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Editorial

I, on my behalf and the Editorial Committee extend a warm welcome and sincere thanks to all the contributors of articles, subscribers and readers of the *Indian Journal of Theology* in the blessed name of our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Christ. The current IJT publication has been made possible through the efforts put in by the NIIPGTS management, editorial board, and the continued support of the subscribers from the theological seminaries in India and beyond. We thank you for having the faith in us over the years and the same is solicited for the future of this theological repository.

Keeping our minds focused on the mission and ministry of the church is of paramount importance to theological education in the past and present. That said, the present volume of this journal is a blending of treatises by some prominent scholars – both national and international – dealing with the recent issues in biblical studies, history, mission and ministry of the contemporary Church, contours of globalization in the Indian sub-continent and the global scenario. Talking about the mission of the church, there is special entry on Serampore Mission in conjunction with the Bicentenary Celebrations of Serampore College in December of 2018.

There are nine articles in all which are divided into two major parts. Within the first major section, the *first* article is written by S. Temjen Imchen. It is the recent trends in biblical interpretation with some select methods appropriated from the Old Testament perspective which is of paramount importance in interpreting the Bible and must have the contextual relevance. The *second* piece is by M. Peter Singh who provides a revolutionary political love of God by rereading the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis. The

author postulates the narration between the retributive justice and restorative justice. The author expounds that retributive justice requires punishment. It is said that restorative justice, by contrast, is more interested in promoting healing and reconciliation. The *third* entry authored by Johnson Thomaskutty looks at John 13:1-20 both from within the framework of the Farewell Discourse as well as from the overall structure of the Gospel. It is primarily an attempt to see the being and becoming natures of Jesus and his instructions for disciples' doing. The study also attempts to see how the narrative exists as a paradigm in the contemporary missional and ministerial contexts of the South Asia. The *fourth literary* piece is essayed by R. Bennie Crockett. It places the Serampore Mission and Serampore College by choosing Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15 which became the scriptural foundation for eighteenth century Christian missions. Despite the various challenges faced by the English missionaries in the tropical conditions, the Trio persisted in their educational transformation based on Matthew 28:19, and asserted a connectedness between various fields of study and Christian identity.

In the *fifth essay*, Joseph George offers his specialized discourse on mental health which needs to be managed professionally. According to him, the mental health management refers to a broad array of activities directly or indirectly related to the enhancement of mental and emotional well-being, prevention of mental disorders, and treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders. This process also includes support and help for those caring for the mentally ill persons, particularly the primary family as well as professional caregivers. Mental health (or illness) is affected by a wide range of socio-economic-cultural and familial factors that needs to be thoroughly examined in order to promote positive mental health as well as dealing with the illness categories. Towards the end, the counseling professor offers the hope that with the medical advancement today, particularly the psychiatric facilities and resources, comes

the possibilities of healing and cure of all forms of mental and emotional disorders.

John Mohan Razu, in the *sixth* write-up, examines 'Globalisation an Ideology in Disguise and a Theology to Legitimize the Global Inequality.' He begins by stating that globalization has several dimensions in which economics is one of the core factors. It is to say that globalization as a project encompasses other dimensions too. Hence, in the changed scenario, globalization has integrated the time and space by revolutionizing technology with the help of scientific advances and know-how and thus made the earth as a 'global village.' In such a context, theologians and ethicists who are in favor of globalization have by and large uncritically accepted global capitalism. In times like these, our faith system is challenged which must give rise to a resistance. The writer concludes by stressing the point that our theological and ethical pursuits must move beyond academic or high rhetorical or discourses.

On the second major section of the current volume, there are three articles written from a special context, that is, from the Northeast India (NEI)'s context. In the *seventh* article, O.L. Snaitang one of the senior Church history professors in India and Northeast India, has examined a major topic which is a northeast Indian Christian response to Christianity and Indian renaissance. Professor Snaitang takes the Serampore mission seriously which has brought about far significant socio-cultural transformation in the areas of caste discrimination, female infanticide, *sati* and others. In the light of Dr. William Carey's obligations and renaissance in India, the objective of this essay is to examine the role of Christianity in bringing about significant socio-cultural renaissance among the subaltern groups in India that resulted in the building of a modern nascent India. In the *eight* article – which is a seminar paper presented at the *Ao Theological Educators' Forum* (of Ao Baptist Churches Association/ABAM in Impur, Nagaland) – L. Imsutoshi Jamir elaborates the 'relevance of theological

education in contemporary North East India context.’ The professor of Christian Communications grapples with two issues: first, if theological education is for Church/Christian Ministry, there is no alternative but to be relevant to the context. Second, the author proposes a kind of “going beyond” from the present social scientific positivism or objectivism wherein one needs to be in a “engaged form” of theological education. It is on the relevancy of our contemporary theological education in the region and in any situation. The *last* essay is also a paper presented by Akok Amer, a pastor by profession at the *Ao Theological Educators’ Forum* (of ABAM in Impur, Nagaland). In his write-up, Amer takes up the ‘Relevance of Theological Education in Churches Today.’ Having investigated the impediments of the church today, the author provides some remedies for the clergies and laities. These remedies are proving to be the eye-openers for the church in the present generation.

S. Temjen Imchen
Editor

Recent Trends in Biblical Interpretation: Select Thematic and Contextual Readings from the Old Testament

*S. Temjen Imchen**

Introduction

There are multiple trends in biblical interpretation in our times. These developments have generated a lot of lively interest and significant contributions to our understanding and interpretation of the Bible, both in the Old and New Testament. From the very start and up to the present, the various interpretative methods of the Bible have given the primacy on the Christian faith. The biblical interpretation - as it has developed – has paid special emphasis on the actual interpretation of the texts as well as the contextual realities. Thus this paper has dual purpose: to introduce the students of the Old Testament to certain biblical interpretive methods (the traditional and newer methods) and relate it to some select thematic and contextual readings from the Old Testament. We begin by looking at the beginning of the trends in biblical interpretation that have influenced the interpretation of the text from an Old Testament perspective.

A. Historical Critical Approaches in Biblical Interpretation

The historical-critical method, also known as historical criticism or higher criticism, is a branch of criticism that investigates the origins of ancient texts in order to understand “the world

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behind the text.” The ‘historical criticism’ attempts to analyze texts in their historical context.¹ This method consists of a set of assumptions and an overall approach to the Bible. The historical-critical method began in the 17th century and gained popular recognition in the 19th and 20th centuries. The perspective of the early historical critic was rooted in Protestant Reformation ideology since its approach to biblical studies was free from the influence of traditional interpretation. It received a special impetus during the Reformation and Renaissance.² In historical-critical method, Bible is understood as historical in the sense that this method relates to a story of Israel, the text is seen as historical artifact, and the text is seen as historical product.³ Since the text is conceived as having its own history, it becomes possible to speak of the history of the text – its formation, stages of development, and adaptation. Thus far, the traditional method has made giant strides in the studies of the Old Testament and has been the focal point of biblical exegesis beginning from the seventeenth up to the 21st century CE.

Some of the examples of the historical-critical method are: *Source criticism, Form criticism, Redaction criticism, Social-scientific criticism*.⁴ We may examine one of these methods for sampling.

Social-Scientific Criticism

Social-science criticism accentuates the historical particularity of the Scriptures by describing in detail the original setting. ‘Social-scientific criticism’ of the Bible is that phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models, and research of the social sciences. As a component of the historical-critical method of exegesis, social-scientific criticism investigates biblical texts as meaningful configurations of language intended to communicate between composers and audiences.⁵ The sociological theory maintains that the history interweaves with social science. In the process,

the sociological theory studies (1) both the social aspects of the form, content of texts and the conditioning factors, resulting at the communication process; (2) the correlation of text’s linguistic, literary, theological and social dimensions; (3) the manner in which this textual communication was both a reflection of and a response to a specific social and cultural context and an instrument of social as well as literary and theological consequence. As a way forward, literary critical methods have emerged in the 20th century.

B. The New Literary Methods of Reading the Bible

The recent trends to the interpretation of the Old Testament focus their attention on the newer literary methods, which is a departure from the older historical-critical method. This is the paradigm of the Hebrew Bible as a literary production, having a set of theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches that represent a fundamental shift in the way Scripture is construed as text and that have enough in common to be grouped together as literary paradigm.⁶

The ‘new literary criticism’ of the Hebrew Bible operates on the assumption that it is not a historical discipline, but a strictly literary one, foregrounding the textuality of the biblical literature. The primary concern of this approach is that it looks at the text as an object, a product, not as a window upon historical actuality.⁷ David Clines and Cheryl Exum describes the general idea of the new literary criticism. This theory signifies all the criticisms that are post-structuralist.⁸ What is ‘new’ in the present discipline is that the theoretical approaches that have come into the limelight in literary studies generally in the 70s and 80s, and that can be expected to influence the way we read the Hebrew Bible in the present decade.⁹ It is not surprising, therefore, that Hebrew Bible studies should adopt the new literary methods which have already started to make their mark in biblical studies.¹⁰

The phrase ‘new method’ of biblical interpretation has its interest on the texts that see them as works of art in their own right, rather than as representations of the sensibilities of their

authors. Against the romantic view of the historical-critical kind, new criticism emphasizes the literariness of literary texts and tries to identify the characteristics of literary writing. The emergence of the new criticism marked a decisive break with the historical, philological and referential approach to literature dominant throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.¹¹

The new criticism operates on the assumption that the text is a closed system, and as such should be interpreted apart from either the historical or other *realia* (ordinary objects) to which it refers or the circumstances of its production and reception. In other words, the text has a life of its own independent of its origins and even of its author's intention, assuming it could be known. This approach, therefore, stood in direct antithesis to the emphasis on original meanings in historical-critical studies of Biblical texts.¹² In essence, the goal of literary criticism is to interpret the current text, in its finished form.

C. Some of the New Literary Methods in Relation to Select Thematic and Contextual Readings from the Old Testament

Now, considering the progress made in present times in the field of linguistics and literary studies, biblical exegesis makes use more and more of new methods of literary analysis as can be seen in literary methods such as: *rhetorical criticism, canonical criticism, narrative criticism, feminist criticism, psycho-analytic criticism, postcolonial criticism, subaltern criticisms* which have a bearing on the social contexts of reading the Scripture. We briefly discuss them in the following paragraphs.

1. Rhetorical Criticism

Rhetorical criticism, sharing the outlook of new criticism about the primacy of the text in itself, and often operating under the banner of 'the final form of the text', concerns itself with the way the language of texts is deployed to convey meaning. Its interests are in the devices of writing, in metaphor and parallelism, in narrative

and poetic structures, in stylistic figures.¹³ Identifying the speech-making or oratorical skill is primary in such a method. To the extent that rhetoric is thought of as "art of expressive speech, or of discourse, especially of literary composition," efforts to identify those aspects of a text that constitute its distinctive literary form and determine how they serve to express its message may be characterized as rhetorical criticism.¹⁴

In the field of Old Testament, rhetorical criticism was introduced through a presidential address to the *Society of Biblical Literature* delivered by J. Muilenberg in 1968 and published the following year. Muilenberg began by praising form criticism, which had been pioneered by Hermann Gunkel, but criticized it by saying that "Form criticism had run its course and urged a different approach to which he gave the name rhetorical criticism."¹⁵

As a method, the *rhetoric* is especially used to designate the formal study of oratory in the Greco-Roman world and the application of these principles to various forms of writing. Rhetorical criticism has often taken the form of identifying points of correspondence between the biblical text and the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition. This was the case early on Christian tradition, due to the strong influence of the classical tradition of Christian exegetes. Augustine, for example, in *On Christian Doctrine* identifies numerous examples of rhetorical literary devices within the biblical text.¹⁶

Muilenberg talked about the field of stylistics or aesthetic criticism that was flourishing in his time.¹⁷ Muilenberg stated three main interests: literary composition, structural patterns, and literary genres,¹⁸ all three of which concerned the way in which a passage was written. It studies the (a) *rhetorical unit*: A textual unit and an argumentative unit affects the reader's reasoning.¹⁹ (b) *Focus on Stylistics*: It includes the lyrical character, parallelism, meter, assonance, dramatic style, stylistic characteristics, imagery, rhetorical devices, literary types and forms, triads, structural patterns, and strophes.²⁰ For example the stylistic features of Isaiah

51:1-16 is one important example. (c) *Rhetorical Techniques*: The interest here is on persuasive power of the text based on factual truth, a set of beliefs and the power of a situation. (d) *Effect on the Audience*: Its the way a text manages its relationship with its audiences – an understanding which grows out of the ancient and modern traditions of rhetoric and hermeneutics.

In sum, it first treats the text as we have it, rather than fragmenting it into numerous hypothetical sources, fragments, and interpolations. The second strength of rhetorical criticism: it is historically rooted. When we try to understand how the text would have affected the ancient audience, we must work to understand that ancient audience. But, the problem with rhetorical criticism is that it does not say how the text goes about explicating the various literary features, which are often reader's imagination only. The next method is a text-centred approach, called canon criticism.

2. Canonical Criticism

Canonical criticism gives greater emphasis on the final form of the canonical text, by which the significance of the text as part of a sacred Scripture is studied and the canonization that developed in a historical process.²¹ B.S. Childs lays down the goal and method of a canonical approach to text criticism in his book, *Introduction to the Old Testament As Scripture*: "On the one hand, the canonical critic identifies with the historic Jewish community in starting with the received form of the literature which comprised the Hebrew canon. On the other hand, he seeks critically to discern the canonical function of the literature. That is to say, he attempts to analyze how the literature, made up of disparate parts, was constructed to perform a theological role as a scripture for a continuing religious community. Thus, the canonical function of a book is neither to be separated from its received form, nor is it to be simply identified with the whole."²²

The canonical approach came into prominence since 1970s, especially with B.S. Childs' work.²³ He attempts to analyze how the literature, made up of disparate parts, was constructed to

perform a theological role as a scripture for a continuing religious community. Thus, the canonical function of a book is neither to be separated from its received form, nor is it to be simply identified with the whole.

Its Method and Its Application: For Childs, the term "Canon" does not suggest a new exegetical technique but rather a context from which the literature is to be understood and interpreted. Like redaction criticism, canonical criticism applies the "history of tradition" model and focuses attention on the final, written form of the text rather than on its earlier stages of development.²⁴ For canonical critics, it is important that religious communities have accepted these writings as normative for their faith and practice. So regarded, they may be read and interpreted as writings that make explicit theological claims and ethical demands. As such, the canonical critic places the locus of revelation more squarely within the communities of faith, not in a reconstructed historical process that can be seen through the text. The next theory looks at the various elements of the narratives of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament.

3. Narrative Criticism

Narrative criticism is a literary method that analyzes the complex ways in which stories are told in biblical books written in narrative form. Their hybrid method concentrates on the plot, points of view, character development, dialogue, settings, and repetitions, gaps in the storyline, uses of irony and the effects on readers of these literary features that distinguish a particular biblical text from a letter, treatise, speech and or collection of unrelated stories.²⁵ Narrative criticism also goes by another name, called "the narrative-poetic criticism." It looks at the whole unit of the text, whether prose or poetry, with its doublets, repetitions, contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies. By this holistic view of the text, we get a theology created by the text and not by the author. The emphasis is on the whole poem or the whole story.²⁶

Biblical scholars invented the phrase “narrative criticism” to parallel the established designations of text, source, form, redaction and composition criticisms.²⁷ During the 1970s scholars of the Bible created this new method by drawing on various analytical methods that had been developed recently by literary critics in their study of modern novels, short stories and films, referred to collectively as “narratology.”²⁸ Although, there many books and journals²⁹ devoted to narrative literature on biblical studies in the 1970s, yet in Old Testament studies many regard Robert Alter’s work, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, published in 1981 as marking the beginning of a new stage in work on Hebrew narrative.³⁰

As a method, narrative critics generally of an *implied reader* who is presupposed by the narrative itself. This implied reader is distinct from any real, historical reader in the same way that the implied author is distinct from the real, historical author.³¹ Narrative analysis is not the reading and interpretation of individual *stories*, but the attempt to study the nature of ‘story’ itself. There is a distinction between ‘story’ and ‘plot’. The ‘story’ is the actual sequence of events as they happen, whereas the ‘plot’ is those events as they are edited, ordered, packaged, and presented in what we recognize as a narrative.³²

If applied in the Old Testament, then the interpreter can employ the procedures of ‘story’ and ‘plot’ in “the story of David’s relationship with Michal” (I Samuel 18 and 19).³³ As the story of David’s relationship with Michal unfolds, the character development, settings and gaps in the storyline are shown. The narrative tells the story of David’s unfolding relationship with his wife Michal, the daughter of Saul. Michal is introduced into the narrative shortly after David, a young man from the provincial town of Bethlehem, has made his debut as a military hero and won the adulation of the people. Like many biblical episodes, the passage has a formal frame: David is said to be eminently successful, which is proof of and consequence of God’s being

with him, and his divine election as king thereafter (2 Sam. 2:1ff). In any case, the frame-verses tell us something about David’s divine election to the newly created throne of Israel, but nothing about his moral character, and one of the most probing general perceptions of the biblical writers is that there is often a tension, sometimes perhaps even an absolute contradiction, between election and moral character. David is immensely popular because of his success, both at the beginning of the episode and at the end. David, then, remains a complete opacity (obscured) in this episode, while Saul is a total transparency and Michal a sliver of transparency surrounded by darkness.³⁴ Perhaps readers of this text will identify the plot in the story of David.

Stressing on the relevancy of the Old Testament narratives, W.C. Kaiser puts it, “One of the most distinguishing features of biblical narratives is the overwhelming presence of God. It is this focusing of the action that helps one to follow the plot. Plot simply refers to the fact that these stories have a sequence of action that involves a beginning, middle, and an end.”³⁵ The other method that comes next looks at the close-reading of the Scriptures.

4. Feminist Biblical Criticism

‘Feminist biblical criticism’ takes a close-reading of biblical texts from the perspective of women. The focus of feminist biblical criticism is not upon texts in themselves but upon texts in relation to another intellectual or political issue; and that could be said to be true of all the literary criticisms represented in this essay. The starting point of feminist criticism is of course not the given texts but the issues and concerns of feminism as a world view and as a political enterprise.³⁶ This enterprise is a close-reading of the biblical text.

Feminist theology **has its** origin with the first Women’s Conference held in Seneca Falls (NY), USA, in 1848. As history has it, To begin with, the Women’s Movement evolved out of social reform groups such as the Abolition of Slavery, the Social Purity and Temperance movements. Women began to realize that in order

to transform society they would need their own organizations to do so. They campaigned upon a whole range of issues; from guardianship of infants, property rights, divorce, access to higher education and the medical professions, to equal pay and protective legislation for women workers - many of which women are still campaigning for today.

As a method, it is applied in a variety of ways and encourages multiple readings, rejecting the notion that there is a 'proper way' to read a text as but another expression of male control of texts and male control of reading. It may concentrate on analysing the evidence contained in literary texts, and showing in detail the ways in which women's lives and voices have in fact been suppressed by texts. Or it may ask how, if at all, a woman's voice can be discovered in, or read into, an androcentric text.³⁷

The application of this method finds its expression when it rediscovers their biblical heritage and realizes that this heritage is part of our power today. The biblical heritage in their perspective is about the issue of gender equality. One of the basic tenets of feminist way of reading the Scriptures is Genesis 1:27, where it says "...in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Such a reading is significant for gender justice. The Bible teaches the full equality of men and women in Creation and in Redemption (Gen 1:26-28, 2:23, 5:1-2; I Cor 11:11-12; Gal 3:13, 28, 5:1; etc.).

5. Postcolonial Criticism

"Postcolonial criticism" or "Postcolonialism" is a literary approach that gives a kind of psychological relief to the people (the colonized) for whom it was born. Postcolonialism is a discipline that bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest of political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries, and the discourse of "minorities" within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South.

They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic "normality" to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories, of nations, races, communities, people.³⁸

This theory has its origins with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) which emerges as a key moment in the development of postcolonial theory within the academy. Drawing on Foucault and Gramsci, Said's monograph is a polemical and critical study of the ways in which the Occident has sought to objectify the Orient through the discourses of the arts and the human and social sciences.³⁹ For Said, the rationale for using the term *Orientalism* had come out two aspects. First, it is the generic term employed to describe the Western approach to the Orient. Second, *Orientalism* designates in Said's study 'that collection of dreams, images and vocabularies available to anyone who has tried to talk about what lies east of the dividing line.'⁴⁰

As a method, postcolonial theory has emerged from an interdisciplinary area of study which is concerned with the historical, political, philosophical, social, cultural and aesthetic structures of colonial domination and resistance; it refers to a way of reading, theorizing, interpreting and investigating colonial oppression and its legacy that is informed by an oppositional ethical agenda.⁴¹

R. S. Sugirtharajah, a postcolonial specialist, in his review of postcolonial criticism points out that "Postcolonial studies emerged as a way of engaging with the textual, historical, and cultural articulations of societies disturbed and transformed by the historical reality of colonial presence."⁴² He observes that Postcolonialism as a theory was initially conceived of only as creative literature and as a resistance discourse by the Western empires. But, now it is accepted as a 'grand theory,' or "criticism" which signifies a distinct methodological category and acts as a discursive force. Some of the postcolonial thinkers of the West are: Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, etc. And a

few of the prominent Asian and Hispanic postcolonial critics are R. S. Sugirtharajah, Kwok Pui-lan, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak Chakravorty, Fernando F. Segovia and others.

Postcolonial biblical criticism is best described as a variety of hermeneutical approaches characterized by their political nature and ideological agenda, and whose textual politics ultimately concerns both a hermeneutic of suspicion and hermeneutic of retrieval or restoration. Colonialism which is the capitalistic and exploitative method by a 'superior' nation (colonizer) to lord itself over a less privileged nation (colonized) leads to the impoverishment of the latter. The concept of colonialism has political, economic and cultural implications. It interacts with colonial history and its aftermath(s), which concerns both a history of repression and of repudiation, but it also deals with exposé and with restoration and transformation.

6. Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies.⁴³ This definition given by C. Glotfelty, though from an anthology of American ecocriticism, is equally important for any serious study on ecological science. It goes on to spell out some of the questions ecocritics ask, ranging from the mother-earth, the role of science for environment, literary studies related to environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics.

As a theory, it originated with the modern environmentalism begins with 'A Fable for Tomorrow' in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962).⁴⁴ Her book passionately talks about the images of natural beauty and emphasizing the 'harmony' of humanity and nature.

As a method, Eco-critical method or 'environmentalism' is relatively young as a social, political and philosophical movement, but already a number of distinct eco-philosophies have emerged that seem as likely to compete with each other as to combine in any revolutionary synthesis. Each approach understands environmental crisis in its own way, emphasizing aspects that are either amenable to solution in terms that it supplies or threatening to values it holds most dear, thus suggesting a range of political possibilities. If so, ecocriticism is a strong political mode of analysis, as the comparison with feminism and Marxism suggests. Ecocritics generally tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a 'green' moral and political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory. Developing the insights of earlier critical movements, ecofeminists, social ecologists and environmental justice advocates seek a synthesis of environmental and social concerns.

The understanding that human beings are seen to come from and return to the earth is not a curse so much as an observation: "until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19). The Bible teaches its readers to love life. "To live long on the land that the Lord your God gives you" is a blessing and a benediction (see Deut 25:15). The relationship between the nature and humans is explicit in the Hebrew Scriptures. This is most explicit in the Yahwist's account of creation. Human beings consist of two parts, and one of them is ground, earth, dirt. The other is not "spirit," but life. Such an understanding is taken for granted throughout the Hebrew Bible, assuming a profound identification of humanity with the earth.

Subsequently, environmentalism is widespread and, in certain respects, very powerful. For example, take the case of India. *The Narmada Bachao Andolan*, which is spear-headed by Medha Patkar is a powerful political force as well as a staunch environmental and Non-govern organization. The primary motif

of this environment-conscious social network is to preserve the lands that will be submerged by Narmada Dam Project. They do this by educating the local population through awareness programs driving the message home that injustice must be avoided in the name of development. If warnings are not heeded, then the people of the world in the Third Millennium may continue to experience many more tsunamis with catastrophic proportions of “2011 Japanese Tsunamis.”

7. Psychoanalytic Criticism

Psychoanalytic criticism is a form of literary criticism which uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of literature. Psychoanalysis itself is a form of therapy which ‘attempts to examine a person's unconscious mind to discover the hidden causes of their mental problems.’⁴⁵ The classic method of doing this is to get the patient to talk freely, in such a way that the repressed fears and conflicts which are causing the problems are brought into the conscious mind and openly faced, rather than remaining buried in the unconscious.

By origin, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), an Austrian, is known as the father of psychoanalysis. All of Freud's work depends upon the notion of the unconscious, which is the part of the mind beyond consciousness which nevertheless has a strong influence upon our actions.

As a method, many of Freud's ideas concern aspects of sexuality like *infantile sexuality*, *Oedipus complex*, *libido*, *oral*, *anal*, and the *phallic*. For instance, *infantile sexuality* is the notion that sexuality begins not at puberty, with physical maturing, but in infancy, especially through the infant's relationship with the mother.⁴⁶ Freudian interpretation is popularly thought to be a matter of attributing sexual connotations to objects. Although, psychoanalytical criticism seems to be scientific or non-theological, yet this method enriches the biblical exegesis.

8. Subaltern Criticism(s) as Contextual Readings

In biblical studies, there is a recent phenomenon called the “subaltern criticism.”⁴⁷ It takes the context of the faith community seriously. The contextual readings of the Bible operate under the new literary criticism because it derives its ideological position from the theology of liberation, which is based on the biblical texts. It is a new slogan that refers to the perspective of persons from regions and groups outside of the hegemonic power structure. As such, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* gives us such a viewpoint. A “subaltern” is that of “any officer in the British army who is lower in rank than a captain.”⁴⁸ Similarly, a subaltern generally comprises the various grades of lieutenant.⁴⁹ Consequently, this perspective does reflect the dominant ideology or somebody in authority in the past and present.

