

**THE RITUAL PROCESS OF MARRIAGE: A
CONTEXTUAL EXEGESIS OF MARK 10: 2-12**

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The scope of the thesis is a reflection on the present marriage process within the church, focusing particularly on the U.P.C.S.A. This reflection is done through exegesis of Mark 10:2-12, using Professor J. Draper's tri-polar exegetical model. The aim is to broaden the church's understanding of the marriage process, thus making this key transition in peoples' lives more profound.

This Thesis endeavours to bring together doctrine and praxis, through both textual and contextual analysis. Using Narrative and Ritual Theory at both the textual and contextual level, this thesis seeks to examine both the text and context in a new and innovative way. The use of anthropological ritual models allows one not only to step back from the text, but also initiates doctrinal discussion at a practical level. Further both the text and context are examined through historical reflection, placing both the book of Mark and present the marriage doctrines in their broad social, political and economic circumstance. Is the church's doctrine with regard to marriage adequately represented in praxis through the present wedding ceremony or have other forces lead to a misappropriation of Mark 10: 2-12?

The nature of the tri-polar exegetical model is that it is both dependent on the context for input and acknowledges that any exegesis must have an impact upon the lived-experience of the community of believers. Both present doctrine and praxis of marriage, I believe, are challenged in this thesis through a careful analysis of Mark 10:2-12, in the context of Mark through the use of both, ritual analysis and narrative criticism. In 2003, the church not only is faced with a crisis in respect of marriage and its decline, but it is also faced with an opportunity – the present increase in the interest in ritual. This thesis gives some insights

into how the church can take up the challenge and use ritual as a tool of liberation. This thesis is thus by nature complex as it seeks to bring together doctrine and praxis, through ritual theory and analysis.

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO MY WIFE,

CAROL

**WHO'S LOVE, SUPPORT, AND ENCOURAGEMENT, HAS
BEEN MY MOTIVATION AND INSPIRATION.**

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Appendix 1 & Appendix 2, are taken from, THE SERVICE BOOK AND ORDINAL – of the former Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. (1984), this has been reprinted both in 1985 and 1995.

9.1 Appendix 1143

9.2 Appendix 2148

It must be noted that both Appendix 3 & Appendix 4, are taken from, THE INTERIM MANUAL OF LAW AND PROCEDURE OF THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. (1999)

This manual is interim in the sense that it will be used to facilitate the union between the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, in 1998. Due to the nature of the interim manual, it is continually under revision and change.

9.3 Appendix 3152

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DECLARATION:

I declare that the whole thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own work

ABBREVIATIONS

N.R.S.V.....	New Revised Standard Version
U.P.C.S.A.....	Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
P.C.S.A.	Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
R.P.C.S.A.	Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

1. INTRODUCTION

The term “marriage” elicits a wide range of concepts and topics. There is the cultural diversity, not only in the process but also the lived experience of this institution. There is the legal aspect of marriage governed by the state and its legislation. There are the religious elements to the process of becoming married and the theological debates regarding the essence of marriage. Further, there are the historical debates regarding the reasons for marriage ranging from negative – avoidance of sin, to positive – procreation and the nurture of children.

In reality, while theologians continue to debate and change doctrine, marriage as an institution is on the decline. People from all racial groups and social status are cohabiting without legal contract or religious ceremony. Divorce is on the increase, both within the church and outside the church. Marriage and its evolution is an extremely complex topic as it involves a myriad of inter-related factors:

1. The sexual aspects – including the introduction of contraception thus separating sexual pleasure and reproduction.
2. The historical influence of state on church and vice versa – including the struggle for power.
3. Socio-economic factors – the structure of the economy has a huge effect on the structure of the family throughout history.
4. Gender roles – to have had an effect on the nature of marriage – its lived experience.

If we follow the history of the institution of marriage, it is clear that the cultural, legal and religious elements have at certain times in our modern history held different prominence and authority. In South Africa today, there is a choice of a secular (court) marriage, and/or a religious (church) marriage (both recorded by the state with specific legal requirements). Further, the vast majority of this country coming from African descent have their own cultural specific ritual process, sometimes followed or preceded by legal requirement and/or church ceremony which in the majority of cases is Euro-Centric.

The sociological, psychological and socio-economic theories explaining the break-down of marriage and the family structures are vast; ranging from the effects of the break-down in

the patriarchal hold on society to the instant age of modernity. It is not my intention to challenge or discuss the wide variety of issues that are impacting at a sociological or economic level on marriage. Nor is it my intention to negate the need for dissolution of some marriages, which in essence portray pain, rather than benefit for either wife or husband and children. My aim is to study the interface between state and church in relation to Mark 10, and to briefly review doctrine and theological debate that may benefit the practical process of marriage.

Adrianne Thatcher, in his book, *Marriage after Modernity*, in which he argues for a review of theological doctrine of marriage, and goes to great lengths to explain that marriage, as an event is a recent phenomenon. This, to an extent, is illustrated by Thatcher by the fact that, “Only in 1754, after the Hardwick Marriage Act had been passed was a ceremony a legal requirement in England and Wales” (1999:109). And further, “... only after the Council of Trent in 1563 was a ceremony compulsory for Roman Catholics” (Thatcher 1999:109). Although I agree with Thatcher, regarding the need to look at marriage as a process I feel strongly that there may be a point in time that the status changes from single person to married person. This may or may not be the marriage ceremony, but this is what we need to work with as many people with different levels of belief in God/Jesus continue to get married in churches throughout South Africa. Marriages start in church but seem to end in the legal courts. What is the Christian church ceremony really doing? Is it fundamentally different in kind to that of a marriage in court?

Are the churches practising a process of marriage that is enhancing the chances of a successful marriage? I do not, like Thatcher, believe that, “the Bible has no guidance for us about the right age for marriage nor about any ceremony” (Thatcher 1999:28). This thesis will therefore endeavour to do a narrative reading of Mark in conjunction with Anthropological Ritual Analysis of Mark 10: 2-12, using Draper’s Tri-polar model, as will be discussed in the methodology section. This will allow for equal credence to be given to both the text and my context. The focus will be process and not doctrine, but doctrinal issues will always be impacting upon discussion and outcomes.

2. MOTIVATION

On a personal level, the issue of marriage has emerged not only in an essay looking at one's specific culture in relation to the bible (biblical studies), but also in a Masters course – "Ritual in Early Christianity". In the biblical studies course, my concern was to what extent the church marriage ceremonies have a biblical base. And in the ritual course, I was concerned with the expediency of most church weddings that I have attended. If this is an important rite of passage/stage in life, should there not be more emphasis placed on the process of union? "The occasion calls for an appropriate rite, a sacred occasion suited to the significance of the step that is being taken" (Root 1971:42). Further, Simon R Charsley in his motivation for writing his book, *Rites of Marrying – the wedding industry in Scotland* states, "In the extensive contemporary literature on marriage and its problems, the wedding day itself is at best seriously underplayed"(1991:5). Marriage at first glance seems to have all the elements of ritual. Charsley states, "The movement of the ritual sequence here, first out of the secular world, then held separated around the altar for a procedure conducted in a special language and finally back into everyday life again is such as to delight every admirer of Van Gennep's theory of 'rites of passage' (1909)" (1991:22). It must be noted at this stage that though Charsley does mention ritual elements, his ritual analysis throughout his book is generally superficial.

In my studies of Anthropologists' theories of rituals such as Victor Turner, Mary Douglas and others, I realised that ritual is a powerful element and evolving tool that must be nurtured. I particularly realised that ritual is paramount for effective passage from one state in life to another. Further, there are elements to ritual process that can be manipulated and enhanced to make the process more profound.

My underlying motivation is the children of our society. They are the weak, the poor, those who need our protection and nurturing. The rate of divorce in South Africa is alarming. This leads to more and more children being either raised by one parent, with all the socio-economic difficulty that entails or children ending up with three, four or five parents. From my previous studies in Psychology and in particular, Developmental Theories, one of the primary elements needed for optimum development is stability. The child needs a stable environment in order to develop trust and security. Thatcher speaks of a kind of liberation theology for children, which should inform our doctrine (theology) of marriage. For

Thatcher, “A ‘reading of the signs of the times from the stand point of suffering children enables a clearer vision of just how horrible is the hedonism that puts self-interest and short-term happiness above everything else” (Thatcher 1999:152). The children are the future; they will make up the next generation – the next society. Divorce is not only one of the most psychologically traumatic events in the short term, but also has lasting and vast effects in the long run on the children and society as a whole. Our “private decisions have public consequences with far-reaching and unanticipated effects” (Thatcher 1999:148). “Luther called marriage ‘the mother of all earthly laws’ and Calvin agreed that the ‘invisible law’ of the estate provided the basis for all social order” (Harrington 1995: 26). This stated, I believe the church has a profound role to play in the stabilising of society through the creating of stable relations under which children can grow and mature.

Even though the debate regarding marriage and its indissolubility is well recorded and the different theological views (Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox-East) regarding the essence and purpose of marriage are well documented. I wish to focus on a biblical exegesis placing Jesus’ remarks in Mark 10: 2-12 into context and analysing this text for ritual process. The many debates regarding marriage will come into contention but the focus of my study is biblical and ritual. What, if anything, can we glean from this text that could enhance our understanding and practice of ritual process in marriage. Does this text give us any insight into the nature of marriage law versus God’s will? People are getting married in the church but getting divorced in the courts. Is there something substantially different in our church marriages (process)?

The focus in theological circles has, to a large extent been driven by crisis or challenges facing the church. First, should the church condone/allow divorce? Then should the church condone/allow remarriage? The most recent debate is one regarding sexual orientation. I wish to see what can be done on a practical level to strengthen the bond of marriage – with particular emphasis on ritual analysis. Many who get married in church have no interest in religion or God; they are merely following a tradition. Can the church make the process so profound that it has a lasting effect even on those who do not subscribe to any belief system? The legal, the religious and the cultural, all intermix in marriage. What effect can the church’s involvement in the process of union make, even though the different denominations may differ on doctrine and in respect of other specific aspects of marriage.

3. METHODOLOGY

Due to the nature of this thesis, I will primarily use literary sources of material. This will come in the form of books, articles and particular church manuals, reports and liturgies. This material is readily available due to the vast interest in marriage, particularly from a Catholic perspective.

3.1 Narrative Methodology

Elizabeth Malbon in the introduction to her book, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* outlines a biblical paradigm shift from "... what did the text mean?" (2000:1) to "...How does the text mean?" (2000:2). Malbon states that "Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism might seem to be asking literary questions" (2000:1), but concludes that they are primarily asking historical questions (2000:2). For Malbon this new form of criticism, Narrative Criticism, has its origins in secular New Criticism and Structuralism (2000:3,5). The focus of Narrative Criticism is therefore the mediation of meaning (message) via a text. The text becomes the central point of analysis and investigation, but the implied author and implied reader are a fundamental part of this analysis (Malbon 2000:7). Narrative Criticism involves the analysis of the implied reader, the implied author, characters, settings, plot, and rhetoric, primarily from within the text itself.

Fundamental to Narrative Criticism is a communication model of sender-message-receiver (Malbon 2000:2). This base model is expanded upon to include "implied reader", a concept popularised by Wolfgang Iser, and the "implied author" (Iser 1974:xii). Both the "implied reader" and "implied author" are "...a creation of the real author that is implied in his or her text ..." (Malbon 2000:7). "The interaction between the implied author and the implied reader is part of the discourse" (Malbon 2000:9). This discourse level in the narrative lies beyond the story and includes rhetoric and other literary tools which the narrative uses in an "... attempt to weave its spell over the reader" (Fowler 1991:2). In other words, due to the nature of the construction of the narrative the reader is not only drawn into the world of the narrative, but is also by covert and indirect means manipulated into seeing certain things the author's way (Fowler 1991:11). The rhetorical power of the text is seen to be so strong by Fowler that he states, "By means of ironic narrative, Mark probably creates a more cohesive readership than he could have by means of plain, straight forward claims about

Christ” (1991:12). For Fowler, the “...story refers to the content of the narrative, and the discourse refers to how the content is communicated” (1991:16).

Wolfgang Iser says that, “... the written part of the text gives us the knowledge but it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things; indeed without the elements of indeterminacy, the gaps in the text, we should not be able to use our imagination” (1974:283). For Iser, the reading process is a dynamic one, where meaning is formulated or re-created between the text and the reader. The mechanisms or process of preconception and retrospection are guided by the text through the use of literary techniques such as “gaps” filled by the reader in different ways. Further, familiar elements or outcomes are juxtaposed with unfamiliar elements and outcomes to draw the reader to the recreation process. For Iser, “This process is steered by two main structural components within the text: first, a repertoire of familiar literary patterns and recurrent literary themes, together with allusions to familiar social and historical contexts; second, techniques or strategies used to set the familiar against the unfamiliar” (1974:288).

Although narrative criticism focuses on the text and the rhetoric and other literary devices used to convey meaning, most if not all, narrative critics would agree that the reader has a part to play in creating meaning from the text. In reality, scholars fall along a continuum within narrative criticism and reader-response criticism, those that give more credence to the rhetorical power of the text and those that give more credence to the creative power of the reader (Fowler 1991:34). My choice to use narrative criticism is not only due to the fact that Mark has been identified as a literary masterpiece - Fowler says, “Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark is comfortable with telling a story rich with ambiguity; he likes to offer puzzles for the reader to solve” (1991:17). But also because I believe that the text is the dominant “locus of meaning” and not the reader (Fowler 1991:34).

“Redaction critics focus on the sender or author and reader-response critics focus on the receiver or reader” (Malbon 2000:4). Malbon states that there is, “No doubt (that) biblical criticism would benefit greatly from an approach that could – if not simultaneously, at least sequentially – keep in view all parts of the communication process: author, text and reader (2000:21). This statement leads on to the fact that any reading of a literary text without any reference to its history and context will not only be impossible but may lead to misunderstanding (Malbon 2000:115). Although an interpretation based on historical

context and genesis of the text has its own danger Herman Waetjen in his book, *A Reordering of Power – A Socio-Political Reading of Mark's Gospel*, stresses that contemporary readers need to have knowledge of the material that first readers or hearers would have had. "Since the picture of Jesus that is offered by the Gospel is conditioned by the realities of context that permeates the author's stock of material its comprehension requires some knowledge of Mark's "extra textual world"" (Waetjen.1989:4). Waetjen goes to great lengths to explain that the meaning of the rhetoric and literary devices can only be reconstructed by the hearer or reader, if they identify with the "implied reader". This he says can only happen today for contemporary readers if they have knowledge of the extra-textual world. For Waetjen, the important knowledge is that of socio-political power structures that he states were similar in both Jesus' context and Mark's context. In my thesis, I too, like Waetjen, will start my narrative criticism by highlighting "extra-textual" material in terms of my text, Mark 10: 2-12, that is relevant to ritual analysis. This would include a description and an understanding of the world of the text in regard to ritual. For example, the Pharisees themselves had adopted rigorous purity codes, which in Mark's text, had been a point of conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees (Waetjen 1989:9).

My analysis of the text will therefore primarily be focused on what Waetjen calls "response-inviting structures", those literary techniques used by the author to convey his perspectives (Waetjen 1989:17). But at all times this will be done with an eye on the ritual context of the text's world. In my analysis of Mark 10: 2-12 the emphasis will be on the text. The thesis will therefore primarily use Narrative Criticism in conjunction with Prof. JA Draper's Tri-polar model as outlined below.

The fundamental structure of my methodology will be as proposed by Prof. JA Draper in his article "Old Scores and New Notes: Where and What Is Contextual Exegesis In The New South Africa" (2001). This method seeks to give full credence to both the context of the literature (sacred text) relating particularly in this case to Mark 10: 2-12 and the context of the reader/community. Broadly, it involves three steps of analysis. The first step Draper calls "distantiation", this involves allowing, "... the text to be different to us, alien, intended for others as a first step to entering its world of discourse" (Draper 2001:152). The second step in the exegesis process, Draper calls "contextualisation" which involves, "analysing my situation as a reader/hearer" (Draper 2001:152). The final step Draper calls

“appropriation” which involves “accepting the meaning and implications of the text for myself and my community ...” (Draper 2001:152).

In the context of this thesis the above steps will be adapted and expanded on in order to suite the relevant topic under investigation. My interpretation (distantiation) of Mark will proceed as follows:

1. A brief historical background will be painted of the construction of Mark, its time and place in history – with particular emphasis on the notion of ritual.
2. An outline of some of the themes, characters and rhetoric running throughout Mark will be highlighted – Mark 10:2-12, is not a separate text. How do these themes, characterisations and Rhetoric impact on this text and give meaning to this debate?
3. This section will involve anthropological ritual analysis of the text, using Van Gennep’s three phases which he postulated are part of all rites of passage, namely: separation, margin and aggregation (Turner 1969:94). Further Victor Turner’s concepts of Liminality and Communitas as well as ritual elements will be applied to the text.

Both the Narrative Criticism procedure used in step 2 above and the anthropological analysis of step 3 form part of Draper’s “distantiation phase”. In other words both Narrative Criticism and Anthropological analysis are used, “... to gain ‘critical distance’ from the text, to suspend what the reader previously understood the text to mean, to open her/himself up to new understandings which may contradict her/his presuppositions” (Draper 2002:5). And dare I say may challenge that of the broader church community and doctrinal scribes.

It must be noted as does Edwin Broadhead in his Introduction to Mark (2001) that, “No text nor reader is wholly innocent and without bias” (2001:13). In other words it is not by chance that I have chosen the anthropological analysis but rather because I believe it may shed some light on my primary questions. It must be noted at this point, but will be explained later that the anthropological analysis applied to the text will also be applied to my “context” broadly speaking marriage, but more specifically the marriage ceremony.

Further, there will be interpretive interaction between the information gleaned from Narrative Criticism and Ritual theories to extract the meaning.

The second step “contextualisation” will take a similar format to the first. The process of marriage today will be briefly described. In particular, the interface between law (legal process) and religious marriage ceremony will be described and analysed in the context of South Africa and specifically the Presbyterian Church. This will be achieved, briefly by looking for the same ritual phases of separation, margin and aggregation. Further, as with the textual analysis, Victor Turner’s concepts of Liminality, Communitas and his ritual elements will be sorted out in the procedure manual of the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, as well as in actual process as experienced and witnessed by the researcher. The use of the same criteria or process to analyse both the “text” and “context” will make it easier for the next phase of “appropriation”. Further, it will in a profound way highlight any differences between the “text” and my “context”. However, the danger is that my preconceptions may elicit an untrue reflection of the dialogue between “text” and “context”. In reality the use of anthropological theory of ritual on both the “text” and the “context” may unnaturally break down the inherent gap between “what the text meant” and “what the text means”. The next phase of “appropriation” will therefore be critical in giving credence to both the “text” and the “context”. “The negotiation of meaning, like the dance of the cobra and the mongoose is sometimes a dangerous task” (Broadhead 2001:13).

The “contextualisation” stage will not only include the above mentioned analysis of the present situation regarding church procedure for marriage, but will also include:

1. A brief historical overview of change in location (authority) of marriage from culture to church to state in Germany in the Reformation period.
2. A brief description of the present interaction between church and state in the process of Marriage.

Further, the deterioration of the practice of marriage both in respect of divorce and the increase in co-habitation (without legal sanction or religious ceremony) will be highlighted. It must be noted that traditional African marriage ritual will be excluded and only the ceremonies/formats historically originating in Europe and practised by most churches in South Africa will be studied. This exclusion is done not only with the realisation that “African Ritual” is not part of my lived experience, but also with the belief that for any conclusions or insights gained from studies of this nature to be appropriated by a community, they should be done by members of that community/ culture. In other words it is more likely that I would misread signs and signals and that my research in this area

would be misconstrued. I would however in my evaluation and conclusion of this thesis encourage those from other cultures and communities to endeavour similar studies to enhance the lived experience of marriage within their religious community. Bearing in mind at all times that although we serve one God, we do so in different ways as we have different cultures.

The final phase of “appropriation” will be used to bring together the “textual analysis” and the “context analysis”, to see if the text can in any way indicate a way forward for churches in terms of marriage ritual and an understanding of the interface between religious and legal formalities. For Draper the final stage of “Appropriation” must at the same time acknowledge the context of the community of believers while being true to the message gleaned from the “distantiation” stage (2001:57). Interpretation of the text needs to be responsible because for believers this text is sacred. Explaining this concept, Broadhead states, “To study the gospel of Mark as anything other than sacred is to redefine its genre and to create an alternate form of literature” (2001:15). I believe, as does Draper, that both the text in its context and the present life situation need to be treated with equal sincerity and caution. Further, one’s conclusions need to take into account the community of believers and the historical development of Christian doctrine.

This moment of interpretation is difficult but there must be dialogue between “text” and “context” all the while bearing in mind the sacredness not only of the “text” but also the lived experience of community of believers. “Analysis of the literary dimensions of this gospel do not extinguish its sacred history or its sacred potential” (Broadhead 2001:15). As stated in my motivation, the children are those that I regard as weak and poor in the light of the hedonistic decisions made by adults. The main aim of this moment of analysis is to be true to the “text” and the “context” drawing the two together without either drowning the other.

3.2 Ritual and Ritual Process

“Everything points to the supposition that our remote ancestors were ritualizing before they became humane” (Driver 1991: 31). “It is not as true to say that we human beings invented rituals as rituals have invented us” (Driver 1991: 31).

I open this chapter with these two statements by Tom Driver in his book, *The Magic of Ritual – Our Need for Liberty Rites that Transform our Lives and our Communities*. I have done so not only to emphasise the anthropological roots of ritual studies/analysis, but also to stress my view from the onset that ritual is a powerful means/tool for the creation of ways-of-being in the world and relating to others. Ritual is an area of investigation that in the last century has captured the minds of a vast array of disciplines including sociology, psychology, anthropology, religion, drama and archeology. “Clifford Geertz, the influential anthropologist has shown that ritual shapes society and culture by creating experiences that affirm and thereby make authoritative a society’s world view and ethos, motivating participants to model their everyday lives by them” (Alexander 1995: 209). This quote seems to incorporate one of the major debates regarding rites: do they promote change thereby changing the social structures or do rites by their very nature reinforce the status quo and thus maintain the existent social structures? Driver points out that ritual in its essence has the power to do good and bad (1991: 8). This statement in itself without qualifying the subjective terms “good” and “bad” has no value. For Driver, with whom I agree, “good” should for Christians and theologians mean liberating elements: freedom from poverty, freedom from imprisonment etc., while “bad” would be suppression and bondage. In reality therefore ritual could be seen as having potential to maintain good and bad social structures or to transform good social structures to bad ones and vice-versa.

At the heart of this debate regarding the primary function of ritual are Victor Turner’s works. It seems that many would wish to view Turner as supporting a “structural-functional” approach to ritual. “The functionalist theory is based on a homeostatic model of social life that holds social cohesion and maintenance of the existing social order as the ideal” (Alexander 1991: 53). Alexander notes that those who read Turner as proposing that ritual is a form of sublimation have viewed his theory incorrectly in a conservative way (1991: 45). In other words, if Turner is read as saying that ritual provides a safety-valve to release energy that has been generated through frustration with the present social structures in place, so that those structures can remain unchallenged then Turner has been read too conservatively. In this thesis I will tend to agree with Bobby Alexander and others who argue with Turner himself that, “Ritual is a principal means by which society ‘grows’ and moves into the future (Turner 1974: 298)” (Alexander 1991: 3). It must be noted that it is, I believe, possible to misinterpret Turner as at times his terms are not always clearly defined and even when they are, he may not “employ it consistently...” (Driver 1991: 232).

3.2.1 Victor Turner: Ritual Process and Ritual Symbols

Victor Turner's theory of ritual process consists to a large extent of an elaboration of Arnold van Gennep's model (1909: *The Rites of Passage*). Further, many scholars have used this model as a starting point for their studies, either adapting Turner's work or using it as a template to be applied to a text or a live ritual. Victor Turner's model proposes that every ritual is marked by three stages: (1) separation; (2) liminality and (3) aggregation (Turner 1969: 94).

Separation or rites of separation

This stage involves the separation of the initiands or participants from their ordinary lives. This separation from ordinary status and activities of life is achieved not only through space, physical separation to a sacred place, but can also be done through the manipulation of time. This separation of time is a complex notion and in most instances involves either time being stretched or compressed or both (McVann 1991: 349). McVann applies this notion to the baptism of Jesus as found in the gospel of Luke by noting that Jesus spent forty days in the desert fasting (1991: 350).

Liminality or rites of transition

This stage is the core part of ritual as viewed by Turner and involves his concepts of *communitas* and *anti-structure*. "The neophyte in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status" (Turner 1969: 103). This is the stage at which the initiand is "nothing", he/she must comply with all the requirements and be humble in his/her acceptance of punishment for non-compliance. At this stage in the ritual the initiands are neither in their old status or yet in their new positions. They are said to be "betwixt and between". Alexander states that, "Turner notes that in the indeterminate state participants are able to encounter one another in spontaneous, direct, and egalitarian interchanges that are less alienating and more existentially satisfying than those allowed within everyday social exchanges" (1991: 18). For Turner therefore, this state of liminality brings with it a comradeship between the fellow initiands. This form of community is born spontaneously not only through the need to survive the initiation, but also through the identification no longer with "status of others" but rather with their humanness, their wholeness, their

“sameness”. Turner uses the term *communitas* to describe this spontaneous unity. It must be noted that *communitas* is not a measurable force and therefore transcends empirical techniques (Driver 1991: 160). *Communitas* is a term used and identified by Turner and therefore it must be noted that Turner went to great lengths to explain that *communitas* is spontaneous. It is a mistake to assume that one can convert this *communitas* that is experienced in ritual liminality into a structural form (Turner 1969: 137). On the other hand Turner does allow for attempts at what he calls “normative *communitas*” (Turner 1969:132). Normative *communitas*, is already in the domain of structure as it is an attempt to create a social system which is organised to maintain existential *communitas*. In reality, “...it is the fate of all spontaneous *communitas* in history to undergo what most people see as a “decline and fall” into structure and law” (Turner 1969: 132). As Turner explains as soon as people need to be mobilised, social organisation is required, which in essence immediately reaches into the level of structure, rules and hierarchy (1969: 135).

In Chapter four of, *The Ritual Process, Structure and Anti-Structure*, Turner does an extensive analysis of the development and subsequent history, of the thirteenth century Franciscan order (1969:145 – 154). Turner notes that through excessive poverty ideals, “Francis appears quite deliberately to be compelling the friars to inhabit the fringes and interstices of the social structure of his time, and to keep them in a permanently liminal state, so the argument in this book would suggest, the optimal conditions inhere for the realization of *communitas*” (1969: 145). Turner notes, referring to Lambert’s work that Francis’ successor translated the lofty ideals of Francis into acceptable terms (1969: 149). Turner explains that a split occurred between those who held to Francis’ strict poverty ideals, the Spirituals, and those who in a sense gave into the capitalist system and its ideals, the Conventuals. Turner seems to indicate that it is possible to form a sort of normative *communitas*, as long as the group has organised itself in a way that it takes into account the threats from the structured society within which it lives and has its being (1969: 150). It must be noted that these communities of normative *communitas* will come under attack as they inherently pose a threat to the norms of society as a whole. As Turner explains regarding the eventual downfall of the spirituals, “One feature of this apparently admirable attitude [poverty] made it ultimately intolerable to the structured church” (1969:152). Thus, Turner, clearly illustrates structure and anti-structure are related, and at most junctures in conflict. “Within Turner’s scheme, since *communitas* stands in dialectical opposition to social structure, it can be found to be in relationship to structure ‘at every

point and on every level [of human intercourse] in complex and subtle ways' (Turner 1974: 52; see also 1969: 113)" (Alexander 1991: 37). Turner argues that "rites de passage" do not merely reinforce the status-quo within society at large but "rather it is a matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond without which there could be no society" (1969: 97).

In *The Ritual Process, Structure and Anti-structure*, Turner develops the notion of anti-structure versus structure. In essence, Turner proposes that one cannot survive without the other. Further that in reality they are born out of each other. In other words, *communitas* cannot survive "alone if the material and organisational needs of human beings are to be adequately met" (Turner 1969: 129) and "exaggeration of structure may well lead to pathological manifestations of *communitas* outside or against 'the law'" (Turner 1969: 129). So, during ritual by meeting temporarily "the need for direct and egalitarian relationships, *communitas* infuses structure with anti-structural values and in so doing, transforms everyday social structure" (Alexander 1991: 41). Turner uses the examples of Tullensi, Nuer and Ashanti, kinship structures to not only emphasise the notion of structure versus anti-structure but also to show that *communitas* does not only occur in ritual but also within aspects of everyday life. Further, it is emphasised that "*communitas* breaks in through the intensities of structure, in liminality, at the edges of structure, in marginality and forms beneath the structure in inferiority" (Turner 1969: 128).

Interestingly it is those who are structurally poor that seem to be spiritually strong. Those who are marginalised seem to have powers to take on the offences of structure. Turner notes that, "Prophets and artists tend to be liminal and marginal people..." (1969: 128). Tom Driver notes that, "Where people are in movement, whether in a liberative or a reactionary direction, ritual is likely to be their strong ally" (1991: 9). It is the liminality stage and *communitas* that has a playful and indeterminate energy that generates the potential and possibilities to reconfigure social structures (Alexander 1991: 18). True ritual creates *communitas* and is not purely reflexive but also imaginative (Alexander 1991: 32). "Indeterminacy lies at the heart of liminality, since social structure prescriptions have been relaxed" (Alexander 1991: 19) and it is this space, that gives opportunity to be creative in challenging social structures.

The potential for change lies in the level of *communitas* and indeterminacy. However, "Ritual can be manipulated by those who hold power in society, used to protect their privileged positions by surrounding them with an aura of sacredness or inevitability" (Driver 1991: 162). The space created for spontaneous *communitas* to occur can be curtailed and hence though one may have the external elements of ritual process and ritual symbol, the transformative power has been removed from the mix. For Driver to the extent that the ritual fails to partly or temporarily overcome social alienation, it fails to be ritual, "...declining into mere routine, or into what Turner calls 'ceremony' (by which he means the celebration of the social structure), perhaps becoming an instrument of regimentation, the very opposite of authentic ritual" (1991: 162).

For Turner therefore rituals are "transformative processes" and ceremonies are "confirmation or ratification" (Alexander 1991: 15). So for Alexander part of the reason for the conservative reading of Turner is the neglect of this distinction that Turner makes between ceremony and ritual. Ceremony, "reinforces existing order (while) ritual, by contrast, promotes social change in the direction of a more communitarian order (Turner 1982 a)" (Alexander 1995: 212).

Those who seem to misread Turner as viewing ritual as reinforcing the social structure have not noted that:

1. "... attempts to circumscribe ritual calls attention to the fact that ritual is subversive by nature ..." (Alexander 1991: 55). In other words the efforts by those in power to control ritual to the extent of no changes in performance show clearly that ritual has potential power to cause change and challenge the structures.
2. That Turner's first studies done in tribal cultures were examples of how, "... ritual's innovative potential has been circumscribed, even dormant or pressed into the service of maintaining the existing order (Turner 1982 b: 86)" (Alexander 1991: 47). It is clear that ritual can be manipulated and thus it loses its power to transform social structure, but in this form it should be called ceremony. This begs the question: whether the liturgies in most churches today should be classified as ritual or ceremony? Are they merely reinforcing the present social structure, church organisation or do they have

some transformative power not only upon the individual but also upon the society at large? (Driver 1991: 172). For Driver: "A sacrament must signify not merely the idea of liberation but its actuality as a work in which both God and the people move against all forces of enslavement" (1991: 204). If ritual becomes ceremony there is no room for growth and movement. There are power struggles which can be seen and there are power struggles which we cannot be seen. Driver is proposing a reclaiming of the church's rituals for transformation purposes. For the purpose of freedom, the ushering in of "God's kingdom".

This section of liminality has been long, not only to negate any misconceptions of Turner's process being homeostatic, but also to reinforce the notion that there is a continuous movement within Turner's concepts. There are not in essence any static ritual performance or social structures, rather both will continue to change and be changed if not impeded by prescriptive formats which do not allow *communitas*.

Aggregation of rites of incorporation

This is the final stage where initiands/participants are incorporated back into society with new transformed status or role. They may at this point be given new names, which reflect their new status, with its defined rights and obligations. This stage could be seen solely as the entry back into social structure, but it must be noted that the initiand has been changed and will therefore impact upon the social structure. The aggregation stage may often be signalled by the eating of a meal or a community feast. I will not elaborate on this stage except to note that the ritual elder at this stage ends his role in the initiating activity.

To a large extent, I have dealt with Victor Turner's ritual process. It must be noted at this point that I have not dealt with Victor Turner's differentiation between "liminal" and "liminoid" as I, like Driver, do not feel that this differentiation is justified or makes any differentiation to ritual analysis (Driver 1991: 232).

Frank Gorman Jr. in his article, "Ritual Studies and Biblical Studies: Assessment of past; prospects for the future", goes to great lengths to explain how the events of enlightenment and the theology of reformation has in essence not only ignored ritual in texts, but have also been hostile to the benefits of ritual (1995: 14-16). For Gorman, "Biblical texts were subjected to analysis in scholarly treaties based on reason, objectivity and neutrality"

(Gorman 1995: 18). Tom Driver also notes that “Protestant Inconoclastism” and the “rationalism of the enlightenment” have created hostility toward ritual (1991:7). Further, he states that ritual boredom and “...misapprehension in post-enlightenment societies arises from the fact that ritual liminality has been suppressed” (Driver 1991: 159). Grimes in *Ritual Criticism* notes that there is a renewed interest growing for ritual form within post-modern societies. The climate in post-modernism says Grimes is more favourable but he warns that this could lead to exploitation (1990: 27). He praises the editors of “*worship*” for their insight into the need for ritual criticism (Grimes 1990: 29).

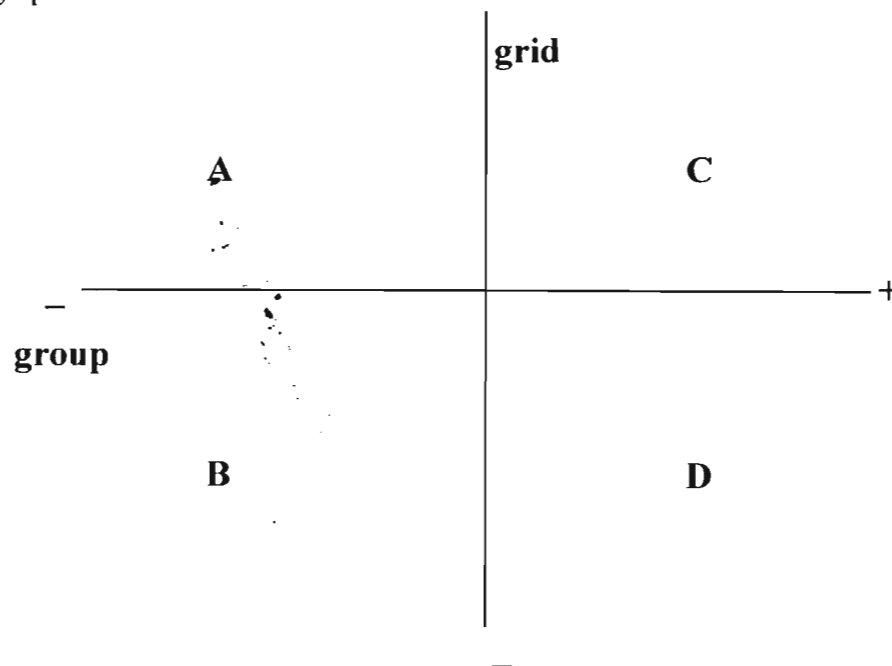
For Grimes, “...liturgy is one of the primary means of enculturation and therefore they need to be studied culturally noting power struggles and agendas” (1990: 56). And for Gorman, “a full appreciation and understanding of the narrative requires that the ritualising feature be identified and analysed” (1995: 26). Further Alexander notes that, “Ritual is the subject of many biblical texts intended to be read on ritual occasions or which reflect ritual concerns” (1994: 209). It is hoped in this thesis to use ritual analysis to gain insights not only to Mark 10: 2-12 but also to critically analyse marriage liturgies, especially when used in conjunction with Narrative Criticism.

