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## Editorial

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Serampore College, along with all the fraternity of Serampore College, celebrating its Bicentenary (1818–2018) this year. The celebration was inaugurated on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and with the yearlong programs, it will culminate in the concluding grand ceremony on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018. I, on behalf of the Editorial Committee of the *Indian Journal of Theology*, bring greetings to all our contributors, readers and subscribers on the occasion of the Bicentenary of Serampore College. Thank you very much for your constant support in the past years without which we will not be able to continue the publications. The present issue brings six major articles from different fields of studies and perspectives.

The first article, “*Deciphering the Dream: A Call for Rebuilding of the Temple and the Motives of the Empire. Rereading from a Postcolonial Perspective,*” by Joel Joseph delves into a question why people were hesitant to the rebuilding project, the agenda of the Persian Empire, whereas at the same time the Judean elites returned to rebuild the Temple during the Persian Empire. Based on the text from Haggai 1:1-15, Joseph’s study affirms prophet’s theological conviction, it was not ‘due to laziness or indifference’ as portrayed in several commentaries, but it was deeply rooted in ‘the community’s covenantal obligation’ that challenged people to rebuild the temple through the language and forms of wisdom traditions.

In the following article, “*Blurring of Binaries in the Primeval Stories,*” by A. C. Thomas stresses that the postmodern reading of the primeval discourses found in the book of Genesis can challenge the hierarchical binary oppositions that resulted in anthropocentrism after the human disobedience. This has the point of reference for good or bad of human. In fact, this

places human in the position of dominion and further alienated them from nature/creation. According to Thomas, it is an urban civilized culture that contributed to this shift from biocentrism to anthropocentrism. Hence, when this primeval story of Genesis is read deconstructively it can subvert the hierarchical binary oppositions and contribute to ecocriticism drawing on geography, ecology, and other natural sciences.

The article by Subhro Sekhar Sircar, “*Paul on Women in the Church and Christian Worship: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*,” investigates what Paul was attempting to communicate when he wrote this most difficult and controversial passages in the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 figures most prominently in the discussion of women and has produced numerous essays and articles with a variety of interpretations over the last fifty years. Scholars are divided not only on “the integrity of the passage” but also “on major issues that include the meaning of the word ‘head’, whether Paul prescribes head-coverings for women in the worship or emphasizes sexual distinctiveness of men and women or instructs women to have ‘authority’ over men or other related issues.” Hence, Sircar examines various interpretations of these major issues proposed by scholars and then to suggest the possible coherent meaning of the passage. This passage clearly indicates the worship context of the church where both men and women are involved. Hence, in his conclusion, Sircar affirms that Paul does not deny women praying and preaching in the Church. Although man’s hierarchical role cannot be denied, yet in the Lord, man and woman are mutually independent to one another. There is no sense of superiority or inferiority in the Lord, but this does not cancel functional and also sexual differences. Thus, both men and women should properly attire themselves when they come to the public worship.

Kairidinang Newmei, in his article “*The Church’s Response to Traditional Healers and their Work with Special Reference to Zeliangrong Nagas*,” appraises that the traditional healers among

the Zeliangrong Nagas not only play the role of physicians but also ‘of prophets who foretell what lies ahead for the family and community or village as a whole.’ But with the arrival of Christianity, this art has declined due to the opposition of Christians. The author of this essay makes an attempt to study these traditional healers taking into account their history, culture, the challenge faced by missionaries-past and present, and Biblical and theological perspectives. In his conclusion, Newmei asserts that the traditional healers (who are now Christians) contribute toward the healing of the community by using medicinal plants have natural strengthening and curative properties. These plants are created by God and it is he who placed this curative power into the plants which are necessary for human beings. Hence, the traditional Christian healers should continue with their treatment and the church needs to take the issue of medicinal plants seriously for the wellbeing of the entire society despite the advancement of modern medicine and treatment.

The article by Matthew Marvin Reynolds, “*Jonathan Edwards’ Influence on the Formation of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society*,” is his attempt to demonstrate that William Carey’s challenge to a small band of Baptist ministers to take the light of the gospel to India and subsequently he committed himself for this task in India was a historic and momentous beginning which was the culmination of numerous previous events of this. This historic and momentous beginning has its influence upon the founding of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society that resulted from many discourses penned by a pastor Jonathan Edwards in the American colonies. Reynolds shows that Jonathan Edward’s writings directly influenced the formation of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society in England which accomplished God’s purposes among the nations.

The last article, “*The Incarnation and Contextualization*,” by Pramod Aghamkar points out that in midst of unparalleled changes due to globalization, modernization, social media, etc.,

the importance of doing mission contextually has not diminished. This situation compels mission workers both to study and observe the living traditions and cultures wherever mission work will be done. However, the international promoters of mission and ministry hardly contextualize their approaches. It is by living and participating in the life of people one can truly understand the relevance of today's mission in context. It is best exemplified by the incarnational life of Jesus who is the only defining expression of all effective contextualization. Aghamkar emphasizes that there is an "inseparable relationship between the gospel message and the life of believers, with the incarnate model of Jesus as the key for an effective contextualization model."

I trust that this issue and the ones to come will engage our writers and readers in the task of understanding our theology, cultural heritage and spiritual life in an integral way in our contemporary world.

**Subhro Sekhar Sircar**  
Editor

## **“Deciphering the Dream – A Call for Rebuilding of the Temple and the Motives of the Empire”: Rereading from a Postcolonial Perspective**

*Joel Joseph\**

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The text of the rebuilding of the Temple during the Persian Empire and its context needs a decoding of the dreams and aspirations of the covenantal community. This article will investigate the Haggai 1:1-15. Haggai may reflect an earlier perspective among the Yehudite community than Zechariah chapters 1-8.<sup>1</sup> These two prophetic units, Haggai 1-2 and Zechariah 1-8, share a prevailing interest on the restoration of postexilic Jerusalem and specifically on the project of temple-restoration. These observations, coupled with the observation that Zechariah 9-14 lacks both of these characteristics, form the basis for the now common view that both Haggai 1-2 and Zechariah 1-8 once circulated together as an independent book, in a composite editorial unity.<sup>2</sup> A long-standing approach to Haggai 1:1-15 maintains that the people's opposition to the reconstruction of the temple was not due to laziness or indifference, as is affirmed in many commentaries on Haggai, but was rooted in ideological convictions.<sup>3</sup> Several exegetical considerations present serious difficulties to understand the people's opposition, as it is portrayed in the redactional study of Haggai, as stemming from pious theological concerns<sup>4</sup> rather than simple self-interest.<sup>5</sup> Hence, any prophetic book that focuses expressly on the temple, it is Haggai.<sup>6</sup> So in the succeeding pages,

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\* Dr. Joel Joseph, an alumnus of Serampore College, is the Assistant Professor of Old Testament and teaches in New Theological College, Dehradun, Uttarakhand (UK), India.

an attempt will be made to delve into the text to draw out some important insights about why people were reluctant of a rebuilding project and the agenda of the Persian Empire and at the same time the Judean elites who came back to rebuild the Second Temple during the Persian empire.

## 1. Translation<sup>7</sup>

1. In the second year of Darius the King, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD (Yahweh<sup>8</sup>) came through Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor<sup>9</sup> of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest,<sup>10</sup> as follows:

<sup>2</sup> Thus the LORD of hosts (Yahweh Sebaoth<sup>11</sup>) says: These peoples say, ‘This is not the time to come,<sup>12</sup> the time for the house of Lord (Yahweh) to be rebuilt’.

<sup>3</sup> Then the word of the LORD (Yahweh) came by the prophet Haggai, saying:

<sup>4</sup> Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses,<sup>13</sup> while this house lies in ruins?

<sup>5</sup> Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared.

<sup>6</sup> You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and you that earn wages earn wages to put them into a bag with holes.

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared.

<sup>8</sup> Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored, says the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because my house lies in ruins, while all of you hurry off to your own houses.

<sup>10</sup> Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce.

<sup>11</sup> And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the soil produces, on human beings and animals, and on all their labors.

<sup>12</sup> Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of the prophet Haggai, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the LORD

<sup>13</sup> Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, saying, I am with you, says the LORD.

<sup>14</sup> And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

<sup>15</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month of the second year of Darius.

## 2. Textual notes / Form / Structure / Setting

In Haggai 1:2, text-critical and translational choices play a crucial role in determining the theme and logic of 1:1-15. The two chief translational options propose differing subjects for the verb בוא ('to come'). The more frequently adopted translation construes עת as the subject of בוא and translates, ‘The time has not come...’<sup>14</sup> The alternative translation, which John Kessler<sup>15</sup> affirms is taken into consideration for this translation. This views the people as the implied subject of בוא (as is the case in v. 14) and translates, ‘It is not the time to come.’<sup>16</sup> There are two principal options for understanding the MT: (1) בוא may be read as an infinitive absolute and predicate of עת; as in the first translation; or (2) בוא may be read as an infinitive construct used genitively with עת<sup>17</sup> describing the *kind* of time in question (i.e. a time for / of coming), as in the second translation that is mentioned. Four considerations

make the latter solution the most likely. First, the people are the subject of בּוֹא in v. 14. There they come to Jerusalem to build the temple. In the thematic structure of 1:1-15, vv. 2 and 14 stands opposite each other. Because of Haggai’s words in 1:1-11, the people do in v. 14 that which they have refused to do in v. 2.<sup>18</sup> It is thus likely that the people constitute the subject of אָבָה in both verses. Second, vv. 2b and 4 both use עָתָה followed by a genitival infinitive construct. It is therefore entirely opposite to see the same construction in 1: 2a. Third, Jerusalem appears to have been quite sparsely inhabited at the time<sup>19</sup> and it would be necessary for some workers to come to Jerusalem from their own dwellings, located elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> Fourth, the noun עָתָה followed by a genitival infinitive construct (usually preceded by lamedh, but occasionally without, cf. Genesis 29:7) is frequently used in sapiential contexts and denotes the kind of time suitable for a given activity. Thus the translation ‘It is not the time to come, i.e., now isn’t a good time to come’ is more contextually appropriate than ‘The time has not come’. The latter reading leaves greater room for the possibility that the people’s motive is theological (although it by no means *requires* it). The former underlines the speakers’ volitional choices at a given moment.<sup>21</sup>

From a purely formal point of view Haggai 1: 1-15 may be divided into three sections 1:1-3; 4-11 and 12-15, corresponding to the more poetic language of the central section and the prose of the introduction to the more poetic language of the central section and the prose of the introduction and conclusion. ‘Kessler sees the book’s opening (vv. 1-2), consisting of a date formula, a Wortereignisformel (Word-Event Formula)’.<sup>22</sup> The use of date and Word-Event Formula, as well as Haggai’s name and his designation as a prophet, establishes the text’s genre as a prophetic book and suggests to the readers/hearers that it be approached with a reading strategy appropriate to such texts.<sup>23</sup> However, from a thematic and rhetorical point of view vv. 2-3 cannot be abstracted from vv.4-11 and thus vv. 2-11 must be considered as a unit.<sup>24</sup> Verse 12 signals an important transition. The reader awaits the

outcome of the conflict described in 1:11. The narration progresses by means of two identifiable units found in vv. 12-13, followed by a conclusion (v. 14). Each unit includes a description of the reaction of the principal dramatis personae to Yahweh, followed by a definition of the role and the identity of Haggai. Verses 12-14 frame the narrative epilogue ‘Haggai 1: 12-14 provides the narrative of response and is concerned to relate the rebuilding of the Temple to the changing fortunes of the people and in particular to the dawning of a new age in which Zerubbabel of the Davidic house is to occupy a primary position. Two passages in Zech. 1-8 are related to this. An isolated fragment in 4: 6b-10a<sup>25</sup> stresses the full part to be played by Zerubbabel in the rebuilding; this is quite explicit, but its relationship to its context and indeed to the remainder of these chapters of Zechariah remains very uncertain.<sup>26</sup> The dating formula in v.15, while unexpected, fulfills two important functions. First, it frames the scene, and second, it underlines the fact that the resumption of the work occurred quickly.’<sup>27</sup>

The form of Haggai 1: 2-11 has been variously categorized. Floyd views it as a prophetic disputation.<sup>28</sup> Bedford<sup>29</sup> maintains that the community had rejected a call to rebuild the Temple issued sometime around the emergence of Darius I and the return of Zerubbabel. He affirms that their motivation for doing so was not ‘moral turpitude’ but stemmed from ‘excellent ideological reasons’.

### 3. Explanation

**1, 2** It is noteworthy that the author of the book uses “Darius the King” includes the title as “king” but excludes any qualification indicating his nationality or kingdom.<sup>30</sup> This stands in contrast to the references made to introduce the foreign kings.<sup>31</sup> The hearers/readers are virtually invited to skip over the issue of foreign domination by a dominating Empire and somehow see that situation analogous to earlier periods of the people’s history.<sup>32</sup>

Hence the author very carefully presents the dominating Empire to the people.

The text continues to introduce Zerubbabel as a Davidide via the inclusion of his patronymic.<sup>33</sup> There was no other messianic hope as blatant in postexilic portions of the Hebrew Bible as found here.<sup>34</sup> The title ‘governor (פּוֹהֵל) 35 of Yehud’ is very carefully attributed to show once again the anomaly of Judah’s domination by a foreign power and Zerubbabel’s humble status<sup>36</sup> and to avoid any confrontation with the Empire. “Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest was likely to be born in exile.”<sup>37</sup> In Verse 2, Kessler<sup>38</sup> quotes Wellhausen who suggested that two opposing theological conceptions were present in Haggai 1. On one hand, there were those who saw the rebuilding of the temple as an essential and preliminary step to the coming of the messianic era. Others, however, viewed the temple’s restoration as occurring subsequent to the arrival of the hoped-for age.

R. G. Hamerton-Kelly attempted to identify the two opposing theological and sociological factions.<sup>39</sup> He identified the proponents of immediate rebuilding with the priestly group, who based its convictions upon the theological perspectives of Deuteronomy.<sup>40</sup> Hanson took a similar approach, situating the theological opposition (in contrast to Hamerton-Kelly) between the priestly-Ezekielian coalition, on one hand, and an amalgam of the disciples of Deutero-Isaiah and disenfranchised Levites, on the other.<sup>41</sup> The introduction of a legitimate priestly figure strengthens the hearers/readers sense of continuity-Yahweh had preserved both the Davidic and Zadokite lines in exile, and both would be involved in the temple’s reconstruction.<sup>42</sup> The symmetrical fashion wherein each member of the book’s principal characters is introduced by name and title thus creates the image of an ordered and structured society in which each member has an assigned role and a part to play.<sup>43</sup>

**3-11**, The continuity motifs established in 1:1-2 are continued through 1:3-11 by two highly creative techniques: (1) the redactional slant placed upon the conflict with the people over

the rebuilding of the temple; and (2) the use of Deuteronomistic and Zion traditions to express that conflict. His analysis suggests that the judgment is over and the “divinely appointed, propitious time to rebuild” has indeed arrived.<sup>44</sup> The end of the time of the deity’s abandonment of the site could be discerned by means of “dreams, extispicy and planetary omens.”<sup>45</sup> The Judean community, according to Bedford, would have known that it was time to rebuild the temple by means of “tangible signs, such as the repatriation of all the exiles, the blessing of Yahweh’s people and land, the destruction of enemies, the acknowledgement by the nations of Yahweh’s sovereignty, the re-establishment of the kingship of David, and the reunification of Judah and Israel.”<sup>46</sup>

Most of the people in the peripheries felt that they were not convinced of such tangible signs and the Jerusalemite community staunchly refused for this great and laborious task. This could be also based on the calculation regarding the seventy-year desolation of Jerusalem which is found in the book of Jeremiah.<sup>47</sup> The word עַתָּה inverses 2, 4 does not mean a divinely designated moment, because Haggai’s response to the people’s conviction does not consist of any theological or exegetical arguments, though in certain cases עַתָּה may refer to an epoch or a moment designated by Yahweh for a particular purpose. (Psalms 102:14; Jeremiah 46:21; 50:27, 31).<sup>48</sup> Thenuance is rather the well-attested notion of “an appropriate or suitable time” for a given activity.<sup>49</sup> The idea of an “appropriate” time is well rooted in the sapiential literature (Ecclesiastes 8:5-6).<sup>50</sup> Frequently the noun עַתָּה is followed by an infinitive construct indicating the activity which is appropriate or inappropriate in the time under consideration. As noted in the textual criticism, the implied subject is the people who say, “It is not the appropriate time to come...”<sup>51</sup> This sapiential orientation is evident in several passages which contain the same construction. In Ecclesiastes 3:2-8, for example, עַתָּה is followed by an infinitive construct that describes activities appropriate to certain periods of life. Thus there is a time to be born (עַתָּה לְיָדָה), to die (עַתָּה לָמוּת),

to plant (עַת לְטַעַת) and to pluck up (עַת לְעִקּוֹר נְטוּעַ). Genesis 29:7 provides an excellent parallel. There it is stated, “It is still day, it is not the time to gather in the flocks” (לֹא-עֵת הַאֲסֹר). The intent is clear that the given external circumstances, gathering in the flocks constitute an inappropriate activity. In each of these instances the construction refers not to a divine judgment regarding whether or not an action should be undertaken, but rather to a human evaluation in response to the question, “Would the activity under consideration be wise, prudent, appropriate or well situated in the existing circumstance?” What is more, such an evaluation can be called into question, by the prefixing of an interrogative הֲעַת as in Haggai 1:4. Thus 2 Kings 5:26, contains a virtually identical interrogative structure. There Elisha asks Gehazi, “Is it the time to receive (הֲעֵת לְקַחַת) silver, to receive (לְקַחַת) garments, olive trees...?”<sup>52</sup> Haggai, like Elisha, calls into question a course of action chosen by the people based on their view of the appropriateness of the circumstances, presumably the adversities mentioned in 1:4-6; 9-11. In other words, the people have said, “It is clear, given the external circumstances, that wisdom dictates that the rebuilding of the temple be put off until a more appropriate time.”<sup>53</sup>

He addresses the people in 1:3-11 using “traditional” forms of questions (cf. Hosea 6:4; Amos 3:3-8; Jonah 4:11; Micah 3:1-3; 6:3; Zechariah 1:5-6; 7:5-7; 8:6)<sup>54</sup> and disputations, as well as a promise of salvation (v. 8). The author has used creatively the Deuteronomistic<sup>55</sup> and Zion traditions in 1:3-11, it has long been noted that Haggai uses the treaty or futility-curse form in his disputation with the people.<sup>56</sup> Such usage was highly significant in the Deuteronomistic tradition (Deuteronomy 28; Judge 2:11-14), especially in several of the prophetic books (Hosea 2:2-9; Amos 4:6-11; 5:11; Micah: 13-16). Indeed, it has frequently been pointed out, there are numerous verbal and thematic parallels between Haggai 1:3-11 and Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26, and Micah 6:13-16.<sup>57</sup>

Haggai’s innovative use of the Deuteronomistic tradition could be seen. The people are being reprimanded for failing to

rebuild the temple despite the fact that temple building, as Petersen puts it, “is markedly absent from other covenant stipulations preserved in the Hebrew Bible.”<sup>58</sup> However, that which is most significant for the present discussion is how Haggai subtly introduces in his presentation with regard to the duty of temple reconstruction. From the beginning, the Jerusalem temple was seen as something of an innovation, needing divine approbation (2 Samuel 7; 1 Kings 8), a place where the worship of Yahweh was corrupted by the worship of foreign deities (Ezekiel 8) or a locus of misplaced faith—a false assurance has been given that Jerusalem would never be overthrown no matter what the conduct of its inhabitants may have been (Jeremiah 7).

In Ancient West Asia, it was the customary practice of awaiting instructions from the deity before such an undertaking of reconstruction, as well as its form and cultic personnel. Haggai gives no room for any discussion on this matter. The rebuilding of the temple is a covenantal duty, whereas no explanation is offered as to how, when, or why it came to be one!<sup>59</sup> The book overlooks the failures of the past and focuses on the critical nature of the present (v. 8). 1: 12-15, this portion of the epilogue describes the effects of the Haggai’s message.

This section has minimized the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile – the texts assumes both but mentions neither. Failure to rebuild the temple, and the consequences thereof, are portrayed as a blemish on an existing relationship, not the evidence of one which had formerly existed and had lapsed. Hence, in 1:12-15 the audience is invited to view Haggai’s words as a challenge and response within an alive relationship rather than a call to renew a failed one. The obvious and contrasting difference that is found between the response of the people during Jeremiah and Haggai is that Haggai’s audience have done the right thing (1:2- 15), whereas, the generation during Jeremiah’s time have done the wrong thing. Haggai is to a great extent silent regarding the failures of the past and even lacks an explicit call for repentance. He simply enjoins

his people to do what they ought to do. And when they do what is required, he guarantees that Yahweh is among them once again as He has been in the past at critical moments of the people of God.<sup>60</sup> He lays less stress on the failures of the people to live as God expected them to live by stressing on the aspect of the building of the Temple.

#### **4. Comments on Haggai 1: 1-15: Postcolonial reading on the voice of Dissidence for the rebuilding of the Temple**

The book of Haggai is very clear about its intention, i.e., the rebuilding of the temple. One of the major themes as many scholars have projected is to show the prophet Haggai's success.<sup>61</sup> His enthusiasm for temple building seems totally out of place among the prophets.<sup>62</sup> As Elizabeth Achtemeier expresses it; He crops in the midst of the goodly fellowship of the prophets like a misguided stranger from the wrong part of town. No cry for social justice escapes his lips, no assurance that God dwells with the humble and contrite. Instead, he reeks of something that smells very much like the external and superficial religion of which we would all like to rid.<sup>63</sup> He is seen as one breaking through the resistance voice of the common people and through whom Yahweh is able to bring change. Haggai is portrayed as a scribe or interpreter of omens who is able to correct the miscalculations of the people. Rather, he is portrayed as a classical prophet whose words cut to the heart of a disobedient people.<sup>64</sup> In this regard, it is significant to note that in Haggai, 'the people' in 1:2 constitute a *dramatis persona* separate and distinct from the High Priest, Governor, and the prophet (1:1) as well as 'the priests' (2:11). 'The people' comprises of the majority of the population of early Persian Yehud was likely to have been involved in agricultural and economic pursuits.<sup>65</sup> The people lived in a situation of hand to mouth because they bore the brunt of the burden of taxation within the Persian Empire.<sup>66</sup> Yehud had a limited territory and reduced population base.<sup>67</sup> The dramatic conflict introduced in v. 2 turns on the conviction of the people that "it is not the time to come; the time for the house of

the Lord to be rebuilt."<sup>68</sup> For at least a half a century, scholars have suggested that the issue at hand was something of a pious reluctance on the part of the people. The community does not want to risk offending the deity by proceeding with the reconstruction without having first received clear authorization to do so.<sup>69</sup> P. R. Bedford argues in a similar line of thought. He maintains that the cessation of divine displeasure, manifested by concrete signs, was seen to be a necessary prerequisite to temple (re)building both in Israel and in ancient West Asia.<sup>70</sup>

At times, the stark refutation of Haggai seems very ambitious, because the conception of *נָוָה* is supported by the fact that the book of Haggai clearly anticipates a future "time" of restoration.<sup>71</sup> In 2:6 Yahweh, will initiate his mighty activities "in a little while."<sup>72</sup> In 2:15 and 2:18 the prophet employs the notion of "time" to encourage the people to think about the great hope that lies before them. In 2:20-23 the prophet speaks of a future time, "on that day," when Yahweh will act against the kingdoms.<sup>73</sup> When the people are coming to a conclusion that it is not the "time" to rebuild the temple, they are articulating their observations about the current state of affairs to the expectation, the people had about the coming time of restoration which is characterized by the unfolding of the certain events.

In different prophetic traditions in the Bible,<sup>74</sup> the initiative of the restoration happens with the defeat and submission of foreign nations.<sup>75</sup> But on the contrary, the reality of foreign rule that is mentioned in the initial verses of the book of Haggai indicates that the hopes of political independence had yet not materialized in Yehud.<sup>76</sup> Haggai carefully uses the terms as "the governor" 1:2; "my servant" and "like a signet ring" in 2:20-23,<sup>77</sup> but never uses the term "king,"<sup>78</sup> as he does not want to offend the Empire and create a wedge in the minds of the Persian colonial power. Haggai was exhorting the people to rebuild the temple. As Rex Mason, concludes "..., when Yahweh begins his universal reign in the completed temple, Zerubbabel will succeed to royal status."<sup>79</sup>

Thus, this passage reflects that the coming of the Davidic king would bring an end to the exile and bring restoration. But on the other hand, people could not think as the foreign colonial power was still ruling over them.

The prophetic expectations about the restoration looked for an economic boom.<sup>80</sup> The book of Haggai is no exception as it looks for the same in 2:19, but a contrary thing is seen in 1:9. Hence, the people had a high expectation in the form of abundant agricultural yield, which was not met and hence people had the feeling that it is not the ‘time.’ The people of Yehud were not clear about the return and their hopes were hung on the return of Yahweh. Thus, the “return of Yahweh to Jerusalem stands in the center” of the restoration process<sup>81</sup> is well affirmed in 1:8; 1:13; 2:4. This return of Yahweh’s glory was an important component to the rebuilding of the temple.<sup>82</sup> The people were not sure as the situations were very bleak, because the prophetic traditions always held the view that Yahweh’s return would inaugurate a “new age” that would result in reversal of fortunes, including economic prosperity, agricultural blessing, judgment upon the nations, a return of shalom.<sup>83</sup> As Ackroyd<sup>84</sup> points out, Temple was the most potent symbol of the presence of God... It is the outward sign of that manifestation of the divine presence and power which was an important ingredient for an established life of restoration.

Thus, these imaginations pervaded the thoughts of the people in the early postexilic times which made them to be unwilling in terms of “time”. There appeared no “completeness, success... a situation which is both prosperous and secure... a state of well-being which is a direct result of the beneficent Presence of God.”<sup>85</sup> Instead of abundant crop yields, the people experienced terrible agricultural conditions in Yehud, this is dramatically pictured in Haggai 1:10.<sup>86</sup> Yehud still faces a daunting situation of foreign rule, difficult economic conditions, and a meager population.<sup>87</sup> Hence, the word *עו* expresses “activity which is inappropriate in the time of consideration” as used in wisdom literature. The current state of

affairs in early Achaemenid Yehud looked more like an extension of the exilic period<sup>88</sup> and a time under the colonial empire and the political independence is still to be materialized. The book of Haggai and the book of Zechariah express a sense of a persistent exile.<sup>89</sup> The texts throughout the postexilic period emphasize the imminent return of Yahweh.<sup>90</sup> Hence, the people concluded with a voice of resistance, that the political, economic and religious environment does not match with the restoration expectations found in the Hebrew Bible and hence they thought it was not the “time.”<sup>91</sup>

In the light of the discussed evidences, the dissidence voice of the people who were colonized by the imperial power made the colonized to give sapiential reasoning to justify that the “time” was inappropriate because the initial time at Yehud under the Persian domination did not facilitate the situations. There was a difference of opinion on whether the “propitious time” had in fact arrived. It was very true that the rebuilding had to take place but the terms used as discussed, made the people doubtful of the time. The book is very careful to present the two aristocratic strata of the returning exiles. Zerubbabel, the governor who was from David’s lineage and Joshua<sup>92</sup> the high priest, who hailed from Zadokite priesthood are promoted. Throughout the Second Temple Period, the Temple served as the heart of Jewish life, not only as the cultic and ritual centre, but also as the political, social, judicial and cultural core.<sup>93</sup>

The postexilic biblical literature talks about the intra-community tension, which the researcher has dealt with and will deal from the Book of Ezekiel chapters 40-48 in the latter part of this chapter. At the same time, Haggai is promoting the Persian colonial imperial rule by facilitating the rebuilding project. This indirectly promoted the Persian economic, political, religious, social and cultural agendas. He never uses the title “king” for Zerubbabel, though the book of Haggai was hoping for the restoration of the Davidic king.<sup>94</sup>

The prophet confronts the voice of resistance which was raised by the people with proper reasons, as this was in line with the prophetic tradition. The situations were in a contrasting sense; in the political scenario, the Persian domination was not yet over and Zerubbabel was seen as a governor. The economic, social and religious factors were far beyond the reach for the people to think that restoration had begun and the presence of the Lord had returned. The West Asian contexts also did not allow them to think for the rebuilding of the temple as they were not certain of the approval of the deity and the return of Yahweh's presence. All these factors made the people to be in the resistance mode but the prophet was energized to encourage the people to rebuild the temple. The rebuilding was also very much the plan of God but people did not know the "time." Some who thought that they are not free and still under the empire, could not go with clarity about the rebuilding of the Temple.

The dominant voice in the prophetic book of Haggai "undergirds rhetorically his theological interpretation of the community's covenantal obligation to rebuild the temple through the language and forms of wisdom traditions. He makes more effort to add a eudemonistic dimension, common in wisdom, in which the basis of his appeal is, in part, choosing that which will bring the greatest ultimate personal happiness. To move his hearers to a point of decision, Haggai calls for two well-known sapiential responses: 1. Observation, 2. Reflection upon that which has been observed. (Haggai 1:6b, 9a, 11). Thus the use of religious traditions in Haggai 1:1-15 manifests 'creative reformulation, mixing, and re-application'<sup>95</sup> of a variety of traditions and genres"<sup>96</sup> for giving voice to powerful on behalf of the voice of the unheard common in the periphery to cater to the need of the powerful Persian Empire.

## End Notes

1 John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud" in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, eds. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London / New York: T and T Clark, 2008): 9.

