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How can Europeans enter the Kingdom of Heaven? A decolonial challenge to Western European political and public theologies in an age of migration

Field, David
Coordinator Methodist e-Academy, Switzerland
UNISA, Pretoria, South Africa
david.field@umc-cse.org

Abstract

In his 2019 Steve de Gruchy Memorial Lecture John de Gruchy provocatively posed the question: "Is it possible for a white South African male to enter the kingdom of heaven?[1] The core of his concern was how is it possible for a person who was and is still a beneficiary of Apartheid and colonialism in South Africa participate in the creation of a just and transformed society. This question has a particular poignancy in contemporary South Africa where the beneficiaries of exploitation and injustice continue to live in close proximity to the victims in a society that still reflects the patterns of inequality created by Apartheid. However, the challenge of the question is not limited to one particular situation of exploitation and injustice but reverberates in numerous other contexts. South African Apartheid was an intensified microcosm of European colonialism and hence my question; "How can Europeans enter the Kingdom of Heaven?" Or to phrase it differently, how can Western European political and public theologies contribute to the creation of a just and sustainable world order, in the light of Western European colonial entanglements and Western Europe's continued benefiting from unjust and exploitative international relationships.[2]

I pose this question as a white South African male who has lived in Europe for eighteen years and has recently acquired Swiss citizenship. Hence, the question is self-referring – it challenges the particularity of my own existence that is characterised by complicity,

1 John W. de Gruchy, "Is it Possible for a White South African Male to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven?" 8th Steve de Gruchy Memorial Lecture, Cape Town, 2019.

2 The focus on Western Europe is out of recognition of the complex entrapment of eastern European countries in the dynamics of inter-European imperial politics during the colonial era, see Róisín Healy and Enrico Dal Lago, (eds.) *The Shadow of Colonialism on Europe's Modern Past*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

hybridity, and complexity of one who is a beneficiary of Apartheid, whose cultural heritage is influenced by Europe, who has deep roots in (South) Africa; who seeks to do theology while listening to the diverse voices of Africa; yet who now resides in Europe and through taking on the citizenship of a European country has grafted himself into the history and politics of Western Europe and all that this entails. So, the question is this personal – "How do I do political theology in Europe as a white South African, but also as a student of John de Gruchy?"

Keywords

De Gruchy, Kingdom of God, decolonial theology, political theology

1. Entering the Kingdom of Heaven

De Gruchy expounded the motif of the kingdom or reign of God extensively in the concluding chapter of his first major work *The Church Struggle in South Africa*[3]. In many ways this exposition can be understood as the generative seed of many dimensions of De Gruchy's theology. In his later writings he returns to develops, re-interpret, and modifies his construal of the motif of the kingdom of God in relation to changing contexts, different dialogue partners, other theological motifs, and new challenges. Three aspects of his construal of the theme of God's reign regularly recur and are definitive of his understanding. The first is that the "The kingdom of God promises a "new earth" where justice and righteousness shall flourish. It promises God's *shalom*, God's gift of a renewed creation and a fulfilled humanity."[4] In another context he proposed that:

> God's redemptive concern for the world has to do with every aspect of life, whether personal, social, or environmental. The struggle for justice and liberation, the need for forgiveness and reconciliation, the healing of mind and body, the search for meaning and the awakening and sustaining of faith, hope, and love, and the renewal of the earth, are all part of the *missio dei*.[5]

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3 De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), 195–237.

4 De Gruchy, *Church Struggle,* 213.

5 De Gruchy, "Christian Community" in *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives,* edited by John W. Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip), 134.

The motif of the reign of God is thus away to portray God's comprehensive goal for all creation.

De Gruchy describes the second aspect in *Confessions of a Christian Humanist* as follows:

> For Jesus … the coming of God's reign had to do with the establishment of God's *shalom* or peaceable kingdom on earth. It was … about the establishment of justice and peace here and now. In his parables Jesus teaches us how to become part of the kingdom of heaven by entering it *now*. In his healing miracles, Jesus demonstrates that in the coming of the kingdom humanity will be made whole, restored to its fullness, by healing people *now* … in answer to the question "Why did God become human?" the gospel answer is: in order to inaugurate God's reign of justice and peace so that we may have life in all its fullness.[6]

Bringing these together he writes in *Led into Mystery* the kingdom of heaven is:

> … the transforming work of God at work in our midst. God's reign on earth as in heaven is both near at hand and coming. It is present as love and justice; it is anticipated when the transformation of life will be complete in all its fullness in the "new earth and new heaven".[7]

The third dimension is that when De Gruchy interprets the relationship between the eschatological coming of the kingdom, the transforming work of God in the present, and our human participation in God's reign he characteristically uses Dietrich Bonhoeffer's distinction between the ultimate and the penultimate.[8] In doing so he makes a significant shift. Bonhoeffer's distinction was a means of creating room for affirming the significance of human work in the present in the context of the Lutheran

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6 De Gruchy, *Confessions of a Christian Humanist*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 156–157.

7 De Gruchy, *Led into Mystery: Faith Seeking Answers in Life and Death*, (London: SCM, 2013), 189.

8 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works vol. 6, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 146–170.

tradition of justification by faith (for Bonhoeffer this is the ultimate). For De Gruchy the ultimate is the eschatological reign of God and the penultimate is the manner in which human beings anticipate, witness to, and participate in the kingdom in the here and now. This relocation of the distinction from the *ordo salutis* (the order of salvation) to the *missio dei* (the divine mission) with an eschatological horizon results in a transformative, liberative, and dynamic understanding of human praxis that points beyond the constraints of the possible and a socially determined realism "to the possibilities that reside in God's promise of a 'new heaven and a new earth.'"[9]

In his Steve de Gruchy Lecture, John de Gruchy describes entering the kingdom of heaven God as participating in the penultimate presence of God's reign through "doing the will of God today, living life responsibly before God." To enter the kingdom is to participate now in the struggle for "justice, reconciliation and peace". Reshaping De Gruchy's question for the European context, the challenge is how Western European political and public theologies can participate in the global struggles for "justice, reconciliation, and peace". This is, of course, multifaceted question with numerous possible answers depending on the perspective and location from which the challenge is made. The location of the challenge for this article is the hybridity of my own identity as a white South African who resides in and is also a citizen of a Western European country, yet deeply aware of my own complicity in colonial and Apartheid exploitation – it is thus an identity that contains within itself the fracture between Europe and Africa, between the colonist and the colonised. This fracture is geographically symbolised by the Mediterranean Sea which has become watery grave of thousands of African migrants.

The challenge of how Europeans can enter the kingdom of God attains a particular intensity when it is focused through the prism of the arrival and non-arrival in Europe of millions of migrants, fleeing war, poverty, ecological disaster, dictatorial rule, and political instability. This is the European *kairos* – the moment of challenge which when fully understood, strips away the pseudo-innocence of Western European countries exposing

9 De Gruchy, *Liberating Reformed Theology: A South African Contribution to an Ecumenical Debate*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 279.

their complicity in the complex socio-political dynamics of colonial and neo-colonial oppression and exploitation. It exposes the dominant narratives of European progress which ignore and obscure the multifaceted interrelated dynamics of domination, subjugation, and exploitation of Africa, Asia and Latin America that provided and continue to provide the economic resources upon which both modernity and post modernity are based. I would therefore propose that the challenge of how Europeans can enter the kingdom of God is an act of decolonial insurgency designed to disturb, destabilize and re-orientate European political and public theologies that do not foreground the historical and contemporary dependency of Western Europe power and prosperity on colonial and neo-colonial exploitation. However, this insurgency is not primarily directed at developing a more adequate political theology but at the transformation political praxis in general and the political praxis of the churches in particular.

In this article I will explore three aspects of this theological insurgency. The first is to hear the cries of the colonised, the second is to bid farewell to innocence, and the third is to centre the agency of the colonial subject.

2. Hearing the cries of Africa

In *Theology and Ministry in Crisis and Context,* De Gruchy wrote: "the urgent demand for social justice and transformation … arises as much from the gospel of the kingdom of God as it does from the cries of the poor and the oppressed."[10] The diverse cries of poor and exploited Africans arise in a variety of contexts across the continent as they suffer under exploitation, corruption, violence, and injustice; however, the challenge to Western Europeans arises in a particular way from the cries of the thousands of Africans who have gasped for air as they have sunk beneath the waters of the Mediterranean; the parched cries of those dying from thirst and starvation in the sands of the Sahara; the cries of those abused by human smugglers; the cries of horror, fear, anguish, and shame of migrating African women and children forced into prostitution across Europe. If Europeans are to participate in the struggle for "justice, reconciliation, and peace" in our