3.2.2 Mary Douglas

This section would be incomplete without a brief description of Mary Douglas’s ritual theory. One aspect of ritual that has not been covered purposively up to this point is that of boundary setting. Ritual can be seen as creating “them” and “us”. In essence, the initiand is incorporated into a new group or kinship; for example those being baptised into the Christian faith. Douglas a British anthropologist seems to build on Turner’s concepts of structure and anti-structure to create terms/concepts of contrasting degrees of “grid” and “group” (Douglas 1970: 53). Douglas argues that our expression in ritual activity within society is a reflection of the broader social structures. These social structures/dimensions she divides into grid and group. “Group” being the level of bondedness and exclusivity (in/out dimension) and “grid” being the level of formal structure, leadership and defined roles. For Douglas, “...beliefs which attribute spiritual powers to individuals are never neutral or free of the dominant patterns of social structure” (1966: 112). In other words, our attitudes towards ritual and our bodily concerns are not merely an individual expression of

our maturity or immaturity, our behaviour and treatment of our body function are not an expression of our individuation, but rather a reflection of social structures that make up our world. So, "The paradox of spiritual powers vested in the physically weak is explained by social structure rather than by local doctrine which justifies it" (Douglas 1966: 110). The doctrine is therefore an explanation for something that already exists independently from it. It will be interesting in our later analysis to see if this in anyway give us insight into marriage as a ritual.

As mentioned earlier, Douglas uses two independent variables that she proposes makeup social structures, in turn these social structures affect individual attitudes and behaviours, particularly in relation to the body and ritual. These two dimensions group and grid can be expressed in graph form as follows: +



Each quadrant will represent a certain mix of the two variables:

- A = relatively high grid, but low group
- B = relatively low grid and group
- C = relatively high grid and group
- D = relatively low grid but high group

Douglas then identifies tribes/groups who fit into these grid/group analyses, into

specific quadrants. Further, in each case she is analysing their concerns not only with bodily ritual, but also with their conception of spiritual forces. Are these forces good/evil? Are they controlled by human intention? Douglas is seeking to prove that, "... bodily control is an expression of social control – abandonment of bodily control in ritual responds to the requirements of a social experience which is being expressed" (1970:70). Society has boundaries with margins and internal structures; these boundaries can be modelled on the human body (Douglas 1966:114). The human body becomes the expression of the social concerns and attitudes. Douglas goes against psychoanalysis in their interpretation of the body, and its boundaries and attitudes as its function as an expression of personal and private concerns (Douglas 1966:115). Rather, for Douglas, these are expressions of the public world-views.

In conclusion, I hope to use these ritual theories and concepts to not only analyse the scriptures but also the act of marriage as practised in the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa.

4. DISTANTIATION

As discussed above, in the methodology section, the “distantiation” stage in interpretation involves achieving, “...critical distance from the text to suspend what the reader previously understood the text to mean, to open her/himself up to new understandings which may contradict her/his pre-suppositions” (Draper 2002:17). This, I believe, is easier said than done as “we human beings know ourselves and our world only through an already formed sociality that contains institutions, languages, customs and norms” (Farley 1990:47). In the area of scripture this “critical distance” is extremely difficult because anyone that has been socialised in a church environment will not only have heard and read a particular scripture, but s/he may have heard numerous prior explanations and interpretations. To take this argument to the extreme as does Richard Horsley, many texts have Christian doctrine imposed upon them or read into them when in fact there is not enough evidence or support for such a reading (Horsley 2001:28; 29). Somehow we need to set aside prior understandings and interpretations as well as the preconceptions that lead us to our prior interpretations. Even doctrines may need to be set aside as they have been used as a looking glass through which to glean from the text something which may not even exist. In a sense we need to avoid the error of the text becoming a mirror in which we see our doctrine or beliefs.

The Mark text was created in a different world than the one in which I live today. Two thousand years ago the eyes/ears would have heard or seen this text in a vastly different way. Some scholars such as Lightfoot, Lohmeyer and Marxsen, have tried to recreate the community in which, or for which, a specific text like Mark was created (Peterson 2000:11; 12). Both Elizabeth Malbon and Dwight Peterson agree that while historical material is necessary for an acceptable or authentic interpretation, interpretation based on the construction of the community in or for which the text is meant are inherently flawed (Malbon 2000:154 and 155; Peterson 2000:196). Malbon also states that, “No text has just one context; contexts are always plural and they present the same problems and challenges as texts: they demand interpretations in themselves...” (2000:107). Further, Peterson argues that, “Communities and historical contexts are often so complex and interweaving as to defy adequate description” (2000:161). Malbon goes on to explain that interpreters are reluctant to ask further questions or place the text in other contexts once they have in their mind achieved a neat fit between the text and a re-constructed context (Malbon 2000:109).

For Malbon, “To explain the text’s emergence in history is not to explain the text” (2000:113). On the other hand she admits that, “... reading the text with no reference to history or other texts is impossible, and of course, focussing on the internal relations of the text has its own dangers” (Malbon 2000:115).

Peterson in his book, *The Origins of Mark – The Markan Community in Current Debate*, does a brief critical analysis of scholars such as Werner Kelber, Howard Kee, Herman Waetjen. Peterson’s conclusion is that, “Each of these authors [as well as others] treats the Markan community as if it were a known quantity which can be brought to bear on interpretative problems and unproblematically unlock the door or explain the enigma or shed light on the passage(s) under scrutiny” (2000:21). For Peterson, however, all these attempts are fallible as most scholars use material solely from Mark to create the proposed community in the first place, resulting in what Peterson calls a “vicious circle”. Further Peterson notes that scholars do not take into consideration the complexity of social contexts and they assume that the influence is unidirectional – context to text, when we could expect them to move both ways (Peterson 2000:52, 73, 167, 168). Peterson makes the most damning statements against this form of interpretation in his concluding chapter:

“Each of these interpreters has produced a reading different from each of the other. They agree that the story is really about something other than the story. But they disagree as to what that something is”. (2000:21)

This statement clearly highlights the problem faced by scholars who rely solely on historical methodologies. Donald Juel agrees with both Malbon and Peterson and concludes that, “There is no alternative to historical reconstruction, but we must understand its place in the interpretative enterprise. It is not the most stabilising element in interpretation...” (Juel 1994:127). For Juel, as for many other scholars in the last twenty years since “...the Society of Biblical Literature Markan Seminar, chaired by Norman Perrin, and then by Werner Kelber, between 1971 and 1980” (Powell 1997:65; Merenlhti and Hakola 1999:17), “The data that hold the greatest promise for stabilising interpretation are found within the Gospel narrative itself; engagement with the stories results in changing us” (Juel 1994:25). Further, Hengel notes that in spite of their differences both Rudolf Pesch and Walter Schmithals, “agree on one thing: in their almost unlimited confidence in the possibilities of literary criticism in the second gospel, a confidence which again dominates wide areas of new testament scholarship today” (1983:32). This new emphasis on the narrative, through narrative criticism, focuses on the whole of the text and gains its

interpretative data from within the text – the story world of the text. The origins of narrative criticism, “Both the new criticism and structuralism focus on the text itself – the language of the text and the text as language” (Malbon 2000:6). As discussed in the methodology section, narrative criticism works on the notions of communication theory – the emphasis is not on what the story meant, but how the story conveyed this meaning.

We need to get back to our aim of the text being different, alien and intended for others (distantiation)(Draper 2001:152). It is clear that on the one hand we need to set aside our prior conception while on the other hand relying on historical analysis is not going to be effective (Draper 2001:152). Therefore, my approach will be an eclectic one – I will use narrative criticism and ritual analysis of the text to create “critical distance” but I will also place this analysis in a broad socio-economic and religious context. In a sense I am using techniques (ways of reading the text) which are new to me. In this way I hope to replace my prior conceptions with a new set of lenses. As explained above, in recent years few scholars still cling to the notion that biblical texts can be read purely relying on the internal world of the story. Merenlahti and Hakola note that, “An intrinsic text centred approach does not seem to match properly the nature of the gospels as non-fictional narratives” (1999:43). For Merenlahti and Hakola, the gospels clearly not only have an ideological base, but the gospel’s narrative needs to be seen as taking “... shape in a process of interaction with the historical situation and ideology of the author and the readers” (1999:47).

I will not be dealing with specifics such as: was Mark written prior to 70 or post 70 or trying to determine the exact location of and the identity of the writer. Rather, I will identify general economic, religious and social elements of that era that will make our ears/eyes more in tune and attentive to the cues/signals which would have stood out for the hearers and readers of that time – first century Palestine. As Juel notes while describing the present scholarly conclusions: “Virtual agreement exists among students of the bible that Mark’s gospel is worth reading as a narrative” (1994:25). However, he also notes that, “It should come as no surprise that interpretation of Mark is caught up in larger social, political and religious currents” (Juel 1994:27). It is these currents that I will try to describe before doing my narrative analysis of Mark and Mark 10:2-12. It must be kept in mind that the aim of this section, distantiation, is always to allow the text to speak out against us. To achieve this we will at times have to acknowledge the vast gap, which exists between the world of the twenty-first century and that of first century Palestine. As Draper writes, “It [the text] is

not an object but another subject which calls us into conversation” (2002:17). It is our task to create that space so that we allow the text space.

4.1 Other Historical extra-textual considerations

Waetjen notes that, “If there is no acquaintance with any of this material [referring to knowledge of Mark’s ‘extra-textual’ world] the results can only be disorientated and misconstrued” (1989:4). In this section I will be dealing with some of the extra-textual realities I believe need to be considered when reading Mark. This task will at times involve highlighting conceptions of the twenty-first century, which need to be set aside. In this section I will be drawing largely from Richard Horsley’s recent book, *Hearing the whole story – The politics of plot in Mark’s Gospel*, (2001).

I again remind the reader that I am not discussing extra-textual material or concepts to reconstruct the community for which or in which the text was created. Rather my aim is to create space between myself and the text so that I can, in some instances, read or hear the text as those of two thousand years ago. In Waetjen’s socio-political understanding of Mark as addressing an agrarian society, he states that the links and associations, presupposed by the writer, “... would be made quite naturally by the recipients of the gospel because they themselves participated in the same realities of agrarian society that the story world reflects” (1989:12). In other words, “Since the message that is communicated is not a set of concepts but an experience arising out of a participation in the story...”, we need to have certain background/extra-textual knowledge in order to interact with the text, not as a twenty-first century scholar, but as a first century peasant for example (Waetjen 1989:17). Horsley notes that his students were, “... not gripped by the narrative – perhaps either because they are overly familiar with its contents or are alienated by its supposedly authoritative status as scriptures or are so utterly unfamiliar with Mark’s “narrative world”” (2001:7). In essence, Horsley notes not only that they need to create “critical distance” but also that they need extra-textual knowledge before they can respond to the “response-inviting” structures or wordings within the text. Horsley acknowledges as I have in the previous section that we are not “virginal readers” and that it will take extreme effort to put aside our previous conceptions in order to discuss, in a sense, Mark anew (2001:8). Rhoads argues that while narrative criticism has shown that there are benefits of studying the narrative in its own right without bowing to historical methodologies, “Nevertheless,[he

admits], narrative criticism affirms that a gospel narrative is a historical artefact, a first century contextual document fully conditioned by its time and place” (1999:268). Rhoads also notes that, “Once we have allowed a gospel to address us on its own terms, the dialogue can begin to move to the modern reader’s side of the equation: How does this story relate to contemporary life?” (1999:284). In a sense Rhoads is proposing a similar concept or process as the one in which I am involved with, Draper’s tri-polar model of interpretation. Juel also goes to great lengths to note that while the focus of scholars in the past on historical methodologies has created “A gulf between scripture and present readership ...”, “We cannot abandon historical studies any more than we can abandon our native tongue, especially because the bible is located in particular times and cultures and because it makes claims about people and places” (1994:5; 7).

4.1.1. Jewish matters

I will start my historical extra-textual discussion with a controversial issue regarding the importance of Jewish matters. Juel in his concluding chapter of, *A master of surprise – Mark interpreted*, notes that, “A profile of Mark’s implied audience demands that current readers not only do some homework but undertake a new assay of theological investment in Jewish matters regarded as passe since perhaps the second century” (1994:144). The dilemma is, how do we understand Mark? Is Mark establishing a new Christian religion which is in essence to replace Judaism or is Mark an expression of God working within and through the Jewish conceptions to renew his people? For Juel the presence of God in Mark must be understood, “... itself within the framework of God’s dealings with Israel” (1994: 139). Juel notes that Mark’s implied audience have both knowledge of scripture and knowledge and investments in the traditions of God’s people (1994:136-138). This leads to the next important distinction. Are we dealing with a religion or a tradition of a people? Was Judaism a defined and structured religion by the time of Jesus or even at the time of Mark? Further, as the Israelites had been dispersed several times and been under foreign rule for at least two centuries, what constituted the Jewish people or their traditions? This question is important because throughout Mark we have conflict between Jesus and various leaders and to understand this conflict we need to question whether it is over Jewish law as seen in Mark 7:1-23 or whether there are other elements involved (Malbon 2000:31). “Other controversies involving the Pharisees are these: the fact that Jesus’ disciples do not fast, as John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees do (2:18), plucking grain on the

Sabbath (2:24), healing on the Sabbath (3:16), eating with hands defiled (7:1,3,5), seeking a sign from heaven (8:11), the question of divorce (10:2) and paying to Caesar (12:13)" (Malbon 2000:141). Malbon notes that, "What bothers both scribes and the Pharisees about the Markan Jesus is that he challenges the tradition – the tradition of the elders (7:5)" (2000:143). Again we must question whether there are other dynamics involved? Further, what was the tradition of the elders and why was it so important to conserve or defend it?

For Horsley, "It has been clear for some time, as readers shed narrower Christian doctrinal schemes, that Mark does not portray Jesus founding a new religion, Christianity, in rejection of an old one, Judaism" (2001:23). Firstly then, Horsley regards Mark's presentation of "... Jesus and his movement both as uncompromisingly based on Israelite covenantal traditions and as the fulfilment of the history of an imperially subjected people" (2001:42). Most scholars would agree with the concept that the Israelites at the time of both Jesus and Mark were under imperial rule, but how does this fit with the struggle between Jewish leaders and Jesus? The key for Horsley is the recognition that at the time of Mark religion, politics and economics were inseparable and that "... neither 'Judaism' nor 'Christianity' existed yet as an identifiable 'religion'" (2001:28). In Horsley's assessment it is our western preconceptions that religion and politics are separate in conjunction with our preoccupation with the bible as a religious text, which leads us to misconstrue Mark (2001:28).

We misconstrue Mark because we do not place the story in its correct social, economic and political context. This happens primarily because we see the Pharisees as representatives of a religion, which seeks to restore Israel through strict codes of purity laws (Horsley 1995: 3), and not as the "retainers" of a higher social class, who in essence are seeking out their own survival in a political and economic environment, which was highly competitive. In, *Galilee – History, Politics, People* (1995), Horsley goes to great lengths not only to trace Galilee's history back in time prior to Solomon, but also describes the political, social, economic and religious institutions throughout the ages. For Horsley, the Israelite tribes who were living in Galilee when it was captured by King Tiglath – pileser in 733-732, were not all carried off to exile (1995: 23, 26). Rather only the educated were taken into exile, but "The bulk of the Israelite population, however, that is the vast majority of the peasantry would have been left on the land" (Horsley 1995: 27). In essence, this means that even though the people and the land were under foreign rule, the majority of the inhabitants had

their cultural roots in Israel's covenantal traditions. Horsley notes that, "It is highly likely, however, from what we know of agrarian societies under foreign rulers that Israelite traditions continued to be cultivated independently in the popular oral traditions of Galilee" (1995: 33). Osiek, referring to Freyne's work notes that, "... he concludes that in the Hellenistic period and into Roman (New Testament) times, Galilee remained a largely Jewish peasant society, with most of the population residing in rural areas and villages" (1992: 18). Horsley's statement introduces two very important extra-textual issues, namely agrarian societies and oral traditions which will be discussed at length, as I believe they are vital in understanding and interpreting Mark.

Later the people of Galilee were to be governed by Hasmonean rule. This was done through the Hasmonean high priesthood in Jerusalem. For Horsley, the evidence from Josephus' writings indicate that this political-economic-religious subordination meant the subjection to "the laws of the Judeans" (1995: 47, 48). So, "Although Galilean customs were rooted in some of the same Israelite traditions as the laws of the Judeans, they had undergone more than eight centuries of separate development" (Horsley 1995: 50). In reality, "The temple itself, temple dues, and rule by the high priesthood would all have been foreign to the Galileans, whose ancestors had rebelled centuries earlier against the Solomonic monarchy and Temple" (Horsley 1995: 51). It must be noted that in context of this thesis, it is not possible to give a detailed history or the complex arguments, which go with Horsley's analysis and conclusions. The political and economic history of Galilee in comparison to Judea is however important to our understanding of Mark, as Jesus in the story world of Mark spends much time in Galilee before making his way to Jerusalem. Further, we begin to realise that Galilee and Judea share a distant common past. This information in conjunction with the fact that "Neither archaeological nor textual evidence suggests that there was any (religious) community self-consciously identifying itself as "Christianity" over against (rabbinic) "Judaism" in Galilee – conceivably even until after the time of Constantine", questions our use of the word Jewish. Is this an ethnic term or religious one? This topic has gained importance in recent years particularly in regard to John's gospel. Draper in his article, "Holy Seed and the return of the Diaspora in John 12:24", goes to great lengths to explain that the misinterpretation of a term such as "Greeks" can easily occur if we do not place the description in context (Draper 2000). Draper explains that on one hand, "... inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world would name any Israelite settler in their cities after the name of the most well-known Israelite region, whether they maintained

their culture in an orthodox way or not, i.e. “Judaean” (2000: 355). While, “... on the other hand, that Israelites in Palestine called any other Israelites who had settled in the wider Greco-Roman world and lost their mother tongue and lost contact with the motherland, “Greek” (Draper 2000: 355), should not be surprising. Draper concludes that in the context of John 7: 32-36, “When John tells us that the “Greeks” who had come to the feast of Passover wanted to see Jesus, it seems to be very probable, but not certain of course, that he refers to Greek speaking Diaspora Israelites who had come to worship” (Draper 2000: 355). This argument is clear and reinforces not only the complexity of the social terrain in Palestine due to the years of different imperial rule, but also stresses the importance of careful and extensive exegesis.

Horsley notes that, “Limited but mutually confirming evidence indicates that the political-economic-religious role of the Pharisees (along with others) in late second-temple times was rooted in their social-political location as what sociologists call “retainers” of the high-priestly regime” (1995: 149). As mentioned earlier, Waetjen regards the social-economic context of Mark as an agrarian society. For Waetjen, “The two worlds, that of Roman-occupied Palestine during Jesus’ ministry and the ‘extra-textual’ world of Mark’s gospel are essentially equivalent” (1989: 12). At this point it is important to highlight the characteristics of the social structure which sustains these so-called “retainers”.

4.1.2. Agrarian societies – Peasantry

In *Peasants*, (1966) Eric Wolf, does an extensive anthropological and social analysis of the “social group” which he calls peasants. In Wolf’s analysis he highlights the pressures which are placed upon this group, both from environmental factors, internal social system-household maintenance and wider society - rent and taxes (1966: 77-80). The picture painted by Wolf is one of a people who are continuously trying to balance their resources in order to maintain their heritage (the land), while at the same time keeping authorities at bay by paying required taxes and dues. So for, Wolf, “... the term ‘peasant’ [primarily] denotes no more than an asymmetrical structural relationship between producers of surplus and controllers ...” (1966: 10). “The existence of a peasantry thus involves not merely a relation between peasant and non peasant, but a type of adaptation, a combination of attitudes and activities designed to sustain the cultivation in his effort to maintain himself and his kind within a social order which threatens that maintenance” (Wolf 1966: 17). This is a picture

of a domination and hierarchy where land acquisition becomes an important source of power and maintenance of a superior class, the elite. This system is generally only maintained with a large majority of the people in subjection to a small elite group. This picture painted by Wolf of an oppressed people struggling to survive is the very picture, which Waetjen paints, of the story world of Mark in his introductory chapter of: *A Reordering of Power – A Socio-Political Reading of Mark's Gospel* (1989). For Waetjen, his argument is reinforced by the presence in Mark of Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate and the high priest – all powerful individuals in Roman occupied Palestine who exerted pressures of taxes and other obligations upon the bulk of the population living in villages and trying to survive off the land. Further, the Pharisees, "... compromising with the ruling class [as retainers] so that the norms of levitical purity might govern the life of the Jewish people, they [in essence] stabilised and perpetuated the political status quo with all of its injustices and inequalities" (Waetjen 1989: 9). Draper notes that, "... central to a peasant society is a functioning system of power and control, without which it would not be possible, despite the claims of the ruling elite that it is natural or divinely ordained" (1995: 185). For Osiek, "While small ancestral peasant holdings were still the basis of land allotment in Galilee in New Testament times, increasingly the best land was held in royal estates, parcelled out to whoever the prevailing occupiers wished to reward, confiscated and reallocated when its owners fell out of favour with the crown" (1992: 19).

Both Herod the Great and his son, Antipas, undertook extensive building projects both in Galilee and Jerusalem, including the re-modelling of the temple. These projects were certainly funded by increasing the tax burden on those who found themselves on the lower rung. From the above discussion regarding agrarian societies it is clear that any increase in expectation from the ruler would cause tension between the client and ruler relationship. James Scott notes that, "When the economic surplus claimed by elites as a matter of right violates customs or imposes great hardship on the peasantry, it is likely to be resisted as unjust" (1977: 16). Scott used the terms 'little tradition' and 'great tradition', "... to distinguish the beliefs and practices of the folk strata of an agrarian civilisation from that of its elite" (1977: 8). For Scott, there is not only evidence of, "The cultural dependence of the little tradition on the great tradition..." but there is also, "Evidence that much (but not all) of what passes as folk culture in fact originated in an earlier great tradition is pervasive" (1977: 12). If we analyse these statements with Galilee's past historical roots in some of the tribes of Israel and their New Testament relationship with Jerusalem through "retainers",

Pharisees, we discover a complex relationship of cultural and thus religious beliefs. Scott later notes however that, "Within this shared great tradition, however, peasant beliefs may fly directly in the face of what passes as orthodoxy" (1977: 19).

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, (1990), Scott develops the terms, "hidden transcripts" and "public transcripts" to explain and analyse the communication inherently found, "... between subordinates and those who dominate" (Scott 1990: 2). The public transcript is that communication or interaction which happens in the open between dominant and subordinate, in a sense it is the mask which they consciously or unconsciously hold up for protection (Scott 1990: 10). For the elite or dominant, this mask is to sustain the position of power through "... haughtiness and mastery" (Scott 1990: 11). While for the subordinate, it keeps them safe from further loss due to retaliation for deviance from the elite. The "hidden transcript" on the other hand is that word or action which truly describes the feelings of the actors. For Scott this discourse generally only takes place "off stage" for obvious reasons (1990: 4). Scott argues, "... that a partly sanitised, ambiguous and coded version of the hidden transcript is always present in the public discourse of subordinate groups" (1990: 18). In other words, in order to express their true feelings while at the same time hiding this expression, those under subjection by the dominant would use: "Rumour, gossip, folk tales, jokes, songs, rituals, codes and euphemisms" to protect themselves from retaliation (Scott 1990: 18). In this section I hope it is clear that within the Galilean situation of the first century not only were the majority peasants, but it is highly likely that they formed part of the "little tradition" which would have expressed itself only in disguise, by means of a public transcript.

Horsley notes that both Galilee and Judea were traditional agrarian societies with the vast majority of people living in villages and trying to survive on the land or lake (1995: 189). This is important to note as, there has been, a lot of the discussion regarding Galilee and its separate development culturally from other regions. Further, it is important that we understand that Judea and Galilee may have shared a distant heritage but they also share a common lived experience, that of being subject, maybe to a lesser degree, but still subject to the elite who generally ruled from the cities. For Horsley, in Galilean villages and towns, "The family was the basic social unit of production and consumption, of reproduction and socialisation of personal identity and membership in a wider society" (1995: 195). Thus the creation of marriages was extremely important as it was "... a strategy of keeping the

inheritance of land within certain boundaries” (Horsley 1995: 196). Wolf concurs that the importance of marriage and the family unit in peasantry society can be seen in ceremonial evidence. Wolf states the following:

“Everywhere in peasant societies, much ceremonial surrounds the formation of a new marriage, and, through it, the creation of a new household. This ceremonial does not merely tie the conjugal bond between husband and wife; it also invites the public to take note that a new minimal unit of the community has been formed. Everywhere in peasant societies, too, ceremonial surrounds the domestic unit, aiding in the management of the tensions which arise in its operation” (1966: 97).

We cannot be sure of Wolf’s definition of ceremonial, but we can be sure that it was public and shared. It would be interesting to see how Wolf would define ritual in relation to my section above and his concept of ceremonial. It must be noted that in all likelihood Galilee and Judea would have placed the same importance on family and therefore on marriage which could have included ceremonials/rituals as discussed by Wolf.

For Horsely, there was an understanding that the land was a grant from God that had been entrusted to lineages and families. Further, for Horsley, this notion was “... vividly expressed in the priestly statement of the Israelite covenantal mechanisms designed to maintain the people on their family inheritance of land in Leviticus 25” (1995: 208). Horsley emphasises this point in his concluding chapter when he states that the “Basis in Israelite traditions was the independence of the village and communities living under the direct kingship/rule of God as Moses had taught” (1995: 281). There is thus an important link in Peasant societies between marriage and the land (inheritance). Further in Israel’s history there is a link between the land and God. These notions are highlighted here, as they will be developed, through the narrative reading of Mark.

4.1.3. Oral Tradition

The reading of the bible in 2002 is often a very individual experience between a static written text and a person's intellect and previous socialisation. More so in South Africa, I believe we can relate to the fact that a large majority of the so-called previously disadvantaged are illiterate. The factors causing this phenomenon can be debated but I believe it can be linked directly to the subordinate role these ethnic groups experienced during the apartheid years. "As Africans, we recognise our own specific location at the end of a long history of colonial domination, cultural dispossession and economic exploitation" (Draper 2002: 17). As we have seen in South Africa, those in power tend to control not only material resources but also the opportunity for those under subjection to develop intellectually and culturally. This can be highlighted by the recent debate in the media regarding the continued use of Afrikaans as the primary medium of tuition at Stellenbosch University.

Horsley notes that one recent study places the literacy rate in Roman Palestine "as low as 3 percent" (2001: 55). Rohrbaugh concurs, that "Probably no more than 2 to 4 percent of the population in an agrarian society could read, or read and write and the vast majority of these people lived in the cities" (1997: 107).

Further, for Horsley, at the time of Jesus not only was literacy located with the wealthy and the powerful, but this advantage was used "... largely for controlling the inheritance of property..." through the use of, "... written records to record large scale loans, wills and marriage contracts" (2001: 54,55). Osiek notes that, "Unfortunately it is the leisured urban classes throughout the ancient world which left the best records of themselves, for it was they who had the education, time and money to do so" (1992: 17). Peterson in discussing Kelber's interpretation notes that, "Instead of placing the origins of Mark in a historical scenario of conflict between northern and southern Christian communities centred around the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, Kelber places that origin at the centre of a more general kind of conflict between communicative media: oral Vs written" (2000: 47). My prior discussion needs to be kept in mind regarding the formulated religion at the time of Mark. The above quotation does however highlight the fact that the concepts and understanding of oral tradition needs to be taken into consideration when analysing Mark.

For Horsley not only does the, “Reading [of] Mark as a mere text reduce[s] what was a living tradition of live performance to a fossilised skeleton of what it was or could be”. But Horsley also notes that, “... the communal reception, like the performance, was emphatic and participatory rather than distanced and reflective (let alone “objective”)” (2001: 62). Although I will not be analysing the text of Mark through, “Oral performance theory”, but rather narrative criticism. I will bear in mind the notion that when reciting a “text” a performer and the crowd are part of the process. Further, “Perhaps the key to how the performer evokes meaning in reciting a “text” to an audience is that a given term or phrase or image or statement summons up a whole range of connotations and experience” (Horsley 2001: 63).

The other concept which some are well aware of in South Africa and previous colonised countries is that our history (written records) are skewed in favour of the elite or the oppressor. Scott notes that, “Perhaps one reason why political scientists and historians generally overlook the moral and political ideas of the little tradition is that both, unlike the anthropologist, tend to concentrate on the written record – the product, *par excellence*, of the great tradition” (1977: 240). On the other hand Scott also notes that because the oral tradition form of communication is adaptive and impermanent, it has an element of anonymity which in the light of subjection and the need to express discontent is often necessary to protect those of the “little tradition” (1990: 161).

This concludes the section on extra-textual material. I hope that the concepts: “Jewish”, “Agrarian Society” and “Oral tradition” will facilitate the narrative as well as ritual analysis of the text. It must also be pointed out that throughout the above discussion, there is also an implicit message that the text is not aimed at individuals nor is it a message about individuals but rather a group. The disadvantage of those under subjection needs to be taken into consideration when reading the next section: *Marriage at the time of Jesus*. I believe that it must be considered that the information which can be gleaned about marriage at the time of Jesus, is largely the product of the elite and the great tradition of that time.

4.2 Marriage at the Time of Jesus

To grasp a picture of the “process of Marriage” at the time of Jesus, is particularly difficult for three main reasons;

1. History and Historical contexts are on a continuum. The customs and rituals of the Jewish people were not static but continually evolving, through rabbinical debate and praxis.
2. Through time the New Testament World had been “governed” or influenced by many different cultures – Assyrian, Persian, Greek and Roman.
3. The information, which is available from the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*, is largely legalistic/instructive. Even, though both the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* are formulated or written down after the time of Jesus it can be assumed that much of tradition, rite and customs had been preserved through “oral traditions”. Thus we do not get a descriptive picture of the performance but rather prescriptive measures and rulings which are to be followed.

Further, we cannot be sure of the extent to which the prescribed rules and regulations were followed (Cohen 1999: 947). Carolyn Osiek, in her introduction to: *What are they saying about the social setting of the New Testament?* states, “We must realise that we are working with incomplete evidence” (1992:5). Osiek says this in reference to the fact that the literature we use, the texts, and archaeological findings are not only incomplete but they in themselves reflect a certain genre and message (1992:5). This however should not deter us but make us more determined to seek out new methods of data analysis and interpretation. George Moore, in his writings on the “Jewish” Family in the first centuries of the Christian era when dealing with polygamy also states, “Our information is largest about the learned class...” (1958:122). This shows clearly that we need to be extremely careful in appropriating information and making generalised statements regarding marriage at the time of Jesus. Further there may be a need to look at the social/economic structure – the power dynamics – as there may well be a distinction between the different classes or strata in society. This is sure to affect the way in which their story is told or neglected. Do the writings we study reflect the minority or majority? However, I will endeavour to outline the process of marriage, bearing in mind that in the text: Mark 10: 2 – 12 Jesus is in direct debate/ conflict with Pharisees. I will then compare the Jewish concepts to that of the Greco–Roman Society.

“The Talmudic writers were determined to promote marriage. It was especially vital for Judaism to build the strength of the family structure as a good foundation of their ethnic life.” (Tenney 1977:94) Marriage was an important issue in the eyes of the Jewish leaders; this can be seen by the amount of material in the *Mishna*, which is devoted to this subject. The whole Third order: *NASHIM* (women) consisting of seven tractates is full of material dealing with marriage, especially the second tractate *KETHUBOTH* (Marriage contract), the third Tractate *NEDARIM* (Vows and their cancellation) and the seventh tractate *KIDDUSITIN* (betrothal/engagement). The importance of marriage was emphasised through time by the changes and rabbinical debates regarding the institution of marriage. Judith Hauptman in her introduction to a chapter devoted to marriage summarises my above mentioned concerns and emphasis on marriage:

“Nearly every one of the biblical institutions relating to marriage was maintained by the rabbis but radically transformed. It is impossible to know if these transformations were the consequence of rabbinical invention or the infiltration of new ideas from other cultures. Or maybe they were the formal record of what had already been established generations earlier” (Hauptman 1998:60).

As stated earlier, I have presumed that the presence of and, may I say, threat posed by other cultures, did have an impact on the laws and customs of the Jews. This influence could be either the assimilation of material from other cultures and/ or the implementation of stricter rules/laws – boundary measures in the line of Douglas’, grid and group formulation (see below). The accumulation of law clearly tends to show an in/out group dynamic, especially if we study the prohibitions on marrying those out side of the Jewish system. Davies and Finkelstein in discussing the period between 333 and 175 B.C.E, clearly indicate that there was a “...tension between assimilation and self-assertion” (Davies and Finkelstein 1989:185). Further they note that, “The only reference to a Jewish-Gentile mixed marriage in Ptolematic times is not certain” (Davies and Finkelstein 1989:194). So it would seem that even though the Greek culture had an influence on the Jewish culture, there were still distinct lines – boundaries that in a way had been strengthened due to the threat. “That is, the Jews, too, appear to have perceived in the Greek way of life an aggressive civilisation which threatened the distinctive tradition of their fathers” (Davies and Finkelstein 1989:184). Davies and Finkelstein confirm my assumption in their chapter dealing with the period 170 B.C.E to 135 C.E when they propose that Josephus and the New Testament records confirm and supplement the rabbinical traditions (1989:245). It must be

noted that they do however go to great lengths to emphasise the schism between the Shammanites and Hillelites. “Thus in regard to many ritual questions, the people remained divided – the neo-Pharisees following the customs of their ancestors, which they now insisted had come down from Moses himself, and the old Pharisees following their own customs” (Davies and Finkelstein 1989:261). The distinction between secular customs and religious rites will become more apparent as we begin to discuss the understanding and process of marriage.

Most if not all literature that I have studied regarding the structure of the family, seems to indicate that even though there were exceptions and “Bigamy is recognised as a legal fact by Deuteronomy 21: 15 – 17, and the kings sometimes kept a large harem” (De Vaux 1961:25), “Family life was generally built around a monogamous marriage” (Safrai and Stern 1987:748). The Talmudic law did not change the biblical law of bigamy (Safrai and Stern 1987:749). However, through the history of Israel, the prophets seem to use monogamy as an analogy for Israel (only wife) and God relationship. De Vaux, quotes the following references, “(Os 2:4f; Jr 2:2; Is 50:1; 54:6-7; 62:4-5), and Ezekiel develops the same metaphor into an allegory (Ez 16)” (1961: 26). Further, “The Gospels and the whole Tannaite literature evidently suppose a practically monogamous society” (Moore 1958: 122). Moore explains that the conditions under which most lived in conjunction with the rabbinical marriage contract and settlement, not only hindered divorce, but also plural marriages (1958: 122). This argument will become clearer once the process of marriage has been discussed. From the above discussion, it would seem that monogamy was not only prescribed, but rabbis also encouraged it. Moore starts his chapter on the family by stating that, “Marriage was regarded not only as the normal state, but as a divine ordinance” (1958: 119). Marriage was important, but what form did it take?

Tenney, states that, “The Talmudic legislators neither elevated marriage to position of a sacrament nor did they regard it as a mere contract in civil law” (1977:94). However this distinction is not explained by Tenney nor is his statement backed up by any argument except that “The act of establishing the communion between husband and wife was termed *Kiddushin*, or ‘sanctification’, without implying the indelible character of a sacrament” (Tenney 1977:94). Again Tenney does not explain the notion of sanctification, which in its self, represents a notion of pure and impure – in/out of the group or accepted norm. Hauptman, too notes that “Despite this imbalance, [referring to the patriarchal nature of the

process of marriage], the standard rabbinic term for betrothal, *kiddushin*, unlike its biblical equivalent, *erusin*, suggests that marriage has now been infused with a sense of sanctification” (1998:69). I will get back to Hauptman’s notion of liberating changes, which took place in the process of marriage. But at this point I wish to note that both Tenney and Hauptman mention the notions of ‘sanctification’, but they fail to explain how this is expressed in the marriage process or lived out in the marriage experience. Could it be that they have not researched this aspect or that they find a contradiction between the terms used and the realities/lived-experience?

