

A Theological Reflection on the Parable of Samaritan Luke 10:25-37

Julie Gardiner

7 Parken Court, Noarlunga Downs. SA 5168
julie@gardiners.me

Julie Gardiner is an accredited Baptist Pastor within Baptist Churches of South Australia (BCSA). She is a senior leader at Christies Beach Baptist Church, where she exercises her passion for social justice through local community projects. She is currently studying for her PhD thesis and is exploring the current conversation between LGBTQ individuals and their advocates and individuals in the member churches of BCSA. Julie completed a Master of Ministry at Tabor College Adelaide. She is married to Daniel, also an accredited Baptist pastor. They have twin adult sons and one granddaughter.

Abstract

This paper is a theological reflection on the Parable of the Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). It resulted from PhD research into the conversation and relational dynamics between LGBTQ persons and their advocates and individuals who are members of churches belonging to Baptist Churches of South Australia (BCSA). The paper weaves the issues, experiences, and expectations from the participants' narratives with a theological reflection on Luke's approach to 'other'. It concludes with the lessons gleaned from the parable of the Samaritan, along with some practical applications.

A Theological Reflection on the Parable of Samaritan Luke 10:25-37 (NIV)

The Parable of the Samaritan

²⁵ On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

"Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied, "How do you read it?"

²⁷ He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind';

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and ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied, “Do this, and you will live.”²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”³⁰ In reply, Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.³³ But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.³⁵ The next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” (NIV)

The following paper is a theological reflection on the parable of the Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37 NIV) that came from PhD research I am currently conducting through Adelaide College of Divinity and Flinders University. This study has full ethics approval and participant authorisation. I am an accredited Baptist Pastor in South Australia, and I am studying how to facilitate dialogue between member churches and congregational members of Baptist Churches in South Australia (BCSA) and LGBTQ persons and their advocates. There were 55 participants in the research project, from a range of different roles and identities, but all South Australian and all have personal interaction with Baptists in SA.

Using the methodology ‘grounded theory’, I analysed the interviews from the participants to understand the main subjects that people were dialoguing about in the conversation between the different positions towards LGBTQ and faith (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). The research was born from necessity. In my pastoral work, I often

find myself standing between those in the church who affirm LGBTQ theology and praxis and those who come from a non-affirming perspective.

Luke-Acts is the story of the influence of diversity on the formation of the Early Church as cultures and worldviews wrestled with issues of faith and praxis. Comparisons between the Gospel of Luke and the other Gospels reveal Luke's priority to include 'other'—those overlooked, marginalised, and excluded by the majority in 1st-century society—into the story of Jesus' inauguration of the coming Kingdom (Green, 1995). Luke narrates everyday stories and parables as examples of how to action his theological perspective on inclusion. Luke's ability to couple his theology with praxis is an exemplar of how to conduct conversations in places of difference (Green, 1997, p. 426; Nadella, 2011, p. 115-16). Consequently, theological reflection on Luke-Acts provides a practical exercise in recognising the pitfalls in a dialogue between non-affirming and affirming perspectives on LGBTQ.

The parable of the Samaritan challenges the negative perception of 'others.' It appears in chapter 10 of Luke's Gospel; however, the background to the story starts in the previous chapter, which depicts the depth of hostilities between Jews and Samaritans. In Luke 9:51-55, Jesus sends messengers ahead of him to a Samaritan village. The village refuses Jesus' entry; an insult in a society where hospitality to a stranger is paramount in faith and cultural expectations (Koenig, 1985, p. 15-20; Chalmers 2020). Jesus' Jewish followers retaliate with a request for God's judgement to destroy the entire village with 'fire from heaven'. The speed of the escalation in the rhetoric is indicative of the enmity between the groups; a humiliating snub is met with a threat of violence against men, women, and children. However, Jesus' response is counter-cultural, and he rebukes his Jewish disciples, not the Samaritans who reject him (Dyck, 2013, p. 126-127). The moral of the story is seen in the disciples' ease in presuming to know God's perspective on the issue and their expectation that God's retribution would follow their judgement. It is easy to see the faults in the disciples; less easy to see those same faults mirrored in ourselves. In today's context, the language of 'fire from heaven' is heard in the rhetoric against LGBTQ lifestyles and the cultural war played out in the public discourse (Hollier, 2022; Marin, 2011). It is a *Selah* moment to consider whom Jesus would rebuke today.⁴ From this familiar story of enmity between Jews and Samaritans, Luke moves his audience into an unfamiliar

⁴ *Selah* is a Hebrew word that means pause and consider what was just said.

place where Jesus uses the Samaritan as the story's hero. In an unlikely plot twist, those who reject Jesus suddenly become the exemplar.