10 De Gruchy, *Theology and Ministry in Crisis and Context: A South African Perspective* (London: Collins, 1986), 14.

world they must begin by hearing these muffled and silenced cries of Africans. Those outside the gates of fortress Europe – excluded, rejected, and left to die, those brought within the gates to be abused and exploited to satisfy the lusts of European men. It is also to hear the cries of those who did not embark on the journey. Some of whom sacrificed much to finance their migrating relatives and who hoped that they would soon be sending them resources which would enable them to survive. Now they mourn the loss of their loved ones and the destruction of their hope for a better future. Others are too poor to finance the journey. Entering the kingdom requires a refusal to suppress or stifle these cries and in the insistence that they must be heard and, if necessary, be amplified so that they fracture the normality of European political and public theologies.

This moves beyond charity and activism because it hears in and with these cries another cry in dynamic perichoreses. This is the cry of the crucified one – humiliated, excluded, rejected, and left to die outside the gates of Jerusalem. These cries mutually illuminate each other and in their mutual illumination radically challenge our political theology and praxis. Since Constantine the radical significance of the cross has been domesticated and its meaning reversed. Contemporary counter imperial readings of the Bible have recovered the radically subversive core of early Christianity – the affirmation that God is most profoundly revealed in the death of one crucified by Roman colonial authorities.[11] This affirms that the theological significance of the crucifixion of Jesus needs to be understood in relation to the socio-political meaning of crucifixion as the public display of Roman power over those the empire despised. It was not sufficient that those who resisted Roman power were executed they had to be ritually and brutally excluded, mocked, degraded, abused, and left to die an excruciatingly painful death. It was the ultimate display of the ruthlessness of imperial subjugation reserved for those the empire regarded as the filth of society – slaves, rebels, traitors. The church confessed that one subjected to such ritual

11 See for example Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide,* (Nashville: Abingdon, 20 06), Joerg Rieger, *Jesus vs. Caesar: For People Tired of Serving the Wrong God*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2018), Klaus, Wengst, *Pax Roma and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, (London: SCM, 1987), Adam Winn (ed.), *An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament* (Atlanta: SBL, 2016), *Theodore W. Jennings Jr., Transforming Atonement: A Political Theology of the Cross*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009).

cruelty and humiliation is God incarnate. So that his cry is simultaneously the cry of suffering and abused humanity and the anguished cry of God protesting against human injustice and cruelty.

To hear the cry of the crucified One and the cries of suffering Africans as interpenetrating and mutually illuminating each other, is to go beyond the confession that God hears the cries of oppressed and suffering human beings. It is to confess that in the cries of oppressed and suffering human beings we hear, and God hears, the cry of God. Their anguished cries contain and articulate God's cry for compassion and justice. If European political and public theologies are to be a critical reflection on the presence, voice, and presence of God in the sphere of the political then they must open themselves to the disturbing, destabilizing, and fracturing consequences of this cry. As de Gruchy commented; "any society that is serious about justice … has to take the voice of the victims of injustice as primary and refuse to allow that voice to be silenced."[12] This does not mean an attempt to formulate a more adequate theoretical approach but rather the challenge to an alternative praxis, a praxis of vicariously entering into the suffering of the victims, acting in solidarity with them and thus participating in God's transformative suffering in the world through "action which is both historical and concrete."[13] As De Gruchy emphasises, "God's redemptive suffering becomes concrete in the world through the life and witness of the suffering community of faith and especially its prophets."[14]

Interpreting the arrival and non-arrival of African migrants through the lens of the crucified Christ transforms their cries into a radical challenge for Christians in Europe constituting this as a kairotic moment. As *The Kairos Document* expressed it in reference to South Africa in the 1985, this is:

> … the moment of grace and opportunity, the favourable time in which God issues a challenge to decisive action. It is a dangerous time, because if this opportunity is missed, and allowed to pass

12 De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 206.

13 De Gruchy, *Theology and Ministry*, 121.

14 De Gruchy, *Theology and Ministry*, 119.

> by, the loss for the Church, for the Gospel, and for all the people of South Africa will be immeasurable.

