



## Soteriology as Empowerment in the Gospel of Luke: Implications for Ghanaian Christianity

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v5i12.799>

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### **Abstract**

The gospel of Luke was written for a Gentile audience from a Gentile perspective of the life and ministry of Christ. Like any of the other gospel accounts, Luke focuses on the soteriological dimension of Christ's ministry. From a Lukan perspective, salvation is not only a future glorious hope and eternal life, but empowerment for earthly life. Luke's emphasis on the empowering dimension is crucial for contemporary Christians who live in a society full of sin. The purpose of this paper is to examine the empowerment that salvation in Jesus brings from a Lukan perspective and to draw lessons from it for the Ghanaian Christian community. To this end, the paper examined relevant texts in Luke's gospel relating to the empowering dimension of soteriology. The paper warns against allowing human relations to degenerate to the point of enmity and hatred and provides an empowerment avenue to break walls of discrimination, thus promoting respect for the dignity in a multi-cultural society like contemporary Ghana.

**Keywords:** *Christianity; Luke; Salvation*

### **Introduction**

At the heart of Christianity is the good news that Christ died for the sins of humankind. Christianity centers on the person, life and ministry of Jesus, the Christ. Without Christ, there is no Christianity. Christ came into the world as the Son of God who was appointed to live, minister and finally die to save humankind from sin. Thus, the main reason for the incarnation of the Son of God was to reconcile the lost world to God. The salvific mission of Christ is underlined by his name Jesus, which alludes to the fact that he came to save his people from sin (Matt. 1:21). Christ's determination to obey God perfectly, fulfill the Law and the Prophets and purchase eternal life for humanity stands out in each of the gospel accounts.

The theological sub-discipline that deals with the study of salvation is referred to as soteriology. The term “soteriology” derives from the Greek words *soter* (savior) and *logos* (discourse). Negatively, salvation explains deliverance from sin, death and divine wrath and positively, it explains the bestowal of far-ranging spiritual blessings both temporal and eternal. God freely conveys all these benefits on the basis of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Soteriology and Christology (the doctrine of Christ) are intertwined; one cannot be studied without the other. An important theological subject, the doctrine of soteriology has been explored by different scholars and from different angles. However, most contemporary soteriological discourses focus on a future glorious hope and eternal life, with little or no attention to the benefits of salvation in the present age. To avert the situation, there is the need to balance the eschatological benefits of salvation with its benefits in the present world.

The Lukan gospel is very relevant in establishing this balance. This gospel account speaks of a social order in which there are right relationships between all sorts of people such as the rich and poor, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, sinners and righteous. The present study examines selected Lukan texts that covers the marginalized in society. Marginalized in society are people relegated to the borderline or outside the mainstream of society—including the Samaritans, women, tax collectors and the poor. They are regarded as people with low stature, significance or qualification in society. These are the people Jesus made friends with, offered hope to and changed their status. Jesus’ ministry was meant to empower the marginalized and integrate them into Jewish society. The empowering function of salvation is considered as an antidote to religious animosities and the social divides in contemporary Ghana. It reflects Christian *koinonia* that could be an answer not only to the problem of poverty but also to the problem of a divided society that we live in.

### **Soteriological Context of Luke’s Gospel**

Most New Testament scholars believe that the gospel of Luke was written by Luke who was a companion of Paul. Luke was a Greek and the only Gentile Christian writer of the New Testament. He is described in Colossians 4:14 as the beloved physician. The author of Luke’s gospel was a second-generation Christian who investigates the traditions about Jesus (cf. Luke 1:3). This gospel is the first part of Luke’s letter to most excellent Theophilus who evidently has a Gentile background (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2). The gospel of Luke was therefore written from a Gentile perspective for a Gentile audience<sup>1</sup> (Thaddaeus Aaron Tan 2015, p.1). The word Salvation generally connotes rescue or deliverance from danger, disease, enemies or bondage and the gift of eternal life. In the New Testament, God is the savior (Luke 1:47, 1 Tim. 1:1, 2:3, Tit. 1:3, 2:10, 3:4) in that the divine Father planned and initiated the gift of salvation and sent his only Son into the world on a saving mission. Salvation is depended only on Jesus Christ whose life and death redeems repentant sinners from their lost condition.