Jacob Neusner in his analysis of the construction of the Mishnah, through a process of deconstruction, in his book, *Judaism – The Evidence of the Mishnah* (1981), divides the contributions into three time periods:

1. Before the first war, namely before 70 CE.
2. Between the two wars, namely between 70 CE and approximately 140 CE and
3. After the two wars, namely after 140 CE.

Neusner states that the principle and laws before 70CE and those after seem to be on a continuum of thought. However some changes in thought and principals took place after the second war to the time that the Mishnah in a sense was finalised probably 200 CE (1981:76 and 122). I will only look at the division of women over the period before and after the first war and the notion of sanctification as it develops through this period. For Neusner, at the core of the Mishnah’s system is the notion of holy versus unclean. Laws are exacted at the point where danger or uncleanness is present and needs to be in a sense sanctified.

“If my analysis of the history of Mishnaic law was correct and the discrete laws we shall now survey do represent positions and principles adopted before 70 and continuously carried forward to the formation and closure of the Mishnah as a complete system, then the Mishnah as we know it originated in its Division of Purities” (Neusner 1981: 49). This system of sanctification is governed and controlled by man. “Man is counterpart and partner and creation, in that, like God he has power over the status and condition of creation, putting everything in its proper place, calling everything by its rightful name” (Neusner 1981: 271). For Neusner, this notion of sanctification in the “Division of women only becomes formulated after the two wars in the final formulation of the Mishna” (1981:

137-138). “The principal interest for the Mishnah is the point at which a woman becomes and ceases to be holy to a particular man, that is, enters and leaves the marital union” (Neusner 1981: 138). So in reality the Division of Women is not really concerned about women as such but more concerned about the times of transfer of women from father to husband and vice versa. There are the points in time of danger, which need to be controlled by man. Referring to the division of women Neusner states, “The whole constitutes a significant part of the *Mishnah*’s encompassing system of sanctification, for the reason that heaven confirms what men do on earth” (1981: 138).

It is not my intention to deal with the entire system of the *Mishnah*, but it must be noted that ultimately marriage – the beginning and end thereof are part of the whole sanctification system. “Like the holy Land of Agriculture, the holy Temple of Holy Things, and the potentially holy realm of the clean of Purities, women for the Division of Women define a principal part of the Mishnah’s orderly conception of reality” (Neusner 1981: 139).

Does this help us define the process of marriage at the time of Jesus? I believe that even though the Tractates do encompass layers, these layers do speak to one another. For Neusner, prior to the first war, the concerns regarding women were the cessation of marriage. However, even at this stage there were debates between the House of Hillel and the house of Shammai regarding the parallel rite to betrothal in Levirate marriage and the validity of vows (Neusner 1981: 59-61). This clearly shows not only that there were vows but also that betrothal was a part of the process. “Between the wars the chief focus is located in the transfer of the person of the women from the father’s house to the husband’s domain...” (Neusner 1981: 92). Neusner indicates that, “... had the Mishnah come to expression between the two wars it would have looked quite different from the Mishnah we now know” (1981: 95). This does make sense with regard to environmental influences and social power struggles and the final formulation taking approximately sixty years, but to some extent, I propose that in the lived experience, the rites of marriage did not change over night. Rather in the majority of the population the rites evolved slowly over time.

4.2.1. The Marriage Process

As indicated in the introduction, it is extremely difficult to gain a picture from law and literature regarding process. It would seem that the process from the outset is dominated by the patriarchal structure. Further, the marriage process is divided into two distinct stages, “Betrothal and marriage were accompanied by a long series of customs and colourful practices” (Safrai and Stern 1987: 750). It is these customs and colourful practices that are so difficult to find within literature. We can however gain a broad view of what both betrothal and marriage entailed.

It must be noted from the onset that “Marriages were usually arranged by the parent of the parties” (Moore 1958: 121). This does not mean that they organised and paid for the subsequent parties, but rather that they to a large extent chose the bride to be for their son and negotiated the *mohar*. This was a price paid to the bride’s father for his loss; it could also be that the bride’s father only had use of this money until the marriage ended. In effect it was an insurance to take care of the women at points of transition (Madeleine and Miller 1979: 98-99). Both Tenney and Hauptmann note that there was a change some time in the second temple period when, “... the *mohar* was replaced by the sum registered in the *kethubah* (marriage contract)” (Tenney 1977: 93) and (Hauptmann 1998: 62). The question to ask, which will be difficult, to answer is at what point did this change take place? Secondly, did the change take place in practice prior to the law being changed or vice versa? It must be noted that this change could have been in its evolving stages at the very time of Jesus’ debate with the Pharisees and further that the essence of the change was one of purchase to one of “social contract”.

Most references indicate, “... that both in Israel and in Mesopotamia, marriage was a purely civil contract, not sanctioned by any religious rite” (De Vaux 1961: 33). However, there do seem to be some contradictions as indicated by Tenney who says, “For the Israelites it was a covenant or *b’rith*” (1977: 96). While later he stipulates that the right of a husband to divorces is central to the Jewish law, this seems not to imply a covenantal relationship, but a legal one. For Moore, betrothal was a formal act by which the woman became legally the man’s wife; unfaithfulness on her part was adultery and punishable as such, if the relation was dissolved a bill of divorce was required (1958: 121). Safrai and Stern also emphasise that the betrothal was the formal point and that, which “sanctified” the bride, even although

the bride would only move to her husband's home during the second ceremony that of marriage (Safrai and Stern 1987: 754). "During the interval between betrothal and wedding the young woman remained in her father's house (Safrai and Stern 1987: 755). It would seem that betrothal at the time of Jesus involved "marriage contract and marriage settlement as Blackman in his introduction to Tractate Kethuboth states that Simon ben Shelach introduced these doing the first century BCE (Blackman 1991: 122).

"Betrothal was actually a formal act of property transfer wherein the groom gave his bride money or something else of monetary value and told her that through it she became betrothed to him according to the law of Moses and Israel (T Ketuboth 4:9)" (Safrai and Stern 1987: 755). There is debate regarding the value of this exchange and if it is merely symbolic or not. But it must be noted that vows are said and that this transfer is over and above the marriage contract that lays down the husband's responsibilities and marriage settlement that he would have to pay on death or divorce. The betrothal was a festive occasion which included many people as well as in some places betrothal blessings "... in the presence of a quorum of ten men" (Safrai and Stern 1987: 756). A period would pass before the actual marriage ceremony, but in essence they were married.

"The chief [marriage] ceremony was the entry of the bride into the bridegroom's house" (De Vaux 1961: 33). This was, however, preceded by a procession from the bride's house with singing and dancing and the playing of instruments (Safrai and Stern 1987: 758). Going back in time to the Old Testament times, Madeleine and Miller in referring to texts (Isaiah 61:10; Ezekial 23: 42) state that "From the evidence cited above it appears that the relatives and close friends of both bride and bridegroom, during the procession and at the feast at the bridegroom's house treated the couple as if they were indeed the queen and king implied by the diadems and the garlands (1979: 102). It could be assumed that the bride would be richly dressed and "adorned with jewels (Ps 43:14,15) [and may] usually have worn a veil which she took off only in the bridal chamber" (Tenney 1977: 97). De Vaux notes that, "The Arabs of Palestine and Syria have preserved similar customs – the procession, the wedding songs and the veiling of the bride" (1961: 34). I say it "could be assumed" because a lot of these assumptions are drawn from Old Testament texts and customs may have changed. Again, at the wedding blessings, were recited with a quorum of ten men (Safrai and Stern 1987: 759).

“The celebration, however, lasted for a week, if we may generalise from Genesis 29:27 and Judges 14:17” (Madeleine and Miller 1979: 103). I shall not go into detail regarding the emphasis placed on virginity and all the rules regarding this. However, “Talmudic sources report early differences between Judaea and Galilee as regards the first wedding night, for the southerners were very suspicious and exacting in all that regarded the confirmation of the bride’s virginity” (Safrai and Stern 1987: 759). Most references state that the wedding feast continued for seven days, but there is not certainty on whether the consummation of the marriage took place on the first night or on the last. What is interesting however is the fact that not only was “seven” a sacred and holy number but also “ritual defilements lasted ‘seven’ days” (Madeleine and Miller 1979: 103)

We cannot recreate the performance which occurred centuries ago, but I hope that in some way the above discussion and description gives us some idea of the process and symbols involved in marriage at the time of Jesus. The emphasis on contract must be noted because the Greek and Roman notions of marriage were dominated by contract. Greek and Roman families were governed harshly by a patriarchal structure that thrived on order, “within each family, the father as priest and patriarch, had *patria potestas*, absolute control of the lives and affairs of his wife and children (8:29 and 8:32)” (Bell 1998: 227), to the extent that the daughter did not escape the father’s control completely unless this was made part of the marriage contract (Bell 1998: 228). The decline of the family structure in first century will not be discussed. The main points to be borne in mind are that,

“There were several types of marriage in Rome, depending on the degree of power over the bride which was granted to the husband. None of them required a ceremony to make them official, though ceremonies were always held because the Romans liked an excuse for a party as much as anyone” (Bell 1998: 230).

These statements and comparisons may help our analysis of Mark 10: 2-12 and our discussion of marriage as formulated by contemporary Western beliefs.

4.3 NARRATIVE CRITICISM

“The disciplines of narrative criticism and historical criticism are not mutually exclusive and work at times in a complementary fashion. Still, narrative criticism is

bringing a fresh perspective to Mark's gospel that often offers literary explanations for matters that scholars have traditionally interpreted from a purely historical perspective" (Powell 1997: 69).

These statements by Powell, in conclusion to his article, "Toward a Narrative – Critical Understanding of Mark", not only re-affirm the need for historical knowledge but also stress that narrative criticism has been able to answer old questions with different and often more legitimate answers. Powell, in the above article, gives enlightening answers to, the Secrecy Theme, the Portrayal of the Disciples and the Abrupt Ending which emphasises not only the benefit of Narrative Criticism but also the fact that to do Narrative Criticism we need to take the gospel as a whole (1997: 65-68). Although Merenlahti and Hakolu note that, "... historical-critical scholars of the bible fear that narrative-critical analysis smooth over inconsistencies and breaks in the text in favour of harmonising interpretations", we need to ask ourselves are we not doing more injustice to scriptural interpretations by reading them piece-meal? And in most cases one interpreted not only out of context with the whole text but also the historical context (1999: 24). In my analysis of Mark, the gospel will be treated as a whole and therefore the analysis of Mark 10:2-12 will develop from the narrative critical analysis of Mark. The characters, plot and settings are not exclusive to each new scene, but rather they form part of a whole story. This leads on to the point, that as my choice of analysis is Narrative, "... we cannot legitimately use the other gospels to 'fill out' or to 'fill in' some unclear passages in Mark's story" (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 3). This makes more sense if we acknowledge or take the view, as I do, that "Matthew and Luke were now widely held to be literally dependent upon Mark" (Peterson 2000: 5). The subject of analysis is thus primarily the text and the story world which it encompasses (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 4).

"When we enter the story world of the gospel of Mark, we enter a world of surprising reversals and strange ironies, a world of riddles and hidden meanings" (Rhoads and Michie). It is not possible to explain in detail all the rhetorical techniques highlighted by scholars in Mark over the past thirty years. Neither is it possible to repeat the explanation about the concept and aspects involved in narrative criticism as explained in the methodological section. It must however be reinforced that narrative analysis is the endeavour to analyse or read the text on two levels, firstly the story level and secondly the discourse level which is how the story is communicated. "What is hidden or misunderstood

at one level, Juel says, is made known at the other level, and thus the gospel of Mark is fraught with irony, ambiguity, mystery and paradox” (Fowler 1991: 22). Fowler notes that, “The discourse of the narrative is so seductive that we tend to look past it and become caught up in the story of the narrative” (1991: 18). This emphasises how difficult it is to separate the story and discourse and also how difficult it is as an interpretative task.

The techniques used by the author of Mark will be discussed, as they are uncovered during the analysis of the text. This narrative section will be divided into three sections. Firstly, I will deal with Mark as a whole highlighting the plot, setting and characters. Secondly, I will deal with the section from chapter 8:22 to 10:52 and finally I will deal with Mark 10:2-12. The insights gained at each level of analysis will be carried forward to the understanding of the next section. For as Horsley notes, “The particular parts and episodes make sense only as components of and in the context of the overall narrative” (2001: 14).

4.3.1 The Gospel of Mark

Most, if not all, scholars identify Jesus, the Jewish leaders and the disciples as the main characters in the story. Some scholars have begun to identify the “little people” within the text as a significant comparison for not only the “Jewish leaders” but also the “disciples”. I will discuss each one of these groupings in turn while at the same time explaining the plot of Mark. Rohrbaugh in his article, “The Social Location of the Markan Audience”, goes to great lengths to do a thorough analysis of the social stratification within the text by analysing the number of times the particular levels from elite to peasants are mentioned (1997: 108-117). Rohrbaugh concludes that, “In looking over the five lists of characters in Mark cited above, we can safely say that the narrative world of Mark accurately recreates the sharply stratified peasant society of his day (1997: 117). Harrington, in discussing the plot of Mark states that “... indeed, conflict (not necessarily violent conflict) is the heart of most stories” (1996: 12). For Rhoads and Michie the plot of Mark is primarily conflict and “... the establishment of God’s rule provides the larger background for the story” (1982: 73). If the story of Mark is primarily one of conflict, what is the reason for this conflict and how is it played out in the text? Further, how do we define the above conflict in conjunction with another of the main themes in Mark, “the establishment of God’s rule” and what part does it have to play in the discourse. Rohrbaugh discussing Ched Meyers’ thesis notes that Meyers is correct when he suggests that the community of Mark is caught in a struggle on

two fronts. "On the one hand, the reconciliation of Jew with Gentile was opposed by Pharisees for reasons of purity; on the other hand, it was encouraged by Romans on imperialistic grounds" (Rohrbaugh 1997: 118). This may be true, but how does this understanding change when we take into account that the Pharisees were in essence the "retainers" of the very imperial rule. And further, that peasants living in Judea and more so those in Galilee had more in common with other peasants whether Jew or Gentile than with the Great Tradition, which in a sense was being imposed upon them.

"Right from the outset, Jesus challenges the authority of the authority figures by speaking and acting with an authority immediately evident to the people" (Horsley 2001: 2). This can be seen in Mark 1: 22, "They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" (NRSV). So right from the start the story is one which will develop along the lines of authentic and inauthentic authority. If we use Scott's concept of hidden and public Transcripts, and if Jesus is seen as another or the real authority, this could surely challenge the public transcript of those who are trying to exercise authority over the majority. In essence, "Because God's rule challenges all other claims to authority a conflict ensues between those who choose to proclaim the good news and those who oppose it" (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 75). For Malbon, "Jesus and the Jewish authorities are in continuing conflict over issues of authority and interpretation of the law (Torah)" (2000: 15).

For Horsley, not only does the plot and setting of Mark indicate that the Gospel "... is about a subjected people in a strange, distant 'Oriental' country" (2001: 25). But the story is also, "... full of references and allusions to Israel's origin, historical experiences and current imperial subjection" (Horsley 2001: 31). The irony throughout the story is not only that, "... the authorities viewed themselves as defenders of God's law" (Harrington 1996: 13), but also that, "The readers know that Jesus will be established in power and the authorities condemned (8:28-9:1; 13:24-27; 30-32; 14:62)" (Harrington 1996: 14).

If we peel away our misconceptions of a defined Jewish religion, that State and religion were separate, and accept that we are dealing with a little and great tradition which have a shared history, the controversies that Jesus enters into with the "Jewish leaders" take on a different light. If we take one step further and add the peasants, who in most cases would have made up the crowd, we can see how they sided with Jesus. He was the radical they

were looking for to take up their cause. The conflict in the plot of Mark's story world does not ease off at any point but becomes more and more tense as the Jewish leaders try to test Jesus. Kingsbury notes that as the story nears its end, not only does the setting of Jerusalem and the temple increase the intensity of the conflict, but also the number and nature of the challenges intensify (referring to 11:18; 12:12; 11:27; 12:13; 12:18 and 12:34) (1989: 76,77).

For Malbon, "... Mark's portrayal of Jewish leaders is that all the characters must be seen in relation to all the other characters in order to understand their functioning in Mark's story" (2000: 149). So, although the "Conflict with scribes and with Pharisees is concentrated chiefly with the controversy stories of chapters 2-3 and in the discussion of the tradition of elders in chapter 7" (Malbon 2000: 139), it is my contention that the same battle continues not only in chapter 10 but also through to Jerusalem. So while the opponents may change their guise the battle is inherently the same. The essence of this battle is seen clearly in chapter 7: "At stake is the 'commandment of God' versus 'the tradition of men' (7:8), the 'word of God' versus 'your tradition which you hand on' (7:13)" (Malbon 2000: 151). Time and time again Jesus silences his opponents, in essence publicly breaking down their public transcripts to expose the truth about their existence. "For [if as I have discussed in previous sections] the Gospel's addressees [were] of peasants and crafts people, therefore Jesus in view of his own class membership, would serve as a model of how the dispossessed and the oppressed can enter into a re-ordering of power in order to recover what God willed to call human beings at creation (Ps 8:4-6)" (Waetjen 1989: 16). This would explain why Jesus does extensive ministry in the remote areas and does not enter any cities in Galilee. Jesus may be gathering support against those who seek to oppress the majority of the people.

As Horsley proposes, Mark's Jesus caricatures the Pharisees as obsessed with purity and ritual but focuses his criticism on their economic exploitation and oppression of the poor ("encouraging *Korban*" and "devouring widows' houses") (2001: viv). We can only imagine the response from the crowd, when they identified Jesus as saying the very things that they as the "little tradition" would say "off-stage". Further, Rohrbaugh notes, "... that the very rules that the Markan Jesus breaks concerning dietary laws, washing, Sabbath observance and temple sacrifice are precisely those that peasants had the most difficulty keeping" (1997: 119). "Thus, [Jesus'] opponents use laws and traditions as weapons to

accuse, to exclude, to destroy others and to protect themselves” (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 120). This can clearly be seen in the way the narrator paints them in a bad light throughout the text. At this point it must be noted that the narrator in Mark cannot only be linked or identified with the implied author, but also he/she is clearly an omniscient narrator. “Perhaps the foremost value of the use of an omniscient narrator lies in its capacity to convey scenes and episodes that are not available to any of the characters in the story but are intended specifically for the benefit of the addressees” (Waetjen 1989: 18). This unlimited omniscience also allows the narrator to speak to the reader/hearer through “asides”, making comments or giving the reader/hearer the very thoughts of other characters (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 35-38). Rhoads and Michie conclude that, “When the narrator is omniscient and invisible, readers tend to be unaware of the narrator’s biases and conceptual view of the world” (1982: 39).

To get back to our characters within the story – Jesus is clearly the protagonist who is up against the injustices of the elite, through challenging their retainers, public transcript and through assisting the poor. Rohrbaugh notes that the degraded, unclean and expendables only made up, “... about 10 percent of the population [and yet] the striking thing about them in Mark’s story is their number and the frequency with which Jesus interacts with them (1:28, 32-34, 45, 3:7-10, 6:31-34, 54-56, 7:36-37)” (1997: 113). “In fact [Rohrbaugh states], Mark wants us to know early on that Jesus’ healing activity among these people is a major reason for the reputation he develops (1:28)” (1997: 113). Enter the “little people” in the text, those who believe in Jesus, ultimately because they have no other earthly thing or person to believe in.

“The first campaign in Galilee begins with Jesus announcing that the kingdom of God is at hand (1:14-15), which also announces the theme of the whole story” (Horsley 2001: 71). Whatever this kingdom is to represent you are sure that not only will it contradict the present ruling powers but also contradict their very essence, their means of existence. “Jesus uses his great authority to serve people – liberating them from demons, illness, sin, uncleanness and oppressive laws and traditions” (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 109). The very opposite of what those in authority were doing. If Horsley, Waetjen and others are correct, “Mark presents Jesus as spear-heading this popular movement not as politically innocuous religious revival, but in direct opposition to the rulers and ruling institutions” (Horsley 2001: 41). The main plot is therefore conflict between Jesus and the rulers and their

retainers. Due to the fact that, to a large extent, the religious authorities had become a part of the political and economic suppression of the majority, Jesus has to challenge their so-called religious conventions. “The dilemma for Jesus is this: how can he inaugurate God’s rule yet evade the efforts of the authorities to trap him?” (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 84).

As mentioned above the conflict grows as the story comes to an end as Jesus re-orders the very institutions that represent the rule of God – Jerusalem and the temple. Long, in his article, “Marriage and divorce in South Africa today: A reading of Mark 10: 1-12,” (2002), focuses on the temple as a key theme throughout Mark, which for him points to what he calls a “re-figuration motif in Mark” (2002: 3). This re-figuration is in a sense a re-ordering of the world to God’s original intention. Long also uses the term re-imagining and states, “It is for the purpose of this re-imagining that Jesus often chooses the Sabbath for his work because he wants to bring alive the reality of its real purpose (e.g. 2: 23-28; 3: 1-6). In other words the action of Jesus overturning tables in Mark 11:15 is an illustration of how throughout the story, Jesus is trying to turn so-called religious convention back to their original God-ordained purpose. This illustration highlights a number of rhetorical devices which are used throughout Mark, such as “... the repetition of words, the two-step progression, the use of questions in the dialogue, the framing of one episode by another, the arrangement of episodes in a concentric pattern and similar episodes in series of three” (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 43). Most, if not all, of these techniques involve the reader or hearer’s imagination; they are kept actively involved with the story. They become part of the story world. “The text provokes certain expectations which in turn we project onto the text in such a way that we reduce the polysemantic possibilities to a single interpretation in keeping with the expectations aroused, thus extracting an individual, configurative meaning” (Iser 1974: 285). Iser goes on to explain that this is achieved “... by two main structural components within the text: first, a repertoire of familiar literary patterns and recurrent literary themes, together with allusions to familiar social and historical contexts and second techniques or strategies used to set the familiar against the unfamiliar” (1974: 288).

Juel notes that, “The remarkable lack of interest in surface details, as is well known, characterises much of Mark’s gospel and it forces some reflection even at this point on the character of his composition as narrative” (1994: 33). Juel is referring to the opening of Mark’s gospel and continues by explaining the framing, which is present between the end

of Mark and the beginning. Juel explains that in Mark 1:10, the word *schizo* is used to explain the opening of the sky while in Mark 15:38 *eschisthe* is used in relation to the tearing of the curtain in the temple. For Juel, the use of *schizo* in Greek denotes an active action, in a sense the heavens cannot be closed again. Juel also notes if you add to this the receiving of the spirit and the breathing out of the spirit at the beginning and the end of Mark with the declaration that Jesus is the Son of God at the beginning by God and the end by a centurion, “The images form an inclusio: A pattern that begins here at Jesus’ baptism and ends with his death” (1994: 34,35). Juel goes on to explain that with the knowledge of the beginning “...we are to understand the Spirit as inhabiting Jesus is apparent from the dispute in Mark 3: 22-30...” (1994: 36). This not only shows the literary techniques of repetition but also shows the implied author preparing the implied reader for subsequent episodes. The wording of Mark 1:11 also seems to indicate that only the hearer/reader has the knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God. Thus the crowd and the leaders are not aware of this fact. This gives the hearer/reader insight which he carries with him/her into subsequent episodes and helps him/her to see or hear things that they would not have without this prior knowledge.

Rhoads referring to an earlier work of his notes that narrative critics although usually focussing on the whole gospel, “... are now also appearing [to do] detailed and careful treatments of particular episodes as they can be understood in their context in the whole gospel” (1999: 272). It is my intention, to look at Mark 10 through the same themes, characters and rhetorical devices, which are used throughout Mark. As discussed above, the main plot and characters involved throughout Mark are Jesus and the rulers of Israel and their retainers.

It is impossible to deal with all the chapters in Mark in detail but I will now look more closely at Mark 7 as I believe it not only highlights the common plot but also has insights which can be used later in my analysis of Mark 10. Juel notes that, “There are places, [within Mark], however, where the scriptural allusions play an important role in the narrative. They make a difference in how the reality being described is to be understood” (1994: 133). Horsley goes to great lengths to describe that there are two sets of parallels, five miracle stories and other episodes in between.

“The first set consists of a sea crossing, an exorcism, two healing stories and a feeding in the wilderness. The episodes of Jesus in his hometown, the mission of the twelve and Herod’s execution of John the Baptist are inserted before the feeding (4:35-6:44). The second set consists again of a sea crossing, an exorcism, a healing, a feeding so that it forms a transition to the next step of the story. The dispute with the Pharisees over Korban is inserted right after the (second) sea crossing (6:45-8:26)” (2001: 104).

This clearly shows repetition and foreshadowing of events to come and the explanation of events past. Horsley continues his analysis by linking these episodes to the history of Israel, the crossing of the sea, the feeding in the desert, all linking Jesus to Moses and the renewal of Israel from the bondage of slavery. Further, the healing of the twelve year old and the twelve baskets of left overs are not merely co-incidental but point to the renewing of the twelve tribes of Israel (Horsley 2001: 104-106). If we add this to our knowledge that Galilee had a shared history with the other tribes, as well as the notions that those living in agrarian society were in a sense becoming slaves to the notions of the retainers who sought self preservation. It could be that the Markan Jesus is seeking support for His renewal amongst the oppressed. Horsley explains that, “Throughout Mark’s story prior to the confrontation in Jerusalem, therefore, Jesus is expanding a systematic campaign of renewal of Israel patterned after and evoking memories of the events of Israel’s founding led by Moses and the renewal of Israel in resistance of oppressive rulers led by Elijah” (2001: 108).

How can I fit Mark 7 into this portrayal of Jesus campaigning as described by Mark and what rhetorical devices can we see at play in linking these concepts. “The scribes who came down from Jerusalem” appeared earlier as ones accusing Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebul, the prince of demons (3:22-30) (Malbon 2000: 31). Thus right from the onset the implied readers are expecting more confrontation, and confrontation they get. Joel Marcus describes Jesus’ response to the Pharisee’s questioning by referring to Mark 7:8,9,13 as, “A sharper attack on the Pharisaic and rabbinic conception of the relationship between the divine word and tradition could not surely be imagined” (1997: 177). Marcus goes on to argue at length that although the references to washing of hands were initially a “Pentateuchal requirement that priests wash their hands before offering a sacrifice (cf. Exodus 30:18-21; 40:31)”, “... based on this symbolism [referring to Deut. 21:6-7; Ps 18, 20, 24, 26:6, 73:113] Ps 24:4 says that only a person with clean hands and a pure heart can

ascend to the hill of the Lord and stand in his holy place (the temple)” (1997:182). Marcus in his general analysis of Mark’s theological discussion in Mark 7 is arguing that there are fundamental flaws to the author’s arguments in terms of “God’s words” and “man’s traditions”. For Marcus, “Although Moses himself, therefore, does not explicitly mandate hand washing for lay people before regular meals, it might be argued that to do so is in keeping with the spirit in which the Mosaic purity laws are already being interpreted within the Old Testament” (1997: 183). This argument is clearly not taken from a narrative perspective and neither does it take into consideration the use of the so-called “tradition of elders” to separate and keep others under subjection. Marcus does however go on to explain that if Mark [the author] had to redeem himself theologically he would most probably argue that, “In this hostile atmosphere, tradition ceases to be a lifeline for revelation and becomes instead a bludgeon to be used against transgressors, indeed, for Mark and his community...” (1997: 192).

Harrington, in his analysis of this controversy places the question by the Pharisees in the context of “... whether Gentile Christians had to conform to Jewish tradition (see Gal. 2 and Acts 15)” (1996: 60). In light of the above discussion regarding Christians and Jews, it would not be wise to take this stance. Further, it shows that our understanding of “Jews” as a homogenous entity has many problems. Later, however, Harrington notes without contextual explanation that, “Casuists are regularly in positions of authority and make life miserable for others – especially the vulnerable” (1996: 60). I will not get into detail of the oral tradition of Pharisees and scribes, but must note that, “The ‘tradition of the elders’ that may momentarily sound honourable on the lips of the Pharisees and scribes is clearly condemned when it is reclassified by Jesus as ‘human tradition’ in opposition to ‘divine commandment’” (Malbon 2000:32). Further, from a narrative point of view it must be noted as do Malbon and Waetjen that spatial changes occur similar to 4:10 when the disciples enquire about the meaning of the parable in the privacy of a house (Waetjen 1989: 133 and Malbon 2000: 35). This questioning of disciples in chapter 7 also echoes chapter 4 in the introduction of Jesus’ explanation of the parable by questioning the disciple’s lack of understanding (7:18; 4:13)” (Malbon 2000: 35). This will be discussed in the next section as we deal more directly with the characterisation of the disciples. For Waetjen “The divine objective [of Jesus in Mark 7] is to expunge the impurities of the heart in order to restore individual’s wholeness and social integration and transform the world of binary oppositions

– constituted by pollution systems – into a new creation of the one and the many” (1989: 133).

4.3.2 Mark 8:22 – 10:52

Most, if not all scholars in the field of Mark, have noted the framing of the only two stories in Mark of the blind being healed around Jesus’ three predictions of his death and the disciples’ subsequent reactions (Malbon 2000: 19 and Myers 1988: 236). I will deal with this section not only because it has clear rhetorical devices of framing but also, “The characters, actions and dialogue in each episode illuminated the other episodes by comparison and association” (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 53). This is especially critical if we view these texts as being heard and not read individually. The repetition and interaction between stories would not only illuminate the next episode, but also improve meaning and retrospection of previous understandings. Fowler notes that, “Bundy has been able to observe that the three crystal-clear predictions of Jesus’ death (8:31, 9:31, 10:32-34) secure no uptake within the story, if they have any function at all in the narrative, they function to alert the reader to what lies ahead” (1991: 21). The word “uptake” simply means acknowledgement and understanding. This section of the text gives us insights into the characterisation of the disciples and their role in the narrative as a whole. Further themes such as “the things of God” versus “the things of man” are expounded which clearly link to the previous section and the main plot of the story, being conflict.

For Malbon, the “Blindness and sight are symbolic of misunderstanding and insight” (2000: 20). Malbon goes on to explain that the two stage healing of the man at Bethsaida represents the two stages which Jesus has to teach to his disciples about his Messiahship. Chapters 1 to 8 represent his power and authority and chapters 8 to 10 the suffering and service (Malbon 2000: 20). The ultimate goal is that both the “... disciples and implied readers [are] to ‘see’ as Bartimeaus does to follow ‘on the way’” (Malbon 2000: 20). Waetjen concurs with Malbon that, “They [the disciples] are like the blind human being who requires a second touch of Jesus’ restoring hand in order to see clearly and be capable of true perception (8:22-26)” (Waetjen 1989:24). The disciples throughout this section are seen to be misunderstanding Jesus’ teachings regarding, himself and discipleship. This section of the text has therefore often been used to paint the disciples in a bad light, as those that should not be copied. Malbon, however, notes that the disciples he pictures in Mark are

not flat characters but rather “round” characters who need to be identified with in order that we may have the same commitment and hope that they depicted (2001: 118). “The Markan gospel discredits not the disciples, but the view of discipleship as either exclusive or easy” (Malbon 2001: 119).

Myers also notes that although this part of the discourse is further leading to the portrayal of the disciples as “outsiders”, he notes that there are distinct elements throughout this section which not only indicate hope for the disciples but also for the hearers/readers (1988: 239). For Myers, these indications include the three healings including the deaf as well as, “... the promise of resurrection (8:31b; 9:9, 31b; 10:34c)” (1988: 239). This tension created between the disciples and Jesus interspersed with signs of hope for Myers is, “... Mark’s literary strategy in the second half of the gospel and prepares us for its surprising and baffling conclusion” (1988: 239). Another element of hope is “The appearance of Moses and Elijah to converse with Jesus [and] places him in the company of Israel’s primal law giver and Israel’s paradigmatic prophet (Mark 9: 2-10)” (Broadhead 2001: 81). This episode, linked to Horsley’s understanding of Jesus not challenging Israel’s history/traditions but restoring it, highlights the link to the prediction of Jesus’ death at the hands of his adversaries. Broadhead notes that this is explained in the next section Mark 9: 11-13, “Elijah has come in the form of John the Baptist, suffering and preparing for the day of Yahweh” (2001: 82). Although the tension in the main plot of conflict between Jesus and retainer and Roman elite seems to take second place, in each of Jesus’ predictions, we are reminded that that is still the main plot.

For Kingsbury, “In the crucial section 8:27-10:45, Mark traces the failure of the disciples to comprehend that the essence of discipleship is servant-hood to their failure to comprehend that servant-hood is also the essence of Jesus’ ministry” (1989: 114). The question that needs to be asked is, what criteria are we using to define discipleship and are these criteria part of our Christian doctrine or are they part of the first century experience? The disciples after each prediction show their misunderstanding by Peter rebuking Jesus (8:33), by arguing who was greater (9:34) and by James and John requesting positions of glory and status (10:37). Jesus, in turn, teaches not only the disciples, but also the crowds the following lessons. Firstly, Peter is rebuked, “For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things” (8:35) and Jesus explains that those who would follow him must pick up their cross and follow, further, the one who wants to save his life will lose it.

Secondly, he teaches the disciple that those who would want to be first would be last and he uses children as the way in which Christ must be received (9:35 and 9:37). Lastly, He refers to the baptism and the drinking of the cup as well as repenting, the notion that whoever wishes to be first must be servant to all (10:38 and 10:44). In the context of Mark as a whole narrative, these illustrations seem to turn the very principles of Roman rule upside-down. For John and Kathleen Court, "There could be no more suitable context [as Rome] in which to preach a message about a reversal of the world's values, a creed which expects suffering, a power which demonstrates itself in weakness and an order in which the first shall be last and the last first" (Court and Court 1990: 80). This they put forward in respect of the writing of Mark. However, it must be noted that if Jesus was, as I have argued, gathering support for his cause, this would have been done primarily in those remote areas where the "little people" could identify on a practical level with Jesus' program of reconstruction. It would also be necessary to make sure that his followers did not have the wrong intentions regarding power and status. Further they relate directly to Mark 7 where Jesus speaks of the "commandment of God" versus "the tradition of men" (Malbon 2000:151).

Jesus' rebuke of Peter reminds one of not only the debate in Mark 7 but also the theme of the "kingdom of God" expressed throughout Mark. This kingdom as I have argued is a return to God's intention for his people, so that there can be equality and no longer any suffering. As Rhoads and Michie note, the disciples' response to Jesus' predictions, "... are also exclusive and domineering, trying to stop an exorcist 'who isn't following us' and rebuking people who bring children to Jesus for a blessing" (1982: 125). "Their [the disciples'] request therefore emerges as an attempt to manipulate the things of God in order to acquire the things of men" (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 126). I will not discuss the children as a metaphor in this section but leave it for my discussion of Mark 10: 2-12.

Near the end of this section, a man approaches Jesus wanting to know, "... what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (10:17). Myers explains the man's strange address of Jesus as a "good teacher" as the man wanting to be complimented, as he had just given a compliment (Myers 1988: 272). With this in mind, Myers explains that Jesus' self-effacement in 10:18 can be understood (1988: 272). Both Myers and Waetjen note that the addition of one command "do not defraud" to those which came from the Decalogue goes a long way in explaining this story (Myers 1988: 272 and Waetjen 1989 :169). Waetjen goes on to

explain that, “The possessions he has accumulated in the agrarian society of the first century can have been gained only through the injustice of economic exploitation and perhaps social and political oppression” (1989: 170). It must be noted that it is only at the end of this story that we are notified that the man had many possessions (Mark 10:22). This is after Jesus’ request of the man to sell his possessions. Myers links this outcome to the sower’s parable (4:18) and notes that, “In contrast to the love of wealth, a tragic illustration of the danger of possession of ones possessions, is Jesus’ love for the man” (1988: 273). It must be kept in mind that this story of the man who wants eternal life, is linked directly with 10:23, “Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, ‘how hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!’” (NRSV) Again we get the concept of the kingdom of God and, “As far as Mark is concerned, the man’s wealth has been gained by ‘defrauding’ the poor – he was not ‘blameless’ at all – for which he must make restitution” (Myers 1988: 274). It is clear again, that Jesus is indirectly attacking the very institutions, which are causing poverty and subjection. For Horsley this entire section could be an attempt, “to console the communities it addresses and call the larger movement back to what it considers the original base and ideal of the movement of Jesus launched as a program of village community renewal over against any ‘leadership’ (let alone oppressive rule) exercised from Jerusalem” (2001: 96).

