

CHAPTER VI  
CONCLUSION AND CHALLENGE

**Conclusion**

The present research has pointed out that the Gospels have connection with Greco-Roman biographical writings. Thus, in investigating Luke 4:16–30, we treat the text not just as a narrative, but also as the ancient biographical literature, in order to treat the text in line with its antiquity. In chapter 2, we have some components that correlate the two, Gospels and ancient biography. The content that focuses on one main character and function that has rhetorical aspect indicate the similarity between the Gospels and the ancient biography. In this research, the awareness of similarity is beneficial for the narrativel study of the Third Gospel. The text can be treated based on its genre, thus we render it based on how the text works. Precisely, in the attempt to explore the meaning of Luke 4:16–30, it is helpful. The narrative analysis is a proper method to analyze the biblical narratives. However, what becomes the concern of the present research is that the Gospel should be read also as an ancient writing. Therefore, reading the Third Gospel as Greco-Roman biography will be a decent addendum for the narrative reading.

In the text analysis, the present research places Jesus in the spotlight, since it is precise that he is the main character of the story. It is one of aspects in reading the narrative as ancient biography: the main character is the focus of the story. With the general overview in chapter 3, we try to see how Luke 4:16–30 is correlated with the other parts of Third Gospel. This is in accordance with the nature of the unity of story,

which is significant in narrative analysis. Based on the analysis, the present research suggests that Luke 4:16–30 is a programmatic text that provides pattern for the characteristics of Jesus’ ministry in the whole Third Gospel. As the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, the narrative of Nazareth portrays the ministry of Jesus in the Gospel in a nutshell.

Therefore, Luke 4:16–30 can be significant source to see the features of Jesus’ ministry. In the text analysis, the significance of the quotation from Isaiah, the use of word Spirit and poor in the quotation, the use of the allusion from Elijah and Elisha’s ministry, and the importance of the rejection at the end of the narrative are being observed. In line with the findings of analysis on those elements, we can see two important characteristics of Jesus’ work. The mission conducted by Jesus is part of a larger theological idea, namely God’s work. The other characteristic is social dimension. Jesus has been anointed with the Spirit because he was sent to proclaim the good news for the poor. Based on the study on chapter 4, we have seen the information of being anointed with the Spirit has literary connection with the previous sections of the Third Gospel that indicates the link between Jesus’ work and God’s work. Regarding, the social dimension of the ministry, we may find it from the elements of the quotation from Isaiah 61:1–2; 58:6 in Luke 4:18–19. Based on the study of the word *poor* in Luke 4:18, the social dimension is related to the concern of Jesus’ ministry to bring release to those who are discriminated or considered as outsider. Theologically, the ministry is the reflection of God’s concern toward the low class people.

In this study we find that, through the narrative of the main figure’s life, Greco-

Roman biography present values which are significant for the readers. Therefore, based on the characteristics of Jesus' ministry, the present research try to elaborate the characteristics of Christian social responsibility and their implication for Christian ministry. The two characteristics of Jesus' mission, part of God's mission and having social dimension, has brought about two important ideas of Christian social responsibility: the involvement in social act is divine call and expression of Christian spirituality.

For the current ministry, especially in the context where poverty is rampant, the idea of Christian social responsibility has important implications. Since the social responsibility is inevitable, it determines the way the church implementing ministry. Generally, the mission should be not dualistic in its nature. It does not make a separation between introducing the eternal life in Christ and social act. The social act is not just a secondary addition to the evangelism. Christians have social concern is not merely to support evangelism. Evangelism and social act are equally important and essentially part of God's mission. Therefore, the two should be conducted integrally. Such conception is supported by the idea of *release* in Luke 4:18–19, which indicates a broad aspect of salvation. It is associated with individual salvation, but at same time we cannot disregard the literary context of the text also expresses a strong social aspect.

### **Challenge for Evangelical Ministry**

The fact that our study promotes the integration of individual and social restoration, we may find a challenge for the ministry committed by the evangelicals. The challenge

would be related to those who dichotomize the ministry by considering evangelism and social act cannot be unified. Before going further with this part, first of all we need to know that the present research is also aware of some development in the ministry conducted by evangelical community in relation with the unified practice of evangelism and social act. Among the evangelical scholars, we see the attempt to emphasize that spiritual and social restoration cannot be separated. One of the important example is the Lausanne movement. In the Lausanne Covenant, one will see the idea of holistic ministry. Previously, in the present research, part of the Covenant is used to show an example of the theological conception concerning social concern as the awareness of the nature of God's mission. Thus, we have proof of development. However, among some other evangelicals, we still see the reflection of suspicion that unifying evangelism and social concern may cause the Christian ministers to overlook the significance of salvation in Christ.

