on the


955 A. S. van Klinken, ‘When the body of Christ has AIDS,’ esp. 447.


957 For a deeper understanding of the theological reflection about HIV/AIDS in Brazil as well in Latin America see V. Schmiedt Streck, Theology and HIV & AIDS in Latin America, São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2013.
There are various similarities between BT and AT with Negra theology in Brazil. First of all, they are talking about the same group of people. The black people who came to Brazil are Africans and thus, the African background, history, beliefs and languages are the same analysed by the African theologians. However, the differences are enormous as they came as slaves and their descendants were slaves that had never known about freedom. Thus it is very difficult to compare free African people, who in spite of having difficulties for building their communities in Africa, were free to make their own choices, to Africans that were regarded and treated as goods of someone else.

Unfortunately, as a consequence of slavery, they have had religious restrictions of liberty as well. They had to be christened and give up their original religion. The Afro-Brazilian religions emerged only during the second half of the 19th century. Thus, Candomblé, which is considered the most African religion in Brazil, is markedly a syncretism with Roman Catholic Christianity. Certainly their Christian beliefs and practices were not always result of an authentic and sincere conversion. Quite the contrary; they were imposed on them by the white Christians. In many cases they worked as masks for hiding from their owners what they actually believed and practised. However, they incorporated some Christian beliefs and practices into their religious experiences and it became complicated to separate what is genuinely African from what is Christian. This is a very important point, because African theology deals with African beliefs and practices trying to find resonances and points of contact, but theology Negra is already dealing with inculturated religious material. Moreover,

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958 Public Theology is discussed in Chapter 4, in this sense some aspects of relevance of South African Public Theology to Brazilian Public Theology are analysed there.
961 D. Irarrázaval, ‘Salvação indígena e afro-americana,’ 81.
962 It does not mean that there was no inculturation in Africa, but the process was much more slower in Brazil and therefore, it is very difficult to identify how much
Candomblé is an ‘impo verished’ African religion in the sense that in Africa the religion formed the identity of the individual, family, and society, but in Brazil these conceptions were formed by Christian and western concepts. Thus, Candomblé has a reduced field of significations, sharing some aspects of Afro-Brazilian’s identity with Roman Catholicism. For example, as put above, the role of Orixá in Candomblé is reduced to one aspect, the mediation from God to human beings, while in Africa it is much richer in meaning. In Afro-Brazilian Candomblé it worked as a parallel concept, not modelling the whole structure of social relations, but only some aspects.\(^\text{963}\)

In Brazil, there are no African languages, in contrast to indigenous languages,\(^\text{964}\) no African family systems or social structures. Moreover, there is not an African ethnicity in Brazil since very different African ethnicities were forcefully mixed. In conclusion, it is almost impossible to speak about inculturation in relation to African presence in Brazil, because there is no African heritage that is clearly identifiable. These considerations do not mean that African characteristics are not present in or are not relevant to Brazilian culture. What is clear, however, is that it is very difficult to discern what is African in the Brazilian culture. In this sense, it is better to speak of syncretism rather than inculturation.

Having said that, it is necessary to recognise the valuable role of Negra theology in calling attention to an issue that was ignored in the theological reflection in Brazil for centuries. If it is possible to discuss these issues about African heritage in Brazilian theology, it is because these theologians had the courage of bringing Afro-Brazilian religions to the fore. Before that, in many circles, they were not even considered as religions, but only superstitions or magic or simply demonic practices.\(^\text{965}\)

\(^{963}\) R. Prandi, ‘As religiões negras do Brasil,’ 67-68.

\(^{964}\) Until to the 18th century and in some places until to the first half of the 20th century, most of the Brazilians spoke the Nhengatu or the ‘general language’, which was the most common indigenous language, Tupi, with Portuguese grammar structure and with some words in Spanish and Portuguese. See J. R. Carvalho, ‘A construção da identidade de uma nação por meio da língua escrita e falada’ in: Revista Fórum Identidades 2/4 (2008), 83-90.

\(^{965}\) M. Barros, ‘À procura do encanto perdido,’ 437.
Jesus as an *Orixá* is a metaphor that is mostly being explored by *Negra* theology, but still,⁹⁶⁶ there must be other themes as well that are worthy of further analysis. Several themes and metaphors of Afro-Brazilian religiosity could enrich Christian thinking in the Brazilian context and are more than welcome. Nevertheless, the transplant of the African theologies to the Brazilian context is not so simple according to the different reasons presented in this section. This is especially due to the fact that, in Brazil, syncretism is a solid reality. For example, it is difficult to add the metaphor of *Orixá* to Jesus in Brazil, because in Candomblé for decades, probably centuries, Jesus was already identified with *Orixá* in Candomblé’s celebrations. In other words, in Brazil, Jesus is not *Orixá*, but rather, *Orixá*⁹⁶⁷ is Jesus. It was not Jesus who received a new meaning from African religions, but it was the *Orixá* that received the new meaning of Jesus of the Christian religion.⁹⁶⁸ Thus, the issue here is that it is necessary to use a specific set of concepts to deal with the Brazilian context and it turns out that syncretism is appropriate to provide it.

### 5.4. From syncretism to double belonging

Syncretism and double belonging are very important elements in Candomblé and for Brazilian religiosity and theology. Brazilian religiosity in general and Candomblé in particular were formed through an ongoing process of encounters with the wider culture and popular religiosity. Nevertheless, this process does not only determine Candomblé or Afro-Brazilian religions, for, it is a broad Brazilian phenomenon and deserves special attention. Besides syncretism, double belonging is another example of an encounter between Christianity and Candomblé, which is also applicable for other religious encounters in Brazil. Double belonging and syncretism are two models of encounter, though not incompatible. The main hypothesis of this section is that double belonging and syncretism reveal the Candomblé’s particular situation in the Brazilian society in general and especially its religious status.


⁹⁶⁷ As put earlier *Orixá* or *Oxalá* is the *Orixá* generally associated with Jesus.

⁹⁶⁸ Soares quotes a comment by a Catholic catechist in an ecumenical meeting: ‘This Jesus is very good. He said and did things that only an *Orixá* performs. We consider him welcome there in Candomblé’s temple. He is still a boy, but he will develop.’ See A. M. L. Soares, *Interfaces da revelação*, 233.
Syncretism was discussed in the first Chapter. Now it is possible to say something about syncretism in relation to Candomblé. There are different ways of a religion being syncretic. Ferretti identifies four types of syncretism: 1) separation; 2) interpenetration; 3) parallelism and 4) convergence. Following this typology, Ferretti says that Candomblé is a syncretism of the third category. Orixás and Catholic saints are juxtaposed. Some beliefs are put together but they are not a mixture. They are not opposites, but they are separated. There is correspondence or analogy, but not identification. This could explain an important phenomenon in the Brazilian context with respect to the encounter between Christianity and Candomblé, which is double belonging.

Double belonging and multiple belonging are special characteristics of Brazilian religiosity. In Brazil, many Afro-Brazilians participate in Afro-Brazilian religions and Christianity throughout their lives, even when they have total liberty to choose being a member of only Afro-Brazilian religions. A factor that helps to maintain this attitude of double belonging is that Candomblé was built to respond to some answers of identity and religiosity of black people, while other questions continued to be answered by the official Roman Catholic Church. Thus, for people that participate in both religions there is no contradiction, because they believe that these religions are complementary. As a rule, the Roman Catholic Church gives the sense of social cohesion, while other religious aspects such as the intimate relationship with God is given by the experience of the Orixás in Candomblé.

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971 The phenomenon is also present in other Latin American countries where there are African religions sharing space with Catholicism as is the case in Cuba and Haiti. See A. A. da Silva, ‘Caminhos e contextos da teologia afro-americana,’ 37.


Religious contexts are dynamic and the Brazilian context is no different. Recently there are some reactions to the movement of double belonging and syncretism between Catholicism and Candomblé, which question these traditional practices. Two interesting developments in this context emerged in the second half of the last century and deserve attention. Firstly, a considerable amount of black people that participated in the black movement of the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil (pastoral negra) moved to Candomblé. Secondly, there is a strong movement within Candomblé that combats syncretism. Several Candomblé leaders want a purer Candomblé: more African and less Catholic.

This conversion from Catholicism to Candomblé shows that it is possible to build a religious identity without Catholic conceptions, but they also point out that Catholicism is no longer answering the issues that it previously did. This movement can explain why there are nowadays other kinds of double belonging or multiple belonging than the usual Catholicism–Afro-Brazilian religion. Some members of Candomblé combine their beliefs in Orixás with beliefs of other religions or traditions, including Pentecostalism, which is the most radical movement against Afro-Brazilian religions.

The Africanisation of Candomblé also points to the fact that Catholicism is viewed as less necessary to the identity of members of Candomblé. Nevertheless, there are other reasons for this movement. First of all, Candomblé is no longer a religion of just black people. There are a lot of white Brazilians, intellectuals and upper class people that are participating in Candomblé. A second reason, which is also a consequence of the first, is that Candomblé had to adapt to the very competitive Brazilian religious market. In other words, to compete with the other religions in Brazil, Candomblé had to have clear distinct characteristics. Thirdly, Candomblé is absorbing more values of Brazilian modernity and the old syncretism is related to the rural environment. Ironically, they

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are becoming blacker, i.e. African, in order to be more suitable for whites, i.e. a broader spectrum of Brazilian people.\(^{979}\)

These new developments criticise the traditional role of Candomblé in Brazilian Culture. Candomblé was a reaction to a process of modernisation in Brazilian society and of the catholicisation of the Roman Catholic Church, who wanted to exterminate African and indigenous elements of Brazilian Catholicism. From its beginnings, Candomblé was considered anti-scientific, primitive and inferior. Thus, Candomblé was in the contra-flux of the Brazilian process of modernisation marching on at that time.\(^{980}\) Nonetheless, despite most of the people criticising Candomblé as a sign of inferiority and backwardness, a lot of people still believed in its power and quite often went secretly to Candomblé temples in search of help.\(^{981}\) Thus, Candomblé was a primitive religion incompatible with Brazilian modernisation, but at the same time, it was feared, respected and sought because of its magical and supernatural powers. Following this line, double belonging reflected this view of Candomblé as being simultaneously primitive yet powerful, anti-scientific yet real. Many Brazilians were traditionally catholic because they wanted to be modern and progressive, but at the same time they went to Candomblé because it was powerful and its magic really worked. Then, when members of Candomblé question double belonging, it means that they are questioning the incompatibility of Candomblé with modernity.\(^{982}\)

In spite of these many efforts, Candomblé is not experiencing an impressive growth.\(^{983}\) The group that has considerably grown in recent decades is Neo-Pentecostalism, which incorporated some elements of the Afro-Brazilian worldview and at the same time is a religion adapted to the Brazilian process of modernisation and thus

\(^{979}\) M. van de Port, 'Bahian white,' 245-250; R. Prandi, 'O Brasil com Axé,' 224-231. In order to find a space in the competitive Brazilian religious market of religions Candomblé must present its particular and unique characteristics, and these characteristics are mainly its blackness, its African-like style of music, liturgy, theology, dances, and so on. If Candomblé’s leaders are successful in their efforts to present Candomblé’s blackness they may attract more white people to their group.

\(^{980}\) M. van de Port, Ecstatic encounters, 73-96.

\(^{981}\) M. van de Port, Ecstatic encounters, 107-111.

\(^{982}\) M. van de Port, Ecstatic encounters, 147.

it seems to have overcome this dualism of being powerful, but primitive, that marks Candomblé.  

To summarise, I will answer the questions presented at the beginning of this section. Firstly, the type of syncretism that marked the encounter of Candomblé and Catholicism was that of parallelism, where the different religious concepts are juxtaposed. Thus, *Orixá* and Catholic saints are put together because of correspondences and analogy between them, but there is not a mixture or identification. It is precisely this kind of syncretism that explains, in part, double belonging. Due to the fact that different theological concepts coexist without mixture or identification, people of a religion may appreciate other religions without perceiving any incompatibility. Lastly, but not least, the black Catholics of the black movement of the Roman Catholic Church that moved to Candomblé as well as the reaction among some Candomblé leaders of combating syncretism and double belonging reveal that many Afro-Brazilians are questioning the necessity of being Catholic in Brazil. Thus, it is possible to assert that more recently there are many people that do not accept the inferior status of Candomblé within Brazilian culture and society anymore, which was of a primitive and inferior religion, but at the same time powerful and realistic. It is exactly in this tension between primitive and powerful, inferior and realistic that Neo-Pentecostalism found a place to operate and develop and therefore it deserves special attention, which is given in the next chapter. Before that, it is important to add a few paragraphs about Indigenous religions’ influence on Christology in Brazil.

5.5. Brazilian Indigenous Religions

The question of this section is why did Afro-Brazilian religions present important components for a Brazilian Protestant Christology whereas Indigenous religions do not. The answer is that the influence of Indigenous religions on Brazilian Christology is minimal. This is not the case for the whole of Latin America though. In other parts of the continent, new Christological metaphors were developed on the basis of indigenous

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984 Due to its importance, Neo-Pentecostalism deserves special attention and it is the theme of the next chapter.
religions. In Brazil, indigenous theology has contributed very positively to the themes of Ecology and Mariology. The contribution to Ecology emerges from the point of view holistic of indigenous religions, while the concept of the Virgin Mary is enriched with the idea of ‘Mãe Terra’, Mother Earth. Both are deeply linked and form a perspective of respect for nature, where nature is not abused, on the contrary it is served by human beings.

The relationship between the colonisers and indigenous people in Brazil is very complex. French and Dutch Protestants, in addition to Portuguese Roman Catholic priests, were all against the slavery of indigenous people. Hence, the fact that they were more sympathetic towards the indigenous people than to the situation of the Africans. Nevertheless, the indigenous people’s fate was destruction and slavery in many instances. In spite of having an evangeliser project for the indigenous people, which was completely absent in the case of Africans, their religion was also considered heathen

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986 In respect to that there are interesting associations between the images of Christ to his mother. ‘The humanity of the Saviour is consolidated trough the joint veneration along with his mother.’ D. Irarrázaval, ‘Latin America images of Christ’ in: Journal of Reformed Theology 1/1 (2007), 50-71, esp. 67-68.


988 Roberto Zwestch calls attention to ‘community’ as an important element which could enrich Christian theology. See R. Zwetsch, ‘Intercultural Theology and the challenge of the indigenous peoples in Latin America’ in: Missionalia 43/3 (2015), 526-544, esp. 538-541. As is the case with Negra theology about Candomblé, aspects related to community, fellowship, and love, are highlighted, since it is an evident feature in the many feasts and rituals of these religions.


990 See Chapter 3 above.

991 About the indigenous situation in Brazil see R. Zwetsch, ‘Intercultural theology,’ 526-538.
or demoniac. However, due to this closer contact with Brazilian civilisation, some aspects of indigenous religions were profoundly mixed with Brazilian religiosity and it is difficult to identify indigenous concepts. In various Afro-Brazilian religions, such as **Macumba** and **Caboclo Candomblé** and also in popular Catholicism, there is a noticeable presence of indigenous spirits, such as Tupan, Tupinamba and Caipora as well as **Caboclos**, such as Malemba and Bôrôcô.

Secondly, indigenous religion has an eschatological concept, namely, ‘terra sem males,’ land without evil. This eschatological dream of a land without evil influenced the millenarist Brazilian perspectives. The importance of indigenous religiosity in Brazilian culture is strong, but it is confused quite often with the Medieval Portuguese and Afro-Brazilian religiosities.

To summarise, it is possible to say that in spite of its importance for Brazilian religiosity, up to now indigenous religiosity does not have distinctive elements that could be identified in the Brazilian Protestant Christology(ies). Firstly, because in Brazil indigenous religiosity is confused with popular religiosity and its elements are already assimilated in popular religiosity or Afro-Brazilian religions. Secondly, the peculiar characteristics of indigenous religions are best perceived in other theological areas, such as Mariology and Ecology.

### 5.6. Assessment

This chapter sought to answer a great variety of questions about the Afro-Brazilian religiosity in Brazil. We will not recapitulate all the answers here but some points should be highlighted. Firstly, the African religiosity was profoundly ignored in Brazilian theology for a long time. Recently, the Negra Theology has looked at the potential of Afro-Brazilian theology for a construction of a Brazilian contextual theology in general and for Christology in particular. The contribution of this theology in Brazil is very important and it has still much to contribute and to develop. Nonetheless, this theology does not have a great impact on the great majority of Brazilian black Christians. On the contrary, many black people are moving from the black Christian movement to

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992 D. Irarrázaval, ‘Salvação indígena e afro-americana,’ 72; M. Barros, ‘À proucura do encanto perdido,’ 437.
995 This is a criticism to African theology in the African context as well.
Candomblé. One important reason for that is that while in Africa these new elements enrich Christian theology, in Brazil, Christian elements were already used to enrich African religiosity. In other words, in Brazil the inculturation exists in the opposite direction or in both directions if we consider the encounter between Candomblé and popular religiosity.

Secondly, the Negra theology has worked with Candomblé as if Candomblé was a pure and traditional religion. Actually, this is the idea of several leaders of Candomblé that are combating syncretism in Candomblé more recently. But in fact, Candomblé's relationship with modernity is much more complex. Yet Candomblé was respected, admired, and feared by so many people it was seen as synonymous with primitive, anti-modern, inferior. Syncretism and double belonging reflect this ambiguity regarding modernity. Thus, there is at the same time a fascination for and an aversion to Afro-Brazilian religiosity.

Thirdly, the concept of ancestry in Candomblé’s Orixás is limited because there is a big variety of African origins, different ethnic groups, and a very different societal organisation in Brazil. Jesus as Orixá may contribute to the valorisation of black identity and a deeper sense of community, but it has its limitations as well. Since the African concept of community, Ubuntu, is not the same as in Africa and especially in the Brazilian urban context, life is not organised around an extended family base.

Fourthly, the idea of salvation is not so present in Candomblé as in the Christian tradition. In Candomblé salvation is viewed as part of creation. Thus, the dimension of our relationship with God is deprived of one important aspect and the idea of reconciliation is almost absent. In the same way, the public aspect of theology, which is so important in the Brazilian context, is not emphasised, mainly because these aspects were normally entrusted to the Roman Catholic Church.

Having said that, it is important to highlight that there are some elements of Candomblé that could be identified and enhanced in a Brazilian contextual Protestant

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996 Yet it is possible to see this as a fruitful outcome, because it means that these Afro-Brazilians due to the contact with Negra theology are overcoming prejudices that they had against Candomblé.
Christology. Firstly, it is the sense of closeness to God which is expressed in Candomblé through the experience of trance with the Orixás. The more sensorial and more immanent spirituality of Candomblé has to be dealt with in Christological thinking. Secondly, and related to the first, is the relationship between the material and spiritual world. The search for harmony between these two spheres is very important to any contextual theology in Brazil. When there is harmony there is a good life, well-being, healing, and happiness. Religion is to bring blessings from God to human beings and the life goal is a prosperous and harmonic life. Thirdly, the eschatological element is not pre-eminent. Candomblé is a religion for the present time and its adherents are not used to postponing harmony and well-being to a distant future. The question of time and the eschatological elements of God’s kingdom have to be addressed for any Brazilian Christology that intends to be relevant to Afro-Brazilian people. The metaphors that point to these elements best are Jesus as healer, Jesus as King and Jesus as Creator. All these metaphors can be summarised in a core metaphor which is already present in the Christian tradition since a long time ago: Christus Victor. This concept of Christus Victor is particularly present in Neo-Pentecostal Christology.

It is not by chance, that the proportional majority of black people are members of Pentecostal churches to the detriment of the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse Neo-Pentecostalism, which develops a new syncretism with Candomblé. In the study of Neo-Pentecostalism, the theological elements of Candomblé are taken up to re-evaluate the contribution of Afro-Brazilian religiosity to that particular Brazilian Protestant Christology. Thus, the general question concerning what are the theological elements from Afro-Brazilian religiosity that should not be missed when identifying the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context will be discussed in the next chapter in light of the study about Neo-Pentecostalism. The proposition is that Neo-Pentecostalism already incorporates these African elements in such a way that it attracts millions of Brazilians, for that reason, the aim should be to critically explore these elements.
6. The Jesus of Neo-Pentecostalism: Jesus Christ as King

The main objective of this dissertation is to identify theological elements that are useful in the construction of a contextual Brazilian Protestant Christology that is theologically consistent. This dissertation does not propose an entirely new Christology for the Brazilian context. Instead, it seeks for a Christology based on the Christologies that already exist in Brazil. Thus, its goal is to contribute to the development of a model that enables the dialogue between theologians, churches and groups with different Christological viewpoints. Therefore, the strategy is to look at the concrete shifts in Christology that have taken place in the History of Brazilian theology. The thesis of this chapter is that the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG)\textsuperscript{997} the most important representative of Neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil, presents distinct Christological elements that are based on the main features of the Afro-Brazilian religions. These elements should therefore be taken into consideration in the building of this model. Thus, this chapter is a continuation of the previous one, which states that a contextual theology in Brazil has to look at the African elements in Brazil and also presents these African elements. Now, in the sixth chapter, it is demonstrated that these same Afro-Brazilian elements are appropriated and reinterpreted by the UCGK.

The main goal of this chapter is to analyse whether the relationship between the theological perspective of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and the theology or cosmology of Brazilian popular religiosity is a responsible syncretism.\textsuperscript{998} This chapter will look at this relationship with Brazilian popular religiosity in general and with Afro-Brazilian religions in particular. Evidently, the goal is not to present a comparison with the whole Neo-Pentecostal’s theological perspective but with those aspects that could help us to understand the shifts in Christology within Brazilian Protestantism. It does not focus exclusively on Christology but also on other theological elements or religious views that framed Neo-Pentecostal’s Christology.

\textsuperscript{997} In Portuguese it is Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (IURD). The abbreviation Iurd is being used even for English speaking scholars to refer to this church. In this dissertation, the English abbreviation is used because there are several other Brazilian churches mentioned and to have many abbreviations in Portuguese or in two different languages would make the text confusing.

\textsuperscript{998} For the concept of ‘Responsible Syncretism’ see Chapter 1 above.
The first section (6.1) describes the origins of Neo-Pentecostalism. It starts presenting the origins of Pentecostalism and the developments within the Pentecostal movement that became the origin of Neo-Pentecostalism and, in particular, of the UCKG. The aim is to understand the differences between Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism and the relationship between Brazilian Pentecostalism, in its three phases or waves, and North-American Pentecostalism.

The argument of the first section is that the UCKG maintains various elements of the Afro-Brazilian religions. However, this hypothesis seems problematic because Neo-Pentecostalism is historically related to North-American Pentecostalism. Consequently, the main objective is to answer the question of how Neo-Pentecostalism and its more significant representation, the UCKG, are related to the culture of Brazil in general and the Afro-Brazilian culture in particular.

The goal of the following section (6.2) is to demonstrate which elements from Afro-Brazilian religions have been incorporated into UCKG theology and liturgy. In the last chapter the main characteristics of Candomblé’s theology were shown, which was chosen because it was the purest expression of an African religious worldview and it will be used here again for comparison. To compare Candomblé with the UCKG allows some conclusions to be drawn about the relationship between this Christian church and an African cosmology and theology. The UCKG’s approach to this Afro-Brazilian worldview is very complicated, involving ruptures and assimilations, continuities and discontinuities. The question that this section tries to answer is in which way UCKG’s theology uses Candomblé’s cosmology and theology?

999 The expression ‘African cosmology and theology’ is being used in a broad sense. With African cosmology is meant the African worldview. Marguerite Kraft says, ‘worldview provides the time and space framework, the reasons behind why things happen as they do, the options for interpreting any given activity, and the framework for evaluating all that is observed and experienced in life.’ See M. G. Kraft, Understanding spiritual power: A forgotten dimension of cross-cultural mission and ministry, Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1995, 22. It is similar to what Rudolf Bultmann named as ‘world picture.’ See New Testament & mythology and another basic writings, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989, 1. Certainly, worldview is a broader concept than world picture. When I use both, I mean to say that the African world picture is decisive to understand the African worldview. Whereas, according to David Ford, theology ‘at its broadest is thinking about questions raised by, about and between the religions.’ In other words, it is a reflection about the religious worldview of a specific group. See D. F. Ford, Shaping theology: Engagements in a religious and secular world, Oxford: Blackwell, 2007, 1.
The subsequent section (6.3) is dedicated to the analysis of the UCKG from a theological perspective. After presenting that it is a syncretism, linked to the Pentecostal tradition and to the Afro-Brazilian religiosity, it is necessary to evaluate if it is a syncretism able to contribute to the Brazilian context. The criteria and standpoints chosen and discussed in the second chapter are used here and the question then, is if UCKG’s theology is a responsible syncretism.

The last section (6.4) explores the relationship between UCKG’s view of Christ and the view of the Christus victor and at the same time shows the link between this concept of Christus victor and the kingly office and its relevance to the Brazilian context. The main question in this section is: What is UCKG’s contribution to a Protestant Brazilian Christology?

6.1. From Pentecostalism to Neo-Pentecostalism

The goal of this section is to put Neo-Pentecostalism in general and then specifically the UCKG into context. In order to understand Neo-Pentecostalism, it is necessary to comprehend what Pentecostalism is and what is new in Neo-Pentecostalism. The main questions of this section are: what are the origins of world Pentecostalism? When did Pentecostalism come to Brazil and under which circumstances? What are the differences between the three waves\textsuperscript{1000} of Pentecostalism in Brazil? And related to this question: why should Pentecostalism be classified in three waves? What are the core elements that differentiate Neo-Pentecostalism from the original Pentecostal movement? Behind these more general questions are some other issues that are fundamental for the line of argument of this chapter. Many scholars may object to the idea that Neo-Pentecostalism and the UCKG, in particular, could be used as a source for a Brazilian contextual Protestant Christology that takes into consideration the African element in Brazilian religiosity because Neo-Pentecostalism is taken to be a North-American phenomenon and therefore a white and Western religious expression. This section then seeks to demonstrate the relationship between African religiosity and Pentecostalism in North America. However, despite there being a relation between Afro-American culture and Pentecostalism, the next objection would be that Africans in North American and African

\textsuperscript{1000} For the arguments and criticisms about the division of Pentecostalism in three waves see below.
in Brazil are not the same, given that the culture of the Africans in North America did not
develop in the same way as that of the ones in Brazil. Thus, the next question is: What is
the relationship between the Afro-Brazilian context and Brazilian Neo-Pentecostalism?
The main issue of this section is to demonstrate a relationship between African
religiosity and the UCKG, firstly demonstrating a relationship between African’s features
in the North-American Pentecostalism that was brought to Brazil and secondly,
demonstrating that the UCKG is not a simple copy of North-American Neo-
Pentecostalism. On the contrary, it utilises many elements of African Brazilian culture
and religiosity.

