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**MARK 5 AND  
CARIBBEAN  
THEOLOGY**

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Mark 5 which contains the account of three miracles of Jesus, the exorcism of Legion, the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and the raising from the dead of Jairus' daughter, is central to the Gospel Mark. The chapter brings

together key elements of the Gospel of Jesus the Son of God as they are seen through these miracles stories of Jesus who through the grace and power of the Kingdom of God confronts the realities of alienation and oppression, distortion and marginalization, death and despair which were a part of the lived experience of empire. The narratives are woven together in ways that unmask the powers with their life-diminishing, life distorting and life destroying propensity. The narratives also betray the recalcitrance of such powers and their residual capacity for resistance in their rejection of Jesus and his mission of transformation.

This chapter in Mark's Gospel has been chosen as a part of this project on Caribbean Theology to give concreteness to Caribbean Liberation hermeneutics which is centrally a part of the theological method. Significantly, as will be demonstrated below, the passage chosen provides ample opportunity to grapple with pressing issues of identity and marginality as well as, importantly, with the resilience of the forces of oppression, distortion and dehumanization. The assertion that Caribbean Theology is public theology requires a demonstrable commitment to the historical project of creating a just and responsible society in the Caribbean.

The motivation and measure of such project for the community of faith is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God inaugurated in Jesus Christ.

The articulation of the nature of the envisioned just and responsible society in the Caribbean risks becoming a “wish list”. It is easy to make well-intentioned pronouncements about just and responsible society without such pronouncements being grounded in a sense of the ideal or rooted in realism. The development of notions of a just and responsible society is most meaningful when those notions arise out of an exegetical understanding of the eschatological ideal and when the exegesis is done in the light of the lived experience of the people. Caribbean Liberation hermeneutics provides the opportunity to come to terms with things as they are but also and compellingly so, grapples with an exalted sense of what is possible in the light of the Kingdom of God which has broken into human history in Jesus Christ.

The choice of Mark 5 as the focus of this exercise is based on certain assertions about Mark’s gospel in general and Mark 5 in particular. Mark 5 does not suggest itself for any obvious reasons. It is being asserted and will be demonstrated below that the following features that are peculiar about Mark 5 make it particularly useful to a Caribbean Theology project of this nature: a) Mark 5 is central to the anti-establishment and anti-imperial character of the Mark’s Gospel. Mark is a basic document. It is accepted generally that Matthew and Luke used Mark’s Gospel in the compilation of their Gospels. There is also agreement that to a lesser extent this may also have been the case with the Fourth Gospel. Its centrality lies in the fact that it brings together a focus both on imperial power and the power of the religious establishment in the way they bear upon the lives of the common people in both Jew and Gentile territory. b) In the way it is written, the Gospel of Mark calls attention to the lived experience of a people under Roman occupation in a way that is not dissimilar to the experiences of post-colonial societies. The stories of Mark 5 parallel the lived experience in the

Caribbean; the man, woman and child triad in the chapter provides a point of departure to reflect upon troublesome aspects of the circumstances of life in the Caribbean. c) The stories in Mark 5 reflect the ways in which power distorts, diminishes and dehumanizes human life in the service of empire and domination. d) Fascination with spirits (spirit/demon/duppy) is a part of the African cultural retention in the Caribbean and a part of the coping mechanism of the people of the Caribbean. Demons and demon possession are also a neglected part of the story of the New Testament as far as scholarly output is concerned. Mark 5.1-20 is among the longest passage and the most detailed account of demon-possession in the New Testament. It therefore provides an opportunity to engage the subject theologically with the utmost sobriety. e) The chapter includes accounts of rejection and ridicule of Jesus and provides a point of departure to reflect upon the resilience of and resistance by forces opposed to the project of renewal, wholeness and liberation inaugurated in Jesus. f) Legion who answers the question what is your name by saying “my name is legion for we are many” provides an opportunity to grapple with the issue of the distortion of identity and the interiorization of anger and oppression which is central to this project.

This paper will elaborate the above assertions. It will then develop the central message of the paper in terms of the mission of Jesus. It will indicate that by bringing the grace and power of the kingdom of God to bear upon the lives of these marginal figures, dehumanized man, exploited woman and child at risk, Jesus has set the pattern of humanization, transformation and liberation. Attention will also be paid to the resilience of forces opposed to the mission of Jesus. Questions will be raised about the nature of the project of transformation and liberation in light of what is revealed in the story about the recalcitrance of forces of oppression and their collaborators. Finally, the paper will explore options for ministry and public policy which arise from the mission of transformation and liberation carried on by Jesus in Mark’s story of Jesus.

a) *The Gospel of Mark as an Anti-establishment Document*

In the history of interpretation, the Gospel of Mark was first neglected because it did not meet the liturgical and catechetical needs of the church in the way that it was thought that its synoptic successors, Matthew and Luke did.<sup>1</sup> However, since the twentieth century Mark has been the most popular of the Synoptics for scholars. This has been largely due to conclusions drawn by many in respect of Marcan priority.<sup>2</sup> The interest in Marcan studies which began in the twentieth century has been intensified since it has become the site of new interpretative strategies. Fernando Belo's Materialist Reading of Mark has been succeeded by Ched Myers' Political Reading of Mark. The use of Mark as the site to illustrate a Caribbean liberation hermeneutic is attempting to build on this emerging pattern.

Brian Incigneri locates the provenance of Mark in 71 C.E. and contends that Mark is a 'pathetic' Gospel, seeking to engage with and meet the needs of Christians who were struggling with recent persecution.<sup>3</sup> Ched Myers sees Mark's Gospel as a manifesto. He contends that it is written to those committed to God's work of justice, compassion and liberation in the world and willing to raise the wrath of the empire.<sup>4</sup> For Myers, Mark has been fundamental to the genesis of the radical discipleship movement. He cites as support Eduard Schweizer's synopsis of Mark's thesis that "discipleship is

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<sup>1</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, (1999), 159.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Brian J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: the Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel*, Leiden, Boston (2003) 426.