For some people, the emphasis on the social act is considered as a threat that may reduce the significance of repentance in Christ. Integrating social work and introducing the eternal life will make forgiveness of sin to be secondary matter. Joel James and Brian Biedebach say, "Making social action an equal partner with the gospel, in effect, subordinates the need for repentance and forgiveness to temporal needs ..."<sup>314</sup> The idea of *holistic ministry* will promote indirect evangelism. He supports this concern using D. A. Carson's assumption that views the idea of holistic ministry overemphasize the social act

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<sup>314</sup> Joel James and Brian Biedebach, "Regaining Our Focus: A Response to the Social Action Trend in Evangelical Missions," *TMSJ* 25, no. 1 (2014): 38. Their article assumes that combining proclaiming the gospel with social justice activity will endanger Christian mission. Therefore, the article is aimed to point out the negative effects of doing proclamation of the good news and social work together. Generally, James and Biedebach concern about the possibility of the big shift in evangelical mission from church planting toward social action.

and ignore the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>315</sup>

Based on the text analysis of the present research, avoiding the social dimension of Christian mission is avoiding the nature of God's mission. What the Third Gospel suggests is that Jesus' mission has social aspect, because he is implementing the mission from God who concerns about the marginalized. Accordingly, social concern is essential part of Christian mission. God's concern is not just found in the Third Gospel. The Old Testament has affirmed it. In her observation, Helen Taylor Boursier points out:

In the Old Testament, when the Israelites began their new life as the chosen people, God demanded equal social justice for the widow, the alien, and the orphan—the three groups who did not have protection of normal family or tribal affiliation. Using Moses, God established the judicial system while the Israelites were in the wilderness en route to the Promise Land from Mount Sinai (Exod 18; Deut 1:12–18), later modifying the law for agrarian life within the system of cities and towns in premonarchic Israel.<sup>316</sup>

The quotation from Isaiah in Luke 4:18–19, which has a strong of social concern indicates the existence of social concern in the ministry of the prophets. Regarding the connection between social concern and the ministry of the prophets, J. Carl Laney tries to show us that the ministry of the prophets is related with the social situation of the community. For the sake of the restoration that they brought, the prophets engage with the social issues surrounding them. Laney differentiates them with social reformer. Mainly, the prophets are not social reformers, because their main motivation is the commitment to the laws of God.<sup>317</sup> However, social concern is not something that they overlook. Laney suggests, “The prophets of Israel were greatly concerned with social

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<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>316</sup> Helen Taylor Boursier, “The Necessity of Social Just-Ness for a Postmodern Ecclesi-Odicy,” *ThTo* 72, no. 1 (2015): 88; see also Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9* (2nd ed.; WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 356.

<sup>317</sup> J. Carl Laney, “The Prophets and Social Concern,” *BSac* 147, no. 585 (1990): 33.

issues, both moral and religious. Indeed, for the prophets, social and moral concern lay at the very heart of religion. Repeatedly they rebuked idolatry, formalistic worship, failure to support temple worship, oppression of the poor, usury, and dissipation.”<sup>318</sup> To display the connection between the social message of the prophet and the Law, Laney uses the following chart:<sup>319</sup>

| <b>Subjects</b>           | <b>Law</b>  | <b>Prophets</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| The orphan and widow      | Deut. 10:18 | Ezek. 22:7      |
| The return of the pledge  | Exod. 22:26 | Amos 2:8        |
| The perversion of justice | Deut. 24:17 | Hab. 1:4        |
| Bribery                   | Exod. 23:8  | Mic. 3:11       |
| Usury                     | Lev. 25:36  | Ezek. 22:12     |

The brief survey on the social concern in the Old Testament exhibits the consistency of idea of social aspect in God’s mission in the Bible. Accordingly, social action is not an addition to God’s mission. It is significantly integrated in his mission. In the case of Jesus’ work, since it is part of God’s mission, Jesus’ messiahship involves a concern toward the discriminated or people who are in need. It is necessary to remember, based on the analysis in the previous chapter, the author of the Third Gospel link his work with some important Scriptural conception. Precisely, we have seen it in the analysis on Isaianic citation (Luke 4:18–19). Thus, precisely the social concern in Third Gospel is the continuation what God has done earlier in the Old Testament.

The fact that some evangelicals are influenced by dualistic ideology has become a great challenge for some churches to implement social act as the integral part of Christian

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 35.

ministry. Therefore, it will be not surprising social act just becoming supplementary activity of the churches. It is not being done as the responsibility that Christians should demonstrate. We hope that those who are dualistic in their perspective of mission can be more open and being able to see the idea of holistic aspect in Christian ministry. In his analysis, Jaymes Morgan suggests that, for the evangelicals, involvement in social action is inevitable. One of the reasons that he proposes is that it is a call received from the Word of God for the Christians to pursue social righteousness.<sup>320</sup> In his work, Morgan does not touch Luke 4 as one of biblical foundations that he presents. However, we may include the narrative of Nazareth as an addition to his list, since Luke 4:16–30 is fundamental for the Third Gospel to correlate Jesus' mission with social concern.