The first audience to hear the parable of the Samaritan lived in a religiously, socially, and ethnically diverse world which mirrors our 21st-century context, enabling a correlation between the two eras (Rhoads, 1996; Nadella, 2011, p.125). Luke-Acts acknowledges the reality of 'other' in a diverse world and the challenges that come when the different worldviews connect. In the interviews I conducted for my research project, participants also mentioned the challenges created by diversity, frequently referring to 'us and them' to explain cultural, social, and religious boundaries that surrounded their experiences of faith and church in a Baptist context. Some acknowledged the segregating language of 'us and them' but struggled to find alternative ways to express themselves. However, Luke uses 'other' (in Luke 10, it is the Samaritan) to challenge our picture of ourselves and those excluded by cultural, social, and religious boundaries.

In this positive account of Luke's portrayal of 'other', it is important not to ignore Luke's weaknesses. Luke is a 1st-century man, bound in many ways to the blind spots the culture of his day instilled in him. For example, feminist theologians have highlighted how, despite the prevalence of women appearing in Luke-Acts, Luke does not report women's speech unless it is to use their words as the introduction to either Jesus or the Apostle's correction or instruction. For example, in Luke 10:38-42, Martha's speech voices her perspective on Mary listening to Jesus' teachings rather than submitting to the expected gender role of serving the disciples. Her perspective set the context for Jesus' rebuke. Equally, when relaying the story of the sinful woman at Simon the Pharisees' house, the woman is reduced to an object in the story, being spoken about and not to until addressed by Jesus, and even then, in the story, she is the object of their gaze (Thibeaux, 1993)

Luke relies on parables in his narrative. The parable of the Samaritan allows him to widen the dialogue from a simple retelling of an exchange between Jesus and the religious expert to an invitation for the audience to join in the conversation. McCracken picks up on this idea of parables being an invitation, likening the parables to dialogue theorist Martin Buber's I-Thou way of communicating. Buber argues that communication involves dialogue between people—I and Thou—and never between a person and a problem. He describes the dialogue between a person and an

ethical/moral issue as degenerating the conversation from a place of equality—I and Thou—into ‘I-it’ discourse (McCracken, 1994, p, 77). American theologian, Klyne Snodgrass agrees that the strength of parables is their invitational approach; he said: ‘people tolerate discussion but attend stories’. However, he also compares Jesus’ use of parables to speech-act-theory—i.e., Jesus anticipated a change in behaviour from hearing them (Snodgrass, 2008, p. 1-3; Briggs, 2001). Parables expect a response from the hearer; they create a space to say: What did you hear? What did you understand? ‘Go and do likewise’ Luke 10:37 (Wuthnow, 2012, p. 136-137). Based on speech-act theory, Snodgrass suggests the parable of the Samaritan demands two responses from today’s audience:

On the basis of this parable, we must deal with our own racism but must also seek justice for, and offer assistance to, those in need, regardless of the group to which they belong (Snodgrass, 2008, p. 361).

The parable of the Samaritan should force to the forefront the uncomfortable question: why a Samaritan? Luke’s original audience would instantly pick up on the differences between Jews and Samaritans. They would be intrigued as Jesus pits Priests and Levites—who teach and uphold the Torah—against the Samaritans, who held a significantly different version of the Torah. Samaritans had a different Pentateuch from the Jews and situate God’s Temple at Mount Gerizim, not Jerusalem. The Jewish high priest and prince—John Hyrcanus—destroyed the Samaritan temple in 128 BC when the Samaritans refused to convert to Judaism (Magen, 2007; Nodet 2011). However, the Samaritans are not a ‘quasi nation’ but rather represent another way of cultic worship of the God of Israel (Wolter et al., p. 79; González, 2015, p. 32). Luke’s audience would question why Jesus deliberately chose the ‘heretic’ over his cultic faith to be the hero.