4.3.3. Narrative Reading of Mark 10: 2-12

The text must be read in the light of the narrative as a whole and, as I have illustrated, Mark is primarily about Jesus’ re-ordering Israel back to God’s original plan which indicates equality and the removing of unjust practices. The framing of 1:10 and 15:38 which showed that this was God’s son and the framing of the healing of the blind man (8:22-25) and healing of Bartimaeus (10: 46-52) showed that even those close to Jesus found it hard to accept the reversal of the previous standards. This part of the text is situated as Jesus begins his journey towards Jerusalem. The Pharisees are trying to test Jesus. To be sure of what the Pharisees’ intentions are, we must put this in context of:

1. Debate between the Hillel school, which had a liberal approach, and the Shammai school, which had a more conservative approach to what were acceptable reasons for divorce (Keener 1991: 39).

2. Further, we must realise that the territory in which Jesus is now in could very well be that of Herod Antipas who had John executed (van Iersel 1998: 316-317).
3. Lastly, the Pharisees could have wanted to drive a wedge between Jesus and his growing support in form of the crowd – little people and little tradition - before Jesus reached Jerusalem. This could have been achieved if Jesus had contradicted Moses as at that time divorce was accepted by the developing Jewish religion (Nineham 1963: 260).

It is clear that their interest is sinister from their previous interactions. It is also clear that possibility of divorce was not amongst the debates of that day as it was freely practised. However, I question from previous sections who was practising divorce and did the “writ of divorce” not in some way jeopardise the poor in more than one way? Further if, as I have illustrated, the household was not only a source of social existence but was in essence the very life of an individual, to cause harm to the family structure was to put into jeopardy the very inheritance (the land). In other words, as discussed above in the section on Jewish marriage, divorce was more readily practised amongst the elite than the poor.

The play on words between the Pharisees’ questions and Jesus’ counter question (“command” versus “permission”) has been noted by scholars with various explanations (Horsley 2001: 173,174 and Schweizer 1970: 203). Horsley notes that due to the separate development of Galilee from Judea, “... there is no reason to imagine that Jesus and his movement viewed Deuteronomy as authoritative law” (2001: 174). In other words, it is more likely from historical studies that Galilee had a more conservative approach to divorce (Horsley 2001: 174). The key element here is that the difference between “command” and “allow” would have been picked-up (uptake) by those who in some way are being disadvantaged by the marital exploits of the rich/elite. And the “little tradition” for which marriage was integral to their very existence would have been encouraged to support Jesus as they identify with his program of renewal. On the other hand, Schweizer notes that the language used by the opponents of Jesus expresses their true concerns; that of their own rights as compared to what God intended (1970: 203). Due to the above I do not think it is possible that the Pharisees had it in their mind to drive a wedge between the crowd and Jesus and if they did things went horribly wrong.

It is possible that the Pharisees were trying to cause Jesus trouble with Herod Antipas, as he was ruler of that area and, as seen in Mark 12: 13-17 the Pharisees once again try to trap

Jesus into speaking against the ruling authorities, this time Caesar. Jesus' response on that occasion must be seen through light of his answer in Mark 10 and vice versa. Jesus' response to paying taxes is "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12: 17 NRSV). Both Myers and Malbon note that Jesus in these words was challenging the crowd in a way to remain true to their God as all comes from him in terms of their covenantal relationship (Myers 1988: 311-312 and Malbon 2000: 147). "In other words, no Jew could have allowed for a valid analogy between the debt Israel owed to Yahweh and any other human claim" (Myers 1988: 312). In this reply Jesus is not only challenging the root of the great tradition (exploitation) but he also does it in a way in which he can escape direct accusation. In other words, Mark has Jesus using literary techniques to be able to explore "hidden transcripts" in public without being defenceless.

The problem that I have, however, is that a careful reading of Mark 6:17-28 will highlight the fact that it was never Herod's intention to kill John the Baptist and in fact Herod held John in high regard. But again this story illustrates the nature of corrupt power and status when individuals are forced to act to please others and not themselves.

Jesus' response to the Pharisees has been identified as that of rabbinical style where a question would be responded to with a further question (Harrington 2001: 61). Further, both Harrington and Van Iersel note that the reference of Deut. 24: 1-4 does not allow or command divorce but instead it assumes it (Harrington 2001: 62; Van Iersel 1998: 317). This would be a direct challenge against the Pharisees on the basis of their oral tradition, similar to that discussed in Mark 7. Nineham in his commentary on Mark notes that Jesus' argument, "... is thus in essence an appeal to God's original intention in instituting marriage; in form – reasoning from one scripture to another – it is almost an exact duplicate of 7:6-13, and though in a very general way it might be called rabinnic..." (1963: 261). In view of the crowd who would have already noted throughout Mark the allusions to Israel's past, and in particular the role that Moses played, this text could be seen as a clear indication to the "little tradition" of how the "great tradition"(Jerusalem), has interpreted aspects in scripture in order to promote their own existence. At this point I must remind the reader that approximately only three percent of the population were literate. This would mean that the writing of a document to divorce could in all likelihood have been a function of the Scribes or priests and no doubt this came at a price. Juel notes that, "The narrative

[around 10: 1-12] takes pains to shape that world in which the faithful will live”, referring to (10:31; 9:33-36; 10:41-45) (1994: 140). The question we need to ask at this point is how does Jesus’ response in Mark to the Pharisees’ answer in verse 5 and 6 add to this re-shaping of the world? And if we put this in context of the narrative which started by stating, “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1 NRSV), then how do we view this text? Most, if not all, commentaries note that Jesus could be stating that Moses merely made a concession because of the hardness of human hearts.

Banks notes that the Markan Jesus does not explicitly reject the Deuteronomic provision, but stresses that the provision was given for a special reason (1975: 149). Banks goes on to state, “In fact, the Deuteronomic provision is thus neither abrogated nor expounded but set in a context in which it now no longer applies except as a condemnation of those who refuse to accept the new state of affairs which has now come into existence” (1975: 149). This new state of affairs is one where Jesus has authority and is re-ordering Israel back to that which God intended. Jesus is the new Moses, leading the tribes via the twelve disciples to the “kingdom of God”. Although Jesus refers back to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 for his argument, this does not negate all scripture that follows but expressly points out that these scriptures must be read in the light of the fall. Marcus referring to this text Mark 10: 5-6 states, “... the ‘hardness of heart’ which made the law necessary, that is the inclination itself, had finally been dealt a death-blow by God’s eschatological action which restores the paradisiacal conditions that prevailed ‘in the beginning’” (1997: 194). As Long states, “Jesus thus sets himself apart from the two most popular views on this question, those of Shammai (the strict view) and Hillel (the permissive view) and presents himself as the bearer of the true and unique word of God” (2002: 7). Much has been written regarding the Markan Jesus referring back to Genesis and creation, but scholars have neglected to note that it is possible that the “little tradition” of the peasants in Galilee may have still been holding onto this formulation for their survival.

Those under the subjection of the “great tradition” may have identified with the words of equality and creation, in contrast to “separation and divorce [which] are realities that originate from a pollution that promotes inequality, oppression and exploitation” (Waetjen 1989: 166). In verse 5 when Jesus responds to the Pharisees, “because of the hardness of heart he wrote this commandment to you” (NRSV), Jesus is directly addressing the Pharisees (“to you”). In other words, the Markan Jesus is not only creating a distinction

between the crowd and the Pharisees but he is also challenging the very ideology behind their questions. If we push this analogy, Jesus could be implicitly linking himself to the crowd who could be part of the once conservative “little tradition”. Mark 10:7-8 will not be discussed at this point, but will be dealt with in the next section on ritual analysis. It must be noted that most commentaries on Mark indicate that Mark clearly changes the discussion from one of divorce to one of marriage.

“The last saying [v 9] is the actual answer to the question of v2: because it is God who has united them, the union of man and woman is indissoluble” (Van Iersel 1998: 318). This begs the question; does God unite every marriage? And in what way is God part of the marriage? Nineham notes that, “... neither in Jewish nor in Roman law were the parties divorced by an extraneous authority; in Jewish law the man divorced his wife, in Roman law either party could divorce the other” (1970: 265). However, what about the understanding of the initial union? Van Iersel notes that although v9 is not clarified by the proceeding verses that, “Perhaps that was less necessary for ancient readers than it is for the readers today” (1998: 319). The notion that God or the gods joined the husband and wife were far from unusual at that time (Van Iersel 1988: 319). The notion that man must not separate in this context could again be Jesus siding with the “little tradition” and insisting that those in power do not interfere with creation by creating their own ways of union as well as divorce. For Myers, because 10:9 drops the term “... (*apoluse*) in favour of a different term (to ‘separate’, *chorizeto*)” (1988: 265), Jesus is not stating any prohibition on divorce but rather he is protesting against patriarchal practices which drive a wedge into the unity and equality originally articulated in the marriage covenant (Myers 1988: 265). I question if Myers has considered what the potential of divorce had done to the concept of marriage in the time of Jesus. This needs to be read in the light of the Jewish laws which were developing at that time which required an agreement prior to marriage (see section on Jewish marriage). It must also be considered, as does Witherington, referring to an earlier work that, “... separation of a married couple without divorce was not a legal possibility in early Judaism” (2001: 275). Later quoting Painter, Witherington notes that in v9 (*chorizeto*), “... is used in the Greek papyri to mean divorce” (2001: 277). The question now becomes a debate regarding linguistics.

Most if not all commentaries on Mark 10:11-12 note that this section of the text reverses the Jewish notions of adultery. As Brooten states, Jewish men could not commit adultery against their wives, but only against a married male Jew (2001: 428). On the other hand, a Jewish woman committed adultery whenever she had sex, which was not with her husband (Nineham 1963: 266). Further, this re-imagining by Jesus is seen as once again creating more equality between men and women. Some scholars have argued that these verses were intended to make the scriptures compatible with the audience – referring to the Greco-Roman law which allowed women to divorce (Waetjen 1989: 166). However, if we put these verses not only in the context of verses 2-9, but also in context of the re-ordering which Jesus is trying to communicate in the previous section (8:22 – 9:50), it seems likely that the intention of the Markan Jesus is to reinforce his view established in verses 2-9. This theory is reinforced by the fact that the Markan Jesus had been questioned by his disciples in private (“in the house”). For Waetjen, “Here as elsewhere in the narrative world of Mark, it serves as the symbol of the household of the new humanity that Jesus is constituting and stands in contrast to the hierarchical institution of the synagogue and its ideology of separation” (1989: 166).

“The private interaction in the ‘house’ (cf 2:1) is a typical Markan addition. The whole matter has been explained, but man cannot understand God’s revelation. Although the principle should have been adequate for them, it is still necessary to spell out the ethical implications” (Schweizer 1970: 204).

The above, lengthy quotation, though not strictly a narrative approach, highlights the fact that the subsequent teaching in private was not new teaching but merely an emphasis or further explanation. In narrative terms, the “in the house” introduction would by this stage in the story have alerted the listeners/reader to take particular note. Not only because Jesus was talking to the disciples but also because in a sense the hearers/readers get inside information. “The disciples [throughout Mark] ask Jesus about parables (4:10; 7:17), reading (9:11; 10:10), healing (9:28), feedings (6:37; 8:4), salvation (10:26); the signs of the end (13:4)” (Malbon 2000: 93).

Throughout the analysis of Mark, my intention has been to read Mark as a whole and to discuss this specific section in context of the whole of Mark. Children frame this

controversy regarding divorce. In 9:36 Jesus takes a little child and puts it in the midst of them and goes on to explain verse 37 that whoever welcomes the child welcomes me and the one who sent me. Directly after 10:12, again we have the appearance of children. At this point the disciples try to prevent the children from coming to Jesus. Mark's record of Jesus' response in v14, "But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs'. V 15 'Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it' (NRSV).

Jesus is indignant with his disciples for they have not only neglected to hear his previous teaching regarding the kingdom of God, but they have also not accepted the importance of the care of children. Myers notes that v14 and v15 have often been misinterpreted as a metaphor of the qualities, which Christ requires for us (1988: 267). The real issue at hand for Myers is that, "... the child represent[s] an actual class of exploited persons, as does every other subject of Jesus' advocacy in Mark " (1988: 268). Myers goes on to explain that not only has Jesus throughout Mark been talking against subjection and domination, but also throughout Mark referring to (5:27; 7:24; 9:14) we get the picture "... that all is not well for the child in first century Palestinian society" (1988: 268). The framing of the divorce controversy with Jesus reference to the need to take care of children must not only have been an indictment upon those who had neglected their children, but also reinforces the notion that marriage is tied up with creation. Parents will care for the offspring from a marriage or external forces will cause the break-down of the marriage, which could result in the loss of any inheritance by the child. In view of the agrarian social structure it is clear that if the adults were in a precarious position, these children were in a worse position.

Within this text Mark 10:2-12, Jesus is re-ordering the social aspect of Israelite society which has been corrupted by the traditions of many. This re-ordering not only involves the equality between men and women but also the need to preserve at all costs the union of marriage.

4.4 Ritual Analysis of Mark 10:2-12

“It is time for biblical studies to take ritual seriously as a central element of the communities that composed and passed on the biblical texts” (Gorman 1995: 29). This will be the aim of this section to analyse Mark 10: 2-12 from a ritual stand-point, specifically using Turner and Douglas’ concepts and models, to identify within the text ritual elements which may improve our interpretative process. Although this section will focus on the ritualising elements as aspects of the text, Mark 10: 2-12, this will be done not only by reflecting on the extra-textual historical element already discussed but also the themes/plot which were analysed in the previous section (narrative analysis). Marcus, referring to Hengel notes that, “The whole issue of ritual purity probably had a very sharp relevance for Mark and some members of his community since it seems to have been a consuming concern of the Jewish revolutionaries whose war against Rome provides the background for our Gospel’s composition” (1997: 185). This statement of Marcus is made specifically in reference to the controversy of Mark 7; however, McVann has done an extensive ritual analysis of the baptism of Jesus at the beginning of Mark (1995). For McVann, not only is baptism the overarching theme in the gospel of Mark but it could also be the root-metaphor for Mark (1995: 183).

McVann, in his article, “Reading Mark ritually: Honour-Shame and the Ritual of Baptism”, divides Mark into three key points: the beginning, Mark 1: 9-20; the middle, Mark 8: 27-9:1 and the end, Mark 16: 1-8, all of which he describes have not only baptismal themes and imagery, but also clear links with “honour-shame, eschatology, and the status-transforming ritual of baptism” (1995: 186-190). Further, “Cohn (7-23) has argued that Turner’s work on liminality and rites of transition provides a useful interpretative framework for understanding the structure and meaning of the wilderness narratives in the Pentateuch” (Gorman 1995: 26).⁴ Gorman goes on to explain how Turner’s three stages of separation, liminality and aggregation can be used to analyse the crossing of the Red Sea, the forty years in the desert and the entering of the Promised Land respectively. If, as I have argued in previous sections, Mark represents Jesus as renewing Israel back to Mosaic covenant, and that Mark uses allusions or representation of Israel’s past such as the renewing of Israel through Moses and Elijah, then it is clear that from the above discussions not only is Mark rich with ritual elements, but also that these ritual connotations reach right back to the covenantal formation of Israel.

The analysis of a text for ritual elements is a comprehensive activity and it must go beyond the notion that “ritual is simply a way of expressing the story” (Gorman 1995: 22). In other words, the “... ritual enactment refers to itself and not to a message that exists apart from, outside of, or above the ritual enactment proper” (Gorman 1995: 24). It is necessary to move beyond the notion that the ritual is a means of conveying some symbolic message and that behind the ritual lies a prior conscious ideology. During a Master’s course, Ritual in Early Christianity, the students were required to perform a cult initiation in the Mythran Cult. This they dutifully did, however, the profound experience which all encountered, even physiologically, including myself, could not be explained by an ideological understanding or acceptance of the belief that lies behind the Mythran Cult, but rather this experience was due solely to the ritual enactment. In saying this, inherently the dichotomy between body and mind are at work. And in the period after so-called enlightenment, “Because rituals and their texts were not universally valid expressions of religion, they could not provide access to Truth, at least as it was recognised by German idealism” (Gorman 1995: 20). Luckily, some scholars have moved beyond false notions of objectivity and neutrality to make the path available for this study. Some scholars may not agree with my approach of selecting my framework of analysis, namely Turner and Douglas, prior to the analysis. But my justification for this is that not only have Turner and Douglas been used in the analysis of other Markan texts, but I believe Turner’s concept of liminality is integral in analysing social-structural change which, as mentioned above, is one of the main themes in Mark. Alexander, referring to Turner notes, “Ritual is a principal means by which society ‘grows’ and moves into the future (Turner 1974: 298)” (1991: 3). I hope in my interpretation and analysis that my decisions will be vindicated.

Driver in his book, *The Magic of Ritual – Our Need for Liberating Rites that Transform our Lives and our Communities*, goes to great lengths to explain how ritual has three major gifts to offer, namely: order, community and transformation (1991: 131). However, Driver also notes that, “Ritual can be manipulated by those who hold power in society, used to protect their privileged positions by surrounding them with an aura of sacredness or inevitability” (1991: 162). In light of my prior discussions regarding the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, particularly with reference to Mark 7, it is clear that the Pharisees could very well have been manipulating ritual to maintain their privileged positions. Driver proposes that the present day liturgical practices have become morbid because, of “... a certain

unholy alliance between liturgical order and social order that has set its face against the significant change that justice and peace require” (1991: 9). Further, for Driver, “... we cannot well appreciate the power of ritual unless we see its usefulness to those in need, especially those who, having little social power and, being the victims of injustice, have a need for social structure to be transformed” (1991: 166). It would be hard to ignore the parallels between this description by Driver and the Agrarian peasantry under Roman rule in first century Palestine. So it is with this in mind that we turn to the text.

As discussed, this episode starts with the Pharisees testing Jesus. If we read this in the light of honour-shame society in which this story is told, the element of boundaries are introduced (McVann 1995: 180). Further, this could imply that the Pharisees are testing Jesus’ standing within the group. Was Jesus’ reaction to the challenge by the Pharisees going to maintain the publicly recognised boundary or challenge it? Draper notes that the northern regions held on to the prophetic figures of Elijah/Elisha and Moses (1994: 35). This would imply that a negative response from Jesus could cause him to lose his Galilean following. Draper goes on to explain that Jesus’ response to the Pharisees’ divorce question was indicative of their understanding of the above mentioned prophetic traditions (1994: 35). It must be noted at this point that Jesus, in this section of Mark is beginning his journey to Jerusalem and this too may indicate that the Pharisees are concerned about Jesus crossing over into “their” territory as such – their world.

“Contests of honour then are expressions of what is already known, that is, what having honour and being shamed are all about. But they are also simultaneously about what cannot be known in advance – whether or how a particular contest will affirm or undermine the structure of honour-shame itself” (McVann 1995: 181).

Throughout Mark these contests have been raging between Jesus and the Pharisees, and as Jesus heads towards Jerusalem something which he has avoided up until now (in the story) it is clear that the challenge against Jesus will intensify. At stake is the “world-view” which the Pharisees seek to preserve. McVann notes that, “What is at stake, especially in serious challenges to honour, is the value of the primary constituents of the world inhabited by the one being challenged” (1995: 181). It must be noted that in context of this challenge that Jesus had previously in Mark 7 referred to Moses’ commandments/laws to challenge the

Pharisees. This may be the reason why they ask this question in 10:2, to question Jesus' alliance to Moses' laws, and in this way maybe shame Jesus in the eyes of the crowd.

For McVann, challenges to honour bear a resemblance to the liminal period in ritual as, "... in both situations statuses and boundaries are denied or challenged before the new ones emerge or the old ones are re-affirmed" (1995: 181). For Alexander, "... ritual creates social conflict by relaxing or suspending some of the requirements of everyday social structure, making possible alternative social arrangements..." (1991: 1). In light of both McVann's and Alexander's comments regarding ritual, one could identify with the text not only the challenge of Jesus on the status of the Pharisees and vice versa, but also the possible alternative social arrangement, which Jesus is proposing regarding marriage. Driver states, "When a spirit of rebellion against unjust social structures is rising, an understanding of ritual as an alternative order fostering freedom, creativity and deliverance will take precedence over the idea that rituals enforce rigid notions of order" (1991: 165). In the context of Mark 10:2-12, this would imply that the Markan Jesus is not trying to maintain the Pharisees' traditions but rather challenge them and their rituals. There are elements of ritual in this text, due to the shame/honour nature of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. So from the outset boundaries are being challenged, Jesus standing with the crowd and against the Pharisees' world-view built on the oral tradition and interpretation. The outcome of the challenge is not expressly noted in the text but the silence of the Pharisees and the later challenge in Mark 12, indicates that they were the ones who were shamed and Jesus retains his status with the crowd.

Douglas, in discussing the Indian caste system in conjunction with the body being a social map, suggests that, "... when rituals express anxiety about the body's orifices the sociological counterpart of this anxiety is a care to protect the political and cultural unity of a minority group" (1966: 124). Douglas then relates this to the Israelites who were concerned with similar bodily issues to those of the Indians and were a hard-pressed minority (1966: 124). In context of Mark however, the peasants are the majority while the elite and their retainers are the minority who are fighting for political and economic survival. Further, Douglas notes that, "Since place in hierarchy of purity is biologically transmitted, sexual behaviour is important for preserving the purity of caste" (1966: 125). Although it would be difficult to argue that Mark 10 is primarily a sexual debate, sex is

inherently linked to the debate regarding marriage and divorce. What control are the Pharisees trying to maintain or enforce?

In discussing Jesus' violation in Mark of ritual purity rules, Rohrbaugh proposes that the Markan Jesus, "promulgates new purity rules which imply that holiness is an internal matter of the heart rather than an external matter of protecting body surfaces and orifices (7:18-23)" (1997: 118). Rohrbaugh also notes that the Pharisees were concerned about genealogy because it was through this that status was granted while Jesus in Mark was concerned about the acceptance of himself and his teachings (2:7; 3:35; 6:3-6; 7:1-4; 8:27-30) (1997: 118). The question that needs to be asked: "Is Jesus in Mark drawing alternative boundaries around his movement or primarily challenging those boundaries resurrected by his opponents or both?" In respect of my narrative analysis of Mark and the fact that, not only were women more disadvantaged by clean and unclean dimension because of menstruation defilement (Waetjen 1989: 165), but also, in context of Mark 10: 2, the question of the Pharisees highlights the patriarchal nature of society. Further, Jesus specifically attacks this inequality in Mark 10:10-12. It would on the surface seem like a challenge, but in reality any challenge of status and their structures would imply alternatives.

Douglas in discussing her concepts of grid and groups notes that, "The relation of self to society varies with the constraints of grid and group: the stronger these are, the more developed the ideas of formal transgression and its dangerous consequences and the less regard is felt for the right of the inner self to be freely expressed" (1970: 102). This statement could relate directly to Jesus' continued use of the theme "hard hearts". The Pharisees see Jesus as a danger because their social world is controlled by strict codes while Jesus is concerned about equality and freedom from legalities. It has also been argued that when groups are challenged they tend to make the boundaries for entry or exit more extreme. So, while the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees does not portray a ritual as such, it introduces elements of ritual through the honour/shame challenge.

The next section will deal with what I believe are elements, which indicate that Mark 10: 2 – 12 is part of the disciples' status of transformation, which will only be completed after the resurrection of Christ. This initiation of the disciples will also involve 'ritual conflict', but the two notions are distinctly different. The Pharisees are challenging boundaries and

status, and Jesus returns the favour – this is conflict from without the boundaries between one group and another group. On the other hand the disciples are the initiands who must be trained and tested by the Ritual Elder again through ‘ritual conflict’ these two forms of ‘ritual conflict’ are found within this one text and seem to play-off each other but it is important to note the essential differences. The disciples are in the in-group/Jesus’ initiands while the Pharisees are the out-group/the opponents. I hope to clarify this as we discuss the text as part of a bigger narrative portraying the ritual initiation of the disciples by Jesus. The disciples are in essence from the beginning to the end of this text in a liminal stage of their status transformation ritual. I will then deal with the subject of this text, namely marriage, and describe what I believe is a ritual, proposed by Jesus. Finally, parallels will be drawn between the ritual of marriage and the ritual of status transformation of the disciples, in the light of the theme ‘The kingdom of God’.

4.4.1. Ritual Status Transformation of the Disciples

The disciples, are present within the crowd, as indicated by Mark 10: 10, and yet they are only mentioned after the teaching has been given. These same disciples are depicted by scholars as both loyal and yet uncomprehending with regards to the things of God (Kingsbury 1989: 95 and 96). Rhoads and Michie note that the “...conflict between Jesus and the disciples on the way to Jerusalem exemplifies the clash between the values of the disciples and those of Jesus”(1982: 91). Further, this conflict creates frustration not only for Jesus and the disciples, but also for the readers (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 95). Rhoads and Michie, state that “The disciples are foils for Jesus in their failure to respond appropriately to the rule of God” (1982: 123), in this way revealing the standard of Jesus’ discipleship (1982: 123). This clearly paints the disciples in a bad light and does not give them much hope of redemption. As discussed in the narrative section, I prefer to read the disciples as ‘round’ characters and therefore there must be something more within the text than merely a negative example of discipleship, followed by Jesus’ teaching of the correct response.

Especially, if we take into consideration these same disciples have already, in a sense, completed a successful mission in Mark 6: 7 – 30. For Draper, “The mission of the twelve was intended to be a call to a new Passover, issuing in a new withdrawal into the

wilderness, a new desert feeding and a new crossing of the Red sea, a new Sinai, a new entry into the promised land via Jericho, a removal of the oppressive temple system and the introduction of a new social order” (1995: 199). If Draper is right in this analysis of the Passover as a ‘hidden transcript’ and the disciples as having a purposeful mission, this mission must go beyond Jesus’ death (at least on the narrative level), which he predicts three times surrounding Mark 10: 2 – 12. It must go beyond to his resurrection, which he also predicts (8: 31b; 9: 9; 31b; 10: 34), the hope as discussed by Myers (1988: 239). Further, if the analogy is used between the Israelites’ escape from Egypt (separation), desert experience (liminal) and entering the Promised Land (aggregation), then on their journeys the disciples would still be in the desert. This would mean, in essence, they are still in the liminal stage. Draper notes in referring to 6: 30 – 32, that “If the mission of the twelve was intended as a call to a new Passover and a new Exodus, then a withdrawal to the desert would be the logical next step” (1995: 194). Jesus intended to take the disciples into a liminal space. This however was not possible due to the crowds. Although the disciples were obedient to leave their homes, loved ones and occupations to follow Jesus (separation)(10: 28), they are still in a ritual process of status transformation. It is important to note as does Kingsbury, that; “when the twelve return to Jesus and recount all they have done and taught, Mark refers to them neither as the twelve nor as disciples, but as “the apostles” (6: 30)” (1989: 95). I will not analyse this designation, but it must be noted that in a sense they could have achieved a new status. However, this is not their final status and just as all of the Israelites, which left Egypt including Moses, had to die before Israel could enter the promised land. So, too not only did Jesus have to die, but the disciples had to die to themselves and accept the full realisation of following Jesus.

Kingsbury notes that soon after returning from their mission in chapter 6, their hearts were once again hardened because they did not understand Jesus’ miracle of the loaves (6: 51 – 52) (1989: 99). Maybe, the disciples had regressed or maybe this was the next stage in their transformation. Kingsbury, referring to the section of Mark between 6: 30 and 8: 21, states, “Despite auspicious beginnings, the disciples, by the end of this series of scenes and miracles show themselves to be like outsiders”. Like “outsiders”, they “think the things not of God, but of humans”...” (1989: 101). The notion that, the disciples ‘think the things of this world’, is discussed in the narrative section in relation to 8: 22 to 10: 52. However, I do not agree with Kingsbury, that the disciples can ever be alluded to as “outsiders” since they continue to remain loyal to Jesus, right up to his arrest 14:50. The disciples had

followed Jesus to Jerusalem and Jesus had continued to teach and rebuke them. I will elaborate on the notion of the disciples being insiders later.

Via states, referring to chapter ten, that one cannot find a more concentrated fusion of dominant and subdominant Markan motifs elsewhere in Mark (Via 1985: 79). Further Via notes that most if not all motifs and themes, which are presents in Mark, are present in Mark 10. Mark 10 thus illuminates the past and paves the way for the future in the narrative. So, although the story is not complete, it is whole. Mark 10 "...narrates an in-between time..." (Via 1985: 78), a liminal time. Best, in his analysis of the disciples, depicts 8: 27 to 10: 45 as the central area in which the will of God is laid down for those who wish to be part of God's community (1983: 84). Again this section was discussed in the narrative section; it must be stressed again, however, that most if not all the teaching in this section requires some sacrifice from those being taught. They need to give up their old world-view and take up a new one defined as the 'things of God'. Best, describes the ending of Mark 10 as a redemption of the disciples, as not only does 10: 45 indicate that the disciples will not be required to serve as Jesus, but also the healing of Bartimaeus, indicates the redemptive power of Jesus (1983: 89). And, as mentioned in the narrative section, the two-stage healing of the blind man in 8: 22 – 25 has been described as indicating a two-step acceptance/development of the disciples. Best, referring to the above healing, notes that the "Disciples are in danger of following Jesus but not perceiving that in following him they also must go the way of the cross" (1983: 86). Best, goes on to note that the denying of self is not a possibility by human power alone (1983: 87), again indicating the redemptive work of God (Jesus).

Best's statements link well with Mc Vann's notion of the ritual of baptism being represented in a sense by the symbol of the cross (1995: 187). Mc Vann discusses these notions of baptism, the cross and honour/shame principals in conjunction with what he sees as the middle section 8: 27 – 9: 1 of the baptism theme which runs throughout Mark. Specifically Mc Vann notes that immediately after Peter acknowledges that Jesus is the Christ (8: 28), Jesus challenges all present, disciples and the crowd, by his first passion prediction and stating: "Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels"(8: 38) (1995: 187). Mc Vann, states that "He [referring to Jesus] invites the disciples [in section 8: 27 – 9: 1], who have just recognised his identity as messiah, into the next stage of

discipleship – facing death” (1995: 192). This links directly to my proposal that the disciples are in a process of status transformation with Jesus as their ritual elder. Jesus has called them and proceeds to initiate them in the ‘things of God’. The disciples need to “...abandon their previous habits, ideas, and understandings about their personal identities and relations with others in their society” (Mc Vann 1991: 339). And this is the task of the ritual elders, in this case Jesus. Mc Vann notes that “They [referring to ritual elders] see to it that the pre conceived ideas about society; status and relationships, in short, about life itself, are wiped out” (1991: 337). This is not only achieved through story telling, but also through, symbols and the acting out of the ideal. Mc Vann notes that certain initiands are “...tested to see whether the skills of the new role have been learned or to apprise whether the initiand is faithful to the charge” (1999: 340). This is known as ritual confrontation and generally forms part of the liminal phase of a transformation ritual. I propose that the so-called conflict between Jesus and the disciples in this section of the text (8: 27 – 10: 52), is more than a resistance by the disciples’ to Jesus teaching, it is in essence part of the disciples ritual of status transformation filled with symbols and challenges. Just as Mc Vann refers to Jesus’ way to the cross and crucifixion as, “the nadir of the liminal phase,...” (1995: 194). So too, the harsh challenges and teachings of the disciples in 8: 22 – 10: 52, “...form part of the “passivity of neophytes to their instructions...[and] submission to ordeal ...[which] are signs of the process whereby they are ground down to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to cope with their new station in life (Turner 1967: 101)” (Mc Vann 1995: 194). I will now turn to 10: 2 – 12, but it must be kept in mind that this section is within a larger section, narrating an initiation of the disciples, to the ‘things of God’ as opposed to the ‘things of man’. Further this ritual of status transformation is initiated by Jesus so that his followers may continue his mission, the renewal of “...the Galilean peasantry in response to the economic and social disintegration and threatened landlessness” (Draper 1994: 40).

Jesus’ response in 10:3, “What did Moses command you?” as mentioned earlier, creates separation between Jesus and the Pharisees (NRSV). Further, in context of 10:1, it could be that Jesus is creating, in addition, separation between the Pharisees and the crowd. For Best in Mark, the disciples represent believers/Christians while the crowd, represents the great mass of unevangelised humanity outside the church...” (1983: 83). Although, Best tends to use Christian doctrinal schemes, the distinction is still made between the in-group and out-group. The crowd, in essence, is neutral and therefore not part of the in-group while the

Pharisees are clearly hostile toward Jesus, they are the out-group. Draper in discussing the sermon on the mount in Matthew as a ritual of status transformation of the four disciples, notes that, "... the presence of the waiting crowds as witnesses of the status transformation of the four chosen disciples is significant in that they are the ritual subjects of a second implied status transformation" (1999: 30). For Draper the crowd consists of those seeking to be part of Matthew's community. In the context of Mark then the crowd which Jesus teaches could also reflect those who had come because they had heard about Jesus' prior healings and teachings. They are not, in a sense, followers as the disciples are. Draper, referring to the initiation of the four disciples as depicted in Matthew, states that "Their initiation into leadership is marked by the conferral of a body of teaching as both a ritual symbol and the content of authoritative catechesis for those they will lead" (1999: 47). In respect of Mark 10 and other texts which follow Mark 6, the attempt by Jesus to remove the disciples for what I believe would be their second stage or level of initiation, I propose that the disciples are in a liminal phase in the midst of the crowds. They receive the same teachings as the crowd, but on another level, they are being initiated. The disciples are the ones who were present at the narrative level, in the past, when Jesus had accused them of having hard hearts.

This separation is carried through to 10:5 when Jesus answers the Pharisees again, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you" (NRSV). At this point the disciples must be part of the crowd, but at the same time questioning their status, as they too had been, described by Jesus as having hard hearts. Thus at one and the same time the Markan Jesus creates and sustains separation between the Pharisees and the crowd, which included the disciples, and challenges the disciples regarding their position. This language used by the Markan Jesus not only creates separation, but also draws a boundary between the Pharisees and the crowd, once again including the disciples. It must be noted that the Pharisees did not ask Jesus if it is lawful "for us" to divorce and later Jesus in 10:9 uses generalised language / or inclusive language, "... let no one separate" (NRSV). If we add to this the "separation of space" experienced by all present. The Pharisees had come to test Jesus. The disciples were on a journey out of their usual territory, and as discussed above already in the liminal stage, after their successful mission. Even the crowd was out of their normal environments and most probably in a harsher environment. Further, as we have all experienced in the heat of conflict, verbal or physical, our concept of time tends to be altered, even if we are merely observers of the conflict. One may find oneself arguing

with someone for hours when in fact you feel as though only a short time has passed. These three elements of separation, namely: “separation of people”, “separation of place” and “separation of time” coincide with those explained by McVann in his article, “Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke – Acts: The Case of Jesus the Prophet” (1991: 338, 339).

Much like a ritual elder instructing his initiands. Jesus creates the separation, the liminal space, for the teaching and initiation of His disciples. Jesus has clearly shown that the Pharisees are the outsiders while the disciples are the insiders, the initiands. They are the ones who have left all behind. They are the ones who are “betwixt and between.” This is clearly indicated by their misunderstanding of Jesus’ predictions of death. They have not yet been transformed. Although Mc Vann notes that rituals of transformation may occur voluntarily or involuntarily (1991: 336), in most cases it would seem that initiands to some extent are volunteers. Mc Vann notes that, “The ritual symbols may include stories or narratives which shape the way initiands learn to perceive the cosmos” (1991: 338). The disciples are subjected to this “teaching”, which would have impact not just because of the referring back to creation, but also because of the mentioning of the “hardness of hearts” and the reference to Moses who they (not all, but some) had seen in the transfiguration (9: 2 – 13).