<sup>4</sup> Ched Myers, *Binding The Strong Man: A Political Reading of the Mark's Stories of Jesus*, Orbis, MaryKnoll, (1988) 11.

the only form in which faith in Jesus can exist.”<sup>5</sup> Myers locates the provenance of Mark in the *locus imperium* between 66-70 C.E and indicates that Mark is an anti-establishment document.<sup>6</sup>

Suggestions that Mark is an anti-establishment document find rich textual support in Mark’s stories of Jesus in the following ways:

(i) *The theme of conflict in Mark’s narrative:*

By referring to Mark as an anti-establishment document it is being suggested that Mark presents to the story of Jesus not as one seeking to lend plausibility to social reality or giving normative dignity to its practical imperatives. Rather the stories of Jesus are presented in ways that unmask and uncover the workings of the inner structure, under-pinning and network of things as they are with the intention of challenging, subverting and overturning them. It is being further suggested that the stories do not present reformist but revolutionary strategies. The aim of these strategies is to delegitimize and disestablish by a pressure from below with new ideas, new norms and creating a new ethos.

Mark presents Jesus as a figure with whom the established Jewish religious leadership had occasion to be in conflict from the outset of his ministry. The plot to kill Jesus was not one hatched in the week of his passion, after

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<sup>5</sup> Myers (11) cites Eduard Schweizer, *Lordship and Discipleship*, Studies in Biblical Theology (SCM, London).

<sup>6</sup> Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark: An Early Christian to Roman Imperial Propaganda*, Mohr Siebeck, (2008), 76, is unconvincing in his determination that the prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple is post-factum and has tipped the arguments in favor of a composition and date no earlier than 70 C. E. His offer of two internal factors, eschatological expectation and the presence of world-wide mission as support for the lower limit of 65 C.E. is more convincing.

his entrance into Jerusalem and his cleansing of the temple. It was hatched from very early stages of his ministry.<sup>7</sup>

- (a) Jesus is presented in Mark as one whose authority and teachings exceed that of the members of the establishment described as teachers of the law. (1.22)
- (b) The words put on the lips of the demonized men in chapters one and five are open to the interpretation that Jesus was regarded as a threat to the establishment: “what do you want with us Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? (1.24) “What you want with me Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God don’t torture me.” (5.7)
- (c) Jesus appeared to treat with the customs and laws to which the members of the religious establishment attached a great deal of importance in a manner that could be seen provocation. This includes the fact that he healed on the Sabbath. Put differently, the Sabbath did not inhibit his miracle working activities. (1.29-34; 3.1-6).<sup>8</sup> He provided justification for his disciples of doing “what is unlawful on the Sabbath,” by citing an example from David in the OT. (2.24ff) He introduced the revolutionary and anti-establishment idea that the Sabbath was made for man and

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<sup>7</sup> Mark 3.6; this is the climax of the story of the healing of the man with the paralyzed hand. It is presented at the early stages of Jesus’ public ministry. The Fourth Gospel places the cleansing of the temple after the first miracle, the turning of water into wine in John 2 and like Mark develops the plot of conflict and misunderstanding with the Jewish establishment. Mark also places the cleansing of the Temple towards the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry rather than at the outset, but he develops the idea of a plot from the time of his ministry in Galilee.

<sup>8</sup> The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law, who had a fever is deemed to have taken place on the Sabbath because it suggests that a miracle took place as soon as he left the synagogue, (1.29) while other miracles took place “that evening after sunset.” 1.32

not man for the Sabbath. (2.27) He downplayed the importance of activities of personal piety like fasting by suggesting that such activities had merely a cosmetic impact in the face of the need for more fundamental changes. (2.18-22)

- (d) The offer of forgiveness of sins was intended to establish beyond doubt the nature of Jesus' authority (2.10) and therefore to throw down the gauntlet to the religious establishment.
- (e) The use by Jesus of the not too subtle parable of the wicked tenants (12.1-12) infuriated the religious establishment and cemented their intention to arrest Jesus. (12.12)
- (f) The discourse given by Jesus on the tradition of the Elders criticized the religious establishment for superficiality and hypocrisy and exposed the shallowness of rituals and regulations insisted upon by the religious leaders and which were burdensome to the people. (7.1-23)

Throughout the Gospel of Mark both the actions and the teachings of Jesus placed him in direct conflict and confrontation with the Jewish religious establishment. From very early in his public ministry there was evidence of the intention to engineer the demise of Jesus. Each new encounter between Jewish authorities and Jesus was used by them to seek the arrest or trap him. The confrontation between Jesus and the political authorities that is the officials and representatives of the Roman Empire was far more subtle. It will be a working hypothesis of this project that the references to demons and evil spirits through Mark's Gospel is a part of the hidden transcript which were ways of speaking about empire and a way of betraying the oppression by evil forces upon the lives of the people in the far flung places of empire. It will be argued below that this is the way Mark uses to speak about the resistance and challenge by Jesus in response to oppression



marginalization and distortion over the lives of people by the powers that be.

(ii) *The Use of Crowd in Mark*

Mark's stories of Jesus have managed skillfully to integrate two apparently opposite themes at one and the same time. On the one hand Mark presents Jesus as a reticent and reluctant Messianic figure and on the other hand there are all the appearances of a mass popular movement surrounding Jesus public ministry. In Mark stories of exorcism, of which the story of Legion is an exception (5.19), Mark silences the 'demons' in order to prevent them from making him known.<sup>9</sup> Some miracle stories end with strict instructions to keep the account private: the leper is told "see that you don't tell this to anyone;" (1.43) the parents of the dead little girl restored to life are strictly instructed "not to let anyone know about this." (5.43). It can be argued that the instruction to keep the account private is in the service of refusal of Jesus to allow his ministries (the miraculous events) to be treated as light entertainment or the occasions for Jesus' own self-indulgence or self aggrandizement. In the case of the twelve year old girl, keeping the story private could have been meant to facilitate her getting on with her life without becoming the object of intrusive speculation into the past details of her life. However when it is put alongside the other stories in Mark in which Jesus appears to seek to evade the attention and adulation of the crowd (1.37,38) and particularly using the shorter reading (16.8) as the intended end of Mark's Gospel, it seems justifiable to deduce that the

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<sup>9</sup> Mark 1.25; 34; 2.11, 12; In both the account of the healing of the daughter of the Syrophenecian woman's daughter and the child with the epilepsy which Mark's describes as demonization there is no reference to the silencing of the demons. This is perhaps due to the flow of the narrative. In the account of Legion Jesus instructs the man, clothed and in his right mind to return to his home and people (from which Jesus is deported) and to declare "how much the Lord has done for you, and how much he has had mercy on you." (5.19) This is because Mark is using the intentional declarations in as subversive a manner as the withholding of Jesus identity.

reticence and reluctance of Jesus were strategic.<sup>10</sup> The suggestion is being made therefore that Mark's stories of Jesus portrayed Jesus in a manner that would have been regarded as a threat to the establishment. Jesus therefore sought to avoid premature disclosure of his identity and that also prevented his ministry from suffering from association with popular distortions of messiahship. Jesus was arrested tried and crucified in a manner consistent with the view that he was an insurgent and a threat the establishment.