Pentecostalism in Brazil is not a monolithic block. There are different
movements with an enormous variety of emphases and perspectives. The first question
therefore is how to put these several Pentecostal movements in perspective? The goal is
to understand the context and influences on each movement and specially, on Neo-
Pentecostalism. One of the main goals of this chapter is to analyse a particular Neo-
Pentecostal church, the UCKG. Therefore, it is necessary to discern the context and the
developments that had an influence on the establishment of this church.

As it has already been said, there are many movements and many Pentecostal
churches, thus to be able to work with them it is necessary to group them. A very useful
way to describe the developments within Brazilian Pentecostalism is to divide it into
three different phases or waves.\textsuperscript{1001} These three phases are identified in North American
Pentecostalism as well as in Brazilian Pentecostalism. This description is by C. Peter
Wagner and despite being far from unanimously accepted, it is useful for the
classification of Brazilian Pentecostals.\textsuperscript{1002} Each phase in Wagner’s classificatory model

\textsuperscript{1001} P. Freston, ‘Pentecostalism in Brazil: A brief history’ in: \textit{Religion} 25 (1995), 119-
133, esp. 120. The term wave is problematic in the sense it seems to portray the first
two phases as ‘living fossils.’ Phase is a better term, even though wave is still sometimes
used in this dissertation because it is the most known and used term in Brazil. See J.
Bialecki, 'The third wave and the third world: C. Peter Wagner, John Wimber, and the
pedagogy of global renewal in the late twentieth century' in: \textit{Pneuma} 37/2 (2015), 177-
200, esp. 179.

\textsuperscript{1002} Peter Wagner himself now speaks of a fourth wave, which would be ‘the New
Apostolic Reformation.’ See C. Peter Wagner, \textit{Churchquake: How the new apostolic
reformation is shaking up the Church as we know it}, Ventura: Regal Books, 1999, cited in:
A. Anderson, ‘Varieties, taxonomies, and definitions’ in: A. Anderson, M. Bergunder, A.
of Pentecostalism in the United States of America corresponds, to a certain extent, to a phase in Brazil\textsuperscript{1003} and this fact facilitates the identification of theological resemblances\textsuperscript{1004} and, at the same time, points out historical relationships.

Nevertheless, other classifications are more useful for analyses of other contexts or even for a more global analysis. For example, Hollenweger presents also a threefold classification of the movement, but different from Wagner's one. His classification identifies three types of Pentecostalism 1) Classical Pentecostal Churches; 2) the Charismatic Movement in traditional churches and 3) Non-white Indigenous Churches.\textsuperscript{1005} This classification helps to put the non-white Indigenous Churches into perspective. Some of these non-white churches developed with little or no influence from Western Pentecostalism. In fact, some of them descend from charismatic groups or movements that originated before the Azusa Street revival, as was the case in India, where since 1860 there were reports of glossolalia and other manifestations of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{1006} Another important example are the African Instituted Churches (AICs) that play a great part of a particular and autochthonous movement.\textsuperscript{1007} The issue with Hollenweger's classification is that he puts the third wave, Neo-Pentecostalism, as a newer form of the second wave.\textsuperscript{1008} And this point in his classification does not help us to understand Neo-Pentecostalism, which is to a certain extent similar to the second wave but in some aspects profoundly different from it.\textsuperscript{1009}

\textsuperscript{1003} Each phase in Brazil is compared with the respective phase in the United States throughout the chapter.

\textsuperscript{1004} The use of term ‘resemblance’ is deliberate and refers to Wittgenstein’s concept of ‘family resemblance,’ which is applied to define Pentecostalism by A. Anderson, ‘Varieties, taxonomies, and definitions,’ 15.


\textsuperscript{1008} B. J. G. Reitsma, ‘Health, wealth and prosperity,’ 165, footnote 5.

\textsuperscript{1009} These aspects are explored below.
Allan Anderson classified Pentecostalism in four types. Besides the three types presented by Wagner, Anderson includes the non-white indigenous churches which Hollenweger had already pointed to as a fourth type.\footnote{A. Anderson, ‘Varieties, taxonomies, and definitions,’ 16-20.} If the goal was to describe Pentecostalism in general, Anderson’s fourfold classification is the most inclusive and complete one, but the goal of this dissertation is to understand Brazilian Pentecostalism, where until now there are no non-white indigenous churches and thus C. Peter Wagner’s threefold characterisation fits well.

This does not mean that non-white indigenous churches, especially AICs, are not being considered Pentecostal in this dissertation. Indeed, until now there are many classical Pentecostals and others scholars that do not recognise AICs as a legitimate Pentecostal movement.\footnote{Anderson and Kwabena discuss this criticism. See A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 103-106; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Pentecostalism in Africa’ in: D. B. Stinton, African theology on the way: Current conversations, London: SPCK, 2010, 56-67, esp. 59-60.} The main reason for these critics to distance AICs from Pentecostalism is that, according to them, AICs are syncretistic and they incorporate elements of indigenous African religions in their repertoire.\footnote{A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 105-106; A. Anderson, ‘Varieties, taxonomies, and definitions,’ 18-19. Precisely, due to these criticisms AICs are very important to understand Brazilian Neo-Pentecostalism, which is also criticised for being too syncretistic and rejected as a legitimate development in Pentecostalism. There are important similarities in theology and practice between AICs and the UCKG and they help to understand the importance of African elements in the UCKG, therefore they are explored below.} However, there are many similarities between these non-white indigenous churches and the Pentecostal movement in general; therefore they should be labelled as Pentecostals.\footnote{Harvey Cox says that they are ‘“phenomelogically” pentecostal,’ since they present many elements of Pentecostal spirituality, such as healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues, which are interpreted as gifts of the Spirit. Moreover, they were also influenced by Pentecostal preachers and theologians over the course of many years. H. Cox, Fire from heaven, Boston: Da capo, 2009, 246. See also A. Anderson, ‘Varieties, taxonomies, and definitions,’ 18-19; A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 105.} On the other hand, these indigenous churches differ from Pentecostalism in various aspects such as their historical origin, relationship with indigenous African cosmology and practices. Furthermore, their theological emphasis and accents can also be seen as distinguishable.
In light of this, they should be put into a different category.\textsuperscript{1014} Thus, Anderson’s fourfold classification is very useful to understand the phenomenon globally. Nonetheless, the goal of this chapter is to speak about Pentecostalism in Brazil and, in the Brazilian context, not a single non-white indigenous Christian church has emerged at all.\textsuperscript{1015} The first two waves especially, were partially outcomes of the North-American missionary enterprise and for this reason the threefold classification largely accepted for Brazilian scholars is more useful.

The argument of this section is that the UCKG is a development in the Pentecostal movement, which derives from the United States of America, but at the same time it incorporates and absorbs elements of Brazilian popular religiosity as well as of Afro-Brazilian religions. Furthermore, some features of a relationship between African elements and Pentecostal practices are already intrinsically present in Pentecostalism since its origins. The first question that this section seeks to answer, then, is what are the origins and characteristics of the first wave of Pentecostalism? The first wave in Brazil begins with the emergence of Pentecostalism itself. The big event that marks the movement’s starting point globally is the Azusa Street revival in 1906. Indeed, throughout the history of Christianity it is possible to find all the manifestations that are presently related to Pentecostalism. Speaking in tongues, experiences of ecstasy, or emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit are not completely new phenomena in Christianity. Even the doctrine of Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second blessing, or a second happening, in the believer’s life and the evidence of this baptism being speaking in tongues was not an original idea of Azusa Street’s leader Seymour or of his followers. For this reason, there are some authors that don’t agree that Azusa Street is the

\textsuperscript{1014} Anderson cited some of these dissimilarities, ‘like the use of healing symbolism including blessed water, many other symbolic ritual objects representing power and protection, forms of governments and hierarchical patterns of leadership (sometimes including hereditary leadership, not a stranger to western Pentecostalism!), the use of some African cultural practices and the wearing of distinctive robes or uniforms. They also differ fundamentally in their approach to African religions and culture, in liturgy, healing practices and in their unique contribution to Christianity in a broader African context.’ A. Anderson, \textit{An introduction to Pentecostalism}, 105-106.

\textsuperscript{1015} Even though there is no indigenous Pentecostalism in Brazil, the UCKG in particular presents many characteristics of Brazilian popular religion as well as Afro-Brazilian religions. Thus, it is possible to say that Neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil presents features from AICs in African and third wave churches and, therefore, the third wave in Brazil is a mix of Anderson’s third and fourth category. This relationship is more deeply explored below.
movement’s place of birth. Some authors would say that Pentecostalism emerged from the Pentecost day as it was registered in the book of Acts in the New Testament and that during history there were always movements that kept that flame burning. Nevertheless, most authors will say that there are some distinctive characteristics in the modern Pentecostal movement. Some of them point to the doctrine of speaking in tongues as the main evidence of being baptised by the Holy Spirit as the distinctive characteristic. In this way, they point to Charles Fox Parham, who taught this doctrine. Some people believe that his teaching of this doctrine would have initiated the movement.1016

Evidently, there is a piece of idealism in considering Pentecost itself as the origin of Pentecostalism. That is not to say that Pentecostals are not inspired by the Coming of the Holy Spirit and the outstanding signs of that event, but there is a difference between the inspirational or theological background of the movement and its socio-historical context. In the same way, there are historical evidences throughout the whole history of Christianity of ecstatic experiences like speaking in tongues, visions and prophecies as well as exorcisms and supernatural healings, which were attributed to the Holy Spirit’s gifts.1017 Nevertheless, Pentecostalism is not just associated with these kinds of experiences or phenomena. It is possible to say that some Pentecostal characteristics always existed in the Christian Church. Sometimes, in some places, they were marginal and at other times and places they were more central. The non-white indigenous Churches, for instance, are exceptionally Pentecostals without a direct North-American influence. Nevertheless, the classical Pentecostal movement was identified with happenings in the United States and especially Brazil, which was deeply influenced by North-American Pentecostalism. These non-white indigenous churches show that Pentecostal experiences were present in different parts of the world at that time, but at the same time some specific characteristics that are very important in the beginning of

1017 For a good account of these stories see A. Anderson, Introduction to Pentecostalism, 19-33.
the movement such as the doctrine of Baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as evidence of it are not present in these non-white indigenous churches.\textsuperscript{1018}

The point in this dissertation is not to identify the global origins of the Pentecostal movement as such, instead it is to demonstrate that Brazilian Pentecostalism has characteristics that are embedded in a specific context of the recent history of the movement in the United States and, therefore, the discussions about this origin can help to understand elements of the Brazilian Pentecostalism.\textsuperscript{1019} It is an important decision to choose to identify the origins of the movement either in the Azusa Street revival or in Charles Fox Parham’s doctrine of speaking tongues as the main evidence of baptism of the Spirit. This is because this decision will influence the definition of Pentecostalism. If it has its origins in the Azusa Street revival the connection between Pentecostalism and Afro-American culture is more evident. On the other hand, if its origins are seen in Parham’s teaching of speaking in tongues a doctrinal point passes to be central and the Afro-American element is viewed only as marginal.

William Joseph Seymour was an Afro-American son of former slaves,\textsuperscript{1020} while Charles Fox Parham was not only white, but also a racist sympathiser of the Ku Klux Klan. Seymour listened to Parham’s Bible Classes about the Holy Spirit from outside the classroom through a half-open door, because he was not allowed to share the same space of Parham’s white students.\textsuperscript{1021} Moreover, as Hollenweger says, choosing between Seymour and Parham as the main person behind the origins of Pentecostalism is not a historical decision but a theological one. To choose Parham means to consider a doctrine about the gifts of the Spirit the essence or heart of Pentecostalism, while to opt for Seymour means to regard the structure of the Pentecostal communities as the heart of

\textsuperscript{1018} See A. Anderson, \textit{An introduction to Pentecostalism}, 35-38.


\textsuperscript{1020} W. J. Hollenweger, \textit{Pentecostalism}, 19.

\textsuperscript{1021} W. J. Hollenweger, \textit{Pentecostalism}, 19-20; A. Anderson, \textit{An introduction to Pentecostalism}, 39. Harvey Cox says that he listened through an open window, which certainly makes no difference to the argument. See H. Cox, \textit{Fire from heaven}, 49-50.
the movement. It is a theological decision to understand the movement as changing in doctrine or in the structure or spirituality of the Church.

There are two strong arguments to plead for Seymour. Firstly, while speaking in tongues is a very important gift for Pentecostals and Parham’s teaching of speaking in tongues as the main evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit supported this special role, there are many Pentecostals, including Pentecostal leaders, who do not speak in tongues and are nonetheless recognised as Pentecostal Christians and as baptised by the Holy Spirit. In other words, this teaching is important but it cannot be considered decisive. Secondly, most Pentecostal churches recognise the Azusa Street revival as the starting point of the movement. This is an important indicator because it shows that Pentecostals themselves perceive similarities in their values and characteristics and in those of Seymour’s pioneer community.

Hollenweger describes these characteristics that mark the Azusa Street revival that influenced the whole Pentecostal movement after that as:

- ‘Orality of liturgy;
- narrativity of theology and witness,
- maximum participation at the levels of reflection, prayer and decision-making and therefore a form of community that is reconciliatory;


1025 Anderson says that ‘...at least twenty-six different denominations trace their Pentecostal origins to Azusa Street, including the two largest: the Church of God in Christ and the Assemblies of God.’ A. Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism*, 42.

1026 Alexander refers to this characteristic with the Latin word *communitas*. With this word he emphasises the aspect of a participative congregation and therefore a reconciliatory one. K. E. Alexander, ‘Presidential address 2011,’ 336. Anderson speaks of the ‘maximum participation of the whole community in worship and service.’ A. Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism*, 43. Actually, in my view, a participative community on these various levels cited by Hollenweger is characteristic of Pentecostal churches, but it is doubtful if these communities are indeed always reconciliatory.
• inclusion of dreams and visions in personal and public forms of worship; these function as a kind of icon for the individual and the community;

• an understanding of the body/mind relationship that is informed by experiences of correspondence between body and mind, the most striking applications of this insight being the ministry of healing by prayer and liturgical dance.’

This description of the characteristics helps to understand the nature of the movement, but what is more important for the purpose of this chapter is that Hollenweger links them to the black roots of Seymour. Actually, race issues were present in different ways in the history of Azusa Street and Seymour’s ministry. Parham, when he preached at Azusa Street - invited by Seymour himself - said to the people during the sermon that they were ‘engaging in “animism”’ and after the worship he confessed he was very upset in meeting blacks and whites together around the altar. Parham clearly identified the African elements in the Azusa Street revival and precisely due to the presence of these elements he became upset. Undeniably, the Azusa Street community was a community of black and white people and led by an Afro-American pastor, which was a unique fact in the United States at that time because there were no mixed churches elsewhere. Moreover, there was a strong black impulse in the liturgy and structure of the community. Therefore, to accept Seymour and the practices of his community as the essence of Pentecostalism involves, in some measure, the recognition of a genuine relationship between Pentecostalism and African religiosity.

Pentecostalism from its origins has an Afro-American impulse. To try putting the origins in Parham is a way of denying this fact. Moreover, it is very common in the History of Protestantism to identify a theological or doctrinal reason for the beginning of a new movement. Without disregarding the importance of the doctrine of Baptism in

1027 W. J. Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 18-19.
1028 W. J. Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 18.
1029 H. Cox, Fire from heaven, 61.
1030 H. Cox, Fire from heaven, 61.
1031 A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 39-40
1032 A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 40.
1033 In the case of Pentecostalism rejecting Azusa Street revival as the origin of the movement was also a rejection of the leadership of a black man, because for many white Pentecostals, especially at that time, it was difficult to accept being part of a movement initiated by an Afro descendent. See A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 41.
the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as being evidence of it, it is clear that Pentecostalism is much more than a change in doctrine.\textsuperscript{1034} It was many times precisely the ‘disorder’ and ‘animism’ that were so disgusting for Parham that marked many Pentecostal churches in the history. Pentecostalism presented a new way of being a church and this new way was clearly influenced by Afro-American culture.\textsuperscript{1035}

This association between Pentecostalism and Afro-American religious culture is very significant for the argument of this section. The main point of this chapter is that to claim that Neo-Pentecostalism in the United States and the UCKG in particular present a theology and spirituality strongly influenced by African religion and culture. This hypothesis could be objected to by saying that Pentecostalism is a North American and therefore a Western white movement.\textsuperscript{1036} The answer to this is that despite Pentecostalism, especially the one that came to Brazil, was brought to Brazil by white missionaries, in its very roots it was influenced by African elements in its liturgy, spirituality and theology.\textsuperscript{1037}

\textsuperscript{1034} See M. McClymond, ‘“I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh”: An historical and theological meditation on Pentecostal origin’ in: \textit{Pneuma} 37/3 (2015), 356-374. McClymond rightly calls attention to the fact that an identification and definition of the origins of the movement has to do with the present-day purpose or agenda. On the other hand, I disagree with him when he proposes that instead of speaking of Pentecostalism’s ‘black origins’ it should be spoken of ‘inclusive origins.’ For me it is doubtful that the feature that is the base of all paleo-Pentecostal movements, i.e. all movements that are seen as possible origins for Pentecostalism, is the sense of inclusiveness. Even if it is possible to identify elements of inclusiveness in these movements, there could be elements of exclusiveness identified as well. It is hard to accept that a movement marked by so many splits and tensions could be defined as based on inclusiveness.


\textsuperscript{1037} Theology here is specially meant as an understanding between body and mind which is typical of African theology.
However, there is another important objection for the association between the UCKG and Afro-Brazilian religiosity, namely, that African culture in the United States is very different from Afro-Brazilian culture. For example, in the United States, there was no Afro-American religion such as Candomblé or Umbanda. This objection is discussed below, but the first part can be answered stating that Pentecostalism, from its origins, is already a step further in the direction of a closer relationship between the Christian faith and African religiosity or, at least, African cultural elements such as those pointed out by Hollenweger, 'oral liturgy, a narrative theology and witness, the maximum participation of the whole community in worship and service, the inclusion of visions and dreams into public worship, and an understanding of the relationship between body and mind manifested by healing through prayer.'

Now it is time to look closer at the origins of Pentecostalism in Brazil. The first Pentecostal preacher went to Brazil in 1910, only four years after the Azusa Street revival. The first wave in Brazil began with two different missionary enterprises. The first one was initiated by Luigi Francescon (1866-1964), initially only among Italian migrants, but after the first conversions in Paraná he turned his mission to São Paulo and the Christian Congregation (CC) finally flourished there. Francescon was Italian but he had immigrated to Chicago before coming to Brazil. His work started with Italian migrants but after a short period, the CC reached people from other origins as well. The second missionary enterprise was also by Europeans who immigrated to Chicago. Gunnar Vingren (1879-1933) and Daniel Berg (1884-1963) were Swedish Pentecostals who received, through a special revelation, a missionary call to Para in the northern region of Brazil. They initially participated in a Baptist Church in Belem, the

1038 Cited in A. Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 43. For Hollenweger’s own list see above.
1040 Luigi Francescon made long visits to Brazil yet he never lived in Brazil. See P. Freston, ‘Pentecostalism in Brazil,’ 124.
1041 P. Freston, ‘Pentecostalism in Brazil,’ 124-125.
capital of Para State, but soon they had troubles with the church’s leadership because of their Pentecostal practices.\textsuperscript{1043} Then in 1911 they created the Assembly of God (AG).\textsuperscript{1044}

Even today, the AG is the biggest Evangelical\textsuperscript{1045} denomination in Brazil. They emerged from one of the lesser-populated states in the country and up to the present day they show themselves as better adapted for the non-urban context. They are spread across the whole country, but they have more difficulties working in urban areas. AG presents, from its beginnings, a strong sense of separation from worldly affairs and clear characteristics of a contra-cultural movement. In recent years, they are more involved in politics and they are timidly beginning to use the media to propagate their message.\textsuperscript{1046}

The CC is the biggest evangelical denomination in São Paulo (the highest populated state in Brazil),\textsuperscript{1047} and it is also present in various other regions. They maintain an even sharper separation from worldly affairs than the AG.\textsuperscript{1048} Until now they were against any participation in politics and did not use the media in any way as a means of propagating faith. In fact, due to its radical view of the doctrine of predestination it does not maintain any project of evangelisation or mission. It believes that God has predetermined those who will come to church and that any effort to bring people to church reveals a lack of faith in God’s power.\textsuperscript{1049}

The AG and the CC created and developed Pentecostal doctrines and styles in Brazil. For this reason, they are called classical Pentecostals.\textsuperscript{1050} They brought new concepts to ecclesiology and pneumatology, e.g. spiritual gifts, baptism of the Holy Spirit
as a second blessing, open and more informal liturgy, the orality and participation of lay people. Nevertheless, they did not contribute with any distinctive insight on Christology. They maintain the same vision presented by the Protestant missionaries of the second half of the 19th Century, which could be labelled in this way: Christ as priest. Christ was presented basically through his sacrifice on the cross and the outcomes of this sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and justification. Certainly, there is a noticeable emphasis on healing and exorcism in the preaching of these churches and in this regard they differ from the more rationalist perspective of the Presbyterian missionaries of the second half of the 19th century. The Pentecostal Christ heals, casts out demons and operates miracles, but there is no doctrinal or theological change. The theological changes are found in ecclesiology and pneumatology with the doctrines of Spirit Baptism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Both churches were founded by Western white missionaries, who were European by birth. These missionaries did not come directly from the Azusa Street revival, but from Chicago, where the great leader of the Pentecostal movement at that time was William Durham. Nonetheless, Durham had ‘received his Spirit baptism at Azusa Street in March 1907 and returned to Chicago transformed.’ Later on, in 1911, he broke with Seymour due to differences in regard to the doctrine of sanctification. While Seymour defended that sanctification was a second blessing, Durham defended that sanctification was ‘received at the conversion by identification with Christ in an act of faith.’ Nevertheless, Francescon, Berg and Vingren came to Brazil in 1910, before the conflict. The point is that up until this time, Durham and Seymour had a close relationship. The conflict between them occurred justly after some sermons that Durham preached at Azusa Street during a missionary trip of Seymour in 1911, which shows that Seymour trusted in Durham up to that point. The most important

1051 W. J. Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 218-227; 258-268.
1052 A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 45.
1053 A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 46
1054 The Assemblies of God were founded in 1911, but the Swedish missionaries arrived in Brazil on November 19th, 1910. I. de Araújo, Dicionário do movimento Pentecostal, 34. See also R. von Sinner, ‘Pentecostalism and citizenship in Brazil,’ 103.
1055 Yet Durham had already declared, in 1910, that Seymour’s doctrine of a ‘three stage’ process (conversion, sanctification and Spirit baptism) was unscriptural, presenting his position of a ‘two stage’ process (conversion/sanctification and Spirit baptism). A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 45-46.
Pentecostal influential person in several European immigrant Pentecostal congregations in Chicago, including the Italian of Francescon and the Scandinavian of Berg and Vingren, was white-Western Durham. However, it was a Durham who was deeply touched and inspired by the Afro-American Seymour ministry. Thus, despite being formed by white western missionaries, Brazilian Pentecostalism’s link with Azusa Street and with its Afro-American elements is undeniable.\textsuperscript{1056}

The second wave started in the 1950’s with missionary work of the Church of the Four-Square Gospel (FSG) from the United States of America. The other important churches from this period were founded by Brazilian preachers: Brazil for Christ (BC) by Manoel de Mello (1929-1990) (a deacon from the AG and then a minister in the FSG before founding his own church) and God is Love (GL) by David Miranda (1936-2015).\textsuperscript{1057}

The FSG was founded in the United States by a woman, Aimee Semple McPherson, and for this reason it was the first Pentecostal church in Brazil that ordained women as ministers.\textsuperscript{1058} It was also the first Pentecostal church to use Radio and TV as means for propagating its message. Theologically it did not show important transformations, but certainly it was more adapted to an urban context. Besides using Radio and TV it was more tolerant than the first wave churches, the AG and the CC, and it relaxed its members of some behavioural taboos that were commonplace in other Pentecostal churches.\textsuperscript{1059} BC is the first Pentecostal Church which engaged in ecumenical institutions becoming a full member of the World Council of Churches (WCC). It was also the first to encourage its congregations to vote in church members to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1056} It may explain why AD appealed to Amerindian, black and mixed race Brazilians. See A. H. Anderson, \textit{To the ends}, 177-180.
\item \textsuperscript{1057} R. Mariano, ‘Expansão pentecostal no Brasil,’ 123.
\item \textsuperscript{1058} R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal}, 31-32.
\item \textsuperscript{1059} P. Freston, ‘Pentecostalism in Brazil,’ 126; R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal}, 32.
\end{itemize}

Examples of these behaviour taboos are prohibiting church members from watching TV, going to either the movies or the theatre, women of having hair cut, wearing trousers, wearing jewellery, and men from having long hair or beards, wearing shorts. In this regard, the FSG is the first Pentecostal church to be tolerant to these rules. See R. Mariano, \textit{Neo-Pentecostais: sociologia do novo pentecostalismo brasileiro}, São Paulo: Loyola, 2012, 51-53.
political posts and, in fact, it elected some candidates from the church.\textsuperscript{1060} GL is more contemporary than the other two churches in the second wave, but it preserves some characteristics of the classical Pentecostals. It states a complete separation between church and society, for example by prohibiting children older than 7 from playing games with a ball. They use radio as a means of propagation of faith, but they do not use TV and indeed they do not allow its members to watch TV at all.\textsuperscript{1061} BC and GL are also churches directed and governed by very strong personalities and are deeply connected with their leaders.\textsuperscript{1062} These characteristics will be present in the third wave as well.