While the immediate consequences of the challenge posed by migrating Africans is not as devastating for Europe as was the intensified repression and struggle in South Africa in the 1980's, the theological challenge is urgent and the potential for renewal or for failure stands before the church in Europe. Will it rediscover what it means to be the church of the crucified through hearing the call of God in and through the cries of suffering Africans? This rediscovery requires that we "accept our guilt in the suffering of others and our responsibility to be with them."[15]

3. Bidding farewell to pseudo-innocence

Why are Europeans guilty? What have we done? It is easy for churches and progressive Europeans to lay the blame for the present crisis on African governments, on the immigration policies of some European nations, and increasingly on the manipulation of the crisis by populist nationalists. Thus, blaming it on others and maintaining our own innocence. In his dissertation *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power*[16], published in 1976, Allan Boesak argued that a major task of Black Theology was to expose the pseudo-innocence of if the white population in South Africa. The pseudo-innocence was constituted by the narratives that whites used to explain South African history and politics. These narratives hid the realities of the oppression and suffering of the black majority, justified the position of whites in society, and enabled them to view themselves as doing no harm and to be without guilt. For Boesak, the exposure of the pseudo-innocence did not only refer to the supporters of Apartheid but also to white liberals who engaged themselves in seeking to help black people – doing things for them. Black Theology uncovered the fallacy of white innocence by making visible the oppressive suffering of black people and the active or passive complicity of whites in their suffering. Commenting on Boesak's book De Gruchy noted that the effect of this pseudo-innocence on white South Africans was that they

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15 De Gruchy, *Theology and Ministry*, 119.

16 Allan Aubery Boesak *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll: Orbis 1976).

"rationalized their power and privileges in such a way that they can no longer discern the reality of that now faces them."[17] He goes on to write:

> Part of this pseudo-innocence is a lack of a sense of guilt for what has happened to black people as a result of whites' attitudes, actions, and policies over centuries. In the name of maintaining security whites are constantly informed that they have nothing for which to feel guilty. Such a refusal to acknowledge what history plainly describes does not mean an absence of guilt, only an absence of admission and acceptance of it. This has disastrous consequences fort whites coming terms with reality.[18]

The relationship between European countries and Africa is characterised by a similar pseudo-innocence. The *Kairos Document* affirmed that a prophetic response to the *kairos* has to be rooted in a thorough understanding of what was happening, and hence in an in-depth social analysis of the situation. Hearing the cries of Africans as interpenetrated by the cry of God as a challenge to the church requires that we engage in such an analysis of why people are migrating from Africa to Europe. The causes of migration are complex and diverse, however, in relation to migration out of Africa the diverse causes are deeply intertwined with the negative legacy of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation. This is not to claim that colonial and neo-colonial exploitation is the only cause of African suffering, nor is it to excuse the role of African leaders who have in various ways contributed to African suffering.[19] It is however to argue that the present socio-economic situation of African and Western European countries cannot be understood without reference to long history of European exploitation of Africa, including the slave the trade, the colonial domination, neo-colonial exploitation, and the continuing impact of major transnational companies and financial institutions based in Europe.

The dominant narratives describing the rise of modernity and the socio economic and technological development within Western Europe often

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17 De Gruchy, *Church Struggle*, 189.

18 De Gruchy, *Church Struggle,* 189–190.

19 See Allan Aubery Boesak, *Pharaohs on both sides of the Blood-Red Waters: Prophetic Critique of Empire: Resistance, Justice, and the power of Hopeful Sizwe – A Transatlantic Conversation* (Eugene: Cascade, 2017)

ignore the long history of European exploitation of and hence dependency on Africa. This exploitation that was often accompanied by the violent suppression of those who resisted and the coercion of the others to serve the interests of the European exploiters. The cruelty and inhumanity of this exploitative relationship contradicts the dominant narrative of increasing enlightenment, progress, humanisation, and democratisation as the hall marks of the European modernisation project.[20] Hence the reality must be suppressed in order to maintain the façade of innocence. While particularly horrendous examples cruelty might be grudgingly acknowledged, the reality of systematised exploitation over centuries is ignored. This does not only apply to the great colonial powers, the majority of Western European nations participated in and benefited from the colonial trade and continue to benefit from neo-colonial exploitation.[21] The wealth of European nations that attracts migrants from Africa is in part a product of colonial relationships. Hence, the arrival and non-arrival of migrants is the victims of exploitation and oppression asserting their right to share in the benefit created by the long history of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation.