There is little doubt that Mark portrays Jesus in a way that suggests that he had mass following. Throughout the Gospel Mark there is a great pull towards Jesus on the part of the crowd. The rigidity of ethnic cleavages does not appear in Mark: Jews and Gentiles appear to come together in thronging Jesus. The crowd came from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon as well as from Galilee.<sup>11</sup> The crowd is comprised of artisans and peasants, women and children. At points Jesus takes steps to avoid the crowd and indicates that he has to guard the nature of his ministry from descending into rank populism and at other points he appears to deliberately limit their access to him.<sup>12</sup> The Marcan Jesus privileges the masses and responds to their plight, he shows compassion on them, feed their hunger, heals their diseases and casts out their demons. In response the people are impressed with his authority and

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<sup>10</sup> Mark 16.8 "trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid." Text critical conclusion that most reliable manuscripts end Mark's Gospel at this point would mean that the messianic secret remained in tact even after his resurrection.

<sup>11</sup> Mark 3.7-12.

<sup>12</sup> Mark does not develop the theme of Jesus' deliberate avoidance of becoming a bread and fish or a political messiah the way the Matthew and Luke positions it in the account of Jesus' temptation or the way the Fourth Gospel develops this idea in terms of the response of the crowd to his provision of food after feeding of the five thousand. See Matthew 4.1-11; Luke 4.1-13 and John 6.25-27.

compare the teachers of the law unfavourably with him.<sup>13</sup> Jesus selects and appoints his followers from among the common people and gives them authority to extend his reach and influence in response to the plight of the masses.<sup>14</sup>

Mark does provide a disclaimer to distance the ministry of Jesus from overt political challenge. He places that disclaimer on the lips of Jesus at the time of his arrest: Jesus insisted: “Am I leading a rebellion ... that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scripture must be fulfilled.”<sup>15</sup> Despite this disclaimer a picture emerges of a Jesus whose crowd support would have placed him over against the religious establishment and no doubt in their eyes in a manner that would make him a threat to them. Nothing that he did in the way Mark presents Jesus would have caught the eye of the Roman imperial establishment, but in the role that was played by the members of the Roman imperial establishment in Jesus trial and crucifixion they were at best unwitting collaborators. The Marcan Jesus is therefore an anti-establishment figure.

*b) Mark 5 and the Lived Experience in the Caribbean*

Mark 5 reads like a page out of newspaper in the Caribbean setting out Caribbean reality. The three miracle stories are found in exactly the same sequence in Luke and Mark.<sup>16</sup> Matthew interrupts the sequence by putting the healing of a paralytic, the call of Matthew and questions about fasting (Matt. 9.2-17) between the exorcism and the healing of the woman and the

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<sup>13</sup> Mk 1.22; 8.1,2.

<sup>14</sup> Mk 3.13-19; 6.7-13.

<sup>15</sup> Mk 14.48,9.

<sup>16</sup> Matt 8.28-9.26; Lk.8.26-56

raising of the child. David Bruce Taylor contends that the three miracles should be read along with the miracle of the stilling of storm which immediately precedes them in Mark's account and that together they make an irrefutably persuasive statement about Jesus as Messiah.<sup>17</sup>

These stories are accounts of the human situation that Jesus confronted in Palestine. They are a dissection and a cross-section of life in the far flung places of empire. This is what one sees when one surveys empire, violent men, exploited women and diseased children (children whose future is at risk). In a day in the life of Jesus going from place to place, randomly he encounters men stripped of their dignity, women bereft of their self-confidence and children robbed of their future. The three stories not only present distressing situations but also paint a picture of a society on the edge of despair; one that has ran out of options. Each of the stories tells its own version of hopelessness. About the Legion it says "no one could restrain him anymore, even with chains; for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces, and no one had the strength to subdue him" (5.4). Of the woman it said, "she had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better but rather grew worse" (26). When Jairus came to Jesus he said, "my daughter is at the point of death." (23) While Jesus stopped to heal the woman, people came from his house to say "your daughter is dead, why trouble the teacher any further." (35) And when Jesus seeks to challenge their despair with a word of hope, "she is not dead but sleeping; they laughed" (40) uproariously, derisively and dismissively.

Throughout the Gospel, there is a mainstreaming of the lot and experience of the working poor and the artisans. Mark privileges their struggles by his portrayal of Jesus as responding to the demonized, calling fishermen,

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<sup>17</sup> David Bruce Taylor (1992), 144.

helping older women overcome fever and dealing with the ordinary struggles of the poor in an evening of miracles. He ends the opening sequence of miracles in the first chapter with the cleansing of the leper. Mark 5 is the centre page of Marcan representation of Jesus as a challenge to systems of domination which have resulted in the marginalization of the mass of the people and the distortion of their lives. Mark's story of Jesus is the people's story how he met them and showed compassion on them and brought the grace and power of the Kingdom of God to bear upon their lives.

*c) Mark's Critique of Power and Domination*

The use of the language of power and domination takes into account the complex of issues involved in discussions of certain words used in the NT that seem to speak to the surplus capacity of evil in its superhuman or supernatural dimensions. Such words include principalities, powers, rulers, dominions, authorities, evil angels and demons. Marva Dawn<sup>18</sup> who critiques Walter Wink's trilogy on "the Powers" offers three types of interpretation of these "evil powers" or "principalities and powers": She suggests that there is a demythological approach led by Rudolf Bultmann, the personal demon approach led by John Stott and a structural approach led by Cullman and others.<sup>19</sup> A fourth option however is possible which has not been offered by Dawn but may yield some fruit is the contextual approach. This is the approach that seeks to identify the principalities and powers as they manifest themselves in a given context.

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<sup>18</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*, (2000 Schaff Lectures Pittsburg Theological Seminary, Eerdmans Publishing House, Grand Rapids, (2001) 10,11.

<sup>19</sup> Dawn, also Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1, trans. Kendrick Grobel Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, (1951) 257-58; John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians* InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, (1979) 263-67; See also Visser't Hooft, *The Kingship of Christ*; Cullman's *Christ and Time*: Albert H. van Del Huevel *These Rebellious Powers* Friendship Press, New York, (1965).