Further, as mentioned in the narrative criticism section, this section of narrative is in fact framed by two episodes of children, in which Jesus affirms the need to “be like children”. This too could point to the status of the initiands who are often called children in respect to the ritual elder. Draper in his article, “The Role of Ritual in the alternative of social universe: Jewish-Christian initiation of Gentiles in the Didache”, notes that the novices in Didache 3:1,3,4,5,6 are referred to as “my child” (1997: 59). Draper goes on to explain that, “...God is the new fictive father, but the ritual elder stands as it were *in loco parentis*...” (1997: 59). There is a need for the new initiands to submit. Waetjen is dealing with the framing of children which surround this section and which link it to one of the main metaphor of God’s rule (the Kingdom of God) states, “In their innocence and openness children manifest the qualities of authentic humanness that are characteristic of God’s rule” (1989: 167). Waetjen goes on to explain that, “To enter into it [God’s rule], therefore, means to be released from any and every force in society that faces human existence” (1989: 167). Although Waetjen is not intending to discuss Turner’s concept of ‘communitas’, it is clear that he could be talking in a language which invites us to make

comparisons to Turner's concept of 'communitas'. The child represents the qualities of humanness not only required by God, but also required by Turner to be able to create transformation through ritual. This is what is experienced in the liminal state.

The next stage in Turner's process is liminality. Alexander notes that, "The primary motivation behind ritual is the desire to break free of social structure temporarily in order to transcend its social and existential limitations and reconfigure it (ibid 266 and 1982, 52)" (1991: 17). If we put this statement in the context of the role of Jesus to reconfigure the oppressive social order of the Roman Empire, this text can begin to be taken seriously as a ritual text. Further if the disciples are those that have been chosen by Jesus to carry forward this mission/movement, it is clear that they too need to be reconfigured. "Ritual then is a response to the need to create community: it is put into play in response to breakdown in, or it is enacted to rejuvenate community" (Alexander 1995: 213). Further, if we add the fact that marriage/family was a primary structure within the covenantal program due to the importance of the inheritance of land, this text must be seen as having not only ritual process but also ritual elements.

"Weddings are occasions of great importance. During them a woman and a man publicly enter into a new social relationship; they have crossed a line that cannot be crossed again. With that crossing, they assume a new identity with new rights and obligations. No matter what the future holds, neither of them can ever be 'single' in the sense the word had before they were married. A fundamental life boundary has been crossed, and its mark on personal and communal experience is virtually indelible. The wedding, which is a ritual of status transformation of 'boundary crossing' signals to the members of the group that this man and woman have validly assumed the new role of married man and woman" (McVann 1991: 333).

I use this lengthy quotation, not only as it speaks volumes regarding the link between the ritual and Mark 10: 2-12 in which Jesus explicitly changes the question from one of divorce to one of marriage, but also because McVann uses these sentences to start an article which is not about marriage at all but rather ritual in the context of Mark. McVann does not in his whole analysis of Mark deal with this section of the text. I propose that just as the man and woman assume new identities through a process of boundary crossing through ritual, so too the disciples are engaged in a process of transformation, which will change their identities,

through a process of boundary crossing. Further, the above quotation also stresses the social and communal aspect of marriage, which is brought out in the text as Jesus is teaching a crowd. The disciples are being re-configured in the midst of a crowd. “What needs stressing however is not just that the greatest quantity of rituals are social but that ritual activity is interactive and social by nature” (Driver 1991: 154).

It is not possible at this juncture to repeat the lengthy discussion regarding liminality as set out in section 3, but it must be stressed that it is at this stage that transformation takes place. Further, it is only if the conditions are conducive to spontaneous ‘communitas’ that “true transformation” can be achieved through ritual. During liminality, “...neophytes tend to develop intense comradeship and egalitarianism” (Turner 1969: 95). The introduction of the disciples in 10: 10, could indicate that the disciples are one in their questioning of Jesus. They alone seem to have comradeship and further they alone seem to be mentioned, although again one cannot be sure if the crowd is part of this interaction. The disciples are the ones who are in the liminal stage of transformation being taught the detailed implication of the broader teaching given in 10: 6 – 9.

I hope the above discussion, has illustrated my proposal clearly that in Mark 10: 2 – 12 the disciples are in a liminal stage. Not only because of the separation caused by the honour/shame challenge between Jesus and the Pharisees, but also because by referring back to Mark 6 we note that it was Jesus’ intention to take the disciples into a desolate place, a liminal space. I will now conclude this section by discussing the aggregation of the disciple’s status transformation. It must be noted at this stage however, that in this ritual of transformation of the disciples, the marriage motif, is a profound ritual symbol for the reconfiguring of the disciples’ world-view. This idea of marriage being a ritual symbol, will be discussed in more detail later.

The mentioning of the house in 10: 10, could mark the aggregation phase of the disciples but, as I will discuss later, I propose the mentioning of the house indicates the aggregation phase of the Marriage ritual. It must be noted that this is the last time within Mark that one finds Jesus teaching the disciples in a house. Further, Best notes that after 10: 52 the disciples slip into the background (19: 90). This as mentioned earlier could imply that the disciples are redeemed, but in reality in the story world it must soon be acknowledged that the redemption indicated by Bartimaeus’ healing, must be a prediction symbolically of the

final aggregation of the disciples. Mc Vann notes in his baptismal analysis, “Their aggregation as full and genuine disciples, who understand and accept the teaching of Jesus in 8: 34 – 38, is projected into the future, after the resurrection” (1995: 193). As Kingsbury states, “After the resurrection, they [referring to the disciples] will comprehend aright both who Jesus is and what he was about” (1989: 107). For Mc Vann, Jesus’ death and resurrection mark his second baptism, the aggregation phase represented by the resurrection, and Jesus’ new status being that of Lord, no longer prophet (1995: 194 and 195). I propose that only at this point, the disciples will truly be aggregated into their new roles. It must be stressed that “Those, however, who have been initiated into particular roles such as shamans, prophets, or priests, undergo only a partial aggregation” (Mc Vann 1991: 341). True disciples will in essence to some extent remain liminal in this life. Thus, the aggregation of the disciples is not lived-out in Mark 10, but its potential is proposed.

In section 3.1.1, I described Turner’s concept of “Normative *communitas*”, and explained Turner’s understanding of the development and final division of the Franciscan order. In short to maintain a form of ‘*communitas*’, permanent liminality needs to be achieved, and since the liminal stage is marked by a void of social structure, all contact with social structure needs to be avoided to achieve normative ‘*communitas*’. As with Francis, and his poverty requirements, it would seem that Jesus’ teachings to the disciples in Mark 8: 22 to 10: 52, would require, a humbling and giving up of earthly materials as well as earthly aspirations. The disciples are in essence being prepared for a life lived in the “margins”. They would be a continual threat to structure, namely the elite and those who represented them, the Pharisees. But in reality, structure too, would be a threat to their continued existence and successful mission of the disciples. So even when the disciples are finally re-aggregated into the community they will remain marginalized. In essence, Jesus teaching in Mark 8: 22 to 10: 52, could provide the key to the maintenance of a form of normative ‘*communitas*’, a community set apart from social structure.

4.4.2. Marriage Re-configured – A Ritual of Status Transformation

Let us now move on to the second ritual beginning at 10:6. It must be stressed that the second ritual is not being conducted within the narrative, but rather is merely described by the Markan Jesus. And as I have proposed and will continue to explain further, Jesus not

only uses marriage as a ritual symbol, for the initiation of his disciples, but He also proposes a ritual for the process of marriage. The Markan Jesus refers back to creation, “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female” (NRSV). From a ritual point of view, these words would remind those who are listening that their world (Israelites) was defined by a creator God in covenant with his people whom God had promised redemption (Driver 1991: 141). Driver, through an extensive analysis of human existence in the world, including the development of language concludes that, “... rituals spring from something essential to our humanity” (1991: 24), to the extent that, “The processes through which ritual regulates the life of a society, perhaps especially when these have significance for the maintenance of the biological life-system, are mostly hidden from consciousness” (1991: 47). Either our worldview sustains the existence of a creator God or it does not. If it does, this in turn has a profound effect on our ritualisations. Had God been replaced by some other ritualisation, which did not reflect the creator God?

Juel states, “As I reflect on what allows for lively engagement with passages such as the account of Jesus’ baptism, I am continually reminded about the indispensability of imagination” (1994: 42). At this stage in the thesis I would ask the reader to kindle their imagination as we read Mark, ritually. For, “With a few carefully chosen words, the narrator suggests things and encourages readers to use [their] imagination” (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 44). Throughout Mark, ritual imagery has been present particularly in (1:21-28 – unclean spirit; 1:40-45 – touches leper; 2:12-15 – eat with unwashed hands; 3:1-6 – heals on Sabbath). In all cases Jesus seems to transgress, “... tradition for the sake of a higher good” (Juel 1994: 41). For Rhoads and Michie, “...through the style of the narrative the reader experiences the urgency which the protagonist conveys by his central message: the right time is fulfilled and the rule of God has come now” (1982: 45). This higher good and rule of God is surely linked to the covenantal renewal of the twelve tribes of Israel and if this were the case it would have to involve marriage. As discussed in section 4.3, the prophets seem to use monogamy as an analogy for the relationship between Israel (only wife) and God.

I propose Mark 10: 7-10 has Turner’s three phases of ritual process, namely: separation, liminality and aggregation. The man leaves the father and mother. This clearly implies separation from that which has been his lived experience. The Disciples too had to separate from their previous lived experience. Schweizer notes that at that time forsaking “... the

house of one's father was far more meaningful..." as it meant the forsaking of "... the solidarity and protection of his own clan" (1970: 203). The problem with this notion is that if we read it in conjunction with section 4.3 which states that the marriage process involves the woman coming to the man's father's house we tend to have a contradiction. This however could be explained by the fact that even within the father's house a new space would be created for this new family unit. This does not however change the picture of separation, which is enhanced if we accept that the woman was dressed in jewels and wore a veil hiding her usual identity. Further, the procession from the bride's house was one most, if not all, of Jesus' audiences had either been part of or had witnessed. This means that the mention of leaving mother and father's house, not only implies separation but also conjures up images within the minds of those first century hearers of this text. I could even envisage Jesus motioning the movement with his hands and the crowd responding.

The framing of the children stories has already alluded to liminality, but now it is part of the another status transformation (rite de passage). "... (v7) and be joined to his wife, (v8) and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh" (NRSV). The status transformation involves the joining of two into one. This is a profound statement and the Markan Jesus emphasises the point by repeating the concept in (10:8b) "... so they are no longer two but one flesh" (NRSV). In view of the disciples' ritual of status transformation they too in time need to be one with Jesus in his death and resurrection.

Waetjen states that Jesus omits "... the phrase, 'and will cleave to his wife'" (1989: 165) from the original Genesis 2:24, because the Markan Jesus wishes to stress equality in the fact that both parties need to make a movement. Both parties, in other words, need to separate. This does seem to strengthen our ritual analysis. However, the phrase in question has been included in the Greek New Testament in brackets because the committee felt that it could be an omission, "... the scribes eye passing from *kai* to *kai*" (Metzger 1971: 104). How does this effect my ritual analysis? If, as some have indicated, the "one flesh" could have sexual connotations it could mean that the transformation happens before the sexual act. Unfortunately, as discussed in section 4.2.1, it is not clear whether consummation of the marriage happened on the first night or the last. It must be stressed however that the liminal phase is that which denotes danger and playfulness and thus the sexual act is part of the liminal phase prior to the re-incorporation into the ordinary social situation. The sexual act could be the beginning of the ritual liminality. What is clear however is that the two lose

their prior individual status and are now seen as “one”. Something profound has happened during the transformation period. The disciples clearly too need a profound transformation.

It must be kept in mind that the process mentioned in Section 4.2.1 involved betrothal and only later marriage. Further, the betrothal aspect of the process was in all, intense and purpose a legal negotiation and contract. The Markan Jesus seems to neglect the former aspect namely the betrothal and seems to be implying only a marriage process. This would in reality put marriage back into the hands of the “little tradition”. One may question the removal of the protection of the rights of women by the marriage contract but if we read Mark as proclaiming the changes in status of “two to one” through a process of liminality, there should be no need for legalities. The very essence of liminality is expressed in verses seven and eight, “Secular distinctions of rank and status disappear or are homogenized” (Turner 1969: 95). Further, these verses also express ‘communitas’, “... community or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders” (Turner 1969: 96). This is emphasised by verse 9, “Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (NRSV). Mc Vann discussing baptism in ritual notes that for Turner the process, “... brings neophytes into close connection with deity or with super human powers, with what is, in fact, often regarded as the unbounded, the infinite, the limitless” (Turner 1967: 98)” (1995: 189).

If God is not the ritual elder, in person or through others, God is still present. As mentioned earlier, God could and maybe should be recognised as the ritual elder in the process of marriage. The disciples, too, need to come to the realisation, as indicated in 10: 26, 27, that it is only God that can facilitate the transformation of the human being so that he/she may enter the experience of the ‘Kingdom of God’. This would eliminate the need for those in power to control the process of marriage. In other words, the conflict, which is the theme throughout Mark, is continued even as the Markan Jesus describes marriage. “Ritual liminality’s suspension of social-structural norms places it in opposition to social structures” (Alexander 1991: 32). Alexander also notes that,

“It [referring to ritual] is not essentially activity that reinforces existing social structure. Instead, it redirects present social structural arrangements when they squeeze out community and no longer serve communitarian ends” (1991: 3).

Again this statement seems to have clear links to the conflict as I have portrayed it in the narrative analysis section. It could be that the Markan Jesus is re-instituting a ritual in the light of the injustices being promulgated in the marriage process by the Scribes and Pharisees. As mentioned earlier, ritual is inherently performance. "Ritual takes the form of a performance in order to reflect on the ideal and to act it out" (Alexander 1991: 24). In the renewal of Israel, the Markan Jesus is re-ordering society to the ideal which God intended. This ideal needs to be re-inforced/instituted through ritual. As I have tried to convey throughout the narrative analysis section and this section, the Markan Jesus is concerned about unjust structures, which cause oppression, and the need for equality. Alexander notes that, "Ritual 'communitas' makes the arbitrariness of social-structural distinctions even clearer as it calls attention to the underlying equality among human beings" (1995: 217). True ritual which encompasses liminality and 'communitas' not only challenges the structural society but it also infuses, "... it with alternative anti-structural values which emerge in the experience of immediacy and egalitarianism" (Alexander 1991: 42).

As discussed earlier, Driver proposes that true ritual has three main benefits, namely: order, community and transformation (1991: 131). McVann also notes that, "Rituals help create and maintain an ordered cosmos" (1995: 180). If the Markan Jesus is referring back to creation as the way God willed things to be, it could be that this is the ritual Mark 10: 7-9 which could provide much needed order in the world in which Jesus found himself. And once again we can assume that the crowd would have identified with this notion of ritual which set aside (in a sense) the need for monetary exchange and legal documents, all of which clearly form part of an oppressive structure. I hope that this, in some ways, illustrates the possibility that the Markan Jesus was proposing a marriage ritual, which involved both 'communitas' and liminality as described by Turner.

McVann in discussing baptism notes that, "Rituals are concerned primarily with the boundary lines drawn within a society, and conditions which permit crossing of those lines" (1991: 334). Further, McVann notes, "Ritual makes order; that is it draws boundaries through and around both natural and social space" (1995: 180). Throughout Mark, it can be witnessed how the Pharisees have tried to create boundaries between those that are acceptable (pure) and those that are not. This theme is also clearly illustrated through the discussion of marriage in section 4.3, the sanctification of women as they pass from one

man (father) to another (husband). Although the Markan Jesus seems to be creating his own ritual and therefore boundaries and order, this does not involve hierarchy and status but rather equality and unity. These are qualities represented or present in liminality and, as I have argued, represented by Mark 10:6-9. Draper has also noted regarding the renewal of the Local Galilean community by Jesus that, "The family structure, traditionally patriarchal and authoritarian, now in danger of disintegration, is affirmed, but in a new egalitarian way" (1994: 41).

The final stage in Turner's ritual process is aggregation. McVann defines this stage as the time when, "... the initiands return to society with new roles and statuses and new rights and obligations" (1991: 340). This stage, I propose, is implied by (10:9), "Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (NRSV). This implies a process. God has joined the two into one, but now they must venture as "one" into society again where there will be threats from others. It must be noted that the two (husband and wife) are now one. They have been transformed and therefore enter society with a new status; a status which must be acknowledged by society. McVann quoting Turner, notes that the liminality-communitas stage of ritual does not just encompass knowledge acquisition but "[it reveals] 'an absorption of powers which will become active after his social status has been redefined in the aggregation rites (Turner 1967: 101, 102)'" (1995: 191). This implies that the aggregation stage is just as important.

Mark 10:10, "Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter" (NRSV) mentions the word "house". The house was central to the crowds' marriage process (see section 4: 3), and so the hearers of this story would symbolically identify with the house not only in respect of the marriage, but also the hive of activity which occurred within the house encompassing, as discussed earlier, in agrarian societies, life itself. The moving into the house is part of the aggregation section; it represents a new life, a new family, and a new existence. I will not discuss (10: 11,12) at this stage as they have been dealt with previously at length, but it must be noted that the actions described in (10:11,12) would in essence destroy this new household.

Many scholarly debates have occurred around the extensive use of the word "house" in Mark. As Malbon notes both the "messianic secret" theme and anti-temple theme in Mark have been equated to the "in a house" teachings of the disciples (7:17; 9:28,33; 10:10)

(1991: 107). After a lengthy discussion regarding the use of “house” throughout Mark, Malbon concludes, “The house as the setting for such teaching signals not a ‘secret’ teaching (as opposed to an ‘open’ teaching) but rather the replacement of the synagogue as a center of teaching” (1991: 116). The synagogue however, was also the meeting place for the community and as such could clearly be linked to the aggregation phase of the ritual process.

It is possible that the Markan Jesus expresses a process of marriage, which involves far less legal or ritual purity requirements on the one hand while on the other hand, allows for liminality and ‘communitas’, a ritual process which is not controlled by man, but by God as the ritual elder. This ultimately challenges the Pharisees’ very essence, their social world built on rules, regulations and purity rituals, while also adding to the understanding of the status transformation of the disciples. Thus the children, the house, and the proposed marriage process, are all ritual symbols in the transformation of the disciples, while at the same time fulfilling a different role at the story level. The symbol of marriage is a particularly profound one, if we take into consideration, that the Markan Jesus is on a mission to reconfigure Israel back to God’s original plan. Throughout my narrative analysis I alluded to the fact that many symbols within the text would have drawn the audience to reflect on Israel’s history. This history included the prophets using the symbolism of marriage to represent Israel’s relationship with God. Further, this relationship was on all accounts a troubled one, mainly due to the hardness of hearts on the side of Israel. If the Markan Jesus is reconfiguring Israel, it is primarily regarding their relationship with God. The reconfiguring of Israel’s relationship with God would, therefore, inherently require the reconfiguring of the marriage symbol. This makes the reconfiguring of marriage profound because as Jesus reconfigures God’s covenant with his people he also in a sense reconfigures the archetypal representation of that covenant, marriage. This would make the use of marriage as a ritual symbol for the initiation of the disciples essential.

4.4.3. The Kingdom of God

Roads and Michie, note that the two major conflicts, the one between Jesus and the Pharisees and the one between Jesus and the disciples, "...overlap and interweave, each one anticipating and paralleling the other at key points, and each illuminating the other by comparison and contrast" (1982: 100). I, in essence, agree with Rhoads and Michie, but as described earlier, I view these conflicts between Jesus and the disciples as part of their liminal phase of status transformation. The conflicts are in essence about the same thing, "the things of God" versus the "things of man", but the processes involved are vastly different. Jesus is challenging the Pharisees' essence, their world-view; this is an honour/shame conflict, while Jesus is harshly initiating the disciples who will continue his radical mission of renewing Israel. Via with reference to the 'Kingdom of God' and chronological time states that:

"Time with its human possibilities is both the expression and matrix for the divine intention, and it is fallen as, for example, in Mark 10: 2 – 9. Marriage is intended by God, and it is supposed to continue in time – it takes time. At the same time human beings in time have contracted hardness of heart, and that is the condition in which marriage has to be lived out. Eternity or the kingdom is also viewed dialectically" (Via 1985: 60).

I do not wish to go into debate regarding chronological time, and redemption but it must be noted that Via uses Marriage as an illustration for future redemption. Marriage and wedding illustrations are extensive in the New Testament but also in the Old, referring to the ushering in, of God's Rule, and the redemption of his people. Via goes on to note that, "The Kingdom of God, which is the presiding Theological motif of the Gospel (1: 14 – 15; 9: 1; 12: 34), appears in this chapter [10] in both its realised and futuristic expressions (10: 14 – 15, 23 – 24, 29 – 30)" (1985: 77). The conflict over marriage, can therefore be seen as integral to not only the ushering of the "Kingdom of God", but the marriage description by Jesus could be taken as a profound symbol for the disciples in their status transformation. The disciples need to separate from their old lives and world-views, just as the married couple needs to first leave behind their old lives. Secondly, the transformation is a process, where "the two become one", the disciples too need to identify with Christ to this extent. Finally, God's intention of continued unity is not curtailed by the hardness of hearts. As

Via, notes, "... time has positive moments, not only because the eschaton is anticipated but, because the creative intention continues (Mark 10: 6 – 9) despite hardness of heart (10: 5)" (1985: 61). God's will, his purpose not only in marriage but also in the disciples' transformation, will be fulfilled. The subject of marriage in Mark 10: 2 – 12, thus has its own elements of ritual process of transformation, while at the same time is not only part of the teaching for the disciples, but represents a ritual symbol in their initiation process.

If, as I have proposed and argued, marriage is a ritual symbol of covenant discipleship, it could be argued that Christian marriage is a very deep expression of the life of a disciple. Kasper states that "Marriage belongs to the order of creation and to the order of redemption" (1980: 1). For Kasper, the connection in marriage of both creation and redemption speaks volumes about the sacramental nature of marriage (1980: 32). The concept of sacrament, has not been dealt with yet, but will be covered in the contextualisation section. I propose that my ritual analysis expounds and gives credence to Kasper's notion that marriage incorporates both creation and redemption. Creation and redemption are brought together in one symbol, a symbol which in its true form, expresses, all the teaching regarding sacrifice, humility and equality which are evident in Mark 8: 22 to 10: 52.

4.4.4. Summary of Ritual Analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12.

I hope that I have clearly illustrated and argued the following:

- 1 That the disciples are at a liminal stage in the initiation in Mark 10: 2 – 12, and that the conflict between Jesus and the disciples is that of the 'ritual conflict' between that of ritual elder and initiands. The disciples are the in-group.
- 2 The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees is also 'ritual conflict' but one of honour/shame. The Pharisees are the out-group.
- 3 In the context of (1) and (2), marriage, as described by Jesus, is a primary ritual symbol for the disciples' initiation, while at the same time challenging the very rules and structure of the Pharisees' existence.
- 4 Marriage, is a symbol of creation and redemption, a re-configuring of Israel, back to a covenantal existence, where God is creator and sustainer of all.

I have now covered Turner's process of ritual and dealt with some insights gained from Douglas' model, although I have not been able to deal with all the ritual elements in detail or discuss the difference between the ideological nature and sensory nature of symbols. This was not my intention, my intention was simply to illustrate that Mark 10:2-12, like other texts within Mark can be taken to represent ritual. I hope this analysis will give insights for the last section of this thesis, namely appropriation.

5. CONTEXTUALISATION

The emphasis or inclusion of “context” within the process of exegesis “...rests upon the fundamental understanding that there is no neutral or absolute meaning of a text or, for that matter of any human communication” (Draper 2001: 149). In Draper’s Tri-polar model the stage of contextualisation, is crucial, as “our context prompts us in the questions we bring to the text and decides what counts as answers” (2001: 153). In my motivation section 2 and methodology section 3, I have briefly highlighted my concerns, but I decided to do the Distantiation section prior to this section on context, so if at all possible they may remain independent in my thought processes, prior to the Appropriation stage. Contexts are by nature subjective and changing. One may find, therefore, that some readers may not relate to my description of context, or they may only relate partially. This will effect their acceptance or understanding of the appropriation section but should not effect their use of my Distantiation Stage. Any reader could in essence apply my Distantiation efforts to their own context.

“Contextualisation involves spending time analysing who we are and what our location in society and history is” (Draper 2002: 17). Draper also notes that, any exegesis “...stands in continuity with the whole “reservoir of meaning” (Ricoeur; Croatto) which is filled up by the whole long process of interpreting the Bible over two thousand years in general...” (2002: 16). Draper, as well as Genholm and Patte, stress that any interpretation needs to take into consideration, not only “the believer’s religious perception of life” but also that the interpretation needs to be responsible in treating the Bible as the “sacred text” it is, in a community of believers (Draper 2002: 15) (2000: 14 & 15). Thus, not only does one need to be true to one’s context, but in all exegesis one needs to not only take into account the historical reservoir of interpretations, but also the impact your interpretation will have on the community of believers.

Each and every context involves a myriad of variables. Further the word “marriage” conjures up varied and complex notions including economic, social, legal and religious aspects. My task therefore to explain my context will be extremely difficult and as indicated above will need to take into consideration not only my personal understandings, but also those of history. I am in this section seeking the questions I am faced with in my

particular context as understood by my socialisation within not only the church but also society at large. I will therefore not be able to go into vast detail but merely highlight the problems, as I see them, within my context.

I will do this by looking at three broad areas:

Firstly, I will explain my understanding, that the family is the social hub of society due to the need for the socialisation of children. This section will involve aspects of my previous psychological studies.

Secondly, I will explain my situation of preparing for ministry and the dilemma I have with the current stance, by the churches at large and in particular the denomination I am affiliated with, namely the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. I will deal with the historical development of marriage and the historical interface between church and State through the ages.

Thirdly, I will include a brief understanding of the experiences I had of the marriage process in the U.P.C.S.A.

Once I have discussed the above, I will, in a summary of this section, highlight some of the debates and questions gleaned from the discussion, which will be used to dialogue with the Distantiation Section.

5.1. Family - essential for Children

The following section is based largely on my previous training in psychology, and statistics gleaned from different forms of media. In my psychological studies, I learnt that at the heart of most counselling is an assessment of the client. This would involve a full history to understand the problem, by looking for predisposing and precipitating factors. These factors would include not only stressful experiences, but also the stability of the client's social environment, especially during their developmental years. Both Psycho-dynamic developmental theorists such as Freud and Erikson, as well as Object-Relations theorists such as Melanie Klein, agreed that children develop through stages either successfully or unsuccessfully; either rapidly or slowly. Although theorists do not agree on the nature of the process or the stages, most agree that the early years are important. Clark states regarding Erikson's theory; "Each one [referring to stages of development] represents a social crisis in the individual's development which can be more or less successfully

resolved, resulting in a positive or negative outcome...” (1987: 147). For example, Erikson would hold that ‘Trust versus Mistrust’ would develop at the age of one to eighteen months, while ‘Identity versus Role Confusion’ would develop during adolescence (Clark 1987: 147). I am aware that we need to take into consideration differences in culture, but the heart of my argument is that developmental theorists note that the environment is crucial to the development of individuals. Children need to develop not only the possibility to trust, but also a sense of identity and belongingness.

I am aware that some may argue that “the environment” needed for this development need not be a family, but I argue that the family is the most natural station for socialisation. One should not fall into the same mistake as our predecessors by redefining the child and the child’s needs according to society (The Adults). As Thatcher notes, “If the marriage covenant embraces children it gives protection to the vulnerable which, in the reign of God, is an absolute priority” (1999: 156). Further, Thatcher refers to research in Britain, which shows that “The connections between family breakdown and the huge increase in crime in the last 30 years are horrendous” (1999: 146). The behaviour of adults within society has either a positive or negative influence on their children’s development.

Before looking at statistics, I must note, as does Forster, that I am aware that statistics can be used and manipulated to further the ends of those who are interpreting and publishing them (1994: 10). My intention is to in some way promote stable families for the benefit of the weak and vulnerable, the children. In an article in the Time Magazine (28 August 1995) the author Robert Wright, explains his theory that the increase in technology and decrease in human interaction is resulting in an increase in anxiety and depression in our societies (Wright 1995). Wright notes that “Hunter-gather societies, for all their diversity, typically feature intimacy and stability: people live in close contact...” (1995: 47). Wright links this to nuclear families and states “To be sure, keeping nuclear families intact has virtues that are understood by evolutionary psychology...” (1995:48). Finally, Wright cites research and notes:

As of 1993, 37% of Americans felt they could trust most people, down from 58% in 1960. This hurts. According to evolutionary psychology, we are designed to seek trusting relationships and to feel uncomfortable in their absence” (1995: 49).

I agree in essence with Wright's argument about the increase in separation of people due to the increase in technology, but if we take into consideration Erikson's stages of development – trust would be developed within the confines of the family. The breakdown in family structure, I propose, is causing problems with the natural development of children. Forster notes, referring to British statistics, that "In 1989 the proportion of births outside marriage rose to 26, 6 per cent. By 1991, it was about 30 per cent (Source: Social Trends 23)..." (1994: 15). Swart notes in the context of South Africa that not only do children have to deal with conflict between parents during divorce, but also have to deal with separation/loss (1997: 120). Swart goes on to explain that the child during divorce not only experiences emotional and psychological trauma but in reality also experiences economic loss (1997: 121). Most interesting for my debate is that Swart deals with the effects of divorce on the child at different developmental stages of the child (1997: 125 – 127). It is not possible to go into detail but it must be stressed that divorce has a tremendous effect on children physically and psychologically.

Codrington, referring to South African Youth, notes that "65% of young people have experienced divorce", and that "26% of young people live with a single mother" (1999: 2). Further Codrington notes that in spite of this 96% of young people see family as important and 72% say they enjoy their parents and home life (1999: 2,3). It seems that even when times are difficult and the reality faced by children does not meet their needs, children still acknowledge the need and the importance of family life. Is it not time that parents/adults begin to take children seriously? Thatcher proposes that "Divorce law is the means by which a society signals [or fails to signal] its support for the special importance of adults devoting themselves to the upkeep and nurture of their own children" (1999: 274). FAMSA – Family and Marriage Society of South Africa, on their website note that approximately 30% of households are run by single-parents (www.famsa.org.za/single.html – 18/01/2003). The Daily Dispatch, an East London based newspaper, noted referring to figures produced from a Statistics South Africa Survey, that not only in 1996 was the divorce rate 81 per 100 000, but also that KwaZulu-Natal had the highest divorce rate of 2 074 divorces per 100 000 population (Daily Dispatch 18 December 1998). Further, in a statement by the South African Law commission, it states, "The number of people living in non-marriage relationships has, however, increased world-wide and also in South Africa" (www.doj.gov.za/docs/soc2001.html).

In my research I discovered a website that was promoting the concept of living together without being married (www.unmarried.org/fun.html). This website even lists well-known personalities, who live as such. 1997 Statistics in America indicate that new marriages have a 43% likelihood of ending in divorce (www.divorcemag.com/statistics/status.shtml).

In the latest report released by statistics South Africa on the 17 December 2002 regarding figures for 1999, the following information is listed:

- 1) The number of divorces registered has increased from 1998 to 1999 by 3.6% (Page 2).
- 2) The number of marriages has increased from 1998 to 1999 by 6.2% and of the marriages registered in 1999 45, 3% were solemnised under civil (Page 2).
- 3) The 35 711 divorces during 1999 involved 45 360 minor children (Page 4) (www.statssa.gov.za/release/marriageanddivorce).

These figures clearly show that in the context of South Africa divorce rates are on the increase and that children are being affected. It is unfortunate that the statistics for 1999 are only available from the 17 December 2002.

It has not been my intention to prove through statistics, that the trend for divorce or cohabitation is on the increase. I only wished to highlight that there is an indication that this is so. Further, I wished to propose that any loss is traumatic and for children who are vulnerable, and at different stages of development, this loss is compounded. Children are in need of stable and permanent environments in order to develop not only trust, but also a good sense of self-esteem and identity. Thatcher notes, "...that rising rates of divorce, out-of-wedlock childbearing and absent parents are not just manifestations of alternative lifestyles, they are patterns of adult behaviour that increase children's risk of negative consequences" (1999: 143). Further Dominian, referring to Freud's theory notes that "The pattern of behaviour shown in marriage will correspond closely to the experience in childhood, and once again statistically there is good evidence to associate marital breakdown with an unhappy childhood" (1971: 145). Not only are children unable to develop the resources needed to sustain a relationship but, they often model their behaviour from that of their parents. This in essence leads any society into a spiral of divorce, a vicious circle of mistrust and neglect.

In my personal experience from running youth groups within the Presbyterian Church for the past twelve years, I have not only been able to identify children who come from a divorced situation. Further, I have also noticed that these very same children are the ones that seek love and a role model on which to build their characters. No one can deny the effect our environments have on our socialisation, how much more so on those who are developing their identities and perceptions of normal behaviour. If the role models our children have in South Africa are ones of divorce and cohabitation, is this not what will manifest in their lives in the years to come? Further, how will children develop trust and self-esteem in relationships, which do not reflect permanency or from single-parents. How will the children of today be able to sustain relationships without the capacity to trust and love? It is my view that society is built on the future generation and the future generations need to be nurtured in a loving and secure environment.

5.2 Preparation for Ministry – The Reformation, Marriage Sacrament, Covenant vs. Contract and Church vs. State

I am presently a student for the ministry of the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (in future I will use U.P.C.S.A.). In my preparation for ministry, I wished to gain insights into the understanding and procedure of marriage, and the churches' understanding of divorce, as I believe it is an integral part of pastoral work. Ministers either find themselves ministering to couples prior to marriage, during the course of the marriage relationship or dealing with those that have been divorced or are preparing for divorce. Further, ministers who have interest in the youth of churches, as I do, may find themselves having to deal with the hurts and trauma, experienced by the children of unstable and divorced marriages.

On studying the "Order of Marriage Service" of the U.P.C.S.A. see APPENDIX 1, I noted that it states not only that "Marriage is an honourable estate, instituted by God..." but also "...as signifying to us the mystical union between Christ and his Church". Further, I noted that it was for the purpose of 1) a life long relationship 2) for the nurturing of children and 3) the welfare of society. All aspects I have discussed in the previous section. It was also stressed in the vows that the marriage is "...until God shall separate you by death?"

How do these sentiments relate to the reality, which surrounds us in society, where divorce is rampant and cohabitation is on the increase. It has been my belief for as long as I can remember, that not only does one's sexual morality effect one's witness as a Christian, but ministers need to guard their marriages as examples for the rest of the congregation. In a recent document on "Marriage" produced by the South African Anglican Theological Commission, the following statement is made: "What we do with our bodies effects who we are as Spiritual beings" (February 2001). This clearly reflects my view of sexual morality. How can a minister counsel those preparing for marriage or those struggling in marriage if he/she, himself or herself, is divorced or has a disastrous marriage. I am not suggesting that ministers are infallible, but I am suggesting that I believe that marriage is sacred, and, as indicated in the Marriage Order of Service (APPENDIX 1), should reflect the relationship between Christ and the church.

Most of the literature I have studied relates the notion of marriage as a symbol of Christ and the church, not only to Ephesians 5: 21 – 32, but also to St Augustine (Harvey 1994: 35; Mackin 1989: 17). Reynolds notes that "By Augustine's time, the term "sacrament" had acquired a range of powerful senses and connotations, although its meaning was still far from determined"(1994: xxv). Both Reynolds and Harvey state that the translation, or should I say interpretation, of Ephesians 5:32 to mean that marriage is a sacrament, stems from a shaky translation from Latin, the word *mysterion* translated into *sacramentum* (Harvey 1994: 35). From the notion that "...marriage automatically images the Christ-Church relationship, and because the latter relationship is indestructible, [came the notion that] the marriage too is indestructible – is indissoluble" (Mackin 1989:17). I do not wish to go into the theological debates and doctrine of the Catholic Church, but it must be noted that "Since the sixteenth century Catholic teaching has linked the indissolubility of marriage inextricably with its sacramentality" (Mackin 1989: 16). Reynolds goes into detail, analysing Augustine's concept of sacrament and notes that "It is perhaps better to say that he [referring to Augustine] posited a sacrament in marriage than to say that he posited a sacrament of marriage" (1994: 280). This distinction will become more relevant when I move on to the appropriation stage. Reynolds also notes that, when discussing Ephesians 3: 8 – 11, Augustine proposed that in Genesis, "Adam became privy to this mystery [referring to Ephesians 3:10] and gave utterance to it. In one and the same moment, he understood the meaning of his marriage to Eve, he instituted marriage and he prophesied the Incarnation"(Reynolds 1994:287) . This not only strengthens the notion of

God joining together as extracted by the Latin Fathers from the synoptics, but also strengthened the link between the image, the symbol, between Christ and the church and men and women. To add to Augustine's already elaborate argument regarding sacrament and indissolubility was his notion that baptism had parallels to marriage "... for just as the sacrament of regeneration conferred in baptism remains even after excommunication, so the sacrament constituted by the marriage bond survives even valid divorce..." (Reynolds 1994: 296). Mackin notes "Thus the synoptic tradition joins with the Pauline to set out the ingredients of the later theology of the sacrament in marriage" (1989: 65).