The parable of the Samaritan offers the same challenge to today’s church regarding our attitudes toward others who hold a different theological interpretation from our own. If we listen, Luke-Acts shines a light on our propensity to preconceptions and prejudices. This parable allows today’s audience to consider whom, in their own context, the Samaritan represents and whom they exclude and how they will change in light of this revelation. It is interesting to imagine emulating Snodgrass’s question in a conversation between Baptists and LGBTQ who hold differing perspectives. Before

tackling the thorny issues that mark people's differences, what if the majority stakeholders had to explain not their position in the debate but rather what actions have been taken to 'seek for justice' and 'offer assistance' to 'other'?

The parable is known as 'the Good Samaritan', although the adjective is not used in the original story.⁵ However, 'good' is a useful adjective to illustrate Luke's agenda for challenging the status quo on acceptance and exclusion as the character the original audience would have classified as the 'bad' person—the other from the marginal and 'disdained community'—turns out to be 'good' (Bovon et al., 2013, p. 51). Familiarity with the parable, coupled with the traditional sermon conclusions of 'love your enemy' or philanthropy and charity, and the innate predisposition of readers to play the part of the hero, conspire to dull the modern-day audience's ability to be challenged by Luke.⁶ Theologians, such as Green and Wuthnow, argue that removing the parable from its historical location and studying it independently from its context within the Luke-Acts narrative has resulted in a narrowed application of the 'Good' Samaritan to a very individualistic ethical praxis (Wuthnow, 2012; Green, 2010, p. 77-78). Whilst the call to acts of charity and unconditional love is commendable, these are not the only messages of the parable. Jesus did not cast the character needing help as a despised Samaritan; Jesus cast the Samaritan as a role model to emulate. An ethical focus diminishes the offensiveness of Jesus' focus on the Samaritan as the exemplar for living obediently to the Torah (McCracken, 1994, p. 7).

To fully understand the challenge of Jesus' parable, Green suggests changing the character of the Good Samaritan to a modern alternative (i.e., those we view with equal prejudice), such as The Good Homosexual; The Good Feminist; The Good Refugee; The Good Addict. However, Green has missed an opportunity to emphasise his conclusions. By labelling 'other' as 'good', he adds a caveat to the parable—that it is only possible for the religious expert to learn from, and emulate, homosexuals etc., when they are judged as being 'good'. However, Jesus never labelled the Samaritan as 'good'. Adding 'good' to those we today would view with a prejudicial bias diminishes the powerful challenge of the parable. Luke aims to uncover hidden biases toward 'other', and he achieves this by confronting the audience with a radical concept. Those

⁵ Luke 10:25-37

⁶ However, there is research that shows that people who live by the guiding principles of their faith were less likely to be a good Samaritan towards people they viewed as 'sinners'. Batson, C. D., Eidelman, S. H., Higley, S. L., & Russell, S. A. (2001). "And Who Is My Neighbor?" II: Quest Religion As A Source Of Universal Compassion. *Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion*, 40(1), 39-50. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0021-8294.00036>

whom the audience would usually see as 'good' (for example, the religious leaders and teachers and experts in the Torah) are the antiheroes, and the 'sinners' are shown to be 'good.' Confronting our biases is essential in creating what theologian Miroslav Volf describes as the drama of embrace—a place of mutuality in a dialogue of fundamental differences—because it raises the uncomfortable question: why do I believe that you are 'out' and yet I am 'in'? (Volf 1996).

Luke draws awareness to the murky waters of boundary keepers, bouncers who admit and prevent people from entering the fullness of the Kingdom of God. Snodgrass observes our propensity to set boundaries; for example, Peter wanted boundaries on forgiveness (Mat 18:21-22). In the parable of the Samaritan, the religious expert wanted boundaries to exclude others through the labels of 'sinner' or 'heretic'. Snodgrass highlights how the religious expert's boundaries are influenced by racial hostility and not just ethics (Snodgrass, 2008, p. 358). The parable illustrates how recognising and laying aside our stereotypes—forged in our judgments on ethnic, social, racial, sexual and gender differences—tears down boundaries and keeps the welcoming posture of 'open arms' advocated by Volf (Volf, 1996, p. 107).