Mark's Gospel presents Jesus in an intentionally political manner that seeks to challenge the imperial domination over the lives of the people including Jews and Gentiles. He does so in a way that avoids the popular distortions of Messiahship that were abroad in the society. What has been described therefore as reticence on the part of Jesus in respect of his messiahship was to avoid any direct associations with other rebellions, uprisings and anti-Roman movements that were taking place in especially places like Galilee. The Galilean and Judean people were prominent among peoples subjected by Rome for their persistent resistance and rebellion. They were the most adamant in reasserting their independence and defending their traditional way of life, persisting in their resistance for nearly two centuries.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore the tradition of which Mark makes use and the stories of Jesus are presented in manner that shows Jesus as unmasking, confronting, disemboweling the powers and their collaborators (the Jewish religious establishment). The stories are clad with the hidden transcript or a sub-text which carries the message of the challenge and victory over the powers. William Stringfellow offers the following description of the principalities and powers:

Legion in species, number, variety, and name; creatures that are fallen (meaning that they thrive in chaos, confusion and competition); an inverse dominion (one that works backward—not to foster life but to dehumanize); not benign, but aggressive; causing all to be victims (with or without their knowledge); capturing leaders as acolytes enthralled by their own enslavement; engaged in rivalry with

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<sup>20</sup> Horsely, 35.

each other since their very survival is always at stake;  
and creating a new morality of survival.<sup>21</sup>

The use of references to demons in Mark fits easily into the categories that Stringfellow has suggested. The notion of hidden transcript is being nuanced for the purposes of this discussion. It is being suggested that it was Mark's purpose to present Jesus as a challenge and response to Roman domination and in so doing to unmask the real nature of the principalities and powers of which it was a part and its most self-evident representation.<sup>22</sup> It was also Mark's purpose at one and the same time to avoid popular distortions of messiahship. It is for this reason that Mark uses the language of demons. The use of the language of demons contemplates evil and its impact on human life, and by the using the reference to demon also obscures anything else that may have been in view by the intention of the writer. The Legion narrative in Mark 5 is the most developed expression of Mark's intention. Without seeking to make the same point, Louise Lawrence has offered the insight that 'the Legion narrative presents a multiple personality that is fragmented and self-destructive: indeed many have read the name as a 'double-voiced,' referring to Rome's military occupation of land.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Dawn, 5, 6 cites William Stringfellow, *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land*, Word Books, Waco, (1973) 77-94.

<sup>22</sup> Principalities and powers is Pauline language not Marcan. In Eph 6.10ff Paul speaks of the triad of evil in its surplus capacity and superhuman and supernatural dimensions in terms of principalities and powers, rulers of this dark world and spiritual wickedness in the heavenly realm. In the Apocalypse the triad is represented as the dragon the beast, and the false prophet, Rev 12, 13. In Mark 3 the triad is spoken of as Satan, Beelzebul and demons.

<sup>23</sup> Louise J. Lawrence, *The Word in Place: Reading the New Testament in Contemporary Contexts*, SPCK, (2009), 35.

Mark chapter five presents Jesus as crossing boundaries and moving interchangeably between Gentile and Jewish territories. Boundary Crossing is the observation made by Brain K Blount and Bas MF Van Iersel<sup>24</sup> to capture how Jesus confronts the human situation in *locus imperium*. Mark's narrative not only tells a human story, but it offers a critique on the existing power structure, both religious and political. The scene in Chapter five portrays Jesus moving betwixt and between gentile and Jewish territory, between Decapolis and Capernaum, and between a place under direct rule by Rome and a place in Galilee in which the local religious leadership elite were either witting or unwitting collaborators with Roman rule. Galilee was also a hotbed of opposition to Roman rule from which many uprisings and rebellion emerged. Blount suggests that Mark was interacting with his own context in this particular section. He says:

However, the context of culture suggests that for the community to which Mark wrote, the times were anything but good. Threatened by false messianisms of nationalism, the colonial domination of Rome, the economic subjugation of the subsistence living, and the institutional controls of a holiness/cultic ideology, the proclamation of a good news to the people of the land suggests some form of outside intervention.<sup>25</sup>

The boundary crossing of Jesus goes beyond the physical movement and the crossing of territorial boundaries decided among political forces however, formidable. Jesus also crosses boundaries which are psychological and social and reinforced by religious and social conventions. To make this

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<sup>24</sup> Blount considers the message of the Gospel of Mark is about boundary crossing of particular relevance to the African American Church. Van Iersel considers this to be the theme of Mark 4.35 -8.21.

<sup>25</sup> Blount 90,1.



clear however, one must pay careful attention to what may be called to subtext in the story.

Most commentators discuss the fact that in the Synoptics, the stories of the healing of the woman with flow of blood and the raising of Jairus' are kept together. Dibelius and Bultmann conjectured that originally the two stories may have existed separately. Vincent Taylor points out that Schmidt holds that the interweaving of the stories is due to historical recollections.<sup>26</sup> There are some obvious allusions that connect the two stories: Jairus' daughter is twelve years old, the length of the time of the woman's illness. Jesus is touched by the woman (an act of ritual defilement according to Leviticus 15.25-30) and touches the dead little girl, which also risked ritual defilement. As Jerry Camery-Hoggatt has pointed out, the true foil for the woman is not the little girl, but her father Jairus. He says:

It is the woman's faith that "makes her well" in v 34, just as it is Jairus who must "merely believe" (v. 36). Both Jairus and the woman fall at Jesus' feet, although the effect of that gesture is somewhat different in each case.... Yet the reader senses that Jairus—the ruler of the synagogue—must learn from the woman, must be prepared by the healing of the woman, for the raising of his daughter which follows.<sup>27</sup>

However there is something of more profound significance that is taking place in the interweaving of the two miracle stories. Two important textual details deserved to be noticed. The first is the fact that even though Mark introduces Jairus by name, a rare enough occurrence by Mark's standard,

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<sup>26</sup> Vincent Taylor.

<sup>27</sup> Jerry Camery-Hoggatt 1992, 138.

three times in the short narrative he identifies him as ruler of the synagogue. (22, 35, 36). It is Mark's purpose that in this miracle story who Jairus was, the ruler of the synagogue, must always be kept in mind.

The second textual note is that in describing the woman's condition Mark uses precisely the language of Leviticus (*en rusei aimaton*).<sup>28</sup> If a woman with a similar condition were to have to been discovered in Jerusalem, Levitical rules might have been enforced by the priest. However, this is in the region of Galilee where the local people are under the watch of the synagogue. The Synagogue rulers would have been required so far away from the temple in Jerusalem to remember to enforce the Levitical regulations against the woman, for her mandatory exclusion from the community during her period of uncleanness, in her case twelve years.