These three churches have grown considerably and they are well established in the country. They emphasised healing and exorcism more than the other two classical Pentecostal churches, and they were more concerned with the issues of people that were migrating to the cities, who had difficulties settling into their new environment. However, they still maintained an emphasis on the role of Jesus Christ as priest.\textsuperscript{1063}

In fact, the FSG in the United States is considered a first wave church.\textsuperscript{1064} The remarkable emphasis of the FSG in the ‘fourfold gospel’: Jesus Saves, Jesus Heals, Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit and Jesus will come a second time was also the


\textsuperscript{1061} After Manuel de Mello’s death in 1990 his son Paulo Lutero de Mello became the minister of BC’s biggest church in São Paulo. See I. de Araujo, \textit{Dicionário do movimento pentecostal}, 805-806.


\textsuperscript{1063} A. Anderson, ‘Varieties, taxonomies, and definitions,’ 17. Aimee Semple McPherson founder of the FSG had been influenced and even healed by Durham in Chicago. A. Anderson, \textit{An introduction to Pentecostalism}, 46.
characteristic of the whole spectrum of classical Pentecostals.¹⁰⁶⁵ In Brazil this church is considered a second wave one because of its differences in relation to the Classical Pentecostals that had already been established in Brazil, namely it was more tolerant to some behavioural taboos, the use of media, and the use of more aggressive campaigns of evangelisation, emphasising healing encounters and preaching on Radio and TV, therefore, it was more adapted to Urban centres. Nonetheless, the basic difference is that this church came to Brazil in the 1950s when the urbanisation process was quickly advancing and they were trying to adapt to this new situation. To distinguish the FSG from the first classical Pentecostal churches in Brazil, labelling it a second wave church is a way of recognising these differences in method, emphasis and practice. The point here is that despite many differences in practice, the theology of the first two waves of Pentecostalism in Brazil is very similar especially in reference to Christology. In the same way, the Christology of the other two main churches in the second wave, BC (founded by a former deacon from the AG and minister from the FSG) and GL, do not differ either. Brazil for Christ and God is Love present some characteristics that show that they are part of a transition period. For example, BC’s participation in WCC was probably a strategy of its leader to develop his missionary projects on a global level¹⁰⁶⁶ and is certainly in contrast to the mentality of the counterculture in churches of the first wave. On the other hand, the GL’s rigid rules about social behaviour, in many cases more rigid than the first wave ones, point to the efforts of this church of re-establishing rural, traditional patterns of behaviour in an urban context. In other words, the three main churches of the second wave try to adapt this theology to the new Brazilian context of urbanisation but at the same time they follow the Classical Pentecostal theology.

The second wave, properly described by Wagner and Hollenweger, refers to the Charismatic movement in the traditional churches in the 1960s in the United States of America. This type of movement was not significant for the Protestant churches in Brazil. There were schisms in the traditional Presbyterian churches in Brazil and in other traditional Protestant churches, but none of them were remarkable in numbers or influence. Therefore, these churches are not considered second wave Pentecostal

¹⁰⁶⁵ A. Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism*, 60. Some classical Pentecostal groups speak about a fivefold gospel because they include sanctification as a distinct element.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Paul Freston says BC’s affiliation to WCC ‘was mainly for external consumption and had little impact on the church.’ P. Freston, *Evangelical and Politics*, 15.
churches in Brazil. The impact was more accentuated in the Roman Catholic Church and deserves scholars’ special attention.\textsuperscript{1067} Nevertheless, the goal of this chapter is to analyse the theological similarities between the UCKG and Candomblé. The Charismatic Renewal movement has no impact on Neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil and is therefore not discussed in this dissertation. Even though there are some phenomena in common, the second wave in Brazil differs from the second wave in the United States. Presbyterian Pentecostalism, Lutheran Pentecostalism, and Methodist Pentecostalism did not make as great an impact on Pentecostalism in Brazil as they did in the United States. What is described in Brazil as second wave is more a development in the first wave Pentecostalism, which seeks to adapt to the new context of urbanisation in Brazil. There is a more accentuated change in the Christology, only in the third wave, which is now explored.

The third wave, also named Neo-Pentecostalism,\textsuperscript{1068} started at the end of the 1970’s, precisely in 1977, with the beginning of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG). It was founded by Edir Macedo, his brother-in-law R. R. Soares and Roberto Augusto Lopes. After some conflicts and disputes in 1987, Roberto Lopes left the church and returned to his previous church, New Life. Even earlier, still at the beginning, in 1980, Romildo R. Soares had separated from Edir Macedo and founded his own church (also a very important church of the third wave) called the Church of the Grace of God.


\textsuperscript{1068} R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal}, 37-38.
(CGG). Despite being a big and established church, the CGG does not have the same influence and impact that the UCKG has.\textsuperscript{1069}

Edir Macedo encountered a variety of experiences before founding his own church. He was baptised in the Roman Catholic Church, participated in Umbanda, and then moved to a church named New Life, founded by a Canadian called Walter Robert McAlister (1931-1993),\textsuperscript{1070} who was an ex-AG missionary.\textsuperscript{1071} New Life was never a big church and its leader was not very famous in the Brazilian context.\textsuperscript{1072} However, he did teach Macedo about exorcism and the importance of combating the ‘evil spirits’ of Afro-Brazilian religions.

The UCGK is a growing phenomenon and is demanding the attention not only of scholars, politicians and the public in Brazil, but also from many parts of the world. They are present in almost 100 countries spread across every continent\textsuperscript{1073} according to its official website.\textsuperscript{1074} They are owners of the second most important TV channel in Brazil as well as a lot of radio stations. They have elected church members in different political posts and in different states, including a member of the Senate, who was a Minister in

\begin{itemize}
\item R. Mariano, ‘Expansão pentecostal no Brasil,’ 135; R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal}, 60-62.
\item Almeida spells it differently: Robert Maclinster. See R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal}, 36.
\item For a short biography about W. R. McAlister see I. Araújo, \textit{Dicionário do movimento pentecostal}, 448-450. For a more critical analysis about McAlister and New Life Church see R. Mariano, \textit{Neo-Pentecostais}, 51-53. Ricardo Mariano says, ‘Even small, genealogically pertaining to deutero-Pentecostalism, New Life Church played an important role forming and providing leaders for two of the biggest Neo-Pentecostal churches in the country: UCKG and CGG.’ (p. 51).
\item http://www.universal.org/institucional/historia-da-universal.html last access 17/02/2016.
\end{itemize}
the Cabinet of the Brazilian President, Dilma Rousseff from 2012 until 2014 and is now the mayor of the Rio de Janeiro, the former Brazilian capital and the second biggest city. It is not the biggest evangelical church in Brazil as the AG and the CC are still bigger, but it is certainly the most important development in the Brazilian religious scenario.\footnote{1075} Moreover, the UCKG does not offer a contra-cultural perspective like the previous Pentecostal churches, but a concept of a wider church; a universal church as its name propagates.\footnote{1076}

Theologically, the UCKG presents two noticeable developments. The first one is Christological. In contrast to the other Pentecostal churches, the UCKG’s Christology presents a new development. This can be perceived in its faith statement, which is presented on its website. It is described in 16 articles, most of them in a language similar to the Apostle’s Creed. In its third article it speaks about Jesus Christ:

‘[We believe in] the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the second person to be manifested to mankind, when he came in human form, he was born from the womb of the Virgin Mary, through the work and grace of the Holy Spirit. He, who is the incarnated word of God, took human nature, so uniting two complete and perfect natures (divine and human) for being known as the true God and true man. He suffered, was crucified, died and buried, thus, reconciling us with the Father, doing the expiation by our sins and guaranteeing for us the salvation and the liberation from all our sufferings.’\footnote{1077}
The text is not well written. It seems that the authors would want to maintain a kind of creedal language and they ended up making the text a little confusing, however there are no huge differences between that and the text of the actual Creeds of Christianity. Indeed, what calls the attention is the last phrase: ‘guaranteeing us... liberation from all our sufferings.’ That is certainly not present in any ancient Creed. It reflects the theological perspective of the UCKG that is described as being the Theology of Prosperity. Christ was not only a priest who reconciled us with God, but also the one who brought us liberation from all our sufferings. The role of Christ as a mediator was not only to re-establish a good relationship between human beings and God, the vertical dimension of the relationship between humans and God, but also to bring God’s blessings to human beings; the vertical dimension in the opposite direction from God to human beings. As it was put earlier, this dimension can be labelled by Christ’s office as King. Jesus Christ brings God’s Kingdom to fulfilment and he inaugurates a Kingdom of peace and justice, which has already given its first fruits but will only be completely fulfilled at a time in the future. Interestingly, the very name of the church calls attention to this kingdom: the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God.

The second distinctive feature of the UCKG is its relation to Afro-Brazilian religions. This point deserves special attention because it points to the main thesis of this chapter, namely, that the UCKG presents distinct Christological elements that are elaborated on the main features of the Afro-Brazilian religions and, therefore, they should not be missed when identifying the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context. These distinct Christological elements are discussed in the next section, but the goal of the final part of this section is to answer the following question: How can a Neo-Pentecostal church be compared with African religions? The strength of this objection is that Neo-Pentecostalism is considered a North-American movement within a Pentecostal movement which is also considered an American movement. In other words, could Neo-Pentecostalism be identified with Afro-Brazilian religiosity or is

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1078 For instance, it would be better to add ‘of the Trinity’ after ‘the second person’ in the phrase: ‘who was the second person to be manifested to humankind.’ Moreover, there is no mention of Christ’s descent to hell or even to his resurrection and ascension, which seems to be only a lapse, because on the site of the UCKG in the United Kingdom, there is a shorter creed that expressly affirms the doctrines of resurrection and ascension. See: [http://www.uckg.org/uk/?page_id=40](http://www.uckg.org/uk/?page_id=40) last access in 11/09/2012.

1079 Cox identifies this change in regarding the theology of prosperity in general. See H. Cox, *Fire from heaven*, 271-272.
it an imported product? Moreover, the UCKG is known by its hard criticisms of all the Afro-Brazilian religions. So, then, how can it be compared to a group that it so bitterly criticises?

The relationship between the UCKG and Brazilian culture in general and Afro-Brazilian religiosity in particular is very controversial. Neo-Pentecostalism is deeply influenced by the North American prosperity gospel and style. Indeed, all three waves of Pentecostalism in Brazil reflect waves in North-American Pentecostalism to a certain extent. The main churches in the first and second waves were founded by foreign missionaries, who came from the United States. However, the line of argument of this chapter is that in spite of its connection with North American Pentecostalism or in some measure because of its relationship with this American movement - the UCKG may be considered a contextual expression of a theological point of view rooted in the Afro-Brazilian religiosity. What follows are the reasons that underlie this statement.

Firstly, despite the influence of North American Neo-Pentecostalism on the Brazilian one, the impact is less accentuated than in the other two waves. Generally Neo-Pentecostals' churches in Brazil and the UCKG in particular are founded by Brazilians. BC and GL were also founded by Brazilians but they have kept the same


1083 The relationship between American Pentecostalism's first two waves and Brazilian's ones are presented above.

1084 Martin explores also the participation of black people in Pentecostalism in Brazil. See D. Martin, *Tongues of fire*, 67-72.

1085 Due to this stronger Brazilian character, Bittencourt names Neo-Pentecostalism as autonomous Pentecostalism. See J. Bittencourt Filho, *Matriz religiosa brasileira*, 193-212.
theological perspectives of the first wave churches and of the FSG, which were their predecessors. It was Robert McAlister, a North American minister, who inspired the UCKG founders. His vision that spirits of Candomblé and Umbanda should be taken seriously and also about the importance of exorcism in people that came from these Afro-Brazilian religions certainly had an impact, but the Brazilian third wave churches were very different from the New Life Church founded by McAlister. Firstly, McAlister’s missionary work mainly targeted middle class people. Secondly, despite McAlister’s perspective on the exorcism of Candomblé’s and Umbanda’s spirits or entities being very similar to Macedo’s point of view, the role that exorcism plays in the UCKG with its elaborated rituals and detailed theology is much more significant than in the New Life Church. In other words, Macedo gave a much bigger importance to exorcism in his church and moreover, he transmitted these ideas in a framework and language which are easily understandable by the Brazilian people.

Furthermore, there is a fundamental difference between the prosperity gospel theology in the United States and in Brazil. Neo-Pentecostals of the third wave in North America, including Afro-Americans, defend a prosperity gospel based on the idea of ‘positive confession.’ This idea has a long tradition in the United States and was reworked by prosperity teachers like Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and Joseph Prince. This doctrine is also known as ‘name it and claim it’ or ‘the word of faith theology.’ It emphasises that the believer should have health, wealth and prosperity because God wishes these things for him. The believer, who desires a

1089 D. J. Mumford, ‘Rich and equal in the eyes of almighty God!’ 220-222. Mumford links the positive confession theology to Essek William Kenyon, who started to present his ideas still in the end of the 19th century.
prosperous life, should only ask with faith and he will receive prosperity. If he does not
receive prosperity, it is because he is not asking with enough faith or because he is not
living his life according to God’s will. On the other hand, the preaching of prosperity
of the UCKG is framed in a concept of interchange, which is very similar to
Candomblé’s theology. In summary, despite the North American influence also in
Brazilian third wave Neo-Pentecostalism, the UCKG is much closer to the Brazilian
context than the churches of the first two waves in Brazil.

Secondly, North American Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism are Afro-
American phenomena. As it was put earlier, Seymour was the son of former slaves and
many of the distinctive characteristics that marked the Azusa Street revival were
typically African. Hollenweger pointed out these characteristics that Anderson
summarises, ‘Oral liturgy, a narrative theology and witness, the maximum participation
of the whole community in worship and service, the inclusion of visions and dreams into
public worship, and an understanding of the relationship between body and mind
manifested by healing through prayer.’ Then Anderson adds ‘other examples of African
American Christian liturgy include rhythmic hand clapping, the antiphonal participation
of the congregation in the sermon, the immediacy of God in the services and baptism by
immersion, which are all practices common to Pentecostal churches worldwide.’
The African roots were not perceived as African features in Brazil in the first two waves
of Brazilian Pentecostalism because they were brought by white missionaries:

Dollar emphasises the importance of a life according to the will of God. See D. J.
Mumford, ‘Rich and equal in the eyes of almighty God!’ 223.
The concept of interchange in Candomblé was presented in Chapter 5 and the
concept of the UCKG and its relationship with Candomblé will be presented in the next
section.
Bialecki presents an interesting analysis saying that the third wave in the United
States has been influenced by the Neo-Pentecostal movement of other parts of the
world, especially from South America and not the other way around. See J. Bialecki, ‘The
third wave and the third world,’ 177-200.
W. J. Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 18-24; H. Cox, Fire from heaven, 45-65; D. T.
Irvin, ‘Meeting beyond these shores,’ 238-239.
It is at least doubtful that baptism by immersion was an African influence, but
anyway the other features presented by Anderson are very reasonable.
A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 43-45. Therefore, Anderson is
pointing out that these African elements or features spread from Azusa Street over the
whole Pentecostal world.
The ethnic character of Pentecostalism is not emphasised yet statistics in Brazil
show that there are proportionally more black people among Pentecostals than in any
Swedish and Italian ones. Nevertheless, these missionaries were strongly impacted by the kind of religiosity that was introduced by Afro-Americans. They came to Brazil via Chicago, where the main leader Durham had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Azusa Street through Seymour. Yet Afro-Americans are not African but Afro-American and despite there not being any African religions or practices deeply rooted in African religiosity in the United States, like in other countries in Latin America as is the case with Candomblé in Brazil, the African aspects were not totally obliterated and the features presented above by Hollenweger and Anderson were present in Brazilian Pentecostalism. In other words, the Neo-Pentecostalism was built on a framework, Pentecostalism, which already had several African features.

Thirdly, several elements of African religiosity are present in North American Neo-Pentecostalism, but in Brazil they are much more noticeable. In the UCKG, the similarities are to be found not only in the worldview and style, but also in the symbols and the roles of African entities or spiritual beings. Indeed, the UCKG furiously combats Umbanda and Candomblé, yet it maintains many practices that resemble these religions. At the same time, they combat popular Catholicism, but they teach various practices that are similar to that religiosity. The UCKG abundantly uses the repertoire from Brazilian popular religiosity and particularly from Afro-Brazilian religions. The Neo-Pentecostal church that Edir Macedo founded is deeply adapted to the Brazilian urban

other Christian tradition. See D. Martin, *Tongues of fire*, 67; R. Mariano, 'Expansão pentecostal no Brasil,' 122; R. von Sinner, 'Pentecostalism and citizenship,' 114; J. Burdick, 'What is the color of the Holy Spirit?' 111. The recent census about the proportion of different races among Pentecostals presents that most of the 50% of their membership is black people or *Pardos*. In the UCKG 61, 31% of the membership declared themselves to be black or *pardo* (a mixture between white and black). [ftp://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Censos/Censo_Demografico_2010/Caracteristicas_Gerais_Religiao_Deficiencia/tab1_4.pdf](ftp://ftp.ibge.gov.br/Censos/Censo_Demografico_2010/Caracteristicas_Gerais_Religiao_Deficiencia/tab1_4.pdf), last access 08/10/2012.


R. Almeida, *A Igreja Universal*, 143. The UCKG’s use of an Afro-Brazilian repertoire is presented and further analysed below.
context of the big cities, mainly to the poor and lower classes. It reflects a traditional and popular religiosity for people who migrate from rural areas or small towns in the countryside to the highest populated urban areas.

Classical Protestantism in Brazil, e.g. the first Protestant churches founded by North-American missionaries attracted only a small number of black people, mostly mulatto and black elites, probably due to its position against slavery and to its offering schooling for all the people without distinction, including, of course, black people. But in this case these black people assimilated Western norms and practices. On the other hand, in the Pentecostalism of the first two waves there is much more space for Afro-Brazilians to practice Christian religion without denying their African roots. But this space is certainly limited. With the UCKG in particular, the Afro-Brazilian religiosity is assimilated and transformed in a way that several theological ideas are incorporated and accepted.

Fourthly, this Brazilian context in the big cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, where the UCKG has flourished most since the 1970’s, was a context of globalisation, modernisation, urbanisation and neo-capitalism. In other words, the Brazilian context from that period onwards and in those places in particular was similar in many aspects to the North American context. Indeed, the United States of America was an example of modernisation and development that Brazil has tried to imitate since the second half of the 19th century and it was in the urban areas that these efforts to mirror North America are more evident. Thus, these overlaps facilitated the interchange between the United States and Brazil and helped to explain why the UCKG is not simply an American or Western phenomenon. Actually, it is possible to say that the UCKG is more like a fruit

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1102 R. Mariano, Os neo-pentecostais, 59.
1104 This argument is presented in D. Martin, Tongues of fire, 67-68.
1105 D. Martin, Tongues of fire, 67-72.
1106 The next section explores what are these main theological concepts that are accepted and incorporated.
1107 R. Mariano, ‘Expansão pentecostal no Brasil,’ 132-134.
of the process of globalisation, which quite often leads cultures to paradoxically be simultaneously strongly universal or Western and deeply indigenous.\textsuperscript{108}

Birgit Meyer explains that globalisation entails a ‘glocalising’ dynamics.\textsuperscript{109} This neologism and its derivates ‘glocal’ and ‘glocalisation’ are used in reference to the relationship between the global and the local within contemporary cultures.\textsuperscript{110} Globalisation seems to entail homogenisation, Western values, neo-capitalism and so forth,\textsuperscript{111} but in fact, globalisation has also given rise to new movements, emphasising the local and very specific and peculiar cultural traces. David Reed says, ‘a culture does not passively receive ideas, rituals, and movements from outside, but engages, confronts, and restructures them, and sometimes precipitates “reverse flows.” The result is a process called “glocalization” whereby the global and local interact to produce a new reality, a “hybrid.” This new social phenomenon does not eradicate the local and global but transforms them.’\textsuperscript{112} Meyer says that Pentecostalism, especially the Neo-
Pentecostalism which preaches the prosperity gospel, shows this ability to integrate global and local aspects in a way that it puts the local in a broader global perspective.\textsuperscript{1113}

The present section presented a panoramic view of Pentecostalism in Brazil pointing to its history, origins and perspectives. The presentation was not exhaustive, but, I hope, sufficient to describe Pentecostalism, from which Neo-Pentecostalism in general and the UCKG particularly originated. Now, it is necessary to demonstrate in which sense the UCKG uses Afro-Brazilian religious ideas, since it furiously combats Afro-Brazilian religious \textit{Orixás} and everything that seems to be of African origin. The UCKG’s strategy is of the assimilation and re-signification of the Afro-Brazilian worldview and symbols. The task of the next section is to demonstrate precisely that.

6.2. From Afro-Brazilian religions to Neo-Pentecostalism

The previous section said that the UCKG presents a theology that echoes Afro-Brazilian theology. The present section demonstrates how it does that. The goal is to show similarities and dissimilarities between the UCKG and Candomblé, which, as put earlier, is the most African among the Afro-Brazilian religions. Thus, the questions that this section seeks to answer are, which elements from Candomblé are incorporated by the UCKG and in which way does the UCKG incorporate these Afro-Brazilian elements? For this purpose, each Candomblé element or characteristic that was discussed in Chapter 5 is presented in comparison with the UCKG’s theology. Yet, although, UCKG’s theology is repeatedly mentioned there is, in fact, no clear and critical UCKG theology.\textsuperscript{1114} Edir Macedo came to create a faculty of theology, nonetheless he soon realised that a long

\textsuperscript{1113} B. Meyer, ‘Pentecostalism and globalization,’ 120-122. Most of Meyer’s research is with African Neo-Pentecostalism.

\textsuperscript{1114} Richard Burgess uses the term ‘ordinary theologies’ defined by Astley to describe ‘the theology and theologising of Christians who have received little or no theological education of a scholarly, academic or systematic kind.’ See R. Burgess, ‘“Practical Christianity and public faith”: Nigerian Pentecostal contributions to intercultural theology’ in: M. J. Cartledge & D. Cheetham, \textit{Intercultural theology: Approaches and themes}, London: SCM, 2011, 145-168, esp. 146, footnote 2. Astley’s own view is discussed in some more detail below.
time training in theology would not help his purposes of a fast growing and centralised leadership. In some places there is still training for new ministers, which lasts only six months, but it does not include critical or scientific theological training. Indeed, Macedo wrote a book, soon after the closing of the theological faculty, entitled the *Liberation of Theology*. In this book he argues for the necessity of turning more to practice and spiritual power than to theoretical studies. The theology and practices of this church are transmitted by oral means and, of course, also by visual means through its TV programmes. This is the first similarity with Candomblé as both are not religions based on the written word, but on orality. Even, the books or newspaper from the UCKG are in a kind of oral style, telling stories and testimonies so that the readers may feel that they are hearing the real tellers. For this reason, it is not possible to identify the theological rationale behind the UCKG’s speech, liturgy and practices, unless attention is given to oral performance and context. The way followed here is to look at anthropological and sociological descriptions from scholars that made ethnographic studies interviewing churchgoers or participating in actual worships or meetings. The difficulty is that obviously these ethnographic studies are not written by theologians and their authors do not have to focus on theological issues, or sometimes they are concerned with theological issues, but they do not have theological expertise. Therefore, another important tool to help clarify theological discourse in the UCKG is looking at the theological analyses of some authors of Afro-American Neo-Pentecostalism and African Neo-Pentecostalism. Until presently, there are many more positive critical analyses of Neo-Pentecostalism in these non-Brazilian contexts than in Brazil.

1116 Ironically, in many of Macedo’s books his academic titles are in the book’s flap. For example, Edir Macedo DD, ThD, PhD see E. Macedo, *Plano de Poder: Deus, os cristãos e a política*, Rio de Janeiro: Thomas Nelson Brasil, 2008.
1117 V. Garrard-Burnett, ‘Stop Suffering?’ 223.
1118 For the relationship between orality in Pentecostalism and African Religions see A. Anderson, ‘Intercultural theology,’ 128-144.
Firstly, as put earlier, the most important theological element in Candomblé is the harmony between the infinite spiritual reality and the finite material reality. The same idea is present in the UCKG. The majority of anthropologists say that the UCKG appropriates magical thinking in its practices. Goncalves da Silva shows a very interesting insight by stating that the church’s constant efforts to combat or even destroy Afro-Brazilian religions is not primarily because they are trying to conquer members of these religions, especially since these Afro-Brazilian religions do not have a significant amount of practitioners, but because the UCKG wants to show that it is the religion that best dominates the magical mediations. There is no doubt that it presents a magical view of the world, where the spiritual reality constantly interferes in the material reality. Nevertheless, the UCKG’s worldview is not only that the spiritual reality is deeply related to the material one, but also that the aim of this relationship is harmony. There once was a harmonious relationship between humans and spirits, human and spiritual spheres, but this harmony was broken and the goal then is to restore that disrupted harmony.