- 2 Byron G. Curtis, *Up the Steep and Stony Road: The Book of Zechariah in Social Location Trajectory Analysis*, SBL 25 (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2006), 93.
- 3 P. R. Bedford, "Discerning the Time: Haggai, Zechariah and the 'Delay' in the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple" in *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for G.W. Ahlström*, JSOTSupp 190, eds. S.W. Holloway and L. K. Handy (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press): 71-94; P. R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*, JSJSup 63 (Leiden: Brill, 2001). There is a critique also done by John Kessler in 1998, which he mentions in "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 243.
- 4 P. R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*, 174, 177; John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 244.
- 5 John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 244.
- 6 David L. Petersen, "The Temple in the Persian Period Prophetic Texts" in *Second Temple Studies*, vol. I, *Persian Period*, ed. Philip R. Davies, JSOTSupp 117 (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1991): 135.
- 7 John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, VTSupp 91 (Leiden / Boston / Köln: Brill, 2002), 103-108; Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi: WBC*, vol. 32 (Waco / Texas: Word Book Publisher, 1984), 150-151.
- 8 Hereafter, Lord will be used.
- 9 On the meaning of פהה cf. the discussion of the political status of Yehud in chapter 3. The LXX renders פהה here and in 1:12, 14; 2:21, 22 by ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰουδα. Bianchi, following Sacchi sees the LXX as reflecting an original Hebrew reading such as "mimmišpāhat yehūdā". Alternatively, Wolff suggests that the Greek translators assumed פהה to be synonymous with משפחה. Amsler opines that the LXX messianizes here. The Targum reads *zerrubbabel rabba' debēt yehūdā* ("Zerrubbabel the great one (cf. Ezra 4:10) of the house of Judah"). The Peshitta reads *zrbblrb' dyhwadh*. Bianchi further notes that the Vetus Latina, I Esdras 5:2 and Josephus (*Antiquity* 12.73) follow the LXX and see a reference here to Zerubbabel's Davidic origins. The book of Haggai is the only place where the LXX renders פהה in this way. Refer to John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 103.
- 10 הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל lit. "the great priest" is usually translated "high priest" (cf. Leviticus 21:10; Numbers 35:25; 2 Kings 12:11; 22:4, 8; 23: 4). כראש

כֹּהֵן “head” or “chief priest” is used in 2 Kings 25:18. Refer to Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi: WBC*, vol. 32, 151. Meyers and Meyers as referred by John Kessler in his book John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 120, 121, writes that “high Priest” differs from the head or chief priest or the priest in terms of the functions and responsibilities fulfilled by the individual in question. This view is affirmed in his work. D. W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heir: the Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel*, Oxford Theological Monograph (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 130. This term could be more in terms for a person responsible for the collection and management of funds (for example, Hilkiah 2 Kings 22:4, 8 and Jehoiada, 2 Kings 12:11) and certain governmental activities than cultic in nature. Tollington takes an intermediate position, seeing the term as a continuation of its pre-exilic use with reference to “any senior priest who had special duties connected with the fabric of the temple and its upkeep. Refer to J. A. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, JSOTSupp 150 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 131.

11 Hereafter, Lord of hosts will be used.

12 The principal problem here concerns the repetition of נָעַם in the MT, a repetition which is not reflected in the versions. The LXX οὐχ ἦκει ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ οἰκοδομηῆσαι τὸν οἶκον κυρίου reading, which is also reflected in the Vulgate and Syriac, The Targum adds כַּעַן (now). The text-critical decision which yields this translation, as opposed to the alternative ‘The time has not come’, will be discussed in detail. This particular verse in the whole passage is of great interest and therefore, this part of the verse will be dealt in much detail. Scholars such as Wellhausen, Janssen, Hamerton-Kelly, Steck, Hanson, de Robert, and Tadmor view the people’s words, as cited in Haggai 1:2, as reflecting the opinion that the time for temple reconstruction had not yet come, and, consequently, no such endeavour ought to be undertaken, for a summary of the opinions of these scholars regarding the various sectors of the population that held such views, cf. John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 123-125. Much weight is placed on understanding נָעַם in v. 2 as referring to a ‘divinely appointed moment,’ H. Tadmor, “‘The appointed time has not yet arrived’: The Historical Background of Haggai 1: 2” in Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine, eds. W. W. Hallo et al. (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999): 402-403; Peter Ross Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*, JSJSupp 63 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 173-178. Bedford’s recent studies argue for this position in great detail. His assertions involve not only exegetical judgments

regarding the sense of the text, but also historiographical conclusions with reference to how such a prophetic text may be used to reconstruct an historical context cf. M. H. Floyd, “The Nature of the Narrative and the Evidence of Redaction in Haggai” in VT 45 (1995): 490. Refer to John Kessler, “Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15” in JSOT 27. 2 (2002): 243; John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 103, 104. According to Assis, the Psalm 127 and 133 as representing a voice within a larger discourse surrounding community rebuilding which sought to offer a solution to the cognitive dissonance that the community surely experienced when their anticipated triumphant return to Jerusalem and immediate reconstruction of the temple was instead fraught with challenges that delayed efforts to rebuild. Ellie Assis, “Family and Community as Substitutes for the Temple after its Destruction: New Readings in Psalms 127 and 133” in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 85.1 (2009): 55-62; Kathleen Rochester, “The Missing Brother in Psalm 133” in *The Expository Times* 122 (2011): 380-382; Refer to Lauren Chomyn, “Dwelling Brothers, Oozing Oil, and Descending Dew: Reading Psalm 133 through the Lens of Yehudite Social Memory” in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, An International Journal of Nordic Theology 26.2 (2012): 220, 221.

13 Thus in v. 4 the term נָעַם carries the notion of a judgment relative to the appropriateness of a given activity. Using a good dose of irony, Haggai asks the people, ‘Is it an appropriateness time for you to live in paneled houses while the house is desolate?’ Consequently, both vv. 2a and 4 use נָעַם in the sense of an appropriate time for a given activity. This is well rooted in sapiential literature as dealt in a later stage elaborately. John Kessler, “Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15,” 244. The people’s understanding of נָעַם is “a falling together or juncture of circumstances favorable or suitable to an end or purpose.” See John R. Wilch, *Time and Event: An Exegetical Study of the Use of ‘eth in the Old Testament in Comparison to Other Temporal Expression in Clarification of the Concept of Time* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 167. Wilch’s definition encapsulates the wide semantic range of this word, which includes uses for an appropriate activity, a proper occasion, and an appointed situation. Cf. “נָעַם” BDB, 773-774; Frank Y. Patrick, “Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai” in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, eds. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London / New York: T and T Clark, 2008): 41.

14 H. W. Wolff, *Haggai: A Commentary*, trans. M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 27; C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*: AB, 25B (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1987), 3.

- 15 John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 245.
- 16 Dominique Barthelemy (ed.), *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament. III. Ezéchiel, Daniel et les 12 prophètes, OBO, 50.3.5 (Fribourg / Göttingen: Editions Universitaires / Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1992), 923-924; S. Amsler, A. Lacoque and R. Vuilleumier, Aggée-Zacharie 9-14, Malachi, CAT 11c (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1988), 19. Refer to John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 245.*
- 17 H. Tadmor, "'The appointed time has not yet arrived': The Historical Background of Haggai 1:2" in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*, 402; Refer to John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 245.
- 18 Dominique Barthelemy (ed.), *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament. III. Ezéchiel, Daniel et les 12 prophètes, 923-924; Refer to John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 245.*
- 19 O. Lipschits, "The History of the Benjamin Region under Babylonian Rule" in *Tel Aviv* 26 (1999): 184-185; C. E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*, JSOT Supp 294 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 200-205; John Kessler, "Reconstructing Haggai's Jerusalem: Demographic and Sociological Considerations and the Quest for an Adequate Methodological Point of Departure" in *Every City Shall Be Forsaken: Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East*, eds. L. L. Grabbe and R. Haak, JSOTSupp 330 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001):137-158; John Kessler, *Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 90-96; Refer to John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 245.
- 20 Refer to John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 245.
- 21 John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 245.
- 22 John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 9.
- 23 On the genre of the prophetic book, see the insightful discussions of Ehud Ben Zvi, "Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books: Setting and Agenda" in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd, SBLSymS 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000): 1-29; Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book: A Key Form of Prophetic Literature" in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003): 276-297; Refer to John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 10.
- 24 John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 108.
- 25 This text is dealt in the later part of this exegetical study, in the succeeding pages.
- 26 Peter Ackroyd, "The Jewish community in Palestine in the Persian period" in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol.1, *Introduction; The Persian Period*, eds. W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984): 141.
- 27 John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 113-114.
- 28 M. H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets. Part 2, FOTL 22* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 273.
- 29 P. R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*, 170-177.
- 30 John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 11.
- 31 Cf. Cyrus the king of Persia (פֶּרְסִי מֶלֶךְ פָּרְסִיָּה, 2 Chronicles 36: 23; Ezra 1:1); Sennacherib, king of Assyria (סִנְחַרְיָב מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּרִיָּה, 2 Kings 18:13); Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon (2 Kings 5:8)
- 32 John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 11.
- 33 On the questions surrounding Zerubbabel's genealogy, see Sara Japhet, "Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel: Against the Background of the Historical and Religious Tendencies of Ezra-Nehemiah" in *ZAW* 94 (1982): 66-98; John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 11, 12.
- 34 Paul L. Redditt, *Tradition in Transition Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, eds. Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd, *Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies* 475 (New York: T and T Clark, 2008), 77-80; Paul L. Redditt, "Prophecy and Monarchy in Haggai and Zechariah" in *CBQ* 76.3 (July, 2014): 442, 444.
- 35 By incorporating the term פֶּהָה it makes sense that this was to refer the domination of the empire as he is imperially appointed governor, John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 12.

- 36 John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 12.
- 37 Seriah was put to death in 587 BCE, His father, Jehozadak, was taken into exile, where Joshua was likely born. He was of a Zadokite stock (2 Kings 25:18, 1 Chronicles 5: 40-41, in conformity with the requirement of Ezekiel 44:15. Refer to John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 120.
- 38 Cf. John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 123-124.
- 39 R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "The Temple and the Origins of Jewish Apocalyptic" in *VT* 20 (1970): 1-15.
- 40 R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "The Temple and the Origins of Jewish Apocalyptic," 4-11.
- 41 P. D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*, 225; Refer to Cana Werman, "Levi and Levites in the Second Temple Period" in *Dead Sea Discoveries* 41.2 (1997): 211-225. Soo J. Kim, "YHWH Shammah: The City as Gateway to the Presence of YHWH" in *JSOT* 39.2 (2014): 194.
- 42 On the priesthood in the Persian period, see D. W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heir: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel*, Oxford Theological Monograph (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); David W. Suter, "Jubilee, the Temples, and the Aaronite Priesthood" in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibbá (Grand Rapids / Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009): 397-410; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Another Contribution to the Succession Narrative Debate (2 Samuel 11-20; 1 Kings 1-2)" in *JSOT* 38.1 (2013): 54, emphasizes that through Zerubbabel the Davidic line was kept.
- 43 John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 12.
- 44 Peter Ross Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*, 169-181. According to Bedford, the people of Yehud have legitimate ideological reasons for not rebuilding the temple. These ideological reasons are encapsulated by the people's usage of *עַל* in 1:2. Although contested by Kessler and others, the theological understanding of the usage of *עַל* is supported by similar usages of *עַל* in Psalms 102:14; Ezekiel 30:3 and Isaiah 49: 8, as well as numerous parallels in other West Asian sources, refer to Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in the Light of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic Writings*, 140-143. Although Kessler's earlier work counters Bedford on this issue, his recent work reflects a greater awareness of the theological underpinnings of the people's statement in 1:2: "It is quite *likely* that ideological objections to temple reconstruction, or at least significant questions with reference to the timing of such a project, did exist in the early Persian period" see, John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1:1-15," 250-251; See, Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 41.
- 45 P. R. Bedford, "Discerning the Time: Haggai, Zechariah and the 'Delay' in the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple," 78.
- 46 P. R. Bedford, "Discerning the Time: Haggai, Zechariah and the 'Delay' in the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple," 84, cf. also page 94.
- 47 Hayim Tadmor, "'The appointed time has not yet arrived': The Historical Background of Haggai 1: 2," cites Jeremiah 25:12-13; 29:10. Thus the termination of the building project was timed to coincide with the seventieth anniversary of the fall of Jerusalem. Refer to John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 124, 125.
- 48 John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 125.
- 49 Job 22:16; Proverbs 15:23; Ecclesiastes 3:2-11; 7:17; 8: 5-6, Cf. John R. Wilch, *Time and Event: An Exegetical Study of the Use of 'eth in the Old Testament in Comparison to Other Temporal Expression in Clarification of the Concept of Time* (Leiden: Brill, 1969). Refer to John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 125.
- 50 The dispute hinges on the concept of the appropriate time (*עַל*), a concept deeply rooted in wisdom traditions, G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. J. D. Martin (London: SPCK, 1972), 138-143; John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 15.
- 51 Refer to John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 126.
- 52 D. P. O'Brien, "Is This the Time to Accept? (2 Kings 5: 26b): Simply Moralizing (LXX) or an Ominous Foreboding of Yahweh's Rejection of Israel (MT)" in *VT* 46 (1996): 448-457. Refer to John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 126.
- 53 John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud*, 126.
- 54 Cf. John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 15.

- 55 The author links Yehud's economic woes to the ancient Deuteronomic curses (Haggai 1: 6-11; cf. Deuteronomy 28: 22-24, 38-40), assuring his audience that the curse will be removed if the temple is rebuilt. Wes Haward-Brook and Anthony Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now*, 62.
- 56 Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, BibOr 16 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964); David L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia / London: Westminster/SCM Press, 1984 / 1985); John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 16.
- 57 Haggai 1:6 / Deuteronomy 28:38; Haggai 1:6 / Leviticus 26: 26; Haggai 1: 11 / Deuteronomy 28: 18.
- 58 David L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary*, 190-191.
- 59 The authorization for rebuilding may be understood from the decree of Cyrus, (2 Chronicles 26: 33 and Ezra 1:2-4. One thing to notice is Haggai nowhere mentions about the decree, Chronicles and Ezra were likely produced much later, thus the knowledge of the decree cannot be demonstrated within the text. But it is assumed that the people were informed of this permission as Peterson mentions in *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 52; John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 14, 15.
- 60 John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 23, 24.
- 61 John Kessler, *Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud, 255-257*, that one of the primary redactional themes in the book of Haggai is that of the prophet's success. This success has been widely noted in scholarly literature of H.W. Wolff, *Haggai: A Commentary*, 16; C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*: AB, 25B, xliii; B. Peckham, *History and Prophecy: The Development of Late Judean Literary Traditions*, ABDRL, (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 741; John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1: 1-15," 249; the foreign ruler is depicted in a more favorable light than in the original visions, as H. J. M. Van Deventer, "Another Look at the Redaction History of the Book of Daniel, or, Reading Daniel from Left to Right" in *JSOT* 38.2 (2013): 260, in the conclusion sees a comparison based on the similarities between the superscriptions in Daniel 8-12 and those in Haggai and Zechariah.
- 62 Wes Haward-Brook and Anthony Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now*, 62.
- 63 Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Nahum-Malachi* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1986), 95
- 64 M. H. Floyd, "The Nature of the Narrative and the Evidences of Redaction in Haggai," 470-490; M. H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets*, 272-274; Refer to John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1: 1-15," 249.
- 65 Cf. E. Ben Zvi, "The Urban Centre of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible" in *Urbanism in Antiquity, JSOTSupp 244*, eds. W. E. Aufrecht et al. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997): 194-209.(194-96). Refer to John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1: 1-15," 253.
- 66 Joachim Schaper, "The Jerusalem Temple as an Instrument of Achaemenid Fiscal Administration" in *VT* 45 (1995): 528-539.
- 67 C. E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*, 201-205; John Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1: 1-15," 253.
- 68 This is dealt in the Textual comments.
- 69 John Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," 14. The possible reasons include misplaced priorities, economic difficulties, social division, the seventy-year prophecy of Jeremiah, and the presence of other place of worship. See, Frank Y Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 40.
- 70 P. R. Bedford, "Discerning the Time: Haggai, Zechariah and the 'Delay' in the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple," 71-94.
- 71 Clines agree that "this saying of theirs (1: 2) presumes there is still time, in future, to rebuild." David J. Cline, "Haggai's Temple Constructed, Deconstructed" in *Second Temple Studies*, vol. II, *Temple and Community in the Persian Period*, *JSOTSupp* 175, eds. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994): 60-87; Janet A. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, 187; Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 41, 42.
- 72 This phrase indicates the immediacy of this coming event, see, Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Reactions and Responses to Failure in the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 161.
- 73 The particular aspect is very much connected to the "Day of the Lord." See, Claus Westermann, *Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament*, trans. Keith Crim (Louisville / Kentucky: Westminster, 1991), 255-257; Gerhard von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh" in

- JSS 4 (1959): 97-108; Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 42.
- 74 Jeremiah 29:8; 51:33; Ezekiel 21: 29 (English); Haggai 2:7; 21-22. Thus the people keenly observed the time, when the overthrow of foreign powers is the initial step to grand restoration envisioned in the prophetic corpus. The renewal of Davidic throne is also linked with restoration, Isaiah 11:10-16; Jeremiah 23:5-6; though, neither of these passages is directly alluded to in the book of Haggai, but the tradition is held high, particularly in 2:20-23. In these verses Zerubbabel is identified as "my servant", and is promised to be "like a signet ring". See, Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 44.
- 75 This idea is very important for the rebuilding of the temple that the king's enemies are defeated in West Asian context. Refer to Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in the Light of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic Writings*, 133-134.
- 76 The remarkable portrayal is the lack of the negative assessments about the reality of foreign rule, see, David L. Petersen, "The Temple in Persian Period of Prophetic Texts" in *Second Temple Studies*, vol. I, *Persian Period*, JSOTSupp 117, ed. Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991): 125-144; Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 48.
- 77 Although Haggai 2: 20-23 anticipates Zerubbabel's role as King under Yahweh's authority, he apparently never ascended the throne for reasons that must remain unknown, see, Marvin A. Sweeney, "Targum Jonathan's Reading of Zechariah 3; A Gateway for the Palace" in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, eds. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London / New York: T and T Clark, 2008): 285.
- 78 Paul L. Redditt, "The King in Haggai-Zechariah 1-8 and the book of the Twelve" in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, eds. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London / New York: T and T Clark, 2008): 59; Paul L. Redditt, "Prophecy and the Monarchy in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8," 436-449.
- 79 Rex A. Mason, "The Messiah in the Postexilic Old Testament Literature" in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, JSOTSupp 270, ed. John Day (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998): 342. For a different view see, Wolter H. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period*, JSOTSupp 304 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); J. J. M. Roberts, "The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations" in *The Messiah; Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992): 39-51; Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 48.
- 80 This is mentioned in Jeremiah 31:12-14; Ezekiel 36:30; The postexilic influence of this "grand program" in Zechariah 8: 11-12, refer to Antonine De Guglielmo, "The Fertility of the Land in the Messianic Prophecies" in *CBQ* 19 (1957): 306-311.
- 81 R. E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 53. Refer for further clarity to Tamara John Eskanazi, "From Exile and Restoration to Exile and Reconstruction" in *Exile and Restoration Revisited: Essays on the Babylonian and Persian Periods in Memory of Peter R. Ackroyd*, Library of Second Temple Studies, eds. Gary Knoppers et al. (London / New York: T and T Clark, 2009): 78-93.
- 82 כבוד in 1:8 refers to the ancient belief that God's presence was made manifested in his glory, and it is an effective rhetorical tool to present this idea. See Rex A. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 144; R. E. Clements, *God and Temple*, 124.
- 83 Jeremiah speaks of the absence of *shalom* in both the community and temple. Cf. Jonathan Paige Sisson, "Jeremiah and the Jerusalem Conception of Peace" in *JBL* 105 (1986): 437, 438, suggests that the absence of *shalom* is due to the disruption of divine order. Claus Westermann, "Peace (*Shalom*) in the Old Testament" in *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies*, eds. Perry B. Yoder and William M. Swartley, trans. Walter Sawatsky (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1992): 16-48; Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai" in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, 47.
- 84 Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.* (London: SCM Press, 1968), 248.
- 85 John I. Durham, "Shalom and the Presence of God" in *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davies*, eds. John I. Durham and Joshua R. Porter (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970): 272-294.
- 86 Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 49.
- 87 P. R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*, 160.
- 88 The description of Yehud in 1:11, חרב echoes the image of exilic condition, see, Francis I. Anderson, "Who Built the Second Temple?" in *Australian Biblical Review* 6 (1958): 24-25, the depiction of the current postexilic situation as חרב is significant because this is the same word employed

- by Jeremiah 33:10 to describe the curse conditions of the exile. Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 50.
- 89 Zechariah 1:12, this is further confirmed by the prophet's words in Zechariah 4:8-10. According to Zechariah 7, the people of the early postexilic period in Achaemenid Yehud were not clear about the restoration. The current difficulties in early postexilic Yehud suggested to the people that the expected time of restoration was still a distant hope, not a present reality. This confusion is reflected in the people's waning commitment to the effort of rebuilding as the book of Haggai reflects. For example, Haggai 2:4 presents another call to work, portraying the dwindling effort of the people, see, Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 51, 52.
- 90 For example, Yahweh declares in Zechariah 2:10; 8:3; Haggai 1:8, Anderson opines: "The overriding theological issue for the early postexilic community is that of Yahweh's presence." See, Gary A. Anderson, *Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel: Studies in Their Social and Political Importance*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 41 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 93; Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 54.
- 91 Frank Y. Patrick, "Time and Tradition in the Book of Haggai," 55, this portion of the exegesis has incorporated lot of ideas from this article.
- 92 Deirdre N. Fulton, "Jeshua's High Priestly Lineage" in *Exile and Restoration Revisited: Essays on the Babylonian and Persian Periods in Memory of Peter R. Ackroyd*, Library of Second Temple Studies, eds. Gary Knoppers et al. (London / New York: T and T Clark, 2009): 94-115.
- 93 Kyu Sam Han, *Jerusalem and the Early Jesus Movement: The Qumran Community Attitude towards the Temple* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 18.
- 94 Paul L. Reddith, "Prophecy and the Monarchy in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8," 441.
- 95 The postexilic prophecy was constantly involved in this process of the 'authoritative' word, but this does not mean that the postexilic books have no originality but the prophetic books of this time shows considerable creativity in using the materials and traditions. R. A. Mason, "The Prophets of the Restoration," 141-142.
- 96 John Kessler, *The Book of Haggai Prophecy and Society in the Early Persian Yehud* (Leiden / Boston / Köln: Brill, 2002), 156-157.

## Blurring of Binaries in the Primeval Stories

*A. C. Thomas\**

### 1. Introduction

(Key terms: *Ecocriticism, chaos, cosmos, culture, nature, good, evil, death, life*)

The postmodern engagement identifies that the modernity<sup>1</sup> trained us to think in binary oppositions. The tendency of postmodern reading is to subvert the hierarchical binary oppositions. It is worth to identify the binaries present in the primeval discourse found in the book of Genesis and its mutual relationships. The last two centuries of readings of these discourses are influenced by the modernity and postmodernity.<sup>2</sup> The modernity played its role to build hierarchical oppositions between the binaries and the postmodern literary reading aims to subvert the binary oppositions. A deconstructive reading<sup>3</sup> tries to subvert the hierarchical binaries lean on history, philosophy or social sciences. On the other hand, the ecocriticism<sup>4</sup> tries to consider the environment in a spatial sense, a system, a part of which humanity exists. Ecocriticism draws on geography, ecology, and other natural sciences.<sup>5</sup> This paper is trying to deconstructively read the primeval story that is going to be ecocentric. In between the binaries, there is a space which is real.<sup>6</sup>

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\* Rev. Dr. A. C. Thomas is Associate Professor of Old Testament in the Faculty of Theology, Serampore College (University), Serampore, Hooghly, West Bengal, and an ordained minister of the Syrian Malankara Marthoma Church, Kerala.

## 2. Binary Oppositions with the Modernity

René Descartes restricted the scope of science to only what is material by bifurcating the universe as matter and mind and limiting science to the study of the former. Then the science was confined to material objects within the limits of perception of human sensory organs. Here start the making of binaries.<sup>7</sup> The examples of binary oppositions are Good vs. evil, being vs. nothingness, presence vs. absence, truth vs. error, identity vs. difference, mind vs. matter, man vs. woman, soul vs. body, life vs. death, culture vs. nature, speech vs. writing. There is a value-laden hierarchy. The second term in each pair is considered the negative, corrupt, undesirable version of the first.<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Culler notes that deconstruction disrupts not only the hierarchy but the opposition itself.<sup>9</sup> Any claim of the truth is an exercise of power. Derrida develops a programme of reading texts that see beyond the narrow confines of binary opposites and thus to disturb the reliance on hierarchical oppositions.<sup>10</sup> He believes that the critical metaphysical tradition which extends from Plato to modern times, that includes Marxism and structuralism is insufficient. The binary *one concept is always preferred to the other* is oppressive and violent rather than the peaceful coexistence.<sup>11</sup>

The philosophical project deconstruction attempts at charting how key terms, motifs, and characters are defined by binary oppositions within a text, how the oppositions are hierarchical and demonstrating that these oppositions are unstable, reversible, and mutually dependent on one another.<sup>12</sup> Then we may be able to show how each term in the opposition joined to its companion by a complex network of arteries.<sup>13</sup> Derrida claims that the line ordinarily drawn between the two terms is a political and not natural reality.<sup>14</sup>

## 3. Binaries in the Primeval Discourse

Anthony C. Thiselton observes that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the method in biblical interpretation has colored by

the modernity.<sup>15</sup> This section tries to bring a few examples of binaries present in the primeval discourse (creation story) and how the modern reading placed them in hierarchical opposition and how the ecocriticism can dissolve the opposition by exposing the political and cultural co-dependency behind the modern reading which is oppressive.

## 4. Cosmos and Chaos

Gen 1:2 reads, “The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.” In spite of the absence of any struggle with chaos in the text, many commentators interpret the creation within the purview of chaos-cosmos binary opposition. For example, G. von Rad explains, the word *בְּרָא* (to create) includes God subjected a pre-existing chaos to his ordering will.<sup>16</sup> For von Rad, chaos is something as threatening the creation, creation as something that moves from chaos to cosmos and the main concern of the story is to give prominence, form, and order to the creation out of chaos.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, the life comes out from ‘formless void and darkness’ with the immanence of the creator God. There is also a tendency to explain the origin of the ocean as from the dimension of chaos. Von Rad suggests that the ocean permanently preserves something hostile to God and creation.<sup>18</sup> Conversely, the ocean is something God sees as *good* (1: 10) and that it is something in which the life reverberate, God chose ocean to produce life for the first time (Gen 1: 20).

Here the new physics of *chaos and complex theory*<sup>19</sup> helps to understand the reality. According to this theory, the behavior lies and life creates at the border between chaos and order. Nature is really aperiodic, dynamic, unstable and complex. The mathematical mechanical worldview celebrates the perfect order of nature and the modernity stands for everything structured.<sup>20</sup> It is part of the hegemonic presence of modern West over the rest of the world, which tries to defend social order developed by the imperial powers. Actually, the system is nonlinear and sensitive

to initial conditions contrary to the mechanical worldview of modernity.<sup>21</sup>

The second word of the phrase *תהו ובהו* (Gen 1:2, *formless void*) appears only three times in the Old Testament and always in conjunction with *תהו* (Gen 1:2; Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23). On the other hand, *בהו* appears twenty times in the Old Testament and stands its own. Eleven of these occurrences are in Isaiah.<sup>22</sup> In Isa 45:18 the word *תהו* stands in opposition to the phrase “to be inhabited.” In Deut 32:10, it parallels with the desert, that is, an uninhabitable wasteland. It shows the condition of the earth before God’s gracious work has prepared it for the vegetable and animal kingdoms.<sup>23</sup>

Later *תהו* (*tohu*) and *בהו* (*bohu*), when used in proximity, also describe a situation resulting from judgment (Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23). Both prophets may be picturing judgment as for the reversal of creation in which God’s judgment causes the world to revert to its primordial condition. The evil present in the human culture can revert the life kingdom to a wasteland as a result of a curse. Thus uninhabitable wasteland is not evil in itself, rather the condition to which human evil can lead to. This possibility always looms over the creation due to the presence of evil. The same point is made in another powerful image in the next clause, “darkness was over the surface of the deep.”<sup>24</sup>

*חֹשֶׁךְ* “darkness” is another evocative word in Hebrew. However, the darkness and deep are not at all a mythical idea of personification, which rebelled against God.<sup>25</sup> It can be a realm out of which life emerged on earth. It does not mean that as frightening as many concede. Gordon J. Wenham terms it as “terrible primeval waste.” Darkness may be frightening for the civilized. However, darkness and chaos are stages of creation where hectic activities of creation and formation of life take place.<sup>26</sup>

The bishop Gregory of Nyssa already commented on creation that it is a process of double operation—rest and motion. All things that are seen in the creation are the offspring of rest and

motion brought into being by the Divine will. Here, the heaven and the earth are being diametrically opposed to each other in their operations, the creation which lies between the opposites and has in part a share in what is adjacent to it; itself acts as a mean between the extremes, so that there is manifestly a mutual contact of the opposite through the mean.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Gregory had a solution to evade the binary oppositions of chaos and cosmos. The process of creation represented here as something that moves from chaos to cosmos. The main concern of the story is that through different processes of separation, renewal and reshaping God makes the earth conducive for the emergence of life.<sup>28</sup>

The origin of the chaos is left undiscussed, and given the background of oriental mythology, it may be presumed to be eternal. In support of this view, it is urged that only it does justice to the exact wording of v 1. The traditional interpretation supposes that God first created chaos and then ordered it, whereas elsewhere Scripture speaks of God creating order, not chaos (e.g., Isa 45:18). Even here the text says God separated “heaven and earth,” which most naturally denotes the whole cosmos. Then chaos is neither against God nor outside of God, rather does Chaos exist within the being of God. The cosmos emerged from this Being.