In his narrative, Luke highlights the religious boundary enforced by categorising 'other' as 'sinners' (Adams, 2008; Carter 2016, p. 153). It is language that resonates with today's church as some participants in my research also referred to same-sex relationships as 'sin'. 'Sinner' is a loaded term in Luke's Gospel. It can be defined (as Sanders argues) as the 'wicked' who remain unrepentant (Sanders, 1985, p. 158; Powell, 2009). However, Luke frequently uses 'sinner' in a 'factional context,' as a label to exclude whole social groups who were known as the outcasts of their society or were deemed immoral or belonged to an immoral profession (Green, 1995, p. 85; Dunn, 2005, p. 478). For example, Gentiles, prostitutes, and tax collectors are all groups who were 'sinners' and excluded from belonging to the people of God. Gentiles were 'sinners' because they belonged to a different ethnic group and did not live according to the Law of the Torah. However, Jews could also be labelled as 'sinners', not only because of an individual sin or moral or ethical choice but by transgressing the religious boundaries which informed all aspects of Jewish life—socio-cultural, economic, moral, and political (Carter, 2016, p. 180-181; Slawomire, 2017, p. 4; Adams 2008). For example, Jesus was called a 'Samaritan' by the religious leaders in John 8:48; a pejorative label implying Jesus is a heretic and sinner (Lightfoot et al., 2015, p. 180).

It is not difficult to see the correlation between the 21st-century church and Luke's 1st-century world. Today's church has people groups judged to have transgressed the boundaries defined by the church and consequently excluded. In my research interviews, one of the participants shared a vivid illustration of his growing awareness of the boundaries placed on 'sinners' (in his example, gay men) and of operating as a bouncer to keep them firmly outside his church community. He said: 'they were a speck that grew into a cloud and threatened to change my world.' In his example, the 'other' was ignored, distanced, and perceived as a growing threat to be kept outside the boundaries of the church. A few participants also recognised their fears of LGBTQ 'sin' coming into the church. They vacillated between shame in admitting this and justification of their feelings. For some participants, the only course of action seemed to draw the boundaries between 'us' and 'sinners' more distinctly, equating church membership with holding what they deemed the correct theology. Differences in theology or praxis were not mere differences; rather, they were described as 'heresy' and 'unorthodoxy'.

However, Luke's narrative challenges the reader's definition of 'sin' and how 'sin' is forgiven and removed. Luke portrays sin not as breaking laws set by the church but as breaking a relationship with Jesus. As the story in Luke-Acts progresses, it is apparent to the audience that the religious leaders are the 'sinners' because they reject Jesus and his ministry (Szkredka, 2017, p. 165). Therein lies the challenge to the church. If a person holding an affirming theology is known for their growing relationship with the Trinity, if they are displaying the fruits of the Spirit, if they love God and neighbour, if their sex life and gender orientations are submitted to Christ, what is the basis for the policy of exclusion from church and ministry?

Luke tackles the boundaries that distance 'sinners' from the 'righteous' by moving the 'sinners' from the margins and including them as part of Jesus' story. The actions of the Samaritan 'sinner' were, according to Jesus, acts of faith to be emulated. Listening to the parable of the Samaritan highlights how our unconscious biases influence our opinion of 'other', labelling them often before we even have either a relationship or an experience to judge. Luke's parable challenges Baptist churches on the justifications for acting as the bouncer—admitting some and preventing others from joining their church community. Before any conversation between Baptists and LGBTQ could gain traction, there must be the conviction of how to include the perspective of 'other' with the same equality that Luke does. It is prioritising the voice of 'other' that allows the

challenge to peoples' justifications for acting as bouncers at the entrance to God's Kingdom.

Time to Adopt Luke's Challenge of Radical Reversal

To challenge assumptions of who is 'in' or 'out' of the Kingdom of God, Luke employs a technique known as 'radical reversal' throughout his Luke-Acts narrative (Card, 2011; González, 2015, p. 26-35). It is Luke's central theme for his Gospel; the radical reversal of expectations of privilege is bestowed on the minority who lack power, means, influence, or social importance (Card, 2011, p. 136; Green, 2010, 130-132). In the parable of the Samaritan, the radical reversal is seen when an expert in the Torah (who would be expected by the audience to know the answers) asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life (the audience would automatically assume an expert in the Torah would be included in the Kingdom of God and inherit eternal life). The religious expert becomes the catalyst for Jesus' parable of the Samaritan, and the Samaritan becomes the exemplar of belonging to God's kingdom. The radical reversal of whose actions should be emulated by those pursuing eternal life continues today to challenge the reader's world. However, the real challenge comes when that challenge is accepted.