The way to restore the lost harmony is through spiritual warfare. The evil spirits have to be expelled and the good spirit has to occupy its original place. The

1120 cf. R. Burgess, ‘Practical Christianity and public faith,’ 155-160. Burgess speaks of Neo-Pentecostalism in Nigeria, nonetheless, his description could be used to describe the UCKG as well.
1122 Garrard-Burnett citing Esperandio speaks of a ‘sense of well being.’ V. Garrard-Burnett, ‘Stop Suffering?’ 233. The concept of prosperity or blessing, which is so important for the UCKG’s theology, points to this idea of harmony. See especially V. Goncalves da Silva, ‘Entre a gira da fé e Jesus de Nazaré,’ 218-219.
solution for disharmony in this Neo-Pentecostal’s point of view is in the spiritual realm as well. While most of the Pentecostals identify Candomblé’s *Orixás* with devils, they do not believe that expelling these evil spirits brings harmony. What they do believe is that after exorcism the exorcised is free to seek God and to seek a new way of life. On the other hand, for the UCKG, expelling these spirits means that everything will work well and the new life is already present. In other words, exorcism in the classic Pentecostal churches is just a first step toward a new life. To cast out the demons means that the deadlock was broken and the person is free to become Christ’s disciple, whereas, in the UCKG exorcism is already a transformation and the beginning of a new life. If the demons are cast out the blessing will flow immediately. Moreover, the way to restore the harmony is, similarly to Candomblé, through elaborate rituals of exorcism and the use of some symbols such as salt, water, soap, herb-of-grace or common rue, flowers, olive oil, etc. which after being consecrated pass to have power to protect people from evil spirits.1125

The UCKG as a Christian church speaks about sin, but not only is sin not emphasised as much as in the other Pentecostal churches, it also has a different meaning. The UCKG permits its members to dance, go to the theatre, drink alcohol, and so forth.1126 The negative emphasis is on some sexual practices such as homosexuality1127 and adultery as well as against the addictions to alcohol,1128 tobacco, and drugs. Interestingly, its approach is not based on morality or ethical issues, but on the fact that these practices open space for evil spirits to go into the person’s life and

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1126 R. Mariano, ‘Expansão pentecostal,’ 124.
1127 Edir Macedo shows certain liberalism even about homosexuality. During an interview he was asked if he would reject a homosexual child. He answered ‘No way.’ ‘I would try to help him in the best way possible. Because, if God respects the human creature life’s free choice, why would I not do the same?’ cited in G. Leite de Moraes, ‘Neopentecostalismo – um conceito-obstáculo na compreensão do subcampo religioso pentecostal brasileiro’ in: *Revista de Estudos da Religião* June (2010), 1-19, esp. 8, (my translation).
1128 For most Pentecostal churches, even the use of moderate alcohol is considered addiction, while the UCKG distinguishes between the moderate, excessive and abusive use of alcohol.
consequently bad things will happen. There is no emphasis on repentance.\textsuperscript{1129} On the contrary, sins are committed because of the presence of evil spirits and the way for changing this sinful life is to ritually exorcise these evil spirits.\textsuperscript{1130} People do not commit sins because they are immoral, but because they are led by evil spirits to commit these acts.\textsuperscript{1131} Thus, for example, adultery opens the door for an evil spirit, normally the Orixá related to fertility, and the person will become adulterous. Nevertheless, sexual intercourse is not the only way to permit possession by an evil spirit. The social contact with, for example, a woman that is already possessed by this evil spirit can lead someone to be possessed as well. Sometimes there is no need of personal contact, but only a spell or a magical enchantment or an enchanted object that leads to the same consequence.\textsuperscript{1132} Quite often, it is necessary to find out the origin and the way that the spell was produced to be able to expel it.\textsuperscript{1133} Therefore, it is possible to state that the UCKG's concept of sin is similar to the concept of taboo.\textsuperscript{1134}

Another characteristic of Candomblé that is comparable to the UCKG is the concept of ‘exchange’. In fact, this is one of the most explored and criticised elements of the UCKG.\textsuperscript{1135} In the UCKG, every exorcism, or intercession, or ritual for special blessings or for liberation from evil spirits is accompanied by a request for an exchange. The goal of the donation is not to help the church’s missionary work or social activities, though the money is used for these aims, but it is to establish a relationship with God. The act of

\textsuperscript{1129} R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal e seus demônios}, 109-111.
\textsuperscript{1130} R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal e seus demônios}, 96.
\textsuperscript{1132} R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal e seus demônios}, 107-108.
\textsuperscript{1133} R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal e seus demônios}, 93-96.
\textsuperscript{1134} For a more detailed discussion about the concept of taboo see the former chapter. For a discussion about the concept of taboo applied to Neo-Pentecostalism see J. Almeida Júnior, ‘Um panorama do fenômeno religioso brasileiro: neopentecostalismo ou pentecomessianismo’ in: \textit{Ciências da Religião – História e Sociedade} 6/2 (2008), 146-177, esp. 172-173.
\textsuperscript{1135} cf. L. Togarasei, ‘The Pentecostal gospel of prosperity,’ 347.
donation makes God obligated to compensate the donator.\textsuperscript{1136} That means that the donator can now demand a specific blessing from God.

This is an important difference between the UCKG and other third wave churches, especially North American ones. According to those other third wave churches God wants to bless his people and Christians just need to ask with faith and expressly state what they want and they will get it.\textsuperscript{1137} For this reason their teaching is called ‘name it and claim it.’ On the other hand, the UCKG preaches that the tithes and offerings are sacrifices that are given to God who, due to these sacrifices, is obligated to bless the giver. Thus, the believer may demand blessings from God and it works as if it were a contract between the believer and God. Therefore, this contract may be called an exchange.\textsuperscript{1138}

The difference between Candomblé’s view of interchange and the UCKG’s view is that while in Candomblé there is no monetary exchange,\textsuperscript{1139} in the UCKG, every exchange involves money.\textsuperscript{1140} Thus, money in the UCKG assumes the role of the sacrifice in Candomblé. Yet, while there are some rituals that the donator has to perform like in Candomblé; there is no idea that you should live in a determined way to deserve God’s blessing. On the contrary, what guarantees God’s blessing is an act of faith that is

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{1136} For a part of a sermon in Portuguese which shows Macedo saying that if we give money to God, God is obligated to bless us see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQ7MFdEk2GQ last access on 23/01/2016.
\textsuperscript{1137} It is not being said that the idea of exchange exists only in UCKG, on the contrary, it is common in the AIC’s and also in other Neo-Pentecostal churches in Brazil and Latin-America. Although I could not find any North-American or Western Church with a similar view, there may be similar forms of preaching in other parts of the Western world. Nevertheless, what is being said is that the emphasis on the exchange of money as a sacrifice accompanied by specific rituals to exorcise evil spirits before someone may be blessed, is especially present in the UCKG.
\textsuperscript{1138} For a part of a sermon in which Macedo defends that giving money to the Church is a spiritual sacrifice ‘so holy as Jesus’ life’ and comparable and superior to Candomblé’s sacrifice see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnK5Fv0jPoA last access 25/01/2016.
\textsuperscript{1139} Nowadays, monetary exchange in Candomblé is more and more frequent, which indicates that Candomblé is also adapting to the new urban context. See M. van de Port, \textit{Ecstatic encounters}, 241 and J. R. de Carvalho Baptista, ‘ “No Candomblé nada é de graça...”’, 68-94.
\end{footnotesize}
expressed in giving a monetary offering. Sometimes this blessing is more general in character, but most of the time it is very specific. It is a specific amount for a specific blessing. It is clearly a concept of gift and counter-gift.

Orixás are almost always present in the UCKG’s services. The repertoire is expanded to include the Umbanda’s pantheon, which, as it was put earlier, is more popular among the poor living in the outskirts of the biggest Brazilian cities: São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Not only are they named in services and exorcisms, but some of their characteristics are described. It was already mentioned that Edir Macedo took part in Umbanda, nevertheless, there are several bishops, pastors, and lay leaders, who had much longer experiences with Afro-Brazilian religions and that give explanations about the nature and special characteristics of the Orixás. Of course, the role of the Orixás in the UCKG is the extreme opposite of their role in Candomblé. There, they are the mediators of life and joy, yet they are also responsible for bad things. On the other hand, in Macedo’s Neo-Pentecostal worldview, they are the only ones responsible for all the problems in people’s lives: sickness, poverty, temptations, difficult relationships, etc. They are the devil’s manifestations: the Devil’s personae. This identification is crucial for the development of the UCKG’s theology, because through this identification they build a different cosmology. Only the shadows of the Orixás are presented, their bad side is overemphasised and every possible virtue is attributed to Jesus Christ. As a result,

1142 See excellent articles about the theme in D. E. Silva, ‘Mercado, sacrifício e consumo religioso’ in: Estudos Teológicos 50/1 (2010), 131-143 and V. Goncalves da Silva, ‘Entre a gira de fé e Jesus de Nazaré,’ 209-219. Goncalves da Silva states that prosperity in the UCKG is the equivalent of the Axé in Candomblé, which is also liberated in a relationship of interchange.
1144 R. Almeida, Igreja Universal e seus demônios, 68-69.
1146 R. Almeida, Igreja Universal e seus demônios, 82. For a similar view about Nigerian Neo-Pentecostalism see R. Burgess, ‘“Practical Christianity and public faith”,’ 150-154.
1147 R. Almeida, Igreja Universal e seus demônios,121-123. As it was presented earlier, the Orixás in the Candomblé are spirits that communicate good energy, Axé, but they
Jesus’ Spirit is the only mediator of good things and only Christian churches, and specifically the UCKG, can offer the mediation of the good things from the spiritual reality to the material reality.\textsuperscript{1148}

\textit{Orixás} are not welcomed, but they are central to most of the church’s services. There are services every day in the UCKG; some congregations have more than one every day and each day or each service has a special theme. One of the most important and popular services is on Fridays; precisely the same day of regular Candomblé and Umbanda meetings. It is named worship of liberation.\textsuperscript{1149} Not exclusively in this Friday service, but mainly in this one, trance is the central part of the service.\textsuperscript{1150} It is important to say that trance is being used here as an ecstatic experience of spirit possession. Despite the differences in meaning, circumstances, rituals, and so on, spirit possession may be described as trance in the Afro-Brazilian religions as well as in the UCKG. Other experiences of trance such as glossolalia, which is present in Candomblé as well as the UCKG, yet with different meanings, are also ecstatic experiences but they are not as central as the possession by an \textit{Orixá} in Candomblé or by its manifestation and exorcism in the UCKG.\textsuperscript{1151} In this regard the UCKG differs from classical Pentecostalism where glossolalia was the most important ecstatic experience or trance.\textsuperscript{1152} Mattijs van de Port explores the meaning of the trance. He acknowledges the limitations of the diverse explanations about the phenomenon given by anthropologists, psychologists, neurobiologists and sociologists. The trance points to something mysterious and the definitions normally used to describe it cannot explain its totality. On the contrary, the importance of the phenomenon is justly that ‘it seems to escape all the attempts at

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\textsuperscript{1148} V. Goncalves da Silva, ‘Entre a gira de fé e Jesus de Nazaré,’ 229-236.
\textsuperscript{1151} See V. Goncalves da Silva, ‘Entre a gira de fé e Jesus de Nazaré,’ 222-228.
\textsuperscript{1152} V. Goncalves da Silva, ‘Transes em trânsito,’ 218-219; M. van de Port, \textit{Ecstatic encounters}, 56. Van de Port speaks of ‘a receiving of the Holy Spirit.’ In this way these ecstatic experiences of the Holy Spirit would also be viewed as spirit possession or in this case, Holy Spirit possession.
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signification.’\textsuperscript{1153} In the same way, in this dissertation no explanation for the meaning of trance is given and in spite of the deeply different meanings of trance for the U CKG and Candomblé, the phenomenon may be labelled as trance in both religions.

The meaning of trance in the U CKG is completely changed. Here there is no idea that the trance is a feast and that God comes to dance and eat among his children as in Candomblé, on the contrary, the trance is viewed as an evil happening and the \textit{Orixá} comes to be exorcised. The whole worship of liberation is structured in a way that prepares for this special happening when several people, sometimes hundreds, will manifest in trance in the possession of the \textit{Orixás}\textsuperscript{1154}. Indeed, this outstanding amount of people in trance point to an interesting dissimilarity between both religions. While the trance in Candomblé is for the initiated in the mysteries of the religion, in the U CKG everyone may, in principle, incorporate an \textit{Orixá}\textsuperscript{1155}. On the other hand however, Goncalves affirms that most of the entities that are manifested in Neo-Pentecostal services are \textit{Eguns}, which are also called the spirits of the dead and are more present in Umbanda than in Candomblé. In Candomblé the \textit{Egus} are considered inferior to \textit{Orixás} and could be manifested in other places besides in a Candomblé temple. For many Candomblé members, the spirits present in the U CKG’s services are \textit{Eguns} or \textit{Orixás} of Umbanda\textsuperscript{1156}. It is evident that behind this discussion there is a dispute between Candomblé, a purer African religion, and Umbanda, considered more impure. Nevertheless, it is Umbanda, which has more members in the big cities, that loses more members to the U CKG and thus, it should not be a surprise if more \textit{Orixás} of Umbanda are manifest in the U CKG worships. During this worship of liberation, the people in trance are rapidly brought to the front and then it is time to start the ritual of exorcism. Instead of being immediately expelled, the pastor prolongs these moments for a long time, sometimes interviewing the Afro-Brazilian entities, other times asking them to

\textsuperscript{1153} M. van de Port, ‘Circling around the “really real”: Spirit possession ceremonies and the search for authenticity in Bahian Candomblé’ in: \textit{Ethos} 33/2 (2005), 149-179, esp. 153. See also M. van de Port, \textit{Ecstatic encounters}, 183-212.

\textsuperscript{1154} R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal e seus demônios}, 79-80.

\textsuperscript{1155} See R. Almeida, \textit{Igreja Universal e seus demônios}, 99-100; 121. In Camdomblé, the term “to incorporate an \textit{Orixá}” means that the person is in a trance or possessed by spirits.

\textsuperscript{1156} See V. Goncalves da Silva, ‘Entre a gira de fé e Jesus de Nazaré,’ 235. In Umbanda, for example, \textit{Exús} are evil and there are \textit{Orixás} that are also bad spirits. This is in contrast to Candomblé where they are morally neutral. For the dissimilarities between the \textit{Orixás} of Candomblé and Umbanda see Chapter 5 above.
manifest themselves and then to stop the manifestation so that everyone could be certain that they are really manifesting and at the same time be certain that the minister, as Jesus Christ’s representative, has power over these evil spirits. The final exorcism is an act of the whole congregation, which, through an elaborate ritual, expels all these demons. The trance and the incorporation of the Orixás is described as a demonic possession, therefore in spite of playing a central role in the worship, its presence is totally negative. Thus, Candomblé and the UCKG maintain the centrality of the trance but with absolutely opposite meanings. The trance in the UCKG is on the negative pole of Candomblé. Nonetheless, the services are focused on the trance.

The concept of time in the UCKG also deserves special attention. It is not the time of the eschatology or kaiology of traditional Christian theology, the time of Salvation History, when everything is coming to an accomplishment and the end, the eschatological end draws closer and closer. A time that was inaugurated by Jesus’ first coming, but not totally fulfilled, leaving Jesus’ followers in a tensional existence between the ‘already,’ things that were already fulfilled, and the ‘not yet,’ things that still need to be fulfilled in the future. On the other hand, the UCKG’s concept of time is not the Candomblé concept of time either. For African cosmology in general, and Candomblé in particular, time is cyclic. For the UCKG there is no emphasis on Christ’s second coming, yet this is not denied, but the emphasis is on this present time, the immediate time. God’s blessing and promises are not for a distant future, but for right now. There is a cyclic concept present as well. God’s time for us can repeat the time of, for example, Abraham’s time, when he was blessed with richness and prosperity. Nevertheless, the past that should come back is an ideal past, an idyllic past. However, the harmonious promises of the UCKG’s speech are of breaking with the past of suffering and poverty and going to progress and prosperity. In this way, it resembles the traditional Christian concept of time as an opportunity to develop. Nevertheless, there is neither emphasis

1159 V. Goncalves da Silva, ‘Entre a gira de fé e Jesus de Nazaré,’ 219-229.
1161 R. Almeida, A Igreja Universal e seus demônios, 133.
1162 P. Birman, ‘Feitiçarias, territórios e resistências marginais,’ 343.
on eschatological fulfilment, nor on suffering that could be even necessary as part of a whole plan that would be revealed in the future. The time is now and all God’s promises and blessings are for today.\(^{1163}\) The time of the UCKG is the present, when the idyllic past is repeated and the promised future is anticipated.

It is evident from the above analysis that the UCKG’s theology is deeply embedded in Candomblé theology and cosmology. Sometimes they present ruptures, but they still use the same repertoire. The referential is always that of the Afro-Brazilian perspective. They assimilate it to transform; quite often, the UCKG appropriates Afro-Brazilian concepts, giving them a new signification.\(^{1164}\) It builds its theological discourse in response to Candomblé. Therefore, there is no doubt that the UCKG is a syncretism\(^{1165}\) between Christian theology and Afro-Brazilian theology.\(^{1166}\)

As it was put earlier, all theologies are syncretistic. Thus, the fact that the UCKG is clearly syncretistic is not per se the most critical point. In fact, the expansion of the church and the influence that it has on the Brazilian context confirms that its strategies are very successful. The question is whether they have strayed too far from Christian tradition. The conclusion is not that they are wrong because they are syncretistic. The issue is if they maintain, using Hollenweger’s\(^{1167}\) expression, a responsible syncretism.\(^{1168}\) This is the question that will be analysed in the next section.

6.3. Criteria and Standpoint

This section is dedicated to the critical evaluation of the UCKG’s theology. As it was put earlier, its practice and preaching is syncretistic. This is not the biggest issue, because all

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\(^{1163}\) cf. L. Togarasei, ‘The Pentecostal gospel of prosperity,’ 340. See esp. V. Goncalves da Silva, ‘Entre a gira de fé e Jesus de Nazaré,’ 236-243. Goncalves shows several similarities between time in Candomblé and the UCKG, for example the liturgical calendar, the use of specific rituals on determined days, and so forth.


\(^{1165}\) Ronaldo de Almeida speaks of an inverse syncretism. See R. Almeida, A Igreja Universal e seus demônios, 99-112.

\(^{1166}\) R. Almeida, A Igreja Universal e seus demônios, 113-119.

\(^{1167}\) W. J. Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 132. For the concept of ‘Responsible Syncretism’ see Chapter 1 above.

\(^{1168}\) A. Anderson, ‘Intercultural theology,’ 138-140.
theology is syncretistic, even though Western theology has quite often denied it. The task is to discern the good and bad elements of this syncretistic view and to judge whether it is a responsible syncretism. The criteria to judge it are the ones introduced in the second chapter and already applied to analyse the theology of the missionaries in the second half of the 19th century and Liberation Theology. Nonetheless, to criticise the UCKG’s theology is much more complicated than it was with the first two movements. First of all, it is very difficult due to its theological inconsistency. The UCKG’s theology is an ordinary theology built through oral discourse. They normally do not engage in theological discussions and then it is difficult to know what its answers would be to the criticisms against its theological perspective. The concept of ordinary theology, devised by Jeff Astley, refers to the actual theology of believers in contrast to the academic and ecclesiastical theology. In the case of the UCKG and most Neo-Pentecostal churches, it is a sort of official theology and therefore of ecclesiastical theology, but this official theology itself is oral, non-academic and not consistently stated and theologians are not systematic thinkers, thus it is similar to Astley’s concept of ordinary theology. Secondly, in Brazil it is hard to find any positive appreciation of the UCKG’s theological discourse. I do not think that theologians should be, necessarily, positive, but the fact that, to my knowledge, nobody evaluates the UCKG’s discourse positively deserves attention. This does not mean that a theological analysis should not include the negative

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1169 This was already explored in the Chapter 1 of this dissertation. See also W. J. Hollenweger, Pentecostalism, 132-134.

1170 J. Astley, Ordinary theology: looking, listening and learning in theology, Farham: Ashgate, 2002, 45-86. Astley says, ‘Ordinary Christian theology is my phrase for the theology and theologizing of Christians who have received little or no theological education of a scholarly, academic or systematic kind. “Ordinary” in this context implies non-scholarly and non-academic…’ p. 56. (italics in the original). As mentioned above, Edir Macedo points to his academic titles: DD, ThD and PhD. But despite these three academic titles there is no published dissertation of his own. I could not find any reference to any academic publication or even the titles of any of Macedo’s dissertations. The conclusion is that these titles were not achieved in a regular recognised way.

1171 Burgess applies Astley’s concept of ordinary theology to Pentecostalism in Nigeria. See R. Burgess, ‘Practical Christianity and practical faith,’ 146.

1172 An important exception is Marceli Fritz-Winkel. She did her PhD in Missiology at Augustan-Hochschule Neuendettelsau in Germany in 2010 and her dissertation tries to identify the attractiveness of the UCKG and Umbanda and what the Lutheran Church in Brazil (IECLB) could learn from them. See M. Fritz-Winkel, Zur Zukunft der Evangelischen Kirche Lutherischen Bekenntnisses in Brasilien: Aspekte ihrer Attraktivität im Vergleich mit der Umbanda und der neopentekostalen Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, Münster: Lit, 2012.
aspects, because it certainly should. However, Brazilian theologians do not find any positive aspects in their analyses. For example, some authors say that the UCKG’s theology is a pseudo-theology,\textsuperscript{1173} others say that it is pseudo-Pentecostal.\textsuperscript{1174} I believe that this partially reflects the continuous rejection of syncretism that marked Brazilian Protestantism and the difficulties in accepting the African elements in Brazilian culture and religiosity mixed with Pentecostalism.\textsuperscript{1175} Likewise, many Brazilian theologians were influenced by Liberation theology and have a lot of concerns with the emphasis on money, wealth and the capitalist rationale behind the UCKG’s theology.\textsuperscript{1176} It is possible to find more positive analyses by anthropologists and so they will be used here.\textsuperscript{1177} Two North-American theologians have tried to analyse Brazilian Neo-Pentecostalism in a more open way. Harvey Cox, who had written a very famous book about Pentecostalism, more recently, wrote a book about the future of religion called \textit{The Future of Faith}.\textsuperscript{1178} In this book, Cox speaks about the UCKG in particular in a very balanced way. The other author is Richard Shaull, who has already been discussed in this work because of his influence at the beginning of Liberation Theology. A few years before his death, he wrote

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\textsuperscript{1174} J. Almeida Júnior, ‘Um panorama do fenômeno religioso brasileiro,’ esp. 152.
\textsuperscript{1175} Claudio de Oliveira Ribeiro calls attention to the fact that Pentecostalism concurs with Afro-Brazilian religions in terms of the Brazilian religious matrix (See chapter 3 about the popular Brazilian religiosity) and that it has attracted a great number of Brazilians, especially poor people, because it gives meaning to them and also because it engages with their religious and existential needs. Consequently, many members of Base Ecclesiastical Communities as well as members of traditional religions are transferring themselves to Pentecostal churches. C. de Oliveira Ribeiro, \textit{A teologia da libertação morreu?} 52. I am very grateful that Claudio de Oliveira Ribeiro, through an online conversation, clarified this reference to me.
\textsuperscript{1176} For an interesting criticism of Liberation Theology as well as the Theology of Prosperity from a Liberation theologian see C. de Oliveira Ribeiro, \textit{A teologia da libertação morreu?} 75-122. Claudio de Oliveira Ribeiro points out that both theologies need to deepen their point of view about the relationship between God’s Kingdom and history to avoid God’s Kingdom being directly and exclusively identified with historical projects. p. 101-102. Another Liberation theologian that criticises the lack of engagement of Liberation Theology with people’s existential and religious experiences and consequently with Pentecostalism is José Comblin. See J. Comblin, \textit{Cristãos rumo ao século XXI}, 302-373, esp. 324-328. De Oliveira Ribeiro and Comblin are Liberation theologians who write to criticise Liberation Theology to help it to develop and to deepen some points. And they both engage with Pentecostalism in a critical and positive way.
\textsuperscript{1177} References are given below when they are cited.
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a book about Pentecostalism with Brazilian sociologist Waldo Cesar. In this book, he evaluates some of the possibilities of the Pentecostal movement, including some comments about Edir Macedo. Shaull particularly warned against the danger of exploitation of popular religiosity by some Pentecostal leaders but he was convinced of the importance of the movement. Raimundo César Barreto, Jr was in contact with Shaull until few days before Shaull’s death. Barreto points out that: ‘He [Shaull] realised that Pentecostals had managed to touch the lives of the poor in a deeper way than the base communities, because they spoke a language known by those living in that context and offered them a sense of dignity that they had never experienced before. Instead of stressing a preferential option for the poor, Pentecostals often speak about rejecting poverty.’

Apart from Cox and Shaull, there are theologians, mainly African and Afro-American, who have written more generous evaluations about Neo-Pentecostalism in their own context. African Neo-Pentecostalism and the theology of the UCKG are very close to each other and therefore these texts will be used here as well. There are very negative criticisms of African and Afro-American theologians about Neo-Pentecostalism, but it is more frequent to find analyses that search for positive aspects among them. Thus, the task of this section is to give a balanced criticism about the theology of the UCKG.

The first criterion is the importance and use of the Bible by the UCKG. Pentecostalism, as a whole, was criticised for giving too much space to experience and so abandoning the centrality of the Bible in worship and practice. However, the Bible in the classical Pentecostalism plays a more central role than in the UCKG. Moreover, in many UCKG services the trance, the manifestation and exorcism, occupies a central

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place. There is always a sermon about a Bible reading, but it is a very short part in a service that lasts for hours and it consists primarily of stories and illustrations.