The term ‘subaltern’ is understood and taken to be ‘the inferior and less important consciousness of the people’ on the fringe who are socially, economically, culturally and politically marginalized. There is a dominant national consciousness in India. It is called the ‘mainstream’ of the nation, though it may not represent the consciousness of the majority of the people. Beside and behind the dominant consciousness, there is the subaltern consciousness.⁵⁰

As a method, it has its origins with Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, who popularized this term while writing to counter Fascism during 1920's and 1930's, who substituted it for ‘proletarian class,’⁵¹ possibly as a code-word in order to get his writings past prison censors, while others believe his usage to be more nuanced and less clear-cut.⁵² Subaltern is now regularly used as a term in history, anthropology, sociology and literature.⁵³

In South Asian history or more particularly the Indian sub-continent, the usage of such term as ‘Subaltern Studies’ has gained currency in the early 1980s in India. This needs a brief examination. A group of Indian scholars coined this term in their process of research, investigation, critical scholarship

and publication through their Subaltern Studies. As a result, the Subaltern studies published nine volumes on South Asian history and society, particularly from “subaltern perspective” during 1982-1996, hence, from then onwards this term attracts the attention of many researchers and scholars especially of social scientists and theologians. As a matter of fact, the new phenomenon called the ‘subaltern criticism’ is used “as a name for the general attitude of subordination in South Asian Society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way.”⁵⁴

As a method, it is applied in a situation where there a methodical oppression of the people in the lower strata in the Indian society by the so-called dominant class. This scenario can be likened to the “oppressed class turned into the oppressors.”⁵⁵ Historically speaking, even the so called upper-caste people in India were once subjugated by the foreign rulers. But, now the purported dominant class has turned the table by applying the hegemonic tendencies of the past rulers.

What is discussed above is true in India when it comes to the social and religious realities. The term ‘subaltern’ is very generally used in recent times by scholars from ‘Dalits’ point of view, especially focusing their attention on oppressive structures of “caste” in Indian context. In the Indian context, the mission era would be reviewed not only from the perspective of the elite, upper caste and male nationalist, but from the perspective of the Dalits, adivasis/tribals and women too.⁵⁶

In theory and practice, the subaltern-critical schools in India operate under the following labels, viz.: “Dalit Liberation Theology,” “Feminist Biblical Interpretation,” “Tribal Theology,” Adivasi Theology, etc. Some scholars call these methodologies “Contextual Theologies” or “Inculturation” in the sense that they have to do with the people in the particular geographical or local social-setting. But, the theological propositions mentioned above have come to be known as “subaltern methodologies” or still better “subaltern criticisms.” These alternative models call for an

all-out war against all forms of discrimination or categorization based on class, caste, age, gender and office. This is the reason why Sathianathan Clarke gives the real picture when he states, “The subordination and subjection that marks the life of Dalits in India bring them into the contours of a particularly contextual assembly of subalternity.”⁵⁷ Of all the oppressed sections of the Indian society, the Dalits, women and children are the most affected lots.

Just as there was/is a methodical oppression of certain sections of people “in the land of Mahatma Gandhi” a land founded on non-violence and regarded as one of the greatest democracies in the world, so also the subaltern criticisms – which are based on the biblical and liberative-praxis (practice), called “the Exodus model” – call for a drastic and methodical change in our thoughts and practices. That radical change is the practical realization of the desired freedom – freedom of belief, conscience, status, and livelihood. Indeed, the subaltern perspective of mission becomes the Indian contribution to the current ecumenical discussions on gospel and cultures.

Concluding Remarks

Recent trends to the Old Testament interpretation operates on the eclectic hermeneutical tools. The rise of the historical-critical method initiated the development of the traditional method of exegesis. It understands the Scripture as studying it from “the world behind the text.” As a way forward from the historical critical method, the new literary approaches study the Bible as the “world in front of the text.” The new method has a great bearing on aesthetics of the Old Testament texts and the contextual readings of the Bible. The new literary criticisms are indispensable tools for literature to achieve its goal of sensitizing its audience towards conscientization. The study of the recent trends in biblical interpretation maintains that the text has a life of its own. Accordingly, the text is autonomous, it has its own meaning, and it must be interpreted exclusively in its own terms.

The primary objective is that the Bible should continue to be the source and norm for human life today in the postmodern world, just as it has been for generations of Christians before us.

End Notes

1 A seminar paper presented at D. Min colloquium in SATHRI, Serampore w.e.f September 13-19, 2019.

The most important approaches under historical criticism include source criticism, form criticism, and tradition criticism/history. For a detailed discussion on these approaches, see G. A. KLINGBEIL, "Historical Criticism" in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 401-402; cf. John Barton, "Historical-critical Approaches," *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11-19.

2 Cf. E. Kreutz, *The Historical Critical Method*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 6-15.

3 C. R. Holladay, "Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. I, (eds.) L. E. KECK, et al, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 128, 131.

4 Source criticism. Source criticism questions whether texts came from a singular source, author, or historical context, and seeks to untangle the sources present within any given text. For example, source criticism reads the gospel of Matthew with an eye towards what material came from other gospels or from Matthew's own tradition. The gospel of Matthew shares some material with the gospel of Mark, and other material with the gospel of Luke; a source critic would be interested in which material is shared and how.

Form criticism seeks to understand the claims of a text by analyzing its linguistic patterns. For example, form criticism reads the Gospel of Matthew with an eye towards how certain words and expressions, like "the kingdom of heaven," reflect the broader claims of the text. *Redaction criticism* analyzes how redactors (i.e., editors) wove together various traditions into one whole. For example, redaction criticism reads the Gospel of Matthew with an eye toward how Matthew changes or uses material from other traditions (like the gospels of Mark and Luke) to fit the text's broader claims.

5 John H. Elliott, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 7.

6 Cf. C. R. Holladay, "Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. I, (eds.) L. E. Keck, et al, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 136.

7 David J. A. Clines & J. Cheryl Exum, *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 11.

8 Poststructuralism is a literary paradigm that refers to developments that built on but went beyond structuralism (and, for that matter, narrative criticism). Both share a common concern to move past the focus of these disciplines on meaning as residing in a text to a consideration of meaning residing in individual readers. Two major categories of post-structuralism are reader-response criticism and deconstruction. For a complete explanation see Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*,

9 Clines & Exum, *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 12.

10 Clines and Exum identify some important characteristics in the new literary criticism. The first thing that strikes one is that the new literary criticism eclectic. For e.g., feminist biblical criticism, psycho-analytic criticism. The second noticeable feature is that there is interweaving of methods. In Hebrew Bible 'new' literary studies, there is no methodological purism, does not sneer at other approaches. A third feature of these essays is their orientation to texts. A fourth characteristic is that they press beyond 'interpretation' to 'critique.' Clines & Exum, *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 13.

11 Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, Second Edition, 2002), 15-16.

12 J. Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 27.

13 Clines & Exum, *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 16; M. A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism: A New Approach to the Bible* (London: SPCK, 1993), 14

14 Muilenberg quoted by Holladay, "Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible," 140.

15 Gunkel's form criticism set a precedent for what Muilenberg wished to do. But Muilenberg thought that form criticism had come to an impasse and must go beyond it. See J. Muilenberg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," in *JBL*, Vol. 88, (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1969), 1-5.

16 These literary devices are not discussed in detail. See, C. R. Holladay "Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible," 140.

- 17 According to Muilenberg, its foremost representative was Alonso Shökel, see J. Muilenberg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 7.
- 18 Muilenberg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 8-18.
- 19 Muilenberg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 8-9.
- 20 There are other scholars like George A. Kennedy who focus on stylistics. To Kennedy, rhetoric probably means a style. In the 20th century, many biblical critics continued to limit their rhetorical criticism to stylistic concerns. Cf. *The Interpreter's Dictionary Bible*, vol. 5 (ed.) G. A. BUTTRICK, New York: Abingdon, 1956), 381-418.
- 21 Holladay, "Contemporary Methods ...," 134.
- 22 B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament As Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 96.
- 23 Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament As Scripture*, 96. Childs criticizes the textual criticism by saying that it fails to relate the text-critical enterprise to the history of the Old Testament canon. (p. 94). Childs developed the Canonical Method in 1970. However, Childs is unwilling to use the term Canonical Criticism. Some prefer to call it Canonical Approach. Cf. G. T. Sheppard, "Canonical Criticism" in *ABD* Vol.1, 861.
- 24 R. F. O' Toole quoted in Holladay, "Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible", 134.
- 25 S. S. Barty, "Narrative Criticism," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*. Edited by Ralph P. Martin & Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 787. Hereafter S. S. Barty, "Narrative Criticism," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development*. According to Powell, secular literary scholarship knows no such movement as *narrative criticism*. See, M. A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 19.
- 26 For further reading and examples see Kizhakkeyil, *A Guide to Biblical Studies*, Revised Edition, 305; Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism*, 19.
- 27 D. Rhoads and D. Michie quoted by Barty. See, S. S. Barty, "Narrative Criticism," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament*, 787-92.
- 28 S. S. Barty, "Narrative Criticism," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament*, 787. For Peter Barry, "narratology" is about the study of narrative structures. Narratology is a branch of structuralism, but it has achieved a certain independence from its parent. Also, because it takes much of its character and some of its terminology from linguistic theory, it seems logical to belong to a section on stylistics and to be studied under the newer literary methods. See, P. Barry, *Beginning Theory*, p. 222.

- 29 For example, the 1975 issue of *Semeia*, a journal devoted to new trends in biblical studies, was on "Classical Hebrew Narrative." In December of 1975, *JSOT* carried Robert Alter's "A Literary Approach to the Bible", which was devoted to Hebrew narrative. See P. D. Miscall, "Introduction to Narrative Literature" in *New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. II (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 539-40.
- 30 R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, (New York: Basic Books Inc, Publishers, 1982), 2-22.
- 31 Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism: A New Approach to the Bible*, 19.
- 32 Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 223.
- 33 The story of David's relationship with Michal begins with David marrying Michal, the daughter of Saul. (I Sam. 18:17-19). Cf. the stories of David's confrontation with Saul (I Samuel 24); David becomes the King of Judah, see 2 Sam. 2:1 ff; See R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 36-37; Cf. 115-120.
- 34 R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 117-18.
- 35 W. C. Kaiser, *The Old Testament Documents: Are they Reliable & Relevant?* (Secunderabad: OM Books, 2003), 174.
- 36 Cf. Clines & Exum, *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 17.
- 37 Clines & Exum, *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 17.
- 38 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 171.
- 39 Gail Ching-Liang Low and Julian Wolfreys, "Postcolonialism and the Difficulty of Difference" in *Introducing Literary Theories: A Guide and Glossary*, edited by Julian Wolfreys (Edinburg: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 201.
- 40 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (198), 73.
- 41 Liang Low and Wolfreys, "Postcolonialism and the Difficulty of Difference" in *Introducing Literary Theories: A Guide and Glossary*, 200-201.
- 42 R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 7.
- 43 C. Glotfelty and H. Fromm (eds), *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), xix.
- 44 Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (London: Penguin, (First published in 1962), 1999).
- 45 Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 96. See also Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1019.
- 46 For a detailed examination of Freud's ideas concerning sexuality and psychic processes, see P. Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 97-98. Later in his career

Freud moved on from dividing the mind into the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious to dividing it into parts he called the *Ego*, the *Super-Ego*, and the *Id*. See, J. Stiebert, *The Exile and the Prophet's Wife: Historical Events and Marginal Perspectives* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2005), 88.

- 47 Instead of the term “subaltern studies” or “subaltern perspective,” the present author prefers “subaltern criticism” in that there is a sustained critical research from a theological standpoint.
- 48 *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 8th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1541.
- 49 Retrieved from “<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subaltern> (accessed on August 23, 2011).
- 50 Nirmal Minz, *Meaning of Tribal Consciousness* (Religion and Society, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2), 12.
- 51 Cf. Sathianathan Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 6.
- 52 Cf. Stephen Morton, “The Subaltern: Genealogy of a concept” in Gayatri Spivak, *Ethics, Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, M.A.: Polity, Malden, 2007, pp. 96-97. Retrieved from “[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subaltern_\(postcolonialism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subaltern_(postcolonialism))”
- 53 Gyan Prakash, “Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 5, (December, 1994): 1475-1490, especially page 1476.
- 54 Ranjit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), vii.
- 55 This is an idiomatic expression that refers to the upper class people discriminating the low caste people in the Indian social hierarchy.
- 56 Jesudas M. Athyal, “Gospel And Cultures: A Subaltern reading of the history of Christian Mission in India,” See the article at <http://jmathyat.tripod.com/id18.html> (accessed August 23, 2011).
- 57 Sathianathan Clarke quoted in Ranjit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), 7.

Revolutionary Political Love of God: Re-reading the Story of Cain and Abel

*M. Peter Singh**

“An attack on other people’s humanity is by definition an assault on God.” Says Rabbi Shai Held,¹ and further calls people to talk about God who had created every human being on the face of the earth — black and white, male and female — in the image of God. The question that we need to ask is: is there a God or not, but what kind of a God is there. God is love. Love in the broadest possible sense, includes love as a social and political force, a structural reality, a collective endeavor, a shared social practice, a language, a relationship, a moment, a gesture, an identity, and a quest. God’s love extends to politics. God becomes a subject of love and politics. The Bible is highly political with loads of examples of God’s revolutionary political love which has been wrongly interpreted by the Christian interpreters over the years. This paper is an effort to make the case for a God who is about love and who asks human beings to live lives of a revolutionary political love. I begin to look into the first ‘murder’ story narrated in Genesis 4 as many of us believe, but I prefer to call this story of Cain and Abel as a story of God’s revolutionary love politics.

The Cain and Abel narrative was written as a “J,” (Yahwist) document which reflects the authors’ attempt to explain their own context by re-memorizing the beginning. It does not reflect the historical reality of Cain and Abel. “The Pentateuch as we know

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it . . . is the end product of a complex literary process—written, oral, or both—that did not come to a close until sometimes after the return from exile.”²² The authors of Genesis reflect on their own experiences and understanding of the world while drawing together written and oral sources to create what is currently known as the book of Genesis. Cain and Abel narrative is the result of this reflection and editing. There are elements of this story that have not been passed down to us. This narrative does not offer a satisfactory explanation.

The story starts with the birth of Cain, the expectations of him are piled high. His mother proclaims his birth as a divine creation. Cain and Abel are born to Eve after she and Adam have sinned and been expelled from the Garden of Eden. God then sends them out of the garden “to work the ground from which he had been taken.” This passage emphasizes the ‘bitterness of the farming life’ and is made even stronger by the words used to describe Adam's fate. The Hebrew term usually translated ‘till’ or ‘work’ the soil also means ‘serve’. Thus, God has in fact punished man by sending him ‘to serve the ground’—to become the servant and slave of the earth itself. Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil. In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the soil; and Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. The Lord paid heed to Abel and his offering, but to Cain and his offering He paid no heed. God’s politics begins here. Abel’s vulnerability becomes accentuated after the murder when God asks Cain the whereabouts of his brother. Cain’s response “Am I my brother's keeper?” and Abel’s blood said to be crying out highlight Abel’s voicelessness and what Van Wolde calls “negation of the existence of the other as an equal, as a brother.”²³ The subsequent punishment serves as an indication of the consequences of Cain's act. Cain was compelled to move from place to place to search out a living. Cain was prohibited from practicing his trade. As a farmer he is forced to leave his fields because the earth, in sucking up Abel's

blood, has been rendered unusable and infertile, according to the story. Thus Cain becomes a wanderer and a refugee, socially and culturally displaced. The murder made him ‘unclean’. Cain is ultimately banned from the community. It makes him vulnerable. Cain is forced to leave the place where he lived. Moreover, he leaves the presence of Yahweh, who in effect removed his divine protection. LaCocque writes, “Cain, banned from the clan, feels that he must hide from God and from people. A fugitive away from heaven and earth, his miserable existence would be the one of a living dead, roaming aimlessly in an absence of time and space.”²⁴ His story never ends here. Over time, the narrative of Cain and Abel has been identified as indicating the origins of violence and as an example of evil (Cain) and good (Abel). This becomes evident in the Christian scriptures as Jesus refers to this story. Abel is referred to in Matt 23:35 and Luke 11:51. In the Matthew text, Jesus identifies Abel as righteous and as the first person whose blood was shed. These words are within the context of Jesus denouncing the scribes and Pharisees. Similarly in the Luke passage, Jesus is denouncing the Pharisees and lawyers. He charges the generation in which he lives with having killed all the prophets, including Abel. This theme is continued in 1 John with Cain being described as being “from the evil one” (1 John 3:12). One can notice that the Genesis narrative gives no indication that Abel is either righteous or a prophet. Then the question is from where Jesus got this idea? As a student of Jewish literature, he might have read the Palestinian Targums of the 2nd Temple period, 538 BCE to 70 CE which includes an expansion of a conversation between Cain and Abel.

Cain answered to Abel: ‘Therefore your offering was accepted with delight, but my offering was not accepted with delight’. Abel answered: ‘The world was created by love and is governed according to the fruit of good deeds. Because the fruit of my deeds was better than yours and more prompt than yours, my offering

was accepted with delight'. Cain answered and said to Abel: 'There is no Judgment, and there is no other world, there is no gift of good reward for the just and no punishment for the wicked'. Abel answered and said to Cain: 'There is Judgment, there is a Judge, there is another world. There is the gift of good reward for the just and punishment for the wicked.'⁵

This conversation indicates that Abel's offering was given in love and Cain's offering was not given with love and that Cain did not believe in judgement for behavior. Cain's comments regarding judgment and reward suggest that, Cain did not understand that there are consequences for murder. Augustine further damaged this interpretation in his *The City of God*, in which he treats Cain as the first citizen of the city of man, while Abel belonged to the city of God. In Augustine's reading, Abel's status as a citizen of the city of God is not a matter of his actions or free choices; rather, he was predestined by grace, elected by grace, a citizen in the city of God.⁶ For Philo, Cain represents a type of wickedness and Abel a type of holiness.⁷ Cain became the archetype of evil which he associates with self-loving. Any 'self-lover' thus shares in the murder committed by Cain. According to Hindy Najman, Cain and Abel represent character traits which result into perpetual conflict. The professions of Cain and Abel, tiller of the soil and shepherd coincide with the traits of their respective characters. Cain as tiller of the soil guides himself to lifeless and material objects, led away from contemplating life and living things. Cain, the self-lover focussing on the now and Abel, the God-lover contemplating the future, cannot coexist in peace. Such writings have heavily influenced the early Christianity that led to the exclusion of Jews from various spheres and fed a particular anti-Judaism within Christianity.

Alan Boesak associates Cain with oppression. The fear that Cain experiences, is read into white fear. Cain continues to live, but it is a life of "restlessness, uneasiness, uncertainty, violence,

ceaseless wandering, a life in which there is no peace with God and one's fellows."⁸ In contrast to Boesak's association of Cain with oppression, Itumeleng Mosala believes that Cain remains black, a victim of a class struggle, a symbol for the village peasants dispossessed of their land by the ruling class in the Davidic monarchy, represented by Abel.⁹ But, because the ruling elite wrote the text, Abel will not be the oppressor. He becomes the victim. Mosala says, "The story of the oppressed has been stolen by the oppressors and is being used as an ideological weapon against the oppressed in subsequent histories."¹⁰ In recent years, several commentators have connected the Cain and Abel narrative with particular contemporary stories of violence using liberation theology. These interpretations offer contextual reflections on the story with a focus on re-imagining or re-interpreting the narrative in ways that bring about a more just world. In addition to interpretations that have focused on human violence, other scholars have a particular focus on violence directed at the earth. These types of interpretations are particularly relevant for contemporary culture as more awareness is focussed on environmental concerns. From a strictly agricultural perspective the addition of Abel's blood should be good for the earth, and yet Abel's blood cries out from the ground. Regina M. Schwartz argues, in *The Curse of Cain*, that there is a scarcity of almost everything—blessing, land, power—and this scarcity is at the root of the violence found in the Cain and Abel narrative and within contemporary culture. We may observe that this story has several gaps that were filled by the interpreters in their own way. The question is who is responsible for this? If Cain is evil, can grace, the possibility of transformation exist for him? This is one of the struggles that the narrative of Cain and Abel highlights: is it possible for those who perpetrate violence to be redeemed? While many of the mass murderers of the Old Testament namely David and Solomon are glorified by the interpreters, and the figures most celebrated in the Hebrew Bible are esteemed for their dissent and disobedience, why Cain

is treated as evil? The Genesis text does not make the distinction between good and evil rather narrates a revolutionary politics of God.

An in-depth reading of this text shows that this text emphasizes that the idea of making a sacrifice to God is Cain's. It is Cain who inclines towards piety, and thinks to take some of his meagre supply of food, which he has scraped from the soil, and sacrifice it to God in gratitude. Further, as a tiller of the soil Cain is following the instructions God had given to Adam. He works the ground just as God had told his father to do. He submits to God's will, and even, amid the curse and the hardship, finds it in his heart to be grateful to God for what he has. On the other hand, Abel is different. He merely follows Cain's example in making a sacrifice. There is no suggestion that his offering is superior to his brother's. While Cain has followed in his father's career and tilled the soil in accordance with God's instructions, in becoming a shepherd Abel has found a way to escape the curse upon the soil. The biblical text emphasizes the fact that this is about what Abel wants, first and foremost, rather than about what God wants. So the pious and hard-working Cain's sacrifice is rejected while the sacrifice of the self-indulgent Abel is accepted. How can this be brought into an understandable framework?

Cain and Abel narrative is not a murder story rather it presents the choice of the best way of life. Both their professions represent an ethics of life. First, the life of the farmer as portrayed in Cain who has piously accepted the curse of the soil ... as unchallengeable. His response is to submit, as his father did. In the eyes of the biblical author, Cain represents the life of the farmer, obeying in gratitude the custom that has been handed down to him. Cain represents the life of a farmer. Second, is the life of the shepherd. Abel takes the curse of the soil as a fact. His response is the opposite of submission. He resists with ingenuity and daring, risking the anger of man and God to secure improvement for himself and for his children. Abel represents the

life of the shepherd. This is the beauty of this story. Two sons one by way of submission became a farmer and the other by way of resistance became a shepherd. Submission and resistance are not contradicting ways of life, rather complementing each other. Cain and Abel are presented as distinct theoretical types. Cain is a farmer whose highest value is obedience. Abel is a shepherd who stands for the spirit of freedom in search of that which is the true good. Further, farming and shepherding are found in God's politics. God wanted Adam not to remain in Eden rather to move out and cultivate. Farming is not the outcome of sin. Similarly God wants an improvement in human life, shepherding. Farming and shepherding are inter-related ways of life. God never condemns Cain's profession. But, at the same time as Yoram Hazony says that God accepts the offering of a man who seeks to improve things, to make them good of himself and his own initiative. He further says, "The biblical narrative endorses ... an *outsider's ethics*, which encourages a critique even of things that appear to be decreed by God in the name of what is genuinely beneficial to man."¹¹ He continues, "what is genuinely beneficial to man is that which will ultimately find favour in God's eyes, even if the idea did not originate with God and even if it was in opposition to God's original plan. This is what God finds in Abel, and the reason he accepts his sacrifice."¹² In re-imagining the narrative, one can imagine that Cain and Abel have worked hard. They come to offer the meat and fruit offerings to God that is the result of their hard labour. Here one can boldly imagine who provoked anger. Christian theology over the years tried to protect God and legitimising God's actions. Theology is not merely God-talk, rather it is talking to God. Theology is raising questions to God and it is risking God. In this process of risking God, we explore the tensions that God experienced with humanity right from the beginning.

Scripture carries a tension between God's love as conditional and unconditional and this is seen in how the Cain and Abel

narrative has been interpreted. The text indicates that it is God who rejects the offering. This may reflect the authors' attempt to describe God as an arbitrary judge. In this line of thinking God's love and acceptance appear arbitrary. In God's question and advice, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Gen. 4:7), Cain is being given the opportunity to choose. The choices and their consequences are not out of his control. Cain has the ability to control his own destiny and that of Abel. To do well comes from the Hebrew *yataw* "to be good." This includes "performing an expected function." One of Cain's expected functions is to be a brother. The implication in this context is that he will be a better brother than he was in the past and it seems that the expectations being placed on him are being raised. Cain is being given an opportunity to make a good choice, a choice that will land him closer to the mark with regards to his relationship with Abel. There is room for mistakes and disappointments but Cain needs to remember that one of his primary roles is to be a brother.

Here comes the revolutionary love of God. God grants mercy, grace and hope to Cain. Then the LORD said to him, *Not so! If anyone slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him.* (Genesis 4:15). God evidently believed that Cain's murder did not deserve death, either by his or anyone else's hand and this may be a sign that there is more to this murder story than we are told. What is the mark that God placed on Cain? Von Kellenbach describes the mark of Cain as "a path of moral repair based on openness and transparency."¹³ It is not a stigma, but a mark of protection that enables life. Cain does not die but settles in Nod, marries, fathers a son, builds a city and establishes art music and culture. The mark of Cain is not a stigma to denounce but is a sign of protection that turns the public proclamation of guilt into an integral aspect of Cain's redemption. The mark of

Cain is a sign of grace, because transparency removes the sting of guilt. Cain's story correlates redemption, transparency, and remembrance in as much as repentance is turned into a public affair. Moreover, his new life is built upon his ability to honour the memory of his brother. The mark becomes a symbol of the liberating power of memory that provides Cain with the possibility of transformation, moral regeneration and the restoration of his human dignity. Cain's crime does not end his life. He lives on and gets a second chance, but only because he does not erase the guilt of his past. This is the revolutionary love politics of God. His life as city builder and father of toolmakers, artisans, and musicians depends on his ability to respect the memory of his brother and to accept his responsibility. Memory and re-remembering is incredibly important in resolving conflict. They help to heal the God-human relationship. Dorothee Söelle writes, "Whoever does not remember, whoever pretends not to have known, and whoever did not want to know . . . has understood nothing at all. God is memory, and that is why to remember is to approach God. To forget, to repress, is a way of getting rid of God."¹⁴

Revolutionary love is restorative justice. Justice is often confused with punishment. Christopher Marshall defines the difference between restorative justice and retributive punishment. The concept of retributive justice requires punishment. Justice demands equity of suffering. Restorative justice, by contrast, is more interested in promoting healing and reconciliation than in measuring appropriate doses of corrective pain for particular crimes. What justice really demands is not the balancing of pain between victim and offender, but concerted action to overcome pain. It requires offenders to act in ways that will restore the dignity, autonomy and well-being of their victims, as well their own.¹⁵ Restorative punishment plays a crucial role in experiencing the pain of taking responsibility and thus in creating justice. Emil Brunner speaks of justice as 'just punishment' and restoring a 'just order.'¹⁶ Bishop Desmond Tutu writes, in "restorative justice, the

central concern is not retribution or punishment ... in the spirit of ubuntu, the central concern is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offence.”¹⁷ Restorative justice is shalom.