The Reformers, however, objected to sacramentality of marriage because, "... it converts a human arrangement into a divine institution; that it ignores the empirical reality of actual marriage; and that it wrongly confuses and conflates the two orders of creation and redemption" (Thatcher 1999: 233). The questions that need to be asked are:

- 1) Does the blessing in Genesis through creation and the re-enforcement of the marriage institution by Jesus in Matthew and Mark not place marriage in the divine order?
- 2) As stated in the "Church of England" document produced on the (1999). Has it not "... always been the Churches' mission to proclaim the unchanging gospel to the changing world?" (Church of England 1999: 1).
- 3) Does not Christ through his life and work on earth and through the cross (Redemption), point not only back to creation? and the "will of God", but also forward to a new creation. Is not the order of creation inextricably linked to the order of redemption and visa versa?

"Paradoxically, as marriage lost its sacramental status in Protestantism it was invested with sacral, but non-sacramental dignity as a divine "ordinance", essential for stable families and societies" (Thatcher 1999: 235). I have outlined the concepts of marriage as a sacrament and will outline the History of the Reformation, because I believe they reflect a turning point in the theology of marriage. And because the reforms from both church and State alike were proposed to deal with a moral problem much like the one South Africa faces, with the rest of the Western World. It is interesting to note that "Though protestants [at the time of the Reformation] appeared to reject both the sacramental and remedial characterisations of marriage, their reforms – like those of Catholic contemporaries – actually represented the final reception of a holy indissoluble, and consensual idea of marriage" (Harrington 1998: 49). And since that time the theological debate regarding

divorce and remarriage has raged. Today, most churches accept the reality of divorce, while at the same time are postulating that permanence in marriage is the “will of God”.

Harrington, states that “Protestant difficulties in establishing marriage as the new “spiritual” ideal have even lead some historians to suggest that the “elevation” of marriage by reformers was merely the only alternative left them after celibate ideal had been thoroughly discredited” (1995: 64). Harrington goes on to argue that “Although both [referring to Calvin and Luther] vehemently rejected the overtly misogynist strains of most scholastic theology, neither reformer was willing or able to part with its vision of “natural social order” (1995: 71).

“Catholic reformers could match Lutheran and Calvinist recruitment training, and disciplining of their respective clerics, but not the living spiritual authority that married ministers lent to the institution of marriage itself” (Harrington 1995: 83). This brings me back to my question, is marriage a sign or symbol of the union between Christ and the church? And if it is so how does the increase in divorce and cohabitation impact upon the witness of the church? Further as illustrated in the Manual of the U.P.C.S.A (APPENDIX 3) should ministers undergo extreme investigations when they divorce or should, as being proposed informally at this stage in the U.P.C.S.A., the regulation governing the treatment of ministers who are undergoing divorce be relaxed? It must be stressed at this point, as I have indicated in the contents page, that both Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 are taken from and interim manual, which was instituted in 1999, to facilitate the union of the former P.C.S.A and R.P.C.S.A. Further, a committee was instituted in March 2001, to consider not only the doctrinal understanding of marriage and divorce in general, but also particularly in the context of ministry (ministers). This commission was specifically tasked to consider the provisions of the documents I have referred to in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4. This committee’s final proposals were submitted to the U.P.C.S.A.’s General Assembly in 2001 and 2002. Although their proposals have in general been provisionally approved, these proposals have at this stage, in the process, been sent to all Presbyteries for final comment. I will, therefore, continue to use the present interim manual for my discussions, as the new proposals may only formally be adopted by the U.P.C.S.A. at a General Assembly in August 2003. The above information is taken from the report that was submitted to the General Assembly in 2002. I must at this point commend this committee for their dedication and commitment, not only to the Church, but also to marriage.

It is interesting to note that in the first section mentioning marriage in the U.P.C.S.A. manual under “Articles of the Faith” (APPENDIX 4) more words are given to the church’s understanding of divorce than marriage. Further in APPENDIX C of the manual “Marriage, Divorce and Re-Marriage” (APPENDIX 3), one page is dedicated to the minister’s and session’s responsibility towards those who wish to get married, be they previously divorced or not, while four and a half pages are committed to the responsibilities and provisions, if a minister is in the position of applying for a divorce. The emphasis definitely is skewed. Does this perhaps reflect the roots of the Presbyterian Church, namely the Reformation?

On the legal side, the minister questions both the witnesses present and those getting married if there are any lawful reasons why they cannot get married. Further the vows taken state “I call upon those persons here present to witness that I (Christian name) take you (Christian name) to be my lawful wedded wife” (APPENDIX 1). Further “Do you (woman’s Christian name) take (man’s Christian name) whose right hand you hold, to be your lawful wedded husband, and do you promise and covenant, in the presence of God...” (APPENDIX 1). After the vows the minister states “As a seal of the covenant into which you have entered, the marriage ring (rings) is (are) given and received” (APPENDIX 1).

Throughout the marriage service there is this dual language which seems to indicate that two processes are taking place, one contractual and one covenantal. Having attended many weddings over the past ten years, one aspect that is not reflected in the U.P.C.S.A. order of service, is that of the signing of the legal Marriage Contract and register. This has become, within the marriage services that I have attended, a focal point at the end of the service where families gather around and photographs are taken. The questions that I pose are: “What does the Church believe is happening in this process: and do not the dual elements of contract and covenant within one process negate the covenantal aspect?” It must be noted that the U.P.C.S.A. also has a “Order for the Blessing of an Existing Marriage” (APPENDIX 2), which does not involve legal elements but only covenantal. Although I have not experienced this service in practice, the wording and elements seem to express more simply the aspect of marriage as covenant.

Thatcher notes that “An almost forgotten feature of marriage in the Western Church is that the state of marriage is not conferred upon a marrying couple by anyone except themselves” (1999: 239). This statement may be challenged by some churches, but does seem to reflect the contractual nature of the marriage service experienced in most main-line churches. Further, this reflects, “The normative position in the West, [in past and present], ... that Christians who married by the customary secular means would, if there were no impediments, be recognised as validly married by the Church” (Reynolds 1994: XIX). Thus the common understanding today is that the blessing of God rests on the civil marriages as well. “Marriage is a gift of God in Creation and the marriage of unbelievers is as real, and often as enduring, as the marriage of believers” (Church of England document 1999: 4). This seems to contradict the following statement in the South African Anglican Theological Commission document; “Christian marriage is not primarily a contract but a covenant, even though both represent forms of commitment” (South African Anglican Theological Commission 2001: 4). This, I believe, not only highlights an inherent flaw in the development of the theology of marriage, but also negates the possibility of the church being the church. Civil marriages cannot in essence be covenants and Church marriages should not involve contractual aspects.

“In his sayings about divorce Jesus affirmed the natural state of relationship from which marriage derives and to which marriages can lead. But it is an understanding of relationship which includes relationship with God” (Bowker 1971: 105).

The question that needs to be asked is “where does God take part in the marriage process?” “Does God do the joining in all marriages according to Protestant theology?” Ware, discussing the Eastern Orthodox Church, notes that, for the first nine centuries, marriage in the Church was incorporated into the Eucharist (1991: 81). Further, Ware stresses that “In every sacrament, [and marriage is seen as a sacrament by the Orthodox Church], it is God himself, invisibly present, who is the true agent” (1991: 81). Marriage is not in any way seen as a contract in the Eastern Orthodox Church (Allchin 1971:119). Thatcher notes that the two main biblical themes regarding marriage are “covenant” and “One-Flesh Union” (1999: 67 – 82). I propose that since the Reformation the Protestant Church has emphasised the “One-Flesh Union”, in conjunction with indissolubility at the expense of covenant. Reynolds states that “the doctrine of indissolubility, and not the liturgy, was the chief means by which Western church Christianised marriage, and set it apart from other

forms of societies” (1994: 384). I believe that the focus needs to return, not only to the theology of sacrament and covenant, but that all churches need to revisit their liturgies and their beliefs regarding the process of marriage.

Further to add to my concern regarding the marriage process within the main-line churches, those which I have attended, I can not recall one which has lasted longer than an hour. And if we take into consideration that some of this time is spent by singing of “appropriate songs’, then this seems an awfully short time for one of the most profound “rites of passage” in anyone’s life. Particularly, if the church does hold that marriage not only forms the building blocks of society, but also reflects the union between Christ and the church.

Most churches in South Africa find themselves in a dilemma regarding marriage and sexuality, not only due to the country’s new secular and liberal constitution, but also due to the realities that they face around them as discussed above. Again, the document mentioned above produced by the South African Anglican Theological Commission reflects my concerns. It states “... the rights of the individual [in South Africa] take precedence over the religious and cultural norms of particular communities such as the Church” (South African Anglican Theological Commission 2001: 2). Both Reynolds’ book, *Marriage in the Western Church* (1994), and Harrington’s book, *Recording marriage and society in Reformation Germany* (1995), paint a vast struggle between culture, church and state over the domain of marriage. Reynolds states that, “During the fourth century, Western bishops and theologians began to insist that the church had her own marriage law...” (1994: 121). This was based on divine laws versus human law. It must be noted, as does Reynolds, that “Constantine greatly enhanced the tendency of the Church to become like an empire and of her bishops to act like judges” (1994: 145). By the ninth century Emperor Charlemagne had set in place that which the council of Carthage in AD 407 had proposed, namely that both divorce and remarriage be prohibited by imperial law (Reynolds 1994: 151 – 154). In reality the language and structures, in which and through which the church operated at this point in time, were legalistic. Rules were laid down and consequences (punishment) for non-compliance, were meted out. This begs the question of how God’s grace fitted into the notions of church governance and how Jesus was interpreted. Did Jesus lay down legalistic parameters or was Jesus teaching rather the proclamation of the moral ideal – “the will of God”? Today in the South African context, there is again the distinction between secular (civil) and religious marriages.

The picture that Harrington paints in Germany in the sixteenth century is one of a three-way struggle between the Reformers, the Catholic Church and the state all interlinked by competing for control of the populace. Harrington expresses his view that the desacramentalising of marriage by the reformers in a sense made a foothold for the state to regain control of this element of governance (1994: 84). "By the sixteenth century, though, many town councils had taken much of this familial responsibility on themselves, requiring State approval of all marriage contracts before the church ceremony" (Harrington 1994: 189). It is impossible to do a thorough historical analysis of the path of marriage and the development of the situation which we have in South Africa today, but one thing is clear: most, if not all, of the debates over marriage in the past have to some degree been influenced by the need for control. Mackin notes regarding the Catholics' position regarding the sacramentality of marriage, that "...the conflict was not theological. It was juridical. It was a contest of competing authorities" (1989: 626).

Long notes, that Thatcher, also argues that the wedding as event and not a process, as experienced in countries previously colonised by England are not the result of religious expression or religious moral victory, but rather a victory for socio-economic class distinction (2002:13). "Especially, it was part of an agenda to separate the propertied classes from others and to ensure suitable marriages – i.e.; those that protected the interests of property from one generation to another" (Long 2002: 13). Thatcher argues for a return to a process of marriage, which involves sexual activity after a betrothal sanctioned by the church (1999: 130). This, he argues, not only reflects the processes of the past norms prior to the nineteenth century, but also allows the church to be proactive in its praxis. Thatcher notes that marriage has evolved throughout the ages and that the church has in the past accepted behaviour and process which it does not today (1999: 119 – 130). Thatcher states, "a new context generates new questions, which in turn make new discoveries possible" (1999: 289).

The church in South Africa is faced with a "new context" not only due to the liberal notions of sexuality which have streamed into the country from the West since 1994, but also because the vast majority of the population do not relate to the marriage service/process as it stands in the mainline churches. Further, the pandemic of HIV/Aids which is stated as

being responsible for 40% of adult deaths in 2000 and 2001 (Natal Witness: 20/01/2003: 2), I propose, is a moral issue and not a medical one. Marriage discussions are directly related to sexual morals and ethics. One cannot separate the two responses and yet, in the media, and in the churches, there is a deafening silence regarding the moral degeneration of South Africa. One of Thatcher's concluding themes is that "if Christian marriage offers sacramental experience, people will continue to want it" (1999: 279). One of the challenges I believe facing the Protestant Churches in South Africa is: "how can they redefine their theology to include the notion of marriage as a sacrament?" And how can the theologies of marriage and the marriage process be redefined to the benefit, not only the vast majority of South Africans but also of the witness of the Church?

Lincoln, writing from the Austin Presbyterian Theology Seminary, notes that he believes, "that Protestant thinking has undervalued the sacramental and ecclesial nature of the Christian marriage". I hope to delve into this issue in the appropriation section. The Theology of marriage and its process need to be re-figured, the gap between theory and practice needs to be examined and, dare I say, radical changes need to be made. This can only happen, I believe, if churches start to work together. It is astounding to find committees throughout South Africa, with a vast array of intellectuals discussing the root problems separately. Each denomination producing its own document regarding the essence of marriage, but none bold enough to make radical changes to the process of marriage due to theological reflection. How much time is being wasted, is not the witness of the Church being eroded day by day? I must stress, as does Thatcher throughout his book, *Marriage after Modernity* (1999), that any analysis or investigation must take into consideration the lived experiences of marriage and not only theological and theoretical discussion. As Mackin notes that in the past, "Rarely was married Christians' experience of marriage consulted" (1989: 627), by Catholic Theologians.

The effects on children have already been discussed but the other major issue, which needs to be addressed by the churches is the discrimination towards women, which has been part of the theology of marriage throughout the ages, either explicitly or implicitly. Thatcher notes that, "Once subjection is disengaged from gender politics and reintegrated into the cosmic vision of the ultimate reign of Christ, marriage can prefigure the victory of Love over violence that is the hope of Christians everywhere" (1999: 91). There are, in a sense, interpretations and experiences of the past, which theologians need to learn from and in a

sense re-define the previous interpretations and not build on what already exists. Thatcher notes that, not only do women find “the experience of the institution, [referring to marriage], as currently practised, unjust and oppressive” (1999: 42), but there seems to be, a “...mismatch between doctrine and experience...” (1999: 44). Thatcher concludes that, “The history of marriage is one of patriarchy and inequality” (1999: 45). If one adds to this, the paternalistic and patriarchal descriptions of the institutions which Harrington describes as the core of the churches’ and state’s attentions during the Reformation period (1995: 38 – 43), then the church not only needs to tread carefully regarding women but we need to look seriously at what the Protestant Churches hold as dear, with regards to the marriage institution. Is marriage purely for the procreation and nurturing of children or does marriage encompass something far more profound, the ushering in of the Kingdom of God?

It is interesting to note that the Eastern Orthodox Church has always placed the emphasis on the union of the couple by the Church and not by a contractual process of vows between the two individuals (Ware 1991: 83). Further, the Eastern Orthodox Church expresses that “The divine image is in this way a ‘relational’ image [referring to the Trinity and the creation of male and female in the image of God] manifested, not in isolation, but in community – and, above all, in the primordial bond between husband and wife that is the foundation of all other forms of social life” (Ware 1991: 79). The focus is therefore on the couple and their unity and development. Lastly it must be stressed that marriage is acknowledged by the Eastern Orthodox Church as a sacrament, but at the same time it is dissoluble in certain circumstances (Ware 1991: 79). It could be that through reflecting on the development of marriage as an institution through the ages and reflecting on other theologies in conjunction with my distantiation section, one could glean some integral insight into God’s true purpose for marriage in the twenty-first century. Our context must not be seen as static, but we need to take into consideration not only the past struggles and conclusions but also other contexts, which have in a sense up to this point not been part of the West’s theological debate.

I will now return to the legal element of the process. Ministers of all denominations have to register with the department of home affairs as a “marriage officer” in order to be authorised to carry out the solemnisation and registration of marriages (statutes of the Republic of South Africa – Husband and Wife Marriage Act, No 25 of 1961). In clause 3

of the above mentioned act it is clear that the state has authority over the capacity granted to the minister, to the extent that limitations of place and period can be placed upon the minister, regarding his status as marriage officer. Further in clause 29(2) the marriage officer is obligated to forward marriage registers and records to the regional or district representatives. It is clear from the above discussion regarding the “Act” that the State in a sense is using ministers of religion to carry out a function of the state. Further, ministers of religion in this aspect of their ministry can be seen as being governed not solely by God’s leading but rather by decisions and proclamations of the state. Thus not only does the marriage process in the church have legal elements, but the state has a degree of control over the process of marriage. Does this not in reality water down the covenantal element of marriage? Does it not also fly in the face of any symbolism or analogy between Christ and the church and marriage? As mentioned above, the U.P.C.S.A. has a service, (APPENDIX 2) which in essence blesses the marriage that has occurred in the civil courts. Further if I analyse Appendix C: Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage of the U.P.C.S.A. manual, (APPENDIX 3) clauses 5 – 8, it would seem that although the minister may decide to marry or not marry someone who has been divorced, in good conscience and after consideration, he may not decline if the person has already been married under civil proceeding clause 7(a). This seems to strengthen my argument that the church in its processes of marriage is subordinate to the legal system of the country and further that the marriage in the civil courts is recognised by the church. This leads me back to my critical question, surely marriages in the church are distinct from legal proceedings and the two processes should not and cannot be equated to be representing the same union.

5.3. My Experience of the Marriage process in the U.P.C.S.A

Charsley notes that “The movement of the ritual sequence here [referring to the marriage ceremony], first out of the secular world, then held together around the altar for a procedure conducted in a special language, and finally back into everyday life again, is such as to delight every admirer of Van Gennep’s theory of rites of passage” (1909) (1991: 22). Although, I admire the extensive research and work put into Charsley’s portrayal of the wedding day and the culture and rituals that surround it in Scotland, Charsley’s analysis of the rituals involved are not very extensive or profound. In the methodology section I did an extensive analysis of Turners ritual theory particularly focusing on the liminal stage.

Charsley mentions the white wedding dress and veil and even acknowledges that “Any radical diverging from white destroys peoples’ sense that what they are looking at is really a wedding dress” (1991: 68), but he does not link this directly to notions of separation and preparation for the liminal stage. Charsley also makes what I believe is a significant observation when he observes that “Even for such couples [those living together], however to spend apart the time immediately before the wedding was to be required to make an unmissable statement of separateness” (1991: 139). The idea of separation is clearly evident in Charsley’s documentation of the process, and I too experienced this separation, waiting alone in front of the Church, dressed in clothes I would never usually wear. The separation for my wife, Carol, I can only assume was far more profound, walking down the aisle veiled and dressed in white, a colour representing death, or nothingness to some cultures. All the proceedings involved my wife and I and the minister standing in a space apart from the rest of the congregation, except of course for the Bestman and the Bridesmaid, who could in essence be seen as ritual attendants, helping the initiands through the process as instructed by the Minister.

Charsley compares both the Scottish Church process and liturgy with that of the Catholic Church and notes that the rituals in the Catholic ceremony are complex and usually end in the “... performance of the central rite of the Church” (1991: 25). Charsley notes that the Reformation swept away almost entirely “...all the movement and initial elaboration of the old order” (1991:23). Further, it must be noted that Knox really simplified the process but his liturgy only lasted 80 years. Later in Charsley’s book he compares two weddings, done by different ministers but within the same denomination, namely the Scottish Church. Charsley notes that “Besides being briefer and tending to be expressed in an older style of liturgical language, the second altogether lacked personal and pastoral orientation of the first” (1991:23). The ritual or sequences of the events were explained to both me and my wife-to-be, so there would be no surprises. The question is, “was the liminal space created through the process and symbols?” In a sense yes, as the minister lead us through the process and we followed his lead and although I had seen the process time and again this was all new, there was a magical element to it. On the other hand, at the root level I do not believe I experienced spontaneous ‘communitas’. The liturgy as it stands in the U.P.C.S.A., although, flexible in a way, does not provide space for spontaneous interaction between the bride and groom; these notions will be dealt with in more detail under appropriation. Charsley notes that some ministers have been innovative in using the extinguishing of

candles and the relighting thereof of a single candle, as they link marriage and baptism (1991: 136). Although Charsley does not state this explicitly, through his work you get the notion that he finds the unofficial ritual activity such as the bull party far more creative and open to change than the official ceremony in the Church (1991: 110). Later Charsley notes that the balance between words and actions are different between what he calls the religious and the popular rituals (1991:181). “ In the popular rites words are usually incidental, it is not what people say but what they do which usually counts” (Charsley 1991: 181). This could indicate an area for investigation, which could improve the church’s liturgy, performance, however, cannot always be transposed onto paper. This leaves interpretation, as in the case of the U.P.C.S.A. manual, to the minister, without many ritual symbols or acts. What is left?

The process of leaving the church is once again, in a sense, an aggregation, as one gathers with family and friends to share on most accounts, as my wife and I did, a meal with the guests. The problem is, the bride and groom are still separate, dressed differently, seated at a separate table. What followed was the Honeymoon, a dangerous time, a liminal time; this begs the question regarding aggregation. I have been only brief in my analysis and have not dealt with the legal aspect, as this was covered earlier. My intentions have been merely to highlight the process as I experienced it, so that it can be juxtaposed against my initial analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12.

5.4 Summary of Contextualisation

It is impossible to cover all my questions and queries regarding marriage in my context in South Africa in the twenty-first century. But I hope, that through the bringing together of this brief outlining of some of the history and question surrounding marriage in my context with my previous in depth analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12, some insights can be gleaned. I will now briefly recap questions and challenges, which I will use to dialogue with the Text: Mark 10: 2 – 12, in its context.

My main question and concern is:

How can my narrative and ritual analysis of Mark and Mark 10: 2 – 12 respectively, improve the church's understanding of the essence, importance and process of marriage in the context of South Africa in 2003.

My specific points of concern are as follows:

- 1) Can the Church gain theological insights, which could enhance the treatment of both women and children, in marriage? Is marriage inherently patriarchal and how does Jesus view the children, in context of marriage?
- 2) The church has used marriage as a vehicle to 'control' a part of society. How does the Distantiation section speak into the role the church has played and needs to play in society?
- 3) The history of marriage, through the ages, is one of legal wrangle and theoretical debate. Can or should marriage continue to be ruled by State and Church? Did Christian marriage go far enough in Christianizing a social institution that already existed before? Contract vs. Covenant. Who does the marrying?
- 4) What can we learn about the subject of sacramentalism and the grace of God, and does sacramentality necessarily mean insolubility? Is the link between Christ and the church and husband and wife, an accurate assessment of Jesus' understanding?
- 5) Can the church continue to recognise marriage in the courts, or should the church be separate in its requirements and obligations? This leads to the second question of dealing with minister differently to laity?

All these questions are in a sense intertwined, dealing with the social, the legal, theological, and practical process of marriage.

6. APPROPRIATION

As noted in the Methodology (Section 3), this final stage of interpretation must at the same time acknowledge the context of the community of believers while being true to the message or insights gleaned from the distantiation (Section 4) (Draper 2001: 57). In essence this is “The climax of the interpretive process [, it] is the moment of appropriation of the text in the light of the context of the reader/s” (Draper 2001: 157). In the context of this Thesis, this process will be an extremely complex process as both the distantiation (Section 4) and the contextualisation (Section 5) involved a myriad of complex and interrelated concepts and principals. No interpretations of “sacred texts” are done within a vacuum and as theological students/scholars it is important to bear in mind the consequences of our conclusion. As Draper notes “... the Bible is a particular kind of book” (2002: 78) and, therefore, we need to face up to the fact that one’s interpretation will have consequences (2002: 78). As stated in the methodology (Section 3) my aim will be to try and allow both the “text”, as I have analysed it by the use of narrative criticism and ritual theory, and my “context” as understood by my analysis, equal credence. The aim is to allow the “text” to be able to relate to the “context” and vice versa, not allowing either to dominate the process and further, at all times, bearing in mind that any interpretations are made cautiously as they could or should affect the behaviour of the community of believers. The interpreter needs to be true to the “text” and true to his/her “context”.

I will endeavour to divide this section into appropriate divisions or topics, but in reality all the discussions are interdependent and interrelated. I will firstly deal with the position of women and children in society in the context of marriage. Secondly, I will deal with both the concept of sacrament and covenant, and then draw out principles, which can speak into the context of the church’s understanding of the essence of marriage. Thirdly, I will deal with the process of marriage and try and glean some suggestions regarding the liturgy with particular reference to the U.P.C.S.A. marriage service. All this will be done through reflection on the conclusions I gleaned from both my narrative and ritual analysis of both Mark and in particular Mark 10.

All these topics are vastly complex and it is not my intention to write the last word on any of the above concepts, but it is my intention to jog the minds and hearts of those that are in

charge of Church doctrine and the formulation of liturgy. Theory and Praxis need to be linked intrinsically.

6.1 Women and Children

It is clear from my contextualisation (Section 5. 1) that more children are suffering from trauma, psychological and physically, due to the increase in divorce and the subsequent increase in the number of single-parents having to raise children. As stated in my introduction (Section 1), it is not my aim to discuss same-sex relationships or the applicability of same-sex couples raising children. My aim has been to study the essence and process of heterosexual marriage. It is interesting to note that St Augustine held that one of the reasons that the marriage bond is indissoluble was for the sake of the children (Thatcher 1999: 139). Thatcher explains that “The plight of unwanted and neglected children throughout the world is the starting point of a theology of liberation for them and presupposes an absolute commitment to them” (1999: 150). As I have argued in my contextualisation (Section 5. 1), the context or situation of children today is not only disturbing due to the hurt and pain suffered by these little ones, the weak and the poor, but the extent of the problem is far greater as the children are the future generations. What the children of today experience and model, in essence formulates the future society. This is a social-structural concern and, as I believe I have shown in the distantiation section, the Markan Jesus is also concerned about unjust social-structural institutions. As noted in (Section 5. 2) both the church and the state took a hard line through their Reformation policies, to improve the moral situation in society. As Harrington states, the programme of reform was based on patriarchal and paternalistic structures involving the *Hausvater*, *Landersvater* and *Gottesvater* (1995: 42). In other words, the husband as head of the home, with each subsequent part of society, church and state, also having a hierarchical structure, which was justified as God’s will and plan. This hierarchical structure clearly not only meant inequality, but often also lead to injustice, not only for women and children, but also for the majority, the weak and poor. Harrington notes that “... perversion and inversion of the authority relations between husband and wife in fact represented the most recurrent theme of all late sixteenth-century protestant publications on marriage” (1995: 79). This clearly shows the intention and means used by the reformers to create and maintain order through social-structures of hierarchy.

In most Western societies today, women do not find themselves in the subordinate position, which their predecessors did. To a large extent women have been liberated and are still in the process of liberation. In essence, "Liberation is the experience of deliverance from all kinds of sin, whether individual and personal, or social and structural, through the victory over sin secured for all of us by Jesus Christ" (Thatcher 1999: 132). If this statement is correct, and I believe it is, then the liberation of women has in the past and will continue to incorporate a rejection of the patriarchal notions of marriage. And to some extent it could be proposed that the rejection of these elements in marriage has resulted in the rejection of marriage in totality. Women do not want to be subordinate to men and therefore, if the church continues to portray marriage as a structure of inequality, then, dare I say women will continue to be abused physically and psychologically. Further, women will continue to make other choices such as divorce, remaining single (having children out of wedlock), or cohabitation. The natural or consequential result is a negative effect and affect on children, the next generation. The question that needs to be asked is, "How can my analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12 speak into this situation?" "How can the Markan Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees and disciples point to structural, social and personal liberation for both women and children in the context of marriage?"

I have argued in the distantiation section that the Markan Jesus is re-configuring Israel back to God's original covenantal plan (Horsley 2001: 104 – 108). Further, this reconfiguring naturally brings him into conflict with structures, which work against equality and communitarianism. I have also argued that in the text the disciples are the focus of this reconfiguring, in order to carry Jesus' mission forward after his departure. This reconfiguring of the disciples, I have argued at length, involved ritual status transformation. The disciples had to be in a liminal state in order to be infused with anti-structural sentiment. All the teaching the disciples received fall in line with anti-structural values of equality and "communitas". In section 3.1.1, I emphasised that Turners "Ritual "communitas" makes it possible to transform structure by infusing it with alternative, anti-structural values which emerge in the experience of immediacy and egalitarianism" (Alexander 1991: 42). Further, I expressed the view as do both Alexander and Driver, that Turner's ritual process is misunderstood if it is seen merely as a form of sublimation, (Alexander 1991: 45; Driver 1991: 30) a release of energy due to frustration generated from social structures. Ritual has in essence, the mechanism to transform society. It is fitting

then that the disciples, and at a second level the crowd, are at a narrative level, being transformed through ritual. Jesus as the ritual elder is re-configuring not only economic structures but also social structures, to include values of equality and community.

The Markan Jesus speaks into the little tradition through the “hidden transcript”. This tradition as I have noted is not only one that belongs to what I have identified as Agrarian Society, but also it would seem possible that they would represent a more conservative approach to divorce. In reality, I have argued that it was only the elite, such as Herod, who could divorce and remarry, as this was not economically viable for the majority. Further, the elite often used the liberal notions of divorce as interpreted by the Scribes and Rabbis as a means to acquire wealth, unjustly. I cannot repeat all the discussions in the distantiation section, but it must be noted that the elite used various taxes and subsequent loans in order to take advantage of the majority by acquiring their land (Horsley 1995: 206, 207, 278). The land was the essence of the peasants’ existence, and was passed down from one generation to the next. Further, I noted that for Horsley, “Israelite covenantal mechanisms [were] designed to maintain the people on their family inheritance of land...” (1995: 208). Clearly divorce and other means of expropriating the land from their rightful owners was against the will of God. As Horsley notes, the Markan Jesus focuses his criticism of the Pharisees on their economic exploitation and oppression of the poor (2001: *viv*). In reality, however, as I have argued in Section 4.1 politics, economics and religion were inseparable at the time of Jesus. Jesus’ criticisms of economic exploitation not only spoke against economic structures *per se*, but also against the social ramification thereof. I noted in the narrative section with respect to the Pharisees’ question in Mark 10: 2, that the question was ultimately not to require about God’s will, but really to bolster their own rights.

If I have argued correctly, “The family was the basic social unit of production and consumption, of reproduction and socialisation, of personal identity and membership in a wider society” (Horsley 1995: 195), so that there seem to be parallels between the need for the stability of the family unit now, as it was then. It is in this context that I argue that the Markan Jesus in Mark 10 reconfigures marriage back to that which with the “little tradition” could relate. Jesus was not just questioning the Pharisees understanding he was also gathering support for his movement. For the “little tradition” which I have discussed as being the original hearer or readers/participants of the story, the “Basis in Israelite traditions was the independence of the village communities living under the direct

kingship/rule of God, as Moses had taught” (Horsley 1995: 281). Even though modern technology has changed and separated the sphere of family from that of work and professional life (Kasper 1980: 9), I still believe that in reality, the family is an integral unit faced with the same challenges as during the first century. These challenges are the squeezing out of community and the ability to serve communitarian ends, by increasing pressures from social-structural arrangements (Alexander 1991: 3). The family is still the main unit on which a sound moral society can be built with well-adjusted adults, but it is still being challenged by social-structural changes.

I have argued that Mark 10: 2 – 12 is framed by children for two related but yet separate reasons. Firstly, in the Narrative section, I noted that Myers states that one must not spiritualise the meaning of the children, but rather take Jesus to be referring to them as the weak and the poor (1988: 268). It is not Jesus’ intention for one to become like children, but it is all adults’ responsibility to receive children and care for them. They are the weak and the vulnerable, and even today the actions of adults affect children more profoundly than they wish to accept. The mentioning of children just before and just after Jesus’ teaching on marriage could, in essence, be reinforcing the importance of a permanent relationship between husband and wife, for the nurturing of the weak and vulnerable.

The state of South Africa has increasingly made divorce more expedient, without any real reason being necessary. And with each new divorce, children are hurt, and may be in jeopardy of not receiving the necessary material, spiritual and emotional support necessary for their development and socialisation. As mentioned in the contextualisation (Section 5: 2) most Protestant Churches reflect in their liturgy and doctrine of marriage, that marriage is for the nurturing of children and the benefit of society. On the other hand, though, the church has all but accepted divorce. The church, in doing so, seems to accept that the State has the right and authority to dissolve a marriage which occurred in the church? The State dictates the mechanisms of divorce and the church accepts it even though they are aware that this is to the detriment of the weak and the poor, the children. One of my motivations for doing this thesis was, “can the church make the marriage process so profound that it has a lasting effect even on those who do not subscribe to any beliefs system?” My emphasis has thus, from the start been the improvement of the marriage process in order to improve the quality and success of marriage and its lived experience. At times, therefore, my discussion may seem to indicate that I do not believe that divorce is possible, but as I have

stated in my introduction, I believe that divorce may be necessary when the marriage experience is one of physical and emotional abuse. On the other hand, however, if as I have argued, marriage was reconfigured by Jesus in Mark 10: 2 – 12, from structure (law) to ‘communitas’, divorce within the church should not be controlled by the State, but rather the church. I am not against divorce, but I am against free and easy divorce, which has developed over time due to the secular understanding of marriage. The church needs to put some balance back into the process and not allow the legal (structural elements) to dominate all decisions. The notion of the church having its own divorce process will be discussed further in section 6. 3 with reference to the Greek Orthodox Church. It must be noted at this point that, although children are one of the reasons for marriage, as mentioned in the liturgy, no emphasis is made of the actual benefits or no symbol or ritual movement is involved, this will be discussed later when I deal with liturgy.

Jesus in Mark 10: 2 – 12, is challenging the Pharisees as regards their authority as he has done throughout the Gospel of Mark. Jesus is challenging the social-structural mechanisms governed by the elite and their retainers, the Pharisees. As I noted, in essence the struggle in Mark is between authentic authority and inauthentic authority. Jesus is the one who has been given authority, which is evident to the hearer/reader of Mark, not only because of the baptismal episode (Mark 1: 10), but also because, as discussed, the *inclusio* is formed between the baptismal episode and the ending, where the soldier proclaims Jesus as the “Son of God” (Mark 15: 39). This emphasises Jesus as the protagonist who has the authentic authority. Jesus, in Mark 10: 14, was indignant with his disciples, one of his harshest rebukes of them, and this was in relation to the disciples rejecting children. The question today is “How is the church, globally through marriage doctrine, liturgy and practice, not following the disciples and rejecting or neglecting children in marriage?” In Jesus’ time, the land was the inheritance, in our time maybe it is more an emotional than physical inheritance that is at stake, but in reality the children are still the weak and vulnerable. Further, Jesus links the children in 10: 14, 15 to the “Kingdom of God”, the theme of prime importance throughout Mark but particularly in Mark 8: 22 – 10: 52. If, as I have argued, Mark 8 – 10 represents the central area in which the will of God is laid down for those who wish to be part of God’s community (Best 1983: 84), then surely, more credence needs to be given to Jesus’ mentioning of children within the context of the Kingdom of God. The church also needs to be aware that disciples were rebuked after their requests on hearing Jesus’ prediction of His death. As I have argued, these rebukes, in

essence, were due to the fact that the disciples had time and time again attempted to “manipulate the things of God in order to acquire the things of men” (Rhoads and Michie 1982: 126). The church needs to be careful that its “loyalty to Christ [in the area of marriage and divorce] must not, as in much liberal theology collapse into altruistic humanism” (Thatcher 1999: 30).