Baptist participants rarely described themselves as 'radical', preferring 'Evangelical' or 'orthodox.'⁷ Nor did they share stories akin to Luke's 'radical reversal.' David F Wells has even accused evangelical Baptists of 'losing their power for dissent' (Wells, 1993).⁸ Radical reversal is only radical when applied, and, as one participant noted, there are no BCSA churches that publicly hold an affirming theological position, and he pitied the church that became the first. Such a radical reversal would make them an outlier within the movement. It could prove too difficult for them and the more conservative churches to stay together in BCSA. Thomas and Olson came to the same conclusions, seeing the trajectory of the current conversation on homosexuality within evangelicalism as the 'potential for division and schism' (Thomas & Olsen, 2012, p. 269). It remains to be seen whether challenging assumptions of who is 'in' and who is 'out' may yet prove to be too difficult a path for Baptist churches in SA to journey.

⁷ Baptist Ministries of Australia describes it and its affiliated members as 'an Evangelical church.' About us: what we value <https://www.baptist.org.au/about-us/#believe>

⁸ David F. Wells is Distinguished Senior Research Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Luke uses his narrative to radically challenge the audience's biases toward others by lessening their ability 'to define them in finalising terms' (Nadella, 2011, p. 66). It is a technique literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin describes as a 'loophole,' which is 'an opening out of any closure' (Bakhtin & Holoquist, 1981). A loophole challenges what has already understood to discover a new meaning (Shields, 2007, p. 59-61). However, the Samaritan is not the only character given a loophole. Luke introduced the religious expert as a character of ungodly motives sent to test (ἐκπειράζων) Jesus just as the devil tested (ἐκπειράζων) Him (Levine, 2014, p. 398; Davis, 2016; Bovon et al., 2013; Keddie, 2020). However, Luke refuses to allow the audience to judge the religious expert. The story ends with a loophole, seen in Jesus' instruction to the expert to 'go and do likewise' and follow the Samaritan's example. There is no concluding observation as to whether the expert did, only the hope that he found the answer to his question of how he could inherit eternal life. In retelling this story, Luke gives dignity to all people in the dialogue. Luke does not allow the audience to cast the religious leader as 'other' and the one now to be excluded. It is also an excellent example of the power to shape or reinforce negative stereotypes, especially when the majority tell the stories of the minority group—an argument strongly advocated by Palestinian-American Professor Edward Said. Said believes those with the minority voice should primarily tell the stories (Said, 1979, 1997). However, Luke demonstrates that where this is not possible, it is still the author's responsibility to shape the story of others with Bakhtin loopholes—an escape route from the predetermined labels.

Deconstructing predetermined labels is counter-cultural, as Australian humour and sarcasm probably enforce stereotypes rather than dismantle them (Due, 2011). For example, a few male participants in my research were embarrassed about their history of telling gay jokes. One man spoke of 'no poofs here' jokes being part of his church culture, although this is no longer the case. In our discourse with others, a question needs to be asked: how often are definite statements or jokes about others' agendas, character, or trustworthiness slipped into the conversation to reinforce our truth at their expense? Luke shifts the power, giving equal respect to the voice of 'other' even though it clashes with the view of many in his audience. It is a challenge when hosting debates today. Any framework for dialogue over differences needs to ask whether the other perspective was raised to a position of equality in the discussion. Or was it debased by stating negative stereotypes, limiting the access for 'other' to express

their opinions in their voice, and by power imbalances where the representatives of 'other' are afforded less time and respect?

Luke's intention, in this parable, is for the characters to participate in the ongoing dialogue as 'equal partners' (Nadella, 2011, p. 5.) It has been described by Raj Nadella as 'lively and intense continual dialogue' (Nadella 201, p. 117). The emphasis is on 'dialogue'; this is not a Gospel that resorts to one-liners from Jesus that dispels all arguments. Jesus listens to the religious expert as well as talks; thus, Luke shows that God is willing to dialogue back and forth over an issue. It is humbling to consider that Jesus, the God who could command our obedience, invites us to draw near and discuss the matter from our perspective.⁹