Biblical scholarship and Christian piety have depoliticised Jesus and domesticated Jesus which has resulted in a drastic impoverishment of Jesus’ message. Gospels record four themes running through Jesus’ attacks on injustice: greed, abusive power, violence and exclusion. Jesus was aware that the world is with good and evil, justice and injustice, beauty and unnecessary suffering, love and hate. God’s love is uncontrolling. God’s love is respecting the freedom of a person and then granting grace and mercy. From the beginning, the world was not under the control of God. Outside of an uncontrolling God, one can experience the freedom to live and love. The God who controls could not be our anchor. But the God who loves us, comforts us, brings us support by prompting the actions of others. Therefore, we need a theology that supports the love revolution we desperately need. I propose that we who feel called to express revolutionary love should set aside the view that God is in control or even could control others. We should instead believe that God is the source, inspiration, and empowerer of the loving actions that oppose injustice and promote shalom.

End Notes

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- 9 Itumeleng Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 23.
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- 11 Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, Cambridge, 2012, p. 23.
- 12 Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*, Cambridge, 2012, p. 23.
- 13 Katharina von Kellenbach, *The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Post-war Lives of Nazi Perpetrators* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 208.
- 14 Dorothee Söelle, *Against the Wind: Memoir of a Radical Christian*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 130.
- 15 Christopher Marshall, “Restorative Justice and Punishment,” Occasional Papers, St. John’s in the City, <http://www.stjohnsinthecity.org.nz/about/publications.htm> (accessed on September 10, 2018), 1.
- 16 Emil Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order*, 149.
- 17 Desmond Tutu describe an ideal for life in community. When we provide a safe space for one another, when we encourage one another, when we find space to collaborate – we create community, better yet – Ubuntu. We believe that a central place in striving for Ubuntu is the development and care for peace. See Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (London: Rider, 1999), 54-55.

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The Event of Foot Washing in John 13:1-20 as a Paradigm for Witnessing Christ in the South Asian Context

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Introduction

The event of foot washing in John 13:1-20 functions as one of the significant narrative masterpieces with a lot of theological insights. The pericope as a whole requires narrative and theological appreciation as it invites the readers toward a unique activity of Jesus. In the current article, we will look at John 13:1-20 both within the framework of the Farewell Discourse as well as from the overall structure of the Gospel. It is primarily an attempt to see the *being* and *becoming* natures of Jesus and his instructions for disciples' *doing*. The study also attempts to see how the narrative exists as a paradigm in the contemporary missional and ministerial contexts of the South Asia. John's Gospel can be considered as a flexible, accommodative, and gnomic literary work that absorbs the situational aspects of people 'everywhere

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and ever.' Keeping all these in mind, this article endeavors to answer the following questions in brief: What is the message the event of foot washing communicates to the global context? How the event functions as a paradigm for the contemporary South Asia for Christian witnessing? How the event functions within the Farewell Discourse in particular and in relation to the events such as the incarnation and the death of Jesus in general? How the event functions within the narrative framework of John as a paradigm for Jesus's servanthood? The task of the study is threefold: first, as a Johannine student, explore the literary and theological aspects of John 13:1-20; second, as a gnomic interpreter, investigate the universal and accommodative tendencies of the Fourth Gospel; and third, as a South Asian contextual reader of the text, fuse the textual and contextual horizons for application.

John 13:1-20 within the Narrative Framework of the Fourth Gospel

John's style of demonstrating the discourses and narratives is characteristic. While the Synoptic evangelists narrate the instructions of Jesus to his disciples throughout his ministry, John amasses the whole set of instructions and presents them together in the context of the Last Supper.¹ The Farewell Discourse of John in chaps. 13-17 follows the literary style of *farewell discourses* or *testaments* of famous men.² John shares some of the literary features parallel to *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* that contains the last words of each of the patriarchs to their people.³ Moreover, John's tradition also shows striking similarities with some of the Greco-Roman symposium traditions.⁴ Within the larger framework of the Gospel, there is a shift of emphasis happens from the public ministry of Jesus (chaps. 2-12) to his private ministry (chaps. 13-17).⁵ While John places 1:1-18 at the outset of the *Book of Signs* with a punch line that *the Word became flesh and dwelt among humanity* (1:14), later on he places 13:1-20 as an introductory narrative for the *Book of Glory* with an emphasis on *the Teacher-Lord became a servant among his disciples* (13:14).⁶

On the one hand, in John the Passover was celebrated on the eve of the festival (13:1; 18:28); on the other hand, the Synoptic Gospels indicate that Jesus celebrated it with his disciples (see Mark 14:12; Luke 22:15).⁷ In John's portrayal, he attempts to foreground Jesus as the Passover lamb. John 13:1-30 falls into two major sections: vv. 1-20, describing the foot washing of the disciples by Jesus; and vv. 21-30, the announcement of Jesus of his impending betrayal by a disciple.⁸ The event of foot washing in vv. 4-11 and the succeeding interpretation of it are persuasive within John's narrative framework. Keener (2003:2:891) considers "the foot washing as the narrative introduction to the Farewell Discourse that prefigures the passion."⁹ This nature of the story underscores its feature as a *hypodeigma* (i.e., an 'example,' v. 15).¹⁰ Interspersing the event of foot washing (vv. 1-20) with the betrayal (vv. 21-30) demonstrates the imminent death of Jesus.¹¹ Jesus's servant-model in 13:1-20 introduced at the outset of the *Book of Glory* becomes an indication for the glorification motif ahead.

The narrative elements of John 13:1-20 initiates the resolution of John's macro-story. Jesus's 'servant-model' has to be looked at from within a 'honor and shame' context.¹² Johannine irony comes into its culmination here in 13:1-20, where servanthood is portrayed as masterhood.¹³ That prefigures to the motif of Jesus's passion in John, in which death is portrayed as glorification.¹⁴ In v. 1, the narrator indicates that Jesus knew his hour had come (cf. 12:23). In John, the 'hour' of Jesus is an indication to the death/glorification of the Son of Man.¹⁵ It is over against the trend of the first twelve chapters where Jesus mostly states that his hour has not yet come.¹⁶ In the context of foot washing, the presence of Judas is once again brought to the foreground (v. 2; cf. v. 18). That shows the connection between the foot washing event and the anticipated death of Jesus within John's narrative framework. The entire event of foot washing is narrated within an inclusion with a reference to Judas in vv. 1 and 18. In v. 3, the

incarnation of Jesus and the 'U-shaped' plot-structure of John are inscribed: Father had given all things into his [Jesus's] hands (as the pre-existent son); that he had come from God (his incarnation to the world); and was going to God (Jesus's returning back to the Father).¹⁷ Paschal sees two levels of interpretations based on varied viewpoints of scholars like Brown and Boismard: first, a soteriological/christological interpretation in 13:6-10; and second, a moral interpretation in 13:12-17.¹⁸ In Bultmann's interpretation, he suggests that the evangelist wove the two together.¹⁹ Based on the coherent pattern of the narrator and the speech-and-action integration of the protagonist, readers can perceive John 13:1-20 as a nicely plotted and sequentially interweaved story. The Farewell Discourse follows its own literary format (13:1-30 [a narrative]; 13:31-16:33 [discourse/s]; and 17:1-26 [a prayer]) in which the foot washing event sustains a distinct literary style from the rest of the materials.²⁰ A comparison between Jesus's speeches in the Farewell Discourse and Moses's Deuteronomistic instructions suggest the covenantal language in both of the masterpieces and demonstrates the way Jesus is cast as the new Moses who institutes a new covenant with the new Israel.²¹ The event of foot washing plays a significant that leads the readers toward the covenantal discourses as well as the death of Jesus. In the following sections, we will expound some of the key factors within the narrative framework of John 13:1-20.

Jesus's Nature of 'Being': Indications about His Divine Attributes

Jesus's nature of 'being' is understood in terms of his universality (4:42), supernatural power (6:1-15) and existence as one 'from above' (8:23).²² God's eternal existence and essential unity with the Son became a "historical and dynamic reality in Jesus as the Christ."²³ The Son's existence in relation to the eternals rather than the temporal aspects demonstrates his being beyond time and space.²⁴ This nature of Jesus is foregrounded within the macro-narrative framework of the Fourth Gospel. Within

John's macro-structure, Jesus is introduced from the eternal point of view and his presence is delineated in the following ways: he was with God right from the beginning (1:1b), he was God himself (1:1c), all things came into being through him (1:2), the 'Word' became flesh and dwelt among humanity (1:14a), and he shared the glory, grace, and truth of the Father (1:14b). Jesus's identity and authority as the begotten Son of God (1:14b, 18; 3:16) enabled him to appear as a distinct figure within John's narrative framework.²⁵ The interlocutors of Jesus recognize him as 'Teacher' or 'Rabbi'/'Rabbouni' in several narrative intervals (1:49; 3:2; 4:31; 11:8; 20:16).²⁶ His conversations with Nicodemus (3:1-10), the Samaritan woman (4:7-26), the Jews in the Synagogue at Capernaum (6:24-59) and during the Feast of Tabernacles (7:10-21) affirm his role and status as a teacher.²⁷ Moreover, his position as 'Lord' is proclaimed alongside of the title 'Teacher.'²⁸ These titles in John do not function in parochial senses, but rather they demonstrate Jesus's divine attributes as he is the teller of heavenly truths and as one who executes authority from above. While the signs in John reveal his lordship over the created things (2:1-12; 4:43-54; 5:1-18; 6:1-15, 16-21; 9:1-41; 11:1-54),²⁹ his 'I AM' sayings demonstrate his role as an authentic teacher of heavenly realities (6:35, 48; 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1).³⁰ It is further supported by the utterances of the Johannine characters: "Lord, to whom can we go?" (Simon Peter, 6:68); "Lord, I believe" (the healed man [9:38]; and Martha [11:27]); "I have seen the Lord" (Mary Magdalene, 20:18); "We have seen the Lord" (the disciples, 20:25); and "It is the Lord" (Beloved Disciple, 21:7).³¹ But Thomas's utterance, "My Lord and my God," takes the attention of the reader one step further to the oneness motif and to the divine realities (20:28).³² Jesus's vertical christological attributes are emphasized within the micro-narrative structure of 13:1-20. Within the macro-structure of John, there is a higher regard for Jesus's 'being' as the Son of God and as the Lord-Teacher from above (cf. 3:2).³³ Jesus's rise

up from the table in 13:4 is symbolical of his departure from the elevated 'position' and 'honor' to the status of service.³⁴ Through his utterances and actions, Jesus proved that he is a teacher par-excellence and the lord of all times. As the ancient rhetoric rightly suggests, Jesus's speech here is supplemented by his action.

In 13:1, the narrator states about Jesus's departure from the world of 'becoming' to the world of 'being.' The 'hour,' 'glorification,' and 'lifting up' of the Son of Man are revealed through Jesus's death on the cross (cf. v. 1b).³⁵ While the event of 'word becoming flesh' brings about a transition in Jesus's mission from the 'world from above' to the 'world from below' (1:3c-4, 14),³⁶ the hour/glorification/lifting up on the cross reveals the reversal of the event.³⁷ While, at the beginning, Jesus appears from the 'world of being' to the 'world of becoming,' at the end, a transition occurs when Jesus moves from the 'world of becoming' to the 'world of being' (v. 1)³⁸ The references about his knowing in vv. 1 and 3 are clear marks of his 'being' nature over against his interlocutors' unknowing character. Borchert comments that, "Building upon the statements concerning Jesus's knowledge of his hour in v. 1, the evangelist expands the idea here to remind the reader that Jesus was clearly knowledgeable about his origin and his goal or destiny."³⁹ Thus Jesus's omniscient nature is made obvious within the narrative master plan of the Gospel.⁴⁰ While the Father committing "all things" (*panta*) into Son's hands as an active partner in creation (1:3), Jesus appears as an authoritative and powerful figure in human history.⁴¹ Jesus's knowledge, love, and action in contrast to the unrecognizing, hateful, and misunderstanding natures of the Jews [and the disciples] reveal his divine attributes (vv. 1-5).⁴² Jesus knows that the Father had given all things into his hands, his coming from God, and his going back to God (v. 1). Jesus's statement in v. 13 is significant to note here: "You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am." While Peter in his personal conversation calls Jesus "Lord" (vv. 6, 9), the disciples as a whole address him

as “Teacher” and “Lord” (vv. 13-14).⁴³ Jesus acknowledges their utterances and affirms his status as “I am.” While Nicodemus refers him as a heavenly teacher, the title has overtones of divinity (3:2).⁴⁴ Jesus’s nature as a sent one of God is highlighted in v. 20. As Jesus is ‘from above’ (*ek tōn anō*, 8:23), seeing him is seeing God. As an agent of God, he has life in himself and has authority to execute judgment (5:26-27). These divine attributes of Jesus enable him to be the authoritative one of God.⁴⁵

Jesus’s Nature of ‘Becoming’: His Servant Model

The Gospel of John as a whole describes how God himself became a human being. Jesus’s descend from the heavens, total identification with the humans (1:14), and his service in the world (13:1-20) are emphasized by the Fourth Evangelist. John 13:1-20 also demonstrates the horizontal and humanitarian aspects in the ministry of Jesus. In the first century CE context, foot washing was considered as a menial work and was usually practiced by slaves and Gentiles.⁴⁶ In the episode, Jesus’s posture of getting up from the table, taking off his outer robe, tying a towel around, pouring water into a basin, washing the feet of the disciples, and wiping them with a towel that was tied around him demonstrates his serving attitude (v. 4).⁴⁷ Michaels says that, “When his work is done, he will reverse those actions: ‘So, when he had washed their feet, he took his garments and reclined again’ (v. 12).”⁴⁸ While reclining at the table is symbolical of his honorable position, washing the feet of the disciples demonstrates his gesture of humility.⁴⁹ The narrative makes it clear that though Jesus was honorable he came to serve humanity.⁵⁰ The event of washing the feet exemplifies Jesus’s pattern of sacrificial and costly service. It is in this manner the disciples are expected to show their *agapē* to one another as they are engaged in witnessing Christ in the world (13:34-35).⁵¹ This understanding of John’s Christology goes in alignment with the suffering servant motifs in the Book of Isaiah and the Gospel of Mark (see Isa 52:13-53:12).⁵² While Mark delineates a ‘theology of power’ at the outset of the Gospel

(chaps. 1-8), later on he shifts the emphasis to a ‘theology of suffering’ (Mark 10:45).⁵³ Such a paradigmatic presentation of Christ’s work is obvious within the narrative framework of John 13:1-20. On the one hand, Jesus’s *being* nature is presented at a vertical level, and on the other hand, his *becoming* nature is shown at a horizontal level. These extreme positions cannot be considered as contrasting elements within Johannine Christology. Rather, they should be perceived as Christological elements that progress from one level to the other.

Jesus’s love for his disciples extends until the end (v. 2). It demonstrates how love as the essential truth of God extends from heaven to earth. In v. 3, the narrator places the clause on Jesus’s coming from God at the center with a purpose. While the construction “Father had given all things into his [Jesus’s] hands” (the pre-incarnate stage) is placed at the beginning and the expression “he [Jesus] was going to the Father” (the ascension to heaven) at the end, the expression “he [Jesus] had come from God” (his descent from heaven) emphasizes a significant aspect within the passage. As Jesus is the word became flesh, he reveals his characteristic role of servant leadership. Jesus’s statement to the disciples, “your Lord and Teacher . . . washed your feet” (v. 14), emphasizes the aspect of humility and servant leadership.⁵⁴ He further states that “servants are not greater than their master nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them” (v. 16).⁵⁵ This speech has to be understood in the light of his statement in v. 20: “whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.” Jesus’s statement here indicates that no one can respect a master or a sender without respecting his/her servant and messenger. Thus, Jesus’s servanthood in relation to the Father and the disciples’ servanthood in relation to Jesus are interknitted together. Peter was hesitant to see “the Holy One of God” humbling himself and perform such a menial service for one so unworthy (vv. 6-11).⁵⁶ In a context in which ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ are interpreted on the basis of the

laws of purification and ‘honor’ and ‘shame’ on the basis of role and status, Jesus shares his views from an eternal and heavenly perspective.⁵⁷ Peter’s appointment as a disciple (1:42) and his presence with Jesus in the Synagogue at Capernaum (6:66-71) would have made him clean.⁵⁸ What Jesus spoke to the disciples was spirit and life (6:63). Peter in his conversation acknowledges that Jesus possesses words of eternal life (6:68). As he is internally cleansed, he and those who follow Jesus need only the washing of the feet (6:60-71).⁵⁹ Jesus washes their feet as a symbolical gesture and as a model of service in order to communicate with them certain lessons.⁶⁰ Jesus, as the Paschal Lamb (1:29, 36; 19:36), demonstrates an image of sacrifice through washing the feet of the disciples.⁶¹ Jesus’s act in this passage prefigures his imminent passion and death on the cross.⁶² The event as a whole foreshadows Jesus’s service to the world as a paschal lamb.⁶³

Jesus’s Instruction on ‘Doing’: A New Lesson for the Disciples

In vv. 14-15, Jesus instructs his disciples that they should wash one another’s feet. In v. 15, Jesus tells his disciples that “you should do (*poiēte*) as I have done (*epoiēsa*) to you” (v. 15b). While *poiēte* remains as the present active subjunctive form and *epoiēsa* as the aorist active indicative form of *poiēō*, the pointed activity of Jesus and the subsequent instructions for the disciples to practice are indicated.⁶⁴ In this context, Jesus illustrates the event as an example (*hypodeigma*) for the disciples to practice in the future. Jesus here insists that the disciples should do as he has done to them (vv. 14-15).⁶⁵ Through Jesus’s activity and the subsequent instruction, the disciples are prepared to carry out the virtue of humility through the act of service.⁶⁶ The narrator of the story points out that the disciples are expected to demonstrate the aspect of *Imitatio Christi*.⁶⁷ Michaels says that, “The noun ‘example’ and the repetition of ‘you too’ make it clear that Jesus is calling on his disciples to do for each other exactly what he has done for them. The repetition of the verb ‘to do’—‘just as I did’ and ‘that

you might do’—confirms that he is urging them to imitate not just his humble attitude, but the literal action of washing feet.”⁶⁸ While Jesus initiates the service as an honorable task, the society considers that as an act of the weak.⁶⁹ As Jesus does the will of God and serving the humanity at the same time, the disciples are instructed to do the same. Through the very activity of Jesus, the Johannine community is instructed in a special way to follow a pattern of sacrificial and costly service to humanity.⁷⁰ The *agapē*-centric ethics of the Fourth Gospel is foreshadowed in its apex level within the Farewell Discourse. The Johannine ethics that are recapitulated within a punch line phrase like “love one another” (13:34). This phraseology of John can be considered as a call for caring the poor and outcaste within varied life situations.⁷¹ As the Johannine community was an expelled messianic group from the synagogue, their mutual relationship and service among themselves in utter humility are emphasized. As Jesus was selflessly serving them and sacrificing himself for the humanity even to the point of cross, the disciples are asked to follow his steps to witness Christ through the gesture of service.⁷²

The narrator foregrounds the relationship among the Father, the Son, and the believers (vv. 16-18). When God the Master sends his Son as a Servant, the Son exemplifies a servant model of leadership. Though he possesses a superior status on a par with the Father and belongs to the world of *being*, Jesus turns to be a servant and he exemplifies selfless model of leadership on earth. Jesus’s humility and servanthood provide the disciples practical lessons to remain as faithful servants of God.⁷³ Furthermore, while God the Father functions as the sender, Jesus the Son appears as the messenger of God. As Jesus proceeds from the world of the ‘sender,’ he exists in the world below as the messenger of God. As Jesus the messenger turns to be the ‘sender’ of God, he sends the disciples as messengers of God. Here Jesus prepares his disciples to do what he has already done for them.⁷⁴ Jesus, though Master and Sender, comes in the form of a servant and a messenger and

instructs the disciples to witness God even at the point of death.⁷⁵ If the disciples continue to know the things that Jesus actualized in this world and imitate his activities, they will be considered as blessed (v. 17).⁷⁶ While Peter is foregrounded as an insider whom Jesus instructs the truth, Judas is identified as a representative of the outsiders.⁷⁷ Paschal comments that, “As Peter represents the community of faith, Judas represents those who reject Jesus’s sacrificial gift and its concomitant demand for service to others.”⁷⁸ In that sense, the *hypodeigma* is also demonstrated through the faith responses of Simon Peter and Judas Iscariot. Jesus instructs here that people can do the will of God through their faith response to Jesus, attitude of loving relationship with one another, and the virtue of servant model of discipleship. In short, Jesus, the ‘sent one,’ functions as ‘the sender.’⁷⁹ When the disciples receive Jesus and accept his authority to send, they shall be turned to be messengers of the eternal truth of God.⁸⁰

Relevance of the Study in the South Asian Context

John 13:1-20 recapitulates the theological master plan of the Fourth Gospel. Jesus’s being nature and divine status, his becoming nature as servant of God, and his glorification on the cross are demonstrated in a nutshell in the episode.⁸¹ The narrator of the story attempts to merge the theme of servanthood with the glorification aspect. Jesus’s movement as a messenger of God flourishes from his divine nature (the pre-incarnate stage) to the human form (the incarnate Word) and further to the divine nature (through revealing the hour/glorification/lifting up of the Son of Man).⁸² The movement of Jesus ‘from heavenly to earthly’ and again ‘from earthly to heavenly’ forms the ‘U shaped plot structure’ of the Fourth Gospel. In the event of foot washing, Jesus’s posture of sitting at the table (v. 4a), his washing of the feet of the disciples (v. 4b-11), and his reclining back to the table (v. 12) symbolically demonstrates the ‘U shaped plot structure’ of the story.⁸³ As Jesus’s identity is delineated in relation to a prop like a table at the beginning and at the end (vv. 4a, 12) and his attitude

of service at the middle (vv. 4b-11), the narrator demonstrates a ‘U shaped plot structure’ at the micro-level with symbolical underpinnings.⁸⁴ While sitting at the table is symbolical of the status of ‘honor,’ washing the feet is identical to Jesus’s becoming nature. Jesus’s attitude of life-giving is resulted into his death and the death is identified as the glorification of the Son of Man.⁸⁵ The event of foot washing and the successive Farewell Discourse intimate the reader a clue concerning the imminent death of Jesus. The event as a whole prepares way for the narrator to identify the betrayer in 13:21-30.⁸⁶ The Farewell Discourse ultimately leads the protagonist to his death and that further demonstrates his glory. In that way, the event in its semantic domains can be considered as a foundational activity with a lot of symbolical aspects. The suffering servant motif is obviously reflected through the event (cf. Mark 10:45).⁸⁷

John’s Gospel is a contextually adaptable and theologically enriched masterpiece that can absorb concepts from ‘everywhere and ever’ in order to provide a ‘gnomic’ and ‘universal’ appeal.⁸⁸ A thorough analysis of the Gospel will enable us to understand the flexible nature of John—its adaptability to new situations and the reverberation of its impact through space and time.⁸⁹ A gnomic reading of the Fourth Gospel, one that explores its message for all times and all places, will help us to understand its significance for the people of South Asian countries today.⁹⁰ John’s narrative master plan enables the readers aware of the superiority of Jesus as ‘one who was in the beginning’ (1:1), ‘all things came into being through him’ (1:2), and ‘in him was life and the life was light of all people’ (1:4).⁹¹ In 13:1-20, Jesus reveals his ‘honorable’ position in contextual and social terms as a ‘teacher’ and ‘Lord.’⁹² But, his posture of washing the feet of the disciples is, in social terms, a ‘shameful’ activity. The church/es in South Asian contexts should ‘do what they speak’ as Jesus ‘did what he talked.’⁹³ As Jesus accommodated the human world and its cultures through his very nature of becoming (see ‘Word became flesh,’ 1:14),

the people of South Asian regions and the churches should take active steps in witnessing Christ to the suffering humanity of the country. The mission model of identifying with people has long lasting effects in witnessing Christ in the pluralistic context of the region.⁹⁴ As the servant-model of leadership demonstrated both at the micro (13:1-20) and macro levels of the Gospel, the church/es in the South Asian regions should prioritize this model both in its ministerial and missional engagements.⁹⁵ Missional and ministerial aspects of the church should not be limited to people's *coming* to the church but it should also prioritize church's *going out* to the people groups. In that sense, Christian mission in the South Asian region can be actualized mainly through servanthood model and praxis-oriented strategies.⁹⁶ As M. M. Thomas and P. D. Devanandan suggests, the churches in this region should get involved in the very act of nation building and she/they should serve the nations through humanization.⁹⁷ As Johannine Jesus, who turns to be a servant of God, uplifted the marginalized sections of the society, the South Asian church/es, as an agent of mission, should uplift the Dalit, Tribal, and other marginal groups of the society.⁹⁸ The church/es of the South Asian regions should come out of its *shameful* past and should practice *honorable* public services through establishing schools, colleges, hospitals, and other service-oriented institutions. In that sense, as Jesus manifested his glory through service until his death, the church should exemplify its service to the community and reveal Christ's honor in the public. As Jesus appears to be a 'sent one of God' to send people for witnessing, the Church as the 'sent one' in the world is expected to send people for witnessing Christ at varied levels of community life.

The South Asian church/es should transcend all sorts of human made boundaries for witnessing Christ and also she should prioritize loving kindness as the greatest virtue of God (13:34-35; 14:18-24; 17:23).⁹⁹ In the contemporary context, the church should function as an agent of charity, reconciliation, and liberation. As

Jesus exemplifies a 'U shaped' witnessing model within John's micro- and macro-narrative frameworks, Christian communities in South Asia can adopt a 'U shaped' mission model to attune people to the experience of eternal life.¹⁰⁰ On the one hand, the church can sustain its values and spiritual norms as 'honorable' human beings, and on the other hand, she can extend her services to the betterment of the society. The church's service to the suffering humanity can enable her to regain the honorable status. The praxis oriented standards of Jesus's witnessing, which interlocks both kerygmatic and praxis-oriented mission strategies, can be a paradigm for the South Asian church/es for her mission in the pluralistic context of the geographical area.¹⁰¹ In Jesus's ministry, the event of foot washing was foreshadowing his imminent passion, crucifixion, and death on the cross as a servant of God.¹⁰² In that sense, the South Asian church/es should endeavor for witnessing Christ irrespective of the increasing oppositions, persecutions, and martyrdoms. The church's struggles in witnessing Christ can be transformed as honorable and glorious occasions. Even when the church remains as a minority community, she should attempt to balance between the kerygmatic and practically oriented aspects of mission in the South Asian context.¹⁰³ As a two-level drama, the Fourth Evangelist emphasizes the event of foot washing with a purpose of educating his community the lessons of mutual love and service in corporate living.¹⁰⁴ John's community considers Jesus as a model of servant leadership and his performances as *hypodeigmata* for social living.¹⁰⁵ All the above factors reveal John's gnomic significance in the South Asian context.