What we have here in Mark 5 is a challenge and response to power by the saving action of Jesus Christ. Legion has identified Jesus as the Son of the Most High God. The scene of the first miracle is in Gentile territory which is under direct Roman rule. The narrative about the exorcism is suffused with military imagery. "Legion" was a reference to the occupy force in Palestine. Myers has pointed out that pigs do not travel in herd, *agele* may be used as a reference to a military platoon; *epetrepesen* is a military command and *ormesen* in 5.13 connotes soldiers rushing into battle. The narrative is therefore suffused with Roman military vocabulary. There might also be an allusion to the drowning of Pharaoh's army as if enemy soldiers were being swallowed by hostile waters.<sup>29</sup> So that on one level Mark portrays Jesus as dealing with demons and on another level it is visible presence of empire, the Roman army, that is being routed. Jesus is therefore a challenge to the distortion and oppression of empire, but not in the ways that false messiahs promote, instead, in a way that sets the captive

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<sup>28</sup> This is different from Matthew 9.20; *gune aimorroousa*.

<sup>29</sup> Myers, 191; al a Derrett (1979), 5.

free and set people on course for the rest of their lives, he breaks the bonds of oppression. The language used calls attention the true nature of the evil that was being challenged by the irruption of the Kingdom of God in their midst made manifest in Jesus Christ. It was evil represented but not exhausted by political domination.

In the region of Galilee where the second and third miracles take place, there is Roman oppression. But the real source of pressure on the daily lives of people is what their religion does to them. It proscribes their lives in ways that hem them in on every side. Mark has made this point earlier through his argument with the leaders about the healing or eating on the Sabbath (2.23-3.6). The noose around the necks of their people put on by legalistic religion which strains at a gnat and swallows the camel is demeaning and life-distorting, preventing people from being active subjects over their own lives. By bringing the synagogue ruler together with the woman who on his say so would have been prevented from enjoying social intercourse with others and fellowship in the synagogue, because of her condition, and whose touch was a defilement, was Mark's way of showing Jesus challenging things as they were. A comment was being made on the type of faith community spawned by the synagogue movement. Jairus approaches Jesus first but when the woman presents herself Jairus is made to wait until the grace and power of God is brought to bear upon her life in the way of her healing and salvation. By forcing Jairus to wait in line while Jesus tends to this woman, who was socially excluded, a profound challenge was being made on Jairus' way of seeing people like her and on his understanding the grace of God.

#### *d. Spirits as a Part of Caribbean Cosmology*

The language of demon possession or "having unclean spirits" which Mark uses is seeking to give expression to two things about the evil in the world: the first is that evil has an extra-dimension to it. There is a surplus capacity which is super-human if not supernatural. The second is to talk about domination or oppression including

domination by imperial forces in the context of principalities and powers or demons, is not meant to be an abstract political discussion. Rather it is to give expression to or to come to terms with such realities where it gets to the rub. It is to give concreteness to this reality. It matters most in terms of its impact on people to diminish the quality of their lives and distort life itself. The narratives are therefore intended to portray the impact on individual human lives in ways that show that evil distorts, diminishes and destroys human life. When power has its way it is unimaginably vicious with its tyranny and cruelty. The grim picture of imperial power conveyed in the stories of demon possession is what power does, “unrestrained, unregulated, unaccountable, totally self-possessed, arrogant, sacrilegious and idolatrous”<sup>30</sup> What it does and what it means is, “it has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him.” (Mark 9.22). It also means, “night and day among the tombs and in the hills, he would cry out and cut himself with stones.” Mark attributes to the work of evil spirits Mark attributes to the work of evil spirits both scenes the father with the epileptic son and the man among the tombs in Gerasa.

Caribbean people have this fascination with spirits for understandable reasons: The majority of the people of the Caribbean are people of African descent. As a part of the African cultural retention no one would be surprised to discover the African cosmology of the interface and interaction between spirits and human experience survives in the Caribbean. It must also be taken into account the fact that the legacy of the trauma of the Middle Passage and three hundred years of enslavement have never been atoned for or cleansed. Caribbean psyche is undeniably shaped by these experiences. Death has been a dominant power in the Caribbean from origin to self-government. Death has been reality of the indigenous people, the Tainos and Ciboneys that have been decimated. The Caribs especially the Black Caribs, Garifuna that resisted European colonization on the last island to be colonized St Vincent, those that were not killed were exiled to the

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<sup>30</sup>Burchell Taylor, *Saying No to Babylon*, Xpress Litho Ltd, Kingston (2006), 86.

Central American mainland.<sup>31</sup> The Middle Passage was the passage of death; a full third of those who were expropriated from the continent of Africa perished at sea. The rate of homicide in the Caribbean as has been noted above is three times the world average and in Jamaica it is six times average homicide rates around the world. Death is a dominant feature of Caribbean reality. The resort of language of spirits or demons or duppies is an attempt to come to terms with and account for such realities as living in the midst of death. It has also been used from time to time as a way of fighting back or responding to such realities. This was certainly the case with Tacky's rebellion and his band of Obeah men, with legend of Nanny of the Maroons and with Voodoo in Haiti. In all of these instances a facility (real or imagined) to make use of superhuman if ancestral or nether worldly powers to counteract the forces which confronted them was called upon.

The image of legion if not the name legion, has been used by the powerful and vested interest throughout the history of the Caribbean to account for anti-establishment figures that have emerged on the scene from time to time and in one place or another. This was the case with Alexander Bedward who was confined to a lunatic asylum with the effect of killing his anti-establishment movement and scattering his followers. The image of legion was also part of the characterization of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, in the 1920s and 1930s Jamaica, who died in Britain at age forty, broke and with a broken heart. Rastafarainism in the heady days of the 1960s was treated as a movement of madmen, miscreants and misfits. Spirits, spiritualists and spiritists are prevalent in the Caribbean. Pentecostalism, Myalism and Pocomania (little madness) are the religion of the masses. It is the case that disempowered people find that the only place in which they have any power, is power over spirits. It is important to note therefore that "legion" is a double entendre. On the one hand it is a signifier of oppression and on the other hand it is the alienation of one who opposes oppression and is broken in the fight against oppression. Language about spirits becomes language about reality and in response to their reality.

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<sup>31</sup> I E Kirby, and C I Martin, *The Rise and Fall of the Black Caribs* (Garifuna), Cybercon Publications, Toronto (2004) 1-56.