The UCKG, regarding the Bible, has to be analysed from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it officially defends a traditional orthodox view of the Bible. One of its base doctrines is ‘We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their original writings as fully inspired by God and accept them as the Supreme and Final Authority for faith and life.’ Such a definition is practically the same of the major reformed confessions and accepted by the majority of the Protestant churches in Brazil and in the world. Nevertheless, the actual use of the Bible is very different from that of other Protestant churches. In the UCKG the Bible texts are quite often used in a magical way. The texts are often employed as a source of symbols that can be used in healing or exorcisms. For example, based in Acts 19: 11-12 piece of clothes are blessed by a pastor or bishop and are used to heal sick people, or then, based in Mark 6: 13 the use of oil to heal or exorcise and many other examples could be used. That is not to say that there are not other symbolic objects in the UCKG for use during an exorcism or for protection against evil spirits that are not grounded in the Bible. There also is a repertoire closer to popular religiosity and afro-Brazilian religions such as salt, water, flowers, rue or herb-of-grace and so forth that may be loosely related to a biblical text, as for example, to ground the use of salt for healing or as a guarantee of prosperity in the text of Matthew 5: 13, ‘You are the salt of the earth.’ Furthermore, in the UCKG the book of the Bible, e.g. the object, the material thing, is used in a magical way.

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1185 O. J. Løland, ‘The position of the biblical canon,’ 112. On Sundays there is a worship where the sermon is more central. It is called ‘family worship.’ See E. E. Alves, ‘A importância dos símbolos como Práxis religiosa na Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus,’ 183.
1188 http://www.uckg.org/?page_id=1419 last access in 28/01/2016.
1189 The words ‘magic’ and ‘magical’ in this dissertation are used to enhance the belief that some people or some objects have spiritual power in themselves or symbolise this power. See J. S. Mbiti, African religions and philosophy, 189-198. For a definition of ‘spiritual power’ see M. G. Kraft, Understanding spiritual power, 23-25.
1191 M. Fritz-Winkel, Zur Zukunft, 185-186.
way as well. In fairness, this is a characteristic of most Pentecostal churches in Brazil. For instance, in the CC there is a very widespread warning that church members must not carry the Bible without a special box or bag, because they believe that would be disrespectful to let hands come into direct contact with the Holy Book except when it is being read in Church or at home. Another example is that in many Pentecostal churches, members beat the head of people possessed by a demon with a Bible during an act of exorcism, because they believe that the book has the power to cast out demons. Thus, the UCKG uses the Bible symbolically in the way that the first wave and second wave normally do and further adds other symbolical uses.

An interesting example of the symbolic use of the Bible in the UCKG is that its new temple called Solomon Temple, since it was allegedly built according to the biblical prescriptions given to Solomon for the construction of the Israel Temple in the Old Testament, was erected above a stone which had the Bible text of Matthew 16: 18 written on it. In this passage of Mathew Jesus says to Peter, ‘you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church.’ Edir Macedo interpreted that the rock in this text means the faith that Peter professed and not Peter himself. Thus, the temple was being built on the faith in Jesus Christ. Interestingly, in this sense, he is adapting a Catholic practice of erecting its temple altars above a relic as well as giving a material symbol representing the faith of the church on which the church should be built.

The UCKG makes constant references to biblical stories in almost everything that it does. Nevertheless, the hermeneutics to do that is very often controversial as the text is interpreted symbolically. There are many discussions about Pentecostalism hermeneutic in general. It merits attention that Pentecostals emphasise and apply a hermeneutics that values the role of the reader. Therefore, Pentecostals easily apply

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1192 O. J. Løland, ‘The position of the biblical canon,’ 112.
1193 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTju2iKSfng last access 28/01/2016. The logic of Macedo’s argument is that Church of Christ is symbolically there in the UCKG’s temple.
1195 A. Davies, ‘What does it mean to read the Bible as a Pentecostal’ in: Journal of Pentecostal Theology 18/2 (2009), 216-229.
the biblical text to their lives and context. They bring the Bible very close to the needs of the people. In spite of some tendencies within the Pentecostal movement that want to lead the Pentecostals to a hermeneutics of the common sense of the Old Princeton, most of the Pentecostals value experience and context in biblical interpretation immensely. Nevertheless, due to the fact that they do not read critically, their interpretation is quite often very simplistic and they look at the Bible stories without analysing the differences between the story’s context and the reader’s context. Moreover, they do not engage in conversation with other Christian traditions. The positive aspects are that there is not only one way of interpreting Scriptures and the people’s experience are part of the process of interpretation, but if churches do not listen to each other and try to read the Bible within the wider Christian community, the interpretation will probably fail to attain the best possible outcome. Nonetheless, the UCKG is not only a hermeneutics which emphasises the reader role, but a symbolic and magical way of reading the Bible.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the Bible is important for the UCKG as it is officially the base of its faith and doctrine. But in practice it works more as a repertoire

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1200 Archer, who is one important Pentecostal theologian, defends that a Pentecostal hermeneutics should be constructed in dialogue with the whole Christian community. See K. J. Archer, ‘Presidential address 2015: Pentecostal hermeneutics and the Society for Pentecostal Studies: Reading and hearing in one Spirit and one accord’ in: *Pneuma* 37/3 (2015), 317-339.

of symbols that are loosely and freely used to embed and justify its rituals. Furthermore, the UCKG does not designate the same space for the Bible in worship and doctrine as is the practice in most Protestant churches or the Base Church Communities of Liberation Theology. In this sense, of the three views presented in this dissertation, i.e. the Brazilian historical Protestantism, the Liberation Theology and the UCKG, the UCKG is the one that lacks consistency and shows a more problematic view.\textsuperscript{1202} Løland rightly affirms that historical Protestantism in Brazil overcame the view of popular religiosity where the Bible played an insignificant role and gave more emphasis on the importance of the Bible in the Brazilian context. The first two waves of Pentecostalism in Brazil keep more or less\textsuperscript{1203} the same emphasis. The Base Church Communities maintain the same principle and brought the Bible to many catholic people who were not used to reading the Bible nor daring to interpret it. On the other hand, the UCKG presents a view which is very similar to the Brazilian popular religiosity and thus, it is a way backward, retrogression.\textsuperscript{1204}

Secondly, with respect to Christian tradition, the UCKG is not so intensely criticised. As a church without a critical and scientific theology, it tends to reproduce the common and shared tradition in speech. Particularly in Christology, there is an important difference mainly in relation to the present Protestant Christology. The role of the cross and suffering in the UCKG’s theology is not highlighted. It does not deny the importance of Christ’s sacrifice, but it emphasises the consequences of this act of Jesus for the life of the believer here and now. As a result of his sacrifice, Jesus is able to offer every heavenly blessing to turn the lives of his followers into pleasant lives. This is a \textit{Theologia Gloriae} and a view of Christ as \textit{Christus Victor}. This theology was evident in the patristic period and Middle Ages, but it has lost its prestige among Orthodox Protestants in the period post-Reformation, especially by Lutherans that defended a \textit{Theologia Crucis} and the theology of the \textit{Christus Patiens}.\textsuperscript{1205} As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the emphasis on the \textit{Theologia Gloriae} and the \textit{Christus Victor} is also present in many African Christian Christologies that take into consideration the African religious

\textsuperscript{1202} R. Almeida, \textit{A Igreja Universal}, 59-98.
\textsuperscript{1203} According to Løland they tend to interpret the Bible more literally and do not contextualise the text. O. J. Løland, ‘The position of the biblical canon,’ 104-108.
\textsuperscript{1204} O. J. Løland, ‘The position of the biblical canon,’ 98-118.
\textsuperscript{1205} The next section explores the concept of \textit{Christus Victor} in more detail and analyses the relationship between this concept and the idea of exorcism.
context. Thus, this same emphasis in the theology of the UCKG is in consonance with its embedment in the Afro-Brazilian context. They are distancing themselves from the mainstream Protestant tradition, but that does not mean that they are straying too far from Christian tradition. Some theologians affirm that Pentecostalism is a particular tradition. For example, Cartledge, referring to the thinking of K. J. Archer, says, ‘instead of seeing Pentecostalism as a form of Evangelicalism, it is understood as a distinct and authentic Christian tradition and its theological manner and method is equally distinct.’ Thus, they should not be compared all the time with Protestantism, but they should be analysed in their own history and context.

In Africa, there are theologians that are studying the potential of Neo-Pentecostalism for an African theology. These theologians look at Neo-Pentecostalism through the perspectives of the intercultural theology and identify the similarities between the indigenous African religious cosmology and the Neo-Pentecostalism theology searching for elements of a positive appropriation of the African heritage and their re-signification for a Christian purpose. Moreover, some believe that Neo-Pentecostalism offers a liberation that the Theology of Liberation and Black Theology were not able to give. Daneel calls it a ‘religiocultural liberation’ which is, according to him, a true ‘liberation theology’. As a result, they believe that Neo-Pentecostalism is a

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1208 For a bibliography about Intercultural Theology see Chapter 1 above.
1210 Cited in A. Anderson, ‘Intercultural theology,’ 138-139. M. L. Daneel’s statement is about African Independent Churches (AIC). Nevertheless, Anderson perceives several similarities between Neo-Pentecostalism and AIC.
good example of inculturation theology. In Brazil the *Negra* theology does not see a positive potential in Neo-Pentecostalism. On the contrary, due to the constant attacks on Afro-Brazilian religions by the UCKG, they see the UCKG's preaching and practice as a step backwards in the development of a healthy appropriation of the African heritage in Brazilian culture. Actually, the UCKG challenges the long consensus that Brazil is tolerant to different religions and it is also true that the UCKG has a very negative view about African heritage and society. However, since the UCKG’s theology is embedded in an Afro-Brazilian theology and cosmology (in the terms presented in the last section) and considering the large amount of black people that participate in this church it deserves a deeper reflection about its potential in building a sense of hope, dignity and self-esteem for the Afro-Brazilian people.

Thirdly, the relationship with the wider Christian Church is still more controversial. The UCKG is a church not only founded by Edir Macedo, but he is also its owner. He consecrates bishops and ministers and governs the church in all its affairs. This sounds very problematic and it is certainly different from the ecclesiastic models present in the Bible and in Christian tradition. This model already exists in the churches of the second wave in Brazil, but it is a negative point in this latter movement. On the other hand, the UCKG has made a huge effort before the Brazilian authorities to pass the idea that it is a representative of all evangelicals in Brazil. Due to this political

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1212 Goncalves edited a book with 8 different articles showing the intolerance of Neo-Pentecostalism towards Afro-Brazilian religions: V. Goncalves da Silva (ed.), *Intolerância religiosa*. This is also the case with some critics of Neo-Pentecostalism in Africa. See O. Onynah, ‘Deliverance as a way of confronting witchcraft in contemporary Africa,’ 181-202. For more about Neo-Pentecostalism as a break from African traditions and culture see B. Meyer, “’Make a complete break with the past”: memory and post-colonial modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist discourse’ in: *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28/3 (1998), 316-349.
1213 Burdick points out that there are three times more black people in Pentecostal churches than in the historical Protestant churches such as Presbyterian and Methodist. And in the same text Burdick specifically analyses the presence of black people in the UCKG. See J. Burdick, ‘What is the color of the Holy Spirit?’ 111.
1214 The capacity of the UCKG’s theology for offering a sense of dignity and hope for poor people in general and Afro-Brazilian people in particular is analysed in the discussion about the role of theological language in its discourse.
project, the UCKG will possibly be more open to dialogue with the wider non-Catholic community in Brazil. Moreover, the UCKG was founded in 1977 and its founder, Edir Macedo, is still in command, but the next generations will probably govern the church differently. With respect to worship, what calls the attention is the central role of trance and exorcism in most of the UCKG’s services. Indeed, exorcism is part of Christian tradition and part of the Christian liturgy throughout history, yet the centrality that it occupies in worship may be considered exaggerated.

In conclusion, in the UCKG, officially, Bible and tradition are very important and the role that they play in its declaration of faith is comparable to any other orthodox Christian Church. Nonetheless, the role that the Bible plays in worship and preaching, and its *theologia gloriae* accompanied by the perspective of the *Christus Victor* that it preaches, distances the UCKG from the present mainstream Protestantism. The role of communication with the wider Christian church is the most problematic and it probably explains other criticisms, such as authoritarianism, business management in the place of spiritual leadership, etc. However, anti-ecumenism and sectarianism are very common characteristics of most Brazilian evangelical churches.

The next step is to analyse the UCKG from the standpoints that were introduced in the second chapter, namely, the concept of truth; the function of theological language and the hermeneutical principle. The hermeneutic principle has already been discussed regarding the role of the Bible in the UCKG, since the role of the Bible in the UCKG is intrinsically related to its hermeneutic. Then it is possible to move to the concept of truth. In the UCKG it is not the concept of enlightenment. There is no idea of a scientific or absolute truth. The truth is deeply contextual. However, the UCKG’s discourse often

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1217 Whether this dialogue would be a real dialogue, i.e. an open and sincere interchange of ideas and projects, or only the discussion of terms of negotiation to achieve its political goals is still to be tested time and again. It seems that the UCKG, since it is governed by one single person, can change its perspectives very quickly depending on the circumstances.


1219 See Chapters 1, 2 and 3 above.
presents a pragmatic concept of truth. In this way the truth is measured by its success. The material outcomes are proof of the truth of a statement or a practice. According to its leaders, the preaching and teaching of the church is right because the church is growing in numbers; both financially and in membership. In the same way, people can be sure that its teachings are correct when they become richer or healthier or because they are solving their emotional problems. This is an issue for almost all of the Pentecostal movement. On the one hand, it is an interesting development that in these churches everyone is able to judge what is true or not. For them, truth is not something that only scholars or intellectuals are able to judge, but everyone through their own experience is able to decide whether something is true or not. On the other hand, the criterion that is often used to judge is more pragmatic than qualitative. So, it is true because it works.

With respect to the meaning of theological language, generally the Pentecostal movement and specifically the Neo-Pentecostalism one make a huge contribution. The language is extensively metaphorical and seeks to address the personal issues that affect the people. In the UCKG, most of the people that participate are living in very disturbing situations. They are normally looking for the church because they did not find a solution to their problems in any other place. For these people, the UCKG speaks about victory, power, richness and prosperity. It offers a sense of dignity and value in a way that they feel empowered to do things, to try new projects and to dream of a better future. It

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does not work for everyone and it is also naïve, but it responds to the anxiety and fear of many people who were living in despair before coming to church. The theology or doctrine of prosperity does not speak about social justice; on the contrary, it gives a message that encourages selfish feelings and attitudes. Nevertheless, it gives a sense of dignity and hope to a lot of people that live on the margins of society. For this reason, it contributes to Brazilian context enormously.

Theological language and its relation to magic and empowerment in the present Brazilian context is a very important issue and it demands a longer explanation. In order to better understand the importance of theological language in the UCKG, it is necessary to consider the role of Afro-Brazilian religions in Brazil. As it was presented earlier, Afro-Brazilian religions and popular religiosity in general and Candomblé in particular were viewed as anti-modern and inferior. Since the 19th century, there has been a project of modernisation in Brazil. This project, which was undertaken by Brazilian intellectuals and politicians, was strongly influenced by Comte's positivistic concepts and rejected popular religiosity as superstitious and anti-scientific. As a consequence of this project, North-American missionaries were allowed to establish Protestant churches. At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church itself began to distance itself from popular Catholicism and the process of bringing the Brazilian Church closer to Vatican principles took place. An outcome of this scenario is that many Afro-Brazilians missing the power and spirituality of the popular religiosity adhered to Candomblé or became active in Candomblé and Catholicism at the same time, thus making double-belonging a common practice. Many others kept membership only in the Roman Catholic Church, but continued to believe in the power of spirits, spells, witchcraft, etc., and for these people, Candomblé and Umbanda were the religions that could better explain and overcome these spiritual forces.

This paragraph summed up in a simple way a much more complex process. It does not deny that there were other factors that contributed to bringing about the

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Romanisation of the Brazilian Catholic Church, Candomblé or Protestantism, but it seeks to highlight only one perspective of the whole process, which is, on one hand, the combat of magical thinking and magical religiosity, and, on the other hand, the strategies that a great part of the Brazilian people used, to deal with their beliefs in magical forces.

The process of modernisation in Brazil was very irregular. Brazil is a modern, Western and educated country, but at the same time it is a very traditional, archaic and illiterate country. Moreover, due to a chaotic process of urbanisation, there is no clear separation between the archaic of the rural areas and the very modern of the urban areas. On the contrary, it is precisely in the big cities that this paradoxical mixture is most evident. The UCKG’s theological language’s strength is in its ability to articulate these two realms in its discourse. Its theology is Protestant and it speaks about progress, prosperity, money; terms abundantly used by modern discourse, but at the same time it maintains the beliefs in spiritual forces and a cosmology that resembles popular religiosity. Likewise, it combines the two discourses in a way that Brazilian people do not have to give up their old beliefs in order to become modern. It offers the possibility to be successful in the Modern, Western and Capitalist system with new,

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1226 These processes were already analysed in more detail in previous chapters.
1227 Leonildo Silveira Campos compares the efforts of historical or classical Protestantism to eradicate magical practices and thinking, and also the emergence of Neo-Pentecostalism as a return of these magical aspects to Protestantism. Campos highlights that due to the large amount of Neo-Pentecostals, it is easy to recognise Neo-Pentecostalism, with its symbioses between magical practices and Protestant elements, is more successful in its implantation in Brazil than the total rupture with magical practices and thinking proposed by the first Protestant missionaries. See L. S. Campos, ‘A inserção do Protestantismo de missão no Brasil na perspectiva das teorias do imaginário e da matriz religiosa’ in: Estudos Teológicos 54/1 (2012), 142-157.
1228 Jose de Sousa Martins, sociologist, explores several facets of this paradox of coexistence between the modern and the archaic in Brazilian society. See especially J. S. Martins, A aparição do demônio na fábrica: origens sociais do Eu dividido no subúrbio operário, São Paulo: Ed. 34, 2008. Alfredo Bosi, a literary critic, explores this same phenomenon but emphasises that this paradox, dialectic, his preferred concept, may be viewed in many aspects of Brazilian culture. See especially A. Bosi, Dialética da colonização. Mattijs van de Port, a Dutch anthropologist who specialised in Candomblé, says that Brazil shows a baroque culture. With baroque, an art style marked by contrasts, van de Port calls attention specifically to the contrasts in Brazilian culture. See M. van de Port, Ecstatic encounters, 47-67.
1229 D. E. da Silva, ‘Mercado, sacrifício e consumo religioso,’ 131-143.
resignified and reframed, spiritual weapons.\textsuperscript{1230} Thus, it is very plausible that Goncalves da Silva’ hypothesis is correct, which states that the UCKG’s attack on Afro-Brazilian religions is connected with its efforts to take the place of Afro-Brazilian religions as the religion most capable to cope with spiritual forces.\textsuperscript{1231}

Moreover, the UCKG presents itself as an internationalised and prosperous church, which is socially, spiritually, financially and politically powerful. Thus a church that is able to overcome spiritual and human forces. Due to the strength it gives to its members, it gives them the confidence to be part of a world which they always thought was not theirs. They believed that the modern world was only for more educated and privileged people.\textsuperscript{1232} Now, mainly through exorcism, the believers are liberated from the spiritual forces that oppressed them and are said to have made them immoral, poor and marginalised people.\textsuperscript{1233}

In Brazil there is a Catholic hegemony, where the Roman Catholic Church defined the role of the poor and the rich in society. The rich should take care of the poor people, giving them alms and social help, who, in turn should accept their poverty and identify their sufferings and scarcity with Christ’s own suffering and poverty.\textsuperscript{1234} The magical world was confined to marginal religions. Therefore, the mere participation or belief in these magical forces was already evidence that they were marginal people.\textsuperscript{1235} Birman says that Pentecostal discourse in general and the UCKG’s discourse in particular offers ‘a positive alterity,’ which empowers Pentecostal people to change their relationship

\textsuperscript{1230} P. Birman, ‘Conversion from Afro-Brazilian religions to Neo-Pentecostalism,’ 115-129.


\textsuperscript{1233} P. Birman, ‘Conversion from Afro-Brazilian religions to Neo-Pentecostalism,’ 115.

\textsuperscript{1234} This social reality was described by Paulo Freire. See especially P. Freire, \textit{Pedagogia do oprimido}, Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2005, 31-64.

\textsuperscript{1235} P. Birman, ‘Conversion from Afro-Brazilian religions to Neo-Pentecostalism,’ 115-132, esp. 132, notes 24 and 26.
with the marginal world in which they live.\textsuperscript{1236} In a similar way, James K. A. Smith says that Pentecostalism helps people to break from the old social orders where they do not have any possibilities. According to Smith: ‘Pentecostal spirituality functions critically precisely by giving members critical distance on all kinds of social arrangements.’\textsuperscript{1237} Thus, the UCKG’s theology empowers people to distance themselves from a strict social order and through a new spiritual power, superior to Candomblé’s one, to judge the old order, break from it and move from the margins to the centre of Brazilian society.\textsuperscript{1238}

The UCKG may distance itself from Protestant tradition in some aspects, yet it stays, in a broad sense, within the Christian tradition. It brings some contributions to the Brazilian context, mainly through empowering people that live on the margins of society and giving them a sense of dignity and hope. Nevertheless, it has a very personal and sectarian view of leadership and a concept of truth that is too pragmatic. Similarly to what was said regarding Liberation Theology, it is not helpful when a theology is linked to a specific institute or church. Thus, it was and it is not good for Liberation Theology to be strictly related to the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time, the empowering theological language present in Neo-Pentecostalism should not be strictly related to any church and not less to the UCKG. It is necessary to distinguish and separate the elements in the UCKG that help Brazilian people, especially people that are living at the margins of the Brazilian big cities, to overcome their feeling of inferiority and lack of self-esteem, from their symbolical use of the scriptures, questionable ecclesiology and exaggerated pragmatism. It contributes expressively on a personal level but on a public level its problematic ecclesiology and pragmatism are not helpful. However, the core of the UCKG’s Christology has not yet been properly addressed. Is its Christus Victor Christology compatible with Christian tradition? Is its emphasis on Christ’s kingly office suitable to the Brazilian context? These questions are addressed in the next section.

\textbf{6.4. Jesus Christ as King: Critical Assessment}

\textsuperscript{1236} P. Birman, ‘Feitiçarias, territórios e resistências,’ 327-338, esp. 338.
\textsuperscript{1237} J. K. A. Smith, ‘‘The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets’’: Global Pentecostalism and the re-enchantment of critique’ in: \textit{South Atlantic Quarterly} 109/4 (2010), 677-693, esp. 683.
\textsuperscript{1238} P. Birman, ‘Conversion from Afro-Brazilian religions to Neo-Pentecostalism,’ 126.
As it was put earlier, UCKG’s distinctive Christological teaching is its emphasis on Christ as king, or the *Christus Victor*. Therefore, the first question that this section seeks to answer is what is the *Christus Victor* doctrine about? What is its role in the history of theology? The next question is what is the relationship between the doctrine of the *Christus Victor* and Christ’s king office? And what is the relationship between this office and the other two offices?

Gustaf Aulén was the theologian who brought the *Christus Victor* doctrine to the fore again. In 1930 he delivered a series of lectures about the theme, which formed a book precisely entitled *Christus Victor*. The book was published in English a year later and the last publication was in 2010. The ‘central theme is the idea of Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory; Christ – *Christus Victor* – fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the “tyrants” under which mankind is in bondage and suffering; and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself.’ This doctrine was very widespread in the early Christian Church and therefore is also named ‘the Classical’ idea or theory of Atonement. Aulén dares to say that ‘in fact, there are no different theories of Atonement in the Fathers, but only variant expressions of one and the same basic idea.’ It is possibly an exaggeration, for example, Jaroslav Pelikan, who has extensively worked with early Fathers writings, says that ‘other ways of speaking about atonement were too widespread even among the Greek Fathers to permit us to ascribe exclusive or even primary force to any theory, but Christ as victor was more important in orthodox expositions of salvation and reconciliation than Western dogmatic theology has recognised.’

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The doctrine became less central in the period of Scholasticism, mainly in Anselm’s *Cur Deus homo* where he puts the emphasis on the sacrifice as objective atonement, and on God as the object of Christ’s sacrifice. Yet, Anselm maintains in his text some images of a ransom or victory over the devil, but the legal character prevails. According to Aulén, Luther still maintained a view of atonement that was very similar to the doctrine of the *Christus Victor*, especially in his vision about Christ’s descent into hell. During the enlightenment, liberal and orthodox theologians totally rejected the classical or dramatic doctrine of *Christus Victor*. For conservative theologians of the Protestant orthodoxy the doctrine seemed intellectually poor, too unsophisticated, while for the liberal theologians it was considered mythological.

The rationale behind this doctrine includes two main related ideas. Firstly, there is the idea of a ransom that Christ should pay to the devil for man’s deliverance, since the devil had acquired rights over the humankind after the Fall. All human beings came under the devil’s dominion because Adam was a representative of all humankind.

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1245 Gustaf Aulén says, ‘in place of the older and more “physical” idea of salvation he put forward his teaching of a deliverance from the guilt of sin; and, above all, he clearly taught an “objective” Atonement, according to which God is the object of Christ’s atoning work, and is reconciled through the satisfaction made to His justice.’ See G. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 1-2.
1246 G. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 89. Anselm criticises the idea that the devil had acquired rights over humankind and emphasises that what the devil did or does is ‘with the permission of God’s comprehensible wisdom, by which he orders even bad things in a way that is good.’ Anselm of Canterbury, *The major works*, 273.
1248 Dramatic theory is another name for the same theory.
1249 G. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 9-10. McGrath says that ‘the imagery traditionally linked with this approach to the cross – such as the existence of a personal devil in the form of Satan, and the domination of human existence by oppressive or satanic forces of sin and evil – was dismissed as premodern superstition.’ A. E. McGrath, *Christian theology*, 417.
1250 The main biblical text used to point out this idea is Acts 26: 18.
when he freely sinned.\textsuperscript{1251} To pay this ransom, Christ, the second Adam, offered his own blood and thus freed humankind from the devil’s bondage.\textsuperscript{1252} Secondly, there is a concept of dualism between God and Satan. However, it is necessary to say that with dualism, it is not being said that God and Satan are rivalling powers. ‘This Dualism is an altogether radical opposition, but it is not an absolute Dualism; for in the scriptural view, evil does not have an eternal existence.’\textsuperscript{1253} Due to the close connection between dualism and metaphysical or absolute dualism, Barth avoids the term and he says that:

‘The only alternative is to think of it [the relationship between Jesus and the surrounding world of darkness] in terms of dynamic teleology, namely, in relation to the power of light, Word and revelation as this is active in great superiority. Yet it has not so far attained its goal but is still wrestling toward it, being opposed by the power of darkness, which, despite yielding in its clear inferiority, is still present and even active in its own negative and restrictive way.’\textsuperscript{1254}

Thus, there is a dualism, but it is not an absolute one:\textsuperscript{1255} on the contrary, through his sacrifice, Christ already delivered humankind of evil’s power, even though these negative forces are not totally obliterated.\textsuperscript{1256} In summary, the death and resurrection of Christ marks the victory and triumph over the devil and consequently humankind also receives power to overcome the powers of the enemy and initiate a new relationship with God, the partaking of the life of God.\textsuperscript{1257} And thus, the dualism is broken by God’s positive power.