Concluding Remarks

The above discussion enables us to understand that John 13:1-20 is a unique literary masterpiece that functions paradigmatically both within the narrative framework of the Farewell Discourse and within the macro-structure of the Gospel. The event recapitulates the 'U shaped' plot structure of the entire Gospel with an emphasis on the *being* and *becoming* natures of Jesus and his instruction for

doing. That reveals the *hypodeigmatic* function within and beyond the text. In a context in which people's social positions such as 'honor' and 'shame' were perceived in a hierarchical way, Jesus's action of washing the feet of the disciples overturns the prevailing norms of the society. While the divine attributes of Jesus plotted dynamically within the textual horizon of John, his *being* nature is brought to the foreground. The symbolical act of washing the feet of the disciples demonstrates his servant model of leadership and thus the *becoming* nature. Jesus's instruction to the disciples for *doing* it in their future witnessing exposes the event to the level of an example story. The usage of the expressions like "got up from the meal" (v. 4) and "returned to his place" (v. 12) and the ordering of the event of washing the feet at the center (vv. 4b-11) amply show the plot dynamics of the event to communicate the message in a unique fashion. Moreover, the connection of the event with the *agapē*-centric utterances of Jesus in the Gospel and his demonstration of love on the cross provide in-depth meaning to the event. The message of the event can be adopted as a paradigm in the South Asian context for Christian witness, mission, and evangelism. As the Johannine community re-interpreted the event in relation to the incarnation, servant model, and death of Jesus and in congruence with their own *Sitz im Leben*, the South Asian Christian community/ies should demonstrate its ethos through serving others even at the point of death. Service to humanity should be prioritized in order to inculcate a praxis-oriented witnessing. Church's servanthood model reveals her identity as a worthy community in the present and thus achieving a glorious future. John's gnomic and universal tendencies can be adopted as means of hermeneutical keys in order to make John's semantic domains conducive and reverberating in the pluralistic context/s of South Asia.

End Notes

- 1 See Mark 4:10-20; 6:7-13, expanded by Matt in 10:1-42; Mark 8:14-21, 27-33; 9:1-13, 33-41; 10:23-45. The instructions in Mark 13 are expanded in Matt 24-25. Also see Mark 14:3-42; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 222; Köstenberger, *John*, 396-397; Stube, *Greco-Roman Rhetorical Reading of the Farewell Discourse*, 1-2; Bennema, *Excavating John's Gospel*, 140.
- 2 Collins says, "It is now commonly asserted that John 13:31-16:33 is written according to the literary genre of the farewell discourse. Approximately fifty speeches ascribed to famous men in anticipation of their deaths have been preserved for us in biblical and extra-biblical sources." See Collins, *These Things Have been Written*, 221; See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 278.
- 3 See the OT parallels in Gen 49; Josh 22-24; and 1 Chron 28-29. Beasley-Murray comments that, "The most important example of this kind of writing, however, is the Book of Deuteronomy, which could well have been in the Evangelist's mind when composing the discourses of the Upper Room. This work in its entirety consists of the farewell discourses of Moses to Israel." See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 222-223; Borchert, *John 12-21*, 72-90; Engberg-Pedersen, "A Question of Genre: John 13-17 as *Paraklēsis*," 283-302.
- 4 Just like the symposium traditions, we see in John 13-17 a formal banquet, a symposium, i.e., a conference or discussion on a particular subject, took place (see Plato's *Symposium*). See Bennema, *Excavating John's Gospel*, 140.
- 5 See Morris, *Gospel of John*, 610. Moloney says that, "No doubt the constituent parts of 13:1-17:26 had their own history in the storytelling of the Johannine community, but the process of telling and retelling produced a Gospel that is thoroughly Johannine in all its parts." See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 370.
- 6 Keener says that, "The foot washing in John is the narrative introduction for the final discourse, part of the lengthy prolegomena to the Passion Narrative. Jesus's impending death dominates with foreshadowing of his betrayal (13:2, 10-11, 18-30), then opens directly into discussion about Jesus's departure by way of the cross (13:36-38; 14:3-6). This scene therefore paves the way for the Farewell Discourse (13:31-17:26)." See Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:899.
- 7 Beasley-Murray states that, "Not frequently it is maintained that the Fourth Evangelist knowingly altered the date of the trial and death of Jesus in the interests of his theology, namely to show that Jesus died as God's Passover Lamb (1:29; 19:31-37)." See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 224. The division of

- the Gospel of John as Book of Signs and Book of Glory can be found in Brown's two-volume commentary. See Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:555.
- 8 Beasley-Murray says that, "In vv. 21-30 a brief dialogue of dramatic intensity takes place, wherein Jesus both makes known that one of the disciples at the table will betray him and actually precipitates the act of betrayal by his words in v. 27b." See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 230.
 - 9 Keener says that, "Just as Mark 13 interprets the imminent passion of Mark 14-15 for the disciples in terms of their future tribulation, so Jesus's final discourse in John's Gospel interprets the meaning of Jesus's passion for his disciples: they will share both his sufferings and his resurrection life." See Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:893.
 - 10 See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 230; also see Culpepper, *Johannine Hypodeigma*, 135.
 - 11 See Carson, *Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*, 11-18.
 - 12 See Neyrey, *Gospel of John in Cultural and Ideological Perspective*, 305-307.
 - 13 See Borchert, *John 12-21*, 75.
 - 14 See Quast, *Reading the Gospel of John*, 112-114.
 - 15 In the first half of the Gospel, the hour of Jesus is a highly anticipated moment in the ministry of Jesus (2:4; 4:21; 5:25; 7:30; 8:20). In the second half of the book, readers discover that Jesus comes upon his hour (12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). See Senior, *Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, 36-38.
 - 16 See Morris, *Gospel of John*, 613-615. Keener states that, "At this point, however, John underlines a different aspect of the chronology: Jesus loved his own 'to the end' (13:1). This is Johannine double entendre: it can imply 'to the utmost,' 'fully,' as well as 'to the point of his death.'" See Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:899.
 - 17 See Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel*, 171.
 - 18 See Paschal, "Service," 749. Also see Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:559-572; Boismard, "Le Lavement des Pieds (John 13:1-17)," 5-24.
 - 19 Morris says that, "Before the sustained instruction begins there are two significant actions performed by our Lord. The first, that of washing the disciples' feet, is pregnant with meaning, the meaning of the cross which now loomed before Jesus. The second, that of giving the sop to Judas, taken with Jesus's words to the traitor, set in motion the events leading to the passion." See Morris, *Gospel of John*, 611; also see Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 558-559; Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 348-351.
 - 20 See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 370; also see Segovia, *Farewell of the Word*, 1-58; Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 559-562.
 - 21 See Köstenberger, *John*, 398.
 - 22 For more details about Jesus's divine nature, refer to Bird, Evans, and Gathercole, eds., *How God Became Jesus*, 1-30; Webb, *Jesus Christ, Eternal God*, 75-94.
 - 23 See Harris, *Jesus as God*, 291.
 - 24 For a more detailed explanation of 'being,' refer to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 1, 777.
 - 25 See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 6-17.
 - 26 See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 27, 47, 63, 188, 374-376.
 - 27 See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 89-103, 115-145, 239-246.
 - 28 See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 375.
 - 29 Thompson says that, "A sign is . . . properly understood when it is seen as pointing to God's work through the person of Jesus to effect salvation." See Thompson, "John, Gospel of," 379; Thomaskutty, *Dialogue in the Book of Signs*, 447-450.
 - 30 See Burge, "'I AM' Sayings," 354-356; Thomaskutty, *Dialogue in the Book of Signs*, 450-452.
 - 31 See Witherington, "Lord," 490-491.
 - 32 See Thomaskutty, *Saint Thomas the Apostle*, 64-68; Wilkins, "Disciples," 180.
 - 33 See Morris, *Gospel of John*, 611-623; cf. Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 82.
 - 34 Borchert states that, "In a society that was very conscious of status symbols of shame and honor, such as the touching and washing of feet, was an extremely important matter." See Borchert, *John 12-21*, 79; also see Köstenberger, *John*, 400-409; Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 2:563-572.
 - 35 Moloney says, "The hour is to be a moment when Jesus will depart from the sphere of everyday events. The one who has been sent by the Father will return to the Father, but during his ministry he has gathered disciples, a group called 'his own' (v. 1b: *hoi idioi*. Cf. 1:11-12; 10:3, 4, 12), and his passage through the hour will be a supreme demonstration of his love for them." See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 373.
 - 36 See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 38.
 - 37 See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 373.
 - 38 See Borchert, *John 12-21*, 77.
 - 39 See Borchert, *John 12-21*, 78.

- 40 Borchert says, “‘Coming from’ (*exerchesthai* plus *apo*) and ‘going to’ (*hypagein* plus *pros*) was the way John here described the broad dimensions of Jesus’s earthly existence and his relationship to the eternal God.” See Borchert, *John 12-21*, 79.
- 41 See Borchert, *John 12-21*, 79.
- 42 See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 373-374.
- 43 See Morris, *Gospel of John*, 617-618.
- 44 See Morris, *Gospel of John*, 620.
- 45 See Borchert, *Gospel of John*, 79.
- 46 Keener states that, “Thus people often washed their feet when returning home; washing one’s feet was common enough that ‘unwashed feet’ became proverbial in some places for ‘without preparation.’ The face, hands, and feet seem to have been the most critical parts of the body to wash.” See Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:903.
- 47 Bruce states that, “So he dresses himself like a household servant and performs a servant’s task.” See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 280; also see Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 458-459.
- 48 Michaels says that, “. . . the writer is content to let the death of Jesus remain implicit here, just as it remained implicit in the account of Mary anointing Jesus’s feet at the earlier ‘supper’ in Bethany (see 12:3-8).” See Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 724-725; also see Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 465.
- 49 See Bennema, *Excavating John’s Gospel*, 142-143; also see Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 454-476.
- 50 Keener (2003: 2: 904) states that, “Washing feet was a menial task, and one who sought to wash another’s feet normally took the posture of a servant or dependent.” See Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:904.
- 51 See Paschal, “Service,” 750; also see Bernard, *Gospel according to St. John*, 476-477.
- 52 See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 338-356.
- 53 Guthrie comments that, “It is supposed that Mark sees the disciples as spokesmen for a theology of glory linked to the Hellenistic divine man idea. According to this view, Mark 1-8 presents a triumphalistic wonder-worker, where the rest of the gospel sees Jesus in terms of the Suffering Servant.” See Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 68; also see Stein, *Mark*, 486-490, 632-634.
- 54 See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 232-237; also see Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 284-285. Morris says that, “Jesus gently discourages excess. The imagery is that

of a man going to a feast. He will bathe at home. Then when he arrives he needs only to wash his feet to sit at table wholly clean.” See Morris, *Gospel according to John*, 618.

- 55 See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 286.
- 56 Cf. Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 726.
- 57 Bruce states that, “the foot washing symbolizes Jesus’s humbling himself to endure the death of the cross and the cleansing efficacy of his death for the believer.” See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 281-283; also see Morris, *Gospel according to John*, 618; also see Borchert, *John 12-21*, 82.
- 58 See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 281-282; also see Köstenberger, *John*, 401-409..
- 59 See Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 732.
- 60 See Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel*, 188-192; also see Bennema, *Excavating John’s Gospel*, 142-143; also see Köstenberger, *John*, 401-409.
- 61 Merkle states that, “Biblical leadership is humble, servant leadership. Jesus gave the perfect example of humility when he washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-20).” See Merkle, *Why Elders?*, 45.
- 62 Paschal says that, “The foot washing is a drama of Jesus’s act of sacrifice on the cross.” See Paschal, “Servant,” 750; also see Köstenberger, *John*, 401-409.
- 63 Paschal states that, “The servant sayings of Jesus in John 13:12-17 have christological implications that we should not miss: the Lord of the disciples is also the obedient son and servant of the Father (cf. John 14:10-12; 17:1-5).” See Paschal, “Servant,” 750; also see Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel*, 189-192.
- 64 See Wenham, *Elements of New Testament Greek*, 96, 159-160. Michaels says, “the present subjunctive, ‘might do,’ in contrast to the aorist, ‘just as I did,’ implies that he is urging them to continue to do repeatedly what he has done for them once and for all.” See Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 735.
- 65 See Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel*, 190-191.
- 66 Paschal suggests that, “The humility that Jesus is pressing on Peter is both to accept the gracious gift of service from the Master and to accept a common human need for the same gift.” See Paschal, “Service,” 750.
- 67 See Green, *Death of Jesus*, 112.
- 68 See Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 735.
- 69 Bennema comments that, “Jesus regards the acts of service to others as honorable, whereas the society of that time considered them as sign of weakness.” See Bennema, *Excavating John’s Gospel*, 143.

- 70 See Bennema, *Excavating John's Gospel*, 140-144.
- 71 See Paschal, "Service," 750.
- 72 See Paschal, "Service," 750.
- 73 See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 282-288.
- 74 See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 286-287.
- 75 Beasley-Murray comments that, "The comparison of v. 13 is deepened by a saying drawn from the tradition of Jesus's sayings (cf. Matthew 10:24); here 'student' and 'teacher' are replaced by 'slave' and 'master,' and 'one sent' along with the 'superior who sends' him." See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 236.
- 76 Moloney comments that, "The blessedness of the Johannine believer flows from the living out, the 'doing' of all that is implied by entering into discipleship through baptism." See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 379.
- 77 See Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of John's Gospel*, 189.
- 78 Paschal further says that, "Not to accept Jesus's death for us is to betray him, to leave the community of faith and embrace the darkness (13:30)." See Paschal, "Service," 750.
- 79 See Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of John's Gospel*, 190-191; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 378-379.
- 80 See other New Testament parallels in Mark 10:35-45; Matthew 20:20-28; and Luke 22:24-28. Also see Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of John's Gospel*, 189-190.
- 81 See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 370-372.
- 82 See Loader, *Jesus in John's Gospel*, 225.
- 83 See Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel*, 171.
- 84 The expressions like *egeiretai ek tou deipnou* (v. 4a) and *anepesen palin* (v. 12) make us to think of a table at view.
- 85 See Loader, *Jesus in John's Gospel*, 225.
- 86 See Bennema, *Excavating John's Gospel*, 140-146.
- 87 See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 222-240.
- 88 See Thomaskutty, "Biblical Interpretation in the Global-Indian Context," 64-68.
- 89 See Thomaskutty, "Reading John's Gospel in the Nepali Context," 6.
- 90 See Thomaskutty, "Glo(b/c)alization and Mission(s)," 56-77; also Thomaskutty, "Reading John's Gospel in the Nepali Context," 5-6.
- 91 See Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 34-39.
- 92 See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 281-283; Morris, *Gospel according to John*, 618; also see Borchert, *John 12-21*, 82.

- 93 See Thomaskutty, *Dialogue in the Book of Signs*, 450-452.
- 94 See Paschal, "Service," 749-750.
- 95 See Paschal, "Service," 749-750.
- 96 See Perry, *A Bibliographical History of the Church in Nepal*, 17-19, 30-31; Pandey, *Christianity in Nepal*, 1-50.
- 97 See Thomas and Devanandan, *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, 2-3, 48-50, 154-155, 209-210, 227-242, 266-289, 290-305.
- 98 See Thomaskutty, "Reading John's Gospel in the Nepali Context," 20.
- 99 See Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John*, 26-99; Varghese, *Imagery of Love in the Gospel of John*, 11-24.
- 100 See Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel*, 171.
- 101 See Thomaskutty, "Reading John's Gospel in the Nepali Context," 14.
- 102 See Sylva, *Thomas—Love as Strong as Death*, 54.
- 103 See Perry, *A Bibliographical History of the Church in Nepal*, 17-19; also see Pandey, *Christianity in Nepal*, 1-50.
- 104 See Martyn, *History and Theology of the Fourth Gospel*, 24-36.
- 105 In John, Jesus is the 'Word became flesh and dwelt among humanity' and one who 'washed the feet of the disciples.' See Coloe, "Sources in the Shadows," 69-82.

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Go Ye Therefore, and Teach all Nations: Education as Transformation

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Abstract

The Serampore Mission and Serampore College find their unifying foundational idea in the two scripture texts of Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15, which became the scriptural foundation for eighteenth century Christian missions. However, the grammatical and textual history and meaning of these texts in Greek, Latin, English, and Bengali present difficulties. When Carey, Marshman, and Ward—the Trio—founded Serampore College, they appealed to these scripture texts in various contexts, and emphasized both the evangelistic and the especially the teaching aspects of their Christian missionary work. As the home office of the Baptist Missionary Society sent younger missionaries to India, some ideological and methodological divisions arose between the Trio and the home office, the younger missionaries, and some supporters in America. In India and Britain, some of the younger missionaries (including William Carey’s nephew Eustace Carey) opposed the Trio and Serampore College. Despite that opposition, the Trio persisted in their educational transformation based on Matthew 28:19, and asserted a connectedness between various fields of study and Christian identity.

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Introduction

Carey, Marshman, and Ward—the Serampore Trio—still speak forcefully in India and around the world, in part, because Serampore College “is the only surviving part of the educational endeavours of the Serampore Mission.”¹ The Trio’s words have a resounding voice through their planting of Christianity in words and deeds, through the iconic Main Building, the unparalleled esteem of Serampore College, and the ongoing transformative educational work of faculty and students.

A former principal of Serampore College said the Trio’s “primary task in the mission field was to bring about social transformation through education.”² However, for people unfamiliar with the Trio’s individual biographies and Serampore Mission history, ambiguity and ignorance surround what “mission” and “education” meant *for the Trio*.

Carey arrived in India in 1793 and Marshman and Ward followed in 1799, a full generation before their founding of Serampore College in 1818. After living for a generation in India and adapting to Indian culture, *what was the Trio’s unifying idea between the mission to India and the founding of Serampore College?* The actual history of the institution’s founding reveals the stunning opposition that the Trio overcame as they fused their missionary vision into their educational city set on a hill.

The relationship of Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15 to the Trio’s mission and the founding of Serampore College needs exposure. Yet, the two texts have more complexity than apparent on first reading, especially in relation to the Trio’s mission and subsequent founding of Serampore College. Though the College’s founding provoked division between the Trio and their early opponents, the role of Serampore College in achieving social transformation through education became evident as these two Scripture texts provided life to Serampore College’s identity.

The Missionary Rationale from Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15

In order to understand a link between the Trio's mission to India and their founding of Serampore College, one must return to the Bible of the Trio's Christian faith. For these British Baptists, their favorite and most read book was the King James Version, which was the Anglican, Established Church affirmation of John Wycliffe (1380), William Tyndale (1526), Miles Coverdale (1535), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560, 1583), and the Bishops' Bible (1568).³ The Trio had read and studied the King James Version from the 1760 edition by Francis S. Parris published in Cambridge or, more likely, from the 1769 edition by Benjamin Blayney published in Oxford.⁴ Both editions presented two short, memorable texts:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.⁵

When William Carey was six, his father Edmund became a parish clerk, and assisted the priest with the duties of St. James Church in Paulerspury, Northamptonshire, England. Edmund's duties included liturgical functions and recording of births, christenings, confirmations, marriages, deaths, but, most importantly for William, Edmund would have read Sunday Scriptures and Prayer Book readings. Likely, Carey heard his father read these Gospel texts, since Anglican Churches read Matthew 28 for the Morning Gospel lesson on January 3, May 30, and September 27, and Mark 16 functioned similarly on February 16, June 16, and October 13.⁶

While these Gospel texts appeared frequently in Anglican churches, few took them seriously concerning missionary activity. Some Baptist sentiment in Carey's day assumed that these texts referred only to Jesus' commission for his disciples preaching in the first century.⁷ However, various non-Baptists such as John Eliot, David Brainerd, John Sargeant, Samuel Kirkland, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, some Moravians, and John Wesley, were noble counterexamples, and worked as missionaries outside of Europe. Carey poured praise on them in 1792.⁸

Among the Baptists, Andrew Fuller—Carey's devoted friend—had alluded to the missionary idea⁹ in his 1785 essay *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*. Fuller wrote that "faith in Christ is the duty of all men who hear, or have the opportunity to hear, the Gospel."¹⁰ And to be emphatic at the beginning of the essay, Fuller's conspicuous epigraphical proof text was Mark 16:15-16: "Go . . . preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned! —JESUS CHRIST."¹¹ In his *Enquiry*, Carey agreed and expanded Fuller's argument using the King James Version's texts of Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15 toward a Society-supported¹² focus on Gospel missions outside of Britain. Carey argued that such work already could occur because local prayer meetings were yielding "calls to preach the gospel in many places where it has not been usually published."¹³

Perhaps, Carey had been influenced in Northamptonshire by others' memory and recitation of Philip Doddridge's views. In a sermon preached at a meeting of the Dissenting ministers at Kettering, October 15, 1741, Doddridge had asked

Whether something might not be done, in most of our congregations, towards assisting in the propagation of Christianity abroad, and spreading it in some of the darker parts of our own land? In pursuance of which it is further proposed, that we endeavour to engage as many pious persons of our respective congregations

. . . to enter themselves into a society, in which the members may engage themselves to some peculiar cares, assemblies, and contributions, with a regard to this great end.¹⁴

In 1786, Carey asked a group of Baptist ministers “Whether the command given to the apostles to ‘teach all nations,’ was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent.”¹⁵ Published in 1792, Carey’s first section in his eighty-seven page *Enquiry* appears as “An Enquiry whether the Commission given by our Lord to his Disciples be not still binding on us.”¹⁶ Quoting Matthew 28:19 and equating Mark 16:15 with it through the comparative clause “as another evangelist expresses it,” Carey wrote,

Our Lord Jesus Christ, a little before his departure, commissioned his apostles to *Go*, and *teach all nations*; or, as another evangelist expresses it, *Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*. This commission was as extensive as possible, and laid them under obligation to disperse themselves into every country of the habitable globe, and preach to all the inhabitants, without exception, or limitation.¹⁷

Carey answered his query by writing, “I question whether all are justified in staying here [in Britain], while so many are perishing without means of grace in other lands. . . . the commission is a sufficient call to them to venture all, and, like the primitive Christians, go every where preaching the gospel.”¹⁸ Of note, thirty-nine years later in an 1831 letter to his sisters affirming Christ’s atonement, Carey—similar to Fuller’s epigraph in *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*—fused his understanding of these two missionary texts. Carey wrote that the doctrine of “atonement was testified by the resurrection of our Lord from the dead and by the commission to preach the Gospel to all nations.”¹⁹

Carey followed Andrew Fuller’s lead and interpreted the texts as being a *perpetual* command of Jesus for his followers to teach and preach the Gospel wherever it had not been heard. By combining and quoting two syntactically similar texts from the King James Version, Carey argued for missionary outreach beyond Great Britain. That combination along with Carey’s interpretation and willingness to be a missionary convinced his colleagues in 1792 to form a Baptist Society to support Christian missionaries outside of Great Britain.²⁰

Some Textual Issues in Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15

Matthew 28:18-20—the “Great Commission”—is one of the most famous Bible passages,²¹ and stands as the authoritative conclusion in Matthew’s Gospel. The key text is verse 19, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.”

Taking a cue from English Bible history in translations from the Latin Vulgate and the Greek New Testament,²² the King James translators interpreted the Greek participle πορευθέντες in both Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15 as having imperatival force with the English word “go.”²³ With the exception of “going” in the 1582 Rheims New Testament.²⁴ The Protestant translations followed the imperatival “go” set by Wycliffe and Tyndale.

The King James Version differs in a significant way from the 1881 Revised Version through the 2017 Christian Standard Bible. Rather than the word KJV “teach,” the dominant translations since 1881²⁵ have the phrase “make disciples” for μαθητεύσατε in Matthew 28:19. Both William Tyndale in 1526 and followed by the King James translators in 1611 interpreted the main verb, μαθητεύσατε, in Matthew 28:19 as “teach,”²⁶ and kept “teaching” for διδάσκοντες in verse 20. The word μαθητεύσατε in verse 19 refers to learning as in being or becoming a disciple, but the word διδάσκοντες in verse 20 refers to instruction or the process of teaching others.

The imperatival use of “teach” (μαθητεύσατε) was a significant translation that began with Wycliffe’s 1380 New

Testament translated from the Latin word *docete*. The Latin in verse 20 for “teaching” is *docentes*, the same Latin stem for “teach” in verse 19. “Teach” in both verse 19 and verse 20 remained current for 500 years in all major English Bibles from Wycliffe until the English Revised Version appeared in 1881. *The power of both Wycliffe and Tyndale with “teach” in verse 19 had significant foundational implication for the Serampore Mission and Serampore College.*

Although “teach” was the dominant English translation almost 400 years prior to the Trio’s births, the eminent Dissenting minister in Northamptonshire, Philip Doddridge, argued in 1761 against the King James Version translation.²⁷ Doddridge was a famous Congregational minister in Kettering, England, where Carey and other Baptist ministers established the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792.²⁸

Doddridge referred to Matthew 28:18-20 as “the Commission,” and affirmed the universal nature of the Christian message. He also argued that the King James Version had a mistranslation of Matthew 28:19 with the word “teach.” Arguing that the translation of the main verb (μαθητεύσατε) should not be confused with the use of the word “teaching” (διδάσκοντες) in the next verse (28:20), Doddridge translated Matthew 28:19 as “proselyte all nations.”²⁹ He wrote,

(I) *Proselyte all the Nations* of the Earth.] The whole Tenour of the succeeding Books of the *New Testament* shews, that *Christ* designed by this *Commission*, that the *Gospel* should be preached to *all Mankind* without Exception, not only to *Jews*, but to all the idolatrous *Gentiles* . . . I render the Word μαθητεύσατε, *proselesytle*, that it may be duly distinguished from διδάσκοντες, *teaching*, (in the *next Verse*,) with which our *Version* confounds it.³⁰

In a November 16, 1796, letter to Andrew Fuller, Carey said of his Bengali translation of the New Testament, “I have made

much use of Doddridge’s Family Expositor in the work.”³¹ If Carey had read Doddridge on Matthew 28:19 before he published his *Enquiry*, one wonders why he chose to quote the King James Version, rather than Doddridge’s more accurate interpretation. Simply, Carey’s use of the King James Version—the Established Church Bible—had a more traditional appeal via Wycliffe and Tyndale for English readers than the accurate interpretation by Philip Doddridge.

In a separate letter to John Sutcliff on November 22, 1796, shortly after the Fuller letter, Carey confirmed “I have received Parkhurst’s Greek and Hebrew Lexicons.”³² Parkhurst’s lexicon has unequivocal precision for the verb μαθητεύω as “Governing an accusative, *To make a disciple*. occ. Mat. xxviii. 19.”³³ If Carey had access to this lexicon and knew enough Greek in 1792 to analyze Matthew 28:19, he obviously *chose* to use the traditional King James Version, “teach,” over the literal translation “make disciples” or “proselyte.”