In order to get a clearer picture of Luke’s soteriological vesture, various layers ought to be taken off by means of knowing the context in which Luke’s soteriology is deployed. The audience of Luke’s Gospel according to Tannehill (1996) was “A group of late first century churches of diverse social composition<sup>2</sup> including people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, social status, and wealth. There were Jews and Gentiles, women and men, poor and relatively wealthy people, common people and a few members, perhaps, of the elite or of the retainer class<sup>3</sup> who had important positions with the elite.” In the context of the less privilege among the wealthy people, the Nazareth manifesto of Christ ministry

<sup>1</sup> Gentiles audience are used for non-Israelite people or persons of non-Jewish nation or faith. They were frequently referred to as heathen nation.

<sup>2</sup> The cotemporary Church is also heterogenous with social diversity including the poor and the rich, different ethnic groups. The elite class which refers to the top, the socially superior part of the society who by virtue of position or education still exercise much power or influence even in the church.

<sup>3</sup> “Retainers” are a class of bureaucrats, evil servants, military and religious professionals whose function was to support the economic and social system by serving the needs of the elite as extension of their power.

explains the empowerment of salvation employed by Luke in Jesus Soteriological work. The Gospel of Luke speaks of a social order in which there are right relationships between all sorts of people such as the rich and poor, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, sinners and righteous.

The context in which Luke's soteriology is deployed could be seen in the Nazareth manifesto of Christ ministry in Luke 4:18-19 as a parallel interpretation of Isaiah 61:1-2a and Isaiah 58:6. In this text, Luke portrays Jesus as the prophet who announces salvation which is totally depicted as liberation. Jesus himself is the Savior who was sent by God the Father to liberate the oppressed, restore sight to the blind, set the captives free and to bring good news to the poor. Luke presents this statement as the architectural plan of ministry which is to be followed by Jesus.

As seen above, salvation in Luke's content according to Powell (1992) means participation in the reign of God. This means that Luke sees salvation not only as a future glorious hope and eternal life, but as significant on our present state of life on earth. The purpose of Jesus ministry is to bring salvation as good news to the poor and to let the oppressed go free. Salvation is therefore emphasized as a reality to be experienced here and now before the final glorification in the future. In the reign of God, people must experience the quality of life that God enables them to have. Luke places more emphasis on the life that God's reign makes possible here and now. This is evident as we see how Jesus ministry is relational as he lived among those he ministered to. Jesus sought to bring salvation to all people at their point of need without making any distinction between their physical, spiritual or social need and not only granting to them salvation for future in eternity. John Huntzinger states that salvation for all people is expressed in Jesus' care for the humble and poor people, women and those marginalized in society (Huntzinger, 2019). This provides a link between eternal salvation and temporal justice.

In this context, Marshall (1998) opines that Jesus' soteriological work in Luke's gospel operates along two major lines. One is the spiritual restoration where humanity is granted forgiveness of sins. It is where humanity is restored to an ideal spiritual state through the forgiveness of sins, through the atonement of the blood of Jesus Christ. This spiritual sense of restoration is clearly presented in the gospel of Mathew 1:21 and Mark 10:26. The aspect of Jesus' soteriological work in Luke's gospel is the restoration of physical and mental health and well-being of individuals who encounter the savior. Luke's special material place much emphasis on the reversal of fortunes for those in need. Luke portrays Jesus as the physician who through healings, exorcisms, contacts and resurrections restores humanity's physical body to an ideal physical state. Marshall (1970) however, proposes that Luke's central theme of salvation uses the Greek word for salvation  $\sigma\omega\zeta\omega$  for healing disease and setting people free from threats of life and safety. Some were healed when they came to Jesus in faith while others were saved and restores to normalcy when Jesus reached out to them.

The point to note from this is that, Luke shows that salvation includes the restoration of the dignity of the marginalized by telling about how Jesus associated with the social and religious outcasts of first century Palestine. He gives them a new status and a new identity. Jesus would challenge parochial attitudes that would limit God's care or blessings to any particular group or nation (Luke 4:24-27; 2:32, 3:6, 8). The foregoing gives the theological framework for the discussions in the rest of the paper. The paper specifically focuses on certain groups of people of whom Jesus gave them a new status and identity.

### **Jesus and the Marginalized in Luke**

Earlier the point was made that the purpose of this paper is to examine how the empowering dimension of Lukan soteriology may function to integrate the marginalized into contemporary Ghanaian society. In the previous section, a theological framework for the paper was espoused. In this section, the effect of Jesus' salvific ministry on key examples of the marginalized in Jesus' society is considered.