Jon D. Levenson suggests, “The Sea is not always described as destroyed, hacked to pieces, never to rise again. On the contrary, often the waters of chaos are presented as surviving, only within the bounds that define creation.”<sup>29</sup> Ps 104: 6-9 proceed from chaos—the waters submerging even mountains—to creation, which comes about when God’s angry breath blasts the waters back into their appointed place. At times this assignment by God of the waters’ bound is narrated even more colorfully, and mythologically in Job 38: 8-11. But it seems that the Sea is not the monster in Ps 74: 12-17. Rather it left to its own, would submerge the world and forestall the ordered reality we call creation. The mastery of YHWH, whose blast and thunder or whose craftsmanship and

commanding word force the Sea into its proper place apparently without a struggle.<sup>30</sup>

It is not the total destruction of the deep, but containment of it to its proper place. God uses his omnipotence to contain them. The biblical drama of the world order is defined by the persistence of those forces on the one hand and existence of evil within the human race. Gen 6: 5 reads “YHWH saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually.” God used the deep waters for the judgment of the evil on earth; in turn, it became a salvific act of God on behalf of his creation.

In Job 41:1-8, instead of crushing Leviathan’s heads and scattering his remains, God caught it like a fish and forced to plead for his life and to accept eternal vassalage, the great monster becoming merely a plaything of his divine captor. Survival of Leviathan in captivity parallels that psalmist’s earlier statement that God set bounds that the primeval waters must not dare to cross. It is worth noting Levenson’s observation, “the confinement of chaos rather than its elimination is the essence of creation, and the survival of ordered reality hangs only upon God’s vigilance in ensuring that those cosmic dikes do not fail, that the bars and doors of the Sea’s jail cell do not give way, that the great fish does not slip his hook.”<sup>31</sup> The confinement should, then, be seen as part of the covenant with Noah and this is the gracious salvific act of God in history (Gen 9: 9-17). Examining the flood story and the covenantal faithfulness God makes with Noah, Levenson observes, “Creation has become a corollary of the covenant.”<sup>32</sup> If the covenant comes undone, creation disappears.<sup>33</sup> Reading Isa 54:7-10, Levenson observes, “as in the story of Noah in the Torah, even the chaotic waters are at the beck of YHWH; they are the rod of his anger employed to punish the Israelites for their sins. The side of God that unleashes them, however, is checked by the side of him that loves and forgives.”<sup>34</sup>

If it is the case, the deep has become the judgment tool (Exod 15:8) in the hands of God to contain evil among humanity

on earth and the confinement of the deep has become his gracious opportunity given to humanity for repentance. In other words, “the deep” is indispensable for the survival of life on earth. Gen 49:25 reads, “By the God of your father, who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep (תְּהוֹמוֹת) that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.” And Deut 8:7 reads, “For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs וְתַהֲמוֹת and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills.” The “deep” here assure the continuance of life in the dry climate of ancient West Asia (AWA). Then Wenham is right to observe that there is no hint in the biblical text that the deep was a power, independent of God which he had to fight to control. Rather it is part of creation that does his bidding (Ps 104: 6; Prov 8: 27-28).<sup>35</sup> Creation endures because he has, also in an eternal covenant, compelled the obeisance of his great adversary. Thus, the confinement of the deep is not the ancient victory over the primordial evil, but an act of creation ordering the universe for the creation of life on earth.

Further, the text does not refer to the creation of chaos. The first term בְּרֵאשִׁית - ‘beginning’ lacks the definite article. It refers not to a particular point of time, rather to an infinite existence of the universe before the present form of the universe came to existence. It will be noted that the chaos was there without a command of creation. Then, it was all along without beginning or the end.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting to note that the chaos is not listed where humans have dominion over. Chaos is there along with the Creator all along. Therefore, the hierarchical opposition between chaos and cosmos is being blurred.

## 5. Human and Nature

The modern interpretations have been dominantly influenced by the dominion principle of the modernity.<sup>37</sup> The answers to what *image* and *likeness* mean range from physical resemblance to the presence of soul and the privilege of dominion over the animal

kingdom.<sup>38</sup> Human is set at the top of the hierarchical ladder of the creatures by many interpreters. Von Rad claims that plants are at the lowest level of organic life.<sup>39</sup> The commission to rule over the earth and creatures is interpreted as the consequence of God's *image*. Moreover, the animal creatures received dignity only through the human dominion over them.<sup>40</sup> Many scholars like G. Von Rad, W. Zimmerli, and H. Gunkel interpret the image as corporeal that stands for the sense of external form.<sup>41</sup>

Claus Westermann has objected to the idea that humanity is the divine representative on earth. For him, it is only meaningful to speak of an individual king as a divine surrogate, but not of a large class or of humankind in general.<sup>42</sup> This is the result of the individualistic worldview of the modernity.<sup>43</sup> Wenham identifies that the divine image makes man God's vice-regent on earth.<sup>44</sup> It again places human at the dominion position on earth.

In the Babylonian and Sumerian narratives, the creation of a human being is to relieve the gods from the burden of everyday work.<sup>45</sup> However, the goal of the creation of humans in the text is detached from the life of the gods and directed to the life of this earth.<sup>46</sup> Ferguson affirms that the semantic field *having dominion* has the context of shepherding.<sup>47</sup> The main theme of the story of creation in Gen. 1:1 -2:4a concerns the creation of heaven and earth and the network of relationships between the creatures in the created universe. In this network, humankind is only one factor.<sup>48</sup> There are others who deduce from Gen 1:28 that God commands human to subject the earth to their will and to make it the object of their desires.<sup>49</sup>

On the other hand, Westermann asserts, "Everything that God created has a destiny; this destiny reaches its goal in humanity which God created as his counterpart."<sup>50</sup> This argument is anthropocentric in principle. However, in the rabbinical tradition, Sabbath, not dominion symbolizes the proper relationship of humans to the rest of nature and of all creation together to the creator<sup>51</sup> and the Sabbath is the "goal and completion of creation."<sup>52</sup> Contrary to

the idea that the blessing gives humans some advantage over the animals, Vawter observes, "[hu]man's dominance... subject always to the example of the supreme dominance of God after which it has been imaged."<sup>53</sup> God does not consume the resources but only nurture it.

The explanation for the story of the Garden of Eden with some also is paramount anthropocentric. Von Rad is even androcentric when he holds, "The garden was planned only for a man and is to be understood as a gift of God's gracious care for the man he created."<sup>54</sup> In 2: 7, the particular creation of human is recorded. According to the notions of the AWA people, among the materials used by the gods for the creation of human the clay of the earth or the dust plays an important role.<sup>55</sup> The human did not begin as a 'heavenly creature' in Genesis (from the blood of the evil goddess Tiamat or spit of a god as in AWA stories); they were made of the 'dust of the ground.'<sup>56</sup> This shows the earth dependency of a human.<sup>57</sup>

Something special in the creation of human has to be seen in the words God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being*. 2:19 shows that the animal too formed out of the ground. The "breath of life" itself which God blows into the nostrils of human is no different from the 'breath' or 'spirit' which he bestows on the rest of animal creation (Eccl 3:18-20). Thus for the author, "nothing to distinguish (hu)man from the other animals who will also share a bodily form shaped from the earth and breathe and the breath bestowed on them by the Creator."<sup>58</sup> This indicates the "aboriginal companion character of all creatures."<sup>59</sup>

We should think of ourselves not as dominant over nature or of nature as dominant over us but rather in dynamic relationship to nature as its partner.<sup>60</sup> In the Garden, there is no ranking between one creature and another.<sup>61</sup> Thus, there is no human-nature binary in the Garden but human is part of nature. The earth and soil and its various forms of life –plant, animal, human –are distinct features

of the same organic system, sharing a common essence from the soil. Earth initiate life-giving activity first or Earth becomes the first subject of divine creativity before *Adam*. Human is not isolated from the rest of the creation and an inseparable part of the network of relationships. Thus, the binary opposition between human nature is being blurred.

## 6. Good and Evil

The formula *God saw it was good* occurs seven times. John H. Sailhamer is anthropocentric when he proposes that it is good because it is beneficial to humankind.<sup>62</sup> There is no indication anywhere in the text to presume this. The creation culminates in the Sabbath. Then, the creation is good not because it is beneficial to humanity, but it contributes to the creation towards the Sabbath. Evil does not have a primordial existence, as it with Babylonian dualistic cosmogonies.

A division of harmful and harmless creatures is not present in the text; rather the creative participation of the earth is mentioned. Von Rad interprets that the bigger creatures in the ocean as more harmful and smaller as more harmless.<sup>63</sup> There is nothing truly 'evil' about the snake in the text. It is simply 'clever'. After eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge, the eye-opening knowledge separated human from the rest of the beings. The common ground that had united human beings with the other creatures is broken.<sup>64</sup> Baird Callicott suggests, with the eating of the forbidden fruit of knowledge of good and evil, the point of reference for what is good and what is bad becomes human.<sup>65</sup> The tree was at the center, so by eating the fruit, human placed himself at the center replacing God, hence the beginning of anthropocentrism.

Sailhamer upholds, "The 'shrub of the field' and 'plant of the field' in 2:5 are not a reference to the 'vegetation' of chapter 1, but rather anticipate the 'thorns and thistles' and 'plants of the field' which are to come (in 3:18) as a result of the curse."<sup>66</sup> Weeds and seeds binary created with agriculture.<sup>67</sup> The point of reference between good (seed) or bad (weed) becomes human

with agriculture. This should be read with the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and bad. Human beings have disrupted that original creation and taken for themselves the power to distinguish what is desirable and what is not.<sup>68</sup>

Joseph Blenkinsopp brings to our attention that the Mesopotamian view of the origin of violence built into the fabric of the created order. But in the Garden story, it transfers from the divine realm to a human one.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the Garden story eliminates the presence of good/evil binary with God's creation. This binary is the result of human fall into the anthropocentrism.

## 7. Male and Female

God created a human being in his own image and likeness as male and female and blessed them. In AWA stories, men are created to be slaves of kings and women as a sexual object within the fertility cult. The dignity of women was a threat. The evil god is presented as a female deity. The ruling class had all the ownership over men, women, and land. With the dominant social paradigm of modernity, the female is everywhere subsumed under the male in society. "But in Genesis," as Diane Jacobson asserts, "all humans, male and female, rich and poor, slave and free, were created as royal images of God."<sup>70</sup> Both men and women share the divine commission.

While AWA narratives present woman as something chaotic and needed to be controlled, the Creation story of Genesis affirm the womanhood of God. God gave birth to the universe, and the earth gave birth to plants and animals and at last human. Within the AWA construction, "a male deity attacked and slaughtered female deity" defines the space and role of female on earth. Polemically, Genesis story constructs the divinity and dignity of womanhood who becomes "mother of all living beings." Ecofeminists try to equate woman with nature. 'Woman' is subordinate to Western tradition because 'she' is identified with the body and nature. Susan Griffin turns this dualistic tradition against itself by re-imagining 'this earth' as 'my sister' in suffering, survival, and

resistance. Then, 'we are nature seeing nature. We are nature with a concept of nature.' Here 'we' in 'we are nature' includes both men and women.<sup>71</sup> In the Genesis story, the human is not isolated from the rest of creation. Carol P. Christ understands ecofeminist philosophy as, "a call to transform dualistic thinking: spirit and nature; body and mind; emotion and reason; woman and man—humanity in the web of life."<sup>72</sup>

On the other hand, with the dominant social paradigm and urban civilization, "The subordination of women and nature are intertwined."<sup>73</sup> The modern civilization of our time constructs the female body as a commercial object to be controlled and manipulated. The beauty contest constructs female only as a body without soul and mind. It really disregards the dignity and identity of women as equal partners with men. Alice L. Laffey notes the space of woman in the scheme of the patriarchy in modernity. For her, Patriarchy, closely associated with hierarchy, is a way of ordering reality whereby one group, in this case, the male sex, is understood to be superior to the other, namely the female sex. Men are considered as stronger than women, more intelligent, more responsible, braver, more adapted to the marketplace, more aggressive, more rational, and better suited for positions of management and leadership.<sup>74</sup> Carol P. Christ observes,

Feminists have pointed out that dualistic traditions are not gender neutral: in them, men, the masculine, and the rational are identified with the transcendent and immortal realm of God, while women, the feminine, and the emotional are identified with the imperfect body and the changing world that is rejected. When maleness is identified with the transcendent and spiritual, it follows that men are more in the image of God than women and that divine power must be imaged as male rather than female. From here it is but a short step to Tertullian's pronouncement that women are the 'devil's gateway.'<sup>75</sup>

Slivniak translates the Hebrew word [l]ce in Gen 2: 21 not as 'rib' but as 'side'.<sup>76</sup> In this case, both the Man and the Woman are 'sides' of a primeval androgyne and one cannot say which one of them is primary and/or superior. Conceivably this means that God took a good portion of Adam's side since the man considers the woman to be "bone of his bones" and flesh of his flesh (Gen 2:21ff). This picture describes the intimacy between man and woman as they stand equal before God. There is no indication that woman is inferior. On the other hand, since they had been one before the separation between Man and Woman, there is continuity between the two with the result that they can find a fulfilling relationship only in one another. Therefore, a woman's origin makes it possible for a man and a woman to establish a dynamic relationship in which they become 'one flesh' (cf. Gen 2:24).

In the curse, a hierarchical relationship is established: 'towards your husband will be your lust, yet he will rule over you.' (3:16).<sup>77</sup> In other words, a binary opposition between male and female is the result of the curse after the disobedience. The designation of Eve as 'the mother of all the living' shows ancient matriarchal conception. The woman was the decision maker of the story in eating the forbidden fruit.<sup>78</sup> The word עֵזֶר (helper) applied to the female human does not necessarily mean something secondary and subordinate. It is sometimes used in the Bible as a designation of God.<sup>79</sup>

Side by side with 'patriarchal' and 'matriarchal' conceptions one may find in the Garden Story a unifying one. Slivniak argues that the Garden Story has three messages contradicting each other: a patriarchal (androcentric) one, a matriarchal (gynocentric) one and a neutral one. The patriarchal message shows the Woman is subordinated to the Man and represents a later and subordinate element. The matriarchal one shows she is 'the mother of all being' and the neutral one suggests a primeval unity of Man and Woman. All three messages are closely interwoven.<sup>80</sup> Hence, male-female

binary is being eliminated at ontological as well as constructive levels.

## 8. Culture and Nature

It is generally believed that the development of culture starts with the invention of agriculture.<sup>81</sup> From Gen 3: 23, we may infer that farming as an activity outside the Garden of Eden as a result of the fall. However, within the Garden itself, there is a command “to till it and keep it” (2:15). ‘To till it and keep it’ becomes the part of creation and agriculture outside the garden, tilling *without keeping* becomes the part of the culture.

H. Gunkel points to the basic relationship between the soil and the person, which *in reality* characterizes agricultural life.<sup>82</sup> It is because of the dominant paradigm in which agriculture is seen as a symbol of progression. In fact, the relationship between the soil and the person goes beyond the agricultural life. It starts with their origins.

After the fall, the human is to depend not on *earth* (1:19) but on the *field* (3:18), for his *food*. *Bread* replaced *fruits*. Therefore, ‘to till it and keep it’ becomes the part of creation. On the other hand, agriculture outside the garden becomes the part of the culture. It is tilling without keeping, because with agriculture outside the Garden, destruction of weeds as well as hummus, the upper layer of the soil takes place. Therefore, there is no keeping with the form of agriculture the civilized humanity practice. Thus, agriculture, which is one of the major shifts towards culture explained as the result of sin. It further made human farther from both God and the earth. Carol Newsom demonstrates that the sin is to be understood as a fall into anthropocentrism. Human beings have violated their interconnectedness with the creation of the invention of agriculture.<sup>83</sup> Thus, the shift from nature to culture can be understood as a shift from biocentrism or earth centrism to anthropocentrism in the story of Garden.

Westermann regards the founding of the first city as reported in Gen 4:1, 17 ‘as the first achievement of civilization’

and claims that ‘Israel did not regard the foundation of cities and urban civilization as something a priori negative, rather progress in civilization is considered as a very positive part of the history of humankind.’<sup>84</sup> If we consider the progression of the primeval history, we can detect a very strong anti-city bias. The Cain community is alienated from Earth as home and kin.<sup>85</sup> The building of the city by Cain seems to contradict God’s judgment that Cain should be a fugitive and a wanderer.<sup>86</sup> City culture allows him to become independent of the life of a peasant. In Gen 4:20-22, the descendants of Cain are depicted as the ancestors of prominent urban crafts and civilizations. The narrator, therefore, presents Cain not only as the founder of a city but also as the ancestor of urban civilization as such.<sup>87</sup> The city is active outside and dead inside with no activity of organic life.<sup>88</sup> The Garden is, on the other hand, calm outside but active inside teeming with life.

*The revisionist history* of modernity<sup>89</sup> interprets shift from nature to culture beginning from agriculture to the urban civilization as ‘progress.’ In fact, such a cultural shift does not necessarily imply a more ‘advanced’ human society.<sup>90</sup> Newsom designates the human privilege to transform the human relationship with the earth as a cultural myth.<sup>91</sup> Modernity places culture over nature. However, the primeval story subverts this hierarchy.

## 9. Life and Death

Death and decay are essential for the continuation of the life on earth. Death and decay is part of the creation. What is not in the creation is violence. The *cultured* human is engaged in violence while trying to avoid death. Then the warning “you shall die” (2:16) should be understood in terms of discontinuation of life due to the anthropocentric behavior of cultured human beings outside the Garden.

Cain received a severe punishment compared to Adam and Eve. They were banished from the soil itself for the fratricide. The result, the soil had to drink the blood. Cain community, which alienated from Earth as home and kin built a city.<sup>92</sup> Then, they

are no longer dependent directly on the soil.<sup>93</sup> The food for the urban people is available only by violence, extortion, exploitation, and oppression of the peasant population who produce food. The city, from its inception, is therefore linked with violence. Lewis Mumford in his monumental work *The City in History* claims that the early city, almost from the beginning, was based on violence, war, and aggression on a scale unknown to Paleo-Neolithic village communities.<sup>94</sup> The author of the primeval history stresses the same point.<sup>95</sup> Thus, there is no opposition between life and death within the Garden. It entered the Earth only after the violence with the coming of anthropocentrism. The problem with the urban civilized is that they fear death and want to avoid it. Every attempt to avoid death becomes an act of violence towards the creation and life. Death has become a dreadful reality with the disobedience. Hence, there is no binary opposition between life and death in the Garden before the disobedience.

## 10. Spiritual and Physical

The word בָּרָא deserves special attention. The English verb “to create” captures well the meaning of the Hebrew term in this context, but needs further expansion. The verb בָּרָא always describes the divine activity of fashioning something new, fresh and perfect. The verb does not necessarily describe creation out of nothing; it often stresses forming anew, reforming, renewing.<sup>96</sup> It is particularly easy to read English notions of creation into the Hebrew verb. But the Hebrew notion is more than the English notion of creation. Norbert M. Samuelson already noted that it does not literally mean the English term “to create.”<sup>97</sup> It is therefore vital to examine usage carefully to determine its meaning within the narrative field of creation. Being בְּרֵאשִׁית is the head of the clause, תִּבְרָא here refers to an action in the past. Based on its relationship with the text and its seven-times appearance in chapters 1-2 and its correspondence with ancient West Asian texts, van Wolde prefers a translation of בָּרָא as ‘to separate.’<sup>98</sup> Thus, v. 1 does not tell us

about the bringing into being of heaven and earth. It represents the total process that which starts from v. 3.

Van Wolde also suggests the difference between בָּרָא and הִבְרִיל. The verb בָּרָא expresses the divine action of separation that took place at the beginning only, whereas the verb הִבְרִיל is conceived as both the divine action of separation at the beginning and the action executed by the heavenly phenomenon until the present.<sup>99</sup> This verb does not mean light have some preference over darkness, or heaven has over the earth as most of the commentators hold. On this view, vv 2–30 expound what is meant by the verb “separate” in v 1. Creation is a matter of organizing, renewing and reshaping the whole body of cosmos—a pre-existing chaos. It refers to the totality of God’s involvement in the ongoing existence of the universe as well as the history.

In the classical Hebrew, there was no special word for what we call today ‘the universe’. What we designate ‘the universe’, they regarded as two separate entities: the *heavens* are the dwelling place for heavenly bodies, but the *earth* he has given to the sons of men (Ps 115:16).<sup>100</sup> The classical Hebrew prefers to show totalities divided into two contrasting parts.<sup>101</sup> Norbert M. Samuelson rightly observes that there is nothing within Genesis, or within most of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures to suggest that its authors made a radical, qualitative, ontological separation in the universe between what is material and what is spiritual. Hence, heaven is the space occupied by the sun, the moon and the other astronomical bodies.<sup>102</sup>

The earth here is to be understood everything under the heavens, including the sea (e.g. Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, Ps 148:7). The first two verses together form an independent sentence that constitutes a formal introduction to the entire section. It expresses the main thought of the section.<sup>103</sup>

The common translation of רוּחַ as “spirit” of God is the result of a radical dualism of the spiritual and the material, body, and soul

that does not fit the ontology of the Hebrew scriptures. This was not part of the biblical worldview, which has drawn an unbiblical divide between human being and their environment.<sup>104</sup> The author is interested in how the act of creation supports life on the earth. The phrase *רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים* might be referred to the creative power of God. Then *the breath of God was fluttering over the surface of the water* would mean the power of God acts on the cosmic waters. God's wind or breath is a most potent manifestation of his presence and creative power.<sup>105</sup> Atmospheric wind blowing over the primordial sea is a common ancient West Asian theme. In *Enuma Elish*, Marduk uses winds as divine weapons to subdue the chaotic sea before he creates the world. Hebrew poets have depicted such winds as the very breath of God.<sup>106</sup> Ps 33:6 reads, 'By the word of the Lord the skies were made and by the breath (*רוּחַ*) of his mouth all of their creatures. Theodore Hiebert goes on that the atmosphere is pictured here not just as created matter, but as divine and as the first aspect of the world so described, the first sacred thing. Samuelson notes that "it is not something that God produces" and "it is something that belongs to God."<sup>107</sup> However, Hiebert affirms the atmosphere itself belongs to the being of God. Samuelson examines another possibility comparing with the cosmogonies of the classical Mediterranean world.<sup>108</sup> The Bible cosmogony includes the standard four elements –fire, air, water, and earth. The text explicitly includes water and earth, but no direct mention is made of fire and air. Thus for Samuelson, "wind is an obvious candidate for that function." Zeno of Citium<sup>109</sup> presents the following picture of the early universe. The basic materials of the universe are divided into active and passive elements. The passive ones are earth and water. Their primary qualities, respectively are dry and moist. The active elements are fire and air. The primary quality of fire is hot, in virtue of which fire causes physical activity. Similarly, the primary quality of air is cold, in virtue of which air causes biological activity. Zeno tells us that *רוּחַ* is a mixture of the two active elements, fire, and air. Hence, God's wind is the active, positive element that God will

use to transform the passive elements of earth and water into the actual deep space of our present universe.

It thus breaks the sharp barrier Western theologians have created between creator and creation. Here, God and the World are not separate but indissolubly connected. The atmosphere we inhabit is not just stuff, but an aspect of God's own presence in creation. Thus it is God's atmosphere –the sacred.<sup>110</sup> "God's wind foreshadows the agent and onset of the first creative act (v 3) and all creative acts thereafter."<sup>111</sup>

The word *מְרַחֵם* is translated generally in two categories: one, in which it translates as 'was moving' or 'sweeping' when the choice of *רוּחַ* as 'wind' and the other, as 'hovered' or 'brooding' if the choice is 'spirit' or 'breath'. Cassuto argues that in Hebrew the verb *רָחַף* never has the connotation of 'brooding'. The primary meaning of the word is, "to fly to and fro, flutter" in the sense it is used in Deut 32:11. It reads, "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that *flutters*." The young eaglets, which are not yet capable of fending for themselves, are unable by their own efforts to subsist and grow strong and become fully-grown eagles, and only the care of their parents, who hover them, enables them to survive and develop. "In the case of the earth too, which was still unformed, lifeless mass, the paternal care of the Divine Spirit, which hovered over it, assured its future evolution and life."<sup>112</sup> The eagle is standing still, but it is not at rest. Rather, it must be in constant motion, its wings shaking or quivering, in order to remain motionless. Similarly, for the spatial relationship between God's wind and the water to remain constant, the wind must be constantly active.<sup>113</sup> Brett's suggestion that the first sign of life is seen with this fluttering that creates life can be accepted. However, the statement that it is the divine action to check the powers of darkness should be viewed critically.<sup>114</sup>

Whitehead and Hartshorne made the proposal that all matter is in some sense 'alive' which is a view against the theory of *scientific materialism*. There, all matter was considered dead.

Whitehead argued that all individuals down to the smallest particle of an atom have the ability to ‘feel’ and to ‘feel the feelings of others.’<sup>115</sup> Christian world succeeded in separating the realms of secular and spiritual activity, as Prince of Wales rightly points out.<sup>116</sup> It is the result of Platonic influence on classical western philosophical and theological traditions. The physical world lost its life and value with the advent of the *scientific materialism* of modernity.

For Gregory, the matter is nothing but God’s creative energy, moving dynamically from one form to another. The matter has no existence apart from the qualities. Different forms of matter are but different confluences of qualities. “Thus God’s will-and-word, which is the *energeia* of God, is the basis of matter. The matter is the manifestation of God’s *energeia*, contingent upon his will-and-word, dynamic and changing.”<sup>117</sup> It goes further with quantum physics. The physical chemist Lothar Schafer presents a view of the universe as interconnected, nonmaterial composed of a field of infinite potential and conscience. With his own research as well as that of some of the most distinguished scientists of our time, Schafer moves us from a reality of Darwinian competition to cooperation, a meaningless universe to a meaningful one, and an isolated existence to an interconnected one. In so doing, he shows us that our potential is infinite and calls us to live in accordance with the order of the universe, creating a society based on the cosmic principle of connection, emphasizing cooperation and community.<sup>118</sup> Gregorios affirms,

We can confirm Gregory’s insight that sub-atomic particles which constitute matter are a dynamic network of energy events continuously changing, forming, dissolving, re-forming. There are no “basic building-blocks,” no solid entities occupying an absolute space. Energy and mass are interchangeable in an orderly way ( $E=mc^2$ ). We cannot explain “nature” in terms of “elementary particles” and their primary qualities.

The mechanistic picture of the universe, popularized by 17<sup>th</sup>-century science belongs to the museum of antiquity. Matter-in-motion is no longer an adequate or tenable explanation of the nature of the universe.<sup>119</sup>

Hartshorne formulated a word “panpsychism” to describe this reality in process philosophy. As the Greek word ‘psyche’ can be translated ‘soul’, *panpsychism* literally means that every individual has a soul. Hartshorne said that *panpsychism* means that there is no part of nature in which ‘feeling or sentience’ could be said to be totally absent. It is *panpsychism*. In other places, Hartshorne speaks of ‘freedom’ and ‘creativity’ as inherent in all acts of feeling the feelings of others.<sup>120</sup> In process philosophy, everything has a body and the body is the location of feeling. We think not with our heads or brains alone but through our bodies. We would not feel any sensations in our minds unless our bodies continually send messages to the brain. Humanistic psychology confirms that the mind and body are one system. A similar view is present in Holistic medicine also. It is increasingly recognizing the complex ways in which mental attitude affects illnesses once thought to have solely physical causes.<sup>121</sup>

This body-mind relation can be projected to the universe at large and to every individual in the cosmos. So every structure can be the manifestation of underlying processes.<sup>122</sup> All individuals in the cosmos have the ability to sympathize with love. Even the cells of our body can communicate with a brain for its pleasure and pain. Cells have feelings and creativity. The system theory defines the ecosystem as ‘a community of organism and their physical environment interacting as an ecological unit.’ Hence, the entire natural world is integrated wholes whose essential properties arise from interactions and interdependence of their parts.<sup>123</sup>

Reading the Hebrew Genesis story, we can project this body-mind relation to their view of the land. It is in tune with what Wati Longchar observes about indigenous people perception of land, “Land is a very complex spiritual component and occupies a very

central place in the worldview of indigenous people. The land is our temple (cathedral), our university, our hospital, our sustenance. The vast hall where we congregate and celebrate, our parent, our life. It is in the land we worship, heal the sick, educate our children and feed our people.”<sup>124</sup> Within the Garden, the human is in the web of nature and the culture/nature binary developed outside the Garden in a long process. Human is not above or outside nature, rather part of creation ongoing. Reading of the primeval story affirms that human/nature hierarchical binary is the result of fall, where the point of reference for good or bad has become human. This made human at the position of dominion and then alienated them further from nature. In short, culture makes nature, the order makes chaos, good makes evil, clothe makes nakedness, and plenty makes poverty, blessing makes a curse.

Thus, culture made all the difference with a shift from biocentrism to anthropocentrism. Having the ontological continuity with the Creator, there is no hierarchical binary opposition between the spiritual and the physical world. The universe is sanctified as the extension of the body of the Creator. This is neither Pantheism nor Panentheism, in which the universe and God are identical or God is seen in everything. There is continuity for the universe with God because the universe emerges from God and thus the creation is sacred. The creative energy of God, that is, “the Word” (Isa 55:10f cf. St. John 1:1) is actively present in the universe. There is a mother-child relationship between God and the universe. Both have a separate identity, yet there is continuity through the umbilical cord. The creator can say to the creation “this is my body” in the same way a mother can say to her beloved child.