Carey equated the text from Mark 16:15 with Matthew 28:19; both texts include the participle πορευθέντες rendered as the imperative “go” in the King James Version. Despite that verbal parallel, Matthew’s “teach” or “make disciples” (μαθητεύσατε) appears as “preach” (κηρύξατε) in Mark with a different focus. While μαθητεύσατε refers to the potentially lengthy process of proclaiming *and* teaching Christian doctrine and ethics before *and* after someone becomes a Christian and is baptized, κηρύξατε tends to focus more narrowly on the verbal proclamation of the basic Christian Gospel (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-5). In 1792, Carey likely chose the King James Version text out of familiarity and respect, but later, “teach” (μαθητεύσατε in Matthew 28:19) developed into the basis both for Christian mission and the founding of Serampore College.

Fast forward to 1832 when the last edition of the Bengali Bible appeared in Serampore. In that Bible, Carey and his colleagues moved μαθητεύσατε from verse 19 to verse 20, so

that verse translated from Bengali reads “having taught them to obey whatever I have commanded you, make them disciples.”³⁴ Neither the *Textus Receptus* nor the subsequent critical editions of the Greek New Testament have μαθητεύσατε in Matthew 28:20. However, Carey’s 1832 translation clearly shows that “teaching” is central to making disciples.

Neither Carey nor any colleague discusses the textual problem of Mark 16:9-20, though for his Chinese translation, Joshua Marshman consulted Johann Jakob Griesbach’s critical Greek New Testament, which questioned the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20.³⁵ Carey, however, used the *Textus Receptus* (i.e., “received text”) developed from Erasmus’ Greek New Testament of 1516, 1519, and 1522.³⁶ On September 11, 1797, Samuel Pearce gave to Carey a Greek New Testament from the prevalent Erasmian tradition,³⁷ and Carey—in mirroring the King James Version—included subsequently disputed *Textus Receptus* texts into the Bengali translation.³⁸

Each member of the Serampore Trio freely quoted and used Mark 16:15 on an equivalent basis as Matthew 28:19. Carey and his colleagues relied on the *Textus Receptus* and the Wycliffe-Tyndale-King James rhetorical tradition for the initiation and perpetuity of Christian missionary outreach.

The Rationale for Serampore College from Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15

In 1818, Carey was fifty-seven years old, Marshman was fifty, and Ward was forty-nine, and they lived in constant awareness that anyone could lose life on any day to disease or natural disaster in India. At their ages, why would they take such an emotional, financial, intellectual, and spiritual risk in establishing a College?

Key to the founding of Serampore College was the Trio’s fulfillment of Jesus’ teaching command aside from outcomes based assessment. Although, some pious persons in England believed that mass conversions necessarily would attend the Trio’s Christian preaching, the Serampore Trio did not find that

satisfaction. Carey once reported to his sisters, “It is news, nothing but news, and most wondrous accounts of people being converted, that will satisfy those at home. Just as if we could create these things, and make them ready to our hand.”³⁹ One Serampore report indicates that the number of conversions from November 1, 1795, through November, 1808, was a total of 147 persons inclusive of twenty-six Europeans in Bengal.⁴⁰

Within three years of his arrival in India, Carey wrote to Andrew Fuller requesting that several missionary families be sent to India so that teaching and education of missionary families and native Indians, including the radical inclusion of females, should begin.⁴¹ Then, in 1800 in the first month of their residence in Serampore, Carey and his colleagues wrote, “We intend to teach a school, and make what we can of our press.”⁴² *Teaching* the truths of Christianity was a central aspect in the Trio’s missionary identity and method, and natives’ freedom to learn, freedom to read, and freedom to read and interpret the Bible in one’s own language became the Trio’s foundational Christian values of missions.

Such a Dissenting view was clear in Barrackpore, 1808, when Lord Minto asked Carey, “Don’t you think it wrong, Dr. Carey, to try and make Indians Christians?” Carey responded, “You mistake us, Your Lordship. We have no faith in makings. You can make hypocrites by compulsions; Christians never. We only solicit the right to present the Truth to each man’s intelligence and conscience, as our Master ordained.”⁴³ The Trio’s effectiveness was most clear as readers, teachers, translators, and printers, for by 1818, the Serampore Mission had over one hundred native schools with over 6,700 students learning in their vernacular tongue,⁴⁴ and the Trio established Serampore College on July 15, 1818, *for the Instruction of Asiatic Christian and Other Youth, in Eastern Literature and European Science*.⁴⁵ Surely the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura* was never more brilliant than in Serampore.

In 1821, Joshua Marshman wrote a letter to a friend in Liverpool, and included a detailed financial and architectural

description of the Main Building of Serampore College. But, before his description, he said that the Trio had “strong reason to hope it [Serampore College] will prove an extensive blessing to the cause of God in India.”⁴⁶ Against the detractors, Serampore College was not an impediment to the cause of God, for Marshman combined Matthew 28:19 with Mark 16:15 and quoted Jesus as saying, “All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye *therefore* into all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature” . . . Marshman interpreted that combined quotation by adding, “On this account, under this wonderful economy every instance of our being so employed, is a distinguished mark of his boundless and condescending grace.”⁴⁷

Recall Marshman’s eloquent and forceful review about the essential identity and union of the Serampore Mission with that of Serampore College. For Marshman as for Carey, there was no separation between preaching the Gospel and teaching the Gospel along with living the Gospel through social and educational transformation. Marshman wrote,

we consider the mission as one comprehensive scheme for one great end, combining as means, preaching, translations of the scriptures, tracts, schools, and the college as the chief of the schools, we assign the first importance for immediate effect, and for bringing the accessory means into efficient operation, to the activity of missionary labourers. But, we have evidence continually increasing, that the native christians will be lamentably insufficient for the duties and difficulties of that vocation, unless prepared with that knowledge and those mental habits to which the college has been designed to train them, while it is also calculated to qualify others to serve the cause in a less ostensible capacity, and even to make those native youths who may receive instruction there without losing caste, contribute to the downfall of idolatry by the diffusion

of knowledge. Therefore it is that the Serampore brethren cannot consent to a measure, intended to raise a separating wall between the college and the extensive missionary ground they have hitherto occupied, and are desirous to be enabled to enlarge.⁴⁸

The third member of the Trio, William Ward, had a like understanding prior to his untimely death March 7, 1823. In an address to the Baptist Missionary Society, London, November 20, 1819, Ward pleaded for support of the Mission, and said the missionaries were “European teachers” and “the servants of the Most High God, showing the way of salvation.”⁴⁹ Subsequently, in a letter to the Society, Ward reviewed the founding of Serampore College, and discussed the College’s role in educating India’s youth and India’s Christian youth for Gospel propagation among the 150,000,000 people of India.⁵⁰ In America, he argued that the Society could not supply the necessary number of missionaries for India. Ward wrote, “if India is ever to be taught, it must be by the Christian knowledge, the talents and zeal of its own christianized population [so] . . . Dr. Carey and his Colleagues have commenced a NATIVE MISSIONARY COLLEGE AT SERAMPORE *For illuminating India by its own converted and educated population.*”⁵¹

In his daily devotional book that he wrote on the voyage back to Britain in 1818-1819, Ward quoted the King James Version of Matthew 28:19 for his May 30 and June 7 entries.⁵² Yet, his use of “teach” reveals Serampore Mission *and* Serampore College activities. For someone seeking to serve God, Ward asks rhetorically, “Canst thou not assist to teach the poor; to diffuse knowledge among the heathen? Is there no child to whom thou canst impart the unadulterated milk of the word?”⁵³ Such Christian *teaching* functions were the exact missionary role that Carey, Marshman, and Ward embodied for social transformation.

Ward wrote three devotionals with the Mark 16:15 text. For June 1, Ward focused on the duty of gospel preaching for every age of Christians, saying,

by this his last command he directed, that the gospel should be preached throughout the world, not once merely, and then to be confined to the places where Christian churches continued to exist; but that the church should consider it to be the duty of every age . . . to carry the gospel to every creature.⁵⁴

Secondly, for June 4, Ward combined and summarized Mark 16:15 with Matthew 28:19 by writing,

Finally, he leaves it in charge to his assembled disciples, as he ascends to heaven, to preach the gospel throughout the earth, to the end of time, so that every creature might hear it, and promises that in this work he would be unceasingly with them. The manifest aim of the Redeemer in the christian dispensation, is, principally, the conversion of the world by the instrumentality of preaching; the agents are apostles, or missionaries, which terms are synonymous.⁵⁵

Lastly, in his December 16 devotion, Ward contrasted the content and effects of the Christian Gospel with the Hindoo understanding of the world. He concluded by saying,

How great a blessing will the gospel be to the afflicted Hindoos, when it shall have taught them christian resignation, when it shall have shown them that death to the Christian is the door to eternal life, and when it shall have opened to them life and immortality! How gracious then was our Lord Jesus Christ, in that he directed this gospel to be preached to every creature!⁵⁶

Before he went to India, Ward ironically recounted his knowledge of Samuel Pearce in Birmingham as a proleptic

analogue to the founding and function of the Trio at Serampore College. Ward said that Pearce

preaches three times on the Lord's day, and two or three times in the week. He teaches the young people of his congregation the easiest parts of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy. They have a Sunday school, at which between 2 and 300 children are instructed . . . that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.⁵⁷

These few selections from Carey, Marshman, and Ward indicate that the Trio conceived of missionary work as a union of *teaching* and *preaching* with no exclusive division. While the teaching of reading and languages fits the school setting, there is no preaching in the church setting or in the open air *without the ability to manage language*. In this way, the founding of Serampore College was an effort in sharing the transformative power of language study and reading toward the ultimate end of sharing the written Word of life as found in the original Bible languages *and* in India's indigenous languages of Holy Scripture.

Familial, Institutional, and Philosophical Opposition to Serampore College's Founding

Despite their reading and application of Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15, the Trio faced intense opposition surrounding the founding of the College in 1818 and afterward in the 1820s and 1830s. In those decades, the College's founding was the locus of a painful controversy within Carey's family, within the Baptist Missionary Society, and even among some American supporters. For the Trio, Providence alone protected Serampore College and allowed it to flourish.

With the arrival to India of the second generation of Baptist missionaries (the Junior Brethren) and after the devastating Serampore fire of 1812, the successful Charter Renewal in 1813, and Andrew Fuller's death in 1815, the positive, good-will relation between the Serampore missionaries and the home

Society deteriorated and caused a split in 1827. New committee members in the Society were not familiar with the Trio as Fuller had been, and some complaints arose about the Marshmans' supposed opulence,⁵⁸ Joshua Marshman's favoritism toward his children, the Trio's supposed mistreatment of the Junior Brethren, and the excessive cost and size of the Main Building along with charges of financial mismanagement. Aside from these attacks which poisoned the support of many in Britain, the new members of the home Society wanted to exercise more budgetary control over the Serampore Mission.⁵⁹

William Ward knew these struggles firsthand since he left India in December, 1818, and returned in May, 1821, accompanied by Hannah Marshman and the newly recruited missionary Scotsman John Mack. During his two and a half years in Britain, Holland, and America, Ward raised awareness and money for the support of Serampore College. Nevertheless, in an 1819 meeting with the London Baptist Missionary Society Committee, Ward remarked pointedly that "the discussion turned on the question of our independence"⁶⁰ at Serampore. He said the Committee thought that "Serampore is a foreigner; every letter and every article coming from thence, is turned over and looked at as though it had a bad odour," since the Committee has "too much the spirit of the corporation; they are new in office, and love power too well."⁶¹

Eustace Carey, the beloved nephew of Dr. William Carey, arrived as a Baptist missionary in Bengal in 1814.⁶² He lived there ten years, and conducted mission work in both Serampore and Calcutta. As one of the Junior Brethren at the Calcutta Mission, Eustace eventually came to oppose Serampore College, and wrote essays against the Serampore Mission and the College. When Eustace returned to Britain, he advanced a negative campaign against Serampore. In a letter to Society Secretary Mr. John Dyer, Eustace wrote,

I cannot but think with most intense concern of this boon of £1000 per annum to Serampore. I ask myself is it possible that the Committee, after all they know and have been made to feel of the extreme mismanagement of Serampore, that they should strengthen that establishment, by pouring into its already enormous treasury the ample provision of £1000! For what? Not to enlarge the Society's own legitimate sphere of operation, but to deepen, and widen, and impart energy to a compact more hostile to our Society than any existing religious institution upon the face of the earth.⁶³

A year later in June, 1826, Eustace Carey gave a public address at Great Queen Street Chapel, London. In the address, one can sense the sharp and painful intellectual opposition to Serampore College by the Society and by Eustace due to Serampore College's inclusion of "literary pursuits" rather than an exclusive focus on the preparation of "native students who had embraced Christianity, and were preparing to become preachers of the Gospel."⁶⁴ Eustace remarked,

We should not forget that the intelligence of the people of India may be resuscitated, and they may rest in infidelity. It is not merely the march of intellect that we are desirous of seeing, but the progress of Christ and his cause in the East and the West. Literature has its pleasures, but Christianity has higher pleasures still. We might have taught the Hindoos to read, and to reason too, without introducing the doctrines of Revelation. But, we aim at a nobler object. "God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus!"⁶⁵

A year later in 1827, Eustace repeated his opposition in an address to the Society,⁶⁶ and added "Yet with the committee, the more simple and spiritual their plans and operations are, the more

success may be expected.”⁶⁷ The eminent and scholarly minister Rev. Joseph Kinghorn likewise addressed the Society in a more restrained tone than Eustace. Kinghorn said,

We were never consulted upon the building of the College . . . We do not deny that many advantages may be derived by the natives of India from the cultivation of literature. Whether much good has ever been done by colleges and universities, in extending the kingdom of Christ . . . may perhaps be questioned; but . . . the establishment of a college formed no part of your plan, and we could not, without manifest injustice to you, appropriate any part of your funds to this purpose. We have no objection to literature . . . It is an instrument of great usefulness, when properly directed . . . for the future service of the church.⁶⁸

In 1828, Junior Brethren Eustace Carey and William Yates wrote, “we cannot approve of the College at Serampore” for.

It now turns out to be a literary institution, in which native youths, both pious and profane, are received, supported, and educated *gratis*. Willing as the religious public would be to support pious natives with a view to missionary labors, we conceive that they cannot consistently support a college where piety is not a prerequisite.⁶⁹

Eustace and Yates moved to attack the College’s seeming exclusive focus on Sanskrit instruction⁷⁰ and then implied that the non-Christian youth admitted in the College possibly were immoral characters.⁷¹ Just three years later, Eustace continued the same argument by saying, “it may be reasonably doubted whether it [Serampore College] was at all necessary to any Missionary purpose.”⁷²

In addition, recall an incident provoked by William Ward’s American fundraising for Serampore College. One of Carey’s

friends, William Staughton, was an original member in the establishment of the Missionary Society in 1792, but relocated to America. He wrote to Carey saying that the interest on the monies Ward raised would remain in America until the trustees could be assured that the money would be spent on the theological preparation of ministers, not on the teaching of science. Carey responded saying, “I must confess I never heard anything more illiberal. Pray can youth be trained up for the Christian ministry without science? Do you in America train up youths for it without any knowledge of science?”⁷³

Under the name of the Trio, Joshua Marshman drafted⁷⁴ a document in 1816 regarding the establishment of native schools, which reveals foundational ideas repeated in the 1818 *College for the Instruction of Asiatic Christian and Other Youth* for Serampore College. Pleading for science, Marshman argued that basic information, reading, and rudimentary knowledge had to be acquired before the Bible could be distributed. He said,

ideas of the heavenly bodies, the earth, the past state of the world,—of the nature and high destination of man, of God as the Creator, the Saviour, and the Judge of mankind; of virtue and vice, and of a future state, fixed and eternal, might in a certain degree be diffused throughout the east; which with the facility of reading which this would create, would be an admirable preparation for the effectual dissemination of the Sacred Scriptures, the best gift, next to his dear Son, which God has ever given to men.⁷⁵

Not only did Carey display a literary emphasis with Bibles, grammars, and lexica in numerous languages, his translation of the *Ramayana* with Joshua Marshman,⁷⁶ and his literary treatment of agriculture and botany,⁷⁷ Carey displayed an enlightened scientific biography, which informed his view on the relation of science and Christian theology. He did not separate God’s creation from God’s revelation. As Principal of Serampore College, 1818-1832, Carey

served both as Professor of Divinity and Lecturer of Botany and Zoology.⁷⁸ A report in 1824 says that.

Dr. Carey commenced a course of Theological Lectures in the Bengalee language, for the benefit of the Christian Students in the College, and the Native Brethren residing in Serampore. He has already discussed the evidences of Natural Religion for the existence and unity of God, and also the greater number of the Divine Attributes.⁷⁹

A year later in 1825 while Eustace attacked Serampore College, William Carey simultaneously affirmed a thoroughly traditional Christian understanding of the natural world and God's providential role in it. Although, his uncle's statement might not convey Eustace's interest in "preaching the Gospel" as a missionary, Carey's enlarged focus was on God as creator, the works of creation, God's sustenance of creation, and the revelation of God's attributes, namely His exalted nature, wisdom, and moral character. Dr. Carey wrote,

The works of God are confessedly calculated to raise the mind to sublime meditation upon and admiration of the Maker. . . . the works of creation, especially, will convince us that every part of them is the work of that Divine Being who "spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast;" and the admirable adaptation of every animal and vegetable to the station it is intended to occupy, proves incontestably the wisdom and goodness of the universal Parent of all creatures, who openeth his hand and filleth every living creature with plenteousness.⁸⁰

This overlooked passage reveals Principal Carey's literary awareness, method, and theology, in contrast to his nephew Eustace, some in the home Committee, and William Stoughton. Carey appealed to themes of general revelation (i.e., "the Maker,"

"works of creation," "Divine Being,"⁸¹ "universal Parent") to emphasize the role of nature in theological reflection. Furthermore the phrases "works of creation," "Divine Being," and "universal Parent" did not appear in Carey's English Bible.⁸²

Within the selection, Carey quoted two English Bibles. First, the phrase "spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast" appears in the King James Version at Psalm 33:9. The other phrase "who openeth his hand and filleth every living creature with plenteousness" from Psalm 145:16 appears slightly modified from Miles Coverdale's 1535 and 1539 English Psalters that became the text for the Psalms in *The Book of Common Prayer* for over four hundred years.⁸³

Carey put quote marks on the King James Version text from Psalm 33:9, but did not include quotes for Psalm 145:16. For this latter text, Coverdale had the phrase "all things living," but Carey changed the text to read "every living creature."⁸⁴ Possibly, to match his understanding of Mark 16:15 "preach the gospel to every creature," Carey modified the melodic Coverdale translation "all things living" with the more cumbersome—and missionary identified—phrase "every living creature." With this gloss, Carey connected God's sustenance of all living things with a particular rhetorical flourish on individual human beings. If the Universal Parent filled *every living creature* with plenteousness, surely in Carey's view that abundance included the gospel for every creature's reception from the missionary servants.

Parallel to this text in 1820 and 1824 *during* the controversy about Serampore College, Carey printed Psalm 145:10, "All thy works praise thee O Lord," as the epigraph on the title pages of his editing of William Roxburgh's eminent botanical work *Flora Indica*,⁸⁵ which Carey edited and contributed substantive additions. Additionally, the title page of both volumes of *Flora Indica* prominently include the phrase "Serampore: Printed at the Mission Press," which emphasized the union of Christian missionary identity *within* literary and scientific efforts.

The prominent citation of Psalm 145:10 in the 1820 and 1824 volumes of *Flora Indica* along with Psalm 145:16 in his 1825 article “On the Study of Nature” are examples of Carey’s literary brilliance and scientific commitment within a traditional Christian hermeneutic. Principal Carey’s view of being Christian demanded that literature and science relate seamlessly to scriptural knowledge and reason, since all “the works of God raise . . . the mind to sublime meditation upon and admiration of the Maker.”⁸⁶ For the Trio, those “works of God” included the plants, the animals, the Bible in its original languages variously translated, the press and other technologies, “Christ’s divinity and atonement,”⁸⁷ and the children of the “Universal Parent” for whom the “Divine Being” remains ever mindful.

Conclusion

Serampore College’s founders and its early history challenged the world with a vision of social transformation through Christian education. And, the founding Trio certainly would affirm that God alone was the Author of Serampore College’s success.

Two summary remarks by William Carey to his son Jabez capture the essence of the Trio’s efforts in being Christian missionaries *and* being founders of Serampore College. Dr. Carey said,

I wish you to stay in Amboyna . . . Teach the people publicly and from house to house holding out to them the free tidings of Salvation through the Redeemer’s Blood and teaching them to observe all things which he has commanded them.⁸⁸

Your ministry embraces two things. The establishment of schools and the spread of the gospel. The first of these if it can be secured will I trust be an effectual introduction to the other. I hope however you will not neglect any opportunity that offers of making known

the Gospel of our dear redeemer. Success must depend on God”⁸⁹

Sandwiching the founding of Serampore College between these letters from 1816 and 1819 both on a timeline and in a rationale for the College’s existence, Carey took from Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15 key foundational words for missionaries and for Serampore College, namely, *teach* and *gospel*. Carey’s methods for achieving social transformation through education encompassed public and private teaching of all the Lord’s revelation, establishing a school for teaching, acting on any opportunity to teach or preach the gospel, and depending wholly on God for any resulting success.

End Notes

- 1 Roger Hedlund, “William Carey’s American Connections: Implications for the Serampore Mission, Indigenous Christianity and India’s Renaissance” (PhD diss., University of Madras, 2003), 139, accessed on May 20, 2019, Papers of Roger Hedlund, <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/rogerhedlundpapers/>.
- 2 J. T. K. Daniel, “Carey’s Paradigm for Indian Higher Education,” in *Carey’s Obligation and India’s Renaissance*, ed. J. T. K. Daniel and R. E. Hedlund (Serampore: Council of Serampore College, 1993), 239.
- 3 On English Bible history, see David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 66-460.
- 4 See David Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 103-114, and Gordon Campbell, *BIBLE: The Story of the King James Version 1611-2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 129-147.
- 5 Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15 (KJV).
- 6 “The Calendar, with the Table of Lessons,” in *The Book of Common Prayer* (Cambridge: Printed by John Archdeacon, 1771).
- 7 William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens. In which the Religious State of the Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings, and the Practicability of Further Undertakings, are Considered* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792), 8.