One of the ways to account for Mark's use of demons or unclean spirits in the Gospel is to speak about power by way of a hidden transcript. An example of a hidden transcript may be given by referring to the recent production by Multi-Phonics LX, a British all white, all male group from Reading University of a Jamaican folk song, "this long time gal mi neva see you." The lyrics of the song which was well rendered go as follows:

Dis long time gal mi neva see you  
Come mek mi hol' your hand  
Dis long time Gal mi neva see you  
Come mek mi hol' your hand.  
Peel head John Crow sit up inna tree top  
Eat out the blossom;  
Come mek mi hol' you hand gal, mek mi hol' you hand.

The words are taken on face value but they are about something else. The song was written to welcome the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Jamaica in 1966 after Jamaica gained political independence in 1962. Her previous visit, the inaugural visit of her reign was thirteen years earlier in 1953. The Jamaican folklorist Miss Lou wrote the song to welcome the queen's visit and in the song she provides the Queen Elizabeth II with her assessment of things as they are: "Peel head John Crow sit up inna tree top, eat out the blossom..." the folklorist complains that social situation of the country since its independence is the same as it was before; the planter and merchant class (which she characterizes as scavengers with receding hair lines) are creaming off the fruits of the economy leaving nothing to the mass of the people to enjoy. The background and context in which the song was written give poignancy and potency to its message, a message that is often lost on those who sing the song.

It is being contended that in Mark's Gospel the use of demons, especially in the case of the Legion narrative has a hidden transcript. Legion that is presented has

interiorized oppression, (“my name is Legion for we are many”) he is tormented (“crying out among the tombs”) and a source of torment (“night and day”) he is out of control and uncontrollable (“no one could bind him anymore not even with a chain. [For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.”) he was dangerous and endangered (“he lived among the tomb”) more at home among the dead than among the living.<sup>32</sup>

Herman C. Waetjen makes the following remark about the significance of the name Legion. He says:

As a signifier the name “Legion” seems to bear several layers or levels of meaning. First, it is a Latin military term and links the demoniac to the institution of the Roman army. But what is the nature of the relationship between the two? Most likely it is colonialism! By its economic exploitation and political suppression, its social disruption and systematic denial of all attributes of humanity to its subjugated people, colonialism creates an atmosphere of living death which fosters a systematic breakdown of the human personality.<sup>33</sup>

All of the victims and objects of Jesus’ miracle working power in Mark’s Gospel are anonymous.<sup>34</sup> Their stories are narrated not for their sakes but they are

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<sup>32</sup> Matt 8.28 “they were so violent that no one could pass that way.”

<sup>33</sup> Herman C. Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power: A Socio-Political Reading of Mark’s Gospel*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, (1975), 115.

<sup>34</sup> The exception is Jairus. Jairus was not himself a victim though his daughter was in need of a miracle. The story is the only miracle event in Mark in which a name is offered.

presented as typical of what is found in the context and times in which Jesus' ministered in the far flung places of empire. Their reality of oppression, marginalization and distortion is the other side of the story of *Pax Romana*, they are the price of *Pax Romana*.<sup>35</sup> "The Pax Romana enabled the Romans to extract goods from the peoples they had subjected, in the form of tributes, in order both to support their military forces and to pacify the Roman masses with 'bread and circus'."<sup>36</sup>

Mark's Legion narrative is the longest account in the three synoptic gospels and is the longest account of demon possession in the New Testament. The details are to be read as Myers and others have correctly interpreted them to be about more than merely stories of demons or disembodied spirits. The details are to be read in the light of the parable of the binding of the strong man in Mark 3. The discussion of the binding of the strong man in response to the accusation from the teachers of the law that the source of Jesus' powers of exorcism was Beelzebul prepares the reader for the encounter with Legion. Mark describes Legion as one whom no one was strong enough to bind or control. In the narrative encounter with Jesus Legion meekly surrenders and the hosted demons plead for clemency, not to be sent out of the region but rather to be sent to occupy the pigs (5.12). Mark's story of Jesus is of one who can face the unmitigated power of evil and is able to vanquish evil, its agents and collaborators with dispatch.

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However it is to be noted that his name is of secondary importance in the narrative; it is more important to identify him as synagogue ruler.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Horsely, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Order*, Fortress Press Minneapolis, (2003), see discussion on Roman imperialism 20-34

<sup>36</sup> Horsely 34



*d) Legion and Disorientation and Distortion of Identity among Subject Peoples*

The use of the word “legion” at the time when Mark wrote his gospel towards the end of the seventh decade of the first century (66-70) inevitably invoked dread and terror; as well as evoking and deepening the sense of trauma among the peoples of Galilee. Legion was the strike force of the Roman imperialism that occupied frontier territories such as Judea and Galilee. The relationship between imperial Rome and subject people in places like Galilee was simple. Taxation and tribute extracted from the people maintained and fed the legion occupying the land as the most visible face of Roman oppression. The revenue taken on the backs of the people sponsored the elaborate games in the centre of empire. Failure to comply with their obligations to pay over tributes, revenues, duties and taxes was met firm, resolute and extreme measures. Even more severe measures were reserved to stamp out any form of rebellion and uprising. This is how Josephus describes it:

They were accordingly beaten and subjected to torture of every description ... and then crucified opposite the walls. Some five hundred or more were captured daily. ... [Titus] hoped that the spectacle might induce the Judean to surrender for fear that continued resistance would involve them in a similar fate. The soldiers out of rage and hatred amused themselves by nailing their prisoners in different postures; and so great was their number that space could not be found for the crosses nor crosses for the bodies.<sup>37</sup>

Horsely offers his own useful terse assessment of the terror and vengeance exacted on subject people by Roman imperialism. He says:

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<sup>37</sup> Horsely, 29; see Josephus, “War” 5.449-51.

There is no way we can understand such practices as crucifixion, mass slaughter and enslavement, massacres of whole towns and annihilation of whole peoples other than as purposeful attempts to terrorize subjected peoples.<sup>38</sup>

He goes on to talk about such forms of viciousness as crucifixion including unburied bodies as carrion for wild beasts and birds of prey.<sup>39</sup> The social arrangement included a pyramid of patronage with a rigid social stratification. Some lived in extravagant opulence and others in dire poverty and want. The general populace was treated like props never taken into consideration as the centre of anything that was worthwhile. They were subjected to the arbitrary and unregulated use of power, unaccountable and unrestrained. The name legion therefore necessarily invoked this sense of terror and trauma.