On the other hand, Joseph Peruma rightly observes, a dualistic philosophy inherits a godless world because it banishes the divine from the world. In a dualistic, antithetical worldview, the material realm, the world of nature tends to be depreciated, manipulated and dominated. If we put God outside, we will see ourselves as outside and against the things around us.<sup>125</sup> Thus, the Creator-creation dualism results in spiritual-physical binary opposition.

The process view insists that not just the earth but the whole universe as a whole is the body of God. It means that everything that happens in the world happens to God as well. Everything we do or suffer, everything animals and cells and molecules and atoms do or suffer, whether on this earth, on Mars, or on a distant star, becomes part of the experience of God. Our experiences are as intimate to God as the experiences of our bodies are to us. God is fully involved with the changing world. God is the soul of the world body.<sup>126</sup>

With Gregory of Nyssa, we can overcome the problem of pantheism as well as panentheism. The universe subsists on and participates in God’s *energies*, but its “is-ness” is not of the same order as God’s ‘is-ness’. Hence, the relationship cannot be defined in terms of any relationship between two entities with our kind of being. From our side, there is a gap between the universe and God. But from God’s side, there is none. Rational knowledge does not get outside the created universe. For Gregory, the question whether God and the world are two realities is pointless. This does not mean that God is the same as the universe. God is not “outside” or “beyond” universe, which would logically mean that the universe is outside God, which means that God has a boundary with an inside and outside. If God and the world were two realities, God plus world were two realities joined together; and God plus world would be more than God. Hence, we must abandon the notion that God and the world are two realities.<sup>127</sup> There is no borderline between God and the universe. Through the breath of God, the creative energy of God interpenetrates the body of the universe.

Hebrew thought affirms the sense of unity or connection affirmed by the pantheists while retaining the sense of differentiation and individuality affirmed by the theist. God is not separate from the changing world. God’s nature or character does not change, but that God’s experience does. It is the unchangeable nature of God always to exist and always to act and react in a consistent

way, in other words always to be creatively and lovingly related to a world. In being unchangeable in basic nature and character, God is different from all other beings in the universe.

Consequently, feeling, feeling of feeling, sympathy, love, creative freedom, and enjoyment are closely intertwined with the fundamental nature of co-creative and relational life on the earth.<sup>128</sup> Here, the well-being of non-human life on earth has intrinsic value separate from human uses.<sup>129</sup> Hence, the spiritual-physical binary is being blurred. The other-worldly Christian concept of heaven should be corrected as this-worldly heaven. The text about the beginning is the plan for the end. The heaven comes to the earth. James Crenshaw states, "The placing of creation narratives at the beginning of the Hebrew Bible notwithstanding, creation functions to support saving history."<sup>130</sup>

## Conclusion

Within the Garden, the human is in the web of nature and the culture/nature binary developed outside the Garden as a process. Human is not above or outside of nature, rather part of creation ongoing. Human/nature hierarchical binary is the result of anthropocentrism after the disobedience, where the point of reference for good or bad has become human. This made human at the position of dominion and then alienated them further from nature. There are no hierarchies such as cosmos/chaos and good/evil within the Garden. In short, culture makes nature, the order makes chaos, evil makes good, clothing makes nakedness, and poverty makes plenty, curse makes a blessing. Thus, urban civilized culture made all the difference with a shift from biocentrism to anthropocentrism.

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## End Notes

- 1 Modernity is a philosophical project of modern era. It has its foundation in scientific materialism and is individualistic. Francis Bacon (1561-1650), René Descartes (1596-1650) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727) are master shapers of modernity. David J. Bohm, "Post Modern Science and a Postmodern World," in *The Reenchantment of Science of Postmodern Proposals*, ed. David Ray Griffin (Albany: State University Press, 1988), 60; Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics. The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 106. The modernity aims to provide not only a coherent understanding of the physical, biological and social worlds, but also the foundations for ethics and political philosophy, and to define the ultimate goals for society, civilization and humanity. Arran Gare, "The Roots of Postmodernism. Schelling, Process Philosophy, and Poststructuralism," in *Process and Difference. Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, ed. Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 32.

- 2 The emergence of holistic, ecological thinking about nature and the spread of multicultural rather than assimilative modes of incorporation seem to be defining characteristics of post-modern societies. The rise of relativizing, post-foundational discourses and a decline in the belief in social progress underscore the arrival of postmodernity. Steven Seidman and Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Introduction," in *The New Social Theory Reader*, ed. Steven Seidman and Jeffrey C. Alexander (London: Routledge, 2001), 13.
- 3 Deconstruction is one of the theories that come within Poststructuralism. Poststructuralism is an umbrella term in which Derrida's deconstruction, Foucault's work on power, Kristeva's work on intertextuality. Barthes's later writings, blur boundaries between criticism and literature. Various called 'discourse theory,' 'critical theory,' 'deconstruction,' 'constructivism,' 'poststructuralism,' 'postcolonialism' and rather nakedly 'theory,' we have here a vast postmodern movement. Catherine Keller, "Process and Chaosmos. The Whiteheadian Fold in the Discourse of Difference," in *Process and Difference. Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms*, ed. Catherine Keller and Anne Daniell (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 56.
- 4 Cheryl Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory. An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, ed. Peter Barry and Helen Carr, 2 ed., Beginnings (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 248.
- 5 Ecocriticism and Postmodern Environmentalism have some common ground. The latter, influenced by the notions of diversity and plurality in social and literal movement of postmodernism, and rejecting anthropocentrism, seeks and believes in a solution for the environmental crisis the human being has created in the world due to economic, technological and ideological structures in order to protect the integrity of the Earth's ecological communities and ecocentric values. The former tries to study the relationship between the literature and the environment and the treatment of the nature in the literary and even the nonliterary texts. Ecocriticism studies, the relationship in the binary oppositions of nature/culture and nature/human and the manifestation of these concepts and their interaction in the literary works. Bill Devall, "The Deep Ecology Movement," in *Ecology. Key Concepts in Critical Theory*, ed. Carolyn Merchant (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1996), 128.
- 6 See Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 255.
- 7 Bohm, "Post Modern Science," in *The Reenchantment of Science of Postmodern Proposals*, 60.
- 8 Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans., Barbara Johnson (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), viii.
- 9 Warren Hedges, "Using Deconstruction to Astonish Friends & Confound Enemies" <http://classiclit.about.com> (accessed 7 Nov 2008).
- 10 Kevin O'Donnell, *Postmodernism* (Oxford: Lion Publishing Plc, 2003), 46, 53.
- 11 Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans., A. Bass, 2 ed. (London: Continuum, 2002), 41; O'Donnell, *Postmodernism*, 46; Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 105.
- 12 Danna Nolan Fewell, "Deconstructive Criticism. Achsah and the (E)Razed City of Writing," in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 127.
- 13 Derrida, *Dissemination*, xiii.
- 14 Derrida, *Positions*, 41.
- 15 Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 143.
- 16 Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis. A Commentary*, trans., John H Marks (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1970), 47.
- 17 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 49.
- 18 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 52.
- 19 Jeff Lewis, *Cultural Studies. The Basics* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004), 228.
- 20 Garnett P. Williams, *Chaos Theory Tamed* (Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press, 1997), 11-12.
- 21 Vicente Valle, Jr., "Chaos, Complexity and Deterrence" <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/valle.pdf> (accessed 7 July 2009).
- 22 Isa 24:10; 29:21; 34:11; 40:17, 23; 41:29; 44:9; 45:18, 19; 49:4; 59:4.
- 23 John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative. A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, ed. Gary Lee, Library of Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 86.
- 24 Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, ed. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 109. H. Gunkel suggests that Hebrew תהום was to be identified with Tiamat, the Babylonian goddess, slain by Marduk, whose carcass was used to create heaven and earth. He saw in Gen 1:2 an allusion to the Mesopotamian creation myths. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary CD-ROM, vol. 1 (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1998). Though Otzen has reaffirmed this connection, Heidel showed that a direct borrowing is impossible. B. Otzen and others, *Myths in the Old Testament* (London:

- SCM Press, 1980), 33-34. Also A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, 2 ed. (Chicago: University Press, 1954), 98-101. For B. Vawter It is a world “apart from the creative, saving and sustaining intervention of God.” B. Vawter, *On Genesis. A New Reading* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 40. Both Hebrew and Babylonian are independently derived from a common Semitic root. Westermann justly states that the OT usage of תְּהוֹם, “does not allow us to speak of a demythologizing of a mythical idea or name as do many commentaries. When P inherited the word תְּהוֹם it had long been used to describe a flood of waters without any mythical echo” That is not to say that this verse shows no connection with other oriental concepts of creation. In ancient cosmogonies a reference to a primeval flood is commonplace. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 105-106. But the word תְּהוֹם is not an allusion to the conquest of Tiamat as in the Babylonian myth. It is unlikely as Wenham terms darkness and the deep as anti-God.
- 25 Cassuto, *Book of Genesis Part I*, 24. In the Babylonian mythological concept, the *deep* is personified. Here we see a subtle polemic against the mythological concept of personification.
- 26 The Romans tell of Chaos, the shapeless form of the four elements—water, fire, air, and earth—before the beginning of time; when these elements finally separated, the result was the formation of Janus, the “god of gods.” Cavalli-Sforza and others, *The History and Geography of Human Genes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- 27 Gregory Bishop of Nyssa, *On the Making of the Man*, Summa Theologica CD Rom Library, 1.1.
- 28 In contrast, von Rad thinks that chaos is something that threatens the creation and ocean is hostile to God. Von Rad, *Genesis*, 47, 49, 52.
- 29 Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil. The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Mythos, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 14.
- 30 Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 15.
- 31 Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 17.
- 32 Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 14.
- 33 Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 17.
- 34 Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 21.
- 35 Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*.
- 36 This insight comes from quantum physics. Shubashree Desikan, “No Bing Bang, the Universe Was There All Along: Studies,” *The Hindu* (Thiruvananthapuram), 05 March 2015, 14. Also Nick Kaiser, “Revealing the Dark Side of the Cosmos,” *Na Kil Hoku* 2 (Fall 2001): <<http://www2.ifa.hawaii.edu/newsletters/article.cfm?a =33&n=3>> (accessed 11 March 2015).
- 37 Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*. For example, Eissfeldt observes that Wellhausen, who is considered as one of the founding fathers of biblical studies in nineteenth century was influenced by Vatke’s book *The Religion of the Old Testament* which has a strong base in the Hegelian philosophy of history. According to Eissfeldt, the insights are conditioned by historical and philosophical postulates, rather than on proofs based upon literary criticism. Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament. An Introduction*, trans., Peter R. Ackroyd (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 165.
- 38 For a survey of different attempts to find the meaning of image and likeness refer Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*.
- 39 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 53.
- 40 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 57f.
- 41 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 56; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11. A Commentary*, trans., John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), 146, 149.
- 42 Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 160.
- 43 Modernism, in contrast to both pre-modernism and post-modernism, is profoundly individualistic. Descartes evolves a system of rationalism by placing the individual self at the centre of thought. By contrast, in postmodern thought, the individual belongs to a community in which shared beliefs, practices, conventions and traditions, decisively shape the individual’s understanding. Richard Harland, *Superstructuralism. The Philosophy of Structuralism and Poststructuralism* (London: Routledge, 1994), 9; Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 143.
- 44 Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*.
- 45 Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 159.
- 46 Robert B. Coote and David R. Ord, *The Bible’s First History. From Eden to the Court of David with the Yahwist* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 47; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 159.
- 47 D. A. S. Fergusson, *The Cosmos and the Creator. An Introduction to the Theology of Creation* (London: SPCK, 1998), 15.
- 48 Ellen van Wolde, “The Earth Story as Presented by the Tower of Babel Narrative,” in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2000), 152.
- 49 L. A. Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 33-35; Van Wolde, “Tower of Babel Narrative,” in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 153.

- 50 Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 141.
- 51 Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethic* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 232.
- 52 Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (New York: SCM, 1971), 134.
- 53 Vawter, *On Genesis*, 60.
- 54 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 76.
- 55 For detail see Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part I from Adam to Noah*, trans., Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1978), 104-106.
- 56 Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch*, 98. In *Enûmaelish* human is created from the blood of a god. see Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 157.
- 57 Human has an essential kinship with all things of earth – are of *humus*, that organic residue of roots, bone, carrion, faeces, leaves and other debris mixed with minerals and organized as a community for life. Coote and Ord translate the word עֶפְרָא not as ‘dust’ but as ‘dirt’. Coote and Ord, *The Bible's First History*, 52.
- 58 Vawter, *On Genesis*, 67.
- 59 Rasmussen, *Earth Community*, 275.
- 60 Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden. The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 6.
- 61 A reading from the anthropocentric cosmology of Aristotle led to Christian version of great chain of being the hierarchical ladder led from a transcendent god, angels, men, women and children, down to animals, plants and inanimate realm. Anthropocentrism of the Greek and Judeo-Christian traditions continued to dominate the major theorists of modern period such as Francis Bacon (1561-1650), René Descartes (1596-1650), Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Gottfried Leibniz (1664-1716). Bacon claimed that modern science would allow humans to regain a command over nature, which had been lost with Adam's fall in the Garden. Descartes, who is considered as the father of modern Western philosophy argued that the new science would make human masters and progressors of nature. His mind-body dualism resulted in the view that only humans have minds (or souls); all other creatures were merely bodies (machines), they have no mental life and could feel no pain. Elizabeth Grey, *Green Paradise Lost* (Wellesley, Mass: Roundtable Press, 1982); George Sessions, "Eco-centrism and the Anthropocentric Detour," in *Key Concepts in Critical Theory Ecology*, ed. C. Merchant (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1994), 142f. Also Hwa Yol Jung, "Francis Bacon's Philosophy of Nature. A Postmodern Critique" <http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/content/v10.3/index.html> (accessed 18 Nov 2007).
- 62 Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch*, 88.
- 63 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 55.
- 64 Carol A. Newsom, "Common Ground. An Ecological Reading of Genesis 2-3," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2000), 70.
- 65 Cited by Newsom, "Common Ground," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 69. from Baird Callicott, "Genesis and John Muir," in *Covenant for a New Creation*, ed. C. S. Robb and C. J. Casebolt (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books): 123
- 66 Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch*, 97. A comparison between 2: 5 and 3: 18 is vital to understand this. If the words עֵשֶׂב and תְּבַרְבָּר are translated in the same way in both these two verses – *thorns* and *plants* (of the field) respectively- it concludes that the thorns and herbs are the result of human fall. *Plants of the field* would mean wheat or barley and the other kinds of grain from which *bread* (3: 19, לֶחֶם) are made. Then, 2: 5 does not refer to the vegetation of chapter 1, rather to the *plants of the field* resulted from agricultural activities. Cassuto, *Book of Genesis Part I*, 101f.
- 67 Newsom, "Common Ground," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 70.
- 68 L. Hobgood-Oster, "For out of That Well the Flocks Were Watered. Stories of Wells in Genesis," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2000), 191.
- 69 Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch. Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 63.
- 70 Diane Jacobson, "Biblical Bases for Eco-Justice Ethics," in *Theology for Earth Community. A Field Guide*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 46.
- 71 Carol P. Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy," *Feminist Theology* 14/3 (May 2006): 290f.
- 72 Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy": 291.
- 73 Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy": 291.
- 74 Alice L. Laffey, *An Introduction to the Old Testament. A Feminist Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 8.
- 75 Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy": 290.
- 76 Dmitri M. Slivniak, "The Garden of Double Messages. Deconstructing Hierarchical Oppositions in the Garden Story," *Journal for the Study of the*

- Old Testament* 27/4 (June 2003): 448. Here עֲלֵי used for man's side, and in 2Sam 16:13 (BDB) it is used for the side of a hill. Elsewhere, it is an architectural term (e.g. Exod 25: 12, 14; 26: 35; 1Kings 6:5, 15, 34; 7: 3; Ezek 41:6).
- 77 Slivniak, "The Garden of Double Messages": 449.
- 78 Slivniak, "The Garden of Double Messages": 449.
- 79 Exod 18: 4; Deut 33: 7, 26, 29; Ps 33:20; 115: 9-11; 124: 8; 146: 5. Slivniak, "The Garden of Double Messages": 448.
- 80 Slivniak, "The Garden of Double Messages": 451.
- 81 Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael. An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit* (New York: Turner, 1992), 42.
- 82 Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 199.
- 83 Quinn, *Ishmael*, 69.
- 84 Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 328.
- 85 Gunther Wittenberg, "Alienation and Emancipation from the Earth. The Earth Story in Genesis 4," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2000), 104.
- 86 Wittenberg, "Alienation and Emancipation," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 111.
- 87 Wittenberg, "Alienation and Emancipation," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 112.
- 88 Lewis Mumford, *The City in History. Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc, 1961), 50.
- 89 The definitions of human nature adopted by the Enlightenment and classical anthropology are both typological. It constructed an image of man as a model, an archetype, a Platonic idea. Every human are reflections, distortions, approximations. The differences among individuals and among groups of individuals are rendered secondary. Here we are in quest of a metaphysical entity, Man with a capital "M," in the interests of which we sacrifice the empirical entity, man with a small "m." Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 51. The cultural development is construed as a progress towards Man with a capital 'M'.
- 90 Jared M. Diamond, "The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race" [http://www.environment.ens.fr/perso/claessen/agriculture/mistake\\_jared\\_diamond.pdf](http://www.environment.ens.fr/perso/claessen/agriculture/mistake_jared_diamond.pdf) (accessed 21 Jul 2008).
- 91 Newsom, "Common Ground," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 62.
- 92 Wittenberg, "Alienation and Emancipation," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 104.
- 93 Wittenberg, "Alienation and Emancipation," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 112.
- 94 Mumford, *The City in History*, 40-69.
- 95 Wittenberg, "Alienation and Emancipation," in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, 113.
- 96 Averbeck and others, eds., *The Net Bible First Edition*.
- 97 Samuelson, *The First Seven Days*, 11. Influenced by the Platonic idea, theologians of classical western philosophical and theological traditions combined the idea of unchanging God with the biblical account of creation. They imagined that creation happened in an instant and that all the creatures including human beings were created simultaneously, corresponding to eternal ideas in the mind of God. Carol P. Christ argues that this was added to the creation account as *creatio ex nihilo*. Carol P. Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy," *Feminist Theology* 14/3 (May 2006): 294. Whitney Bauman argues that the ontology and epistemology of *creatio ex nihilo* have the "logic of domination" throughout the history of the Christian West. It provides a transcendent space onto which colonizing ideals can be projected and is then used to justify the domination of different others. Whitney Bauman, *Theology, Creation, and Environmental Ethics. From Creatio Ex Nihilo to Terra Nullius* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.
- 98 Van Wolde, "Why the Verb": 3. traditionally, the word אָרָא translates as "to create." The debate goes on whether it refers to creation out of nothing or ordering something already exists. Those who stands for the latter cites the examples of Ps 148:5; Prov 8:22-27; Isa 43:15; 65: 17. Averbeck and others, eds., *The Net Bible First Edition*; Benno Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible Genesis*, trans., Ernest I Jacob and Walter Jacob (New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House Inc., 2007), 1. W. H. Schmidt points out that though אָרָא does not denote *creatio ex nihilo* the text never mentions "what God created out of." Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*. Claus Westermann concludes that there is no conclusive evidence in the entire Old Testament that the verb itself ever expresses the idea of a creation out of nothing. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11. A Commentary*, trans., John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), 100. This concept of creation out of nothing first appeared in II Maccabees 7:28 that reads, "I beg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. And in the same way the human race

- came into being.” However, this debate is external to this text and it is the result of the absolute binary opposition between the Creator and creation.
- 99 Van Wolde, “Why the Verb”: 20.
- 100 Ellen van Wolde, “The Earth Story as Presented by the Tower of Babel Narrative,” in *The Earth Story in Genesis*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2000). Also Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 101. Also Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 103.
- 101 Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible Genesis*, 2.
- 102 Samuelson, *The First Seven Days*, 14.
- 103 Cassuto, *Book of Genesis Part I*, 20. There is another possible reading, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters,” B. Vawter, *On Genesis. A New Reading* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 37. However, a clear solution for the reading is not yet possible.
- 104 Samuelson, *The First Seven Days*, 20. Also Theodore Hiebert, “Air, the First Sacred Thing. The Conception of Ruah in the Hebrew Scriptures,” in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 17.
- 105 Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 112-14.
- 106 Theodore Hiebert explores the use of רוח in the Old Testament evading the dualistic interpretations. It can be God’s atmosphere (Ps 135:7; Jer10:13; Job 28: 25-26; Num11:31; Exod10:13; 15: 8,10 Ps 107: 25) or/and breath of God (Gen 2:7; Ps 104: 29-30; 2Sam 22:16). Hiebert, “Air, the First Sacred Thing,” in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, 10-14.
- 107 Samuelson, *The First Seven Days*, 20.
- 108 Samuelson, *The First Seven Days*, 21.
- 109 Zeno (332-262 BC) lived on Cyprus, who is the founder of Stoicism and the Stoic Academy (Stoa) in Athens. At least one of Zeno’s predecessors predates the authorship of our text, and many of the classic natural philosopher-scientists who influenced Zeno were contemporary with the Babylonian Exile. Samuelson, *The First Seven Days*, 21n.
- 110 Hiebert, “Air, the First Sacred Thing,” in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, 15.
- 111 W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness. Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 181.
- 112 Cassuto, *Book of Genesis Part I*, 25.
- 113 Samuelson, *The First Seven Days*, 22.
- 114 Mark G. Brett, *Genesis. Procreation and the Politics of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), 24.
- 115 Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy": 300.
- 116 The Prince of Wales, "Time to Heal," *Resurgence Magazine* 219 (Jul/Aug 2003): 57.
- 117 Gregorios, *Science, Technology*, 103.
- 118 Lothar Schafer, *Infinite Potential. What Quantum Physics Reveals About How We Should Live* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2013).
- 119 Gregorios, *Science, Technology*, 104.
- 120 Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy": 301.
- 121 Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy": 302.
- 122 Frijof Capra, *The Web of Life. A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter* (London: Flamingo, 1997), 43.
- 123 Capra, *The Web of Life. A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter*, 34.
- 124 Wati Longchar, *Return to Mother Earth. Theology, Christian Witness and Theological Education. An Indigenous Perspective* (Tainan, Taiwan: Program for Theology and Cultures in Asia, 2013), 28.
- 125 Joseph Peruma, *The Motherly Earth. An Ecological Ethics of Human-Nature Relationship* (Bangalore: Claretian, 2002), 195.
- 126 Classical theists imagined God as existing entirely apart from the changing world. Pantheists, in contrast understand the world as God. Nevertheless, it does not distinguish the Creator from creation in terms of time and space limits. Christ, "Ecofeminism and Process Philosophy": 306.
- 127 Gregorios, *Science, Technology*, 112.
- 128 Capra, *The Web of Life. A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter*, 301.
- 129 T V Geetha Devi, "Deep Ecology," *Vision* 8/1 (Jan 1999): 58.
- 130 James L Crenshaw, *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions. Collected Writings on Old Testament Wisdom* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1995), 120.

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## Paul on Women in the Church and Christian Worship: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

*Subhro Sekhar Sircar\**

### Introduction

First Corinthians 11:2-16 remains one of the most difficult and controversial passages in the New Testament, despite more than nineteen hundred years of the history of Christianity, which has come and gone since the apostle Paul penned this enigmatic passage. There seems to be little consensus among scholars as to what Paul was attempting to communicate when he wrote this passage. This passage (with other contentious passages that concern women's issues<sup>1</sup>) has produced numerous essays and articles during the last fifty years. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 figures, in fact, most prominently in the discussion of women in the last thirty years and it is beset by a variety of interpretations. Besides, debating over the integrity of the passage, scholars are divided on major issues that include the meaning of the word 'head' (Gk κεφαλή, *kephalē*), whether Paul prescribes head-coverings for women in the worship or emphasizes sexual distinctiveness of men and women or instructs women to have 'authority' (Gk ἐξουσίαν, *exousian*) over men or other related issues. Thus, the main goal of this paper is to examine various interpretations

of these major issues proposed by scholars and then to suggest the possible coherent meaning of the passage.

### Context and Integrity of the Passage

It is almost agreed that 1 Corinthians 11 – 14 is addressed in the context of Christian worship.<sup>2</sup> Paul, in these chapters, addresses several problems concerning the worship practices of the Corinthian community. His main concern for the Corinthian believers is that they conduct themselves in worship in a manner that is orderly, honorable, exemplary, motivated by love and helpful to the common good. While others acknowledge the speaking role of women, argue that the occasion is not the Christian worship, but an informal gathering or a separate assembly for women.<sup>3</sup> This is quite unpersuasive, because if this has reference to the informal setting, then why Paul would be so concerned with such teachings as head-coverings, orderly manner, etc. Since he is addressing both men and women,<sup>4</sup> why one would think Paul is concerned with separate gatherings for women? There is also a clear link with verses 17-34 (especially v. 2 "I commend you" and v.17 "But...I do not commend you) and chapters 12-14 argues strongly for a worship context. Further, two worship functions of 11:2-16, that is, praying and prophesying are precisely the focus of discussion in 12-14 in the worship context.<sup>5</sup>

Although, the above points sufficiently affirm the unity of the passage, several scholars still have questioned the authenticity of the passage. Did Paul write it or someone else writes it and imports it here? Walker<sup>6</sup> argued that this passage is a non-Pauline interpolation. On the basis of form critical and contextual analysis and an examination of the content of the passage, he concludes that this passage (including male supremacy in all other supposed Pauline passages) similarities to the pseudo-Pauline writings.<sup>7</sup> While few scholars have supported these conclusions,<sup>8</sup> generally others find serious problems with these arguments. Thus, Witherington affirms since there is no evidence from manuscripts or language for interpolation of this passage, it should be accepted

\* Rev. Dr. Subhro Sekhar Sircar, Professor of New Testament and the former Vice-Principal, teaches New Testament in the Faculty of Theology, Serampore College (University), and North India Institute of Post Graduate Theological Studies (NIIPGTS), Serampore, Hooghly, West Bengal, India.

as authentic.<sup>9</sup> Walker's position also skillfully refuted by Murphy-O'Connor and evaluated as "ingenious" yet "questionable on both factual and methodological grounds."<sup>10</sup> Padgett and Shoemaker argued that 1 Corinthians 11:3-7 (or 3-10) is Paul's reference to a Corinthian position and verses 11-16 are his refutation.<sup>11</sup> Such suggestions seem more theoretical than real, for the quotation is too lengthy and there is no any indication in the text for contending such position.

## Exegesis of the Passage

### Introduction (11:2)

Verse 2 says "I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you." Paul begins with a surprising word of 'praise' (Gk *ἐπαινῶ*, *epainō*)<sup>12</sup> for the Corinthian Church. For some, it is surprising because the content of the following verses (11:3-16) does not seem to be an example, which Paul could commend.<sup>13</sup> While others contend that Paul praises them in order to soften them up for an exhortation to keep a tradition, which they do not currently observe so that they will receive his critical advice.<sup>14</sup> For Schreiner, verse 2 functions as a complimentary introduction before Paul begins to criticize the Corinthians on certain practices.<sup>15</sup> Hays and others assume that it is a response to a letter in which Paul praises them for seeking his advice on a complex issue.<sup>16</sup> However, Paul here praises them for keeping him (also his teaching) in mind in everything and following the "traditions" (Gk *παράδοσεις*, *paradosis*)<sup>17</sup> he delivered to them. Some think that the tradition Paul has in mind specifically has to do with "the behavior of the Corinthian women contrary to the custom of Paul and the other churches"<sup>18</sup> or the participation of men and women in worship in proper clothing or the equality of man and woman. The traditions, in fact, include historical facts related to the gospel story and doctrine including creedal statements drawn from them (2 Thes 2:15; 3:6; 1 Cor 11:23; 15:3; Rom 6:17). Adherence to

these traditions has strengthened their bond with the apostle and also connects them to the rest of the Church.<sup>19</sup> Paul, therefore, praises them for remembering his teaching in general or more accurately for being "consistent with this foundational tradition."<sup>20</sup> "But" (Gk *δέ*, *de*) in verse 3 suggests a contrast with verse 2 in which Paul commends or praises for observing "the tradition," "but" now he wants them to observe the following matters, which needed further attention. Thus it also connects verse 2 well with the following verses 3-16.

### The Meaning of Head (v. 3)

Verse 3 is the key statement of the passage. "But I want you to 'understand' (Gk *εἰδέναι*, *eidēnai*)<sup>21</sup> that the head (Gk *κεφαλή*, *kephalē*) of every man (Gk *andros*) is Christ, the head (*κεφαλή*, *kephalē*) of a woman<sup>22</sup> (Gk *γυναικὸς*, *gunaikos*) is the man<sup>23</sup> (Gk *ἀνὴρ*, *anēr*), and the head (*κεφαλή*, *kephalē*) of Christ is God." The Greek has the same word for both 'man' and 'husband' (*ἀνὴρ*, *anēr*) and 'woman' and 'wife' (*γυνή*, *gunē*).<sup>24</sup> The second clause in this statement is generally translated "the head of a woman is the man". But the RSV rendering "the head of a woman is her husband" (here 'her' is not in the text), or NRSV rendering of "husband" and wife", has a number of supporters.<sup>25</sup> In view of 1 Corinthians 14:33 and Ephesians 5:22-24, the terms may refer to "husband" and "wife".<sup>26</sup> It is also possible that Paul moved back and forth between the two meanings as suggested by Schreiner.<sup>27</sup> However, a more general reference to "men" and "women" is better rendering here.<sup>28</sup> First, if 11:3 states Christ as the head of every husband, then only husbands dishonor Christ by wearing head-coverings (11:4). Second, 11:11-12 would then suggest that "the wife came from the husband" and "the husband is born of the wife." For it is an impossible understanding.