- 8 Carey, *An Enquiry*, 36-37.
- 9 Brian Stanley, "Christianity and Civilization in English Evangelical Thought, 1792-1857," in *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, ed. Brian Stanley, in *Studies in the History of Christian Missions*, gen. ed. R. E. Frykenberg and Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, Mich., and Richmond, Surrey: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., and Curzon Press, Ltd., 2001), 179.
- 10 Andrew Fuller, "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation, or the Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ," in *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 2nd ed., ed. Andrew Gunton Fuller (London: William Ball and Co., 1841), 157.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 150.
- 12 Carey, *An Enquiry*, 82-83.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 14 Philip Doddridge, "The Evil and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men," in *The Works of Rev. P. Doddridge, D.D. in Ten Volumes*, vol. III (Leeds: Printed by Edward Baines, 1803), 232.
- 15 J. W. Morris, *Memoirs of The Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (London: Printed for the Author, 1816), 96-97.
- 16 Carey, *An Enquiry*, 7.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*, 73.
- 19 William Carey, Letter to His Sisters, Serampore, October 25, 1831, in Terry G. Carter, ed., *The Journal and Selected Letters of William Carey* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth and Helwys, 2000), 251-252.
- 20 Joshua Marshman, *A Defence of the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, In Reply to Ram-Mohun Roy of Calcutta* (London: Kingsbury, Parbury, and Allen, 1822), 33, quoted Mark 16:15 and appended the baptism saying from Matt. 28:19 with Mark 16:15 as an example of Jesus "associating *his own name with that of God the Father* . . . [since he was] equal in nature with the Father."
- 21 An early reference is J. P. Chown, "The Great Commission," in *The Baptist Magazine* (September 1859): 533-538, continued in (October 1859): 608-613, an anniversary sermon to the Baptist Missionary Society preached at Surrey Chapel, April 27, 1859. Chown's sermon was on Mark 16:15, the parallel text to Matt. 28:19.
- 22 Wycliffe (1380), Tyndale (1526, 1534), Coverdale (1535), The Great Bible (1541), The Geneva Bible (1560), and The Bishops' Bible (1568) include "go" and "teach."
- 23 Other participle constructions of πορεύομαι translated as imperatives by the King James translators are in Matt. 2:8; 9:13; 11:4. However, at Matt. 10:7, the KJV reads "as you go" for the translation of the participle πορεύόμενοι.
- 24 *The New Testament of Jesus Christ, Translated Faithfully into English out of the authentical Latin* (Rheims: John Fogny, 1582), 85, has, "going, therefore, teach ye al nations: Baptizing Them in the Name of the Father and of the Sonne and of the Holy Ghost." Wycliffe translated the Latin participle, *euntes* ("going") with the imperative "go."
- In regard to Latin participles being used as imperatives, Peter Butrica, Department of Classics, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, said, "no. In Classical Latin, participles indicate an action going on at the same time as another action or something already completed at the time of another action and could not have this independent force," "Re: Translating Matt 28:19" on *Classics-L By Thread*, accessed on August 21, 2001, <http://omega.cohums.ohio-state.edu/hyper-lists/classics-l/current/0535.html>.
- The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, Translated from the Latin Vulgate, A Revision of the Challoner-Rheims Version (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1963), 37, has "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."
- 25 Included are the English Revised Version (1881), the American Standard Version (1901), the Revised Standard Version (1946 and 1971), the New Revised Standard Version (1989), the New American Standard Bible (1960 and 1995), the Good News Bible (1966), the New English Bible (1970), the New International Version (1973), the New Jerusalem Bible (1985), the New American Bible (1987), the Revised English Bible (1989), the Contemporary English Version (1991), the English Standard Version (2016), and the Christian Standard Bible (2017).
- 26 *The New Testament*, trans. William Tyndale, The text of the Worms edition of 1526 in original spelling; ed. W. R. Cooper with a Preface by David Daniell (London: The British Library, 2000), 71, Tyndale's translation has "Goo therefore and teache all nacions."
- The Holy Bible, Conteyning the Old Testament, and the New: Newly Translated out of the Originall Tongues; & with the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised, by his Maiesties Speciall Commandement, Appointed to be read in Churches* (Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie, Anno Dom., 1611) has "Goe ye therefore, and teach all nations."
- 27 Of note, in 1740, Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellanies," 972, translated μαθητεύσατε as "make disciples," and in 1742, Johann Albrecht Bengel,

- Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Tubingae: Henr. Philippi Schrammii, 1742), 162, interpreted μαθητεύσατε as “Μαθητεύει vest *discipulos facere*” (i.e., Μαθητεύειν is *to make disciples*).
- 28 According to the Baptist Missionary Society Minutes, October 2, 1792, Baptist Missionary Society Archives, the original name of the Baptist Missionary Society was the “Particular-Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the heathen.”
- 29 Clearly, the focus of Matt. 28:19 was Jesus’ command for his eleven disciples to go toward the gentiles. The use of τῶν ἐθνῶν in Matthew’s Gospel refers to gentiles in Matt. 6:32; 20:19,25; 24:7,9, though 24:7,9 could include Jews. In texts unique to Matthew, all occurrences of ἔθνος refer to gentiles (4:15; 10:5,18; 12:18,21; 21:43; 24:14; 25:32; 28:19).
- 30 P[hilip] Doddridge, *The Family Expositor: or, a Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament: with Critical Notes; and a Practical Improvement of each Section . . .*, vol. 2 (London: C. Hitch et al., 1761), 668.
- 31 William Carey to Andrew Fuller, Mudnabatty, November 16, 1796, in Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey, D.D.* (London: Jackson and Walford, 1836), 276.
- 32 William Carey to John Sutcliff, Mudnabatty, November 22, 1796, in Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey, D.D.*, 284. Of note, Carey subsequently asked Sutcliff “to have compassion on my eyes, and send me . . . Parkhurst’s Greek Lexicon.” “Dr. Carey to Mr. Sutcliff, September 28, 1809,” *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary Society*, 4 (1810), 39.
- 33 John Parkhurst, *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament*, 3d ed. (London: Printed by J. Davis, 1798), 412. Whether Carey in 1796 received a first or second edition of Parkhurst is unknown.
- 34 The author gratefully acknowledges both Dr. Dipankar Halder, Associate Professor of New Testament, Serampore College for providing this translation, and Dr. Subhro Sekhar Sircar, Professor of New Testament, Serampore College, for providing a similar translation with commentary.
- 35 See “Memoir of the Translations, addressed to the Society, June, 1812,” *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary Society*, 5 (1813), 39, and “From Dr. Marshman, explanatory of his Manner of proceeding in Translating and Printing the Chinese Scriptures. Serampore, Dec. 1813,” *Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, with Extracts of Correspondence*, 3 (1814 and 1815), 471-473.
- 36 See “Baptist Mission,” *The Baptist Magazine*, 17 (July 1825), 318, and “Vindication of Serampore Translations,” *The Missionary Herald*, 21/12 (December 1825), 393.
- 37 The Greek New Testament Pearce gave to Carey resides in the Heritage Room, Fuller Baptist Church, Kettering, England. Pearce inscribed the book “A small token of the great esteem he bears his dear bro’ Carey. Sept. 11th 1797. ἡ καρδία καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μία. Acts iv.32.” The publication information is as follows: H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ Novum TESTAMENTUM, *Ex Regiis aliisque optimis editionibus cum curâ expressum*. AMSTELODAMI, Ex Officinâ Elzevirianâ. 1670.
- The Greek epigraph that Pearce included in the dedication to Carey has two appearances of the definite article ἡ in the *Textus Receptus* of Acts 4:32 (ἡ καρδία καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μία). Subsequent critical Greek New Testament editions omit both uses of ἡ and have the reading as καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία, but the inclusion or exclusion of both uses of ἡ has no bearing on the translation of this Greek phrase as “one heart and soul.”
- The author acknowledges Stephen J. Weston, Ph.D., Curator, Charles Moore Collection of Musical Instruments, University of Leicester, Leicester, England, and Choir Master at Fuller Baptist Church, Kettering, who gave the author a gracious introduction to the Heritage Room and display of Carey’s Greek New Testament.
- 38 Prominent examples include Mark 16:9-20, John 7:53-8:11, and Acts 8:37. Modern English Bibles starting with the English Revised Version of 1881 include footnotes for various disputed texts.
- 39 Mrs. Eustace Carey, *Eustace Carey: A Missionary in India, A Memoir* (London: Pewtress & Co., 1857), 174.
- 40 William Staughton, “List of Persons Baptized by the Missionaries in Bengal,” *The Baptist Mission in India* (Philadelphia: Hellings and Aitken, 1811), 94-98.
- 41 William Carey, Letter to Andrew Fuller, November 16, 1796, in Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey, D.D.*, 272-273.
- 42 William Carey, John Fountain, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward, Letter to the Baptist Mission Society, January 25, 1800, in Baptist Missionary Society Archives.
- 43 S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey, D.D., Fellow of the Linnaean Society* (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1923), 264.
- 44 See M. A. Laird, “The Contribution of the Serampore Missionaries to Education in Bengal, 1793–1837,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 31/1 (1968): 92-112; and Pratap Chandra Gine, “Educationist William Carey: Translation in Education,” in *Mission and the Local Congregation: Essays in Honour of William Carey’s 250th Birth Anniversary*, ed. Solomon Rongpi (Delhi: ISPCK/NCCI, 2011), 3-12.

- 45 W. Carey, J. Marshman, W. Ward, *College for the Instruction of Asiatic Christian and Other Youth, in Eastern Literature and European Science* (Serampore, 1818), 22, and *College for the Instruction of Asiatic Christian and Other Youth, in Eastern Literature and European Science at Serampore, Bengal* (London: Printed for Black, Kingsbury, and Allen, 1819), 24.
- 46 Joshua Marshman, "Foreign Intelligence – Serampore," *The Baptist Magazine* XIII (May 1821), 222.
- 47 Joshua Marshman, *Thoughts on Propagating Christianity More Effectually Among the Heathen*, 2d ed. (Serampore: Printed at the Mission Press, 1827), 78.
- 48 Ibid., 23.
- 49 William Ward, "Address to the Society," *The Baptist Magazine*, XII (1820), 12.
- 50 William Ward, "Missionary College – Serampore," *The Baptist Magazine*, XII (1820), 38-40.
- 51 William Ward, *Necessity of Christianity to India. Population, 150,000,000* (Boston, January 1, 1821), 4.
- 52 William Ward, *Reflections on the Word of God, for Every Day in the Year* (Serampore: Printed at the Mission Press, 1822; London: Re-Printed for W. Simpkin, and R. Marshall, 1825), 218, 228.
- 53 Ibid., 524.
- 54 Ibid., 222-223.
- 55 Ibid., 225.
- 56 Ibid., 508.
- 57 William Ward, Birmingham, Letter to a Friend, December 31, 1798, in William Stennett, *Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. William Ward, Late Baptist Missionary in India* (London: Printed by J. Haddon, 1825), 58-59.
- 58 John Clark Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward Embracing the History of the Serampore Mission*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1859), 2:175-181, 192-198, 204-205.
- 59 See A. Christopher Smith, "British Recruits for Serampore, 1800-1825," *The Baptist Review of Theology*, 2, no. 2 (Fall 1992), 4-35.
- 60 William Ward, in Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward*, 2:209-210.
- 61 Ibid., 211.
- 62 According to the Trio's "Report of the Baptist Mission," *The Missionary Register* (May 1816), 161, 166, "Our hands have been strengthened this year by the addition of our much-esteemed Brother, Eustace Carey, with

- his wife, whom, after a trial of nearly six months, we have invited to stay at Serampore." Mrs. Eustace Carey, *Eustace Carey: A Missionary in India*, 185, remarked that William Carey wrote to his sisters, January 31, 1816, and said, "Eustace is a very good preacher, and much esteemed."
- 63 Eustace Carey, Letter to Mr. John Dyer, Leicester, September 5, 1825, in Mrs. Eustace Carey, *Eustace Carey: A Missionary in India*, 394-395.
- 64 Eustace Carey, Address in Great Queen Street Chapel, London, June 1826, in Mrs. Eustace Carey, *Eustace Carey: A Missionary in India*, 400.
- 65 Ibid., 401.
- 66 "Rev. Eustace Carey," *The Baptist Magazine* 19 (1827), 346-347.
- 67 Ibid., 347.
- 68 "Rev. Joseph Kinghorn," *The Baptist Magazine* 19 (1827), 345.
- 69 Eustace Carey and William Yates, *Vindication of the Calcutta Baptist Missionaries: in Answer to "A Statement Relative to Serampore, by J. Marshman, D.D. with Introductory Observations by John Foster"* (London: Wightman & Co., and Parbury, Allen, and Co., 1828), 85-86.
- 70 Carey, Marshman, and Ward, *College for the Instruction of Asiatic Christian and Other Youth*, 3.
- 71 Carey and Yates, *Vindication of the Calcutta Baptist Missionaries*, 87.
- 72 Eustace Carey, *Supplement to the Vindication of the Calcutta Baptist Missionaries, Occasioned by Dr. Carey's "Thirty-Two Letters," Dr. Marshman's "Reply to the Rev. John Dyer," and Mr. John Marshman's "Review"* (London: George Wightman; and May Be Had at the Baptist Mission-Rooms, Fen-Court, 1831), 123.
- 73 Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward*, 2:422.
- 74 Ibid., 2:119.
- 75 W. Carey, J. Marshman, and W. Ward, *Hints Relative to Native Schools, Together with the Outline of An Institution For their EXTENSION and MANAGEMENT* (Serampore: Printed at the Mission Press, 1816), 8-9, 13-14, 22, included an argument for the teaching of arithmetic and scientific subjects to native youth in local missionary schools.
- 76 William Carey and Joshua Marshman. *The Ramayuna of Valmeeki, in the Original Sungskrit, With a Prose Translation, And Explanatory Notes*, 3 vols. (Serampore, 1806, 1808, 1810).
- 77 William Roxburgh, Nathaniel Wallich, *Flora Indica; or Descriptions of Indian Plants To Which are Added Descriptions of Plants More recently Discovered by Nathaniel Wallich*, ed. William Carey, 2 vols. (Serampore: The Mission Press, 1820, 1824).

- 78 George Smith, *The Life of William Carey, D.D., Shoemaker and Missionary* (London: John Murray, 1885), 403. For the larger scientific context including Serampore, see Sujit Sivasundaram, “‘A Christian Benares’: Orientalism, Science and the Serampore Mission of Bengal,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 44 (2007), 111-145.
- 79 “Theological Lectures,” *The Friend of India*, 7 (1824), 57-58.
- 80 William Carey, “On the Study of Nature,” *The Friend of India* (Monthly Series), VIII (1825), 250. See Pss. 33:9; 145:16; John Wesley, Sermon 60, “The General Deliverance,” 1; and John Wesley, Sermon 67, “On Divine Providence,” 19.
- 81 William Carey, *Journal*, May 30–April 5, 1795, Baptist Missionary Society Archives, includes the phrase “divine Being” as a description of God after the Muslims had responded to his preaching with their use of “Alla.”
- 82 For “the Maker” in reference to God in the KJV, see Prov. 22:2; Isa. 22:11; Jer. 33:2; Wisd. of Sol. 13:5; 16:24.
- 83 Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 189. See *The Book of Common Prayer, Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David* (Cambridge: Printed by John Baskerville, 1762; and Oxford: Printed by Mark Baskett, 1762).
- 84 *BIBLIA, The Bible, that is the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament, faithfully translated in to English*, Myles Coverdale, 1535; also, see William Aldis Wright, ed., *The Hexaplar Psalter Being the Book of Psalms in Six English Versions* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1911), 356.
- 85 Roxburgh and Wallich, ed. William Carey, *Flora Indica*, 2 vols., title pages.
- 86 Carey, “On the Study of Nature,” 250.
- 87 “Statutes and Regulations of the Serampore College, June 12, 1833,” No. 11, in George Howells and A. C. Underwood, *The Story of Serampore and its College* (Serampore, 1918), 81. During the Serampore Controversy, Marshman, *A Defence of the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ*, 6, said, “we belong to that class who think that no one can be a real Christian without believing the Divinity and the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the Divine Authority of the whole of the Holy Scriptures.”
- 88 William Carey to Jabez Carey, Calcutta, November 23, 1816, in Sunil Kumar Chatterjee, *Family Letters of Dr. William Carey* (Serampore: Carey Library and Research Center, 2002), 152.
- 89 William Carey to Jabez Carey, Calcutta, November 16, 1819, in Chatterjee, *Family Letters of Dr. William Carey*, 175.

Understanding Mental Illness through Anton Theophilus Boisen: The Prophetic Call to Discern ‘Meaning In Madness’

*Joseph George**

Introduction

Mental health management is one of the major concerns in public health services in all countries irrespective of their economic status. The mental health management refers to a broad array of activities directly or indirectly related to the enhancement of mental and emotional well-being, prevention of mental disorders, and treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders. This process also includes support and help for those caring for the mentally ill persons, particularly the primary family as well as professional caregivers. Mental health (or illness) is affected by a wide range of socio-economic-cultural and familial factors that needs to be thoroughly examined in order to promote positive mental health as well as dealing with the illness categories.

One of the notable achievements in contemporary context is the significant and remarkable advancement in healthcare services across the globe, including India. The services on the physical health in India have progressed rapidly along with the

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globalization. The major cities, and even small towns, have multi-specialty hospitals where all kinds of ailments are diagnosed and treated. A few of the Mental Health Institutions in the country is well reputed for their research and advancement in treatment (such as NIMHANS, Bangalore). However, with regard to the mental health services, India is still lagging behind due to many reasons. Among these the negative perceptions on mental illness, myths and superstitions linking mental illness, lack of family and public support for seeking help at the time of mental or emotional distress, and inadequate commitment for providing resources and professional care for the suffering persons and their families.

As a counsellor, whenever I had recommended persons with mental illness and their families that they need psychiatric help as the symptoms displayed features of some form of mental distress (such as depression) or emotional disorders, the resistance was evident in their response and reactions. These reactions indicate their fears, anxieties, and dilemmas about accepting the mental health situations which is disturbing. Myths, misperceived notions, distorted beliefs, and attitudes towards the mentally ill hinder the family and the public from recognizing the need for professional medical care and psychosocial support towards healing, restoration, and growth. The medical advancement today, particularly the psychiatric facilities and resources, comes with the possibilities of healing and cure of all forms of mental and emotional disorders. This hopeful possibility is the promise for today and for the future days.

Persons with mental illness or emotional disorders are capable of living their life and significant contributions towards the society at large. Barbara Moe shares that many specially talented and achieved persons across the globe had mental health problems: recognized “political figures Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill, artists Vincent van Gogh and Michelangelo, writers Edgar Allan Poe and William Styron, poet Silvia Plath, composer Ludwig van Beethoven, actress Vivian Leigh and

Patty Duke, scientist Isaac Newton, media giant Ted Turner, and Television newsman Mike Wallace.”¹ This is not an exhaustive list at all. Today one could think about many more such reputed and acclaimed persons around us: Wayne Brady (Entertainer), Jim Cary (Actor), Tennessee Williams (Playwright), Demi Lovato (Entertainer), Anne Rice (Novelist), Carey Fisher (Actor), J. K. Rowling (Author),² and many more names, known and unknown, across the globe.

This is also true in India. There are persons with different types of mental disorders who made their unbeaten impressions in the community in many different ways. Among the Celebrities of Hollywood the following persons are with mental disorders as they shared with their family and friends and sought professional help. Most of them succeeded well in personal life and career though there are serious setbacks and limitations. Honey Singh (Bipolar), Deepika Padukone (Depression), Shah Rukh Khan (Depression). Manisha Koirala (Depression), Parven Babi (Paranoid Schizophrenia), and Jiah Khan (Depression), who committed suicide without obtaining appropriate medical help.³ During my childhood I noticed a mother in the neighborhood who was suffering from schizophrenia for long time but she took care of her family. In spite of the disturbing symptoms of the illness, she used to take care of the household chores, sent her five children on time to school, and manage (protect) the home. She never obtained any kind of professional medical help or counselling.

The first part of this article highlights the problem in mental health management in India with reference to major challenges. The second part is a brief history of Anton Boisen with special reference to important life events and major influences on him. The focus of the third section is to highlight his religious and theological convictions on mental illness and clinical methodology. And the final section evaluates the overall contribution of Boisen on the CPE movement from a historical perspective and exploring his relevance for understanding mental illness and treatment.

I. Mental Illness, Treatment, and Rehabilitation in India: Problems and Prospects

It was an enriching professional opportunity through my association with the *Medico-Pastoral Association* and its *Half Way Home*⁴ in Bangalore since 1992, since I joined the faculty of the United Theological College. This Association and its Home caters to persons, both men and women, who are recovering from any form of mental illness, following their hospitalization and treatment. As a member of the Working Committee, Managing Committee, Chairperson of various Committees, and being part of the programmes for family members of the Mentally Ill, I quite often heard the fears and anxieties of relatives in taking care of the mentally ill, though these persons have recovered from their severe symptoms. The family members often are unwilling (in some cases refuse) to take the affected person back home. The fears and anxieties continue to be major problem across India irrespective of socio-economic class, educational level, and religious affiliations. Even if the person with illness recover, the family members and others do not trust in their recovery and unwilling to take them home, fearing the unpredictable breakdown again. This tendency is a major hindrance to the healing and rehabilitation of persons with mental and emotional disorders.

Mentally ill persons are categorized and labeled as ‘different’ from the so called ‘normal’, resulting in stigmatizing them systematically and sidelining them everywhere, even in families. The negative perceptions and attitudes, lack of right information, unempathic approach, and sidelining of the mentally ill at all levels remain a serious problem that hinder the healing and rehabilitation of the affected and afflicted persons even today. The recent studies in India have shown that the negative perceptions and attitudes prevalent both in urban and rural population.⁵ Many negative views such as mental illness as a curse, shameful, frightening, dangerous, mentally weak, worthless, unstable and unpredictable, untrustworthy, and incurable are prevalent both in urban and rural

contexts. Persons with mental illness not only suffer biological symptoms of their conditions but also the psychological and emotional impacts due to the stigmatization encountered.⁶

The Live Love Laugh Foundation (TLLLF), commissioned by WHO, published a National survey report titled “How India Perceives Mental Health”, indicating the public perception of mental health and illness across eight Indian cities. The study focused on the level of public awareness on mental health, level of public sensitivity, stigmas associated with mental illness, and attitudes towards the mentally ill persons. In this survey of 3,556 respondents from eight cities across India, 47% of the respondents are categorized as being highly judgmental of people with mental illness; most of the respondents in this category were indicating that one should keep a safe distance from those who are depressed, or that talking to a mentally unhealthy person could affect the mental health of others.⁷ This study has revealed that 87% of respondents associate mental illness with severe disorders (like schizophrenia and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and their symptoms, showing poor understanding of the broad spectrum of mental illness.⁸ The respondents view everything in quite severe form of mental disorders, rather than seeing these from a wider perspective which make them scared about the mentally ill.

The TLLLF based on their qualitative data also reported that people with mental illness are likely to avoid discussing their mental health concerns openly due to the fear of being labeled; they avoid seeking professional help due to the stigma attached to the illness; only the weak man or woman needs professional help; seeking help is waste of time; and illness linked to curses.⁹ This thought process of the Indian community is not helping with the professional management of these persons. Today, there is medical / psychiatric treatment as well as counselling support for all categories of illness with the promise of cure. Even if cure is not possible, the medial-psychiatric help, support from professional counsellors, and the caring actions of the family can make the

persons with mental disorders 'functional.' Each person can live her/his life with direction, purpose, and meaning. They would find life more worthwhile and meaningful where there is social and family support, medical assistance, and a hope-generating community. What is problematic the gap - mental and emotional - between the mentally persons and the world around them.

As the MINDS Foundation asserts, mental disorder is not shameful, but the stigma is. Stigma aggravates the suffering of the mentally ill as they do not get any kind of professional help or caring support from their family or community. It is a common thing in rural India as well as in some urban centres people do not directly take them to counsellors or psychiatrist but religious centres and faith healers who treat them unprofessionally that further aggravates their situation.¹⁰

A recent study reported in WHO, conducted for the NCMH (National Care Of Medical Health), states that at least 6.5 per cent of the Indian population suffers from some form of the serious mental disorders, with no discernible rural-urban differences. This indicates the depth of the mental health problems in India. The study also reports that though there are effective measures and treatment, a significant number of the population does not seek professional help and the shortage of psychologists, psychiatrists, and doctors.¹¹

There are quite a few recent empirical researches in India on the mentally ill populations, primary caregivers – particularly the family members-, role of the family, impact of religious process, and the approach and attitude of the professional caregivers. There are a number of such studies under the SSC at the Masters and the Doctoral level. All these works indicate the main problems in dealing with the mental health and illness problems and management process. Vibeitunuo Mere, in her doctoral dissertations, highlights the major problems in dealing with the mentally ill and their needs. The primary caregivers are forced to play multiple roles in order to manage the patient's behavioral

disturbances, diagnosis, treatment, supervising medications, rehabilitation, and financial needs.¹² Further, she discussed the anxiety in dealing with the patient, fear of rejection from the society, and fear of discriminations at various levels force many not to seek professional help.

Determinants of mental health and mental disorders include not only individual attributes such as the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, behaviours and interactions with others, but also social, cultural, economic, political and environmental factors such as national policies, social protection, living standards, working conditions, and community social supports. Poverty and low education levels are the key amongst these factors. Specific psychological and personality factors also contribute towards the vulnerability. Genetic factors also play a key role in understand mental health and illness.

Lack of adequate awareness about mental health, not well informed about specific illness categories, ridiculing bias against the creative ability of the mentally ill, fear of violent behavior (attacking others / suicidal acts), being suspicious about their healing, and not believing in their ability to be functional again are some of the causes for this big gap even today. In spite of the National and State government level initiatives, demarcated funding for the mentally ill, improved facilities for treatment, better qualified mental health professionals, improved medication, legislations to support the mentally ill (Mental Health Care Act, 2017), and empirically supported evidence for healing, the attitude and approach of the public remain unempathic and unwilling to help. This is a lamentable situation in contemporary India with all her advancements that needs to be addressed with urgency.

II. Anton Boisen: Mentally Ill Person with a Prophetic Call and Vision

Anton Theophilus Boisen (1876-1965) has been widely acclaimed and revered as the 'Father of Clinical Pastoral Education.' Though his pioneering role in the CPE movement is beyond any doubt,

there are questions and reservations often heard on this unusually remarkable person and his contributions. Though he was the pioneer of the CPE training programme in the mental health setting, some of his contemporaries in the training circles even thought of him as a hindrance to the professional training.¹³ This only indicates that there are differing perceptions about this man, his thoughts, and his influences. The purpose of this section is to briefly assess the influence of Boisen on the Clinical Pastoral Education Movement from 1925-1967.¹⁴ It is my thesis that in spite of his personal limitations due to severe mental illness, and others in the movement sidelining him, Boisen made a remarkably deepening influence on the life this movement. It is my observation that there is a renewed interest in understanding Boisen and his thoughts, particularly with reference to his thoughts on religion and mental illness. Many of his contemporaries could not understand and accept his thought on religion in mental illness.

Though I had some reading about Anton Boisen during my B.D., & M. Th. studies, it was during the doctoral study and advanced level clinical training that I encountered this ‘unusual person’ and his ‘prophetically unusual message.’ In 1992, I preached a sermon at the United Theological College Chapel entitled, “An Unusual Vision-An Unusual Message” on Ezekiel 37:1-14. The prophet was in an ‘unusual world’ with an ‘unusual message. The prophet is made to stand in the valley of dry bones where is no life. There is no hope of life. Yet, Yahweh asked the prophet to proclaim life again. The more I read on Boisen and Ezekiel, I saw Ezekiel in Boisen and Boisen in Ezekiel. My academic curiosity increased in reading men and women with extra-ordinary visions and call, both in the Bible and elsewhere. Besides, the book, *Meaning in Madness*, read in my training and teaching emphasizing ministerial concerns with regard to the mentally ill population and the possible pastoral care actions.¹⁵ Hence, the task of pastoral care ministries in the context of mental disorders is mediating hope where there no hope, life where there is no life, and meaning where there no meaning.

I admire Boisen for another remarkable reason: In a world that ‘excludes’ the mentally ill, Boisen not only resisted that exclusion, but also invited others to be in the world of the mentally ill, studying the lives of the mentally ill and ministering to them. The “Boisen message” is professionally enriching to me as a pastoral counselor and trainer. Moreover, with differing views on Boisen, I began to question: Is there a difference between the “historical Boisen” and the “mythologized Boisen”? To what extent has he influenced the Clinical Pastoral Education Movement? When was he first given the title, “Father of the Clinical Pastoral Education” and by whom?

Though there was sidelining and rejection of Boisen, his thoughts and prophetic insights continue to impact the clinical training programmes, particularly the pastoral counselling movement. During my clinical training in the US (1995-2001) there were regular references to Boisen and the Human Living Document. The recent increasing number of dissertations on Boisen at the Masters and Doctoral level is an indication that his theoretical and theological insights continue to challenge the clinical training and practice.¹⁶

In spite of his extremely tough mental illness symptoms, socially withdrawn tendencies, and rigid viewpoints Boisen is remembered for his prophetic calling the church and its ministers to be engaged with the mentally ill and the clinical training programmes with a holistic view of personality development, illness, and healing. Further, he challenged the medical professionals to understand the mentally ill beyond their traditional perspectives of diagnosis and treatment.

III. Living with Mental Illness: Clinical Theory and Practice from Experience

Though Boisen had been influenced by psychological and religious theories mental health and illness, it is his experiences of illness that became the ground of his theoretical and theological articulation. Hence, it is extremely important that his struggles of

living with mental illness are part of any discussion on Boisen. He had encountered extremely tough life experiences, but made extraordinary impacts on pastoral clinical training as well as ministerial practices.