## The Samaritans

The Jews of Jesus' day generally despised the Samaritans even more than they despised the Gentiles. The rift between these two tribes is traced back to early Israelites history reflecting the lack of unity that even existed between the Northern and the Southern kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The Jews saw the Samaritans as descendants of people brought from various Mesopotamian communities due to intermarriages with foreigners (Naseri-Mutiti, 2014). Samaritans were considered racially and religiously impure by the Jews. Throughout the books of Kings, we see the author describes the Kings of Judah and Israel as doing good or evil in the sights of God. Most of the evil kings built high places for sacrifice while the good Kings come to destroy the higher places, mostly in Samaria. It is believed that the Samaritan also housed Temples to Yahweh as well as Temples to Canaanite god Baal. It is possible that the Samaritans did not practice a pure monotheism. This could have also rendered them religiously impure apart from their heathen background. For this reason, the Samaritans were excluded from the inner courts of Jerusalem Temple while their offerings were treated as coming from Gentiles. They were not permitted to pay the Temple tax, make bird offerings, sin offerings or guilt offerings (Jeremias, 1969). The expression "Jews do not associate with Samaritans" in John 4:9 is a summary representation of the racial, social, religious and cultural divides which existed up until the time of Christ.

The Gospel of Mark makes no reference to Samaritans and the Gospel of Matthew which is written to Jewish audience makes only one which is negative. "Do not enter any town of the Samaritans" in Mathew 10:5 connotes hatred and animosity. Luke, however, makes references to the Samaritans three times. He speaks of the Samaritan village that refused to show hospitality to Jesus (9:51-56), recording the story of the good Samaritan (10:30-37) and retelling the story of the ten people with leprosy of whom only one, a Samaritan, returned to thank Jesus (17:11-19). In this soteriological context of Luke's gospel, Jesus challenges the prejudicial attitudes towards Samaritans in Luke 9:51-56; 10:29-37; 17:11-19. In Luke 10:29-37, Jesus used Samaritans as epitome of compassion and mercy and a model of neighbourly love that is supposed to be imitated by the scribes and the Pharisees. The Samaritan alone shows gratitude out of the ten lepers in response to the Lord's goodness of healing (Luke 17:11-19), the others presumably Jews. In this story, Luke shows how Jesus transcended national and racial barriers. It was an attempt by Jesus to conscientize early Christians to build bridges and normalize relations with their Samaritan brothers and sisters whom they perceive to be pagans.

## Women

The society of Jesus' day assigned women a subordinate position. Thus, public was male and private was female. They lived mainly in the domestic, private sphere, and appeared to be silenced. The participation of women wallowed on the rock of patriarchal society. The patriarchal Society is a society marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan with legal dependence of wives and children. These principles had enforced the view that female initiative and will are evil through the juxtaposition of Eve and Mary. Focused on the worship of a male God, it has created a patriarchal nature of Christian environment in which psychological dependence on male authority is almost enforced and the political and social authority of men are legitimated.

Luke, however, takes pains to pair men and women in his stories to show that both receive the same salvation. Luke tells of wealthy women, sinful women, sick women and sorrowful women, all coming the way of Jesus. When Joseph and Mary take the infant Jesus to the temple, they encounter a man and a woman, Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:36-38). In his sermon at Nazareth, Jesus refers to a woman in Zarephath and to Naaman (a Syrian man) in Luke 4:26-27. The parable of the lost sheep, featuring a man, is followed by the parable of the lost coin, featuring a woman in Luke 15:8-10. A narrative about a man being healed in Luke 8:26-39 is followed by one where a woman is also healed (Luke 8:43-48). Jesus had received an invitation from Jarius, a ruler of the synagogue to heal his daughter. As he went, he

was accompanied by a large crowd that almost crushed him. Among the crowd was a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, a situation that had left her physically weak and uncomfortable. The woman had become ceremonially unclean due to her sickness (Lev. 15:25-33); the religious, social and emotional aspects of her problem were huge. She was an outcast because contact with her body or her mat or even her dress rendered one unclean. Consequently, she was not permitted to take part in temple worship and other socio-religious activities. In her desperation, she touched Jesus' attire and got healed. Instead of Jesus becoming ceremonially unclean for having come into contact with the woman, Jesus made the unclean clean. Luke in this salvation narrative, writes about Jesus liberating the woman from bondage by healing her and reintegrating her into the society.