The use of "head" (*κεφαλή*, *kephalē*) has become a bone of contention in the ensuing debate between "egalitarian" and "hierarchical" (traditional) interpretations and also the third more moderate view has gained momentum recently is the

“complementarian.”<sup>29</sup> Paul uses the word to refer to the anatomical head and also in a metaphorical sense as in verse 3. Note also here Paul’s play on the word κεφαλή (head) in verses 4-6: A man who prays or prophesies with his (literal) κεφαλή covered dishonors his (metaphorical) κεφαλή, i.e., Christ. The woman who prays or prophesies with her (literal) κεφαλή uncovered dishonors her (metaphorical) κεφαλή, i.e., man. The question is: “what is the metaphorical meaning of ‘head’ here”? Scholars have tried to explore its meaning on the usage of this word analyzing the available contemporary sources (e.g., Old Testament [both Hebrew & LXX], Jewish and early Christian writings, classical Greek and Roman backgrounds, etc.), especially in the recent years. In fact, these studies show that there is “multivalent force of κεφαλή as revolving metaphorically around the physiological head-body contrast.”<sup>30</sup> There are three views that draw our attention.<sup>31</sup> First, perhaps until the middle of the twentieth century, ‘head’ has been traditionally understood to designate hierarchy and to imply authoritative headship.<sup>32</sup> As Christ is the authority of man, so also man is the authority over a woman and God is the authority over Christ. Similarly, Fitzmyer observed that the evidence from the LXX, Philo, and Plutarch have this meaning only. And thus he has strongly contended that Paul “could well have intended κεφαλή to mean ‘head’ in the sense of authority or supremacy over someone else.”<sup>33</sup> This he argues in contrast to the attempts of Bedale, and others who argue for the meaning “source.”<sup>34</sup> This resulted in some form of subordinationist theology in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.<sup>35</sup> In fact, as we shall see later, this subordination is not in the sense of superiority or inferiority.

Second, a growing number of recent interpreters, following Bedale, understand that the concept of “source” or “origin” is better attested in this context. There are two variations in this view: The earlier interpreters understand κεφαλή (*kephalē*) to mean “source” in the sense of subordination,<sup>36</sup> and recent interpreters exclude any hint of women subordination.<sup>37</sup> Christ is the source of man’s

existence as the agent of creation (cf. 1 Cor 8:6, “through whom all things are”). Man is the source of woman’s existence since the woman was made from man (Gen 2:18-23; 1 Cor 11:12). God is the origin and final goal of everything and is the source of Christ. This view has two lexicographical supports.<sup>38</sup> But this meaning is used in the plural sense of the word κεφαλαι (*kephalai*), “the source of a river” (Herodotus, 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) rather than singular κεφαλή (*kephalē*) as Paul used here. However, Wayne Grudem has conducted a recent and extensive analysis, which finds support for the traditional interpretation.<sup>39</sup> Employing *Thesaurus Lingua Graecae*, Grudem examined 2,336 instances of the use of the word κεφαλή from the eighth century BC to fourth century AD. His conclusions were that in 2004 instances, κεφαλή refers to physical head in contrast to the rest of the body. Of the 302 metaphorical usages, 49 had the sense of “ruler” or “superior” and none he found clear examples of “source” or “origin.”<sup>40</sup> Perriman also observes that this meaning of head does not occur in the LXX and the evidence shown from extra-biblical sources are ambiguous.<sup>41</sup> This meaning may have two serious problems: If the word κεφαλή means “source” then “God will be viewed as the source of a Son who at one time did not exist” and can this lead to Arian heresy. Again, if this meaning is applied in husband-wife context as in Ephesians 5:23a, where we read “the husband is the head of the wife,” then the husband will be viewed as the source of his wife, an impossible interpretation.

A third option understands κεφαλή to mean, “that which is most prominent, foremost, uppermost, preeminent” as convincingly argued by Perriman.<sup>42</sup> With some variations, this view has quite good supporters.<sup>43</sup> Besides the meaning “authority”, all the major Hebrew and Greek lexicon and theological dictionaries that have listed meanings other than “authority” have some kind of direct or implied meaning.<sup>44</sup> Garland has argued, “The ‘head’ denotes one who is preeminent, and though it may result in authority and leadership, that is not its basic

denotation. It is linked to ideas of obedience or submission.”<sup>45</sup> However, this view also is not without problem. For it is unclear if an entity can be most or more prominent without implying some functional superiority, at least in the context of God’s and Christ’s headship, as Blomberg has pointed out.<sup>46</sup>

What do we gain from this? It is evident that there is the multivalent metaphorical meaning of this anatomical word κεφαλή as the extensive research by the scholars and lexicographical data have shown. However, among the metaphorical usages of the word “head,” “authority” is more prominent than any other meaning and more appropriate in this passage as well.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the meaning “source” creates a more theological problem than “authority.” Egalitarians argue that Paul advocates hierarchy or subordination between God and Christ. And thus they object to this meaning by stating that it may lead to the Christological heresy of making Christ subordinate to God.<sup>48</sup> There is, indeed, implied hierarchy in the verse: God-Christ-man-woman. Paul himself writes later (1 Cor 15:28) of the subordination of the Son to the Father. But his submission to the Father is voluntary. This would be a heresy only if one would think that there is an ontological difference between the Father and the Son. The difference is only functional between the members of the Trinity, not in their nature or essence.<sup>49</sup> So also man as the “authority” (head) of woman has different function or role but they are not inferior to each other (vv. 11-12) in essence. Moreover, although there is a hierarchy between each pair, Paul, in fact, does not follow the order of their hierarchy. Paul places “the head of Christ is God,” after “the head of a woman is a man.” Therefore, in view of Schreiner, the authority of man over a woman does not imply the inferiority of women or the superiority of men.<sup>50</sup>

### **Hairstyle or Head Covering (vv. 4-16)**

**Argument from a Practical Point of View (vv.4-6).** Verses 4 through 6 follow the theological principle in verse 3 with practical application. Now, Paul writes if a man prays or prophesies with

“head covered” he dishonors his head; if a woman prays or prophesies without her head covered, she dishonors her head, she should go all the way and have her hair cut and thus be consistently masculine – but that was acknowledged to be a sign of shame for a woman. This does not indicate a restriction in praying and prophesying for women in public worship. Since prophecy was a speaking gift, the apostle is not restricting women from proclaiming a word from God and perhaps taking a leadership role in the worship service. This is also affirmed by its repetition in verse 13. How this verse can be reconciled to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is another problem<sup>51</sup> but what is clear here is that this verse refers to women participating in worship and in the leadership of worship on an equal basis with the men. The only restriction that Paul mentions is improper behavior while praying and prophesying both for men and women. It is related to men and women in the church who should use their literal heads properly to honor their metaphorical heads. The literal meaning of the Greek phrase *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* (*kata kephalēsechōn*, v. 4) is “having down from the head,” which have been variously translated.<sup>52</sup> This signals a problem. What is it that one has “down from the head.” It is argued that Paul is discussing hairstyle<sup>53</sup> rather than head coverings as traditionally understood.<sup>54</sup> A proponent of this view suggests different reasons. It is argued that Paul would not have used *kata* (down) with the genitive to refer to something “resting upon” the head, i.e., a covering. Paul nowhere uses the term for “veil” (Gk *καλυμμα*, *kalumma*) and what is hanging down the head is hair (Gk *κομη*, *komē*) according to verse 14. However, archaeological evidence from Roman religious contexts shows that men used to cover their head and Jews also practiced this.<sup>55</sup> Thus, Paul wanted to correct this pagan practice in the Christian worship. For a man to cover his head dishonors his own head (v. 4) and his metaphorical head, Christ, as well (v.7).

The Greek word *ἀκατακάλυπτος* (*akatakalyptos*) means “uncovered” (v. 5). There is no disagreement in the lexicographical

entries. Thus translating it as “unbound” or “loose hair”<sup>56</sup> basing on certain text in LXX (Num 5:18; Lev 13:45) is incorrect and highly unusual.<sup>57</sup> An argument from verse 15 is also proof where the Greek word περιβολαιον (*peribolaion*) which means “that which thrown around,” “covering,” “garment,” “wrapper.”<sup>58</sup> So what Paul meant here is some kind of covering that women must put on her head. For a woman uncovering her head dishonors her own head and her metaphorical head, man. Thus, if covering means “hair,” then all men should shave their heads or go bald because men must have their heads uncovered. Again, if covering means “long hair” then verse 6 is “if a woman will not wear long hair, then she should cut it off.” But then it will be a shameful thing for her, and she has to put a head covering. Thus the covering referred to in these verses and others as well is actually “head covering.”

**Argument from a Creation Point of View (vv7-10):** Paul explains the basis of his previous assertions by using the Greek construction *men gar... de*, which indicates ‘explanatory force.’<sup>59</sup> Paul argues from Genesis 1-2 that woman should wear a head covering and man should not. He gives three reasons here: (1) man is God’s ‘image’ (εἰκὼν, *eikōn*) and ‘glory’ (δοξα, *doxa*), (2) woman is man’s glory, and (3) woman was made for man. This reading is not without hierarchical authority.<sup>60</sup> Some conjecture that man and not a woman is the image of God and that Paul arrived at this stance by his (mis)reading of Genesis 1:27.<sup>61</sup> But they fail to notice, as Barrett points out, that Paul’s emphasis is on ‘glory’ (Gk δοξα, *doxa*), not ‘image’ (Gk εἰκὼν, *eikōn*).<sup>62</sup> Paul’s point is that man is the glory of God and woman is the glory of man.<sup>63</sup> Man is God’s glory in that he was created by God’s direct activity. To cover his head would diminish the glory that belongs to God by creation. On the other hand, the woman is the glory of man. Verses 8-9 are intended to explain why a woman is the glory of man. These verses reflect Genesis 2:18-20 and 23. Since the woman was created from man’s rib she comes from man rather than vice

versa. Genesis 2:18-20 makes it clear that the woman was created for man’s sake. Paul concludes from Genesis 2 that woman is the glory of man. Supporting this view Fee points out that Paul does not deny that the woman is also the glory of God. His concern is simply that the actions of Corinthians women in praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered undermined man’s glory or her uncovered head will reflect man’s glory before God.<sup>64</sup> It is to guard against any assumption of some interpreters that Paul thought women were not equally created in God’s image.<sup>65</sup> For women were not created in man’s image, but in God’s image. Otherwise, Paul would have made a great theological and factual error. Indeed he clearly knew Genesis 1:27.<sup>66</sup> Also in verses 8-9, Paul reminds us of the creation story from Genesis 2:21-23, through the use of *eikōn* (image), he links with Genesis 1:27.<sup>67</sup> In Verses 8-9, what Paul is actually arguing from the creation point of view is “not the presence or absence of head coverings, but the relationships of honor and glory as described in verse 7.”<sup>68</sup> The main point is that the man stands uncovered because he reflects the glory of God. The woman must be covered because she reflects the glory of man.<sup>69</sup> Otherwise, her uncovered head will reflect man’s glory in the presence of God.

Verse 10 presents the most difficult interpretive problems for all. The Greek term διὰ τοῦτο (*diatouto*) to mean “for this reason” has a backward reference.<sup>70</sup> So the main point of the argument is to explain why a woman ‘ought’ (Gk ὀφείλει, *opheilei*)<sup>71</sup> to have a head covering – because of woman’s origin and purpose of creation. The Greek phrase ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ (*exousia echein epi*) (“to have authority over”) has been variously understood.<sup>72</sup> RSV translates “have a veil on” but in the margin “authority” (the veil being a symbol of this), and all major versions “a sign/symbol of authority on,” but in REB “a woman must have the sign of her authority on her head...” The context makes it clear that Paul intends some kind of connection between the head covering, authority and angels, but what kind of connection is uncertain.

Verse 7 begins with head covering. If verse 10 refers to the argument that precedes as we have already noted, then verse 10 should be the concluding argument of the preceding verses.<sup>73</sup> Two interpretations are in view: (1) that the head covering is a sign that the woman is under authority, assumingly the authority of her (metaphorical) head, man, i.e., in the passive sense,<sup>74</sup> (2) that the head covering is a sign that the woman herself has some kind of authority on her head as in REB, i.e., in the sense of active.<sup>75</sup> Against passive reading, Ellingworth contended, “we may argue that Paul has not talked about a woman’s authority before; however, he goes on to speak of men and women as dependent on one another in verses 11-12.”<sup>76</sup> Verse 10 also gives another reason for wearing a head covering, i.e., “because of the angels.” What Paul meant by this phrase is not evident. The text (and also context) does not support the older idea that evil angels are in view and that a woman needed protection from their lustful looks.<sup>77</sup> However, as in 1 Corinthians 4:9, Paul, perhaps, thought of angels as observers of the created order. So also as in 1 Timothy 5:21, the idea seems to have angels as watchers of believers, and at Revelation 1:20 we find that churches have angels. So they were good angels.

#### **Argument from the Mutual Relationship (vv. 11-12).**

Paul now makes it clear that what he has been saying is not meant as an undue inferiority or subordination of woman so that the Corinthians will not misunderstand his argument. Thus he qualifies the preceding argument by using an adversative *πλὴν* (*plēn*) to mean “nevertheless,” at the beginning of verse 11.<sup>78</sup> So he says “in Christ,” that is, in the sphere of God’s redemptive activity, men and women stand mutually interdependence.<sup>79</sup> Paul argues this statement in verse 12. “The first woman came from man, true – but ever since then, every man comes from a woman! And since virtually everything comes from God anyway,” as it is expressed in Peterson’s contemporary language.<sup>80</sup> However, this does not cancel our sexual and functional differences given at the creation. The created distinction between man and woman should

be honored in the church. If verses 11-12 entirely canceled these distinctions, then verses 8-9 will be pointless, as Blomberg has pointed out. In God’s redemptive activity men and women are equal in their essence, but while sexual and functional differences remain, they are mutually interdependent. A healthy community of God’s people, the church, needs men and women together (v. 11), not a group of people striving for sexless neutrality.

#### **Argument from Nature and Church Practice (vv. 13-16).**

Paul returns to his argument of head coverings in verse 13 by referring to long and short hair in worship. But he argues from three specific culture-bound arguments: (1) what is ‘fitting’ (Gk *πρέπον*, *prepon*) in verse 13, (2) “nature” (Gk *φύσις*, *phusis*) in verse 14, and (3) universal church “practice” (Gk *συνήθειαν*, *sunētheian*) in verse 16.<sup>81</sup> First, he appeals to their own judgment what is fitting. The aorist imperative *κρίνατε* (*krinate*) denotes a punctiliar action or an ingressive nuance of coming to a decision. In either case, there is a force of deciding (NJB) or making a judgment (NRSV, NIV, REB), rather than continuing the matter.<sup>82</sup> The Greek periphrastic *πρέπονέστιν* (*preponestin*) calls attention more explicitly and deliberately to the issue of what is “appropriate” or “proper” (NIV) in the worship context. Second, he appeals to nature, could mean “the ordering of how things are”<sup>83</sup> or “the regular or established order of things.”<sup>84</sup> More appropriately it may refer to “the natural and instinctive sense of right and wrong that God has planted in us, especially in respect to sexuality,”<sup>85</sup> or perhaps “the order established by God in the world, and especially in human society.”<sup>86</sup> It means that the man and woman should do what is appropriate and do what the order established by God. Paul’s last argument is what he has taught them (verses 3-12) besides this there is no other customs or practices in the Christian churches. Perhaps, Paul is indicating the authority of his own teaching, which is fitting for the Corinthians. Some have tried to do away with what Paul taught concerning man and woman’s relationship, proper worship behavior; especially head coverings

by literally translating “we have no *such* (Gk *τοιούτην, toiautēn*) practice.” Certainly the translation “we have no *other* (*toiautēn*) practice/custom,” (NIV, RSV, NASB, NLT) could remove this conjecture.

### Conclusion

I conclude that although this passage has problems and is difficult to understand, the message is very clear. This passage talks about the worship context of the church where both men and women are involved. Paul does not deny women praying and preaching in the Church. Although man’s hierarchical role cannot be denied, yet in the Lord, man and woman are mutually independent to one another. There is no sense of superiority or inferiority in the Lord, but this does not cancel functional and also sexual differences. Thus both men and women should properly attire themselves when they come to the public worship. Men should not cover their head since he reflects God’s glory. Women should cover their head when they come in the worship lest she glorifies man by her uncovering head. As Christian believers, they should do what is most appropriate according to their judgment and natural sense for the best interest of the Church of Jesus Christ and for the glory of God. A final word, we are aware that we live in a different time and context. What is best appropriate for one context may not be appropriate in another context. For example, the head covering is normal practice in our context. Women, both Christians, and non-Christians, generally put a head covering when they go out, and so also in any worship context. It is their inherent cultural practice. What we need is to see what is best and appropriate for a Christian worship that will honor and glorify the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

### End Notes

- 1 For example, 1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:11-12.
- 2 Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. S. R. Driver, A. Plummer and C. A. Briggs (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1914), 230; James B. Hurley, “Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women?: A Consideration of 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 1 Cor 14:33b-36,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 35 (1973): 203; Bruce Waltke, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (1978): 49; Ronald K. Fung, “Ministry in the New Testament,” in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 184; and others.
- 3 Gordon Clark, “The Ordination of Women,” *Trinity Review* 17 (1981): 3-4; Harold R. Holmyard, “Does 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 refer to Women Praying and Prophesying in Church,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (1997): 461-72.
- 4 The Greek word *γυνή* (*gunē*, woman/wife) is used 17 times and *ἀνὴρ* (*anēr*, man/husband) 14 times in this passage.
- 5 Mark C. Black, “1 Cor 11:2-16 – A Re-investigation,” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Carroll D. Osburn, vol. 1 (Joplin, MS: College Press, 1993), 191-95.
- 6 William O. Walker, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul’s Views Regarding Women,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975): 94-110.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 108-09. He has furthered his position and defended against his critics in two other essays: *idem*, “The Theology of Woman’s Place and the Paulinist Tradition,” *Semeia* 28 (1983): 101-112; *idem*, “The Vocabulary of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: Pauline or Non-Pauline?” *Journal for the Studies of the New Testament* 35 (1989): 75-88.
- 8 Lamar Cope, “1 Cor. 11:2-16: One Step Further,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97 (1978): 435-36; G. W. Trompf, “On Attitudes Toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and Its Context,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (1980): 196-215.
- 9 Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series 59 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 78-79.
- 10 Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “The Non-Pauline Character of I Corinthians 11:2-16?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95 (1976): 615-21; again in another paper after ten years he provided a thorough refutation of this interpolation theory, *idem*, “Interpolation in 1 Corinthians,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

- 48 (1986): 81-94; however, he favors such interpolations in 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 2 Cor 6:14-7:1.
- 11 Alan Padgett, "Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradiction of *Coiffure* in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *Journal for the Studies of the New Testament* 20 (1984): 69-86; Thomas P. Shoemaker, "Unveiling of Equality: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987): 60-63.
  - 12 So also ASV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NKJV; "commend" ESV; NRSV; RSV; and "congratulate" NJB.
  - 13 Hans Conzelmann, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, tr. James W. Leitch and ed. George W. MacRai (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 182.
  - 14 Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, HUT, ed. Hans Dieter, et. Al. Betz, 28 (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991), 260, notes that both praise and blame are used regularly in deliberative argumentation to "move the audience to proper behavior in the future and to placate them so that they will be receptive to critical advice." For others this idea is captatio *benevolentiae* (praise before scolding), see C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 247; Conzelmann, *Commentary on the First Epistle*, 182; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 500.
  - 15 Thomas R. Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 2:16," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 125.
  - 16 Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 182-84
  - 17 So also ASV, ESV, NAB, NASB, NJB, NKJV, NRSV, RSV and "teaching" NIV, NLT (Christian).
  - 18 Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity," 125.
  - 19 David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2003), 512.
  - 20 Ibid.
  - 21 So also ESV, NASB, NJB, NRSV, RSV; "realize" NIV; "remember" TEV; and "know" ASV, NAB, NKJV, NLT; in view of the contrast of v. 3 with v. 2 ('teaching' already given to the Corinthians), Gk rendering εἰδέναι (*eidenai*) as 'understand' is appropriate here. For the expression 'understand' refers to new teaching, whereas 'know' refers to teaching that the Corinthians had already received from Paul, see Paul Ellingworth and Howard A. Hatton, *A Hand Book on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 243.
  - 22 So also ASV, HCSB, NASB, NEB, NIV, NJB, NKJV, NLT, RSV; and "wife" ESV, NAB, NRSV. I take the majority view. Note that NRSV translates "husband" and "wife" only in verse 3, but not in the following verses. Besides verse 3, in verse 7 only NAB used "wife", and verses 10 and 11 ESV translates "wife". Rest all 17 occurrences of γυνή, *gunē*, all versions translate γυνή, *gunē* as "woman".
  - 23 So also ASV, HCSB, NASB, NEB, NIV, NJB, NKJV and "husband" (ἀνὴρ, *anēr*) ESV, NAB, NLT, NRSV, RSV (cf. NEB mg). Rest all 14 occurrences of ἀνὴρ, *anēr*, all versions translate it as "man".
  - 24 See note 6.
  - 25 William F. Orr and James A. Walther, *1 Corinthians*. The Anchor Bible, vol. 32 (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 259; Jason D. BeDuhn, "'Because of the Angels': Unveiling Paul's Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 300-301.
  - 26 The rendering "the husband is the head of the wife," as in those verses mentioned above, can also make sense here: as Christ is the head of the man by virtue of his faith, the man is the head of the wife by virtue of the marriage union as Findlay (1910, 871) has argued. Then the problem in Corinth would probably centered around the impact of "wives" behavior on their husbands (cf. 14:34-35). The first humans in the creation account were also the first married couple, and an uncovered woman would not bring dishonor to a man who is not related to her. Thus, according to Winter (2001, 127) "the veil indicated the woman's marital status. But women other than wives would also pray and prophesy, and it is best to retain the generic translation, man and woman."
  - 27 Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity," 124-39, 485-87.
  - 28 Black, "1 Cor 11:2-16 – A Re-investigation," 199; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 514. cf. n. 24 and n. 25.
  - 29 See James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg eds., *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, The Counterpoints Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001).
  - 30 Anthony C. Thieselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 2000), 812.
  - 31 For an excellent survey of these views see Thieselton, *ibid*, 812-22.

- 32 Robertson and Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 229; Heinrich Schlier, “*Kephalē*, ktl.,” in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 3:674 (here after referred to as TDNT); see also *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament & Other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2000); 541-42 (here after referred to as BDAG); Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, “*Kephalē*, etc.,” in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, based upon Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 1:95-96 (8.10); 527 (49.16).
- 33 J. A. Fitzmyer, “Another Look at *kephalē* in 1 Corinthians 11:3,” *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 510-11; he also reemphasized this in his next article, idem, “*Kephalē* in 1 Corinthians 11:3,” *Interpretation* 47 (1993): 52-59.
- 34 S. C. Bedale, “The Meaning of *kephalē* in the Pauline Epistles,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1954): 211-15.
- 35 J. Hèring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*, tr. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (London: Epworth, 1962), 103, argues that even in the case of Christ “the term clearly indicates the Son’s subordination to the Father.” A. C. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul’s Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 37, 117, argues that subordination is precisely what does characterize Paul’s Christology and view of gender in this specific epistle. cf. also Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 183, n. 21 and 26.
- 36 e.g., Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 151-52; 248; Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 248-49. F. F. Bruce, *1 and II Corinthians*, New Century Bible (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 103; John P. Meier, “On the Veiling of Hermeneutics (1 Corinthians 11:2-16),” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 40 (1978): 217-18.
- 37 e.g., Robin Scroggs, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 40 (1972): 299-300; J. Murphy-O’Connor, “Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980): 490; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 503; L. Ann Jervis, “‘But I Want You to Know ...’: Paul’s Internal Midrashic Intertextual Response to the Corinthian Worshippers (1 Cor 11:2-16),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993): 240; R. A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, Abingdon New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 153.
- 38 Kalfried Munzer and Colin Brown, “Head,” in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1986), 2:156-63 (hereafter referred to as NIDNTT); Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. and aug., Henry S. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 945 (hereafter referred to as LSJ).
- 39 Wayne Grudem, “Does *Kephalē* (‘Head’) Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature: A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” *Trinity Journal* 6 (1985): 38-59; see also idem, “The Meaning of *kephalē* (‘Head’): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Studies* 44 (2001): 25-65.
- 40 Ibid., 51-52.
- 41 A. C. Perriman, “The Head of a Woman: The Meaning of *Kephalē* in 1 Cor 11:3,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1994): 621.
- 42 Ibid., 618.
- 43 William J. Martin, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on his 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph p. Martin (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1970), 232; R. S. Cervin, “Does *Kephalē* Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority’ in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal,” *Trinity Journal* 10 (1989): 87; Thieselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 616-18.
- 44 See Thieselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 617-18.
- 45 Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 516.
- 46 Craig L. Blomberg, “Appendix: Neither Hierarchalist nor Egalitarian: Gender Roles in Paul,” in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, The Counterpoints Series, eds. James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 343.
- 47 See Schreiner, “Head Coverings,” 127-28. He has convincingly argued to defend “authority” as the best understanding of the word *Kephalē* by refuting if one tries to force *Kephalē* to mean “source.”
- 48 Among others C. C. Kroeger, “Appendix III: The Classical Concept of *Head* as “Source,” in *Equal to Serve: Women and Men in the Church and Home*, ed. Gretchen G. Hull (Old Tappan, NJ: Flemming H. Revell, 1987), 282-83.
- 49 Schreiner, “Head Coverings,” 128. David E. Blattenberger III, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 through Archaeological and Moral-Rhetorical Analysis*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity, vol. 36 (New York: The Edwin Mellem Press, 1997), 19.
- 50 Schreiner, “Head Coverings,” 130.
- 51 1 Cor 11-14 refer to worship context as we have noted above. Paul, in these chapters, deals with three actual problems in the Corinthian congregation:

- (1) proper and improper decorum for men and women in worship (11:2-16), (2) abuse of the Lord's Supper (11:17-34), and (3) disorderly and chaotic manner in the use of spiritual gifts, specifically speaking in tongues (12-14). So in 14:17-34, it is not concerning silencing prayer and prophesying but speaking in tongues in disorderly and chaotic manner. One should not look at verses 33-36 in independent from other verses in the chapter. Following arguments show in favor of this view: (a) It should be noted here that women are not the only ones on whom this silence is imposed, but the verb "to silence" (Gk *σιγατω*, *sigatō*, vv. 28,30) was also employed for disruptive tongue-speakers and prophets (27-33), so its meaning in verse 34 is not a universal silence, but one directed by circumstances (Liefeld, "Women, Submission, ..." in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, 150). (b) The verb "to speak" (Gk *λαλεω*, *lalein*) here is present infinitive refers to the action as continuing or being repeated in some way (Blass & Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, 174). Thus two present infinitive in the text make it clear that the "ongoingness" of the "speaking" is in focus. So it seems improbable that they were merely "chatting", paying no attention to the speaker and thus disturbing the learners. There is no general prohibition for learning and speaking. But prohibition was specifically directed towards "free rein of 'irresistible impulses' of some women (probably wives) asking question either of the speaker or their husbands, creating chaos in the assembly by interfering with communication" (Bruce). So as with the tongue-speakers and prophets, where self-control and mutual deferment is the emphasis, so in verses 34-35 an appeal is made to Corinthian wives to be silent and, in accord with verse 26, let everything be done with decorum and edification. (c) This silence is specifically referring to the wives, not women in general (v.35). The reason for the admonition to silence is caused by disorder in the worship service by the chattering of the wives.
- 52 ASV, ESV, RSV, NJV and NIV "with his head covered"; NRSV, NASB (who has) "with something on his head," but NIV mg. note, or ...with long hair....
- 53 Martin, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16," 233; Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils," 195-99; idem, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapid: Zondervan, 1981), 169-71; Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic," 483-87; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 154; Padgett, "Paul on Women in the Church," 70-71; See also Blattenberger III, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, " 30-38, he came to this conclusion from the detail study of linguistic concerns from 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.
- 54 See Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 85. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 506; Cynthia L. Thompson, "Hairstyles, Head Coverings, and St. Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth, *Biblical Archaeologist* 51 (1988):99-115, probably a shawl or veil.
- 55 R. E. Oster, "Use, Misuse and Neglect of Archaeological Evidence in some Modern Works on 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 7:1-5; 8:10; 11:2-16; 12:14-26)," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 83 (1992): 68; cf. esp. 67-69; D. W. J. Gill, "The Importance of Roman Portraiture of Head Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *Tyndale Bulletin* 41 (1990): 250-51.
- 56 Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic," 488; Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veil," 199; Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 185; He argues *מְהַלְאֵי אִמְרָתָא* to refer "to have the tied up on top of the head rather than hanging loose." Thus, advocating hairstyle.
- 57 See J. Delobel, "1 Cor 11:2-16: Towards a Coherent Interpretation," in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style, et conception du ministère*, ed. A. Vanhoye (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 374-76.
- 58 BGAD, 800; LSJ, 1369.
- 59 Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 522.
- 60 Blomberg, "Appendix: Neither Hierarchalist nor Egalitarian," 345.
- 61 See Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, 119-22.
- 62 Glory does not appear in the creation narrative but image and glory are closely associated in Jewish exegesis. Here the word "image" leads Paul to use the term "glory" and this becomes the key term in verses 7-9, and this counter balances the notion of "shame" in verses 4-6. So the glory that woman reflects here is in fact honor. Verses 8-9 makes it clear: This idea that woman reflects the glory of the man appears in Prov 11:16 (LXX) and also in 4 Ezra.
- 63 Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 252; Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 114-15.
- 64 Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 516.
- 65 See Blomberg, "Appendix: Neither Hierarchalist nor Egalitarian," 345
- 66 See on Paul's specific use Gen 1 and 2, Jervis, "But I Want you to Know..." 231-46.
- 67 Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 186.
- 68 Blomberg, "Appendix: Neither Hierarchalist nor Egalitarian," 345; Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 253.
- 69 Perriman, "The Head of a woman," 620.
- 70 Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 253; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 87; Delobel, "1 Cor 11:2-16," 385.