Boisen was born in 1876 in a family of educators and religious leaders. His father died when he was only seven. As a child he was raised in a rigid moral family environment, practice of reformed Presbyterianism¹⁷ and in a 'persuasive' environment.¹⁸ All through his adolescent years he suffered with a 'severe inner struggle arising out of a precocious sexual sensitivity'¹⁹ resulting in the Easter experience of 1898, when Boisen was 22, followed a 'period of black despair.'²⁰ These early experiences resulted that he had to struggle with the issues of guilt, shame and sin. Finally, he obtained 'great relief' when he confessed those feelings to his mother and to his favorite professor, Dr. William L. Bryan. It was this professor who introduced him to the writings of William James, particularly the book *the Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Boisen obtained his BA in Modern Languages from Indiana University in 1897 and began to teach French in a High school. Though he began his career in teaching languages, he gave it up for a profession in forestry during which he seems to have developed the metaphor, 'the wilderness of the lost'²¹ which became part of his personal and theoretical narrative. This career decision was motivated not only by his loyalty to his father, but also his "idea of adventure, of exploration, of cutting loose from the beaten path and starting forth into the unknown territory."²² After experiencing a call for full-time ministry, he entered the Union Theological Seminary in 1908 where he came under the influence of George A. Coe and his 'psychology of mysticism.'²³ It was here that Boisen developed his theory of crisis, different from Coe,²⁴ but following William James²⁵ that crisis experiences, like the one he had on the Easter of 1898, are 'mystical experiences' and they are real, foundational and self-authenticating.²⁶ After graduation from Seminary, from 1911 to 1920 he was engaged

in different assignments though his desire was to be involved in a stable parish ministry. He was not successful in obtaining a regular appointment for a full time ministry with the church. He calls this period as the 'years of wandering.'²⁷

It was in 1920, at the age of 44, that Boisen experienced his first major psychotic episode during which he was 'terrified' with the 'coming world catastrophe'; he was 'terrified beyond measure' and 'talked.'²⁸ He felt that the 'inner world had come crashing down.'²⁹ It was on the occasion of his hospitalization he declared to his family at a dinner that "the problem of insanity was of great importance" and that he had "determined to investigate it."³⁰

Any description of Boisen's life and work, illness and healing cannot be complete without considering the deeper dynamics of his relationship with Alice Batchelder to whom his first major book is dedicated. For him, this one sided love affair was a 'desperate cry for salvation.'³¹ He fantasized of a married life with Alice which never became a reality. Yet, his commitment and dependence on her was so deep that his vision of her as a 'helping hand' or 'guiding hand' in his life.³² It is pointed out by several biographers that whenever he was confronted with rejection in this relationship, his psychotic episodes were triggered.³³ As I read more on Boisen I strongly view that 'the Alice Factor,' along with other factors, not only caused his mental illness but also the healing process in him, hoping that he would be with her one day.

During the first part of his hospitalization, he came obsessed with the sight of the 'moon centered in a cross of light'³⁴ and his vision that he had 'broken an opening in the wall which separated medicine and religion.'³⁵ During his fifteen months recovery period he began to theorize and theologize validating his own experience of mental distress – unusual and strange deeply disturbing experiences. It was sometime during this period he had the opportunity to read *The Insanity of Jesus* in which the mental conditions of religious geniuses were discussed. It appears that at this time of deep despair and rejections this book had tremendously

influenced Boisen with regard to his quest to understand the relationship between religious experience and mental disorders.³⁶

Following the recovery from the first major episode, Boisen joined the Andover Theological Seminary as a special student and had come under the influence of William McDougall, Macfie Campbell and Richard Cabot. It was from Cabot that Boisen inherited the 'case method.' Later, Cabot became an ally and advocate in the formation of the clinical training movement. With the help of Dr. William A. Bryan, Boisen began to work as a Chaplain at the Worcester State Hospital in 1924 which was a marvelous 'metamorphosis.' It needed courage, conviction, certainty, and hope for a recovering 'psychotic patient' to become a Chaplain in a hospital for the mentally ill. This decision displays an extraordinary professional commitment from Boisen. This transmutation makes Boisen a rare quality of human being.

The first group of summer clinical training began in 1925 with four theological students. It was a new challenge and the responses grew. The Boisen-Cabot combination attracted students in larger numbers. With regard to training and supervision not everyone was happy with the views and supervisory style of Boisen. Many found him rigid and not giving due importance to others views and opinions. Nouwen's statement that people had ambivalent feelings about Boisen sheds light on his limited social skills.³⁷

On January 21, 1930, the Council for Clinical Training of Theological Students were incorporated with Philip Guiles coming to the central stage, 'sidelining' Boisen. Though the biographers point out that his mother's death in June 1930 and his ambivalent feelings towards Alice and Dunbar as the causative factors for his second major psychotic episode in November 1930, nobody seems to have given serious attention to the emotional pain and rejection that Boisen felt during the formation of the Council.³⁸ The rejection became vivid when Cabot withdrew support and disallowed Boisen functioning in the training program.³⁹ These

professional rejections were key trigger for his second major psychotic episode.

Following the 'rejections' and 'withdrawal' of support for the clinical training programme, Boisen moved to Chicago. This move was also motivated by his desire to be near to his love, Alice. On April 1, 1932, he became a Chaplain at Elgin State Hospital where he immediately organized a training program and the Chicago Council for Training for Theological Students. Seward Hiltner was one of his first students at Elgin. Boisen was hospitalized for a third major psychotic episode in November 1935 after hearing that Alice was terminally ill. She died in December of the same year. Boisen recovered as in the previous occasions. One may note that Boisen did not have any major psychotic episode after this period; the death of Alice!

From 1938-1942, he served fulltime on the Faculty of the Chicago Theological Seminary during which he concentrated on teaching, research and writing. One of his articles from this period, "Theology in the Light of Psychiatric Experience" (1941) clearly presents his theological convictions and proposals for his empirical method. In 1942 he returned to Elgin in his earlier capacity as Chaplain. Beginning in 1945, for the rest of his life, Boisen was assigned as an 'educational consultant.' He was highly critical of seminaries, trainers, programmes, and the Church for not giving adequate focus for an in-depth study of the 'Living Human Documents.'

In 1950 the Council for clinical training honored him. For the last thirty-five years of his life Elgin State Hospital was his home. In the mental hospital, he not only found his healing but also a prophetic vocation. The last five years of life seems to have been a period of distressed silence. In October 1965, at the age of 89, Boisen died at Elgin. Nouwen recalls, "his death drew rather little attention" and "in a way he was a forgotten man..."⁴⁰

Boisen is an unusually remarkable person with commitment to study, understand, and to educate experience-oriented insights

from 'the little known country.' Since 1935 he spent more time in research and writing which is an indication of his creative abilities though he struggled with the symptoms of a severe mental disorder (schizophrenia). He has proved that with opportunities and encouragement in personal and professional advancement one can overcome the debilitating limitations of mental illness. It is worthy to note in spite of living with the struggles and experiences of mental disorder he had published 7 books, 70 articles and 9 book reviews.⁴¹ Of these, more than two-thirds of his work comes from the later part of his life.

IV. Boisen through the Years of Clinical Training:

This section is a review the relationship and influence of Boisen to the Clinical Pastoral Education Movement. The primary focus is to explore his contributions to the organizational life of the CPE movement and the struggles that Boisen encountered with him being sidelined in the later years. In what sense does he deserve the title 'Father of Clinical Pastoral Education'?

a) The First Training Group to the First National Conference: (1925-1944)

The first training group began in 1925 with Boisen as the central figure. There were only four trainee students in 1925, but the number increased in the following years. Thornton opinions that Boisen did not design the program to develop competence in pastoral ministries but to seek support and assistance in a program of 'cooperative inquiry' in the field of psychology of religious experience.⁴² This view does not take seriously Boisen's concern for the mentally ill, his call for a new method of studying theology and his challenge to the Church and to the Seminaries towards a new domain of pastoral ministry. I find 'intention' and 'purpose' from the beginning of the CPE training programme. The program went on quite well for the first five years in spite of the differences between Boisen and Cabot. The role of Boisen in planning and initiating the movement is unquestionable. His long standing plea

for the church and the seminaries to understand the 'little known country' is fulfilled with this new beginning.

With the formation of the Council for Clinical Training of Theological Students, Inc., in 1930, Boisen was 'sidelined' while Cabot and Guiles assumed central roles. Boisen expressed his view of this development as 'disastrous' and 'damage to the project.'⁴³ From this point Boisen's leadership and influence on the organization life of the movement began to diminish. Soon after his second hospitalization, not only Cabot withdrew support but also declared him 'unfit' to function in the training programmes. Thus, Boisen was out of the training programme which he himself began.

On April 1, 1932, Boisen began his work as a Chaplain at Elgin State Hospital, Chicago. He began the first training group in the same summer with nine students, "an outstanding group which helped splendidly to get things started right."⁴⁴ The program was with similar emphasis as at Worcester and it gave them "unrivalled opportunities to serve and observe."⁴⁵ He also formed the Chicago Council for the Clinical Training of Theological Students which was closely associated with the National body till 1939. In a comprehensive interpretation of the history of this movement Charles E. Hall brilliantly presents the schism in the movement from the 1930s with different priorities in two different camps.⁴⁶

The New England group with the leadership of Richard Cabot, Russell Dicks and Philip Guiles emphasized training persons for parish ministry. The New York group, with Helen Dunbar, Carroll Wise, and Seward Hiltner, emphasized clinical training in 'psychiatric setting.' The New York group followed more in line with the views and visions of Boisen and focused on the in-depth study of the 'living human documents.' Boisen remained as a "supporter and critique" of both groups. In both camps, the leadership was in the hands of his own students, enlivening his ideas and visions in the training programmes.⁴⁷

The New England group and the New York group, after 12 years of separate development made formal plans to call for a National Conference in 1944. In the cooperative effort for a unified training program, Boisen had no roles to play, indicates his own account.⁴⁸ Thus, he seems to have been reduced to the role of a ‘supervisor’ in this growing movement, having no national importance.

b) The First National Conference to the Formation of ACPE: (1944-1967)

This part of the history of the movement is marked by ‘years of dialogue’ among various training groups to launch a common program with unified goals and standards. The outcome was the formation of the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education in 1967 with four major groups merging into one programme. During these years of dialogue, the movement had gone beyond Boisen, and he had no major role to play in the organizational set up. He was not a serious participant in the emerging efforts. He remained as an advisor and critique within his theoretical and methodological framework.

However, there were some events that are of significance in the context of this article on Boisen and CPE movement. His break with the Council in 1939 resulted in an outcome that literally removed him from the supervision of students. He was ‘disqualified’ as a supervisor in 1945. Instead, he was appointed as an ‘educational consultant’ with limited roles, directly having nothing to do with the training program. One of his project proposals was turned down by the Council in 1947.⁴⁹ This indicates the CPE movement had ambivalent views on Boisen. They could not sustain him as an insider; hence, permitted him to remain at the periphery.

In 1949 Boisen was appointed as the ‘research consultant’ to the Board of Governors of the Council for Clinical Training. All these actions indicate effectively ‘sidelining’ him from the training program and minimizing his influence on the movement. His

‘new assignments’ were with limited roles. Thus, Thornton rightly observes that Boisen remained on the periphery of the movement from 1930 until his death in 1965.⁵⁰ Boisen was honored by the Council at its Silver Anniversary Celebrations in 1950. In a tribute to Boisen, it was Eastman who gave him the title ‘The Father of the Clinical Pastoral Movement.’⁵¹ The Council also paid a tribute to him during the Fall Conference in 1965 recalling his prophetic visions and ministerial convictions.

Thus, though Boisen had limited influence on the organizational life of the CPE movement and his views finding no enthusiastic acceptance, it is beyond any doubt that his visions and methods have influenced the movement in a big way. The creative wisdom of a mentally ill person and the pastoral vision of a clergyman did not find its due place as the community around him saw him primarily with the label of mental illness – the mentally ill Boisen. It is deplorable that the younger generations during his time and immediately after in the movement paid little attention to his ideas and convictions. Their approach of sidelining him made him a forgotten man at that time. However, his thoughts, visions, and challenges are clearer than ever before in the CPE movement and pastoral ministry training. History continues to credit him as the ‘Father of Clinical Pastoral Education.’ Recently there is an increased academic interest on his ideas and convictions, theory and theology, and clinical direction which is evident from the dissertations at the Masters and Doctoral studies during the last 20 years.

V. Theological and Methodological Emphasis: The Living Human Document

The focus of this section is to highlight the theological and methodological convictions of Boisen. His religious and theological views, concept of mental illness, and his methodological emphasis were an amalgam of various influencing factors, personalities of his time, and theoretical interests. The ‘unusual diversity’ in him “has thrown many

otherwise able theologians off the track in trying to place him theologically.”⁵² Though in varying degrees and with reservations, almost all writers on Boisen agree there was a earnest and consistent effort in him to integrate the experiences of the mentally ill to his theorizing and theologizing method. Asquith’s observation that “the goal of theology for Boisen was not to construct any system of belief, whether liberal or fundamentalist. Rather he believed that the task and method of theology is to organize and test the validity of religious views in the light of human experience”⁵³ clearly depicts the Boisenian methodological approach. This framework also led Boisen to talk about Science and Religion though he did not get much support from his contemporary pastoral counsellors and religion experts on this agenda.

It is noteworthy that he has employed almost all the traditional themes for theological articulation, but his descriptions show the point of departure.⁵⁴ It is equally important to note that in his writing we do not find any reference to ‘grace.’ It seems to be an intentional omission as grace does not fit with his other theological categories. It is surprising that not many commentators have noted this omission in Boisenian theology. With this general introduction, I shall discuss his concept of mental illness, relationships between mystical and the pathological, sin and salvation in human experience, and his theology of the ‘Living Human Document’ and clinical practical applications.

a) Boisen on Mental Illness

The starting point of Boisen’s theory and theology is his encounter with mental illness and related suffering. The life-long affliction with mental illness that forced him to live in a totally different world – not only the physical space but also the mental domain. He felt the agony and affliction of living in a world that is beyond imagination – the wilderness of the lost. His feeling of being lost and that nobody understood him. This led Boisen to find answers to the problem of mental illness as well as explaining the meaning of

that experience. It seems that his theorizing attempt began during the recovery period of his first psychotic experience in 1920. *The Insanity of Jesus* provided him a grounding to rationalize, validate, and theorize his own experience.⁵⁵ From the beginning Boisen contended that some form of mental illness, specially the functional ones, are in some ways akin to religious experience. Both are attempts at ‘reorganization’ or ‘readaptation’. For him mental illness is a sign of the ‘disorganization’ of the patient’s inner world which has “upset the foundations upon which his ordinary reasoning is based.”⁵⁶ They are “regression to the lower levels of mental life to assimilate certain hitherto unassimilated masses of life experience.”⁵⁷ Thus, they are problem-solving experiences which are closely related to certain types of religious experiences.⁵⁸ His psychogenic interpretation of mental illness indicates religious implications. He identified conflicts not only in mental illness but also in religious experience and both experiences are akin and aimed to reach the highest objectives.

In *The Exploration of the Inner World: A Study of Mental Disorder and Religious Experience*, Boisen explains mental illness as ‘an attempt at reorganization,’ as ‘disorganization of the inner child’, and as ‘terminal stage of malignant character trends.’⁵⁹ This indicates Boisen attempted to interpret mental illness from different angles, making sense and meaning to otherwise meaningless experience. It is in this task one could find a prophetic inclination and vision in him.

Similarly, in his book *Out of the Depths* he attempts to interpret and explain mental illness and religious experience are similar experiences leading to healing and growth which is unusually prophetic. He writes:

I believe that **many forms of insanity are religious rather than medical problems** and that they cannot be successfully treated until they are so recognized. The problem seems to me one of great importance not only because of the large number of sufferers involved, but

also because of the religious and psychological and philosophical implications which inhere in it.⁶⁰

His theory that many forms of insanity are religious in nature is supported by literature that make in-depth analysis of noted religious leaders in history. A few of the prophets in the Old Testament, such as Samson, Elijah, Ezekiel, etc., are acting vigorously and violently for Yahweh comes closer to mental disorder categories. This was a big challenge for the theologians and psychologists then and now.

John Patton, detailing the Boisen's understanding of mental illness and healing, sum up his view. Patton writes:

Much could be said about this person-centered view of illness extracted from Boisen's work. Most simply stated, its contribution is the affirmation of potential meaning in the most chaotic and confusing illness, the belief that the illness offers the patient a moral opportunity for change, and that a caring relationship is the most important facilitator of that change.⁶¹

b) Mystical and the Pathological

The most radical thought in Boisen, in my opinion, is his concept of the relationship between the mystical and the pathological; religious experience and mental illness; and locating and validating the religious experience of the mentally ill. It is a prevalent practice at his time and now that the mentally ill are excluded from all social interactions, including the primary family circles. This exclusion makes the mentally ill persons feel discarded for no reason of their own. At the same time one is aware of practices in some communities where the mentally ill are considered as 'spiritually possessed' and hence, revered and worshiped. Reading Boisen's *The Exploration of the Inner World and Out of the Depths* has been fascinating as there is an earnest attempt to integrate the mystical and the pathological. According to Boisen,

when ordinary life do not carry enough 'emotional charge' to lift problematic experiences into the field of attention, the struggle intensifies in the inner world and "under intense emotion the mind is stirred in ever-widening circles and at deeper levels."⁶²

Such emotionally charged experiences and deeper levels search for healing break the accepted norms of reasoning, judgment, and expression. It is in this context that Boisen attempted to interrelate the mystical and the pathological which is the most problematic and radical part of his theorization. He wrote, "We may class them as mystical experiences in so far as they give the sense of identification with the larger fellowship presented by the idea of God. Such a sense of identification with God is common in mental disorder as well as in religious experience."⁶³ In this regard, for him, what mattered was the end result of such an experience and the greater purpose of life. Thus, for Boisen, it was not a divide between 'divine' or 'demon', but the meaning of experience and its result in the actual life situation. It implies a 'God-man' encounter in the life of the person or the community. The mystical experiences of the mentally ill and the experiences of the religious are validated as both are aimed at healing, growth, and salvation.

c) Sin, Illness, and Salvation

Another central concept in Boisen is on sin, pathology, and salvation. Boisen regarded "the problem of sin and salvation to a large extent identical with that of mental illness and its cure."⁶⁴ For him, the idea of God stands for a social and psychological fact of basic importance that symbolizes the individual's social experience and the highest value with which he would be identified.⁶⁵ In this context, sin refers to "the rupture of one's supreme loyalties as represented in the idea of God."⁶⁶

Sin is the presence of experiences that the person is neither able to control nor acknowledge for fear of condemnation. Thus, it is a self-imposed 'social judgment.' Therefore, sin is not so much a matter of transgression but a breach of trust.⁶⁷ Then, Salvation is a

release from the socially conditioned ‘bondages’ and ‘restoration’ into the fellowship of the good. In this reorganization experience, there needs to be uttermost commitment, as implied in the ‘doctrine of the cross.’⁶⁸

Boisen insisted that the role of the church is to initiate religious ministries and spiritual care that would help the church to discern the needs of the mentally ill. Ministry is to initiate and inspire the way of salvation. This understanding of the mentally ill with regard to sin, sickness, and salvation leads him to his methodological approach which is experience-oriented. Hence, he advocated for the study of the Living Human Documents – exploring and studying the actual experiences in its fullness as the living human document is the sacred texts to be studied.⁶⁹

d) The Living Human Document: The Case Study Method

Boisen’s theological and religious views and his perspective for ministry found its climax in his call for an in-depth study of the ‘living human documents’ which seems to be the major theological and theoretical part of his contribution, specially the clinical training movement. The recent trends in pastoral care and counseling and empirical theology seems to have taken Boisen seriously in an effort to find validating theologizing experiences. Boisen advocated the in depth case study method as an essential part of his training programme. For him, this was an “open-minded exploration of living human experience in order from that to build up a body of generalizations.”⁷⁰ Thus, in him I Boisen advocated for an ‘intentional’ attempt for developing a new theology in the context of the mentally ill and apt clinical training practices.

The Case Study method developed by Boisen had a strong emphasis on the social aspects of personality and possible links with mental illness, sexual issues, and religious experiences. This was the first prophetic call to listen, understand, and to respond to the experiences of the mentally ill with a scientific approach. While discussing the Case Study Method of Boisen, Glenn Asquith lists

seven scientific principles that Boisen described in his published and unpublished work for the study of Living Human Documents. They are: Empiricism, Objectivity, Continuity, Particularity, Universality, Economy, and Disinterestedness.⁷¹

e) Wisdom from the Mentally Ill Person: A Prophetic Vision and Call

As a clergyperson, Boisen vehemently challenged the world around him, particularly the Church, for creative and productive ministerial engagement with the mentally ill community. He envisaged and talked about religious activities and experiences in the mental health hospitals to gain deeper understanding of the mentally ill. He was highly and rightly critical of the only Sunday afternoon services that were conducted in the Mental hospital without any reference to the needs of the audience. He challenged the hospital community and the church to learn from the mentally ill as they have something unique which is different from the so called ‘normal’ population. He called the Seminary communities to have exposures in the hospital setting, particularly the mental health hospitals. Boisen urged the medical professionals and theological students to gain a deeper theological understanding of human beings, particularly the mentally ill.⁷² The major challenge was his convincing proposition that mental illness is a religious problem and it involved a deeper spiritual quest which needs to be affirmed and validated met with lot of resistance and viewing it as voice of another mentally ill.⁷³

The untraditional but creative attempt of Boisen was to provide training for seminary students within the mental hospitals that enables them to read ‘books to the raw material of life.’⁷⁴ Mental illness is a religious problem that needs to be scientifically and empirically validated is one of his prominent prophetic propositions. He received the call to fill the gap between religion and medicine and that of religious experience and mental illness. I am convinced that he was truly prophetic with his calls to minister

to the mentally ill community and the advocacy for systematic scientific empirical research appears to be genuinely prophetic.

VI. Anton Boisen: His Relevance for Mental Health Professions Today

Boisen's contributions are extensively reflected by various writers from their own perspectives. As enough effort has been given to portray his influence on the Psychology of Religion, Pastoral Counseling, Clinical Pastoral Education, Theological Education, and his ministerial concerns, my focus in this section is to review his contributions to the clinical training programmes and pastoral practice today.

A few remarks on the limitations of Boisen and his approach are essential in this paper. First, his attempt to interpret mental illness and religious experience is fascinating and yet scientifically not verifiable at that time, and even today. Further, the boundary between the religious experiences of the faithful and the symptoms of mental illness is not clear. Second, he categorized mental illness as 'functional' and 'organic' and concentrated on the 'functional.' He has not shown equal importance to the study and research on the organic and ministry for other areas of human suffering and pain. Even the CPE Movement as a whole did not make much progress on this aspect of training and ministry. Third, too much focus on the 'inner world' without equal importance to the 'outer world' restricted the possibility of reaching 'wider social realities', though he did touch upon the psycho-social domains.

On the other hand, Boisen's initiative to function as a chaplain and his effort for training brought these two areas – mental illness and religious experience - together, otherwise unrelated. Boisen proved that the 'psychiatric setting' was a fruitful ground for clinical training. Secondly, with his effort to bring theological students for clinical training he began a new method of addressing the "problem of sin and salvation" by way of studying the living human documents. Thirdly, Boisen's interdisciplinary approach to study and serve influenced the CPE movement to

remain interdisciplinary in character, both in its theology and methodology. Fourthly, his approach to integrate knowledge and experience was a new way of finding the truth and this had a renovating effect on theological education. Fifthly, his method of theologizing from experience helped the participating students to be creative in their thinking. During the training programmes, no formal theologies was forced upon them. I find this an important element in the CPE program today as one needs to begin from the experience. Sixthly, his insistence on an in-depth study of the Living Human Documents challenged the CPE program all through these decades of training. Moreover, his writings have been influential, not only for the CPE program but also for the pastoral care and counselling movement.

With the current scenario of mental health, illness, and healing situations in the contemporary India one needs to explore positive ways of helping these afflicted and suffering ones with any kind of mental and emotional distress or disorders. The insights from Anton Boisen challenges the faith communities, particularly the church, to make compassionate commitment for engaging with the mentally ill; to empathically understand their needs; to shun from superstitions, discriminations, and marginalization; to regard them as specially gifted and to allow them to experience healing growth; to maximize their creativity and divine gifts; and to accept them as God's creation in God's image.

It is enviable that professional help for the persons with mental illness / emotional disorders and support for their families. All caring professionals in this context must have an updated theoretical framework and skills for practical applications based on the current advanced level psychology, psychotherapies, psychiatry, and the resources from religious and faith traditions. The basic information includes some orientations on mental and emotional disorder categories that would help the caring professional in a big way. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders DSM 5 (2018 or the earlier version DSM

4) would be a big help. It is also important to note that in some quarters ICD 11 (International Classification of Diseases, 2018) is used. Along with these the church linked ministers and caring professionals must have some basic orientation to the Bible, theology, and the various forms of healing ministries.⁷⁵

A theology of redemptive caring with compassion and commitment towards the mentally ill persons and their families was Boisen's cry that day, and even now.

Conclusion

All caring communities, including the church, must be willing to listen to the voices and struggles for the mentally ill who are otherwise labeled as irrational and illogical. Anton Boisen proved that he as a mentally ill person, and others with similar experiences, have something to share with the wider community, particularly the professionals in the caring activities. There is hope for curing and healing and each one of them contribute to the wider community in many different ways that the so called normal population cannot do. Hence, it is the task of the community to provide adequate medical help, create positive psychosocial environment, make use of all the available resources for the mentally ill and their families from the governmental and non-governmental agencies, including the church. There is a big gap between the mentally ill and the public at large – a gap that is illogical and irrational. Persons with mental illness and disturbances can serve the community in many ways. The need of the hour is public awareness that would help reduce fears, anxieties, and distorted notions of the mentally ill.

End Notes

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- 4 Medico-Pastoral Association and its Half Way Home is an endeavor jointly by Medical Professionals and Pastors in Bangalore for helping persons with mental or emotional disorders, gone through hospitalization, and the need professional help in rehabilitation before going home. The MPA provides short term as well as long term care focusing on mental, emotional, and psycho-social development of the patient. The MPA also provides professional support for the families through ongoing programmes. I have been a member of the MPA General Body as a representative of the UTC, have been Chairperson of Programme Committee for several terms, Chairperson of Academic and Public Service Committee for a number of terms, member of the Managing Committee for more than 10 years, and a member of the Working Committee on a few years. Hence, my reflections here is based on my direct experience with the mentally ill, their families, and the ongoing rehabilitation programmes of one of the reputed Half Way Homes, and the pioneering one, in India.
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- 18 Anton T. Boisen., *Out of the Depths* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 23.
- 19 Anton T. Boisen., *The Exploration of the Inner World: A Study of Mental Disorder and Religious Experience* (Chicago: Willet, Clark & Company, 1936), p. 2.
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- 21 This is the first chapter title of his book, *The Exploration of the Inner World*, pp. 15-57. Here one find a lengthy discourse on Religion, medicine, and mental illness. Here one could see his comparison of mental illness as religious experience and both process are attempts at re-adaptation and healing.
- 22 Boisen, *Out of the Depths*. p. 5.
- 23 Asquith, Jr., *Vision from a Little Known Country*. p. 4.
- 24 Coe rejected the reality and validity of mystical experiences because for him they were excesses of revivalism. He also believed that all psychotic experiences were due to organic factors.