If western Europeans are to enter the kingdom of God – or to rephrase the challenge – if European political and public theologies are to contribute to the struggle for justice in the context of the arrival and non-arrival of African migrants, they must begin by acknowledging their participation in the collective guilt of colonial and neo colonial exploitation. As De Gruchy states:

> Those who have been instruments and benefactors of oppression have to deal with their past in a way that sets them free from shame

20 See Sampie Terreblanche, *Western Empires, Christianity, and the Inequalities between the West and the Rest, 1500–2010*, (Johannesburg: Penguin, 2014), and Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Realities,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

21 See for example, Patricia Purtschiert, Barbara Lüthi, and Rancesca Falk, (eds.), *Postkoloniale Schweiz: Formen und Folgen eines Kolonialismus ohn Kolonien*, (Bielefeld: Transcript 2013) and Patricia Purtschert and Harald Fischer-Tine, (eds), *Colonial Switzerland: Rethinking Colonialism from the Margins*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), and in particular relationship to South Africa see, Georg Kries, *Switzerland and South Africa 1948–1994: Final Report of the NFP 42+ Commissioned by the Swiss Federal Council*, (Pieterlen: Peter Lang, 2007).

> and guilt whether acknowledged or repressed as well as from the attempt to cling to unjust privilege to the disadvantage of others.[22]

For De Gruchy the concept of guilt is to acknowledge moral accountability and responsibility; responsibility occurs in diverse ways and contexts within complex networks of relationships.[23] While individual contemporary Europeans might not be personally responsible for colonial and neo colonial exploitation they are caught up in the complex matrix of exploitative relationships that reach back into the past. Many people benefit directly and indirectly from the wealth acquired through colonial and neo-colonial exploitation. As citizens of democratic nations, they share in the decision making and thus participate in the corporate responsibility for the way their governments deal with past exploitation, facilitate present exploitation, and exclude the migrating victims of exploitation. Yet as De Gruchy affirms:

> Acknowledging guilt is … not an end in itself, it is a step towards what the New Testament calls metanoia or repentance, that is, a willingness to acknowledge fault, turn around, and begin to live on a new basis both personally and socially… Repentance, remorse, lamentation, all lead to a new commitment to restore … justice. But what precisely is justice, and how does it relate to the exercise of love, on the one hand and the exercise of power on the other?[24]

4. Justice and the migrating subject

For De Gruchy the benchmark for justice in society is divine justice most profoundly revealed in the crucified Christ.

> Divine power is revealed in the suffering and vicarious love of the cross that forgives perpetrators yet condemns injustice in exercising the creative and redemptive justice of God. God's justice, power and love are revealed in the fact that the just dies for the unjust, thereby justifying and embracing the ungodly in a new covenant

22 De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 189.

23 See De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 189–198.

24 De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 198.

> relationship. Thus, restorative justice has to do with renewing God's covenant and therefore the establishing of just power relations without which reconciliation remains elusive. It is not a justice that separates people into the good and the bad, the ritually clean or the ethnically acceptable, but one that seeks to bind them together in mutual care and responsibility for each other and the for the larger society.[25]

He thus states:

> God's justice is the justice of restored relations, an understanding of justice inseparable even if distinguished from love, and one which finds expression in liberation from oppression and reconciliation within both personal and social relations.[26]

The interrelationship of love, justice, reconciliation, and power revealed on the cross has a particular focus on the victims of society. Reflecting on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of the cross, de Gruchy wrote:

> In Jesus Christ [God] is the crucified God who in his judgement seeks the redemption of all nations. He is the crucified God who "puts down the mighty from their seats" in order to "exalt the humble and the meek." In doing so, God shows partiality to the broken hearted, the rejected and despised, the powerless and the oppressed.[27]

To enter the kingdom of God and its justice is to participate in a praxis that works for the transformation of societies in which personal, communal, and social relationships manifest reconciliation of estranged and alienated groups, in which the power structures and relationships are characterised by justice, and where people take responsibility for the welfare or others. This transformation requires a particular focus on those who are marginalised, excluded, and victimised by thee power dynamics of the particular society.

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25 De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 203–204.