Generally “legion” is treated among New Testament scholars as derangement and schizophrenia. Waetjen describes him as “a violent schizophrenic devastated by a fragmented psyche and deeply estranged from himself and his society. Abandoning his fellow human beings, he has taken residence with the dead, but his despair has not been alleviated. In his desolation he continues to be tormented by self-hatred and impelled to self-destruction.”<sup>40</sup>

Franz Fanon is quoted to give credence to the view that this type of deranged behavior is consistent underdevelopment. Fanon says:

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<sup>38</sup> Horsley, 27.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Waetjen, 115.

The native will strengthen the inhibitions which contain his aggressiveness by drawing on the terrifying myths that are so frequently found in underdeveloped communities. These are maleficent spirits which intervene every time a step is taken in the wrong direction, leopard-men, serpent-men, six-legged dogs, zombies ... which create around the native a world of prohibitions, of barriers and of inhibitions far more terrifying than the world of the settler.<sup>41</sup>

Waetjen furthers his point by arguing that “the demoniac is possessed by many unclean spirits. As such he is *the representation* of a gentile ‘(dis)order’ and (dis)integration, and there are many more like him who are afflicted with the same derangement.”<sup>42</sup> The issue is not what the man was but how the narrative is being used by the Gospel writer. The details provided by the narrative are useless if all the writer wishes to convey is the fact of the “legion’s” derangement. Furthermore demon possession in the Gospel of Mark seems to have a wider reference than simply to schizophrenia or madness. Rather as has been asserted above the encounter with Legion is being used to speak at least in part about the encounter of the people of the land with the occupying force. This is why the narrative is suffused with military language. However while the occupying force is the representative of the evil that has brought disorientation, disorder, life-

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<sup>41</sup> Waetjen 116, cites Hollenbach, “Jesus Demoniacs and Public Authorities,” 547; see Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York Grove Press, 1968), 55-61, and 249-310.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 117.

diminution and destruction, the occupying force does not exhaust the evil on the land.

Significance is to be given to the fact that there is an interiorization of this oppression so that the people have lost a sense of themselves. Legion, (“my name is legion for we are many”) is at one and the same to the signifier of the disorientation and self-distortion and a parody of those collaborators who are more Roman than the Romans. The problem is therefore two-fold: on the one hand there is the problem of occupation and expropriation of the assets and resources of the people by a dreadful and terrifying force; and on the other hand there is the fact that the mores and ethos of this alien force have been interiorized so that the people have lost the sense of what they have and who they are. This is something with which those who live in the shadow of empire are entirely familiar. Legion is an account of the loss of identity, the eroding of the sense of self and the sense of place. This is the reasons in the shadow of empire subjects become clients and consumers and mimic men. Legion confronts the reader with the fact of disorientation and distortion brought by the forces of oppression. However, it also confronts the reader with the fact that oppression distorts the consciousness of the oppressed foisting upon the oppressed self-doubt and the destruction of self-belief and ultimately with a distortion of the sense of self. This is what was understood by philosophers and prophets in the Caribbean that spoke about “emancipate yourself from mental slavery for none but ourselves can free our minds.”

The image of legion in Caribbean experience is a double entendre. It may be used to describe figures that have been demonized by the powerful as well as those who have appeared as an outcome of oppression and alienation to be entirely possessed by demons. In this “legion” means both to be demonized and to be demon possessed. Movements like Rastafarianism, and Revivalism (Pocomania) and to a lesser extent, Myal and Obeah represented at in their earliest incarnation such profound departures from

the status quo ante and existed as counter points of the dominant cultural ethos as to be characterized as movements of madness. However, they were often people interacting with and rejecting domination by the assertion of movements of survival and self-liberation from below. Such movements have not been monolithic or pure but have also included elements of self-rejection and superstition.

Figures like Tacky, Alexander Bedward, and Marcus Garvey in Jamaica, Busso in Barbados, Toussaint L'Overture and Bookman in Haiti, Joseph Cheotyer in St Vincent whom later history was to accord with the status of heroes and freedom fighter were demonized by the ruling elite in their time. On the other hand, the image of Legion depicts individual historical figures that were completely alienated but are no less the product of the life-diminishing and life-distorting realities of the Caribbean: The crime bosses (dons) and gunmen from Jamaica's killing fields are the most self-evident examples of this. On May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010, there was a brazen and organized assault upon the Jamaica state by gunmen, they assassinated law enforcement personnel, razed police stations to the ground and they barricaded themselves in communities from which to launch attack upon the police. Eventually the police gained the upper hand, met their objectives and crushed some of these criminal gangs. One of those killed was Cedric "Doggie" Murray whose diary and his gun was recovered from his body. Murray is one a long list of criminal gunmen who have met their demise, but his diary included comments and statement that made him an unwitting parallel with the Garasene demoniac, or Legion.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The Sunday Gleaner and The Sunday Observer newspapers of September both carried excerpts from the Diary of Cedric "Doggie" Murray a man who had been on the police "Most Wanted" list for more than seven years. He was shot and killed by the police and his journal which he kept was taken from his body along with a firearm after he was killed. The diary which had sporadic entries over a period of all most three years chronicled his journey and his emotions in a life of crime which began at about age 11 in primary school but came into real focus after he was deported from

Christopher Rowland and Mark Corner corroborate this view of demon possession when they make the following observation:

We are not talking about disembodied spirits free from the affairs of men and women. The powers are an indication of a supra-individual dimension to the problems of life. It is not just the case that there are individuals who need dealing, for what confront Jesus are not merely disturbed individuals but persons who are taken over by a power whose characteristics are manifest in disruptive behavior and social dislocation. They are, as it were indicators of the distortion of the world, whose distance from 'normal' people is itself a sign that the latter allow those designated abnormal or possessed by unclean

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USA in 2001 and joined the "Stone Crusher Gang". It told of his loneliness and that his gun was his best friend. It told of his failed love life, his frustration at not being able to see his son, and his frequent narrow escape from the police that he called "Babylon". He confessed to loving "the Lord with passion" and acknowledged that he did the things he did because of "Sin". He spoke of his loyalty to the notorious crime family of Lester Coke and his son Christopher Dudus Coke, and chronicled his efforts to defend Dudus against capture by the police on May 24<sup>th</sup> 2010. Christopher Dudus Coke has since been extradited to the USA to answer drug and firearm charges. Police allegations against Murray were that he was an itinerant assassin and had killed more than one hundred persons since 2001. See below: <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20100905/news/news1.html>; <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20100905/lead/lead1.html>; <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20100905/news/news21.html>; [http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Gangster-says-he-started-life-of-crime-from-primary-school-days\\_7933895](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Gangster-says-he-started-life-of-crime-from-primary-school-days_7933895).

spirits to carry the burden or wider social dislocation.<sup>44</sup>

This way of reading the story is corroborated by the fact that Jesus disallows Legion clothed and in his right mind from leaving Gerasa and Decapolis. The demons can be exorcised and swallowed by hostile waters but the rejection of one's home and people will do little to remove the self-negation, self-rejection and self-doubt occasioned by oppression and marginalization. Accepting one's location and space is part of one's self-acceptance.