- 71 Werner Foerster, *TDNT* 2:537-38, says that Gk word ὀφείλει (*opheilei*) does not mean compulsion, but moral obligation, but the context may demand compulsion because of the order of creation; see Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, 188; Schreiner, “Head Coverings,” 134.
- 72 Some ancient translations, but no Greek manuscript, replace the Greek word for “authority” by “veil” (*kalumma*), see Ellingworth, *Paul’s First letter to the Corinthians*, 248. Even the word *sign/symbol* is not in the text.
- 73 Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 514.
- 74 Foerster, *TDNT*, 2:574; Fitzmyer, “A Feature of Qumran Angelology,” 191; also the different versions indicate that; see also BDAG, 353; LSJ, 599. However, there is no known evidence either that *exousia* (authority) is ever taken in the passive sense, Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 519.
- 75 Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), 115-20; Following Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 253-55; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 87-88.
- 76 Ellingworth, *Paul’s First letter to the Corinthians*, 248; See also Schreiner’s seven reasons against Hooker’s passive reading, Schreiner, “Head Coverings,” 135-136.
- 77 See Fitzmyer, “A Feature of Qumran Angelology,” 503-11, a study based on Qumran material.
- 78 Contra Shoemaker, “Unveiling of Equality,” 63, who translates πλῆν (*plēn*) as “the point of”.
- 79 Blomberg, “Neither Hierarchicalist nor egalitarian,” 346.
- 80 Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message of the New Testament in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 2003), 348.
- 81 See details on these Thieselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 843-48.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 843.
- 83 *Ibid.*, 846.
- 84 BDAG, 1070.
- 85 Schreiner, “Head Coverings, 137.
- 86 Ellingworth and Hatton, *Paul’s First Letter to Corinthians*, 251.

## The Church’s Response to Traditional Healers and their Work with Special Reference Zeliangrong Nagas

*Kairidinang Newmei\**

### 1.1 Introduction

The role played by traditional healers for the wellbeing of the people among the Zeliangrong Nagas is significant for many reasons. Since they serve not just as physicians to which the sick and needy can go and get help, they also play the role of prophets who foretell what lies ahead for the family and community or village as a whole. These, they had been doing since the beginning of the history of the people of Zeliangrong. However, with the coming of Christianity among the people there has been a decline in this art as Christian opposed the said art. This paper is an attempt to look into the traditional healers’ work in the three states of North East India where Zeliangrong people are residing, taking into account its history, culture, the challenge faced by missionaries-past and present, and a Biblical consideration.

### 1.2 A Brief Background of Zeliangrong Nagas

Zeliangrong is one of the many Nagas residing in three North East States of India viz. Manipur, Nagaland and Assam and is one of the biggest tribes among the Nagas<sup>1</sup> with approximately 4 lakhs except for the fact that they are scattered, primarily the work of the British. Namthiubuiyang wrote, “They lived in the

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\* Kairidinang Newmei is the Director of Admission in Logos College of Theology, Trivandrum, Kerala. Currently, he is a Ph.D. scholar at SHUATS, Allahabad, U.P.

contiguous areas between 93°E and 94°E longitude and 24°N and 25°N latitude respectively.”<sup>2</sup> Zeliangrong<sup>3</sup> is an acronym of the first syllable of Zeme, Liangmai and Rongmei (Ze+Liang+Rong)<sup>4</sup> which are names of dialects as well as a community.<sup>5</sup> Except in Nagaland, Zeliangrong is used to represent the four sub-tribes that comprised Zeliangrong. In Nagaland, these three prominent sub-tribes are treated as Zeliang (Zeme and Liangmai) while Rongmei is treated as different. It is the British who distinguishes these tribes as Kabui<sup>6</sup> for Rongmei and Inpui (or Puimei) and Kacha Naga<sup>7</sup> for Liangmai and Zeme. Zeliangrong speaks different languages, but the occurrence of many Liangmai words in all other oral folk tales or songs suggest that once Zeliangrong people speak Liangmai or something close to it before their departure perhaps because of its overpopulation from Makuilongdi.<sup>8</sup> Zeliangrong dialects belong to the Naga-Bodo sub-family within the Tibeto-Burman language family.<sup>9</sup> They are said to have migrated from Sinlung province of China<sup>10</sup> and they belong to Mongoloid stock having similar physical features with other Northeast Indians and Southeast Asians.

The religion of the Zeliangrong according to Gangmumei Kamei is a primordial religion.<sup>11</sup> This is because such basic tenets of primordial religion as belief in a spiritual world of power, the concept of a supreme god, dependence on dreams, visions, and myth, the use of rituals and a great dependence on medicine men (traditional healers) and priests are present in the religion of Zeliangrong.<sup>12</sup> Medicine men and priests play an important role in the society of the people. The religion of Zeliangrong has been known since 1994 in the local dialect as *Tingkao Ragwang Chapriak* (earlier called as *Paupai Rachap*, *Paupai Tacheng* or *Paupai Renet*<sup>13</sup>).<sup>14</sup> *Heraka* is a recently started religion of the people and is actually a reformed religion of *Paupai Renet* whose origin can be traced back to Haipou Jadonang and later continued by Rani Gaidinliu.

### 1.3 The Dawn of Christianity among the Zeliangrong Nagas

Christianity reached Zeliangrong areas first in Benreu, a Zeme village in Nagaland in 1897 when the first Baptist church was established in that location through Kohima Mission Centre, one of the six mission centers established by American Baptist Missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Nagaland and Manipur.<sup>15</sup> Heizeilung Meru of Benreu was reported to be the first convert among all the Zeliangrong living in Nagaland.<sup>16</sup> In Assam, it's the Presbyterian Mission that brought Christianity among the Zeme, where Dituing of Melangpeuram was the first convert in 1910. The Zeliangrong of Manipur were evangelized first by the Kangpokpi mission center. The first convert among the Zeliangrong of Manipur was Maipak of Cha Khuakkiu village,<sup>17</sup> while he along with his wife was living in Keishamthong. Maipak, also called Namrijinang was baptized by Rev. U.M. Fox at Imphal on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1914.<sup>18</sup> Maipak evangelized Jinlakpou of Kaikao, who became the second Zeliangrong convert (first among the Rongmei) in 1918. Maisibou Newmai (written as Maisi in some documents) was the first convert from Liangmai in 1923.<sup>19</sup> Through these converts, many villagers were converted through indigenization one after another.<sup>20</sup> The role played by the Kukis in the expansion and spread of the gospel among the Zeliangrong villages was significant.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly it is the Baptist who brought Christianity first among Zeliangrong and they no doubt constitute the majority of Christian people today. Apart from Baptist, there are Roman Catholics, Charismatics (This includes Pentecostal, Assemblies of God, Revival Church), Presbyterian, Lutheran, Adventist, and others. Some of these groups are very few in number. It may be noted that Liangmai in Manipur had celebrated Passover celebration on 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2003 to commemorate complete redemption of the Liangmai.<sup>22</sup> The other tribes that comprise Zeliangrong are yet to see total redemption as a community.

## 1.4 The Church's Response to Traditional Healers and their Works

WHO defines traditional medicine as, "the sum total of all knowledge and practices, whether explicable or not, used in diagnosing, preventing or eliminating a physical, mental or social disequilibrium and which rely exclusively on past experience and observation handed down from generation to generation, verbally or in writing."<sup>23</sup> In the Zeliangrong context, traditional healers are local physicians who treat persons suffering from various sicknesses by the use of roots, leaves, fruits and even parts of animals. Some prefer to call them "medicine men" or "folk healers" in contrast to physicians who practice medicine with official accreditation. Typically, a traditional healer is one who has acquired from his/her father or a *Guru* the methods of treating diseases common to their region or of a particular specialization.<sup>24</sup> The following section will attempt to study traditional healers and their works among the Zeliangrong community base on its history, culture, the experience of the missionaries, and the response of the church and finally what does the Bible say about these healers.

### 1.4.1 History

The origin of traditional healers among the Zeliangrong is probably as old as its history. No doubt the survival of the people demanded that ailments needed to be combated. This combat often was done with the use of herbs, rituals to appease gods, as well as spells by incantations. When the Zeliangrong people were residing in Makuilongdi, the final settlement of the Zeliangrongs, before the dispersal to the present settlements, the village was said to have four head priests for sacrificial and ritual duties. They were called *Pu Muh* (Mendicant priest), *Dansan Muh* (Soothsayer), *Maguangpu* (Chief priest) and *Charakhendipu* (Diagnostic priest).<sup>25</sup> It may be noted here that the *Charakhendipu* served as a sort of physician. Their works were akin to the works of the magicians (*Jadowala*) who were able to heal, treat diseases, remove magic (*jado*) spells

and foretell the future. Traditional healers were believed to be able to drive away malevolent or malicious spirits and deities, determine the cause of a disease, and administer remedies based on their knowledge in verse.<sup>26</sup> The designation given to them suggests that they played not just healers but also of priests, prophets or diviners. However, like many shamans, though they would not dress up with some terrifying or fantastic fashion, it is their business to find out by divination who or what caused the illness. They could accuse anyone whom they happened to dislike and bring on some sickness which would certainly lead to their death.<sup>27</sup> This points to the fact that many of their practices were done through black magic and demonic spirits. Such practiced was widespread prior to the coming of Christianity among the Zeliangrong.

Traditional healers among the Zeliangrong were called by various names. The Liangmai called them *Phaimu*, *Phaimiu* or *Kamu*; for the Rongmei it is *Maipa*; Zeme called them *Rekame* and the Inpui as *Kathiam*.<sup>28</sup> Today among the Zeliangrong, these healers are often known as *Koubiraj* which was wrongly pronounced as time passed from *Kabiraj* or *Kobiraj*<sup>29</sup> a title given to physicians in Sanskrit (*Vaidya*) who treated kings and the royal family by the use of Ayurveda in ancient India. Many traditional healers learned the art through apprenticeship, though there is also evidence that some learned through the family line. Some of the healers claimed to get revelation as to how a sick person ought to be treated while the majority evolved their practice through trial and error methods and accident. Some seemed to be gifted too.<sup>30</sup>

Healers can be best divided into three categories: first, those who are helped by the spirits; second, those who are gifted by God; and third, those who cultivate and later practice it as a hobby. True healers' concern is the wellbeing of the individual as well as the society. But there are those who use black magic whose concern is not on the welfare of the society nor individual. These bogus healers often cast spells or pronounced certain magic so as to

destroy the wellbeing of certain individual or family,<sup>31</sup> many times on behalf of some others. Thus, their work can be classified as witchcraft or black magic. Many healers often advised the patient to use amulets.<sup>32</sup> Amulets are often worn with the help of a small rope on the hands, legs, waist, arms, and neck or even carried in pockets. This amulet is called *Rasatien* (Liangmai dialect) and can be either a small part of a tree called *Ntakabo*, *Ga khuang* (a kind of ginger), *Chapuanhin ta* (bangle made from a piece of elephant teeth), *Tasenhin* (Python's teeth), *Ga jin*, *Kara ga*.<sup>33</sup> These amulets are said to have power over the *Mairiangsamai*.<sup>34</sup> Marenmai explained that bangle made from Elephant teeth is usually worn only by the rich people and python's teeth are said to have been used when someone had been led astray by evil spirits in the forest. Carrying the python's teeth, if the name of the person who had been led by evil spirits is called out, they would response from where they are in the forest. And thus, they could be rescued.

#### 1.4.2 Culture

The role of traditional healers has cultural significance. They were the chief consultants for all activities in the village whether it is of a community or individuals. Zeliangrong people had been influenced by traditional healers so much that if one cannot ascertain the possible reason for one's sickness, the best help are the traditional healers. They would at times resort to swallowing a button which is done by pleading God, either to take the life or heal sickness. These traditional healers impact cannot be accurately ascertained as they have impacted the very thought and lifestyle of the people. For example, Kaiwiyang<sup>35</sup> testifies to the fact that while he was in the hospital, a certain drunkard was brought because of severe stomach pain, but when the nurse tried to give pain killer, his family member would not let the nurse give the injection. In spite of the near to death painful agony, the drunkard is facing, the family members and friends took him away to consult traditional healers.

Traditional healers would recite a story<sup>36</sup> before treatment of any sickness. The reason for this is because there is a continued widespread belief that sickness is due to *Mairiangsamai* (a kind of evil spirit).<sup>37</sup> They also believed that sickness is also due to sorcery-related activities, consequences of breaking natural laws of breaching of Genna prohibition, or the malevolence of the deceased relatives' souls.<sup>38</sup> This belief perhaps also leads to people becoming superstitious of any ailments. When sickness is by sorcery-related works, a witch doctor is consulted who will do the treatment by the used of folk medicine without the use of blood or ritual. For minor sicknesses, even without consulting diviners or traditional healers, elders would often diagnose sickness by reading omens especially the cotton bowwomen and ginger omen.<sup>39</sup> Such practices, however, though not very widespread among the Zeliangrong exist especially in remote places. Wiriangsuiliu believes there is no harm if people could get a cure or healing through these practices of omens.<sup>40</sup> She went on to say that today, sacrifices of hen/cock or rituals are not being done by the *Phaimu*, but in their place, the pastor/elder would come and pray. For example, when a field is wet (presence of water in certain place of the field), such field is called *Kalothubo* (literally means 'hot field'). This purely indicates the influences of traditional practices or culture of the people even today.

Genna can mean anything forbidden or holiday in the Zeliangrong context,<sup>41</sup> though in majority case it has the former meaning. There are so many gennas.<sup>42</sup> These gennas certainly continued to have certain influences on the social life of the people because any unfortunate things taking place in the life of the individual or family or village is seen as because of the breaking of the gennas. Unfortunately, this impact had resulted in the Zeliangrong Christians having too much inclination to prophets or prophesy. The result is, many Christians continued to believe that the traditional healers are capable of telling why someone is sick and how they should be treated. Sorcery is prohibited among

the Zeliangrong though there are people who practice it mainly out of jealousy, enmity, envy, hatred, and others. These are done usually through concocted food and drinks and many others.<sup>43</sup> Any sickness caused by sorcery can be treated successfully by more expert witch doctors which are done especially by the use of herbal medicines and by counter-magic spells.

### **1.4.3 The Challenges Faced by Missionaries**

Missionaries have faced an uphill task in confronting the traditional life and beliefs system. It may be noted that the first missionary to Manipur, William Pettigrew from Edinburg, Scotland arrived at Imphal on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1894, but could only start his mission toward the Zeliangrong of Manipur in 1914. This 20 long year's wait was not without reason. The people were suspicious of missionaries visiting and sharing the gospel with them. In fact, Zeliangrong people by nature are superstitious and also believed in many superstitious beliefs too. This superstitious nature led to the people assuming that white people were carriers of disease alien to them and feared an epidemic which easily brings disaster to the villagers' altogether. Because of this, missionaries could not easily gain access to communicate the good news to them. Missionaries were also thought of as intruders, disturbing the peace and harmony of the people. The natives seldom welcome any guests or visitors; even people from another village need permission to pass or stay a night in the village.<sup>44</sup> Zeliangrong people also started to think and see that these missionaries who are being sent with the permission of the government in power (British) were trying to annex their lands and their rights.<sup>45</sup> Their fear was legitimate at that time as India was under the colonial rule of British. Suspecting foreigners as carriers of sickness or epidemics was people's ignorance. However, the fear of foreigners, that they would destroy the tradition, culture, and worldviews of the native people, turned out true. Because for the missionaries anything that was non-Christian was condemned right away as evil and satanic. Hence, missionaries can be partly blamed for

the native opposition in the early stage, as the way they treated the native religious beliefs was not right.<sup>46</sup> They also condemned almost everything about the native people's practices or habits. They condemn traditional dress, music, festivals, customs, and many others. Traditional healing processes were rejected in their totality. The missionaries overlooked the fact that healing with plants served the people and occupied an important place in their history of health care. Traditional healing was condemned as being based on superstition. Missionaries thought the very presence of traditional healers was a sign of paganism and of evil forces. This was partly true as some traditional healers as pointed earlier practiced a kind of sorcery and black magic to harm others.

Because of these aforesaid reasons, the native people were reluctant to accept the message of the missionaries in the first place. Moreover, for the native, it was wrong to change one's belief system from one's ancestor beliefs and practices. Pamei wrote, "A person who accepts a new set of beliefs was looked down as unstable and inferior of birth."<sup>47</sup> Hence to accept the gospel was to do it at their own risk. However, it was the introduction such social works as education and improvement of medical facilities that drew the natives to the missionaries. Namthiubuiyang quoted Namthiurei as saying that people refused to accept even the medicine missionaries brought to lure and befriend them. Instead, they were delighted and curious of the gramophone they used.<sup>48</sup> The provision of gun and ammunition by the missionaries through the government further open up the native's outlook to the missionaries as these things stunted them and help them in various ways. These led to mass scale missionaries penetrating different corners of the Zeliangrong areas in the 1920s and 1930s which resulted in many conversions.

### **1.4.4 The Response of the Church to Traditional Healers**

There is no record of any Zeliangrong churches taking initiative in dealing with traditional healers no matter how old the church had grown to be. This perhaps is because of diverse possible reasons.

According to Chamjinang Marenmai,<sup>49</sup> one of the elders in Tharon Village under Tamenglong District, apart from two-three friends discussion about the traditional healers, there have been no teaching or general discussion in the church as a whole.<sup>50</sup> This is significant because many Zeliangrong churches are 50 years old already. According to him, therefore, there is a great urgent task for all the churches as well as public leaders to take stock of the present scenario. Unless they take concrete steps to teach the people the pros and cons of these traditional healers, there is great danger of the public being sold to the hand of the healers. Public education and orientation on the same is the urgent need of the hour. This education can be carried out through seminars, conferences or community grievance forum.

We live in a time of increasing religious disillusionment, much of this is because of the church's retreat from what she was called to perform. Had the church been faithful in teaching to the new members of the church this disillusionment would not be as great as it is today. There is great danger of healing becoming an end in itself. Since many Zeliangrong are pragmatic in nature: whatever works must be believed and accepted, they are accepted just as they are. Moreover, traditional healers in at least one occasion in their practice had healed someone in the past and this becomes a flame that continued to burn. For some, these healers' medicine made people recover faster than anything else.<sup>51</sup> This is possible because a sickness when it is minor or non-existent (not real sickness), traditional healers can be more effective than the medical physicians.<sup>52</sup> In short, the response of the church to traditional healers had been none. As a matter of fact, these traditional healers were very much part and parcel of the life of the people in the wellbeing of the society. They helped the people in times of need and hence the majority of them are looked upon as good (though there are healers as mentioned earlier, whose intention are monetary gain and destruction of others). Much work needs to be done on the given subject.

### 1.4.5 Biblical Consideration of Traditional Healers

The origin of the disease is linked with the history of the creation account. Disease and sickness entered the world as a result of first human beings committing sin. And as such disease can be seen as God's punishment upon them. We also find that disease can be the work of the adversary (Job 2:7), or to what was called as spirits of dumbness or uncleanness (Mark 9:17, 25). Jealousy and self-indulgence (Job 5:2 & Ecclesiasticus 37:30-31) were also seen as causes of disease.<sup>53</sup>

Most sicknesses were probably treated at home as several stories in the Bible would illustrate. There is no evidence of an organized medical system in the Bible days. Physicians do exist but Jews believed the only true healer was God. No doubt herbs mentioned in the Bible have medicinal<sup>54</sup> value. The priests in the OT acted as health officer for diagnosis and treatment of sickness like leprosy. Leviticus gives us details about it. However, there is no mentioned of priests giving any treatment or medicine or exorcism.<sup>55</sup> Physicians and priests among the Jewish people for sure were a separate group. The Apocryphal book, Ecclesiasticus (3:1-15) mentions about physicians having a high prestige in the society. However, it is also evident that physicians in the NT times seem to be incompetent. Interestingly the Talmud advised that if any patient cannot get well, they are to wear an amulet or resort to magical formulae.<sup>56</sup> Though not commanded in the scripture, there are not valid reasons why we cannot believe that amulets were used by Old Testament saints.<sup>57</sup> This then, over the years, like heathen nations probably was the age-old practice of the people of the Jews. And we have no reason why some Jews cannot be practicing certain sort of witchcraft as their neighboring countrymen practices the same in those days.<sup>58</sup>

The Old Testament does not condemn the herbal usage while condemning the incorporation of it in occult practice. Many Old Testament texts clearly teach against the use of witchcraft, sorcery, medium, spiritist, magician or black magic (cf. Exodus

22:18; Leviticus 19:26, 20:26-27, 31; Deuteronomy 18:10-12, 14; 2 Chronicles 33:6; Isaiah 8:19, 47:12-14; Micah 3:7, 5:11-12). God was seen as the great physician of his people (Exodus 15:26) and it was their duty to look to him for relief. This reliance on God indicates the trust that the people had in the use of medicinal plants that God had created for their use.

The use of mandrakes<sup>59</sup> by Rachel and Leah as mentioned in Genesis 30:14-16 clearly indicate that the Jews were aware of the mandrakes usage early on for treating barren women. Many Bible commentators wrote not only mandrake was believed to stimulate love making because of its odour, it also was thought of as medicinal for fruitfulness.<sup>60</sup> Mandrake is known to excite sexual desire, encourage sexual activity and help in achieving sexual orgasm. Hence, it is possible that it can act by stimulating ovulation. Nevertheless, as one reads on, the Bible clearly records in Genesis 30:22 that it is not the mandrake that made Rachel bore sons but that God listened to her prayer. This then tells us there were superstitious beliefs and practices prevalent, which does affect the Jews of the day.

Ezekiel 47:12 tells us we can obtain medicine from the leaves, suggesting during Biblical times people were aware and used herbs for medicinal purpose. When Job was afflicted by boils he seemed to be aware of the principle that the draining sores<sup>61</sup> needed to dry out so he sat in ashes (Job 2:7-8). The balm mentioned by Jeremiah could be of the nature of frankincense or some aromatic juice from the shrub, containing benzoin used as medicine (Jeremiah 8:22, 46:11, 51:8).<sup>62</sup> The used of figs to heal Hezekiah's boil by Isaiah (2 Kings 20:7) could not be ascertained but nevertheless significant. However, figs are known to have medicinal value since ancient days. Modern science has also verified this truth.<sup>63</sup> So it is clear OT does not in any way condemn the use of herbal medicine, it is the occult practices the Bible is against.

If the OT describes the symptoms of diseases, NT no longer describes it. We find patients themselves or through others went to the physicians, Jesus, and apostles for healing. We are told Luke was a physician but sadly we do not see his medical practices being recorded. However, we know that as a physician in the first century, the only 'medicine' available to Luke would have been herbal medicines. The Good Samaritan treated the wounds of the injured man with wine and oil (Luke 10:34). Wine is an antiseptic and will tend to coagulate blood, thereby assisting healing. Oil soothes and forms a coating. The medicinal use of wine is mentioned in Scripture several times (including 1 Timothy 5:23).

A clear case of traditional medicine during the NT period is the admonishing the Church at Laodicea was given to use their locally-produced eye salve because of their lack of spiritual vision (Revelation 3:18). So, as long as there is no incorporation of the use of herbs with occult practices, the scripture is absolutely fine. The healing performed by Jesus and his disciples is not the same as exorcist perform. In this light, it is safe to say that the Zeliangrong healers are not condemned by the Bible unless it involves any black magic or occult practices.

## 1.5 Conclusion

In light of traditional healers' contribution toward the wellbeing of the community, it is important that the Church demonstrates the creative role of God by showing that the medicinal plants have natural strengthening and curative properties. God, the Creator had placed in the plants the curative elements which are necessary for human beings. Therefore, the traditional Christian healers should continue with their treatment of patients within the Zeliangrong context because their actions and service are linked to the wellbeing of humanity. And the church needs to take the issue of medicinal plants seriously for the wellbeing of the society as a whole. It reminds its ministers not to ignore the traditional healers especially the Christian healers, so that they may use their abilities to obey God and follow the example of

Jesus Christ who healed without pride. Despite the advancement of modern medicine, traditional healing and healers should not be totally ignored, however, keeping in mind the presence of genuine and bogus healers. Modern medicine and this traditional medicine does not contradict in its foundation. This clearly, then, implies that collaboration should continue to exist keeping in mind its limitation in the healing process. Because in reality, there are some diseases that best work with traditional healers while others by medical doctors.

## End Notes

- 1 Ksh Rajesh Singh, "Coming Of Christianity in the Naga Area of North East India," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 20, no. 4 (April 2015): 13–17. The origin and meaning of 'Naga' is disputed. There are over 65 different tribes under Nagas living in India as well as Myanmar. Zeliangrong are second largest Naga tribes after Aos.
- 2 Namthiubuiyang Pamei, *Tingben Patbou Racham: A Narrative on the Advent of Christianity Among the Zeliangrong* (Tamenglong: Gironta Charitable Foundation, 2016). 17.
- 3 All Zeliangrong Student's Union, Zeliangrong was coined on 15<sup>th</sup>, February 1947 at Imphal in a historic conference of Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei and Puimei of Manipur and Naga Hills of Assam.
- 4 According to oral accounts the name Liangmai, Rongmei and Zeme had its first occurrence while they were in Makuilongdi. There are different versions as to its origin. Pamei, *The Trail from Makuilongdi: The Continuing Saga of the Zeliangrong People*, P.33-34. Puimei though not in the acronym, are also included in the term Zeliangrong.
- 5 Elungkiebe Zeliang, *Charismatic Movements in the Baptist Churches in North East India: A Zeliangrong Perspective* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2014), P.2. Inpui (Puimei) was excluded in the nomenclature though were part of Zeliangrong for many decades which led to the Inpui departure from Zeliangrong in 1997. Recently the other three tribes also had amicably decided to be known not as Zeliangrong but as three different tribes.
- 6 Namthiubuiyang Pamei, *The Trail from Makuilongdi: The Continuing Saga of the Zeliangrong People* (Tamenglong: Gironta Charitable Foundation, 2001), P. 56. Refer Zeliang, *Charismatic Movements in the Baptist Churches on North East India: A Zeliangrong Perspective*, P.3. for further explanation. *A brief account of the Zeliangrong Nagas* published by All Zeliangrong Student's Union, Assam, Manipur and Nagaland which was published in 2009 pointed out that the word *Kabui* referring to Rongmei had been in existence since 1<sup>st</sup> century Christian era much before the British usage of them, P.4.
- 7 Kacha probably come from Angami dialect for thick forest, referring to the place where Liangmai and Zeme live in ancient times. It is also possible that kacha which means raw can have certain bearing on the name too. "KACHA NAGA," accessed March 6, 2018, [http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Ethnic\\_Races\\_Manipur.Ethnic\\_Races\\_Sanathong.KACHA-NAGA](http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Ethnic_Races_Manipur.Ethnic_Races_Sanathong.KACHA-NAGA).
- 8 Zeliang, *Charismatic Movements in the Baptist Churches on North East India: A Zeliangrong Perspective*, P.2. Makuilongdi is the final resting place of the Zeliangrong before the departure to different regions as Rongmei, Liangmai and Zeme where they are today. Pamei in his book, *The trail from Makuilongdi*, exclusively deal one chapter about the exodus of the Zeliangrong from China along with different versions of the same. It may be noted that disunity might be also a possible reason for dispersal. Refer Sujata Miri, *Stories and Legends of the Liangmai Nagas* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 2014). P. 2.
- 9 All Zeliangrong Students' Union, *A Brief Account of Zeliangrong Nagas* (Dimapur: All Zeliangrong Student's Union, 2009), P.6. Recently there have been attempt to work towards a common language for Zeliangrong people called as *Luangdilal*.
- 10 Pamei, *The Trail from Makuilongdi: The Continuing Saga of the Zeliangrong People*, P.21.
- 11 Jenpui Kamei, *Gaan Ngai: A Festival of the Zeliangrong Nagas of North East India* (Dimapur: North Eastern Zone Cultural Centre, 2012), P. 49.
- 12 Pamei, *The Trail from Makuilongdi: The Continuing Saga of the Zeliangrong People*, P.47-48
- 13 Zeliang, *Charismatic Movements in the Baptist Churches in North East India: A Zeliangrong Perspective*, P.27-29.
- 14 Kamei, *Gaan Ngai*, P.54.
- 15 Ibid., P. 36-39. The other three mission centres are Impur, Wokha, Aizuto, Ukhrul and Kangpokpi.
- 16 Zeliang, *Charismatic Movements in the Baptist Churches in North East India: A Zeliangrong Perspective*, P. 40.
- 17 Heizieluing Meru of Benreu village was the first Zeliangrong convert with his conversion in 1897 from among the entire Zeliangrong Nagas living