As mentioned already, the church used patriarchal notions to instil reform in the sixteenth century. Further, it must be noted that the church in the eighteenth century was party to another change in the notions of marriage which revolved around the acquisition of status and material possessions (Thatcher 1999: 116, 117). This change was from an accepted practice of the sexual activity after betrothal, to one, which presumed the marriage ceremony as the defining step, and all sexual activity before this being condemned. I am not agreeing with either process at this stage but merely highlighting the fact that through the ages the church has both actively and passively been involved with unjust structures that promote inequality. Thatcher notes that the changes in the mid-eighteenth century “...had more to do with handing down of property than with the gospel, and we need to be wary of them” (1999: 29). In other words, theologians need to revisit the history of marriage in modern times before they make rash statements or refuse to make changes in doctrine or practise. Both women and children have often been disadvantaged either actively by the church’s understanding and doctrine or passively by not standing up for the weak and the poor. It must be stressed that even the Jewish notions as presented in section 4. 2, tend to view women as being sanctified only when under the care of either their father or husband. This notion will be discussed later, but it must be noted at this time that if the church is going to take up its role within the modern society, it will have to address the priority, or lack thereof given to children. It will also have to address any and every theology or doctrine which implies that women are subordinate and unequal in any way to men. Jesus challenged the very structure that allowed divorce. In the twenty-first century should the church allow the state to control such a vital element of life, or should not the church stand up as Jesus did against immoral and unethical laws? Should the church not be continually aiming to re-configure social life to that which represents equality and community.

After describing the marriage process in Mark 10: 6 – 9, Jesus continues to explain to his disciples the consequences, if His words are not taken seriously. As I have discussed in

Section 4.3.3, Jesus reverses the status of women at that particular time in Mark 10: 11, 12, making them equal to men. If the church has a role to play in the reversing of the current divorce and cohabitation trends, it will have to take its cue from the Markan Jesus and re-configure all theology that promotes inequality. Waetjen, referring to the use of the word house in the context of Mark 10: 10, states “here as elsewhere in the narrative world of Mark it serves as the symbol of the household of the new humanity that Jesus is constituting and stands in contrast to the hierarchical institution of the synagogue and its ideology of separation” (1989: 166). If, one de-spiritualises, the concept of a new humanity, this statement by Waetjen seems to strengthen the use of marriage as a earthly symbol of God’s love. Further, this statement by Waetjen emphasises Jesus’ concern that marriage be considered as permanent and that it should represent equality, void of social-structural forces of hierarchy. I believe my analysis is strengthened further by the fact that although The Markan Jesus seems to refer to both Genesis chapter one and two, it is with reference to chapter one that He states that God made them male and female. This use seems to negate any inequality that can and has been extracted from the version of creation in Genesis chapter two.

Jesus, in Mark 10, I believe was re-establishing a vital building block in the development and re-ordering of society, the family. At that point in time the land and therefore God’s covenant with His people was under threat and the social structures needed to be challenged and re-established. In the twenty-first century, I believe the future generation, the children and their development is at stake, including their spirituality. The church needs to not only re-examine its doctrine but also needs to take practical steps in challenging the state, or step out from under the authority of the state. This concept will be discussed further when I examine the marriage liturgy. It must be noted that I argued that the Markan Jesus identified with the “little tradition”. Further, the “little tradition” had in reality developed from the same roots as the “great tradition” – Jerusalem and the Temple.

The second interpretation of the framing of the children was discussed in section 4. 4. 1, when I related the term children to that of initiands who have no status in the liminal state of the process of a status transformation ritual. This in essence does not weaken the above argument, but rather strengthens it, as “the two shall become one flesh, so they are no longer two but one flesh” Mark 10: 8 (NRSV). This oneness as I have discussed, is in essence the perfection of anti-structure, where there is no status or differentiation, but rather

equality and communitarianism. If the church can produce doctrine and praxis which illustrates marriage as a liminal state, in essence, in conflict with structure which seeks to develop hierarchy, then the church I believe would be in tune with Jesus' teaching in Mark 10: 2 – 12. Particularly if we take into consideration His continual emphasis on sacrifice and the inversion of normal earthly status mechanism, in Mark 8: 27 to 10: 52.

6.2 Covenant and Sacrament

As I have argued throughout the Narrative analysis (section 4.3), I agree with Horsley's analysis that the Markan Jesus, and His movement, are uncompromisingly based on Israelite covenantal traditions (2001: 42). Further, I have argued that the Markan Jesus identifies with the "little tradition", which existed prior to the establishment of Jerusalem and the Temple regimes. In essence, Jesus comes to re-order Israel back to the way God intended it to be. "The first campaign in Galilee begins with Jesus announcing that the Kingdom of God is at hand (1: 14 – 15), which also announces the theme of the whole story" (Horsley 2001: 71). As noted, this re-ordering involves conflict, which grows through the plot, this conflict is with the very institutions which should, and claim to, represent the covenant of God with His people – Jerusalem and the Temple. But rather they involve hierarchical structures and oppressive laws. "At stake is the 'commandment of God' versus 'the tradition of men' (7: 8), the 'word of God' versus 'your tradition which you hand on' (7: 13)" (Malbon 2000: 151). How much time today in theological debate is given to the 'traditions of men' rather than to the 'word of God'? The re-ordering of any society will require the re-ordering of the smallest building block of that society, and as I have argued above in Section 6.1, I believe Jesus affirms that marriage is not only permanent, for the benefit of children, but also should be based on equality. The questions that need to be asked are: "How is this re-ordering of Israel fulfilled?" "And how can this be appropriated to marriage in the twenty-first century?"

For Waetjen, in Mark 7, "The divine objective is to expunge the impurities of the heart in order to restore individuals wholeness and social integration and transform the world of binary oppositions – constituted by pollution systems – into a new creation of the one and the many" (1989: 133). As noted throughout Mark both the Pharisees and the disciples were at times described by the Markan Jesus as having 'hard hearts'. This condition was

also used in reference to Mark 10: 5, as Jesus' explanation regarding Moses' permission to divorce in Deuteronomy. Both Banks and Marcus, however, seem to indicate as discussed in (Section 4.3.3), that due to the coming of Jesus, the Deuteronomic provision is no longer necessary as Jesus has come to restore the condition of the heart (Banks 1975: 149; Marcus 1997: 194). This argument or language connects clearly with present time theology of the new covenant, which believers have in and through the work of the cross. This understanding is reflected clearly in the following prayer, which I have copied from a covenant service sheet, from a service I recently attended:

“In the Old Covenant, God chose Israel to be His people and to obey His laws. Our Lord Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection, has made a New Covenant with all who trust in Him. We stand within this Covenant and we hear His name.
On the one side, God promises in this Covenant to give us new life in Christ. On the other side, we are pledged to live no more for ourselves, but for Him.
Today, therefore, we meet expressly, as generations of our fathers have met, to renew the Covenant that bound them, and binds us, to God.” (Methodist Service Book 1975: d9)

This prayer clearly not only specifies the work of redemption as the death and resurrection of Christ but also notes that the covenant is based on a relationship, which the believer has with Christ. It also seems to reflect the struggle that the Markan Jesus had with his disciples, to give up in a sense themselves and the ways of this world, and accept the things of God. Covenant involves relationship with Christ, which will restore individual wholeness and social integration. A right relationship with God will lead to a right relationship with fellow-mankind. I know that this sounds simplistic, but I believe throughout my narrative, as well as ritual analysis, Jesus links the things of God as reflecting justice and equality, with a right relationship with God. Further, as reflected in Section 4. 4. 1, the disciples' position or potential status will only be achieved once Jesus has fulfilled His transformation from prophet to Lord through His death and resurrection.

In terms of marriage, I have noted that many scholars agree that covenant is a better term to express the marriage process than contract. I have also highlighted the fact that the Eastern Orthodox marriage liturgy does not reflect in any way the concept of contract between two persons, which is clearly evident in western liturgies (Ware 1991: 83). Covenant moves

marriage from being merely a private matter into the public domain as well. “The covenant of marriage is not simply a personal bond or covenant of love – it is also a public and legal matter concerning the whole community of believers” (Kasper 1980: 41). “If marriage is a covenant, is it a covenant with God?” As discussed, Mark 10: 5 – 9, seems to express God’s involvement in the joining of the two into one, this is especially so in verse 9, which states “Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate” (NRSV). Both Protestant theology and Catholic theology as I have indicated, reflect the notion that it is the partners (man and women) who minister the sacrament to each other. However, Ware notes that in Greek Orthodox theology, the understanding is that “Primarily it is an action performed by God himself, operating through the person of the officiating priest” (1991: 81). This not only links directly with my analysis of Jesus’ description of the marriage process in Section 4. 4. 2, but it also explains the absence of any vows between the man and women in the Orthodox Liturgy. God joins, He is present, and works in and through the priest.

The problem is, as discussed above, that covenant is not a passive activity although, it may be initiated by one party, as in the case of Salvation by God. It, however, also requires the other member to reciprocate. One explanation is that the agreement between the two parties, is in effect, reciprocating with God’s initial intention for man and woman. However, this may not be a solution because, as discussed, the new covenant would require relationship, and this would mean that God would only be present in marriages between persons who already accept Christ as the redeemer. As discussed throughout this Thesis, it was not my intention to get into deep theological debates, but rather to see how my reflection and analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12 can improve the marriage process. I, therefore, at this point, due to the nature of this work, must leave this debate regarding covenant either to other scholars, or to my own future work. My aim in the above discussion was to highlight the present belief in the “New Covenant”. Further to note that any covenant would require two parties each having their own specific obligations. Further in terms of Mark 8: 22 – 10: 52, these requirements for Jesus’ disciples are clearly not the only rejection of any structure, which promotes inequality and injustice, but also accepting the poor and the weak.

It is clear that the “New Covenant” we celebrate as believers today is represented and remembered most profoundly in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Again, I cannot delve into

the vast array of theological debate regarding the essence and substance of the Eucharist. It must, however, be noted that the Markan Jesus predicts His death three times, all in close proximity to the discussion on marriage. Further, these predications also point to the hope of the resurrection (Mark 8: 31b, 9: 9, 10: 34 31b). At the discourse level in the narrative of Mark, as discussed in section 4. 3. 3, and section 4. 4. 1, the readers are aware that Jesus will fulfil His mission (to re-order Israel) and the disciples will be redeemed. As I have argued this re-ordering would have to involve not only marriage, but also the changing of the hard hearts, from the 'things of man' to the 'things of God'. This, I believe, as do many believers, was accomplished through the death and resurrection of the Son of God.

I have argued that the hearers and listeners of this story two thousand years ago, would have identified with Jesus' renewal programme not only in general, but also specifically in respect of marriage because their well-being and the well-being of their children were inherently linked to the land which God had covenanted to them and their children. I now argue that the debate regarding marriage was not only integral to the re-ordering of that community, but it also represents a fundamental symbol for Christian life for ages to come, which Jesus came to re-order back to His original plan. This challenges us to re-look at the concept of a sacrament within marriage, especially if we consider that for the first nine centuries, the marriage religious rites were merely incorporated into the Eucharistic Liturgy (Ware 1991: 80). Lincoln, in his article, "Sacramental Marriage: A possibility for Protestant Theology", argues that "Taking the sacramental and ecclesial dimensions of Christian marriage seriously will aid Protestant reflection of marriage, pastoral care of married persons, and aid ecumenical convergence on the meaning of Christian Marriage" (1995: 216). Lincoln based his discussion largely on work done by James White and notes that:

"Sacraments are sign-acts. There can be no sacrament without the God who graciously communicates with us in the Church. Sacraments do not exist independently of the Church that lives by God's love" (1995: 209).

Lincoln notes that, White argues that the way that Protestant and Catholic understanding of marriage as a sacrament could converge, is to argue that what is important in the identification of a sacrament is not that 'divine forgiveness' is present, but rather that 'the divine' is present (1995: 210). In reality, it is the presence of God's love that administers the forgiveness. Further, Catholic and Protestant understanding can be bridged if it is

accepted on both sides that, the sacraments are not equal, marriage is not a lesser state than celibacy and that marriage does not represent a work (a means to salvation) (Lincoln 1995: 211).

Through the distantiation section, I believe that I have strengthened the notion that marriage can and should be seen as a sacrament. In the rest of this section, I will continue to strengthen that argument. Further I believe, as does Kasper, that marriage can only truly be a sacrament when it is done in the Lord (1980: 82). The presence of God is what changes the essence of marriage from contract to covenant. This presence cannot merely be represented by the minister or priest, but must be present between and in both parties in the process of marriage. It is interesting to note that the Greek Orthodox Church separates the covenant and contract, to the extent that it is the "...civil ceremony before the magistrate that was considered legally binding in the eyes of Church and State" (Ware 1991: 81). The civil ceremony, in the Orthodox Church, happens in a different context before the church service and represents only one aspect of the marriage. This aspect will be developed later, but it must be noted that in a sense, the contractual aspect could be seen as the structural aspect, while the covenantal aspect could be seen as the anti-structural aspect. The contractual aspect is administered by the civil process, while the covenantal aspect is administered by the church. Although I have indicated that divorce is a possibility, I still maintain as indicated in my narrative analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12, that Jesus' position was that it is the 'will of God' that marriage be permanent. As indicated in my contextualisation (section 5. 2), the Orthodox Church holds the doctrine that marriage is both a sacrament and yet dissoluble in certain circumstances. This practically, leads the Orthodox Church to separate out, not only the marriage process as described above, but also its own divorce requirements (Ware 1991: 88). The Orthodox Church does not just accept the legal divorce procedure as sufficient. This separation is emphasised by the fact that the marriage ceremony used for a second marriage does not emphasise victory, but rather includes penitential aspects (Allchin 1971: 121; Ware 1991: 88, 89). This emphasises and reinforces the fact that God's will is still that of permanence for marriage and it is men/women's sinful ways that corrupts God's will, and squeezes out community and equality. I am glad to note at this stage that the proposals regarding amendments to my Appendix 3 and Appendix 4, includes a prayer, which is headed: "Model Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Grace for use in the remarriage of any divorcees". This seems to indicate that the U.P.C.S.A. is taking steps in the right direction to stress as do the

Greek Orthodox Church, that permanence in marriage is God's will. I know that I have not dealt with the Orthodox Church's theology or doctrine in any detail and that there are large areas of differences in understanding, which would have to be researched further. I hope, however, by drawing attention to other ways outside of western theology, that the Church's praxis can be improved in the area of marriage.

In my ritual analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12, (Section 4. 4.1), I proposed that the disciples were in a process of status transformation, and that Jesus, the ritual elder, used marriage as a ritual symbol for part of their initiation. Marriage not only represented the giving up of status, but it also pointed not only to the death of self and union with God, but also new life. This marriage, as reconfigured by Jesus in Mark, at least reflects all that which he was trying to communicate to his disciples, regarding the 'Kingdom of Heaven', including their need to identify with Jesus through his death. It represents the opposite to the requests for status by James and John in (10: 37) and the opposite to the disciples discussion in (9: 34) of who is the greatest. If, as I have argued, Jesus uses marriage as a profound ritual symbol for re-configuring the disciples to the world-view of the 'Kingdom of God', then it may be, as I have argued, that Jesus sees marriage in a vastly different light to not only those before Him, but also to the modern theologians. I propose that Jesus re-ordered marriage through His discussion with the Pharisees, back from a human institution to a divine one. However, the realisation of this state of perfection will only be achieved when structure and status are removed completely when Jesus comes again. We have in marriage a symbol, which reflects not only creation, but also redemption. Marriage can and should represent God's love for the world, but this is only possible if man/woman's relationship with God is right, where there is no inequality and injustice, but 'communitas'. Structure, however often squeezes out this possibility. The challenge for the church is to be part of the mechanisms, which promote anti-structure and not structure.

As stated in the contextualisation (Section 5. 2), the Reformers objected to the sacramentality of marriage because, "...it converts a human arrangement into a divine institution; that it ignores the empirical reality of actual marriages; and that it wrongly confuses and conflates the two orders of creation and redemption" (Thatcher 1999:233). Through my narrative analysis (Section 4. 3 to 4. 3. 3), I believe that I have illustrated that not only was it Jesus' mission to re-order the social structures, but that marriage was one of those structures, which He re-ordered. Further, through my in-depth ritual analysis

(Section 4. 4), I believe I have illustrated that the Markan Jesus used marriage as a symbol, which incorporates the values, which are required by those who wish to follow Him. The Reformers I propose were wrong in disregarding marriage as a sacrament. Although it may not have been initially instituted by Christ, I propose that it was re-configured by him to represent both redemption and a divine institution. I believe my analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12, within the context of Mark, strengthens Lincoln's proposal that Reformed traditions should re-visit their view on the sacramental nature of marriage. This argument is strengthened even more when Lincoln notes, as I have, that Reformed liturgies do ascribe iconic function to christian marriage by referring to the analogy in Ephesians, of Christ and Bride to earthly marriage, as one of the reasons for marriage (1995: 214).

Further, history has shown, as discussed in (Section 5. 2) that the reformers held on to the notion that marriage was sacral and necessary for stable societies (Thatcher 1999: 235). I propose that the very status/structure and power struggles for which Jesus rebukes the disciples and Pharisees in Mark, were at work during the Reformation. State, Catholic and Protestant influences were either under threat, or wanted to establish themselves in a position of status/control. This scenario could be juxtaposed with the situation in Mark, between Jesus, disciples and Pharisees. Although the analogy is not complete, it does relate to the notions that structure and anti-structure will always be in conflict in a dialectical way. I am not arguing that the Catholic Church did not require reform. I am arguing, however, that there is a possibility that theological differences were not the sole reason for the different stances towards marriage. Further, that any differences could have been exaggerated through the need to define and create boundaries. As I have noted, the desacramentalising of marriage opened the door to allow the State to take control once again. In section 4.4.2, I argued that Jesus proposed a ritual or process of marriage, which in essence, removed the need for law and legal structures. In that time, marriage, as I discussed in (Section 4.2), may have required legal documents, which would in essence have to be drawn up by one of the scribes. This would affect the economic position of the majority who were already being stretched financially.

Throughout the history of marriage, one can detect a vacillation between times when marriage is governed formally by structure (legal) and religious institution and times when it is controlled in a sense informally through cultural or religious rites. This vacillating reflects the need, I believe, for balance between structure and 'communitas' (anti-structure)

(Turner 1969: 139). Further, it describes Turner's notion that, "Exaggeration of structure may well lead to pathological manifestations of 'communitas' outside or against 'the law'" (1969: 129). This notion connects perfectly with the re-ordering of Jesus against the structures that produce alienation, inequality and exploitation (Alexander 1991: 35). I have argued that the Markan Jesus, would want marriage to fall within the informal processes, void of structure. In today's times, one can see again a rebelling against structure, through the increase of cohabitation. The question that needs to be asked is "has not the Church marriage become part of the structure, the legalism which Jesus intended to remove from the Marriage Symbol?" This has caused individuals in society to seek out alternative modes or expression of 'communitas'. Although " 'communitas' cannot stand alone if the material and organizational needs of human beings are to be adequately met" (Turner 1969: 129), on the other hand, human beings require 'communitas'. If the church is seen to be in alliance with structure or expressing structural mechanisms through doctrine and liturgy, then people are going to seek out other means of balancing structure with "communitas". How can the church in some way come to an agreement regarding the essence and sacramentality of marriage? I believe one of the answers lies in the following understanding of marriage as a sacrament: "It is perhaps better to say that he [Augustine] posited a sacrament *in* marriage than to say that he posited a sacrament *of* marriage" (Reynolds: 280).

My analysis, both Narrative and Ritual, which took into context the plot and themes of the whole text of Mark, I believe, portrays as does Kasper that Jesus in His discussion on marriage transcends completely the level of law (1980: 28). "The marital bond of faithfulness creates something that transcends the single person and binds the history of two people definitely and at the deepest level together" (Kasper 1980: 22). Marriage within the Christian church today must move beyond law and contract (structure) to represent something far more profound. I believe my analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12 strengthens profoundly the call to take seriously not only covenantal aspect of marriage, but also its sacramental nature. I believe, as expressed by Lincoln, that this will not only improve ecumenical convergence, but also improve pastoral care (1995: 216). Lincoln, however, does not take the next step in discussing how sacramental acceptance should alter the marriage liturgy within Protestant Churches.

If marriage is a sign-act of God's love, then surely the marriage-act itself must represent these notions not only verbally, but also in and through ritual movement? This leads on to

the next section, which will draw the conclusions from both Sections 6. 1, and Section 6. 2 together. The next section will deal with my initial concern in endeavouring this thesis, my belief that Protestant marriage liturgy could and should be improved, especially that which I have encountered in the U.P.C.S.A.

6.3 Liturgy

In the contextualisation section, I expressed not only my concern that the U.P.C.S.A Marriage Liturgy incorporated, both legal and covenantal language, but also that there was a lack of ritual movement and symbolism, although the verbal content expressed the link between Christ and the church, and human marriage, this was not in anyway acted out. Further verbally, children and society were said to be the reason for marriage, but again none of these notions were in anyway acted out. Alexander notes that “Ritual takes the form of a performance in order to reflect on the ideal and to act it out”. Clearly the Marriage Liturgy that I have experienced cannot be described as ritual as they do not include performance, but merely the verbal statements of the ideal. I am aware that the marriage process does not begin and end at the church door, but this is the only space in which the church can have an influential effect on all who wish to be married in the “Christian way”. Especially those who are not affiliated in any way to a particular church, but none the less wish to be married in the Christian way, in a church. In the ritual analysis (Section 3. 1. 1), I not only expressly highlighted the transformative power of ritual, but I also noted that Turner makes a clear distinction between ceremony and ritual. For Turner, ritual is transformative while ceremony is merely confirmation or ratification (Alexander 1991: 15). The question that needs to be asked is, “In the light of the problems facing the institution of marriage, both within and outside of the church, does the church want its Marriage Liturgy to be either transformative or merely confirmation?”

For Turner, as I elaborated in Section 3. 1. 1, the transformative powers of ritual lay in the ability to achieve a liminal state and spontaneous ‘communitas’ (1969: 97). Alexander notes, “It is the liminality stage and ‘communitas’ that has a playful and indeterminate energy that generates the potential and possibilities to reconfigure social structures” (1991: 18). In my introduction to Ritual Process (Section 3. 1), I noted that both the Reformation and modernity have been responsible for under-evaluating and therefore undermining ritual

as a means of expressing religion. Further, it was noted in Section 5. 2, that for Charsley, the Catholic Marriage Liturgy was more complex because as he describes it, the Reformation had swept away almost entirely "... all the movement and initial elaboration of the old order" (1991: 23, 25). Charsley does not elaborate, but by this movement and elaboration one could understand not only ritual movement but also ritual symbols.

Driver notes that "... ritual boredom and ritual misapprehension in post-enlightenment societies arises from the fact that ritual liminality has been suppressed" (1991: 159). I believe, as does Driver, that one of the reasons for this is that there is to some extent, "... an unholy alliance between liturgical order and a social order that has set its face against significant change, that justice and peace require" (1991: 159). This could be used to explain, not only Jesus' criticism of the Pharisee's purity codes, which in reality were ritual, but were also static and oppressive; but it can also explain the way in which the church ultimately was used in the eighteenth century to, in essence, maintain and facilitate a system of status and inequality. Further, it could explain, the lengths Jesus goes to from Mark 6: 30, to move the disciples into a liminal space, away from structural influences. Jesus, as I have argued in Section 4. 4 and Section 4. 4. 1, goes to great lengths to create a boundary between the Pharisees who are the out-group, who seek to corrupt Holy rituals and the disciples, who are the in-group, in a liminal phase of status transformation. McVann states, regarding the increase in ritual interest in the last few years, that "I hazard the opinion that ritual has enjoyed a renaissance, at least in part, because of the appalling barrenness of our culture symbolically and a recognition (or better perhaps, a yearning) that ritual may provide a means of helping to re-establish and sustain community" (1995: 7). This statement not only expresses the view that ritual appreciation is on the increase, but also stresses that ritual can be used to sustain or re-establish community. Ritual could be in a sense, the answer to the decrease in the number of people who are committing to marriage and the increasing divorce rate experienced, not only in South Africa, but also in most parts of the world.

Driver notes ritual can be used either for good or for bad and, as I have noted in Section 3. 1, what is good for believers should be expressed through fighting for justice and equality. Jesus throughout Mark challenges the "great tradition" and its retainers. Sometimes his challenges are misunderstood, because they are taken as challenges against religious ritual.

I hope I have explained clearly that these challenges were in fact challenging ritual which was not transformative, as in promoting justice, equality and community within the society, but were in fact static and oppressive. The Pharisees and the other retainers were very much part of an oppressive hierarchy, part of an oppressive social structure. The rituals which they promoted had been manipulated to be used by those in power, not to liberate but to oppress.

As I have noted in Section 6. 1, social-structural mechanisms will inherently squeeze out equality, community and rather promote exploitation, but as discussed in Section 3. 1. 1, Turner notes that structure and anti-structure cannot in reality survive separately. Structure and anti – structure, are in essence, in a dialectical relationship. This means, as explained with reference to the disciples and the elite in Section 4. 4. 1, that structure will always be threatened by ritual, and by those that are in positions that require them to remain liminal. The converse is also true: liminality and ‘communitas’ are continually in threat of being squeezed out by structural forces. To get back to marriage, it could be possible that the incorporation of structure, represented by the contractual aspect of the Marriage Liturgy, is in fact squeezing out any liminality and ‘communitas’ and therefore making the Marriage Liturgy ineffective (not transformative). In other words, the Marriage Liturgy, which should be in fact infusing the initiands with anti-structural values of equality and community, is merely reinforcing the social-structural elements that are present within the broader society.

Jesus, in Mark 10: 2 – 12, I tentatively proposed in Section 4. 4 .2, removed the legal aspect of the marriage, which as expressed in Section 4.2 took place during the betrothal section. Even if I am wrong in this assessment, most scholars agree that Jesus, in Mark 8: 22 to 10: 52, inverts the normal social apparatus of structure and status. And further, I have argued that the disciples are in their liminal stage of transformation throughout this section of the narrative, being reconfigured through a ritual of status transformation. The Markan Jesus, is the ritual elder, who creates the separation and liminal space in order to transform the disciples. Waetjen states, regarding Jesus’ teaching in Mark 8: 22 – 10: 52 that “To enter into it [God’s rule], therefore, means to be released from any and every force in society that faces human existence” (1989: 167). These forces could indeed refer to social structural forces if one takes into account the nature of the teaching in Mark 8: 22 – 10: 52. This

could imply that the disciples need to remain as discussed in Section 5. 2, in a state of ‘communitas’. This implies a state in which structure is not present.

As discussed in Section 3. 1. 1, and Section 4. 4. 1, Turner coined the term normative ‘communitas’, to explain a situation in which, efforts are made to maintain a state of ‘communitas’. “Turner’s rationale behind the use of the term, “normative communitas”, is to convey the fact that, when legislated, communitas is only an approximation of its spontaneous form” (Alexander 1991: 60). Alexander notes as I have in Section 3. 1. 1 that, “...for Turner [spontaneous] communitas is an ideal that is only approximated in reality, and then only momentarily” (Alexander 1991: 34). I must stress, however, that it is the spontaneous form of ‘communitas’, which not only infuses the person with anti-structural values, but may also be the spark which effects social-structural change. Further, “spontaneous communitas” may infuse the desire within the initiands to maintain a state of “normative communitas”.

I have argued in Section 4. 4. 2 that Jesus uses marriage as a ritual symbol. I have also argued that this notion, taken in context, should cause a reviewing of Protestant theology, regarding marriage as a sacrament. The link that needs to be made now is between the ‘Kingdom of God’, the main theme in Mark, and ‘marriage’. Clearly, as I have portrayed, the Markan Jesus initiates the disciples in order to usher in the ‘Kingdom of God’. Further, in order to achieve success, I have argued that the disciples need to maintain ‘communitas’, in essence, structural forces of inequality and alienation must not corrupt them.

The Markan Jesus, goes to great lengths not only to expose the social-structural oppression of the elite, but He also forcefully, in what I have called ‘ritual conflict’, tests the disciples regarding their ability to maintain values of humility and equality. I have argued in the narrative section, that “the Markan Gospel discredits, not the disciples, but the view of discipleship as either exclusive or easy” (Malbon 2001: 119). This view is emphasised as I have noted in Section 4. 3. 2 by the teaching in Mark 8 – 10, which reflect service and suffering, but also by Jesus’ response to question in Mark 10: 17 “... what must I do to inherit eternal life.” The disciples need to “... abandon their previous habits, ideas, and understandings about their personal identities and relations with others in their society” (McVann 1991: 339).

Today may be vastly different to two thousand years ago, but in reality social-structural forces still squeeze out equality and community. The pressures facing both the church and marriage are I believe social – structural forces. These forces squeeze out the very essence of church and marriage, equality and community, making both church and marriage ineffectual as the mediators of anti – structural values/forces. These social - structural forces, I have indicated, may have been infiltrated as they had two thousand years ago into the very relationships that should be sustaining equality and community. “Religion for him [Turner referring to Francis who initiated the order I discussed in Section 3. 1. 1, in relation to “Normative Communitas”] was *communitas*, between man and God and man and man, vertically and horizontally, so to speak, and poverty and nakedness were both expressive symbols of ‘*communitas*’ and instruments for attaining it” (Turner 1969: 146). Is the church today facilitating *communitas* between man and God? And further, is the church facilitating ‘*communitas*’ between husband and wife?

If ‘marriage’ is a symbol indicating Christ and His bride (the Church) then marriage is a symbol, which is inherently impregnated, with eschatological and paradisiacal potential of the coming of the ‘Kingdom of God’. Christ had come to re-order the world back to God’s original creation. Christ’s coming did not create this new-world order, but rather impregnated the world with the potential for change. If I apply the analogy of the disciples to marriage, marriage should reflect equality and community, but this potential can only be achieved if the parties are able to maintain ‘*normative communitas*’. The state of ‘*normative communitas*’, must however, be initiated through ‘*spontaneous communitas*’ which can be initiated by a liminal stage of ritual where initiands are passive and humble, being “... endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life” (Turner 1969: 95).

“*Spontaneous communitas*” must transform the initiands so that in the case of marriage they are no longer two, but one. This would imply, as I have argued in Section 4. 4. 2, that God himself is the ritual elder in marriage. Marriage is not contractual by nature, which in essence is structure, but it involves ‘*communitas*’, through a ritual of status transformation. This moves marriage from the ratification of what God has created to the transformation of two into one, through the redeeming of Jesus, in Mark, of marriage. If this analogy is taken further, rituals of status transformation or rites to passage require the initiands to come under the control of the ritual elder. The Church Marriages that I have attended, as

discussed, are not transformative, and lack 'spontaneous communitas'. This could be linked to the notion that the husband and wife to be are the ones who in essence administer the sacrament to each other. The minister is seen merely as a witness in a sense ratifying their actions. Although, the Protestant Church acknowledges God's presence, to what effect is this presence, present? I believe that the Western Church can learn from the Orthodox Church in their notions, that God himself is present and officiating at the wedding through the priest. This clearly links the theology of sacrament directly with marriage. It also clearly removes the church wedding from any notions of contract. The legal aspect, which is recognised by the church as binding in a legal way, is an entirely different process. The Orthodox Church, I believe reflects more closely Jesus' re-ordering of marriage in Mark 10: 2 – 12. On a practical level, couples who wish to get married in a church, I believe would, under the Orthodox Church method, be more inclined to be sincere about their belief, that marriage is a symbol that can and should reflect God's love for mankind. Although I have no proof of the above statement, this could be an interesting study for the future.

For Alexander "Turner's definition [of ritual] requires both conformity to formulaic rules and reference to belief in the supernatural" (1991: 15). Although, Alexander notes that this definition is not adequate because it is based on Turner's work within African tribes, and further Turner does not seem to focus on the spiritual aspect, but rather on liminality (1991: 15, 16). The notion that ritual involves the supernatural has profound possibilities for church liturgies. For Driver "... the most distinctive feature [in ritual] is not the repetitive pattern but the performance of direct address to the powers being confronted or invoked" (1991: 176). For Driver, "The business of religions and their rituals, then is to effect transformations, not only of persons individual subjectivity, but also transformations of society and the natural world" (1991: 172). I have explained that this was the Markan Jesus' mission and I have also illustrated that the narrative indicates not only that He used ritual, but also that marriage was itself re-ordered/re-configured. Ritual effectiveness, I have explained, lies in the ability to achieve 'communitas'. Ritual has transformative power only when it can remove the person from all structural forces, when the person can experience for a moment, lowliness and sacredness, homogeneity and comradeship (Turner 1969: 96).

Ritual must not only reflect in actions the way the world is, or should be ordered, but it must in essence put that order in place (Driver 1991: 132). Driver, referring to the work of Segundo, notes that for the church, praxis should involve both ethics and ritual (1991: 204). The church in other words should be using ritual to transform society. The church should be continually reflecting on its liturgy to ensure that it is both ethical and transformative. The church must not be manipulated through social-structural forces, to ratify structures that promote injustice and alienation. Driver notes that “Segundo rightly saw that a reforming of the sacraments is required wherever the church acknowledges that the gospel calls it to become engaged in struggles for justice and freedom” (1991: 203).

As I have noted, the Reformation and modernity have undervalued ritual. Gorman notes that the main reason for this is that “True Religion [was seen to be] expressed through ethical actions and not through ritual actions” (1995: 17). Ritual, however, as I have argued in Section 3. 1, is inherent to our humanness. It is the means, by which we live and have our being. “Ritual is a principal means by which society ‘grows’ and moves into the future (Turner 1974: 298)” (Alexander 1991: 3). I believe to a large extent that the Protestant Church has removed the liminal element in ritual not only because of the incorporation of structural elements (contract), but also because the symbols and movement have been removed. One of these ‘prime symbols’ is that of Christ and the church - One of sacrifice and suffering, one of giving up of all and becoming nothing, and yet in and through this gaining all. The Protestant Church firstly, needs to assess if they believe in ritual and in its transformative power. Secondly, they need to acknowledge that the present Marriage ceremony can in no way be seen as transformative. Lastly, in the light of the present situation regarding the increase in divorce and cohabitation, they need to consider changes to their liturgy, so that it reflects the words that are spoken. There needs to be a balance between structure and anti-structure. I believe my distantiation section portrays the Markan Jesus as enforcing the notion that the church and marriage should form part of the anti-structure. The church and marriage should reflect equality and community.

I am proposing that the churches come together and look back historically at the development of marriage, both its doctrine and liturgy. Further, this needs to be done in the light of the liberation of both women and children, and the acknowledgement that ritual has the means to promote liberation within and through individuals. I will now briefly discuss how I see the problem having developed, and then briefly explain some suggestions

regarding the inclusion of Orthodox liturgy and process. I acknowledge that the theological debates are deep and have an extensive history, but my intention is to generate interest and thought regarding the way in which our theology/doctrine is acted out in liturgy.

Kasper notes “This situation [referring to civil marriages and church marriages] can only be understood if it is recognised that one of its roots to be found in the mediaeval doctrine and, in particular, in the canonistic theory of the sacramentality of marriage, according to which a marriage is constituted exclusively by the consensus or mutual consent of bride and bridegroom” (1980: 73). This situation was clearly private and may have had communal and ‘communitas’ elements, but marriage is not merely a private matter. The result of the Catholic mutual consensus doctrine was continual “ “ dispute, uncertainty, wrangling, and feud,” including the greatest of threats possible to the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage: self – divorce and bigamy” (Harrington 1995:178) As mentioned in Section 5. 2, during the Reformation, those who are called Protestants today called for marriage to be in the public domain. The desacramentalising of marriage gave state (structure) a foothold. This, however, as Kasper notes has over time lead to a secularised understanding of marriage (1980: 75). I have further argued both in this Section and Section 5. 2, that marriage as experienced today in the Protestant Churches and particularly the U.P.C.S.A, reflects a mismatch, in a sense a kind of compromise, to incorporate both private and public concepts. The church needs to acknowledge that it is separate from the state and, therefore, the public part of the process should not involve contractual aspects, but merely the recognition of the church, the members. I am proposing as I have before, that members be married legally (civil) first, this would remove any obligation on the minister regarding legal aspects and elements. The minister would no longer be under state authority, but in a position to facilitate ‘communitas’. My thoughts and analysis were confirmed during a recent wedding I attended on 01/02/2003. I will not mention any of the names, but I will note that the preamble and the message to the couples was done by one minister, and the actual vows were done by another minister. The preamble involved all the good things in the U.P.C.S.A Liturgy that I have mentioned in section 5. 2;

- 1.) “Marriage as an honourable estate, instituted by God...”
- 2.) “as signifying to us the mystical union between Christ and His Church.”
- 3.) Marriage is for a life-long relationship, nurturing of children and the welfare of society.