*The Message of Mark 5: A Stranger in the Midst*

A Caribbean reading is struck by the fact that Mark positions Jesus as a stranger in the far flung places of empire. He is always coming and going, never domiciled in the area. The image of Jesus entering the region of the Gerasene in the Decapolis and then being deported from that place has rather striking parallels in the Caribbean. The parallels include the deportation of the five hundred Trelawny Town maroons from Flagstaff in St James to Halifax in Nova Scotia. From there some of the maroons eventually made their way to Sierra Leone in West Africa. The maroons had been fighting for the right of place and their sense of self. In the eyes of the planters and colonizers they were a threat to the peace of empire and the prosperity of the colony, they were mutinous and rebellious and deportation was chosen for them. The deportation of the Black Caribs from St Vincent to Honduras is also a striking parallel. They had wanted good for themselves. They fought the British and the French to keep possession of their land, the island chain of St Vincent and the Grenadines. After a long war of attrition they were finally defeated by a superior military force, the British military under the command of General Abercombe. However

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<sup>44</sup> Christopher Rowland and Mark Corner, *Liberating Exegesis: The Challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies*, Biblical Foundations in Theology, General Editors, James D G Dunn, and James P Mackey, SPCK, (1990), 103,4.

Kirby and Martin describe their deportation after a long struggle for a more just and equal option in the following way:

At last in early October most of the Black Caribs, some 5080 of them, including... women and children gave themselves up. They consoled themselves that they were not the first, nor would they be the last people to be defeated in war. They had fought a god fight and been beaten by a great nation. The Caribs set sail for Roatan on March 11, 1797. It is alleged that by the time of their embarkation their numbers had been decimated by almost 50% by a malignant fever in Balliceaux.<sup>45</sup>

Other parallels include Alexander Bedward whom they confined to a lunatic asylum, Marcus Garvey whom they exiled, Walter Rodney<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Kirby and Martin 49, 50.

<sup>46</sup> Rupert Lewis, "Jamaican Black Power and Walter Rodney in 1968, A Private Archive", in Jamaica Journal, Institute of Jamaica 130 Anniversary Issue Vol. 32 Nos 1-2 43ff details the story of the October 1968 protest at the University of the West Indies Mona Campus to protest the banning of Walter Rodney a Guyanese National and Professor at the University who had travelled to Montreal to attend a black writers conference. Rodney was deemed by the Government of Jamaica to have been the leader of the Black Power movement and was declared *persona non grata*. The student protest moved the following resolution in the wake of Government banning black literature: "The Government of Jamaica has banned all publications by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, *Message to the Black Man* by Elijah Mohammed, and the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*. These are books by conscious blacks following the footsteps of the Hon. Marcus Garvey and speaking against the oppression at the hands of whites. Every black man should read these books. We, a section of the black population meeting at Marcus Garvey's shrine on Sunday August 4<sup>th</sup> demand that the Government withdraw its ban on black people's literature. We also call upon all our black brothers and sisters to get hold of any of these books by Stokeley Carmichael,



whom they excluded, declared *persona non grata* and Claudius Henry who was imprisoned and whose son was hanged. Each of these insisted on a better life, a more just and equitable society especially to benefit the African majority in the population. The black majority were landless and poor and for generations were made a curse and a by-word. These who sought to empower them and challenge the status quo ante were variously persecuted and rejected.

The Caribbean reader accepts the contextual parallels with the situation in Galilee and Judea to which Jesus went. Like those regions the people of the Caribbean have experience of disfranchisement, dispossession and disorientation.

This Stranger who comes by boat has turned out to have welcomed parallels with those who have fought for the liberation and selfhood of the people of the Caribbean. However, what the Caribbean must first determine is whether this Stranger in the midst, this new arrival by boat, can be trusted. Caribbean existence has been defined by the boat. It is the boat that has effectively brought the Caribbean into being. The present composition of the population all have forebears who were brought by boat. The overwhelming majority were brought against their will and initially in circumstances that have proven disadvantageous to them. The food (mono-crop agriculture) produced in the Caribbean is exported to advantage of the North Atlantic. The food consumed (as well as textiles and equipment) consumed by the Caribbean is imported. The experts, consultants and policy paradigm as well as in the institutional framework of governance in the Caribbean are imported. It has been demonstrably

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Elijah Mohammed and Malcolm X no matter what the government says." This is our fundamental right as black people. In response to this protest the army and police surrounded the University campus for two weeks.

the case that the outcomes of the trading relationships with the centres of which the Caribbean is periphery have resulted in the systematic self-impoverishment and under-development of the Caribbean.

Those who provided a sacred canopy for colonization, and defenders of things as they are who have sought to give legitimacy and render the population more docile and gullible originated elsewhere and came to the Caribbean by boat. Both Missionary theology and the its more modern counterpart, Gospel culture have demonstrated superficial commitment to challenging and change the status quo ante in the Caribbean. Missionary theology appeared to offer legitimacy to the plunder of the region by the emissaries from the North Atlantic as the will of God. Gospel culture appears to promote consumerism which inevitably results in a spike in importation of the goods and services from the North, as the sign of divine blessings. In a word then the boat has changed the world to the advantage of the North Atlantic and to the disadvantage of places like the Caribbean. The Caribbean is within its rights to be suspicious of this new arrival by boat: it wants to know whether he is different from other arrivals in the region. What will he do with what he has found in the region that is different from what other arrivals by boat have done to and with the region?

Mark anticipates this question and provides the response in the opening narrative in chapter 5. He uses the inclusio, vv 2 and 18. V 2 “and coming out of the boat,” and v 18, “and going into the boat”, frame the beginning and the end of the narrative. It there indicates that between leaving and re-entering the boat Jesus had made a contribution of enormous proportion and significance to the region of Decapolis.