In Luke, women are disciples in parallel with men despite the inherent gender divide of the time. Luke records the fact that women even played an important role in Jesus' ministry as they support him (Luke 8:1-3). This text raises an important issue in relation to those social dynamics. Giving the social historical context of the first century, women who were married such as Joana braved public condemnation by leaving their husbands to follow Jesus (Sim, 1989). Because it was unheard for Jewish woman in the first century to be the disciple of a rabbi unless her husband or master was a rabbi willing to teach her. Taken into consideration the patriarchal context of the time, Jewish women were technically exempted from learning the Torah. They could learn it informally or through synagogue teaching but cannot on her own enter into association with a Rabbi and become a disciple.

However, from the attempt by Jesus in ministering with women, it can be concluded that it was women's freedom from patriarchal expectation that freed the women to fulfil their potentials as disciples and to gain independence from domesticity. Seim connotes that "women are brought into discipleship through healings, which conclude with an indication that women are now included in the community of God which they had been excluded" (Seim, 1994, p.41). In Luke 7:36-50, the woman who lived a sinful life and anoints Jesus' feet in the house of a Pharisee is an indication of how the woman has gained sufficient confidence to demonstrate her worship publicly and sufficient funds to use expensive perfume in doing it.

Widows are also important in Luke's narrative. Much of the materials in the New Testament referring to widows is found in the Gospel of Luke. Five widows are introduced: Anna (Luke 2:36-38), the widow at Zarephath (Luke 4:25-26), the widow at Nain (Luke 7:11-17), the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8 and the widow and the Temple treasury (Luke 21:1-4). Luke 7:37-50 records the anointing of Jesus by a sinful woman. Matthew, Mark and John identify the woman's home town as Bethany (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). Luke, however, does not name the town. According to the Lukan account, the woman wet Jesus' feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair and kissed them, before pouring the oil on them. Luke's emphasis in this story is on love and forgiveness.

In Luke 21, Jesus commends the widow who gives only a coin. Jesus in his ministry repeated the importance of supporting widows. Significantly, women are with Jesus, present in Galilee and present at the cross with all the other disciples. The women in Luke's Gospel became active in the declaration of the resurrection to the men even though they would not believe. The weakness of women in patriarchal society is shown in men's lack of confidence in them to declare the resurrection. Luke shows how Jesus transcended social and religious barriers in a patriarchal society to reach out to women. It could be seen that Luke's Gospel celebrates women's discipleship, self-determination and leadership and threatens any attempt by women to find a voice.

### **Tax Collectors**

Tax collectors, also called toll collectors, were detested by the Jews. The Jews regarded them as morally corrupt because they collaborated with the hated Romans and became rich by imposing economic hardship on others. Tax collectors were disliked by the majority of the population because they worked

with Rome to take advantage of the local people. They were seen as equivalence with thieves, extortionists and murderers. Their families and associates were not allowed to be witnesses in court and their attempts to give charity were generally refused, all because they were regarded as lies. To the Jews it would be inconceivable that a tax collector could repent (Luke 3:12-13) and humbly seek for God's mercy (Luke 18:9-14). Jesus calls a Tax collector named Levi at the tax office to be his disciple (Luke 5:27-32). Levi agreed and hosted a grand banquet at which Jesus was the guest of honour. The guest included many Tax collectors and others.

The Pharisees and their Scribes were horrified that someone who claimed to be a religious teacher would associate with Tax collectors they themselves would never have agreed to table fellowship with. They ask why Jesus eats with Tax collectors and sinner. The answer of Jesus in Luke 5:31-32 is an indication that he had come to call them to repentance, but they would never hear his call if he did not associate with them as a sign of divine love. Luke also recounts Jesus telling a story about a Pharisee and a tax collector that would have shocked the audience because of its conclusion that the tax collector, and not the Pharisee, was justified before God (Luke 18:9-14). The story of Zacchaeus the Tax Collector in Luke 19:1-10, presents Zacchaeus as a model of how salvation takes place and what authentic salvation entails. What is to be noted in Luke's Gospel is that the rejection of the Good news by the Rich Ruler in Luke 18:18-23 is balanced with an account of its acceptance by a rich outcast.

### **The Poor and Needy**

In announcing his ministry, Jesus read Isaiah 61:1 to underscore his fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy of God's anointed one who was to proclaim the good news to the poor, proclaim freedom to the captives and make the blind see, to free the oppressed and proclaim the Lord's Jubilee (Luke 4:18-19). Luke made several references to the poor to show his special interest in this group of people (cf. 1:53; 6:20, 24; 12:16-21; 16:19-31; 19:1-10). In Jesus' time, the Roman imperial rule had instituted a taxation system which burdened the Jews and made the poor poorer. Dean gathers ideas from the parables in Luke which helps the reader to understand the Lukan concept of poor and poverty. He explains that,

A profligate son returns home and has a party thrown in his honor, while a dutiful son stands outside and complains about his mistreatment (Luke 15:11-32); an extravagant rich man goes to torment in Hades, and a poor beggar is carried by angels to Abraham (Luke 16:19-31); a despised tax collector who mourns his sinful is justified, but a prideful Pharisee who rejoices in his righteousness is not (Luke 18:9-14)' [Therefore] in Luke's eyes, God's salvation means that some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last (Dean, 2005, p.255).