The vows and the actual signing of the register were then done. The only symbolism in this process was the exchanging of rings and lighting of one candle, from two – representing the couple's oneness. After this was all over, the first minister who had done the preamble proceeded to give his message to the couple. What was profound for me is that his message was that the couple should bear in mind, firstly: that they in marriage represent Christ's love for the church to the world. That people would be looking to them to see a prime example of the expression of God's love on earth. This message linked clearly not only with my analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12, that Jesus used marriage as a symbol, but also linked back to the preamble to the vows. What was even more profound, was that the minister mentioned the Orthodox tradition of the crowning of the bride and the bridegroom, symbolising the victory that Christ had won for us.

Ware notes that, "The crowning is the central event in the Orthodox service for a first marriage" (1991: 84). Ware goes on to explain, that the crowns symbolise both the victory and the sacrifice made for the victory (1991: 85). I must note at this stage that Lincoln emphasises with regards to marriage being a sacrament, that it is "...a figurative sign for the eschatological fulfilment God intends" (1995: 212). This is not represented in the marriage liturgies I have attended. Marriage will have suffering and sacrifice, but in this is the victory. Further, Ware notes that the sign of the cross is made over both men and women with the crowns to signify, not only the death of Christ, but also the presence of Father, Son and Holy Ghost (1991: 85). Allchin notes, "... that the Eastern Churches develop very fully the thought that the union of man and wife in marriage is a union which reflects, and in some way partakes in, the union of man with God in Christ" (1971: 117). The minister did not go into all the above detail but, strangely enough, it seemed to underline what I had already done in my research.

The minister's second point was that Christ/God will not leave you to accomplish this task alone, but He will be present with you in and through the marriage, helping and strengthening you as you administer His love to one another and thus show the world Christ's love. What was most profound for me was how the part in the middle, the vows and the exchange of rings, did not in any way act-out that which was described, both in the marriage preamble and in the message. The lack of acknowledgement of sacrament devalues the service, and the lack of ritual enactment devalues the service further, in Protestant tradition.

I was reminded that in Section 4. 2. 1, I noted that marriage at the time of Jesus involved a similar crowning and the bride and groom being treated like King and Queen, the procession was one that symbolised victory. Driver notes referring to Neusner that:

“Judaism has a world defined by the sense of God as creator, bound in covenant to the Jewish people, to whom God has promised redemption. This world is not ground primarily in theology, nor even scripture, Neusner is saying, but in ritual” (1991: 141).

Driver goes on to note that “In Judaism, and many other religions, certain rituals contextualize the text and secure its place within the ordered world” (1991: 142). Those in charge of Liturgy need to take note, that ritual is vital in one’s quest to “... challenge social order with communal love, ...” (Driver 1991: 150).

Another comparison can be drawn, in my analysis, between marriage at the time of Jesus (Section 5. 2. 1) and the Orthodox marriage process that involves betrothal. Although today Orthodox Liturgy does not separate marriage and betrothal as in my discussion in (Section 4. 2. 1). However, it must be noted that rings are exchanged at the betrothal section of Orthodox Liturgy. Thatcher, in his extensive work, proposes that the church could incorporate a liturgy of betrothal, which would alter the conception of marriage as a once-off act and rather a process (1999: 120). Thatcher, acknowledges that there are practical problems with this suggestion, such as multiple engagements (1999: 125). I proposed in section 4. 4. 2 that the Markan Jesus reconfigured marriage back to a once-off act which involved separation, liminality, and aggregation. It must be noted, however, that different times call for different rituals of liberation, and the development of a two-stage process of marriage which is administered by the church could prevent a lot of hurt. Further, it could encourage society at large to consider marriage in the serious light that it should be considered. Further, this could fall in line with not only the two stage initiation of the disciples as I described in Section 4. 4. 1, but also the framing of the two blind healings as described in Section 4. 3. 2, which represented a two-stage understanding of messiahship, firstly, power and glory, and secondly, sacrifice and suffering. Jesus, went to great lengths to initiate his disciples regarding the standards of the ‘Kingdom of God’. It could be that my focus on the once-off act of God joining the couple has blinded me to the fact, that in reality, my ritual analysis of Mark 10: 2 – 12, indicates that the liminal period

for the disciples was an extended one. Further, within this liminal stage there were, in essence, a number of 'ritual conflicts' and teachings before the disciples were able to take up the challenge of remaining in a state of 'normative communitas'. It may be as those at the time of Jesus got betrothed, that the church, should research further the possibility, that the church institutes a betrothal (engagement) service. Again, however, I must emphasise the principles drawn out from my narrative and ritual analysis of Mark, namely that the betrothal should seek to create a liminal space and, therefore, must be void of structure (law). From this point of betrothal, the couple would be in a liminal phase, a time of being humble, a time of teaching, and having the ideas transformed regarding their future status (marriage). This could be a time when the couple meet with their minister or priest on a regular basis to infuse the couple with anti-structural values. If I take this analogy further, and link it to my experience of marriage as discussed in Section 5. 3, where I noted that aggregation had been incomplete. Any couple, who leaves for their honeymoon, are still in that playful and dangerous phase, a liminal time.

The church could research further the possibility that on return from honeymoon, the couple, may attend what could be called a Nuptial Eucharist. The pronouncement of the couple as being married could be held over until this point. This would create extra tension in the liminal space while, the couple are on honeymoon, which would have religious significance. A Nuptial Eucharist would be the aggregation of the couple back into the church fellowship, with a new status, that of oneness.

If a couple agrees to this process of marriage, I propose, that the church could be more effective in infusing the couple with anti-structural force/values. These proposals in conjunction with the emphasis I have placed on marriage as a sacrament and ritual enactment will, I believe, improve the possibility of liminality and 'communitas', and thus, reverse the mechanisms that suppress liminality in the Protestant Liturgies. I am not proposing that my above proposals are complete, as I have indicated the need for further research. I am merely highlighting the fact that the church not only needs to be proactive in its approach to liturgy, but this approach must take into consideration the current situation. Further, as I have discussed, and Thatcher has noted, the church has in the past changed its view and practise and, therefore, there is no reason not to do so again (1999: 120).

To get back to the wedding I recently attended, the minister's second point for me speaks directly into the argument that I have made regarding sacrament in Section 6. 2, that God is present in and through the marriage, His love is being administered. If one takes this analogy further, and juxtaposes it with the notion that women are only sanctified, as discussed in section 4. 2 (Marriage at the time of Jesus), under the man's authority, then it is clear that two distinctly different concepts are being spoken about. It was interesting in section 4. 2, to note that both Tenney and Hauptman failed to explain how sanctification is expressed in the marriage process, or lived experience. Yet both acknowledged that the terms used, such as *Kiddashin*, illustrate a sense of sanctification (Tenney 1977: 94 and Hauptman 1998: 69). From my narrative analysis, Ritual Analysis and Ritual Theory of liminality, I propose that one way that we can approach the marriage process and liturgy are as follows:

- 1.) Marriage is seen not as ratification, but as transformation.
- 2.) Marriage is seen as a sacrament, in the true sense, with Christ being present in and through the parties and process.
- 3.) For marriage to be transformative, it needs not only to place the couple in their new position, but this needs to be done through ritual symbols and process.
- 4.) God/Jesus is the ritual elder, through the minister, creating the means by which spontaneous 'communitas' is achieved, this means that liturgy needs to allow space for the couple to feel the "... essential and generic human bond without which there could be no society" (Turner 1969: 97).
- 5.) The Spiritual element needs to be emphasised, the "spontaneous communitas" which is created and experienced in the "rite to passage", must be carried forward by the couple into "normative communitas".
- 6.) The couple continues to minister to each other the love God has instilled in them, the anti-structural values, which are instilled during "spontaneous communitas".
- 7.) In this way not only do both man and woman treat each other equally, but they strive against structures that squeeze out community, through the power that has been instilled in them through the experience of God.

I am aware that I may not have directly answered all the questions, which I posed in Section 5. 4 (Summary of Contextualisation), but I hope that indirectly the broad principles and proposals that I have made, reflect my conclusions. Further, I hope that my

appropriation will encourage those in positions to create new liturgy for the respective churches to take my conclusions further.

7. CONCLUSION

Marriage is a topic that not only touches the hearts and lives of many, but also involves a myriad of inter-related concepts and variables. From the outset, it was not my intention to focus as much attention as I have to the theological and doctrinal debates involved. I believed that I could by using both ritual analysis and narrative analysis of Mark and Mark 10: 2 – 12, in conjunction with Draper's tri-polar exegetical model, step back from the text and separate out the different concepts and variables. My initial aim was to investigate the relationship between church and State and to attempt to glean insights from the text that may improve the process of marriage.

In the exegetical process, however, through insights and unexpected discoveries within my extensive distantiation section, I was drawn further and further into debates and discussions, which I never intended. Both the narrative analysis and particularly the ritual process exegesis, drew me into discussions of covenant and sacrament, both areas, which I did not intend to pursue. I tried to keep the distantiation and contextualisation sections separate, prior to the appropriation section, in order to give equal credence to both text and context. However, by doing the distantiation section first, I believe that my intentions were seriously effected, this led to me pursuing in my contextualisation section issues such as equality, patriarchy, political power struggles and the doctrine of sacrament. It may seem to some that Mark 10, has not determined my conclusions, in the appropriation section, but in reality the insights acquired from the distantiation section profoundly influenced and, therefore, determined the outcomes. In reality, this must be the nature of both research in general and in particular the dialectical three pole exegesis. There must be interaction between text and context, they must have dialogue, without the one determining the outcome. It is, however, extremely difficult, as I have discovered during this process, to prevent your first analysis from effecting the rest of the process. On reflection, it is my view that more was gained by doing the distantiation section first.

My methodology was one that tried to incorporate all the elements which are involved if scholars are going to research the marriage process from the scriptural basis. Both present and past doctrines were discussed, as well as the historical aspects which could assist both the ritual and narrative analysis of the text. This ultimately led to very complex discussions

and debates. Although I acknowledge that my proposals in the appropriation (section 6. 3), are not complete I do believe they reflect, a dialogue between both the insights gained from the text and the context. This process is, however, not complete, as with any hermeneutical analysis, the final outcomes themselves bring to the fore new questions. The circle is never complete.

I believe that my analysis has emphasised that doctrine needs to be followed by praxis. Further that this praxis must match the doctrine. As I have stressed throughout my appropriation section, further research is needed, but I believe the principals that I have proposed through my ritual analysis must be taken seriously, particularly by the Protestant Church. The Protestant Church needs to acknowledge that, “ritual then is a response to the need to create community: it is put into play in response to a breakdown in, or it is enacted to rejuvenate community” (Alexander 1995: 213). Revisions must be made not only at doctrinal level, but also at a practical level, Service Book level. “A sacrament, must signify not merely the idea of liberation, but its actuality as a work in which both God and the people move against all forces of enslavement” (Driver 1991: 204). It must be reiterated that, there is a resurgence in the interest and need for ritual in post-modernity times. It is the church’s responsibility to ensure that this resurgence in ritual interest is used for good, and not for evil. Ritual must not serve the needs of the Pharisees, but rather the needs of the weak and the poor.

I believe that the church needs to start drawing from all the traditions, Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic in order to play a vital role in reversing the current trends in divorce and cohabitation. The church needs to acknowledge that the boundaries, which are evident between some church traditions need to be removed or worked around in order to benefit not only the church at large, but also society in general.

Lastly, I would like to suggest three areas of research, which I believe could go a long way in adding to the work I have begun:

- 1.) Similar research to the one I have done needs to be done analysing the traditional/ethnic processes of marriage in South Africa. As I have indicated from the outset my focus has been on the Euro-centric marriage ceremony.

- 2.) It would be interesting statistically to examine the divorce rates within populations which hold to Western Theology, against divorce rates within populations which hold to Eastern Theology (Orthodox)
- 3.) It would be interesting to do research on a cross-section of congregants within Protestant and Catholic traditions to investigate: 1) if the congregants are aware of their specific Church's beliefs regarding marriage
2), if congregants may inherently believe that marriage (human) is a profound symbol of the relationship between God and Men/Women.

In conclusion, I must stress that my use of ritual theory both in textual analysis and contextual analysis seems to emphasise the need for the church to take ritual seriously, not only for use in academic settings, but also to be appropriated practically into the churches liturgies.

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APPENDIX ONE:

141.01E

ORDER OF MARRIAGE SERVICE

The Service may begin with the singing of a suitable Psalm or Hymn.

We are met here in the sight of God and before this congregation (or before these witnesses) to join together this man and woman in marriage.

Marriage is an honourable estate, instituted by God in the time of man's innocence;
beautified and adorned by our Lord's presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee;
commended by his apostle as honourable in all;
and consecrated, as signifying to us the mystical union between Christ and his Church.

It is therefore not to be entered upon lightly or thoughtlessly, but reverently, discreetly and in the fear of God, duly considering the ends for which it was ordained.

Marriage was ordained for the life-long companionship, help, and comfort that husband and wife ought to have of each other.
It was ordained for the continuance of the holy ordinance of family life, that children, who are the heritage of the Lord, should be duly nurtured and trained up in godliness.
It was ordained for the welfare of human society, which can be strong and happy only where the marriage bond is held in honour.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be made one with his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.

Into this holy relationship these two persons (*full names*) now desire to enter;
therefore if anyone can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together in marriage, let him now declare it;
or else hereafter hold his peace.

The Minister addresses the persons to be married.

I require and charge you both, as in the sight of God, that if either of you know any impediment why you may not lawfully be joined together in marriage, (that) you do now confess it.

Since no impediment has been alleged or confessed, let us seek the blessing of God on the union now to be made in his name.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the Maker and Giver of all good things, we thank you for each day's blessings:

for health and happiness,

for the joy in our homes and in the hearts of our friends to day.

We thank you for giving us your love, and for appointing marriage to keep love perfect.

Let your Fatherly blessing come upon (*Christian names of couple*) who now stand before you.

You brought them together, Lord; now let your Spirit live in them to the full,

that their love may be holy, their conduct right, their enjoyment pure, and their oneness complete, in Christ.

Help them to meet the cares and temptations that marriage brings, in his strength;

for it is your love, Father, that keeps safe those who honour you, and brings them to their hearts' desire;

so may it be for these your servants, in Jesus' name. AMEN.

The Minister asks the congregation to stand during the taking of the marriage vows, and addresses the couple.

In token of the vows you are about to make, give each other the right hand.

Do you (*man's Christian name*) take (*woman's Christian name*) whose right hand you hold, to be your lawful wedded wife, and do you promise and covenant, in the presence of God and in face of this congregation (*or before these witnesses*), to be to her a loving, faithful, and dutiful husband until God shall separate you by death?

The man answers: I do.

Will you now repeat after me:

I call upon those persons here present to witness that: (*Christian name*) take you (*Christian name*) to be my lawful wedded wife.

Do you (*woman's Christian name*) take (*man's Christian name*) whose right hand you hold, to be your lawful wedded husband, and do you promise and covenant, in the presence of God and in face of this congregation (*or before these witnesses*), to be to him a loving, faithful and dutiful wife, until God shall separate you by death?

The woman answers: I do.

MARRIAGE SERVICE

141.03E

Will you now repeat after me:

I call upon those persons here present to witness that I (*Christian name*) take you (*Christian name*) to be my lawful wedded husband.

When both have repeated the formula, the Minister says:

As a seal of the covenant into which you have entered, the marriage ring (rings) is (are) given and received.

The ring (or rings) is (are) given to the Minister by placing it (them) on the service book and the Minister says:

By this ancient and accepted symbol (of the ring) you take each other for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until God shall separate you by death.

The Minister gives the ring to the man, who places it on the woman's finger; and similarly the woman, if rings are exchanged. The couple again take hands.

Forasmuch as you have covenanted together in marriage, and have declared the same before God and in face of this congregation (or before these witnesses), I now pronounce you to be husband and wife; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

Whom God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

May God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; may the Lord pour out the riches of his grace upon you, that you may please him, and live together in holy love to your lives' end.

One of the following passages of Scripture is read:

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 John 4:7-13

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No-one has ever seen God; but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

John 15:9-13

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

MARRIAGE SERVICE

141.05E

An anthem may then be sung.

The Minister may, if he chooses, give a brief address to the married couple.

Let us pray.

Father God, you blessed family life and made it holy when you sent your Son to be part of a human family. Now another family takes you as its foundation; bless it, Father, richly.

Lord Jesus, live in the home that this marriage creates; share its sorrows, we pray, and multiply its joys.

Let it be a home that lasts, a home full of unselfish enjoyment, a home where there is enough, and to spare for the unexpected guest, a home where love grows richer year by year.

Holy Spirit, fill this home with your peace and your life: the life that is lived to the full in the heavenly kingdom, the life that makes men and women in Christ to be one, for ever..

And to you, with the Father and the Son, one God, we offer our thanks and praise. AMEN.

A suitable hymn may then be sung.

The Minister blesses the people from God.

APPENDIX TWO:

142.01E

ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF AN EXISTING MARRIAGE

The service may begin with a suitable hymn, followed by words of scripture such as:

Unless the Lord builds the house,
they labour in vain who build it.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

God is love: whoever lives in love lives in God,
and God in him.

The minister invites the congregation to sit.

Dear friends, we have come together in the presence of God (and this congregation) to celebrate the marriage of (husband) and (wife), and to ask God's blessing upon it.

God our Father established marriage as part of his loving purpose for us from the beginning. Jesus affirmed this when he said, 'At the beginning the Creator made them male and female ... For this reason a man will leave his father and mother, and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'

The Scriptures further declare the marriage union to be a symbol of that union of faith and love that exists between Christ and his Church.

Marriage as a gift and calling of God is therefore not to be undertaken lightly or from selfish motives, but with due awareness of the purposes for which it is appointed and given us by God.

Marriage is appointed that there may be lifelong companionship, help and comfort between husband and wife.

It is appointed as the right and proper setting for the full expression of love between man and woman.

It is appointed for the good ordering of family life, where our children, as God's gift to us, may enjoy the security of love and be nurtured in the ways of the Gospel.

It is appointed for the well-being of our human society which cannot be stable unless that society honours, respects and sustains this marriage bond in accordance with God's word.

..... (husband) and (wife) who stand before you now desire to receive their marriage as such a gift, and enter upon it as such a calling, from God.

You are their witnesses, as they, who have already entered into a marriage covenant with one another, now enter into a covenant with him.

Let us pray.

Almighty Father, you are gracious and loving to us at all times. We bring you our humble thanks for all your good gifts to us. You have given us the gift of life: you have formed us in your own image; and you have watched over us from the moment of our birth. In Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, you have granted us to see the way of true life, and revealed to us the secret of true love.

We thank you for the gift of marriage, given to us to direct and sustain that love. Look with your favour and kindness upon (husband) and (wife) as they confirm their covenant of marriage before you. As you have brought them together in your wise providence, we ask you now to give them the blessing of your Spirit: that theirs may be in your sight a true and lifelong union.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of life. Amen.

The congregation is asked to stand.

The couple who have been married turn to face one another. The husband with his right hand takes his wife by her right hand. They say in turn (following the minister if desired):

Husband: I call on all of you present to witness that I (name) have taken you (name) to be my wedded wife, in accordance with God's word, to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death: and to this I promise God my faithfulness.

Wife: I call on all of you present to witness that I (name) have taken you (name) to be my wedded husband, in accordance with God's word, to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death: and to this I promise God my faithfulness.

(If any ring is to be given, the minister receives it and may say:

Bless this ring. O Lord, that it may ever witness as an outward symbol to the faithfulness and trust in this union.

or

Bless this ring. O Lord, that he who gives it and she who wears it may continue faithful, the one to the other, and both to you, in unbroken love.

The minister returns each ring, saying:

As a token of the covenant into which you have entered, this ring is given and received.

The ring is placed upon the fourth finger of the left hand.)

The minister continues:

Since you have covenanted together in marriage before God, let none separate what he joins together.

The minister invites the couple to kneel for God's blessing upon their marriage:

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you. May the Lord pour out the riches of his grace upon you, that you may please him, and live together in holy love to your life's end.

A hymn may be sung.

A passage from Scripture is read, which may be followed by a brief address, at the close of which the minister invites the congregation to join in prayer for those who have been married.

Eternal God, Creator and Father of us all, we praise you for creating mankind male and female, so that each may find fulfilment in the other. Today especially we pray for (husband) and (wife) as they seek your blessing upon their life together. Give them the strength to keep the vows they have made, to be loyal and faithful to you, and to support one another until death separates them. May each bear the other's burdens and share the other's joys. Help them to be honest and patient, loving and wise, toward one another and to all you give into their care: that by your grace they may ever be one, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

A hymn may be sung, after which the minister blesses the people from God.

NOTES:

1. Ministers using this service need not be Marriage Officers, and State Marriage Registers are not to be used to record it.
2. It is necessary that husband and wife produce documentary evidence of their marriage prior to the service, and receive such further pastoral instruction as the minister considers essential.
3. The minister should ensure that all present clearly understand that this service does not purport to effect a marriage.
4. It is suggested that a pastoral letter be given to the couple stating, among other relevant matters, that their marriage on (date) at (place) was blessed on (date) at (place) by the Rev. A.B. A copy of this letter may appropriately form the minister's record of the occasion.

Appendix C
MARRIAGE, DIVORCE
AND REMARRIAGE

(see also Appendix to The Articles of the Faith, Section 2)

General

1. The Christian vocation of marriage is a life-long union between a man and a woman, in conscious dependence upon the grace of God and as an expression of obedience to Him.
2. Ministers and Sessions, in their responsibility toward persons entering marriage as a Christian vocation, provide suitable pre-marital instruction.
3. Ministers and Sessions exercise a ministry toward divorced persons.
4. An enrolled member of The United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa who has been divorced, marries, while remaining a member of this Church, only by leave of his or her Session. This leave is normally given on the ground that the former marriage is irretrievable, and on the recommendation of the Moderator of Session, who discloses only such information as he sees fit. Members of the Session may raise matters of fact which they consider relevant.
5. No minister of The United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, who has been requested to officiate at the marriage of a divorced person, is required to consent or decline until he/she has the opportunity to make such enquiries as he/she deems needful, to ensure that the parties have an adequate understanding of the scriptural teaching concerning their intentions, and have examined the possible alternatives. The minister is not bound by the prior leave given by a Session.
6. If a minister consents to officiate at the marriage of a divorced person, he/she is deemed by this Church to have given a judgement that the marriage is in the better interests of all parties concerned, in the sight of God. The officiating minister bears sole responsibility for his/her decision, and if unable to come to a clear decision, declines to officiate.
7. There are the following exceptions:
 - (a) The blessing of civil marriage is excepted from regulations 5 and 6.
 - (b) The marriage of a divorced person to his or her former spouse is excepted from regulations 4, 5 and 6.
8. No minister of The United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, who holds in conscience that the marriage of divorced persons is wholly contrary to the Will of God as revealed in Scripture, is required to consider officiating at such a marriage.

**Responsibilities of the minister and spouse
when the marriage shows signs of breaking down.**

9. When a ministerial marriage shows signs of breaking down either spouse, or both, before taking any legal advice concerning their troubled marriage, and as a clear indication of their covenant relationship with the PCSA, must in the first instance, approach the Moderator of Presbytery or a member of the Presbytery's Pastoral Group for help. If for any reason the spouses are not able to approach the above they may contact the Ministerial Marriage Committee directly in which event the Ministerial Marriage Committee shall inform the Moderator of Presbytery of any such approach.
10. Should a minister and his/her spouse be separated for more than 180 days through marital breakdown, or should a summons for divorce be issued, the minister shall make an application to the Ministerial Marriage Committee for an interview, which interview shall take place within 180 days of the application being received.

Responsibilities of the Presbytery

THE PASTORAL GROUP CONVENED

11. If personal counselling does not resolve the marital problem, the Moderator convenes the Pastoral Group of the Presbytery, which considers how to care for those concerned, and take any necessary action. The Pastoral Group is free to consult and secure the help of the Ministerial Marriage Committee.

WHEN SUMMONS FOR DIVORCE HAS BEEN SERVED

12. Immediately the Presbytery becomes aware that a summons for divorce by or against a minister has been served the Pastoral Group shall, in consultation with the minister and spouse, consider appointing a counsellor or counsellors to them to assist them to work through all the implications of the divorce.
(Such counsellor(s) should be experienced in personal relationships and have a sound knowledge of the Church's thinking and procedures in this matter.)

WHERE THE MINISTER IS IN A PASTORAL CHARGE

13. If the minister is in a pastoral charge the following provisions apply:
 - (a) The Presbytery of the bounds, or its Moderator, or, where that is not possible, the Clerk, shall appoint an assessor to the Session of the congregation concerned.
 - (b) If, after one month of the assessor's being appointed in terms of para 11 above, divorce proceedings have not been withdrawn, the Presbytery (or if it is not possible for the Presbytery to act timeously, its Moderator or Clerk) shall:
 - (i) declare that the pastoral tie between the minister and the congregation is severed or the appointment is withdrawn, as the case may be;

- (ii) forthwith appoint an Interim Moderator to the congregation;
- (iii) declare that the minister is a minister without charge and is to cease exercising the ministry of Word and Sacraments which shall include holding any office and/or wearing of any ministerial dress and/or acting in any way which may be construed to be an infringement of his/her suspension until the Ministerial Marriage Committee has approved his/her application to be declared eligible to accept a call or an appointment or to resume the exercise of the ministry of Word and Sacraments;
- (iv) declare that for 15 years the minister may not receive a call from, or appointment to, the congregation he/she was serving at the time the divorce proceedings were instituted;
- (v) declare that the severance of the pastoral tie implies the seeking of alternative employment by the minister;

(When the pastoral tie is severed as the result of divorce proceedings being instituted, the Presbytery, through its Pastoral Committee, shall consult the congregation with a view to providing material and financial support for the minister and his/her family for three months after such severance, or until the minister obtains alternative employment, whichever occurs first. It is nevertheless understood that the ultimate responsibility for this support rests with the Presbytery which shall be entitled to approach the Assembly for assistance.)

- (vi) formally notify the Ministerial Marriage Committee of the action it has taken, and request its help.

WHERE THE MINISTER IS NOT IN A PASTORAL CHARGE

14. Where the minister concerned is not in a pastoral charge, the Pastoral Group of the Presbytery shall appoint a counsellor or counsellors in terms of 11. above. If after one month of the counsellor/counsellors' appointment, divorce proceedings have not been withdrawn, the Pastoral Group of the Presbytery shall inform the Ministerial Marriage Committee and the Presbytery (or if it is not possible for the Presbytery to act timeously, its Moderator or Clerk) shall declare that the minister is to cease exercising the ministry of Word and Sacraments which shall include holding any office and/or wearing of any ministerial dress and/or acting in any way that may be construed to be an infringement of his/her suspension, until the Ministerial Marriage Committee has approved his/her application to be declared eligible to accept a call or an appointment or to resume the exercising of the ministry of Word and Sacraments.

Responsibility of the minister after divorce

15. If a minister has not previously made application to the Ministerial Marriage Committee in terms of para 9.2 above for an interview, he/she shall do so when a Final Order of Divorce is granted. (See also Appendix E(3) para 3.) The

interview shall take place within 180 days of the application being received.

The Ministerial Marriage committee

COMPOSITION

16. The Ministerial Marriage Committee is composed as follows:

- (a) The core of the Ministerial Marriage Committee has at least 5 full members:
 - (i) a convener;
 - (ii) the General Secretary or his deputy;
 - (iii) the convener of the General Assembly's Ministry Committee or his/her deputy;
 - (iv) two other members of this Church.

(N.B. (i) and (iv) are appointed by the General Assembly.)

The above complement shall include at least one trained Marriage Guidance Counsellor. Both sexes shall be represented on the committee.

- (b) Co-opted members. (The committee has power to co-opt.)
- (c) In addition each Presbytery appoints a member of its Pastoral Committee or Group as a corresponding member. Such corresponding member shall attend the meeting of the Ministerial Marriage Committee when the case of a person under the care and discipline of that Presbytery is considered.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MINISTERIAL MARRIAGE COMMITTEE

17. The Ministerial Marriage Committee shall:

- (a) develop pastoral resources in Presbyteries for dealing with these matters;
- (b) be available for consultation as necessary;
- (c) from the time that a divorcing minister is declared a minister without Charge, assume a pastoral role in relation to that minister and his/her spouse, ensuring that both are cared for by the Pastoral Group of the Presbytery in which he/she resides;
- (d) consider and determine any application of a divorced minister to be declared eligible to accept a call or appointment or to resume the exercise of the ministry of Word and Sacraments;
- (e) consider any application of a divorced minister from another denomination who wishes to enter the ministry of this Church, with a view to advising the Consultative Committee;
- (f) advise the Ministry Committee on any application of a divorced person to be accepted as a Student for the Ministry;
- (g) advise the Ministry Committee on the continued recognition of any divorced student or probationer.

*PROCEDURES RELATING TO PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE MINISTERIAL MARRIAGE COMMITTEE*

18. In carrying out its pastoral responsibilities the Ministerial Marriage Committee shall:
- (a) meet, or at the convener's discretion appoint a sub-committee to meet, not later than one month after being requested by a Presbytery to assist in a marital crisis;
 - (b) meet, or have its sub-committee meet, if possible, with both parties to the divorce, separately and/or together;
 - (c) have the right to consult or interview any person who, in the committee's view, may be able to assist in its work.

*PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE DETERMINATIVE
AND ADVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE MINISTERIAL MARRIAGE COMMITTEE*

19. The Ministerial Marriage Committee shall:
- (a) normally meet in April and November to consider any applications;
 - (b) consult, if possible, with both parties to the divorce, separately and/or together;
 - (c) consult whomever it considers necessary, but shall in all cases consult the Pastoral Group of the Presbytery in which the applicant currently resides or the Presbytery in which he/she was divorced, and one person nominated by the applicant;
 - (d) ask and be guided by the answers to such of the following questions as are appropriate to the application:
 - (i) has the person maintained a direct and active link with the Church?
 - (ii) has the person attempted any restitution that may be possible in relation to the divorce?
 - (iii) has the person recognised and repented of his or her share in the failure of the previous marriage?
 - (iv) has the person sought and received forgiveness from God and sought his/her spouse's forgiveness for his/her share in the failure of the marriage and hurts caused?
 - (v) has the person been healed of the hurts resulting from the failure of the previous marriage to the extent that he/she is free to minister?
 - (vi) what is the present relationship of the applicant with the previous spouse?
 - (vii) has the person married another partner or is there any intention to do so? If so, what is the quality of the relationship?
 - (viii) has the person had sufficient time to adjust satisfactorily to the dissolution of the previous marriage?
 - (ix) has the person dealt constructively with the faults in himself or herself that contributed to the failure of the previous relationship?
 - (x) has the person made adequate provision for the children of the previous marriage, especially concerning custody and maintenance?

- (xi) in what ways has the person sought, and to what extent has the person benefited from counselling, help and care from Christian sources and specifically his/her Presbytery concerning the marriage breakdown and the divorce?
 - (xii) what indication is there that the person has received, and become an agent of the Good News of the Gospel?
20. If an application is not successful, at least one year shall elapse before the person concerned may make another application.

Responsibilities of the Ministry Committee

21. Before making a decision on an application from a divorced person to become a Student for the Ministry, the Ministry Committee refers the application to the Ministerial Marriage Committee which will follow its procedures and advise the Ministry Committee.
22. When a Student for the Ministry or a probationer divorces, the Ministry Committee takes advice from the Ministerial Marriage Committee as to whether his/her status shall continue to be recognised.

APPENDIX FOUR:

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Appendix A(3)

APPENDIX TO THE ARTICLES OF THE FAITH

Section 1: Worship and the Lord's Day

1. Religious worship is to be offered to God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and to Him alone.
2. Worship is acceptable to God through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of Him only; and is to be offered by us in His name, in reliance on the promised aid of His Spirit.
3. In New Testament times the worship of God does not depend for its acceptance on the place where it is presented, or towards which it is directed, but is well-pleasing to Him wherever it is rendered according to His will in spirit and in truth; wherefore God is to be worshipped everywhere; as in secret and in families; so also in the solemn public assemblies of His people.
4. Public worship is to be regulated according to the simplicity of the New Testament and conducted with due order and reverence, in a known tongue and without burdensome ceremonial.
5. The ordinary public worship of God comprises common prayer, the singing of God's praises, the reading of Holy Scripture, the preaching and hearing of the Word, and the offering of our substance for the service of God, with the due administration at fitting times of the sacraments instituted by Christ.
6. The public worship of God is especially to be celebrated on one day in seven, set apart by God from the beginning as a day of rest and gladness to be kept holy unto Himself. After the example of our Lord and His Apostles, the first day of the week is to be thus observed throughout the Church Universal as the Lord's Day, in memory of our Saviour's resurrection.

Section 2 - Marriage and Divorce

7. Marriage is to be held in honour, having been ordained of God in the time of man's innocence, as the foundation and bond of family life, and is to be between one man and one woman only.
8. Although marriage is not a sacrament of the Church, but an ordinance appointed for the human race, yet Christians should marry only in the Lord, and it is seemly and right that they be joined in marriage by a minister of His Word.
9. Marriage ought not to be within degrees of relationship forbidden in Holy Writ.
10. The position which this Church holds in relation to divorce is best set forth in terms of the text of the Westminster Confession of Faith amended and adopted by the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1958, which reads as follows:
"Because the corruption of man is apt unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage, and because the Church is concerned with the

establishment of marriage in the Lord as Scripture sets it forth, and with the present penitence as well as with the past innocence or guilt of those whose marriage has been broken; therefore as a breach of that holy relation may occasion divorce, so re-marriage after divorce granted on grounds explicitly stated in Scripture or implicit in the gospel of Christ may be sanctioned in keeping with His redemptive gospel, when sufficient penitence for sin and failure is evident, and a firm purpose of and endeavour after Christian marriage is manifest."

Section 3 - Civil Government

11. God, the Supreme Lord and Ruler of the nations, has instituted Civil Government, to be under Him, for the making and executing of laws, with a view to the preservation, good order, and welfare of society; and to this end He has armed rulers and magistrates with the power of the sword, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the defence and encouragement of those who do well.
12. It is the duty of the State, acting within its own province, to seek through legislation and government the common good of its subjects, and to exert the legitimate influence of the nation in favour of righteousness and peace throughout the world.
13. That Christians have a citizenship in Heaven does in no wise relieve them from the obligations of citizenship in the State, or preclude them from accepting civil office, when regularly called or appointed thereunto. In the discharge of all their duties as citizens, Christians are subject to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.
14. The Civil Power may not assume to itself spiritual or ecclesiastical jurisdiction; but should respect and protect the Church of Christ in the due exercise of its worship and administration of its affairs.
15. God alone is Lord of the conscience; so that, in all matters in which He has revealed His will every man is bound to render obedience to Him; wherefore any attempt on the part of the State to constrain the religious belief of its subjects, or to impose on them forms of worship, is an invasion of the rights of conscience.
16. It is the duty of the people to pray for rulers, to respect their office and authority, to obey their lawful commands, to pay them all just dues; nor may any person, on the plea of ecclesiastical employment or dignity, claim exemption from civil jurisdiction.
17. The duty of subjects to be obedient for conscience' sake does not forbid a people, when misgoverned or oppressed, to endeavour to change the laws or constitution of the realm, and, if necessary, to remove from office those rulers who have misused the authority with which they were invested.
18. God alone is Lord of the conscience; so that, in all matters in which He has revealed His will every man is bound to render obedience to Him; wherefore any attempt on the part of the State to constrain the religious belief of its subjects, or to impose on them forms of worship, is an invasion of the rights of conscience.