Undeniably, this view has had a long impact among Christian believers. It has been already present in the Bible itself, in early Church Fathers, then, in a nuanced way

\textsuperscript{1251} This concept of Adam as a representative of all humankind and Jesus as a second Adam was called the theory of recapitulation and is based mainly on Romans 5: 12-21. See J. Pelikan, \textit{The Christian tradition}, Vol. I, 145-146; J. N. D. Kelly, \textit{Early Christian doctrines}, 170-174.
\textsuperscript{1254} K. Barth, \textit{Church dogmatics}, IV.3.1, London: T & T Clark, 1961 (2010), 168. The fact that Barth applies the concept of Christ as victor to the prophetic office is discussed below.
\textsuperscript{1255} In order to avoid a possible misunderstanding Tom Wright prefers to use the term \textit{dualities} instead of dualism. See N. T. Wright, \textit{Paul}, 370-373.
\textsuperscript{1256} The biblical support is mainly found in passages as Gal. 1: 4; Rom. 8: 35ff; I Cor. 15: 24ff; Phil. 2: 10; Col. 2: 15; Heb. 2: 14; I John 3: 8.
in Luther and it almost always had a strong appeal to popular piety.\(^{1258}\) On the other hand, this concept cannot be overstated as is the case in Aulén’s exposition. It should, especially, not be viewed as the only way to look at the meaning of Christ’s death. Nevertheless, Aulén’s view and the whole classical or dramatic theory of atonement highlights some important points which are quite often neglected in modern theology. Firstly, it points to the close relationship between the doctrines of incarnation and salvation, and thus, Christology and soteriology.\(^{1259}\) Both areas of doctrine were deeply related in the early period of the Christian Church, but this connection is obscured with the substantial refinement and rationalisation of much posterior theological reflection.\(^{1260}\) Secondly, it emphasises that Christ’s death brings about a new mode of existence.\(^{1261}\) The idea that Christ overcame the devil and his negative forces offers the possibility of victory, triumph and new life for humankind. Precisely at this point, this theory impacts all Christology. It makes Christology close to people’s experience of struggling with adversities.

The question now is what is the relationship between the doctrine of the Christus Victor and Christ’s king office? And what is the relationship between this office with the other two offices? A central theme in this dissertation is that it is necessary to have a balance between the three offices. Christ is not only the high priest who offers himself to redeem the sinners, and a prophet who announces God’s words of love and justice; he is also a king who brings God’s rule to Earth and makes God’s Kingdom possible among the people. In this view of the Christus Victor, Christ’s kingly office is valued. Nonetheless, the exaggeration of one office over the others is not the best way of building a contextual Protestant Christology. The aim should be to always maintain an equilibrium between

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\(^{1258}\) A. E. McGrath, *Christian theology*, 415-419.


these three offices. The prophetic office calls attention to the ministry of Jesus and his proclamation of God’s Kingdom, the priestly office emphasises his death and passion and the kingly office points to his resurrection and ascension. However, these three roles of Jesus Christ as mediator should not be viewed as separate events in Christ’s history as they continue to be important aspects of Christ’s mediatorship. Another way of expressing these three roles is that the priestly office points out that Christ represents humankind before God, so it expresses the vertical relationship from human beings to God. At the same time, the prophetic office emphasises the importance of Christ’s announcement to the relationship among people, thus it points to the horizontal relationship between human beings and their fellow human beings, which should be viewed and determined by Christ’s message and example. Finally, the kingly office indicates the vertical relationship between God and human beings but in the inverse direction, from God to human beings. That is precisely the contribution of the view of Christus victor, namely it demonstrates the movement of God to man.

Now, the next question is how to interpret this victory over evil’s power? What are the consequences of this victory to Christian believers? John Calvin, who was the first to systematise the view of Christ’s three offices, related the king office to the spiritual kingdom. He states that through Christ’s kingship, we receive power so that we do not fear combating the devil, sin and death. That said, Calvin’s vision about the consequences of victory over the devil is more spiritual than material and thus, he links victory over the devil to the sanctification of the Christian believer.

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1262 Karl Barth emphasises the importance of this equilibrium. K. Barth, *Church dogmatics, IV.3.1*, 5-16. See also F. G. Immink, *Jezus Christus profeet, priester, koning*, 15-23.

1263 K. Barth, *Church dogmatics, IV.3.1*, 15.


1265 J. Calvin, *Institución de la religión cristiana*, II, XV, 368-369. [Institutes of the Christian Religion, II, XV]. Edmondson says, “The one who fulfilled the office of the king or head of the Church, then, as typified first by Joshua and, more definitively, by David, was to serve as the Mediator of God’s blessings upon the Church – unifying the people under him so that they could enjoy God’s blessings of security, abundant life, and unity with God. Through the office of the king, God’s covenant promise was enacted. But, as with the priesthood, the truth of the royal office was not contained within the Davidic kingship, for Israel’s kings could only bestow blessings that were temporally constricted – Israel eventually lost the promised land – and materially limited – they themselves could not bring the Church eternal life. The true fulfillment of the royal office could only be found in Christ, and David and his descendants only pointed to this truth as they
Institutes of Elenctic Theology was used in Princeton during the time of the theological studies of the first North American missionaries that came to Brazil, says that ‘the power of the king takes away the bondage of sin and death.’\textsuperscript{1266} In this way, he explicitly excludes the victory over the devil and relates the king office emphatically to sanctification.\textsuperscript{1267} At that point of theological history, exorcisms and Healings were not a large part of the description of the victory over the devil. However, in the New Testament, especially in the description of Jesus’ ministry in the synoptic gospels, this close relationship is very pre-eminent. Therefore, it is important to consider what the relationship is between exorcism as well as healing through exorcism, Christ’s victory over the devil in Jesus’ ministry, and consequently his exorcisms and the coming of God’s kingdom.

At the present time, the majority of New Testament scholars recognise the great importance of exorcism in Jesus’ ministry.\textsuperscript{1268} Jesus was considered an exorcist by his followers, by his enemies and by himself.\textsuperscript{1269} It is also true that the importance of exorcism in the Bible and in the early history of the Church varies enormously.\textsuperscript{1270} Nonetheless, in the Synoptic gospels and in the book of Acts, Jesus is described several times as exorcising people from evil spirits and exorcisms are considered a very prefigured it in Israel’s history.’ See S. Edmondson, Calvin’s Christology, 115-153, esp. 115.

\textsuperscript{1266} Cited in A. E. McGrath, Christian theology, 413. For an analysis of the influence of Princeton Theological Seminary on Brazilian Protestant theology see Chapter 2 and 3 above.

\textsuperscript{1267} Barth also links the kingly office with sanctification. See K. Barth, Church dogmatics, IV.3.1, 5-7. See also Barth’s section about the Royal Man, K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV.2.3, 155-264.


\textsuperscript{1269} G. H. Twelftree, Jesus the exorcist, esp. 128-129; 172-174; 213-224; C. A. Evans, ‘Jesus and the spirits,’ 157.

significant part of his ministry. In John’s Gospel, Jesus is accused of being possessed by evil spirits several times. This is despite the fact that he is never described performing an exorcism which indicates that, due to a change in context, Church believers also changed their view on the importance of exorcism. It follows that in different contexts there are different views on exorcism. In any case, Jesus exorcised evil spirits very often according to the synoptic gospels and Acts and his disciples also performed exorcisms since the time of his earthly ministry and more frequently after his ascension.

Moreover, New Testament view about evil spirits is deeply influenced by the cultural context of that time. Greek, Judaic and Babylonian ideas about them are clearly present. It is already common, then, in early Christianity, to name gods of ‘pagan’ religions as demons. A case that draws attention to this is the story narrated in Acts about the exorcism of the slave girl. Paul delivers her from the spirit of a python, which was associated with the Greek god Apollo. For Paul, that spirit was a demoniac spirit, but for her owners it was a good spirit and they considered Paul’s attitude abusive, because he had cast out the spirit that gave her the ability to predict the future. In other words, for her owners, it was a powerful and good spirit linked to their religion and to the Greek god Apollo while for Paul, the spirit, even though less powerful than Jesus’ Spirit, was powerful but was evil and should be driven out.

In addition, the association between evil spirits and illnesses, and consequently between exorcism and healing, is also very widespread in the synoptic gospels and Acts. Frederick Gaiser says that ‘the demons will always be lurking in the background of

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1271 There is a complete list of the exorcism’s passages in Uwe Wegner’s article. See U. Wegner, ‘Demônios,’ 83-84.
1272 U. Wegner, ‘Demônios,’ 84; G. H. Twelftree, In the name of Jesus, 183-205.
1273 G. H. Twelftree, In the name of Jesus, 157-173.
John Christopher Thomas qualifies this statement. For him, in the New Testament context, the people were used to believing that demons are lurking about where illness exists, but, in the New Testament writings, the illnesses that are described as being caused by evil spirits are surprisingly no more than 10% of the total descriptions of the cases of healing. The conclusion is that in the New Testament period it was a popular belief that illnesses were caused by evil spirits and the New Testament does not rebuke this idea but minimises the statement that sickness had always to do with evil spirits. Nonetheless, the synoptic gospels and Acts describe many healings that are a result of exorcism and Jesus heals through exorcism as well.

The point that the synoptic gospels make clear is that the exorcisms and healings performed by Jesus are signs or proof that God’s Kingdom is coming. Therefore, there is a relationship between God’s Kingdom and exorcisms and healing through exorcisms. Exorcisms are expressly identified with the coming of God’s Kingdom, which is brought about by the messianic Jesus (Mathew 12:28; Luke 11:20). In these writings Jesus’ kingship is characterised by victory over evil spirits and this victory is demonstrated

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1281 Twelftree says that ‘Jesus was the first one to link the relatively common phenomenon of exorcism with eschatology.’ G. H. Twelftree, Jesus the exorcist, 173. See also M. Welker, God the Spirit, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994, 195-211;
through exorcisms and the consequences of these exorcisms are particularly the healing of suffering people. Barth says that

‘Like His raisings from the dead, they [Jesus’ exorcisms] reveal the total and absolutely victorious clash of the kingdom of God with nothingness, with the whole world of the chaos negated by God, with the opposing realm of darkness. Far beyond the sin and guilt of man, but also far beyond His need and tragedy, even beyond death itself, the activity of Jesus invaded at this point the sphere of that power which was introduced into the cosmos by the sin and guilt of man and works itself out in his need and tragedy, enslaving all creatures.’

As it was mentioned above, the New Testament itself and the early Church present different perspectives about the role of the devil and to the importance of exorcism. It is not to say that with time the importance was less and less accentuated. Thus, for instance at the end of the second century, exorcisms seem more common practice than at the beginning of the same century. At the same time, in some places the practice of exorcism was more widespread than in others. The conclusion is that, already in the New Testament and in the earlier period of the Church, Christians were used to contextualising the concept of the devil, evil spirits and exorcism.

So it should not be a surprise finding modern theologians contextualising the meaning of Christ’s victory over evil forces. Thus, Bultmann’s process of demythologisation as well as Tillich’s proposal of deliteralising the New Testament, reflect this same tendency of contextualising Christ’s victory over the devil. Bultmann denied that the element of myth could be eliminated from the gospel, but according to him, the myths were to be demythologised. He thought that nobody could use electricity, radio and modern medicine and at the same time believe in the spirit and

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1283 G. H. Twelftree, In the name of Jesus, 127-128; 154; G. H. Twelftree, Jesus the exorcist, 216-228; J. D. G. Dunn, Jesus remembered. 696.

1284 K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV.2 §64, New York: T & T Clark, 1958 (2010), 230.

1285 G. H. Twelftree, In the name of Jesus, 279-295.


1289 R. Bultmann, New Testament & mythology, 2-4. See also G. H. Twelftree, Jesus the exorcist, 6.
wonder world of the New Testament. Surely, in his time Bultmann could not imagine that there would be exorcisms transmitted by TV channels to a broad audience spread across the world. However, Hollenweger rightly says that it is not a conflict between a rational worldview versus a mythological one, but two different myths that are in dispute, e.g. the biblical mythological language and the modern myth of scientific rationalism. But Bultmann's efforts to interpret Christ's victory over the devil as 'a victory over inauthentic existence and unbelief' are not useless. He is trying to bridge the gap between the biblical worldview and his own Western European worldview during the first half of the 20th century. The same point is valid to Tillich's statement that:

'Miracles are performed by him [Jesus Christ] because he fully participates in the misery of the human situation and tries to overcome it wherever the occasion offers itself. In a special way the healing stories show the superiority of the New Being in him over mental possession and its bodily consequences. He appears as the victor over the demons, over the supra-individual structures of destruction. This point was taken up by Paul and the early church. The saving power of the New Being is, above all, power over the enslaving structures of evil... God's presence and power should not be sought in the supranatural interference in the ordinary course of the events but in the power of the New Being to overcome the self-destructive consequences of existential estrangement in and through the created structures of reality.'

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1291 Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen says, 'against the predictions of Western theologians, Christians in the Global South, even after the coming of modernity, continue to face the demonic in various forms in their contexts, and many of them believe the gospel relates to it.' See V. Kärkkäinen, *Christ and reconciliation*, 379.

1292 W. J. Hollenweger, *Umgang mit Mythen*, 67. Karl Barth says that 'In this matter, then, we have to free ourselves, particularly in relation to the Gospel records, from the basically subjectivistic habit of thinking and speaking which would have it either that Jesus accommodated Himself in the interests of pedagogy to the current Judaistic idea (the suggestion of earlier Rationalists), or that He was Himself a prisoner of this view (the modern alternative). It is, of course, also a matter of "ideas," but primarily and decisively it is a matter of objective facts, which cannot as such be jeopardised by a demonstration that the ideas in question are conditioned and limited. The truth was this. Jesus did in fact live in this Judaistic actuality with its presuppositions, which were not only subjective but also objective, not only anthropological but also theological and therefore cosmological.' K. Barth, *Church dogmatics*, IV.2.3, 230.


In summary, they are trying to make sense of Christ's victory over the devil to their own context.

As it has already been said, John's gospel, for instance, speaks quite often about the devil, but it never describes Jesus performing exorcisms. Twelftree says that

'in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus does not confront Satan in the form of demons in a few demented or deranged people. Instead, he confronts the unbelief of all those who, inspired by the father of lies (John 8: 44), refuse to see the truth revealed in his teaching and his glory revealed in his miracles. On receiving him, they know the truth and are freed from the father of lies (cf. John 8: 31-32; 44).'¹²⁹⁵

Thus, for John the confrontation with Satan is not through exorcism nor is the focus on sicknesses caused by him, but instead the confrontation is through Christ's revelation of the truth and the focus is on the unbelief caused by the devil.¹²⁹⁶ This Johannine perspective prevailed also in the Apostolic Fathers at the beginning of the second century.¹²⁹⁷ It is precisely this perspective of the gospel of John that Karl Barth uses for speaking about the Christus Victor.¹²⁹⁸ For Barth it is John 8: 43ff 'which gives any exact information concerning his [devil's] nature.'¹²⁹⁹ For Barth, the power of the devil is to hinder human beings from understanding, acceptance and appropriation of Christ's words¹³⁰⁰ and Christ is victor because he overcomes these evil forces that try to obstruct Christ's word.¹³⁰¹ Therefore it is fully comprehensible that Karl Barth does not relate the concept of Christus Victor to the kingly office, but to the prophetic office.¹³⁰² In other words, Christ's victory over the devil is demonstrated when his message is listened to, accepted and rightly appropriated. As a consequence, Barth warns that the

¹²⁹⁵ G. H. Twelftree, In the name of Jesus, 205.
¹²⁹⁶ G. H. Twelftree, In the name of Jesus, 282.
¹²⁹⁷ G. H. Twelftree, In the name of Jesus, 285-288.
¹²⁹⁸ Barth uses the term Jesus is Victor (in German Jesus ist Sieger) instead of Christus Victor, but it does not seem that he attributes a different meaning to the use of Jesus or Christ. In fact, in his Church Dogmatics, his preferred title is Jesus Christ.
¹²⁹⁹ K. Barth, Church dogmatics, Vol. IV.3.1, 260.
¹³⁰¹ K. Barth, Church dogmatics, Vol. IV.3.1, 261. See also, C. Gunton, 'Salvation,' 154; C. Gunton, The actuality of atonement, 78.
¹³⁰² K. Barth, Church dogmatics, Vol. IV.3.1, 182.
devil should not be taken seriously, because its power is limited and mainly because Christ is victor and therefore the Word of truth will prevail.\textsuperscript{1303}

As a result, Karl Barth separates two concepts that are united in dramatic theory. For him, exorcisms are proof of the inauguration of God’s Kingdom and they should be linked with the Royal man as well as with Christ’s kingly office. They point to the victory of God’s kingdom over the power of darkness and consequently, they show God’s movement toward human beings through Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{1304} However, according to Barth, Christ’s kingly office is connected with sanctification and what Jesus brought from God to his fellows; the power to overcome forces that impede these human beings from practising and enjoying God’s will. On the other hand, the doctrine of \textit{Christus Victor} is associated with the prophetic office. This is because Jesus’ most important victory, according to Barth, is against the resisting element to God’s word present in human beings. Thus, the victory over evil forces, which the exorcisms pointed to, enabling humankind to obey God’s word, i.e. sanctification, is secondary and subsidiary to the victory over the human beings’ resisting element to God’s word.\textsuperscript{1305} In this way, Barth distinguishes the exorcisms in Jesus’ ministry from the doctrine of the \textit{Christus Victor}. The former points to a relative and subsidiary demonstration of the superiority of God’s kingdom over the power of darkness, while the latter points to the decisive victory over the humans’ resisting element.\textsuperscript{1306}

\textsuperscript{1303} Even though victory is not yet final, as this victory is in two stages and the final and decisive stage has still to happen. K. Barth, \textit{Church dogmatics, Vol. IV.3.1}, 261-262. There is an interesting article from Benno van den Toren about the context of Karl Barth’s view on the doctrine of the \textit{Christus Victor} and its relationship to the African view on the doctrine. See B. Van den Toren, ‘The Christus Victor motif in Karl Barth and African Theology: an essay in Intercultural Theology’ in: \textit{Zeitschrift Für Dialektische Theologie} 33/1 (2017), 178-199. This article draws attention to Collins Winn’s interesting work on Karl Barth’s view on the Christus Victor, which highlights the influence of Blumhardt on Karl Barth. See C. T. Collins Winn, “Jesus is Victor:” \textit{The significance of the Blumhardts for the Theology of Karl Barth}, Eugene: Pickwick, 2009.

\textsuperscript{1304} K. Barth, \textit{Church dogmatics, IV.2.3}, 230.

\textsuperscript{1305} K. Barth, \textit{Church dogmatics, IV.3.1}, 256-274.

\textsuperscript{1306} Yet, this resisting element does not exclude the devil but ‘neutral expressions like “the resisting element in man” are usually preferred to personal (though they are not debarred) in describing him [the devil].’ K. Barth, \textit{Church dogmatics, IV.3.1}, 261.
The Dutch Neo-Calvinistic theologians\textsuperscript{1307} criticised Barth especially because they missed in him a clearer connection between Christ’s kingship and the present world. While Barth maintained a sharp separation between God’s kingdom, and consequently Christ’s lordship and kingship, and the present world; the Neo-Calvinists’ proposition was that, since Christ is king, everyone and everything should be brought under his lordship. Barth was afraid of the consequences of the identification of any present worldly kingdom with God’s kingdom, though on the other hand, the Dutch theologians believed that, in Barth, there was no room for any continuity between God’s kingdom and human affairs.\textsuperscript{1308} Evidently, Barth’s view about Christ’s kingship has more to do with the personal existence of humankind before God, but it lacks deeper application to the concrete material world. On the other hand, the Neo-Calvinist concept that Christ’s kingship is related to the present concrete world is entirely related to Christ’s prophetic office. In other words, the fact that Christ is king determines and should determine the way that Christians and also non-Christians live in this world. The spiritual dimension that Christ overcomes evil forces, material and spiritual, and that are hindering human beings to achieve a full and plentiful life, however, is lacking in Neo-Calvinism. It draws attention to Liberation theology’s view about God’s kingdom, which is in this regard very similar to Dutch Neo-Calvinism. Liberation Theology’s Christ’s kingship is also deeply related to Christ’s prophetic office and so the implications to Christian behaviour are much more emphasised than the received benefits of being under Christ’s kingship.\textsuperscript{1309}

The main point is that theologians contextualise the meaning of Christ’s kingly office and consequently try to make sense of the idea of Christ’s victory over the devil to their own audience. With this in mind it is possible to examine if UCKG’s efforts of contextualisation of the meaning of Christ’s victory over the devil are justifiable.

Firstly, the fact that UCKG identifies the presence of God’s Kingdom on Earth with the practice of exorcisms is not strange and it is clearly attested in the synoptic gospels.

\textsuperscript{1307} The most important names among the Dutch Neo-Calvinists are Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. Nevertheless, the Dutch Neo-Calvinistic theologian that engaged with Karl Barth’s theology the most was G. C. Berkouwer (1903-1996).
\textsuperscript{1308} M. E. Brinkman, \textit{De theologie van Karl Barth}, 47-64.
\textsuperscript{1309} M. E. Brinkman, \textit{De theologie van Karl Barth}, 234-240. For a more detailed discussion about Liberation theology view about Christ’s kingship see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.
Secondly, the relationship that it points out between evil powers and sicknesses and consequently between exorcism and healing is also supported by Jesus’ and the Apostle’s stories of healings. Thirdly, its identification of pagan gods with demons, in this specific case naming Orixás as devil’s spirits, seems to be a practice already present in the Bible itself (cf. Acts 16: 16-18) and is certainly a not uncommon practice in the early Church.\textsuperscript{1310} Then, while Bultmann wanted to demythologise and Paul Tillich wanted to ‘deliteralise’ the New Testament, UCKG wants to maintain the biblical mythology and a more literal understanding of biblical stories. Thus, in a sense, UCKG does in its own way exactly what both Tillich and Bultmann did. This kind of contextualisation may sound naïve and almost repugnant to a Western theologian, but it reaches out to millions of people in Brazil and, therefore, it cannot be ignored, thus suggesting that all of those people who are embracing UCKG’s theology are ingenuous and ignorant. The question is in which way the UCKG’s view of Christ contributes to a contextual Protestant Christology in Brazil?

First of all, it is necessary to summarise what has been said in this dissertation about the shifts in Christological thinking in Brazil. Christ, in Brazilian Roman Catholic popular culture, was and to some extent still is a distant Christ, unable of helping his followers, a Christ who inspires more pity than trust. It is always his suffering and death that is sung and praised. The most important holiday in Brazil is still Good Friday and not Easter. The people recognise in Christ their own suffering and sadness, but he is not the one able to alleviate their pain, instead, it is the Virgin Mary, saints and Orixás that are the spiritual forces that can help them.\textsuperscript{1311}

The Protestant preaching of the North American missionaries emerged from this context. They brought a resurrected Christ instead of one who had solely died. His suffering was not useless; on the contrary, through his death he can connect his people with God. He forgives all sins, saves afflicted souls and bestows eternal life. This Christology brought a new image of Jesus Christ, who, instead of being powerless and unable to help his followers, is saviour and redeemer. He is the Christ who establishes a

\textsuperscript{1310} The point is that in Palestine during Jesus’ times, the demons were those of Palestinian religions, however, in Acts it is possible to see that the concept of demons was made broader in order to include Greek-Roman divinities.

\textsuperscript{1311} A. Wessels, \textit{Images of Jesus}, 66-71; J. Dias de Araújo, ‘Images of Jesus,’ 30-38; D. Irarrazaval, ‘Latin America images of Christ,’ 50-71.
relationship between humankind and God. He is the priest and the lamb; the priest who offers himself to redeem his loved ones. In summary, the missionaries brought the concept of Christ’s priestly office to the fore.¹³¹²

This new preaching pertaining to Jesus Christ’s priestly office has had an important impact and it is still the main theme of most evangelical churches in Brazil. Nevertheless, during the second half of the last century, some theologians began to perceive that this theme was too narrow. Christ was not only the saviour of souls, but he had also a message of justice and condemnation against the oppressors who perpetuate a sinful system of misery and suffering. Similarly, they believed that Jesus Christ was a political and social liberator who came to save the whole person, body and soul, in his concrete life. Besides emphasising the death and resurrection, they thought that it was important to point out Jesus’ ministry: his words and deeds.¹³¹³ Those theologians were bringing a new image of Jesus Christ to the Brazilian church and society, a Christ that inspires and challenges people to struggle against injustice and overcome oppression. They introduced the prophetic Christ, e.g. Jesus Christ’s prophetic office.¹³¹⁴

Most Protestant churches in Brazil did not receive this new image of Christ as prophet with great enthusiasm and the emphasis in these circles continued to be on the priestly office of Christ. The prophetic voice still needs to be listened to among them. Nonetheless, Neo-Pentecostalism and the UCKG in particular brought a third dimension to the Brazilian context. With its emphasis on Christ as the King who overcomes the evil forces and through exorcism heals and makes people prosperous, it touches a great amount of Brazilian people, especially those living in the poor areas of the big cities. Christ’s third office, kingly office, occupies a central place in the UCKG’s preaching and practice.