The poor in this case are the ones who have nothing to trust in and as a result put all their trust in God. They were the oppressed and were the people who did not have the power to influence things in their favor.<sup>4</sup> The poor were considered as those without advocacy. Poverty renders people helpless and vulnerable to disease, oppression and exploitation by the rich. The poor are often those who are mourning, hungry and those who have suffered misfortune and are on the fringes of society.

In Jesus' day, the fact that they were unschooled and ignorant of the law of Moses meant that they were seen as socially unacceptable and religiously defiled. Yet it was to these people that Jesus preached the good news of salvation (Luke 4:18; 6:20; 7:18-23). He became poor himself so that the poor might be lifted up and be transformed. Luke speaks of a Jesus who is a true human being who understands people's everyday struggles. For instance, Jesus tells the rich man in Luke 18:22 to sell everything and give it to the poor. To be asked to share with the poor is thus central to Jesus heart as he

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<sup>4</sup> The most obvious division in society was between the two main parts of unequal size, the upper strata and the lower strata. Those who belonged to the upper strata were the rich, held higher offices and power, enjoyed prestige and belonged to the privileged order to the expense of the lower strata.

knows the material struggle of the poor. The rich are told to share their wealth with the poor (Luke 3:11). Here, Luke takes the position of the poor as persons set apart and views poverty as an evil of injustice.

Jesus envisaged a new social order characterized by harmony and a sharing of resources with the have-not (Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-35). Achieving this, calls for repentance, renunciation and the sharing of possessions. It is not enough to simply proclaim that “the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame” are on their way to feast eternally in God’s kingdom (Luke 14:21). For Luke, the poor should also have a share in the earthly banquet. The physical miseries they suffer can and should be eradicated.

## **Lukan Soteriology and Empowerment**

From the foregoing discussions, it goes without saying that Jesus’ ministry to the marginalized not only saved them from sin but also empowered them to integrate well with the rest of the society and to play active role in the life of the society. The sick who did not have peace of mind were healed and empowered to contribute their quota to societal life. The marginalization of women in the Jewish society of Jesus’ day was challenged by the Messiah’s ministry. Jesus gave women the opportunity to contribute to his ministry and by extension contribute to societal decision-making process. Jesus’ social ministry also reduced the plight of the poor and empowered them to move in the direction of prosperity. Jesus fed the hungry and catered for the needy, and solidarized with them. Again, in Luke, Jesus’ ministry bridges the gap between the Jews and the Samaritans. The two estranged parties were brought closer through Jesus’ ministry. Furthermore, Jesus justified sinners without justifying their sin. He made it clear that his purpose on earth was to seek and save the lost. Therefore, he was ready to mingle to sinner such as tax collectors. He did not like their sin; yet, he loved their soul and so he offered them salvation. In effect, all the categories of marginalized people that Jesus ministered to were in one way or the other empowered for service. This fact has implications for Ghanaian Christianity, some of which are considered briefly below.

## **Implications for the Ghanaian Christianity**

The findings from the discussions have several implications. First, there is religious implication. The embittered relationship that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans during the time of Jesus is an acknowledgement of the possibilities of conflicts and divisions among humans in contemporary societies of Ghana. But these divisions come because of misunderstanding and lack of readiness by people to understand and tolerate others. The Samaritan-Jewish experience is an invitation to recognize the dynamism of religion and a warning against using religion as an index for creating borders within society. As Jesus looks beyond the narrow limits of Jewish nationalism and prejudice, so must the Ghanaian Christian portray unity in diversity. It also a warning against allowing our human relations to degenerate to the point of enmity and hatred. This soteriological context, provides an avenue for a review of human relations and assessment of what makes for mutual co-existence founded essentially on respect for human dignity. Luke’s holistic message of salvation is strong enough to break down the barriers that divide humans. Luke provides an empowerment avenue to break walls of discrimination and to promote respect for the dignity in a multi-cultural society like ours.