- in three North East state of India. Zeliang, *Charismatic Movements in the Baptist Churches in North East India: A Zeliangrong Perspective*, P.40.
- 18 Elungkiebe Zeliang, *A History of the Manipur Baptist Convention* (Imphal: Manipur Baptist Convention, 2005), P. 31. Kamei in her book *Gaan Ngai* put the date wrongly as 5<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1915. Pamei also concurred the date of Maipak's baptism with Kamei (Pamei, *Tengben Patbou Racham: A Narrative on the Advent of Christianity Among the Zeliangong*, P. 110.) Kabui Naga Baptist Association in their report at MBC Golden Jubilee celebration verified the date of Maipak's baptism as 6<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1914. Refer Zeliang, *A History of the Manipur Baptist Convention*, P.160.
- 19 Zeliang. *A History of the Manipur Baptist Convention*, P.187, 169, 204. M. Maisuangdibou records the date of Maisi's conversion as 16<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1923, in his book, *Liangmai and Christianity: Faith is search of understanding and transformation in indigenous/tribal context* (Tamei: Witinglung publication 2015), P.43. According to an interview in e-pao, ChaKhauk kiu village was a Liangmai village. "The First Christian Convert among the Zeliangrong and Inpui By K Daimai," accessed March 17, 2018, [http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Manipur\\_and\\_Religion.The\\_first\\_Christian\\_Convert\\_among\\_the\\_Zeliangrong\\_and\\_Inpui\\_By\\_K\\_Daimai](http://www.e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Manipur_and_Religion.The_first_Christian_Convert_among_the_Zeliangrong_and_Inpui_By_K_Daimai).
- 20 Namthiubuiyang Pamei, *Tingben Patbou Racham: A Narrative on the Advent of Christianity Among the Zeliangrong* (Tamenglong: Gironta Charitable Foundation, 2016), P.51-54.
- 21 Ibid., P. 54-59.
- 22 Maisuangdibou, *Liangmai and Christianity: Faith in Search of Understanding and Transformation in Indigenous/Tribal Context*, P.55.
- 23 World Health Organization, "The Promotion and Development of Traditional Medicine," World Health Organization Technical Report Series 622 (Geneva, 1978), P.8.
- 24 "Healing Tree Network – Our Brand New Initiative," *Mythri speaks* (blog), July 27, 2016, <https://mythrispeaks.wordpress.com/2016/07/27/healing-tree-network-our-brand-new-initiative/>.
- 25 Pamei, *Tingben Patbou Racham: A Narrative on the Advent of Christianity Among the Zeliangrong*. P.16.
- 26 "Reproductive Health Beliefs and Their Consequences: A Case Study on Rural Indigenous Women in Bangladesh. - Free Online Library," accessed February 21, 2018, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Reproductive+health+beliefs+and+their+consequences%3A+a+case+study+on+...-a0383981215>.
- 27 Mathiudinbou Abonmai, Telephonic Interview, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018.
- 28 These varied title given to them have different meaning too. They include prophet, medicine man, one who know how to predict how to be treated by touching, one who know how to massage etc.
- 29 Sashikaba Kechutzar, "Naga Traditional Religion Versus Naga Christianity," *Journal of Tribal Studies* XXI, no. 1 & 2 (December 2016): 153. The term *Kobirajis* is a term borrowed from Assamese for person who can set right the dislocation of joints and sprains, and they can even prepared medicine from herbs.
- 30 Wilanlung Moita, interview by author, telephonic interview, 20<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2018. Wilanlung was one such practitioner practicing it as a hobby. He learnt the art from reading and observing his grandfather. He also noted that he was gifted as he never forget whatever his grandfather told him or whatever he had seen related to this traditional way of treating the sick people.
- 31 Mathiudin Abonmai, interview by author, telephonic interview, 26<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2018. Mathiudin said his grandfather, who is a traditional healers prior to embracing Christianity, used to narrate how *Doisimai* (those who know magic) would cast spell on their enemies and hence used to have so much problems everywhere.
- 32 "An amulet is any object which by its contact or its close proximity to the person who owns it, or to any possession of his, exerts power for his good, either by keeping evil from him and his property, or by endowing him with positive advantages." Campbell Bonner, "Magical Amulets," *Harvard Theological Review*, n.d., 26.
- 33 Marenmai, interview with the author, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2018. The author is not aware of some of these native names used by healers in English.
- 34 Ashele Matigunta, interview by author, telephonic interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, 2018.
- 35 Kaiwiyang Marenmai, interview by author, telephonic interview, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.
- 36 Pame, *Culture and the Church: History of Zeme Naga Church NC Hills, Assam*. 84.
- 37 Wilanlung Moita, interview by author, telephonic interview, 20<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2018. Moita said *Mairiangsamai* really exist. This is alluded by all the persons interviewed by the author.
- 38 Pame, *Culture and the Church: History of Zeme Naga Church NC Hills, Assam*. 92.
- 39 Ibid., 90-93. Ginger omen is done by cutting ginger into two halves and throwing them into the green banana leaf spread on the ground while saying, "if this sickness if caused by such and such spirit may the cut surfaces of

- this ginger face me. If not, may they face the ground.” This is done three times before pronouncing the sickness and how to treat the sick person would be determined.
- 40 Wiriangsuiiu Moita, interview by author, telephonic interview, 17<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2018.
- 41 Pame, *Culture and the Church: History of Zeme Naga Church NC Hills, Assam*. P. 94. Genna can mean holiday as well as anything forbidden.
- 42 Ibid., P.93-100. Rabi mentioned eight different gennas among the Zeme peoples. The same gennas are there with the other tribes that constitute Zeliangrong.
- 43 The writer in 1998 had severe head pain on his way from Tamenglong to Imphal where the doctors were not able to diagnose it. The writer was told by a prophet that it was because of a sorcery work from a close relative in the village. It was suspected that a magic spell was cast through a piece of the writer’s dress.
- 44 Maisuangdibou, *Liangmai and Christianity: Faith in Search of Understanding and Transformation in Indigenous/Tribal Context*. The Liangmai believed the stranger could bring bad luck to the people, could bring disease and even consider strangers as killers or evil persons.
- 45 Maisuangdibou, *Liangmai and Christianity: Faith in Search of Understanding and Transformation in Indigenous/Tribal Context*, P.42.
- 46 Missionaries treated the native religions as animistic but as the real nature of Zeliangrong religions was not animistic for they in general worship Supreme Being and never worship spirits. Spirits are appeased so that the people would not get harm or sick.
- 47 Pamei, *Tingben Patbou Racham: A Narrative on the Advent of Christianity Among the Zeliangrong*, P. 143.
- 48 Pamei, *Tingben Patbou Racham: A Narrative on the Advent of Christianity Among the Zeliangrong*.
- 49 Chamjinang Marenmai, interview by author, telephonic interview, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.
- 50 Mathiudin also said the same when asked whether the church he is pastoring is taking up any program as to educate the congregation about the traditional healers. He is pastoring a Liangmai church in Imphal, the capital of Manipur. Mathiudin Abonmai, interview by author, telephonic interview, 26<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2018.
- 51 Kaiwiyang Moita, interview by the author, telephonic interview, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.
- 52 Eve, *The Healer from Nazareth: Jesus’ Miracles in Historical Context*, P.56.

- 53 M.M. Mulemfo, “Traditional and Christian Concepts of Disease and Healing among the Manianga,” *HTS* 51, no. 2 (1995): 351.
- 54 “The Top 14 Herbs of the Bible #BibleHerbs - DrAxe.Com,” Dr. Axe, July 16, 2012, accessed March 12, 2018, <https://draxe.com/the-top-14-herbs-of-the-bible/>.
- 55 John Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing: A Medical and Theological Commentary* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), P.57.
- 56 A. Rendle Short, *The Bible and Modern Medicine: A Survey of Health and Healing in the Old and New Testament* (London: The Paternoster Press, 1953). P. 30-31.
- 57 Edwin M. Yamauchi, “Magic in Biblical World,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 34 (1983): 169–200.
- 58 “Ancient Egypt: Medicine,” accessed March 20, 2018, <http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/timelines/topics/medicine.htm>.
- 59 Edwin M. Yamauchi, “Magic in Biblical World,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 34 (1983): 180. Mandrake grows plenty in Palestine and Syria and are popularly known as ‘love apple.’ Garlic, onions, myrrh, mallows and love potion are also thought to serve as aphrodisiacs by Egyptians, Grecian and Romans (See P. 180,181)
- 60 “Genesis 30:14 Commentaries: Now in the Days of Wheat Harvest Reuben Went and Found Mandrakes in the Field, and Brought Them to His Mother Leah. Then Rachel Said to Leah, ‘Please Give Me Some of Your Son’s Mandrakes.’” accessed March 21, 2018, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/30-14.htm>. Important commentary that espoused mandrakes as cure for fertility include: Ellicott’s Commentary, Barne’s Note on the Bible, Matthew Poole’s Commentary, Gill’s Exposition of the entire Bible, Pulpit Commentary and Bible.Org. See also “Fertility and Mandrakes,” *God as a Gardener* (blog), April 24, 2011, <https://godasagardener.com/2011/04/24/jacob-the-mandrakes/>.
- 61 Liubov Ben-Nun, *Medical Research in the Bible from the Viewpoint of Contemporary Perspective* (Negev: B.N Publications House Israel, 2015), P.180. Nun thinks the boils Job and king Hezekiah were affected was Anthrax.
- 62 Short, *The Bible and Modern Medicine: A Survey of Health and Healing in the Old and New Testament*. P. 71-72.
- 63 Ben-Nun, *Medical Research in the Bible from the Viewpoint of Contemporary Perspective*, P.181.

## **Jonathan Edwards' Influence on the Formation of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society**

*Matthew Marvin Reynolds\**

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### **Introduction**

On October 2, 1792, twelve ministers from one of the smallest English denominations stood poised to embark on a task no English church had previously undertaken.<sup>1</sup> They were about to send one of their own to be a missionary in India. Though England was a place where the gospel light had abundantly shown, Bengal, the British seat of power in India, lay in almost total darkness. So somber was the mood at that meeting, Andrew Fuller later recorded that, their undertaking appeared to him, “on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men, who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine, which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us; and, while we were thus deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, ‘Well, I will go down if *you* will hold the rope.’”<sup>2</sup> And so it was, that in that inconspicuous meeting of Northamptonshire divines, a pact was made that would endure for the rest of their lives and sustain Carey and his colleagues through the many “dangers and toils” they would face in the Serampore Mission in India.

As with any historic event, this momentous beginning was the culmination of numerous previous events, in this case, stretching back almost half a century. And in the case of the founding of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society, many of these formative

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\* Matthew Marvin Reynolds is a Ph.D. research scholar at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, USA. Currently, he and his family reside in Myanmar and are serving the Lord.

events were treatises, well-reasoned works of the pen, published by ministers within and without their own denomination, that served to pave the way and remove obstacles in the path to the mission field. Oddly enough the first of these treatises were penned by a pastor in the American colonies—one Jonathan Edwards. Though removed from England by thousands of miles, his writing exerted a tremendous influence over the Northamptonshire Association divines in the works they wrote, works which, along with the works of Jonathan Edwards, paved the way for the formation of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society. The purpose of this paper is to examine this influence as it is seen directly in Edwards' writing and indirectly in the writing of certain Northamptonshire divines. This will be done by considering the context, salient points, and historical significance of each work as it relates to the foundation of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society.

### **An Humble Attempt Context**

Chronologically, Jonathan Edwards' *An Humble Attempt* was the first treatise that would prove influential in the establishment of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society (PBMS). It was written in the context of a great spiritual awakening that was sweeping both the American colonies and Britain. Prior to this awakening in the early 1740s had been a more localized awakening at Edwards' own independent church at Northampton in 1734-1735. At its height, the awakening manifests itself in wild, ecstatic experiences that some revival critics found the suspect. While Edwards was aware that ecstatic responses to God's Word could be spurious, he did not feel that it was necessarily so. The Bible itself contained examples of people who were carried quite beside themselves when the Holy Spirit fell upon them. In addition, he felt it was perfectly fitting that strong affections be present and manifest when the subject of worship and adoration was a Being infinitely holy and perfect. So, in order to set forth a public record detailing what he felt was a true work of God in their midst, he published *A Faithful Narrative* in 1737. This treatise was

published first in Boston, and then London, eventually inspiring revivals in England and Scotland.<sup>3</sup> The ministers of Scotland were especially enthralled by the work of God in Northampton. They both expressed their support of the movement and yearned to see a similar movement in their own country.

Following the publication and distribution of this treatise in Scotland, Edwards began corresponding with various Scottish ministers, especially John Erskine. Yearning for a similar awakening, in 1744, John Erskine began to organize a concert of prayer in Scotland.<sup>4</sup> Although, scores of prayer societies had already been functioning in Scotland since 1740, a group of Scottish ministers proposed a two-year "experiment" in which they would gather on Saturday evening, Sunday morning, and on the first Tuesday of each quarter. Two years later the prayer effort had been so successful they decided both to extend the effort and broadcast it internationally through a document called the *Memorial*. Five hundred copies were sent to Boston and one fell into Edwards' hands.<sup>5</sup> Edwards sensed the revival movement was waning and wanted to spur it on by giving the prayer movement an adequate theological undergirding which he undertook with his *Humble Attempt*.<sup>6</sup> Though it was not so well received in his own country, it was in Scotland, laying the groundwork for the second Great Awakening in the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

### **Salient Points**

The full title of Edwards' work is: *An Humble Attempt To Promote Explicit Agreement And Visible Union of God's People, In Extraordinary Prayer, For The Revival Of Religion And The Advancement Of Christ's Kingdom On Earth, Pursuant To Scripture Promises And Prophecies Concerning The Last Time*. It is divided into three parts. Part I, entitled, "The Text Opened, And An Account Given Of The Affair Proposed In The Memorial From Scotland," is introductory in nature, containing remarks on Edwards' key text for his treatise, a brief history of the prayer movement in Scotland, as well as a reprint of the actual *Memorial*

itself, which had inspired his work. The text that Edwards chose as a foundation for his theological support of the *Memorial's* call to prayer was Zechariah 8:20-22. Edwards understood the prophecy therein to have been fulfilled in part by Jesus' first coming, but saw its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus' second coming which would be heralded by, "... the future glorious enlargement of the church of God in the *latter ages* of the world..." as foretold by the Old Testament prophets.<sup>8</sup> This "glorious enlargement of the church of God in the *latter ages*" was commonly known as a "latter-day glory" that, in keeping with the prevailing postmillennial views of the time, would precede, Christ's second coming.<sup>9</sup> Truly a text anticipating such a hope was a worthy support for an international prayer for the coming of Christ's kingdom as called for in the Scottish *Memorial*.

In Part II, Edwards offers some items for the reader's consideration, "which may tend to induce the people of God," to comply with the prayer concert proposed in *Memorial*.<sup>10</sup> For the sake of brevity, we will here consider four such inducements which are most closely related to the founding of the PBMS. First, Edwards firmly believed that he was living near the beginning of what was often called the "latter-day glory". He saw this glory as unspeakably great, and as he considered the numerous prophecies that pointed to a future influx of peoples and nations into the church he could only conclude that they had not yet been fulfilled. And until they were, the church should be encouraged with the hope, "that God has promised her cause should finally be maintained and prevail in the world."<sup>11</sup> Second, he saw indications of the dawning of latter-day glory in the signs of the times of his own day. Though recently there had been great times of darkness in the travail of Protestants against a relentless Roman foe. But in recent years, Edwards had seen one wave of revival sweep through Northampton and a second, wider wave, through the whole of America. This was a reason to hope that the consummation of Christ's kingdom was close at hand and to pray for its coming.

Third, in a noticeably particular tone, Edwards argued that God was bound to honor such a coordinated prayer effort because Christ had offered up tears, and prayers and even His own blood to redeem a church for God's glory, the majority of which, Edwards felt would be saved in the latter days.<sup>12</sup> God would certainly honor prayer for the coming of His kingdom amongst those for whom Christ died. Lastly, in reasoning similar to that he would later employ in *The Nature of True Virtue*, Edwards argued that the union displayed in the joining in the prayer of so many churches, separated by thousands of miles, would be beautiful, as it would manifest the unity which God Himself had instilled in the church.<sup>13</sup> All of these should motivate God's people to join in prayer. In the final and third part of his treatise, Edwards briefly answers certain objections he anticipates may be raised against the Scottish call to prayer.

### **Historical Significance**

In the wake of the second Great Awakening, Scottish minister, John Erskine included *An Humble Attempt* in a parcel of Edwards' books that he gave to English Particular Baptist minister and founding PBMS member, John Ryland Jr. This led to John Sutcliffe's call to prayer in 1784 at a Northamptonshire Association meeting, "for the evangelization of England and the world," which resulted in a monthly concert of prayer first in that association and then nearby Warwickshire, and in time, in lands outside England.<sup>14</sup> Such was the impact of Edwards' work that it was reprinted in 1789 by Sutcliffe and again in an abridged version by George Burder of the London Missionary Society in 1814.<sup>15</sup> Prayer often has a "feuling" effect, and this was certainly the case with the prayer concert of the Northamptonshire Association. Eventually, prayers for the gospel to reach the nations turned into action to employ means God had given for the realization of their prayers. Thus, the founding of the Particular Baptist Missionary Society in 1795 was preceded by a concert of prayer, and this concert of prayer found

its impetus and theological foundation in Edwards' *An Humble Attempt*, written roughly four decades earlier.

### **Freedom of the Will Context**

The second of Edwards' works that were to cast a long and positive shadow over the future Particular Baptist missions endeavors was his seminal work, *Freedom of the Will*. Though New England had experienced widespread revival during the Great Awakening, the reaction in the religious community was mixed. Some welcomed what they felt was a genuine revival, bearing with what they considered emotional excesses or aberrations from a true work of God. For others, however, these excesses cast doubt and criticism concerning the whole movement. So a division arose in the ministerial ranks between "New Lights" who supported the awakening, and "Old Lights" who opposed it.<sup>16</sup> For some of the Old Lights, this skepticism of excessive enthusiasm in the awakening gave way to a throwing off of traditional Calvinism in favor of more fashionable Arminian doctrines that exalted the role of human reason.<sup>17</sup> The Arminian emphasis on man's free will complemented a rising naturalistic trend in philosophy that held that man, by virtue of his reason and natural ability, had the ability and even responsibility to judge other systems of thought and even religion by the standard of that reason.<sup>18</sup> So though God was acknowledged as the giver of reason, the man was trusted to use his free will in the benevolent exercise of that reason for the good of society. In a way, this new thought was the descendant of the Reformation, which had challenged authority on the basis of Scripture and conscience.<sup>19</sup> In Edwards' day, the emphasis on individual conscience over state authority remained, but he saw the trusted doctrines of the Reformation eroding before his eyes.<sup>20</sup> Without the doctrines of original sin, depravity, and the sovereignty of God, the whole system would be in jeopardy. So, Edwards wrote *Freedom of the Will* to challenge the Arminian foe in general and what he considered to be the pernicious Arminian notion of free will in particular.

### **Salient Points**

*Freedom of the Will* is divided into four parts. Edwards begins in Part I to examine the definition of terms associated with the free will debate as he feels new meanings have been assigned to familiar terms without detection and causing much deception. In Parts II and III, he examines the Arminian notion of freedom and their claim that it is necessary for moral agency, virtue, and praise, and shows both to be invalid and absurd. Then in Part IV, Edwards examines and exposes the underlying foundations for Arminian notions of freedom as well as their opposition to Calvinism.

Edwards does not deny that man has freedom of will, but he takes issue with the unfettered understanding of it that was being advanced by Arminian proponents of his day.<sup>21</sup> He agreed that man has freedom in the sense that most people commonly conceive freedom, *viz.* that each person has, "the power, opportunity, or advantage, that anyone has, to do as he pleases," or the ability to act in accordance with one's own choice.<sup>22</sup> In this case, the will is exercised by the person who is a moral agent. But Arminians, construed the will to be its own agent, with the ability to act independently of inner inclinations.<sup>23</sup> But then the question arises as to what prompts the independent will to act, which leads to a prior action of the will so that the Arminian never reaches that totally unremoved act of the will that they held to be essential for freedom.<sup>24</sup>

Of course in the common sense usage, no one is completely free to do as they like. We are all at times invariably constrained by certain natural limitations that prevent us from doing as we would like. This leads Edwards in Section IV of Part I, to a discussion of the distinction between what he calls natural and moral inability. Natural inability is when we cannot do a thing even if we will it.<sup>25</sup> It is in the common sense impossible for us to do. Moral inability, however, "consists not in any of these things; but either in the want of inclination; or the strength of a contrary inclination; or the strength of a contrary inclination; or the want of sufficient motives

in view, to induce and excite the act of the Will, or the strength of apparent motives to the contrary.”<sup>26</sup> From this, Edwards concludes that a person who is morally unable to do something is for all purposes just as unable to do so as the person who is naturally unable, “For when a person is unable to will or choose such a thing, through a defect of motives, or prevalence of contrary motives, it is the same thing as his being unable through the want of an inclination, or the prevalence of a contrary inclination, in such circumstances, and under the influence of such views.”<sup>27</sup> So, by virtue of his fallen virtue, a man might be unable to perform some good act, not because his mind or body was incapable of carrying it out, but because he did not want to do it, or because he had an aversion to it. It was upon this distinction that both Robert Hall Sr. (in *Help to Zion's Travelers*) and Andrew Fuller (*Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*) would base some of their key arguments in overcoming objections to missions.

### Historical Significance

Mention has been made of the influence *An Humble Attempt* and *Freedom of the Will* had on future Particular Baptist works, but Edwards' influence on the Northamptonshire divines went beyond these two works. In general, Edwards was a delight to Robert Hall Sr., the author of the next work we will consider.<sup>28</sup> Fuller told Timothy Dwight, Edwards' grandson, that Edwards' writing had been, “food to me and many others.”<sup>29</sup> He was also a constant companion of Fuller, and we see in Carey's journal that he looked to Edwards for nourishment in his private devotions.<sup>30</sup> But it was Edwards' distinction between natural and moral ability in Section IV of Part I of his work that greatly influenced Hall and Fuller.

The above Particular Baptist Divines served in an environment that was heavily shaped by hyper-Calvinistic tendencies. This had a chilling effect on evangelism and missions. On the one hand, faith was understood not as simple belief in Christ in response to the gospel, but rather, as Fuller put it, as a persuasion that one had an interest in Christ, or as Hall put it, a

knowledge that one has an interest in Christ before he can apply to Him.<sup>31</sup> It was possible to reach these conclusions because it was thought that man could not be held responsible before God unless he was capable of carrying out God's commands. As good Calvinists, they knew a man in his fallen state was incapable of following God's decrees, and so concluded that he could not be expected to respond to the gospel call. And if he could not respond to it, it was futile and pointless to offer it. But Edwards' distinction between natural and moral ability/inability caused first Hall and then Fuller to see a way out of the impasse—a way to honor Scripture's teaching on election, sin, and evangelism. To the first of these works we now turn.

### Help to Zion's Traveler's Context

Born in 1728 to an Anglican father and Presbyterian mother, Hall was converted around the age of 20, and within 5 years followed the example of his brother, and became a Baptist.<sup>32</sup> Not long after that, he felt called to vocational ministry and in 1753 became the pastor of the Baptist church in Arnsby, Leicestershire, a post he held for the duration of his ministry.<sup>33</sup> This church was one of the founding churches of the Northamptonshire Association, and Hall exercised considerable influence in it.<sup>34</sup> He was both a noted theologian and preacher in his day and had already been a help to many through his circular letters before the publication of *Help to Zion's Travelers*.<sup>35</sup> So in time, Robert Hall Sr. proved a mentor to many younger Particular Baptist pastors who would eventually be key players in the PBMS, including John Sutcliffe, John Ryland Jr., Samuel Pearce, and his own son, Robert Hall Jr.<sup>36</sup>

The Particular Baptists of Hall's time were staunch Calvinists. But their belief in man's inability to save himself was so strong that they had come to believe that calls to repentance of sin and believe on Christ were presumptive in the sense that they called on the sinner to do what he, by nature, could not do. Desiring on the one hand to honor God's sovereignty but on the other to check the boastful notion that man was able to save himself,

they ended up settling on the presumption of another sort—the presumption on the likelihood that someone was of the elect before feeling a warrant to preach the gospel to them. In Baptist life, the clearest proponent of this thinking was John Brine.<sup>37</sup> He believed repentance was the duty of some Particular persons but did not consider it to be the duty of the unregenerate. First, the sinner needed a “warrant” from the divine Word that God was a Redeemer for them in Christ. So, both sinner and preacher required special knowledge of such a warrant before either preaching or attempting repentance and faith.<sup>38</sup> It was into this muddled fray that Robert Hall jumped in 1779 with a sermon from Isaiah 57:14 emphasizing the need to remove certain stumbling blocks from believers’ lives. This sermon was published in 1781 as *Helps to Zion’s Travelers*.<sup>39</sup>

### Salient Points

The full title of Hall’s work reads: *Help To Zion’s Travelers Being An Attempt To Remove Various Stumbling Blocks Out Of The Way, Relating To Doctrinal, Experimental, And Practical*. Stated thusly, both the aim and structure of the work are abundantly clear. So, in Part I, Hall tackles theological antinomies involving the divinity of Christ, the love of God, the doctrine of election, union with Christ, and the atonement. Each of these subjects involves multiple truths from Scripture that, on the surface, seem to compete with or contradict the other, but which Hall seeks, through the circumspect application of Scripture to reconcile. And in Part II, Hall addresses the odd predicament in which many Particular Baptist congregants found themselves of needing to be assured that Christ had died for them in particular and of possessing an interest in Christ before they could have a warrant to repent of sins and believe in Christ. Instead, Hall maintained that “Repentance, therefore, implies the primary actings of faith, and is the immediate effect of grace in the soul. . . .”<sup>40</sup> Similarly, in words of bold encouragement, Hall states, “If anyone should ask, Have I a right to apply to Jesus the Saviour, simply as a poor,

undone, perishing sinner, in whom there appears no good thing? I answer, Yes; the gospel proclamation is, ‘Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.’ Rev. xxii. 17.”<sup>41</sup>

But it is in Part III dealing with Practical Difficulties of coming to Christ that Edwards’ influence is most clearly seen. Here, Hall is considering the threat to believers that is posed by professing believers who do not walk uprightly, opposition from the world, and quandaries related to the believer’s proper relationship to the law.<sup>42</sup> In Chapter III, Hall deals with the particular challenge posed by false religionists. Here, he considers the objection of some who would censure God for entering into a covenant of works with Adam that is impossible for his fallen posterity to keep. Such an objection would pose an obstacle to accountability for sin in general as well as the sin of unbelief in Christ in particular. It is a formidable objection, “for it seems contrary to the common or known rules of equity, to punish on account of not performing what is *naturally* impossible to be performed.”<sup>43</sup> But for the relief of those troubled by such an objection, Hall looks to Edwards by proposing, “a distinction between natural and moral inability, which seems necessary to be well understood in order to obtain consistent views of Divine revelation, relating to the requirements of God’s righteous law and the nature of his precious gospel.”<sup>44</sup> Hall understood natural inability to be, “an absolute defect in the natural powers of a man’s mind or body, by which he is rendered incapable of acting, although his will were bent upon the performance of his duty.” As such, natural inability was not a criminal defect. He understood moral inability to consist of a lack of a holy inclination to do what is truly good, which he held to be criminal for two reasons. First, man sinned out of desire, voluntarily and freely. Second, to protest culpability on the grounds of moral inability actually made one more culpable, for it demonstrates the propensity—as seen in our forebearer, Adam—to make excuses for our sin instead of honestly owning up to it. And so, in this way, Hall was assisted by Edwards as he sought

to remove unbiblical stumbling blocks on the road to Zion and encourage those who yearned to come to Christ.

### Historical Significance

Hall's work would prove instrumental in the conversion of the father of the modern missionary movement, William Carey. In his preface to the second edition, John Ryland Jr. records that Carey had been wavering between Arminianism, Calvinism, and even Antinomianism, but found truth in the Reformed understanding through Hall's winsome presentation.<sup>45</sup> In his own words regarding Hall's *Help*, Carey stated that he found, ". . . all that arranged and illustrated which I had been so long picking up by scraps. I do not remember ever to have read any book with such raptures as I did that. If it was poison as some then said, it was so sweet to me that I drank it greedily to the bottom of the cup. And I rejoice to say, that those doctrines are the choice of my heart to this day."<sup>46</sup> So great was the influence of this work on Carey's life that Ryland conceded the whole of Carey's body of divinity to it.<sup>47</sup> In Hall's effort to counter hyper-Calvinistic excesses affecting the gospel call, Edwards' *Freedom of the Will* played a supportive, background role. But as Andrew Fuller later tackled what was in essence, the same excess, but from the perspective of the sinner's duty to believe, the influence of *Freedom of the Will* would prove foundational.

### The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation Contexts

In the words of Baptist historian, Raymond Brown, "Andrew Fuller's *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (1785) provided Baptists with a more detailed exposition of Hall's ideas."<sup>48</sup> And Edwards' distinction between natural and moral inability helped Fuller address what was then called the "modern question". The modern question asked, "Whether it be the duty of all men to whom the gospel is published, to repent and believe in Christ?"<sup>49</sup> Beginning from a vantage point of man's depraved nature, hyper-Calvinists reasoned that it was not man's duty to believe the gospel

as he was incapable of doing so. Making no distinction between natural and moral ability, they saw this as the only position capable of safeguarding biblical teaching on sin and God's justice. For, they reasoned, it would be unjust for God to ask sinners to do that which they were unable by nature to do. So, Fuller wrote *Gospel Worthy* to answer this "modern question".