The importance of this new emphasis may be viewed in two different areas. Firstly, it embraces an Afro-Brazilian cosmology and spirituality. Historical or classical Protestantism, which emphasises the priestly Christ, totally rejected the popular religiosity and especially the Afro-Brazilian religions. This religiosity was considered pagan and superstitious. The missionaries thought that, with a good formal education

¹³¹² This theme is explored in the Chapter 3 of this dissertation.
¹³¹⁴ This theme is explored in more detail in Chapter 4.
and with a stronger reformed influence, the mysticisms and superstitions would vanish completely. Liberation theologians were divided about this matter. Some were against these beliefs because they would blind the poor people so that the masses could not perceive their own situation of oppression. Other liberation theologians were more sympathetic to popular spirituality, but they still doubted the acceptance of the fundamentals of this spirituality. In other words, they were willing to stimulate this spirituality, but they rejected its theological structure, for example, they rejected the idea of spiritual forces interfering and solving socio-political problems. On the other hand, UCKG incorporates the theological perspective and structure of the Afro-Brazilian religions in its own theology. It modifies and inverts some meanings, but it still maintains the basic theological structure\textsuperscript{1315} as shown in this chapter. Its adepts are not challenged to leave their old beliefs about magical forces that interfere in the material world. Instead they learn about a very powerful spiritual force that is infinitely superior to that force of their former religion. They hear about the king Jesus who overcomes the evil forces and brings material and spiritual enrichment.

Secondly, UCKG’s theology offers a way for these people to distance themselves from their past reality and help them to make a break with the past.\textsuperscript{1316} Most of them came to the big cities in search of a new life. They wanted to be part of the modern society, profit from modernisation and participate in the global world. But at the same time, they have their old religion and beliefs and these beliefs were not compatible with their aspirations. Their old beliefs do not work in this new context. They are looking for a new identity and a new spirituality.\textsuperscript{1317} UCKG’s preaching and practice offers them the possibility of reconfiguring and reframing their old beliefs in a new and strange context.\textsuperscript{1318} Thus, the \textit{Orixás} are exorcised and with them the traditional social structure, where they lived as second-class citizens, where they were considered inferior because


\textsuperscript{1316} This expression is used by Meyer in reference to the Ghanaian Pentecostals. See B. Meyer, “Make a complete break with the past,” 316-349.


they believed in superstitions and witchcraft, and where the well-educated people were the only ones able to prosper and decide what was best for the poor and ignorant people. In the UCKG’s preaching sin is seen as a force that can only be overcome by spiritual help, i.e. the help that the church provides. In this way, they get a new impulse to overpower sin in their lives. The time is not more circular as in their old faith, but they do not need to wait for a prosperous life only in the afterlife either. On the contrary, the prosperity is for here and now. It is a progressing time; UCKG promises that the present will be better than the past. The truth of these promises may be tested right now. Similarly, the poor people do not have to long for a possible blessing, but they enter in a relationship of interchange with God and now they can demand that God bless them, which was the kind of relationship that they were used to in Candomblé, for instance. The experience of exorcism, and healings offered and practiced by UCKG make Christ concrete in their lives. This is a theology that reaches out and touches millions of people in Brazil.

What is lacking in UCKG’s theology? What are the negative points in this Christology of the kingly office? The main issue is precisely its lack of awareness of the two other offices. UCKG needs to consider the prophetic aspect of Jesus Christ. They should engage with social issues in a more critical way, because its theology succumbs to

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1319 P. Birman, ‘Conversion from Afro-Brazilian religions to Neo-Pentecostalism,’ 115-132; P. Birman, ‘Feitiçarias, territórios e resistências,’ 327-338.
1320 As already mentioned, in the Afro-Brazilian context sin is related to breaking a taboo and the concepts of either shame or guilt are not present in this context.
1321 R. von Sinner, ‘“Struggling with Africa,’” 125-127. There are many testimonies of people who were exorcised and had their lives transformed. Many are available to watch on youtube. See for example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oORenXrT]BQ&list=PLaO1wMgexHUvoSk4E32pINxDvtA5D66NS last access on 03/11/2017.
1322 Michael Welker highlights the importance of the concrete experiences of deliverance and liberation that are transmitted by exorcisms. See M. Welker, God the Spirit, 208-211. Considering Pentecostalism, Anderson speaks about the importance of exorcism and healing to poor people in the majority world. A. Anderson, An introduction to Pentecostalism, 231-234.
the present Neo-capitalist system too easily.\textsuperscript{1324} It was presented in the Chapter 4 that an important aspect of Liberation Theology in the current context is its theological criticism against the idolatry of the market. The Christology of the UCKG must listen to this criticism as well. Unfortunately, the UCKG’s preachers can see the presence of evil spirits everywhere but not in the Neo-capitalist global economical system that is widening the gulf between rich and poor in Brazil. Walter Wink has presented the thesis that every domination system has a spiritual ethos. He says,

’what people in the world of the Bible experienced and called “Principalities and Power” was in fact real. They were discerning the actual spirituality at the centre of the political, economic, and cultural institutions of their day. The spiritual aspect of the Powers is not simply a “personification” of institutional qualities that would exist whether they were personified or not. On the contrary, the spirituality of an institution exists as a real aspect of the institution even when it is not perceived as such. Institutions have an actual spiritual ethos, and we neglect this aspect of institutional life to our peril.’\textsuperscript{1325}

Thus, according to Wink, besides the human element, there also is a spiritual evil element in domination systems and that both elements should be addressed. Nevertheless, instead of combating the evil that exists in the social-economic system, the UCKG considers the system neutral or unchangeable and only speaks of how to be successful and how to benefit from this system. The UCKG should engage with the powers and criticise the powers that are responsible for the current Brazilian situation. If the UCKG continues to approach the issues of poverty, illnesses, and injustice only on an individual level it will not contribute to the transformation and renewal of Brazilian society. As already stated, it is legitimate to hold the biblical cosmology in the Brazilian context where this cosmology is acceptable, nonetheless, it should be done at a broader level and not only on a personal level. Kärkkäinen says that ‘the Christus Victor model contains tremendous potential for linking atonement with sociopolitical liberation.’ And then he adds, ‘In his salvific work Christ not only conquers principalities and powers but also issues a judgment on unjustified human violence, cruelty, oppression, and tyranny. Christ, the Suffering Messiah, is on the side of sufferers. He both opposes violence and empowers those in need of power and persistence for the work of liberation.’\textsuperscript{1326}

\textsuperscript{1324} cf. L. Togarasei, ’The Pentecostal gospel of prosperity,’ 349.
\textsuperscript{1325} W. Wink, \textit{Engaging the powers: Discernment and resistance in a world of domination}, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992, 6-10, esp. 5.
\textsuperscript{1326} V. Kärkkäinen, \textit{Christ and reconciliation}, 378-379.
The lack of critical engagement with the socio-economic domination system in the UCKG’s Christology must be addressed. Michael Welker says, ‘the royal gestalt of God’s reign is characterised by a praxis of love and by the freedom mediated by that love. This praxis in its own turn is governed by loving acceptance, healing, liberating teaching and education, and the concern with giving everyone access to such.’

In the same way, the UCKG’s view about sin as a spiritual force is helpful for many people that are struggling to overcome sin. However, its message lacks a view about the guilt generated by sin. In the UCKG’s preaching the responsibility for people’s misfortunes and sin is always of the devil. Thus, every wrongdoing is Satan’s guilt. On the one hand, this message resonates with many afro-Brazilian people who were used to the African religions’ concept of taboo and not to the traditional Christian concept of moral sin. On the other hand, Jesus Christ’s message clearly challenges some people’s moral behaviour, especially of religious leaders in his time. Therefore, it is necessary to have a balance. N. T. Wright draws attention to the fact that for the apostle Paul there is a battle between God and the devil and that pagan’s sinful acts are consequence of being under the devil’s power and that only Christ may set them free from this influence. However, after being delivered from this evil influence the converted pagans must follow Christ’s commands and not go back to Satan’s dominion and it is their responsibility to avoid Satan’s influence. In other words, in the biblical cosmology, especially as presented by Paul, it is legitimate to say that to overcome sin it is necessary to be delivered from devil’s dominion, but, at the same time, it is human responsibility to follow God’s command preached by Jesus.

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1328 Victor Ezigbo, referring to African Christologies, says that most of contextual African Christologies are solution-oriented and ‘have ignored that is christologically problematic to see Jesus as a solution without at the same time and in the same relation construe him as the one who questions Christians’ understandings of their needs and the solutions they anticipate.’ V. I. Ezigbo, *Re-imagining African Christologies: Conversing with the interpretations and appropriations of Jesus in contemporary African Christianity*, Eugene: Pickwich, 2010, 296.
Another aspect is the idea of exchange, which attracts many people used to this concept. But this is based almost solely on Malachi 3:10, which is abundantly cited and stretched to its limits to support its theology. Nevertheless, the many passages about giving without expecting something in return or those that speak about receiving God’s blessings graciously and freely are absent. Grace and forgiveness are substituted quite often by a battle against Satan and his demons. Thus, it lacks an emphasis on the priestly office and that Jesus forgives and graciously offers all sorts of blessings to his people.

The eschatological ‘already’ and ‘not yet’ are also not present and many people become frustrated because they do not receive the promised blessings immediately. Rudolf von Sinner says,

’a theological critique is the total abandonment of eschatology. Even the IURD’s motto, “Stop Suffering”, indicates an immediatist view: now itself your life is to change, now you are to be liberated from all that holds you back from success, now you have to be healed, now you have to become victorious and get the blessings to which you are entitled. This is the message.’

It is comprehensible that, according to their own Afro-Brazilian worldview, many people in Brazil expect to receive God’s blessings right now and not in a distant future, but their worldview should be complemented with the concept of an eschatological hope and reserve.

It was said in the fourth Chapter of this dissertation that one of the issues with Liberation Theology is that it became ecclesiocentric and too concerned about internal disputes within the Roman Catholic Church. The same may happen with the view of Christus Victor as well as the kingly office. These theological views should not become doctrines of only one church or movement. To summarise, it is not possible to simply adopt the Christus Victor view of the UCKG, it is necessary to relate it to the views of the other two offices.

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1333 R. von Sinner, ‘“Struggling with Africa”,’ 127-128.
1335 R. von Sinner, ‘“Struggling with Africa”,’ 129.
In regard to Public Theology, the contribution of the UCKG is mostly indirect.\textsuperscript{1338} Surely, it empowers people and gives confidence and hope to its members to participate in the political project of UCKG.\textsuperscript{1339} Patrícia Birman, speaking about UCKG’s believers, says that now ‘the ex-Afro-Brazilian religious practitioners have thereby broken the convention of silence in the public sphere that has been historically reserved for them as actors at a political level.’\textsuperscript{1340} So now they look at themselves as part of a system that they did not believe could work for them. The church presents itself as an alternative to the Roman Catholic hegemony and UCKG’s members are called to participate in a battle against Catholicism, Afro-Brazilian religions and other non-Christian religions. The UCKG presents a more public religion than a public theology. In other words, the UCKG’s proposal is to substitute Catholic hegemony for the UCKG’s hegemony, whereas a public theology seeks for sound academic arguments, critical reflection and dialogue in the actual context. Public theology is also committed to religious pluralism and is not based in the project of one particular church.\textsuperscript{1341} Therefore, a theological critical view of society is not offered and a construction of a more mature citizenship is not achieved through this model.

The question is whether it is reasonable to expect people with a mentality formed by magical thinking to engage in politics in a critical and constructive way. Surely, it is difficult to imagine a public discourse that would combine exorcisms and a socio-political critique. But is this combination not already present in the New Testament? The task of a contemporary contextual Christology is not to replace a traditional cosmology by a materialistic western cosmology. On the contrary, the people’s cosmology must be respected. It is not by chance that many people are converting to the UCKG or looking for the UCKG’s miracles and exorcisms in times of trouble.\textsuperscript{1342} Cosmology does not

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1338} For an interesting empirical research with a UCKG’s member pointing to his social engagement after his own conversion see A. P. Galdeano, ‘Salmo 127, versículo 1: ativismo religioso e odernamentos da segurança em uma periferia de São Paulo’ in: \textit{Religião e Sociedade} 34/1 (2014), 38-60.
  \item \textsuperscript{1339} Rudolf von Sinner has worked extensively with this subject, i.e. UCKG’s political project. See p. ex. R. von Sinner, ‘Pentecostalism and citizenship in Brazil,’ 99-117.
  \item \textsuperscript{1340} P. Birman, ‘Conversion to Neo-Pentecostalism,’ 129.
  \item \textsuperscript{1341} R. von Sinner, ‘Towards a theology of citizenship,’ 194-203. See also R. von Sinner, \textit{The churches and democracy in Brazil}, 279-348.
  \item \textsuperscript{1342} The same phenomenon occurs in Africa where people revert to traditional religious practices when they face problems or uncertainties. See V. I. Ezigbo, \textit{Re-imagining African Christologies}, 17.
\end{itemize}
change easily. However, a contextual Christology does not have to be naïve or uncritical. Jesus and Paul are examples of theologians who using a traditional and dualistic cosmology challenged the political status quo and proposed a real transformation of the whole society and not only of individual believers.

Jesus was an exorcist and through deliverance he brought liberation to personal concrete lives. But at the same time, he had a critical message against the oppressors of the poor people and a promise of liberation: political and social. Although God’s kingdom was presented as deliverance from evil forces that interfere in the social reality, it still is a kingdom where justice and love prevail against oppression and enslavement. Moreover, he was still the Lamb and priest whose death was in favour of his followers. In this way, a theology which combines these three elements would not only be possible but also desirable in the Brazilian context and elsewhere.

The conclusion of this chapter is that a contextual Protestant Christology for Brazil should engage with the three different developments or shifts that marked the history of Brazilian Protestantism, i.e. Jesus Christ as Priest, as emphasised by the North-American missionaries in the second half of 19th century, Jesus Christ as Prophet, as stressed by Liberation theologians in the second half of the 20th century, and Jesus Christ as King as highlighted by UCKG in the last decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. It should take into consideration the three offices of Christ in its theological thinking. To touch the millions of Brazilians that are struggling to overcome poverty, to engage critically with a society that has wrestled for centuries to be modern and industrialised and to be relevant for one of the most Christian religious nations of the world; the Brazilian Christ has to be Priest, Prophet and King.

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1343 For Jesus’ political critique see Chapter 4 above.
1344 Twelftree demonstrates that especially in Mark’s gospel the exorcisms performed by Jesus did not have a liberationist political dimension, but they generated liberation on a personal level. G. H. Twelftree, *In the name of Jesus*, 105-111.
7. Summary and Conclusions

The main goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate what are the main points that shape the contours of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context. The aimed Christology is meant to be contextual rather than an abstract reflection on the ways that Christ may fit in the Brazilian context. Thus, this dissertation takes into consideration the different Christologies that exist in Brazil. The reason for that is that every Christology that emerged or came to Brazil and had an impact on Brazilian people was answering to specific issues in that context. The message of Christ was heard and accepted by a group of Brazilians because it helped them to cope with a particular situation and it assisted them when face the issues they were struggling with. Context changes and in a continental country like Brazil, it renders impossible to find a Christology that can answer all the questions as they are not the same for everyone. To a great extent, there are different Christologies in Brazil because there are different contexts and different groups moving from one place to another as well as moving from one social space to another. In order to understand the shifts in the different Brazilian Christologies, the starting point should be to find a framework to understand these shifts. At first glance, this is a very difficult task since the different Christologies that are present in Brazil seem to be incompatible.

In light of the distinct Christologies, the three metaphors of the threefold office have been enriched and have been given contextual meaning in the Brazilian context. The doctrine, starting with Eusebius of Caesarea, has a long tradition in Christian thinking. However, it was in John Calvin's theological reflection that it started to play a central role in Christology and from him onwards in the whole Reformed theology and not only in the Reformed tradition but also in other Protestant traditions. Along with the Protestant developments, more recently, it has also spread to Catholic circles. The scheme is used as a heuristic tool rather than as a dogmatic principle, as if there were no other ways of doing Reformed Christology. The threefold office helps to understand the shifts themselves. It shows why there was a need of a shift. It indicates the importance of finding a balance between the different Christologies. And it creates space for ecumenical dialogue and cooperation between different churches and movements.
The scheme also points out to the main elements of the relationships between God and human beings in Jesus Christ. Each office presents a different aspect of the relationship between humans and God through Jesus Christ. Thus, in the priestly office the vertical relationship from humans to God in Jesus Christ is emphasised. Human beings always fall short of God's goal for them, they recognise that they are not perfect and fear facing God's perfection. The priestly office highlights the fact that Jesus Christ represents humans before God and takes them as they are with all their imperfection to God's throne. Jesus Christ is the priest and the lamb that offers access to God to everyone. The kingly office presents the vertical relationship between God and humans in Jesus Christ as well, but in the opposite direction, i.e. from God to human beings. It highlights that through Jesus Christ God gives blessings to his people. God is a gracious God and he bestows upon human beings all kinds of spiritual and material blessings. Jesus Christ is the channel of these blessings. He is the King who reigns over the whole world and provides his disciples with all sorts of God's gifts. The prophetic office, in turn, emphasises the horizontal aspect of Jesus' work. It speaks of how human beings must relate to other human beings in the light of Christ's ministry, life, death and resurrection. Everyone who is touched by Jesus Christ's deeds and words must respond to him appropriately. It means that there is a way of relating to other people and to the whole society that is revealed in Jesus' ministry. Jesus Christ is a prophet who teaches his disciples how to live in this world and how to appropriately relate to everyone else.

The first Protestant Christology that had an impact on Brazil was brought by the North American missionaries that arrived in the second half of the 19th Century. There were other efforts to bring the Reformed faith to Brazil: firstly, the French Huguenots in the 16th Century and then, the Dutch Reformed groups in the 17th Century. Both attempts were unsuccessful for different reasons, as it was clear that Portugal was not willing to accept a foreign presence in its territory. In the 19th Century the context was different. Part of the population was dissatisfied with some developments in the Roman Catholic Church and the whole process of Romanisation of the Church, which intended to make the Brazilian Roman Catholic Church to strictly follow rites and rules given by the Vatican. Likewise, there was an appeal for a modernisation of the country and Protestantism was associated with development and modernisation. Brazil had become independent of Portugal and it was necessary to find a new identity for the Nation. Protestantism seemed to be a possible alternative for this new identity. The first
churches that were formed in that period, inspired by missionaries’ preaching did not attract a big percentage of population but their Christology with an emphasis on Jesus’ priestly office became the main element of Protestant theology for most Brazilian churches to the present day. Their core message was that Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of people’s sins. Jesus Christ was the priest and lamb; the redeemer who justifies the sinners that believe in him. Several authors describe the Christology of Brazilian people before the missionaries as a weak Christology. Its message is that of a dead Christ who suffered as a victim; although innocent, he was killed by the powerful leaders of his time. His image is of an agonising Christ that invokes pity rather than hope. The suffering people could indentify themselves with his suffering, but he was not capable of redeeming the people or changing their situation. When the people needed help they would call upon the Virgin Mary or the many Saints. Jesus could sometimes be one of the Saints they would call upon but not the Saviour or main helper. Whereas, the message of the missionaries was very clear in affirming that Jesus’ death was not in vain and that his suffering was part of a greater plan that brings salvation and redemption. The first Brazilian preachers passed the message forward and the idea that Christ was the priest and the lamb became the core message of all evangelical churches in Brazil and until today it is the main Christological message.

The message of Jesus’ priestly office should no longer be considered the shibboleth of the Christian faith, as it has been the case in many Protestant circles in the Protestant tradition in general and in Brazil in particular. However, it must not be ignored when identifying the main components of a Protestant Christology for the Brazilian context. Despite many criticisms against the doctrine and the need of revising some aspects such as the sharp distinction between God’s wrath and Jesus’ mercy, its legalism, individualism, passivity, and overemphasis on violent sacrifice, it still has the potential to endow meaning to millions of people. Many people who feel that they fall short of God’s expectations find comfort and hope in the message that Jesus takes them to God and presents them justified before the God of love. However, Jesus Christ’s priestly office cannot be the only theme in the Christology. Jesus Christ is also prophet and king and these three offices need to be in equilibrium.

Contexts change and in Brazil it was not different. In the second half of the 20th century, more or less, one hundred years after the North American missionaries arrived
in Brazil, the country had passed through significant changes. The process of urbanisation was accelerating, more people had access to a formal education, including a number of young people getting higher education, and also a new middle class was emerging. The socialist experience in Cuba seemed to many a great success. In this context a new Christian critical spirit started to flourish and a desire for a theology that could answer to the expectations of the majority of Brazilian people. There was an aspiration for a contextual theology, which would serve and emerge from the people rather than only from and for the elites. It would not be a theology for and from the oppressing powers; a theology of the status quo, but rather, it should be a theology for the liberation of the oppressed. Thus, in that context among Protestants and Catholics the main outlines of a Liberation Theology were formulated.

One of the main themes of this new theology was Jesus Christ’s prophetic role. Jesus was seen as the liberator, who preached and acted against the oppressing powers who held poor people captive. Everything Jesus spoke or did had political connotations. His main message was about the Kingdom of God, which existed in opposition to the kingdom of the evil. Jesus was condemned and executed as a political agitator and a messiah pretender. According to Liberation theologians, Jesus was a prophet that challenges his disciples to live in conformity with God’s rule of love and justice. Thus, Liberation Theology brought Christ’s prophetic office to the fore. Jesus did not only die for the sins of many, but he also lived and in his historical context he proclaimed and performed God’s Kingdom which is a reign of justice.

Liberation Theology in general and its emphasis on the prophetic role of Jesus’ ministry was an important development in Brazilian Christology. The Christology of the Evangelical churches in Brazil was too focused on the salvation of souls and very pessimistic about any involvement in political matters. The prevailing idea was that any significant change would occur only when a bigger percentage of the population would be converted to the Protestant faith. Liberation Christology highlighted the importance of reflecting on Jesus’ ministry on earth rather than only on his death and resurrection. Moreover, it emphasised the meaning of the Historical Jesus for Christology. It intended to be a Christology ‘from below’ rather than a traditional Christology ‘from above’ which was the case with the main Christologies in the history of Christianity. Furthermore, it equally presents a historical project. According to many Liberation theologians, Jesus
had a ministry that served his people against the evil powers of his time and now it is necessary to analyse the present historical context and assist the present-day people with words and deeds that may denounce, challenge and overcome the existing evil powers. Inspired by the dependence theory, which was, in its turn, inspired by Marxist ideas, they proposed an interpretation of the prophetic role of Jesus that could help people to fight against the Latin American and global socio-economic system that was oppressing millions of people and making the gap between rich and poor still larger.

Almost fifty years since the first Liberation Christologies were written, Liberation Christology and its emphasis on Christ’s prophetic office are still valid and meaningful. It needs, however, to be revised and an update of some aspects of its thinking, such as the emphasis on poverty as if poverty were the only issue in the society, and also its Marxist framework needs to be analysed and re-evaluated. Mainly, the issues that Liberation Theology needs to face are the lack of a historical project and the loss of the vertical dimension in its reflection. Regarding the historic project, the revolutionary alternative of the 60s and 70s has lost its appeal. The dependence theory is not as useful when analysing the complexities of a globalised world as well as the social issues of a country in development as is the case of Brazil. But, it does not mean that there is no space for any historical project. Many theologians have spoken about the importance of developing a Public theology that engages with the whole society in the search for solutions for the deep-lying issues in the Brazilian context. On the other hand, if Liberation Theology loses its vertical dimension it becomes a liberation discourse without theological significance. Liberation Christology has an important message about how to deal with the whole society and how to make the message of Jesus Christ relevant in the current context. However, it runs the risk of transforming Christ’s message in a political message without reference to the relationship between humans and God and the dilemmas and expectations that are involved in this relationship. To avoid this impoverishment of Jesus’ life and message it needs to include the other offices. The prophetic role needs to be in balance with the other two offices, the priestly and the kingly offices.

The third important shift in Brazilian Christology emerges with the Neo-Pentecostal movement at the end of 70s and beginning of the 80s. This movement is sharply criticised by all former Evangelical and Protestant churches as well as by the
Roman Catholic Church; however, it attracts millions of Brazilians and has had a huge impact on Brazilian society. To appreciate the importance of this shift, however, two things should be highlighted. Firstly, the first two Christological shifts were very different in many aspects but they had one thing in common. They did not incorporate the Brazilian popular religiosity, with its theological framework in their reflection. Among Liberation theologians there was a group more sympathetic toward popular religiosity, but they still did not engage with their cosmological elements. The Pentecostal movement engaged more with Brazilian culture and because of that attracted much more people of the low classes to their congregations. But still, they did not include in their reflection the main elements of the Afro-Brazilian religions. Secondly, it is necessary to see the change in context in Brazil. From the 60s onwards there is a massive internal migration from the North-eastern region to the big cities of the Southeast, mainly Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Many people that were used to the Afro-Brazilian religious mindset moved to the big cities looking for better jobs and socio-economic improvement. They wanted be part of the modern world and take profit of the Brazilian modernisation. However, the migration was chaotic and the conditions were not what they expected. Moreover, they needed to reshape their lives and their communities in a different, very often, hostile environment. They were open to change their religion but they had a way of thinking that was part of their identity and that would not go away so easily.

There was an effort to build a Negra theology in Brazil, but this theology did not attract the majority of Afro-Brazilian people. Very often, the outcome was the opposite. Many Afro-Brazilians left the Christian faith and became only members of Afro-Brazilian cults or converted to Pentecostal or Neo-Pentecostal churches. The issue with Afro-Brazilian religion is that it did not respond to the expectation of the people who were migrating to the big cities with the dream of succeeding in the modern cities, which were symbol of progress and development and the Negra theology did not have an answer to those expectations either.