Secondly, there is socio-cultural implication of the Lukan view of soteriology for contemporary Ghana. Ghana is full of cultural diversity and religious plurality and also of poverty and misery, inequality and injustice. The rich, the educated and the powerful enjoy many luxuries while the poor illiterate people and the disabled can barely eke out a living. Men and women remain divided. It can provide the driving force for transforming society, dealing with social discrimination and reducing the gap between rich and poor. Luke’s message is both revolutionary and comprehensive, and it should propel every Ghanaian Christian to action. If the Church in Ghana is to be relevant, it must address both the socio-economic and political exploitations of the people and all sort of spiritual bondages especially in the hands of quack prophets. The soteriological empowerment in Luke’s gospel teaches us not to take a

one-sided approach to mission but must preach a gospel of holistic salvation that responds to spiritual as well as material needs of the people in order to empower them in their living standards.

The Gospel of Luke speaks of a social order in which there are right relationships between all sorts of people such as the rich and poor, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, sinners and righteous. Thus, as we read it the Ghanaian Christian must look at what he has to say about these relationships. Luke includes much of Jesus' teaching on the subject of wealth and poverty. Jesus often associates with the rich and even accepts their hospitality. However, he warns them of the dangers of riches and of the coming judgement. He commands them to divest themselves of their wealth or to use it to serve kingdom purposes such as sharing our wealth with the needy. The answer to the problem of poverty lies in the Christian *koinonia*, where the Christian community and their wealth is shared with the poor. The establishment of such a community becomes a major sign, if not the ultimate sign, of the presence of Christ in the Christian community.

Lastly, Luke in his soteriological context, presents Jesus as the friend of those usually marginalized by society. He lives with them, heals them and suffers for them. Jesus elates the reputation for being a friend of sinners and tax collectors. Like Jesus, our first step in doing mission in Ghana today should be to identify the church with the poor and stand up for their cause so as to feel being treated with dignity. This message needs to be heard in Northern Ghana, where many women endure intimidations such as witchcraft, economic deprivation, and psychological and sexual abuse. They are sometimes seen as objects to be purchase and used for sex work and child labour. Some are sold in the marriage market and their worth is judged by their dowry. Jesus demands that women be seen as equally human and that their abilities be respected.

Thirdly, the study has missiological implication. Jesus' ministry to the marginalized calls for the Church's holistic ministry to the world. The sacrificial life of the Church which must entail services not only to God but service to humanity. Bringing the needs of the marginalized into sharp focus must define the ministry of the Church. The Christian must have solidarity with the people among whom ministry is performed. Our missions must bring hope to the hopeless, relief to the burdened, liberation to those oppressed and lead to the acceptance of the people we think are religiously and immorally suspect. Christians must strive passionately for justice to the oppressed, being more eager to be generous, understanding and compassionate to the needy in our society is an accomplished mission. The Christian ought to understand that Jesus ministry to Samaritans, the Poor, women and Tax collectors was fundamentally a ministry of restoration of life. If Jesus was a partisan for the poor, the mourning, the hungry, the failures, the powerless and the insignificant, the Christian is not far from obtaining such truth. The challenge here is that ministry understood as service to the socially marginalized, is a ministry that seeks to bring fullness of life for all.

The paper is a call to Christian mission that welcomes everybody and creates cordiality among diversity. The ancestry and the history of the Samaritans brought a rift between the Jews and the Samaritan. Many Jews had allowed these differences to engender hate in their hearts for Samaritans. Samaritans were considered racially and religiously impure by the Jews which excluded them from the inner courts of Jerusalem Temple while their offerings were treated as unclean. This is the problem that Jesus Christ had to correct. Many self-righteous Christian do not want to associate themselves with people who have unclean history. Other Christians are so enmeshed in their own culture that they do not want to minister to people in other cultures. The fact of our Christian mission is that it is supposed to cut across cultural lines. Some Christians avoid intermarriages with other cultures because they do have certain perspectives to stigmatize them.



## Conclusion

Luke's Gospel is about the breaking down of barriers between people and between God and humanity. Luke's concept soteriology reflects Christian *koinonia* that could be an answer not only to the problem of poverty but also to the problem of a divided society that we live in. Christians are therefore expected to live in harmony with other regardless of race, gender, social class or religious affiliation. Christian mission must be extended to all people without discrimination. In this light, solidarity with the poor and marginalized is key in expressing the gospel in its practical form to one's audience. In all, the paper makes the point that salvation must go beyond the redemption of the soul to include empowerment of believers for ministry.

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