26 De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 202.

27 De Gruchy, *Bonhoeffer and South Africa: Theology in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 56.

De Gruchy's focus on the victims of society has a further dimension that is significant for interpreting European participation in the reign of God in the context of the arrival and non-arrival of African migrants. In *Liberating Reformed Theology,* De Gruchy reinterprets the Reformed doctrine of election from the perspective of a theology of the cross as God's preferential option for the victims of society. Election is to be understood as:

> God's gracious election of a people through whom God's redemption becomes a historical reality. This is not the election of a people who are powerful, but of a people who, being rendered powerless by dominant society, have been empowered by God to be his witnesses for liberation and justice in the world.[28]

In the contemporary European context this suggest that the one's God chooses to "become God's special witnesses to God's liberating grace and the promise of life in Jesus Christ crucified"[29] are the migrating Africans who are the objects of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation; who when they arrive in Europe are marginalised, rejected, excluded, and disempowered; and who are often further often subject to further exploitation in European societies. They as "the victims of society have a special place in the redemptive purposes as well as in the providence of God." [30]

Seeking the reign of God and its justice requires that we place the migrating Africans at the centre or our political and public theological reflections. Affirming that they are God's chosen way for transforming society requires that we affirm their agency. They are people who have taken their future into their own hands. They have refused to let it be determined by the consequences of exploitation, oppression and suffering, at great risk to themselves they engaged on their journey. There active presence in European societies is an opportunity for these societies to be transformed so that reflect the coming reign of God. However, this requires a change of theological perspective even amongst those who have welcomed migrants to Europe.

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28 De Gruchy, *Liberating Reformed Theology*, 125.

29 De Gruchy, *Liberating Reformed Theology*, 133.

30 De Gruchy, *Liberating Reformed Theology*, 133.

Many theological and practical responses to the challenges posed by migration have focused on the motif of hospitality.[31] While hospitality is a significant alternative to the exclusion and rejection that has been promoted by some right wing popularists – including those who claim to be motivated by defending Europe's Christian heritage – it often remains captive to unequal power dynamics. The host remains in control of the "hospitality", it is given on the terms of the host, and the migrant remains in a situation of dependency. Moving beyond hospitality many have engaged in advocacy for migrants – seeking to speak on their behalf, to promote their cause, and to argue for a more humane politics. Yet, advocacy too can be an expression of power dynamics where the one who has the resources uses them for the advantage of the one who does not have them.[32]

Affirming the agency of migrants leads to an alternative way of engagement; that of "deep solidarity".[33] Deep solidarity is a standing with others, respecting their agency, engaging with them, hearing them, learning from them, discovering what they have to offer. In this process we discover our deep connectedness with each other. This connectedness has diverse forms. Negatively it is the recognition that we are connected through the complex dynamics of exploitation and oppression. Positively, it is the discovery of common humanity, and in some cases common heritage of faith. Theologically it is the recognition that in hearing the voice of the exploited suffering other I am hearing the voice of God. Deep solidarity does not exclude hospitality or advocacy but becomes a new basis for both in the context of transformed relationships. Pursuing justice in deep solidarity is an expression of love that transforms the power relationships between members of the dominant groups and the migrating people; for it is through such solidarity, and hence in dependence on the migrating people, that members of the dominant groups are liberated to participate in God's redemptive action in the world.

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31 See for example Fleuer S. Houston, *You shall Love the Stranger as Yourself: The Bible, Refugees, and Asylum*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), and Joshua W. Jipp, *Saved by Faith and Hospitality,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

32 See the discussions in Andrea Bieler, Isolde Karle, HyeRan Kim-Cragg and Ilona Nord, *Religion and Migration: Negotiating Hospitality, Agency and Vulnerability* (Leipzig Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019)

33 See Joerg Rieger and Rosemarie Henkel-Rieger, *United we are a Force: How Faith and Labour can Overcome Americas' Inequalities*, (St. Louis: Chalice, 2016), 53–78.

5. Conclusion

How can European political and public theologies enter the kingdom God in an age of migration? Given the continuing enormous influence of European theologues their participation in the global struggles for "justice, reconciliation, and peace" is of vital importance, however such participation will only be of significance when the hear the cries of migrating Africans, acknowledge their complicity in colonial and neo-colonial exploitation, and enter into deep solidarity with the victims of such exploitation. Such participation cannot be a merely intellectual exercise, it is inherently a participation in praxis.

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