Actually, based on the history of the development of evangelicalism, integrating social concern with Christian mission or evangelism is affirmed. The separation happened in the later development. Historically, there was a time when the ministry of the evangelicals strongly characterized by the integration of emphasis on individual and social restoration. The humanitarian tendency had become a quite strong characteristic of the evangelical revival in 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>321</sup> Based on Foakes-Jackson's observation, Frank E. Gaebelein's work suggests that social concern is not a new thing in evangelical movement.<sup>322</sup> According to Ralph D. Winter, in the history of evangelicalism, in the early phase of its awakening, which he calls as First Inheritance, Christian mission concerns on

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<sup>320</sup> Jaymes Paul Morgan, "Why Christian Social Concern?," *RJ* 17, no. 8 (1967): 5–6.

<sup>321</sup> See F. J. Foakes-Jackson, "Christ in the Church: The Testimony of History," in *Cambridge Theological Essays* (ed. H. B. Swete; New York: Macmillan, 1905), 512–14. This classic analysis indicates, in the early development of evangelicalism, the compassion toward who are suffering and the attempt to resolve the issue of injustice are important part of evangelical faith.

<sup>322</sup> Frank E Gaebelein, "Evangelicals and Social Concern," *JETS* 25, no. 1 (1982): 17; see also Foakes-Jackson, *Christ in the Church*, 512–14.

two aspects individual and social transformation.<sup>323</sup> As written by Samuel Jayakumar, to summarize Winter's analysis:

As Ralph Winter has pointed out, the European and American Evangelical Awakenings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were characterized by a broad dual social/personal, earthly and heavenly spectrum of concern, ranging from foreign missions to changing the legal structure of society and even war. This period was significantly characterized by evangelicals in a position of civil leadership. For the most part the nineteenth century missionaries were committed to combining evangelism and social concerns. They worked within the window of awareness which made the transformation of society feasible—something which was within their grasp. They could readily believe not only in a profound transformation of individuals, but also in a wide range of different aspects of social transformation and God-glorification.<sup>324</sup>

Afterward, the Christian mission moves to two different directions. Winter calls it as the Second Inheritance. After 1875, the mission “gradually branched into two ‘reductions,’ each concentrating on one of the two elements in the former concept of a Biblical Christian service which emphasized both personal holiness and social transformation ...”<sup>325</sup> Winter observes that the group that emphasizes more the social aspect become part of social gospel.<sup>326</sup> On the other hand, the followers of personal or individual salvation become the main stream (the Second Inheritance).<sup>327</sup>

To do evangelism and social act integrally does not mean we consider proclaiming the eternal life becoming the secondary aspect. Having social concern is not necessarily will lead the church to neglect evangelism. What the present research is trying

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<sup>323</sup> See Ralph D. Winter, “The Future of Evangelicals in Mission: Will We Regain the Vision of Our Forefathers in the Faith?,” *Compassionlink*, 2007, 6–7, <http://www.compassionlink.org/assets/mostert--ralph-winter-on-future-of-evangelicals-in-mission.pdf>.

<sup>324</sup> Samuel Jayakumar, “The Work of God as Holistic Mission: An Asian Perspective,” *ERT* 35, no. 3 (2011): 228.

<sup>325</sup> Winter, “The Future of Evangelicals,” 7.

<sup>326</sup> According to Gaebelein, the influence of the social gospel, which is related to evolution and socialism, has caused the eclipse of social concern among the evangelicals (*Evangelicals and Social Concern*, 17–18).

<sup>327</sup> Winter, “The Future of Evangelicals,” 7.



to show is that the two should be associated. Our study has affirmed that God's mission includes individual and social restoration in its purpose.

### **Suggestions for the Future Research**

Precisely, the present research is far from perfect. There are some other interesting aspects need to be excavated concerning the social concern in the ministry of Jesus in Luke-Acts. There are three focuses of research that might be implemented. First, in relation with reading the Gospels as Greco-Roman biographical literature, focusing on the other similarities would be necessary to enrich this approach. The present research concentrates on the resemblance of the content and function. These are just two similitudes among some other dimensions that might connect the Gospels with the ancient biography. Excavating the text by taking the other connections between the Third Gospel and ancient biography will be a substantial complement for the present research.

Second, to analyze the continuation of Lukan social concern from the Third Gospel to the Book of Acts would also be an important contribution. In terms of the unity of the Third Gospel and Acts, the interpreter may demonstrate the implementation of the social dimension of Jesus' ministry in the work of the disciples. Theologically and practically, the research will explicate the implementation of social concern in the early church tradition.

Third, it is important to correlate the area of biblical studies with the other disciplines. Therefore, the present research observes the opportunity of the contribution that can be made by mission studies. After an in-depth exegetical investigation, it is

necessary to do a collaborative study to find a proper implementation of biblical social concern in particular contexts. Precisely, the study will enhance the practice of Christian mission.