The Neo-Pentecostal Christology presented by the UCKG is a syncretistic Christology, which incorporates several elements of the Afro-Brazilian religions, sometimes transforming them or inverting them, but all the main elements are there and resonate with the Afro-Brazilian way of thinking. In this sense the UCKG is the first
Christology that includes the Afro-Brazilian theological elements in its discourse. Basically, it brings the concept of the *Christus Victor* to the fore. This concept has a long tradition in the Christian theological thinking and it resonates well with African thinking in general and Afro-Brazilian thinking in particular. The main idea is that Christ overcame the evil powers that held people captive and set them free bestowing upon them every divine blessing, especially material blessings. It presents Jesus Christ’s kingly office in a clear and practical way. Calvin and the Reformed tradition after him interpreted the kingly office as indicating that Jesus offers us spiritual blessings, not excluding material blessings, but certainly emphasising the spiritual ones. The UCKG, on the other hand, emphasises the material blessings and thus, it preaches a prosperity gospel.

The issues with this Christology are evident. It tends to focus on the material aspect of God’s blessings to humans rather than on the responsibilities of Christian people to the world or to the spiritual aspect of a Christian life. Nevertheless, it cannot be discarded, since it responds to the expectations of millions of people and empowers them to cope with the difficult and unjust situations that they have to face in the new context of the big cities. It gives them hope and strength to succeed in the new context. Moreover, it takes into consideration their own way of thinking and thus, it is more understandable to them. The biggest issue with this new shift in Christology is that like the other two before it, it tends to ignore the other elements of the threefold office. The UCKG’s Christology must acknowledge and recognise the prophetic aspect of Jesus’ work and the responsibilities with the whole world as well as the message of grace and forgiveness offered by Christ, the lamb and priest.

Certainly, it is a big challenge to reconcile all these three shifts in the Brazilian Christology and build one Christology that works with all these different emphases. Nevertheless, any Christology for the Brazilian context needs to be aware of these different shifts and deal with the various Christologies that emerged in Brazilian context. Even though each one answered specific expectations of particular contexts in Brazilian history they are all alive and present in Brazilian religious scenario. Thus, the first task of a theologian for the Brazilian context is to keep in balance these three shifts and maintain the three offices with their strong points, however, at the same time, it has to criticise and overcome the limits and weaknesses of these shifts.
To maintain the equilibrium between these three shifts is not an easy task. Especially, since it is hard to combine the kingly office, the concept of the Christus Victor and the Afro-Brazilian mindset behind it with the other two offices. The rejection of most of Neo-Pentecostal preaching and ministry by media and traditional churches is a rejection of an Afro-Brazilian religious way of thinking. They are shifts that occurred in different contexts and point to different cultures that are present in Brazil. In this regard, contextual Christology in Brazil must be a work of intercultural theology. However, to keep the balance between the kingly office and the other two offices is not impossible. In Jesus’ time people believed in evil powers, in the influence of evil spirits on people’s lives and, consequently, the need of healing and exorcism, and, very so often, healings through exorcisms. At the same time, Jesus ministry presented a clear political criticism against the socio-political system of his time, as Liberation Theology has demonstrated. Thus, if both were maintained in balance in the person and ministry of Jesus it can be equally done in the 21st Century Brazilian context. Of course, the same person, normally, does not have an Afro-Brazilian religious background and a contemporary Western philosophical background. It should be an exercise of acknowledging the two different mindsets and philosophical or theological backgrounds and try to reflect on and from that perspective. The threefold office can help theologians to build Christologies that are more aware of the different cultures, how they relate to each other and how they are necessary for a fruitful and enriching dialogue. The recent history in Brazil is marked by hard confrontation between different Christian traditions and a scheme as the one presented in this dissertation can help theologians to see the differences in perspective and overcome this spirit of apologetics and confrontation.

Rather than only theologians, a contextual Christology has to address the perspective of the actual believers as well. The evangelical Christian who adopts the priestly office as the main Christological doctrine needs to realise that Christ’s prophetic ministry is a message to the present Brazilian context. Jesus challenged the Jewish religious authorities of his time as well as the Roman Empire. To be a disciple of Christ should involve engaging with the social, political and economic wider context. Christians, rather than only comforted by Jesus’ sacrifice, are challenged to work for God’s Kingdom to become a reality. They need to affirm that God’s life and ministry is a way of life that prophetically challenges the status quo. They also need to be aware of the cosmic implication of Jesus exorcisms and healings. Jesus overcame evil powers and
established a New Era. He did that during his ministry as a sign of God’s Kingdom and after his resurrection and ascension, he became the *Christus Victor*. Jesus Christ’s dominion over the forces of evil means that he is able to bestow God’s blessing to his disciples. Jesus’ salvation is for here and now rather than for the afterlife only.

Similarly, Christians who adopted the view of Liberation Theology and of the Jesus Christ’s prophetic office needs to broaden their understanding with the idea of the *Christus Victor* as well as the doctrine of the kingly office. They need to realise that Jesus Christ is already renewing the world and that the transformation does not depend on them only. The socio-political system is against the poor and the oppressed, but sometimes it is necessary more than only a social change. Very often, political and economic systems become a spiritual force that needs to be exorcised and overcome. The believer who adopts the view of the prophetic office also needs to appreciate the salvific implication of Christ’s death. Jesus’ death was more than a political event, it was a sacrifice that points to God’s grace and forgiveness.

In the same way, the Christian believer who adopts the view of the *Christus Victor* and the kingly office needs to recognise the implications of Jesus ministry challenging and criticising the religious and political authorities. Christ’s ministry is about engagement with politics and social issues rather than solely with spiritual forces. On the other hand, the Neo-Pentecostal believer in general and the UCKG’s believer in particular needs to recognise the full worth of Christ’s grace revealed in his priestly office. The UCKG’s believer as well as the member of the Liberation Theology movement have to be careful not to transform the Christian view of God’s liberation into a doctrine of liberation or salvation by good works.

Another important feature of a Brazilian contextual Protestant Christology is that it has to be a public Christology. It was said that an issue with the recent Liberation Theology is that it lost its appeal to a historic project. Any historic project for the current context needs to be broad and it needs to acknowledge all the complexities in the Brazilian modern society, however, it is necessary to have a clear historic project. Ironically, it is the UCKG that presents a power plan. Nevertheless, Brazil needs more than a power plan of a single church, even though this church is willing to include other churches in its plan. A broad and open reflection on the possibilities of reform and renewing of the country as a whole is necessary.
Every shift answered to specific expectations and aspirations on the part of the Brazilian population. The priestly office was brought up when part of the population wanted the modernisation of the country. The popular religiosity with its weak Christology of the dead Christ was not responding to those expectations and the missionaries and first Brazilian Protestant ministers preaching of Jesus as the lamb and priest gave them a new perspective and inspiration to change their context. Similarly, the prophetic office was brought when part of the population wanted a modernisation that would affect the whole population rather than only a few privileged. The message that Jesus’ ministry had a political aspect and that he challenged the political and religious powers of his time and that his ministry was towards the poor and marginalised people gave them courage and insights to wrestle with the dilemmas and difficulties in Brazilian context of the second half of the 20th century. The UCKG, in turn, preached about the kingly office and the Christus Victor mainly to the people who had migrated to the big cities and wanted to succeed in the modern and prosperous places in Brazil. Those people were trying to build a new identity that could help them to succeed in the modern world. However, at the same time, they had their traditional religious views about evil spirits and spiritual forces and they need a message that answers to these particular issues as well. The UCKG’s message that Jesus Christ has dominion over evil powers and he is powerful to exorcise all evil spirits that put their progress in risk was encouraging. And also, the message that Jesus is victorious and that he wants to bless his disciples and make them victorious inspired them to believe that they could succeed. This message gave them strength to combine the aspirations for success in a world where they had never been given a chance to win before and their views about spiritual forces and how these forces may jeopardise their success or bring them to victory. All these aspirations are still there and the three shifts have an appeal in the current Brazilian context. A contextual Protestant Christology cannot opt for one of the groups or for some aspirations. It has to engage with all these groups and respond to all their aspirations.

Each one of the three shifts in Brazilian Christology were analysed in light of the three criteria that were developed in the history of Christianity to judge Christian Church and theology, i.e. church or contemporary worship, tradition and Bible. The reason for using these three criteria is twofold. Firstly, they are useful to judge whether these Christological views which are found in the Brazilian theological history are
coherent and acceptable developments in the Christian faith. They allow us to assess the validity of these Christologies. The conclusion was that the three shifts are based on Christian grounds and are authentic Christian Christologies.

However, the use of these three criteria is useful to show the need for ecumenical mutual acknowledgment as churches in Brazil and theologians from one perspective, very often, attack other Christian groups from other persuasions, sometimes expelling them out of the church or affirming that their church is not a Christian Church at all. Anti-Catholicism became part of the Protestant identity and lack of cooperation among Protestant denominations is another unfortunate characteristic of Brazilian Protestant context. To see that all these shifts are in line with the main criteria developed in the history of Christianity can help all parts to recognise each other as part of the universal Church. A contextual Christology must help Christians to engage with each other and to deal with their differences in a constructive way. The threefold office scheme has the potential to do that and to give theologians a framework to analyse other points of view in a more sympathetic way.

To engage in fruitful dialogue with each other is hard when someone believes that there is only one truth and that only one of the groups can hold the truth. Many theologians do not appreciate the other’s views because they believe that if one of them is right the other must be wrong. Many affirm that Bible cannot be mistaken and there must be only one interpretation valid for fundamental texts. Consequently, for them the theological language must present a theological view that points out the truth, which is firmly based on the right interpretation of the scriptures. Moreover, many would say that it is not possible to compare the Old Princetonian Theology and Liberation Theology, which are very solid academic theologies, to UCKG’s theology, which is a grass roots theology, not consistent and not well structured. Thus, to enable a Protestant Christology for the Brazilian context based on dialogue and mutual enrichment it is necessary to expand the concepts of truth, hermeneutics and theological language. The truth should be viewed as performative, the hermeneutics as contextual and the theological language as metaphorical.

Even though these three shifts explained through the three offices scheme be the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context, it does not mean that these Christologies do not need to be revised. Thus, the concept of referential truth
of the Old Princeton School brought by the North American missionaries and embraced by the Brazilian churches is too rigid and does not allow space for contextualising the message and dialogue between different traditions. In the same way their view on biblical hermeneutics does not consider the role of the interpreter and does not take the context in interpretation. Similarly, they believe that theological language is a scientific language that points out the truths or the absolute truth. If the priestly office is not revised and these concepts are not expanded, the priestly office becomes a stumbling block rather than a fruitful element for building a contextual Protestant Christology. Liberation Theology recognises the context in hermeneutics and the performative aspect of truth is emphasised, and they see more clearly the metaphorical use of theological language but still their views need to deepen more on these elements. Very often, they create a new fundamentalism and dogmatism and reject any other interpretation that it is not their own. In the same way they, tend to favour some Bible texts and neglect others. Likewise, they still use theological language as if it were a scientific language. The UCKG’s Christology needs to be revised as well, for example, their view of hermeneutics values the role of the reader and it opens for the reader new possibilities of engaging with his or her context and struggles, but it tends to see the Bible as a source of promises to inspire Christians to achieve success rather than a story that may inspire but also challenge, confront and combat against people’s selfish desires. Regarding the theological language they value the metaphorical aspect and emphasise the potential of theological language to inspire, stimulate and motivate people in their struggles and challenges in daily life. However, their language is too focused on only some aspects such as prosperity, victory and success, while other elements are left out of their reflection. In the same way, their view of truth is not referential; nevertheless, it is very often a pragmatic view and considers truth as property of the successful believers.

The main goal of this dissertation, according to my central research question, is to find the main components of a Protestant Christology for the Brazilian context. The threefold office was used to interpret the shifts in the Brazilian Christology and, thus, giving a framework to understand these shifts and functions as a tool to interpret them. Firstly, the three offices scheme opens up space for a different view of the most important Christologies in the Brazilian context thus, facilitating dialogue, ecumenical relations and mutual enrichment. The lack of dialogue and the spirit of confrontation among different Christian groups are damaging the image of Christianity in Brazil and a
contextual Christology must speak against segregation and division among Christians. Jesus is head of his Church and the base of union among Christians, consequently, Christology needs to speak about unity and mutual love. The three offices scheme is a helpful perspective to engender dialogue and mutual enrichment.

Secondly, the threefold office scheme needs to be revised, as any other doctrine, and updated according to the context and the changes in that context. A Christology for Brazil needs to revise the three offices in light of the changes in the Brazilian context. Each office in its specific historical context sheds some light on the specificity of different contexts. Thus, the threefold office can help different theologians concerned with the Brazilian context understand the value of the different Christologies, but the different Christologies challenge the Brazilian theologians to revise the threefold office and update it for the Brazilian context as well. It is not the three offices doctrine that John Calvin taught in the 16th Century Geneva, but it has to be a three offices doctrine that is fruitful for the 21st Century Brazil with all its diversity as well as its complex issues.

Hopefully, the criticisms against each one of these three shifts and the analyses of the theological standpoints, i.e. their view on truth, language and hermeneutics can be helpful for the building of a more robust threefold office doctrine suitable to the current Brazilian context. There is not only one Christology for the Brazilian context but the analyses presented here give some guidelines to understand and develop a Protestant Christology that helps churches and theologians to recognize the different Christological viewpoints and encourages an open and fruitful dialogue between them.

There still is the question concerning what is distinctively Brazilian in these Christologies. The Christology of the missionaries is the traditional Evangelical Christology and is present all over the world. Similarly, the UCKG’s Christology has its peculiar accents, but it is very well known in other parts of the world as well, especially in African contexts. The Liberation Christology emerged in Latin America and it has a clear Latin American and also Brazilian accent. Nevertheless, it was strongly influenced by European theologians. It seems that it is hard to say that these Christologies are exclusively Brazilian. Perhaps, what is typically Brazilian is how these three Christologies emerged and are now part of the Brazilian context. Brazil is simultaneously a Western, an African, and a Latin American country. What is typically
Brazilian in this dissertation, perhaps, is the way the context is being looked at and the way such different contexts and different Christologies are combined. The question of Brazilian identity has always been a difficult question in Brazilian history, but it might be that especially its diversity, plurality and different contexts are typically Brazilian. This Christology, reflecting the diversity of the Brazilian context and reality, offers a place for blacks, poor, women, believers who sometimes want to become ecstatic about their faith and want to feel God’s presence very near, of whom many were brought in as slaves and still live in the margins and of whom many want the transformation of the whole society. So, this Christology intends to be a very comprehensive one, offering hospitality to very diverse people and believers that share the same space.

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Summary

The question underlining this study is as follows:

What could be the main components of a Protestant Christology in the Brazilian context?

Therefore, this research intends to contribute to the building of a contextual Brazilian Protestant Christology. A contextual Christology needs to address the issues of a determined context, but it also needs to keep in dialogue with the whole Christian church spread over the world. There are different Christologies in Brazil and each
chapter from the third to the sixth one deals with one of them. Context is not static and in Brazil it is not different. There were important shifts in the Brazilian context and, interestingly, new Christologies or new emphases on Christology emerged to address these different contexts.

The structure of the work is as follows. The first chapter, which is the introduction to the dissertation, is an effort to illuminate what I understand by context/contextuality. It explores the issue of contextuality, by dealing with the possibility of a contextual Christology. It explains what the term 'contextual' means in the expression 'contextual Christology.' It introduces the historical background of the consciousness of contextuality in Christology and it shows its two forms: contextualisation and inculturation. It presents what approach is the most suitable to be applied to the Brazilian context. Attention is given to contextuality in its broader sense: possibility, history and interaction; but also its applicability to the Brazilian context. In that way, it intends to present one of the core terms of this dissertation: 'contextual'.

The second chapter presents the methodological standpoints that are used in this dissertation. It presents my own theological context as fundamental to understand the perspective and the criteria adopted. Therefore, it discusses what kind of theological language is more suitable for theological discourse. Since theology always has to do with truth, it also defines the concept of truth I use here. It also deals with hermeneutics and presents the concept of hermeneutics that is more adequate to a contextual Christology. It also presents the main criteria for any Christian contextual theology. Finally, it introduces the threefold office. This scheme is used in the whole dissertation to describe and evaluate the developments in Brazilian Christology and it forms my framework to build a contextual Brazilian Christology. In this dissertation, the three offices are dealt with as three metaphors for the relationship between humans and God. Thus, the priestly office points to the role of Jesus as a representative of the people before God. The prophetical role asserts the role of Jesus as a lawgiver, a new Moses that tells how to behave toward God and other people. And the kingly office points to the role of Jesus as the mediator that brings God to men, a heavenly king that judges, rewards, forgives, and gives what his followers dream of.

The third chapter deals with the first Protestant Christology that was brought to Brazil. It is the Christology of the North-American missionaries, which was embraced by
the first Protestant Brazilian ministers and became the main Christology in Brazil. This chapter focuses on the priestly office and how the related doctrines of atonement, justification by faith, and redemption are viewed in that context.

The fourth chapter points out the emergence of the Liberation Theology and its Christology, showing how it address the changes in the Brazilian context. The role of Jesus as liberator, which is so important for this theology, is deeply related to Jesus’ office as prophet, and it empowers Christians to fight for justice and liberty and to combat the oppression of economic and political power over the marginalised people.

The fifth chapter presents the efforts to address new issues related to the Afro-Brazilian presence in Brazil and how, the Negra theology tried to build a new Christology to deal with these issues. The African religiosity was profoundly ignored in Brazilian theology for a long time. Recently, the Negra Theology has looked at the potential of Afro-Brazilian theology for a construction of a Brazilian contextual Christology. The contribution of this theology in Brazil is very important and it has still much to contribute and to develop. Nonetheless, this theology does not have a great impact on the great majority of Brazilian black Christians.

The sixth chapter shows how the Neo-Pentecostal movement and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) in particular approaches the same issues that Negra theology does. UCKG embraces an Afro-Brazilian cosmology and spirituality. It incorporates the theological perspective and structure of the Afro-Brazilian religions in its own theology. It modifies and inverts some meanings, but it still maintains the basic theological structure. Thus, it offers many Brazilian people the possibility of reconfiguring and reframing their old beliefs in a new and strange context. UCKG’s preaching and practice emphasise Jesus Christ’s kingly office and the concept of the Christus Victor.

Finally, the seventh chapter presents a summary and conclusions of my research. The threefold office can help theologians to build Christologies that are more aware of the different cultures, how they relate to each other and how they are necessary for a fruitful and enriching dialogue. Certainly, it is a big challenge to reconcile all these three shifts in the Brazilian Christology and build one Christology that works with all these different emphases. Nevertheless, any Christology for the Brazilian context needs to be
aware of them and deal with the various Christologies that emerged in Brazilian context. Each one answered specific expectations of particular contexts in Brazilian history, however, they are all alive and present in Brazilian religious scenario. Thus a contemporary contextual Brazilian Christology has to keep in balance these three shifts and maintain the three offices with their strong points, however, at the same time, it has to criticise and overcome the limits and weaknesses of these shifts.

Sumário

A questão que sublinha este estudo é a seguinte:

Quais poderiam ser os principais componentes de uma cristologia Protestante no contexto Brasileiro?

Por conseguinte, esta pesquisa pretende contribuir para a construção de uma cristologia Protestante contextual brasileira. Uma cristologia contextual precisa lidar com os problemas de um determinado contexto, mas ela também precisa se manter em diálogo com a totalidade da Igreja Cristã espalhada sobre o mundo. Há diferente
cristologias no Brasil e cada capítulo do terceiro ao sexto trabalha com uma delas. Contexto não é estático e no Brasil não é diferente. Houve importantes mudanças no contexto brasileiro e, de maneira interessante, novas cristologias ou novas ênfases em cristologia surgiram para lidar com estes diferentes contextos.

A estrutura do trabalho é a seguinte. O primeiro capítulo, que é a introdução à dissertação, é um esforço para lançar luz no que eu entendo por contexto ou contextualidade. Ele explora o problema da contextualidade trabalhando com a possibilidade de uma cristologia contextual. Explica o que o termo ‘contextual’ na expressão ‘cristologia contextual’ significa. Ele apresenta o contexto histórico da tomada de consciência da contextualidade em cristologia e apresenta suas duas formas: contextualização e inculturação. Apresenta qual abordagem é a mais apropriada para ser aplicada no contexto brasileiro. Atenção é dada à contextualidade no seu sentido amplo: possibilidade, história e interação; mas também sua aplicabilidade no contexto brasileiro. Desta forma, ela pretende apresentar um dos termos fundamentais desta dissertação: ‘contextual.’

O segundo capítulo apresenta os pontos de vista metodológicos que são usados nesta dissertação. Ele apresenta meu próprio contexto teológico como fundamental para se entender a perspectiva e os critérios adotados. Por conseguinte, discute qual tipo de linguagem teológica é a mais apropriada para o discurso teológico. Uma vez que teologia sempre tem a ver com verdade, ele também define o conceito de verdade que eu uso aqui. Também discute hermenêutica a apresenta o conceito de hermenêutica que é o mais adequado para uma cristologia contextual. Também apresenta os critérios principais para qualquer cristologia contextual. Por último, ela apresenta o triplo ofício. Este esquema é utilizado por toda a dissertação para descrever e avaliar os desenvolvimentos na cristologia brasileira e ele forma a estrutura para construir uma cristologia brasileira contextual. Nesta dissertação os três ofícios são usados como três metáforas para o relacionamento entre os seres humanos e Deus. Assim, o ofício sacerdotal aponta para o papel de Jesus como um representante do povo diante de Deus. O ofício profético reforça o papel de Jesus como um legislador, um novo Moisés que nos diz como nos comportar diante de Deus e outras pessoas. E o ofício real aponta para o papel de Jesus como o mediador que traz Deus aos homens, um rei celeste que julga, recompensa, perdoa e dá o que seus seguidores sonham receber.
O terceiro capítulo trabalha com a primeira cristologia Protestante que chegou ao Brasil. É a cristologia dos missionários norte-americanos que foi abraçada pelos primeiros ministros Protestantes brasileiros e se tornou a principal cristologia no Brasil. Este capítulo foca no ofício sacerdotal e como as doutrinas relacionadas a ele, expiação, justificação pela fé e redenção são vistas naquele contexto.

O quarto capítulo aponta para o surgimento da Teologia da Libertação e sua cristologia, apresentando como ela lida com as mudanças no contexto brasileiro. O papel de Jesus como libertador, que é tão importante para esta teologia, é profundamente ligado ao ofício profético de Jesus, e ele capacita os cristãos para lutar por justiça e liberdade e para combater a opressão dos poderes econômico e político sobre o povo marginalizado.

O quinto capítulo apresenta os esforços para lidar com novos problemas relacionados a presença afro-brasileira no Brasil e como, a teologia Negra tentou construir uma nova cristologia para responder a estes problemas. A religiosidade africana, por um longo tempo, foi profundamente ignorada na teologia brasileira. Recentemente, a teologia Negra reconheceu o potencial da teologia afro-brasileira para a construção de uma cristologia contextual brasileira. A contribuição desta teologia no Brasil é muito importante e tem muito ainda a contribuir e desenvolver. Todavia, esta teologia não tem um grande impacto sobre a maioria dos negros cristãos brasileiros.

O sexto capítulo apresenta como o movimento neo-pentecostal e a Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (IURD) em particular trabalhou com os mesmos problemas que a teologia Negra trabalhou. IURD abarca a cosmoligia e a espiritualidade afro-brasileiras. Incorpora a perspectiva e estrutura teológica das religiões afro-brasileiras em sua própria teologia. Ela modifica e inverte alguns significados, mas ela mantém a estrutura teológica básica. Assim, oferece a muito brasileiros a possibilidade de reconfigurar e reestruturar suas antigas crenças num contexto estranho. A pregação e prática da IURD enfatiza o ofício real de Jesus Cristo e o conceito do *Christus Victor*.

Por último, o sétimo capítulo apresenta um sumário e as conclusões da minha pesquisa. O triplo ofício pode ajudar os teólogos a construir cristologias que são mais conscientes das diferentes culturas, como elas relacionam umas com as outras e como elas são necessárias para um diálogo frutífero e enriquecedor. Certamente, é um grande
desafio reconciliar todas estas três mudanças na cristologia brasileira e construir uma cristologia que trabalha com todas estas ênfases diferentes. Entretanto, qualquer cristologia para o contexto brasileiro precisa ser consciente delas e lidar com as várias cristologias que surgiram no contexto brasileiro. Cada uma respondeu expectativas específicas de contextos particulares na história brasileira, entretanto, estão vivas e presentes no cenário religioso brasileiro. Assim uma cristologia contextual brasileira contemporânea tem que manter o equilíbrio entre estas três mudanças e manter os três ofícios com seus pontos fortes, entretanto, ao mesmo tempo, precisa criticar e superar os limites e fraquezas destas mudanças.

Curriculum Vitae

Kleber de Oliveira Machado (Santo André – Brazil, 20 December 1973) received his secondary school certificate (1991) at the CAASO in São Carlos. He completed his Bachelor of Theology at the Seminário Presbiteriano José Manoel da Conceição in São Paulo (1997), during this period he also studied Italian Language and Literature at Universidade de São Paulo (1993-1995). He earned his Master in Philosophical Theology at Centro Presbiteriano Andrew Jumper – São Paulo (2004). He also completed a Bachelor of Theology at Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie (2006) and Master in Religious Studies (2009) at the same University. He was ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (1998) and served at the Presbyterian Church of Castro
(1998-2002) and at the Dutch Evangelical Reformed Church (2002-2010). He became a minister of the Church of Scotland in 2012 and is serving at St. Ninian’s Corby - Church of Scotland, Presbytery of England. He is married to Ingrid Caricari Machado since December 1995 and they have 3 children.