### Salient Points

"Fuller delivers his argument in three sections and paraphrased, they are as follows: 1) an explication of the importance of believing that sinners are duty-bound to believe the gospel, 2) arguments from Scripture to prove the same, and 3) answers to Objections."<sup>50</sup> Exposing the missions-killing implications of the hyper-Calvinistic answer for the modern question, Edwards writes that if faith is not required of all men who hear the gospel, then to seek to inculcate that faith, *viz.* to preach the gospel, ". . . would be unwarrantable and cruel to our fellow sinners, as it subjects them to an additional charge of the abundance of guilt . . ."<sup>51</sup> But in Section Two of his work, Fuller shows in many ways that the plain teaching of Scripture demands that sinners are duty bound to respond to the gospel in repentance and faith. He establishes first that, "whatever God commands, exhorts, or invites us to comply with, is the duty of those to whom such language is addressed."<sup>52</sup> So, if there is indeed no duty for sinners for repentance and faith, one would expect to find no commands or exhortations to that effect in Scripture. But Fuller shows from the text after text that such commands and exhortations to sinners abound in both Testaments. Conversely, Fuller shows from Scripture that when sinners do not respond to the gospel call to repent and believe they are found guilty of heinous sin and threatened with, "the most awful punishments".<sup>53</sup> Here, he draws on Edwards work concerning natural and moral inability when he writes, "No man is reproved for not doing that which is naturally impossible: but sinners are reproved for not believing, and given to understand that

it is solely owing to their criminal ignorance, pride, dishonesty of heart, and aversion from God.”<sup>54</sup>

Fuller acknowledges that some hyper-Calvinists find fault with his conclusions on the basis that, “a general invitation to sinners to come to Christ or salvation is inconsistent with God's election of some and rejection of others,” but answers that, “A minister is not to make inquiry after, nor to trouble himself about, those secrets of the eternal mind of God, viz. Whom he purposeth to save, and whom he hath sent Christ to die for in particular; it is enough for them to search his revealed will, and thence take their directions, from whence they have their commissions.”<sup>55</sup> So as ministers of the gospel cannot know whom, in particular, God has elected for salvation, Fuller believed they were compelled to preach the gospel to all sinners indiscriminately. In the concluding arguments of his treatise, Fuller argued that, “The work of the Christian ministry, it has been said, is to preach the gospel, or to hold up the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, as the only way of a sinner's salvation,” and that, “. . . If the foregoing principles are just, it is the duty of ministers not only to exhort their carnal auditors to believe in Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls; but IT IS AT OUR PERIL TO EXHORT THEM TO ANYTHING SHORT OF IT, OR WHICH DOES NOT INVOLVE OR IMPLY IT.”<sup>56</sup>

### Historical Significance

The distinction between natural and moral inability which Edwards established in *Freedom of the Will*, made it possible for Fuller to argue that sinners were duty-bound to believe the gospel *without* jettisoning Calvinistic doctrines of divine sovereignty, election, and human depravity. Naturally speaking, sinners possess the faculties to repent of the sins and believe on Christ for salvation. But morally speaking, they were completely unable to meet these conditions necessary for salvation because they possessed a heart that was enslaved to sin and bereft of holy affections. So with the “modern question” answered, not only were sinners shown

to have a duty to believe the gospel but as Fuller passionately argued, ministers would be derelict in their duties if they did not preach the gospel to sinners indiscriminately. This conviction was also reflected in the prayer emphasis in the Northamptonshire Association. Sinners had a duty to believe the gospel. Ministers had a duty to proclaim it. But sinners must hear the gospel in order to believe. It was left largely to Carey to take Fuller's teaching to its natural conclusion—an organized effort to take the gospel to the heathen peoples of the world.

### *Enquiry: Salient Points*

The contribution of Carey toward the foundation of the PBMS which most bears Edwards' influence is seen in the title of his seminal work in which he made an “*Enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversions of the heathens . . .*” As sinners were both naturally able and duty-bound to believe the gospel, and as ministers were duty-bound to proclaim the gospel, there must be means in place to ensure that the heathen in the uttermost parts of the earth had an opportunity to hear and believe.

*The enquiry* is divided into five sections plus an Introduction. The Introduction gives a brief review of redemptive history; Section I inquires whether the Great Commission is still binding on believers today; in Section II Carey gives a detailed review of gospel labors in church history, from the Acts of the Apostles to the esteemed Moravians in their day; Section III provides numerous charts presenting the then present state of the world in terms of religions and lostness; Section IV considers the practicality of undertaking intentional efforts to seek the conversion of the heathen; and in Section V, Carey gives specific suggestions as to the establishment and funding for a society to undertake such a mission.

Carey's argument, in a sense, was Edwards' grandchild. The first generation of thought was found in the distinction between natural and moral inability which Edwards argued in *Freedom of the Will*. The second generation was Fuller's argument that upheld

cherished doctrines while rendering sinful man culpable for not believing the gospel. The third generation of Edwards' thought is seen in Carey's *Enquiry* as he argued for both the logical and biblical end of Edwards' and Fuller's earlier arguments. If sinners were bound to believe and ministers were bound to preach the gospel to them, then only one thing was missing—an organized effort to take the gospel to the heathen who had never heard the gospel.

### Historical Significance

Following the publication of Carey's *Enquiry*, Carey preached his now famous sermon from Isaiah 54:2-3 contains the oft-quoted motto, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." After this and more imploring, the Particular Baptist Missionary Society was finally formed on October 2, 1792.<sup>57</sup> In a few years, news printed in the *Evangelical Magazine* led to the formation of the Congregational Church's, London Missionary Society in 1795, and then through news related in the *Periodical Accounts*, the evangelical Anglican, Charles Simeon and others in the Clapham Sect were moved and the Anglican Church Missionary Society was born in 1799. As such, Carey's *Enquiry* is widely credited as the impetus for not only the PBMS but the modern missionary movement among all Protestant denominations.

### Conclusion

And so, in God's Providence, the works of a backwoods, American colonial preacher exerted an igniting and roadblock-removing influence on divines whom he never met, in the mother country thousands of miles away. Then, in God's sovereignty, and in His time, God united Edwards with the likes of Robert Hall Sr., Andrew Fuller, and William Carey to found a humble society through which His purposes would be accomplished among the nations, and truly great things would be done!

### End Notes

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## The Incarnation and Contextualization

*Pramod Aghamkar\**

### Introduction

Contextualization is considered one of the most talked-about and widely-accepted methods in current global missions. Globalization, modernization, and social media are creating unprecedented changes, but do not lessen the importance of thinking about missions contextually. In fact, current developments compel mission workers both to do research and observe the living traditions and cultures wherever the gospel needs to go. Surprisingly, “seldom do international promoters of ministry program(s) contextualize their approaches.” Gospel workers should “... be instructed in the process of contextualization...” (Ott 2015:47, 48).

True understanding begins primarily by living and participating in the life of people. It is best exercised and exemplified by none other than the incarnational life of Jesus. Incarnation is the mother of mission methods and the incarnate Jesus is the only defining expression of all effective contextualization (Kraft 1989). Contextualization strives to make the process of the meeting of the gospel and unreached people as natural as mixing seed and soil. This article describes the hurdles of contextualization along with the adaptive, retentive, spontaneous, and reverse aspects involved in the process. It reaffirms the inseparable relationship between

the gospel message and the life of believers, with the incarnate model of Jesus as the key to an effective contextualization model.

### Contextualization

The goal of contextualization is to fulfill the Great Commission, with its models found in the Bible. “Contextualization as a term originated from the conciliar movement of the World Council of Churches, leading to an initial mistrust amongst some evangelicals in adopting it for fear of syncretism or compromise” (Prince 2017:1). The process of doing missions is not possible without grounding our faith and mission activities in a concrete local context (Bosch 1991:498). It involves rejection and incorporation of existing cultural concepts and practices. It also needs to be customized and closely examined since the gospel of Jesus Christ “must neither be abridged nor enlarged” (Brown 1957: 44).

During the non-contextualization era (roughly from 1800 to 1950), mission agencies implemented the principle of removal of every aspect of the old in order to pave the way for Christianity in mission fields (Hiebert 1987). Missionary activities during this period included an element of civilizing the people before they could become Christian (Parekh 1947:78-79). As a result, “any contextualization attempted was culturally conditioned to fit western categories...” (Shaw 2015:208). In India, the Church and Christianity are viewed as a replica or an extension of an outside culture. Conversion to Christianity reflects an anti-national step (Saraswati 1999:52). Mahatma Gandhi said, “I hold that proselytization under the cloak of humanitarian work is unhealthy, to say the least. It is resented by people here” (Aksharananda 2001). The local people perceived Christianity as a foreign religion, rigid with a political agenda and thus a source of perpetual conflict (Ranganathananda 1965: 52).

These views continue to be carried forward and thus form major hurdles even today. Acceptance of Christianity is perceived with contempt as outsiders and anti-nationals, especially in northern India. Globalization has expanded economic and educational

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\* Rev. Dr. Pramod Aghamkar is Founder/Director of Intercultural Satsang Ministry, International. He holds a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies and Contextual Mission from Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky, USA.

goals but heightened the sense of the local and of a loss of control over the immediate environment in which people live. “People then turn to religion to find some surer footing in the midst of the maelstrom that globalization creates... The implications of how to address this for missions need greater attention” (Schreiter 2001:150-151). The gospel compels the mission-minded to cross-cultural barriers (Rom. 1:14-15; 1 Cor. 9:16). All committed Christians affirm the basic attempt and urgency “... to transplant the person and work of Jesus Christ in Asian soil” (Karkkainen 2007:125). The zeal and relevancy of intercontinental ministry philosophies and contextualization call for critical analyses. “Western ways can appear cosmopolitan and forward-looking in comparison to seemingly backward and narrow traditional ways” (Ott 2015:47).

Contextualization of the gospel message means knowing what not to say before what one wants to say. Deep cultural values and meanings are expressed in language, food, farming, homes, family events, and in social relations (between young and old, husbands and wives, orphans and widows, the living and the dead, etc.). Integration of events such as births, weddings, rites of passage, festivals, sickness, births, death, and funerals are vital as is knowledge of how local communities relate to both the natural and supernatural worlds. Unless the gospel touches people’s lives in these areas at the deeper level, it will not become good news to them. “The Christian faith never exists except as translated into a culture” (Bosch 1991:447). Although, the church in India has done much to contextualize the gospel, it must continue to cautiously seek ways in order to adapt elements that are more compatible.

### **Contextualization as Adaptation**

People today are constantly being challenged by new ideas and learning differing, unfamiliar views brought about by globalization. Countless urban families in India have accepted drastic cultural changes as a result of higher education, jobs abroad, and interfaith

and international marital status. Thus, one must ask “How are these unprecedented elements assimilated in India?”

The term “tolerance” has become a popular slogan and a practical tool to handle the unstoppable change confronted by the Indian culture(s). Could those interested in contextualization find this idea adaptable and “intentionally” reusable? (Van Engen 1996:26-27). The “idea of toleration as acceptance is of the essence of Indian culture” (Ranganathananda 1965: 49). It has been asserted as a non judgmental practice and applauded to create harmony in diversity. The practice of tolerance allows equidistance between various communities according to religious, economical, or cultural systems. For some, the law of karma sets boundaries in the context of India. A question may be asked not about the idea of tolerance but about the driving system behind the idea itself.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891–1956), a great reformer, expressed in a manuscript (1935) that the very basis of the idea of tolerance was not relevant to solve the problem of the divisive caste system in India. He strongly felt it failed to deal with the deeper prejudices between “high and low, clean and unclean” and its assertion was “a mistake.” He advocated for a change of attitude and the source of the idea (Ambedkar, Ed. S.K. Gajbhiv 1996:12). The concern for justice became greater for Dr. Ambedkar, as the traditional basis of the idea of toleration was part of the survival mechanism but failed to give equality and quality of life to all (Ambedkar 1996:36). “In other words, the majority group continues to maintain its hegemony over other minority groups by either extending or withholding toleration without any recourse by the minority groups” (Jonathan Y. Tan 2014:152). Equidistance became the way that castes and marginalization created an overwhelming environment for the underprivileged and minority communities, including the Church.

Those concerned with gospel contextualization have an opportunity to build upon the expectations voiced by such

reformers, namely for equality, human dignity, and justice. Millions struggling in India are hoping for a better path. The God of the Bible does not tolerate injustice (Deuteronomy 16:19; Exodus 23:2) but affirms a better path through “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). The practice of love focuses on the equality and unity of humanity by virtue of God’s creation. Unconditional love has the power to go above and beyond toleration and nurture hope. This love is exemplified by the incarnate Jesus and serves as the standard in all social dealings at all times. The community of believers (the Church) is expected to be the living demonstration of that love. Contextualization means offering a new and relevant Christ as the foundation for this love.

St. Paul analyzed such a context, conducting it “... in the center of learning and before a body composed of the intelligentsia of Athens. In addition, Paul’s message draws upon the language and ideas of his Greek contemporaries, particularly the Stoic philosophers, in order to establish a point of contact with his hearers. He even quotes pagan poets, authorities recognized by his audience, in support of his argument about the relationship of humanity to the living God (Acts 17:28)” (Flemming 2005: 74-75). Keener suggests, “that with Epicureanism Paul could only establish minimal philosophical and religious common ground, but with Stoicism, he was able to establish greater common ground with respect to some aspects of ethics, theology, and cosmology” (Quoted by Andrew J. Prince: 2017:102). St. Paul could not afford to neglect local ideas and concepts, and likewise, those contextualizing the gospel should not either. An unlimited wealth of ideas and concepts exist to draw upon in Indian culture, literature, and thought, but largely remain neglected in the efforts of contextualization.

The Indian church understands the element of syncretism as “an uncritical mixture of elements from other religions without center or integrating principle.” (Samartha 2004: 250- 252). The fear of syncretism is not restricted to certain mission fields and

can stall the use of contextualization. Missions involve adopting, “crossing intentionally and naturally, all kinds of barriers (Van Engen 1996:26-27). If a concept or an idea helps to bring the gospel closer to the people, then the Kingdom purpose is fulfilled and the Holy Spirit will do the rest. The risk of not using local contextualization is greater because a larger number of people could remain unreached by the gospel. This contextual approach has been used for a long time in India but remained undocumented. The main components of contextualization observed by the author include spontaneity and retention of native ideas and concepts without compromising the Truth illustrated in the next section.

### **Contextualization as Retentive and Spontaneous**

No culture is perfect without the gospel of Jesus Christ and must discard certain practices that are contrary to the Truth. The gospel is constantly encountering the caste system in India, racial tensions in the West and the spirit of terrorism in the Arab world. While there are always incompatible elements, some could be maintained. The contextualization process examines local practices before anything is retained or discarded. This need was felt from very early on after going deep into different cultures and developed traditions. Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Robert de Nobili SJ (1577-1656) both followed the similar prescription. It expressed in the words of St. Augustine, to ‘preserve and adopt’ local diversities as long as the worship of the ‘one supreme and true God’ was not hindered (Treadgold 1993:387). Retention of local cultural practices involves purposefully adopting, modifying, and introducing new ones.

The focus of contextualization should be retentive, with all that is compatible with the gospel being retained (Aghamkar 2000:192). Rev. Narayan Vaman Tilak (1861-1919), a convert from a high caste Hindu family in Maharashtra, India felt that the church of his time was more colonialist than indigenous. Church settings, names, outfit, music, architecture, and worship style, including the language of liturgy, was incongruous with the

local culture. Thus, he believed the touch of *bhakti* or devotional aspect was desperately needed not because the style was wrong, but because it failed to invoke the deep sense of *bhakti* in native Indian hearts. Most needed was a touch of the local culture. As a convert himself, Rev. Tilak realized that non-Christian friends did not feel comfortable with the traditional Christian venue and the church as a whole was not people-friendly. Later in life, he defiantly focused on developing a new brotherhood of baptized and unbaptized believers in Jesus. He spontaneously came up with an idea of a church that welcomed all and adapted a contextualized name for the place of Christian worship “*Yeshucha Darbar*” meaning the Royal Hall of Jesus (Tilak 2014:221). *Yeshucha Darbar* was meant to be a simple hall without iconography for the gathering of believers and friends in the presence of the Lord Jesus. This new approach never took root due to Tilak's early death in Mumbai [Bombay] on May 9, 1919 (Tilakwikipedia).

Hundreds of his Christ-exalting devotional songs (*bhakti Bhajans*) in the Marathi language were included in the Marathi Christian hymnals and sung in all denominational church services across Maharashtra, India. These songs express deep allegiance to Jesus and appeal immensely to native seekers. The Christian lyrics in this native language and the church name were an unthinkable step of spontaneous and retentive contextualization by Rev. Tilak during the monolithic church of his time. His *linguistic* skills, socio-religious knowledge, and cultural background are unparalleled. Most of all, his encounter with Christ was followed by a passion for fellow seekers that prompted him to retain compatible concepts and practices.

Local pressures and criticisms from anti-Christian elements can push new believers to spontaneously adopt native elements in order to express their faith. In fact, it begins to happen as an ongoing process from the time the gospel is first heard. A believer immersed in the native culture, deep in faith with total dependence on the Word and the Holy Spirit, could lead to healthy spontaneous

and retentive contextualization. What was once unacceptable and rejected has become normal and even necessary in missions today. Church names such as *Yesu Mandir*, *Yesu Ashram*, *Sanjavani Ashram*, and *Christian Satsang* with native music and worship styles are arising all over. The practice of contextualization has exploded in current mission endeavors after observing the results of effective communication of the gospel.

Rev. Josephrao Aghamkar (1913-1977) taught a subject called *Kirtan* (musical storytelling) in Maharashtra Bible College and encouraged students to use local idioms, expressions, and proverbs. He extensively used ethnic music and narrative style to share the Gospel in the central part of India. Coming from a local *bhakti* tradition, becoming a convert, with knowledge of popular religion and familiarity with native music and the Marathi language helped him to make contextual decisions and applications. “Contextualization arises out of situations as faith is lived” (Aghamkar 2002).

The author has found amazing openness in fundamentalist Indian groups through the interactive approach used in Satsang-style meetings since 1977. In fact, one of the venues for interfaith interactions with Asian thinkers is located in a temple precinct. “Christian mission from the beginning has always survived best in the marketplace of competing religions as the person and the work of Jesus Christ has been offered as the Way, the Truth, and the Life for all men and women” (Karkkainen 2007: 124). “You shall be witnesses to me...” implies confirmation from listeners (Acts 1:8). The responses and reactions by the local people are important clues to find out about the state of the church, which is referred to as reverse contextualization in the next section.

### **Reverse Contextualization**

The first century Church generated a unique response from local non-Christian people in the Greco-Roman city of Antioch. The Christ-like lifestyle of the believers was new, different, and even strange for the people of Antioch. These local people called the

disciples “Christians” for the very first time (Acts 11:19-26). The disciples’ neighbors observed the distinctive quality of their lives and “coined the nickname, i.e., Christ’s men” (Trenchard 1986:1288). This naming factor in the city of Antioch was a defining statement with rich missiological significance that still deserves the consideration of the Church. The new name came from the non-Christian community because of the distinguishing characteristics of the new believers. The term “Christian” conceptualized the observed changes in values in the life of these disciples. The people of Antioch responded naturally and many wished for a greater understanding of the believer community. The world of these Antiochians had been permeated by unfamiliar teachings, faith, and activities in the name of Christ without a physical religious center or priesthood. This naming event in Antioch suggests that the introduction of the gospel creates a reaction and ripple effects. This reverse interpretation or contextualization is important in the history of missions of the Church and is validated in the New Testament.

In fact, Jesus instructed his disciples to expect a specific response if they loved one another (John 13:35). His ministry was not affected or changed by public review. However, he did ask, “Who do men say that I am” (Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27), showing that Jesus cared about the response of the people to his presence. Similarly, St. Paul tells Corinthian believers to anticipate a focused response from unbelievers after participating in a worship gathering. Such as “He will... the report that God is truly among you” (2 Corinthians 14:25). Such reactions to the collective worship and love among Christian brethren are positive signals to know if the mission is being achieved.

Today responses may differ from place to place depending on local cultural biases. Antagonistic religious and political elements can often reflect their deep-seated opinions. In 1920 Gandhi said, “It is my firm opinion that Europe (and the United States) does not represent the spirit of God or Christianity but the spirit of Satan”

(Aksharananda 2001). Mixed responses are a global phenomenon and serve as a mirror to see if the body of Christ is reflecting the right image. As part of the ongoing missions strategy, the church should ask ‘who do people say we are?’ thus caring about the quality of their witness. The person of Jesus should be the ultimate explanation unbelievers should discover and acquire. The Christian community in the city of Mumbai has influenced academia through educational institutions for centuries. On the other hand, the same Christian community has been projected as a liquor guzzler and beef consumer in the Bollywood movies and media. While the former is a positive comment, the latter causes serious hurdles that demand corrective soul searching and a realignment of the Christian witness. The Church should prepare and pray for no other response.

These reverse comments or impressions are crucial for effective missions since the purpose of contextualization is to remove hurdles in order to move the gospel forward. The driving and guarding force in all mission activity are the incarnate Christ in the life of believers.

### **Incarnational Approach**

The incarnate life of Jesus renders, changes, and judges everything, especially presuppositions and practices concerning missions. “Missions is based on the whole of the very person, life, and work of Jesus Christ” (Karokaran 1979:168). “God becoming a Jew, the incarnation is the biblical model and mandate for contextualization. Jesus emptied himself to connect with humans; so also mission agents need to connect with the people. It teaches us to enter into the life of the people.” (Whitman 2016).

“Contextualization must be more radically rooted in biblical truth and identity” that leads to the incarnation as the first and the last option (Ott 2015:43). An incarnation is a unique event (John 1:14), and “this event demands proclamation.... Jesus Christ is God’s final Word to mankind” (Headland 1985:170, 174). Jesus became flesh and gave himself to suffer on the cross by choice

(John 1:1-5, 14-15, 3:16). His socialization patterns and extreme approachability crossed barriers through interdining, which attracted sinners and the marginalized. Jesus encountered social issues first-hand by talking, feeling, touching and engaging with all classes of people. Jesus lived as a human being, engaging himself with every need of humanity that cost Him everything, though He remained sinless (Hebrews 4:15). Humanity is the most exceptionally unthinkable and diametrically opposite attribute to the very nature of the eternal Word. The self-emptying of Jesus broke the most unfamiliar and aberrant barrier by becoming sin and death (Philippians 2:5-11). “This concept of missionary spirituality is meaningful...they must empty themselves if they are truly to be among (rather than over) the people whom they encounter” (Schreiter 2001:160).

Jesus is sufficient to provide every method necessary for the missional task. The Incarnational style of ministry is an approach based on principles directly taken from the life of Jesus. Communicators of the Message rightly depend on the power and authority given by Jesus and should be expected to look closely at His incarnational lifestyle, for they both are inseparable. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and the salt-light commission (Matthew 5:13-14) are inherently linked. No method used by Jesus can be effective just because it comes from Him unless the believer first lives his life like Him. Both the presentation and acceptance of the Good News will be difficult if there are any discrepancies.

Dr. Ambedkar was born as a Hindu but did not want to die as a Hindu (Khandare 2008: 327). He contemplated conversion to Christianity and openly admitted, “I might have difficulty in being an orthodox Christian” (McPhee 2005:247). Contextualization is more than wearing native dress, eating food and speaking the language. It is making the Good News truly good for “the people in their concrete situations” (Thomas 1995:170). Missions originate in God and missional methods should reflect the incarnational

model that helps a disciple to identify with unreached people. The need is to be and to send little incarnations of Christ to unreached neighborhoods for long-term rewards.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Contextualization recognizes the human need for the Gospel, which connects to the all-sufficient incarnate Jesus. Christ’s humanity relates to all and all are in need of His divine help. Missions methods that do not imitate this model of the incarnation in the rapidly-shifting cultures of today tend to be ineffective. The world needs to see the combination of the words of Christ and the incarnational life of believers lived out through the Great Commission and the salt/light commission. The process of contextualization involves adaptation, spontaneity, retention and a reverse response that does not compromise the Truth of the Gospel. It has the potential to reduce negative responses and biases where the Church is in a minority such as in India. Most of all, contextualization opens the door to maximize reaching people.

Global predisposed missions programs and projects could possibly overwhelm contextualized methods. Such efforts need critical evaluation by committed indigenous Christian leaders before they stifle growth and create a distant, noneffective form of Christianity (II Timothy 3:5). The Gospel without any pre-cultural coating has a better chance to plant in a local soil and grow from within. Contextualization of the Gospel will create verity in church expressions and worship styles but should retain Jesus as the Lord above all things. Gospel workers can be confident that the Holy Spirit will shape, unite, and guide the future Church and take away the fear of the unknown.

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## Book Review

*Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* by J. Albert Harrill. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006, pp. xiv+322.

**Albert J. Harrill**, a professor of religious studies and director of the Ancient studies programme at Indiana University, in his remarkable book entitled, “**Slaves in the New Testament**” aims at how the early Christians think about slaves. He reads the biblical text (particularly of slaves) metaphorically rather than an actual character throughout his book. For him, the early Christians saw the slaves “through the literary artifice of conventional figures and stereotypes that are familiar in ancient literature, handbooks, and the theater” (p.1). They have uncritically appropriated those images of slaves of the literary culture. He finds, the Christian discourse reflects, participate in, and promote the literary imagination of an ideology that slaves be little which is widely diffused in the ancient world that supported *auctoritas*. This is demonstrated throughout all the chapters in his exegesis.

In chapter one, Harrill considers exegetically Paul’s use of the discursive “I” in Romans 7, where Paul imitates the persona of a slave who is dominated by the wrong master. He uses the technique of “speech-in-character” (*Prosopopoiia*) which was commonplace in Greco-Roman rhetoric literature. For Harrill, Paul uses an artificial construction of the Roman slaveholding ideology of *auctoritas* in Romans 7, to convince his congregations that salvation means to move from the bad enslavement under sin’s domination to the good enslavement under God’s *auctoritas*.

In chapter two, Harrill interprets 2 Corinthians 10:10 of Paul’s response against the accusation (bodily presence is weak, and his

contemptible speech) by using the ancient rhetorical technique of character assassination (which was commonplace) by one’s opponent connecting the slave “physiognomics” to Romans ideologies of masculinity and manhood. Paul brought this to reject rhetorically not necessarily to overturn slave physiognomics of a slavish body, but Paul does to refer that he is both humble and bold to defend his “gospel”.

In chapter three, Harrill examines two rhetorical uses of a slave in two fictive stories from Luke-Acts, namely, Rhoda’s narrative (Acts 12:13-16) and the Dishonest manager (Lk 16:1-8). Harrill argues that Luke has created a stereotyped figure from Roman slave comedy, which is a conventionalized sequence of the narrative. Rhoda’s narrative corresponds with the *servus currere* (running slave), and the dishonest slave corresponds to that of a parasite (*parasitus*) connecting it with the persona of the clever slave (*servus callidus*). Both the biblical stories are made up stories and not a real social description.

In chapter four and five, Harrill examines the deutero-Pauline material of household codes comparing to Greco-Roman agricultural handbooks, which suggests that those domestic codes reflected literary conventions in which the early Christian household codes also participate. In the household codes, it exhorts the slaves as moral agents and the master as subordinates of another lord. Harrill argues that these codes were borrowed from the classical handbook *topos* in Romans slave management that is best exemplified by the agricultural manuals. That is, the elite slave (*vilicus*) oversees the estate in the place of the absentee of a master /owner (*pater familias*). Hence, for Harrill, Christians adopted this *vilicus* figure to remind masters also subordinate to God.

Chapter fifth continues on household codes especially focuses on “slave traders” (*andrapodistes*) in 1 Timothy 1:10. Harrill argues, using this term metaphorically taking from the ancient world of

the slave-trading profession culture in classical antiquity. Paul used *andrapodistai* to portray his opponents in the most negative way possible as slave traders were known as sexually immoral, murderers and consider people who violate the law. He says, Paul does not point to actual people dealing in slaves but he uses a stereotype to get his congregation to think about their opponents as correspondingly vicious.

In chapter six, Harrill analyzes the early Christian literature of apologies and martyrdoms that condemn ordinary household slave as an instigator of family corruption called the “domestic enemy.” Harrill argues that these early Christian writings of martyr stories (and apologies) undermine ancient ideologies of the family; they did not entirely challenge prevalent ideologies of the family in the case of slavery. The literary nature may be fictional about historical martyrs (e.g. data); however, the general household situations of martyrdom represent the reality of slavery in ancient family life generally.

The last chapter examines the use of the New Testament in the religious controversy over slavery in America offering several hermeneutical reflections. Harrill highlights how the antislavery fostered an interpretative approach that promotes a critical reading of less literalism of the Bible. Whereas, proslavery advocate a literal reading of Scripture. Harrill ends his book with an epilogue challenging moral debate to move beyond the specious Biblicism and create new forms of moral vision.

**Evaluation:** Harrill pointed out clearly the slaveholding society and provided an adequate indication to understand the slavery system of early Christianity. He gave a decent analysis showing how the stock characters of slaves did not necessarily constitute social descriptions of actual slaves or slavery rather they constitute as literary devices. Harrill acknowledges Onesimus as a “flesh-and-blood” slave sent for apprenticeship and the letter to Philemon as a “letter of Recommendation,” however, even in this case he

discusses from stock persona/character formula that the ancient writers created. In some way, Harrill’s hypothesis is doubtful and would be considered anachronistic though he doesn’t intend a factual survey of slavery, as the Greco-Roman slavery was an integral part of every aspect of life in Paul’s time.

Harrill worked strictly as a historian but he neglected the socio-cultural history of the biblical text. Moreover, he failed to take up Romans 1:1 which he introduced in the beginning (p.18), which makes unclear how he interprets Paul’s self-designation in terms of *prosopopoiia*. In addition, Harrill does not incorporate outside Romans in which Paul speaks about slavery in a metaphorical way. Overall, the book opened ways to explore the biblical text of early Christian social world. It helps to get out from literal readings of Scripture. One of the significant contributions of Harrill is an explicit liberative hermeneutical framework for reading slavery imagery in early Christian texts. Anyone interested in biblical slaves and slavery subject particularly that of NT whether expert or student cannot bypass this resourceful book.

**Reviewed by Tunchapbo**

D.Th. Student (NT)

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