It is an interesting exercise to imagine how conversations regarding differences might progress if launched from a revelation of how the God of all creation approaches us in an attitude of I-Thou. Would it produce repentance for our stance towards others? Nave's research suggests that when Luke refers to 'repentance,' it is not simply highlighting the correct response; repentance is the *answer* to social, moral, ethical, financial, and religious inequalities (italics mine) (Nave, 2000). What would the fruits of repentance look like in a conversation over deeply held convictions? There were examples in the interviews I conducted of repentance that resulted from theological reflection on experience and praxis. Participants shared deeply personal accounts of their attitude towards 'others' (mainly gay men) who were excluded from their church. They confessed at the time, feeling a sense of relief, comfort, and security when LGBTQ people were excluded from their church. However, they went on to share the later conviction of their sin, and their sorrow that they could so easily lay aside Jesus' prayer in John chapter 17, which calls for love and unity between believers, equal to the love within the Trinity.¹⁰ It is difficult to convey the intensity of emotions expressed in these personal stories. Participants were repentant in the Lukan sense of the word—a change in mindset and reorientation of actions (Leland et al., 2010, p. 704-705). Luke links deeds as demonstrating one's repentance (Nave, 2000, p. 40-41). Participants expressed how their repentance resulted in a desire to draw near and discuss—with emphasis on their role as listeners—issues with LGBTQ persons. There was a willingness to learn from 'other' and approach 'other' as I-Thou and not as an ethical issue that should be argued over or as boundaries that should be defended.

⁹ Matthew 1:22-23 See Isaiah 1:18 Is 41:1 Is 43:9 Is 43:26 for Old Testament examples of God's invitation to dialogue with Him.

¹⁰ John 17²¹ *Jesus prayed: 'I pray for those who will believe in me through their message, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be in us.'*

Conclusion

The parable of the Samaritan is not a moral lesson on loving an enemy and acts of charity to the disadvantaged. Instead, it is a story that confronts religious exclusionism, and the boundaries Christians are guilty of building and reinforcing.

The first lesson begins with Jesus' choice of parables as a vehicle to engage in conversation. His aim was not just to give ethical direction; his priority was to include others in a conversation. Observing any dialogue over differences today suggests it is usual to defend and argue a position rather than to invite participation. This is evidenced by the warlike language that describes the broader conversation between conservative Christians and LGBTQ persons and groups (Marin, 2011; Armstrong, 2000; Coley, 2017). Yet, Jesus' invitational position is modelled throughout the encounter with the 'expert of the Law' in the parable of the Samaritan. Luke sets the scene; this is not a meeting of like minds and can potentially be a destructive dialogue. Jesus pre-empts the conversation from deteriorating by adopting a stance of inviting the other's opinion.¹¹ It is an I-Thou posture and is a prominent part of keeping the 'gesture of invitation' through 'open the arms' advocated by Volf's drama of embrace (Volf, 1996, p. 107). In the parable, Jesus models where the commitment should be focused—on 'other' and continually inviting their opinions to the conversation.

Theologically reflecting through Luke-Acts brings into focus the ease with which majority stakeholders slip into that place of privilege and power, silencing—whether deliberately or subconsciously—the voice and perspective of others. In the case of silencing others, the lesson is easy to emulate; invite 'other' into the conversation. However, it is more than an invitation to the conversation for Luke. He makes 'other' the main character in the narrative, as the parable of the Samaritan demonstrates. It is an example of the radical reversal approach Luke adopts towards those usually excluded by the moral majority. If Baptists want to emulate Luke's pathways for inclusion, then the conversation must include strategies which make LGBTQ the main characters.

¹¹ Jesus' invitation to the expert in the Law into the conversation is seen in Luke 10²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you read it?" and Luke 10³⁶ Jesus asked him. "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

A framework for discourse in accommodating differences is seen in Luke's refusal to narrate the story endings with the appropriate and expected answer and his continual accommodation of differing perspectives. Luke is committed to keeping the dialogue going; he will not allow finalising statements—particularly those made about others—to shut down any voice. It contrasts with our usual agenda for conflict resolution and our expectation of finding an agreement to end the discussion and relieving us of the discomfort of an awkward conversation. One could almost conclude that Luke is an agitator, constantly adding a radical reversal to traditions and norms as a catalyst for keeping the conversation from stalling in the face of stereotypes and implicit biases.

Reflecting on the dialogue between Baptists and LGBTQ, through the theological reflection of Luke-Acts, there is evidence to suggest that the conversation is taken seriously when 'other' is the main character in the conversation. However, all the wise ways of journeying through the deeply held differences will falter if we fail to promote the voice of the 'other'. Not only encourage 'other' but afford 'other' equal rights in the debate. This is the challenge as it brings us back to the vivid picture of menacing black clouds that remain small and inconsequential when they stay in the comfortable world of unconscious biases but threaten us when they grow in power and move closer to crossing our 'boundaries'. It remains to be seen who dares to brave the storm clouds.

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