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- 27 Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, p. 65.
- 28 Boisen, *The Exploration of the Inner World*. p. 3.
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- 30 Boisen, *Out of the Depths*. p. 86.
- 31 Boisen, *The Exploration of the Inner World*. p. 2.
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- 33 Asquith, *Vision From a Little Known Country*. p. 5.
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- 64 Boisen, *The Exploration of the Inner World*. p. 209.
- 65 Boisen, *The Exploration of the Inner World*, p. 307.
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Globalisation an Ideology in Disguise and a Theology to Legitimize the Global Inequality

*John Mohan Razu**

Globalization: Reality and Propaganda

Globalization continues to occupy a major accent, a vocabulary and thus has assumed a scale of alarming proportions even in today's world. The word "globalization" is ambiguous and therefore it posits ambivalence, and thus is interpreted in different ways, perhaps loosely or arbitrarily. Everyone is confronted by the term "globalization". What does "globalization" mean? As Richard Munch succinctly defines:

"...Globalization means that everything that happens anywhere in the world has an impact on events in every place in the world. What other people do in another place influences the possibilities for action open to us and vice versa. Economic transactions, political conflicts, changes in cultural traditions are no longer confined to one particular place but can affect a whole range of peoples and countries. Advancing globalisation has bridged the "distances of time and space" to such an extent that "barriers to action now scarcely exist."¹

However, the terminology and the interpretation differ from one to another. Therefore, Globalization has several dimensions. Although economics is one of the core factors, we should not

think that everything is moved and controlled by economics. Undoubtedly economics is playing the most crucial role behind globalization. It fosters to increase profits, to maximize the returns and to conquer new markets. Nevertheless, globalisation as a project encompasses other dimensions too. Global capitalism translates its vision through globalisation.

The Changed Context

With some exceptions, economists, technocrats and corporate managers view it as an expansion in the volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services, a drastic increase in global capital inflows and rapid diffusion of technology. To be more precise, globalisation for some represents an epoch of opportunities and choices. In concrete terms, the foreign direct investment (fdi) grew three times faster than trade and four times more than the world output annually. This has enhanced foreign investment and facilitated greater scope for the market forces. Further globalisation has integrated the time and space by revolutionizing technology with the help of scientific advances and know-how and thus made the earth as a 'global village'. Connectivity is being made possible irrespective of time and space.

This transformation has enhanced foreign investment and facilitated greater scope for the market forces. The proponents of globalisation push their discourse by saying that the jobs created by the transnational corporations (TNCs) and increased flight of foreign capital; the productivity gains from transferring the latest technologies and technical and managerial know-how to the less developed countries (LDCs); the participation of masses in stock markets through equity funds; to maximize the comparative advantage between nations; the efficiency gains from 'contracting out' and more flexible labor market; the fiscal discipline enforced for favourable investment climate with an assumption of helping the developing nations in the long-run.

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Globalization could perhaps be the fact of life. For a number of critics, it is a phenomenon and process without real meaning or conscience or human face; an economic force that has aggravated inequalities, injustice and poverty for billions all over the world. In addition, the workforce in the formal and informal sectors faces job insecurity because of greater competition, which is invariably 'downsized.' Re-location of production centers from place to place on the basis of labor costs. This is indeed one of the major threats for the workforce. In the industrialised countries, globalization and increased competition are seen as contributing to widening income deferrals; the rise in unemployment and debate over the continuance of social security system or not; the erosion of union influence and host of other issues between and within countries.

In concrete terms the critics point out that the West's gain has been at the expense of developing and poorer countries. The market-propelled globalization has created increased insecurity in the workplace in the developed world. In an era of globalization inequality is on the rise. While booming stock markets, giant mergers and frantic financial speculation provide unbelievable rewards to a tiny globalized minority; the majority of the world's population is yet to be connected with globalization. For many, in fact, living standards have stagnated or declined, while the burdens of work and insecurity have grown. A glimpse of the global and national scenario will help us to look at different dimensions of inequality as well as the increasing concentration of wealth both within and between nations in the following paragraphs.

The report entitled *Public Good or Private Wealth* released ahead of the World Economic Forum in January 2019, in Davos, Switzerland, said while billionaires' fortunes globally increased by 12 per cent last year at \$2.5 billion a day, while 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of the humanity saw their wealth decline by 11 per cent.² Describing the Indian scenario Oxfam International Executive Director Winnie Byanyima said, "It's morally outrageous that a few wealthy individuals are amassing

a growing share of India's wealth, while the poor are struggling to eat their next meal or pay for their child medicines."³ "If this obscene inequality between the top 1 per cent and the rest of India's continues then it will lead to a complete collapse of the social and democratic structure of this country."⁴ To make the matters worse, according to Oxfam CEO that "top 10 per cent of India's population holds 77.4 per cent of the total national wealth."⁵

The glaring widening gap between rich and poor showed that "Indian billionaires' wealth grew daily by Rs. 2,200 crores in 2018. The divide is so appalling that top 10 per cent of India's population holds 77.4 percent of the total national wealth. It further shows that the wealth of top 9 billionaires is equivalent to the wealth of the bottom 50 percent of the population. The fortunes of Indian billionaires grew by an astronomical 35 per cent per day last year, or by Rs. 2, 200 crores daily, while the poorest 10 per cent of the country have continued to remain in debt since 2004,"⁶ according to Oxfam report of 2019.

Further, "The contrast is ever sharper for the top 1 per cent that holds 51.53 per cent of the national wealth. The bottom 60 per cent, the majority of the population, owns merely 4.8 per cent of the national wealth. Wealth of top 9 billionaires is equivalent to the wealth of the bottom 50 per cent of the population" the global rights group said.⁷ The report reveals that India added 18 new billionaires last year raising the total number of billionaires to 119, and their wealth cross the \$400 billion mark for the first time. It rose from \$325.5 billion in 2017 to \$440.1 billion in 2018. This is the single largest annual increase since the 2008 financial crisis,"⁸ Oxfam report added.

The report further revealed that "India's combined revenue and capital expenditure of the Centre and states for medical and public health, sanitation and water is Rs. 2,08,166 crores, less than the wealth of India's richest billionaire Mukesh Ambani at Rs. 2,80,700 crore. It also analyzed that the ways which the government escalating the crisis inequality by underfunding the

public services such as health care and education, on the one hand, while undertaking the multinational corporations and the wealthy, and failing to clamp down on tax dodging”⁹ Oxfam India CEO Amitabh Behar said in a statement.

The survey also found that “Cutting taxes on wealth predominately benefits men who own 50 per cent more wealth than women globally, and control over 86 per cent of corporations. Conversely, when public services are neglected poor women and girls suffer most.”¹⁰ Notably, “Economic inequality plagued by caste, gender and religion need to be tackled on a war-footing. Government must now deliver real change by endsuring the super-rich and corporations pay their fair share of tax and invest this money to strehten public healthcare and education,”¹¹ Behar said. The global scenario clearly posits a divide between the globalised class and the victims of globalization. The existing gap would further widen and disparities continue to escalate in the ensuing years. We live in an unequal world where there are inequalities and injustices. Globalization has created a wedge between the haves and have-nots.

Discourses: Convergent, Divergent and Overlapping

Discourses on the impact of globalisation have generated enormity of meanings and multiplicity of perspectives. We are almost at the fag end of the second decade of the 21st century wherein these transformations and processes should undergo intense scrutiny. Nonetheless, the questions at this juncture emerge are: 1. How to discern the phenomena (a) and process(s) of globalisation? What should be the framework to counter it? Globalization is the engine of the present state of global economy. The transnational corporations (TNCs), global financial institutions namely the IMF, WB and WTO and the rich capitalist countries are the instruments of this process. It ‘claims’ to unify and integrate the distanced economies and market mechanisms into one single market. It encompasses all aspects of human activities. Globalization has thus far produced predators and prey, winners and losers, victors

and victims. This process is like the ‘law of the jungle’, which means the ‘survival of the fittest’.

We need to understand the forces behind globalization, if it is to be countered at a theoretical and practical ways. Economics play a major role in moving and controlling globalization. Economics certainly do influence social structures and thus politics. Nevertheless economics alone cannot be considered as the axis or the driving force of globalisation. Behind globalisation there are underlying forces and processes that are complimenting and navigating the globalization project in the ‘right direction’ and ‘at the right pace’. In this paper an attempt will be made to posit the interplay between ideology and theology in globalisation, which is furthering inequality between and within nations. After having deliberated the above-mentioned aspects a modest proposal will be offered that undergirds a theology of action to counter globalization.

The emergent ruthless competition amongst nations often leads to compare and compete with one another as how oligopolies compete and swallow the weaker ones. It is precisely for these reasons the supporters of globalization use the terms such as ‘borderless’ and ‘seamless’ world. For them, nation-states are just imaginary entities. According to them they are ‘one economic unit’ and ‘one global center’. The neo-liberals attribute to these changes as: “The changes in the techno-industrial base of the world economy would have been ineffectual without the rise of neo-liberalism and financial liberalization. The reification of the ‘market’ as a neutral and natural institution, apolitical and ahistorical has now become common in academic and policy circles.”¹²

Neo-liberalism as the Ideology of “Globalization”

Some political scientists have periodised or enumerated different phases or epochs of globalization and accordingly identified its processes and normative behavior. Virtually every group from the left, green or direct action politics has stated their opposition to

‘globalization’ or went ahead saying that it is one of the serious problems confronting majority of people across the world. Hence, we need to have clarity on the ideological underpinning of ‘globalization’. Neo-liberalism is an advanced phase of capitalism, which under girds globalisation. It is a specific form of capitalism, corresponding to the phenomenon of globalization.

Globalization and neo-liberalism are to be seen as a single global project. They are not just simply descriptive terms, but rather operational in an objective material world expositing subjective meanings. Like all ideologies they infer meanings and thus refer to actual processes of change. Global capitalism as a system is backed, reinforced and legitimized by a brand of theology. This theology is popularly known as “Prosperity Theology.” Jerry Falwell, one of the proponents of Prosperity Theology comments:

“The free-enterprise system is clearly outlined in the Book of Proverbs in the Bible. Jesus made it clear that the work ethic was a part of His plan for man (sic). Ownership of property is Biblical. Competition in business is Biblical. Ambitions and successful management is clearly outlined as part of God’s plan for His people.”¹³

This theology is in conjunction with neo-liberal ideology of globalization. Further, the element of choice, an integral component of freedom is grounded in the neo-liberal ideology and prosperity theology. This value is justified and legitimized as if individual choice and freedom are the natural process of human beings and thus innate. These values in turn help in self-serving and apparently benefit market forces.

The market although is an abstract entity endowed with powers and therefore ascribed to God. It pre-supposes the basic faith in market absolutes and fundamentals. It is assumed and believed that the market forces will “never go wrong” and “there is no alternative” are based on the ideology of neo-liberalism. It pushes the values of materialism and consumerism that are

not grounded on world-Human-God construct, rather rooted in commodity fetishism, money fetishism and capital fetishism. The basic problem lies in a value system where money assumes greater importance and is treated as absolute.

In an era of globalization Mammon has become an absolute. It is being encapsulated by the values of Mammon. Mammon is deivised. The technology and visual media create false consciousness, which is grounded on commodity fetishism. In this process there is no critical questioning, but only absorption and assimilation. The belief system is based on “acquisitiveness”, “consumerism” and “individualism”. One of the major myths that are floated persuasively is that the “invisible hand” regulates the market. What is this “invisible hand”? Is it God or Mammon? There we need to look at the inter-play between God and Mammon.

Global capitalism manifests itself in a sophisticated way and involved in rapid transformations {e.g. restructuring the global political economy and market, free trade organizations, international financial institutions, creating regional trade blocs and the power wielded by TNCs} means that capitalism entirely reached a new phase. Until and unless we take into consideration the core, which propels and activates our writings and actions would remain dichotomized. In the ensuing years globalization would unleash its forces in its ugly forms. And this process needs to be stopped because historically capital has never moderated itself. The only way is resistance, which can stop and thus civilize capital.

A Perspective of Resistance

Discourses on the merits and penalties of globalization have been intense in recent years. They do not even pertain to a particular country, region or continent, but is global as witnessed in Seattle, Prague, Washington D.C., Genoa or New York, which drew protests against globalization. Global resistance has tended to confront its all-encompassing relations. However, the fact remains that these protest movements have often been, in many ways

shows a continuum, consistency, constructive and progression, in forcefully drawing attention of the global hegemonic powers, its institutions and instruments to the problems of inequality in the world.

How do we discern these resistance movements? Indeed the discourse on globalization ought not to be about the efficiency of markets or the advancements of technology. The discourses are about diametrically opposing frameworks. One framework is consolidating its globalizing hegemonic economic, religion-cultural and ideological arrangements. And the other, which is also becoming increasingly globalized, tends to resist the emergent global capitalism. For the global political resistance movements, globalization, in its basic form, is neither particularly new nor an accident. Globalization has been there but manifests in different form in each historical epoch. Its form and processes tend to change in each historical epoch. Therefore, its ideological hegemonic global capitalism as a one-sided movement that simply reflects an asymmetry of power, which needs to be resisted. The rationale behind global-local protests is rooted in the understanding of the processes of globalization as they are unfolding today.

Nurturing Resistance

The resistance against globalisation is contested and qualified. And yet, the interpretations given by the protesters or resisters are being questioned. It is clearly a question of articulating from an ideological, theological and political position about a spate of resistance we have been witnessing in the past years. The boundaries are no more blurred and cannot be negotiated. Therefore,

“The resistance employs both old and new strategies. There is nothing new about counterbalancing state power; plying symbols such as placards, leaflets; Relying on the residual power to refuse; or networking in order to galvanize. The efforts of different groups up against a variety of form...these tested strategies remain important...there is no single model

of resistance. Yet globalization is transforming the parameters, redefining constraints... Innovative strategies specifically crafted to resist globalization are not merely stabs in the dark at an amorphous phenomenon. Some—by no means all—groups that countering self-organizing have engaged in self-conscious strategizing about countering globalisation. These resisters have thought out a question: what kind of political interventions can be adopted to subject neoliberal globalization, often mediated by national and local programmers; to social control?”¹⁴

The resistance movements against globalization are gaining momentum and also global attention. For example, in Genoa the resisters numbering up to 150,000 were the largest since Seattle in 1999. As the French President Jacques Chirac while acknowledging said: “There is no demonstration drawing 100,000 or 150,000 people without a valid reason.” In Portugal, Prime Minister Antonio Guterres said: “Calling G-8 to abandon their egotistical, short-term vision of international relations” and for the process of globalization to be more humane, he warned that “the rich should be concerned with the health of the poor, otherwise one day it will be the poor who will take care of the health of the rich.”

In the 32nd World Economic Forum held at New York in February 2002 the UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan said: that “... business leaders and governments must do much more to address poverty and redress social justice – now has greater urgency. Too much power and wealth is concentrated in the hands of too few people and countries,” Anan said, “Creating a perception that globalisation is to blame.” He continued that “I believe that perception is wrong – that globalisation, so far from being the cause of poverty and social ills, offers the best hope of overcoming them,” he said. “But it is up to you to prove it wrong, with actions

that translate into concrete results for the downtrodden, exploited and excluded.”

Forms of Resistance

Neoliberalism organizes the economy very effectively and thus creates new problems to the vulnerable and workers. Neoliberalism and globalisation are posing new threats because the problems they create are quite different than the past. Nevertheless, people all around the world are determined to resist globalization and its processes. Faced with a global force people resist locally and globally. People all over keep challenging the instruments, institutions and the G-8 consistently and relentlessly.

Apparently some tend to dub these resistances as violent and undemocratic. Questions of different shades are being posed and asked. To do this, it is important to consider that the analysis and critique of neoliberalism take concrete form in specific resistance actions attacking the symbols of their ideology and theology the two powerful dimensions in a striking and imaginative way. It is always that action involves politics and in this dialectic theory-action will help us how to advance.

Towards A Theology of Resistance

As practioners of theology and students of social ethics we should look at the politics/ideology behind the resistance and protest movements where there is deepening hostility of hundreds of millions—in the advanced capitalist countries and poor nations who strive for a more just and humane world order. As informed people these protests and resistance actions need to be theologically and ethically formulated and reflected. Undoubtedly, historical perspective is by no means simply a theoretical abstraction. It must become the guiding thread for the programme of political struggle against the deepening social and economic crises, which confronts the mass of the world’s people in the advanced and poor countries alike.

The political representatives of global capitalism or neo-liberalism cannot resolve this crisis. This is because the globalization of production, transnationalisation of capital, internationalization of labor, homogenization of culture, mammonisation of Divine and Divinisation of the Mammon driving people for markets, profits, goods and services, far from lessening the conflicts within and between the rich countries and poor countries which intensifies these struggles.

A Theology of Resistance

Whether one is in agreement or not, capital – national or global, economic aberrations like un-employment, inflation, poverty, hunger, migration, structural adjustment, redistribution of income, external trade – are all ideologically conceived and politically driven. What then is the role of Christian theology in a context we are placed with? For me, “Christian theology may not start from a body of Church doctrines, lest it become insensitive to the situation around it, and the context from which it speaks. Theology’s starting point cannot be an idea such as revelation, reason, nature, or church doctrine; its point of departure rather be specific social relations, the hopes, and fears of people – the context.”¹⁵

Theology should move beyond the conventional and doctrinal and epistemological preoccupations. It ought to create awareness and thus plunge us into the context, which posits the micro-macro realities. For the organic intellectuals deeply enmeshed in the struggles and hopes of the masses, theology ought to be concerned with urgent issues of life and death, especially the circumstances that dictate who lives and who dies. Theology ought to place humanity at the center since they represent the image of God. God became incarnate in flesh and blood through Jesus Christ who identified himself with humanity.

In God’s being we derive our being. In our being we manifest God’s being. These two statements complement each other. It is dialectical and inherently linked with one another. Any system,

ideology, theology or phenomena that relegates or reduces human beings from human to sub-human, from person to non-person, from the center to the periphery should be condemned. Any attempt by any force to minimize human worth and human dignity that ought to be challenged.

Human beings per se occupy a unique position before God. They are the subjects and ends of God's creation. Therefore, "Theology's goal... is to make clear God's identification with the disenfranchised, who have no one to speak for them, and to bring about those reforms necessary to ensure their full participation in society."¹⁶ The theological extension of this statement is that theology, ideology or economy ought to enhance the personhood i.e., economic and non-economic factors of human beings. Theology and ideology should be complementary to each other; when political economy is at variance with theology, we are called upon to bring economy in line with theology-ethics and not the other way round. In this way economics and ethics play a crucial role.

The magical power of globalization is where people ascribe to commodities produced, money acquired and capital expanded has idolatrous status in capitalist societies, a status being questioned by a few, more importantly seldom analyzed and understood by Christians. We are aware of the fact that the complex relations of the conditions under which commodities are produced, the ways in which money is acquired, and the means in which capital is expanded.

Theologians and ethicists who are in favor of globalization have by and large uncritically accepted global capitalism. Nevertheless, if they are to come to terms with the ground realities vis-à-vis life-and-death issues of our times they are pushed to reckon with. Therefore, the context pushes us to reflect upon these realities so that we would be meaningfully engaged in grappling with complex relations being pushed by classical and neo-liberal economic theories. For example,

- Ideological weapons of death deployed by globalization.
- Theological-ethical categories of the framework we use for interpreting that reality.
- We discern only the reality – that becomes apparent with the theological and ethical categories we use. It is within this framework that the phenomenon of globalization derives some meaning.
- The categorical frameworks within which we interpret the world and within which we perceive the possible goals of human activity are present.

Therefore our theologico-ethical frameworks and the categories we use to interpret the societal reality are based on the system of theology and set of values we adhere to. In this, our ideological premises are hidden and we interpret the society on the basis of the categories we use. Whatever may be our theological position and ethical convictions, when it comes to globalization we interpret the present global order on the basis of our ideological premises. Now the problem that arises is the dichotomy we draw between opposition and resistance.

These two terminologies are not exclusive but rather mutually inclusive. They are often intertwined and interrelated. As Robert Beckford succinctly puts it, "In other words, we might talk about a resistance-opposition syncretism ... involves a complex interplay between styles of resistance and opposition ... In short, there is not one form of resistance, but numerous resistances."¹⁷ On similar lines while explaining about ideology, he says, "...Ideologies draw groupings together; they help to constitute and unify congregations, supporters, and participants; they cement social alliances."¹⁸

It is therefore apparent that resistance is not alien to the Bible or faith affirmation or Christian experience. The Bible, History of Christianity and the witnesses of many around the world amply demonstrates that acts of resistance were common particularly in the context of unjust socio-economic and political

arrangements. Given the all-pervasive neo-liberal logic that undergirds and directs globalization as a totalizing system, there are two questions that surface: 1. Is our faith at stake? 2. What should be our faith response? For the first question,

“But if this is the case, then an enormous challenge faces churches: to nurture people in the Christian faith in comprehensive ways that empower them to resist the logic and assumptions underlying ...globalization. This necessitates moving beyond the spiritualized, privatized interpretations of the faith which are pervasive in most churches of the region, and do not readily lead to engagement with social, economic and political realities.”¹⁹

For the second question, “A more “Galilean” perspective on Jesus is required, one conscious of the resistance to empire inherent in what he was saying and doing.”²⁰ Enumerating further,

“The Galilean struggle with empire, together with the conditions that nurtured a tradition of independence, meant that resistance to empire was a mark of the Galilean ethos...an ethos that bred opposition and resistance...Galileans did not have the luxury of standing in some pure non-imperial space, so as to fight the empire ... As is the case with many subordinated people. Galileans also had to adapt to the imperial ethos even while resisting it...Accommodation is but a necessary feature of resistance.”²¹

It is not only Jesus but also Paul communicates a way of life that resists the incursion of imperial rule which structures people lives. For instance,

“When Paul held up the crucified Christ as a central to a salvific message, he was stealing the show, spicing away the cross, as it were, from the theatre of terror

maintained by Rome for subordinating peoples and putting that executioner’s advice to use as a tool for the gospel’s subverting of imperial power...To be defined by a message about a crucified Jesus was to be defined as a tool for the gospel’s subverting of imperial power... To be defined by a message about a crucified Jesus was to be defined as an adversary to the Roman empire and all that it held to be good...Paul’s adversarial politics of Jesus seeks to nurture new fundamental forms of social relation against the stream of imperial control that shape body, mind and spirit.”

In order to retrieve the theologico-ethical norm of resistance, it is important to effectively communicate the gospel and transform the faith understandings and practices of people in the churches, theological institutions and other ecumenical bodies by interpretations such as these. Our theological and ethical pursuits must move beyond academic or high rhetorical or discourses, rather the substances what is taught and lived out at the grassroots where people struggle against the forces that negate life.

End Notes

- 1 Karen L. Bloomquist, *Engaging Economic Globalization as Churches* in “the ecumenical review,” volume 53, no 4, October 2001, p. 493.
- 2 For more details, see “Morung Express”, Jan. 21, 2019.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.

- 12 Quoted by Don D. Marshall, *National Development and the Globalisation Discourse: Confronting 'Imperative' and 'Convergence' Notions* in "Third World Quarterly," vol. 17, no. 5, p. 887.
- 13 Jerry Falwell, *Listen, America*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980, p. 13.
- 14 James H. Mitt Oman, *Globalization and Environmental Resistance Politics* in "Third World Quarterly," vol. 19, no. 5, 1998, p. 864.
- 15 Nicholas Lossky, et al. *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991, p. 1004.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Robert Beckford, *Dread & Pentecostal*, London: SPCK, 2000, pp. 95-96.
- 18 Ibid. p. 98.
- 19 Karen L. Bloomquist, *Engaging Economic Globalization as Churches* in "the ecumenical review" vol. 53, no. 4, Oct 2001, p. 494.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.

A Northeast Indian Response to Christianity and Indian Renaissance

O. L. Snaitang*

I. Introduction

The much revered Dr. William Carey¹ and the Serampore Mission² though had come and worked in India for the good news of Jesus Christ but their missiological institutional means of involving with the people had brought about far significant socio-cultural transformation that became evident in liberating the people from the shackles of caste distinction, female infanticide, burning alive of a wife on the funeral pyre of her dead husband, from illiteracy, poverty and from certain elements of superstition; unifying people's diversity, leaving behind precious treasures of wealth, spiritual resources and creating avenues for progressive vision, mission, thinking and a work culture. It is, therefore, at least timely and very appropriate that on this bicentennial and centennial jubilee celebrations of William Carey and the Serampore Mission and the publication to mark the historic occasion, an article on Christianity and Indian Renaissance may well require to serve as an eye opener to all right thinking citizens of the country and add weight to the on-going theological education in the region.

In the light of Dr. William Carey's obligations and renaissance in India, the objective of this essay is to examine the

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role of Christianity in bringing about significant socio-cultural renaissance among the subaltern groups in India that resulted in the building of a modern reascent India. Attention will be given to the experiences of the subaltern groups of people. This write up is investigated on the assumption that in the situation of cultural degradation and alienation, Christianity had participated in ushering dynamic means for people's progress and freedom and in creating a universal cultural synthesis. Section II will look into the changing cultural situations in the pre and post Aryan periods. Negative cultural aspects that had happened among the dalits and tribal people in India had happened not only after the arrival of the Aryans but even in the midst of their existence and settlement before external conquest and rule. In section III under the heading 'Christianity and India's Renaissance,' the essay will touch upon the historical survey of Christianity and its role in shaping the destiny of the dalits and tribals and that of the entire nation into a modern reascent country.

II. Changing Cultural Situations Before and After the Arrival of People of Aryan Roots

1. Cultural Setting and Development in the Pre-Aryan Conquest:³ First, **People's Cultural Setting:** Dalits and tribals who were the indigenous settlers in the country had their own cultural features and some of their positive aspects could be seen in their history, religion, social set up and polity.

India is a sub-continent that has long history of civilization. The neighbouring countries and regions that surrounded the country included Sri Lanka on the south and Indian ocean; Pakistan on the west and Arabian sea on the south western side, Myanmar on the east and China; Nepal, Bhutan, the Himalaya ranges on the north and Bangladesh and Bay of Bengal on the east and south eastern side. Though its inhabitants belonged to different ethnic groups, India enjoyed a pride of a single geographical identity. The land witnessed the presence of hills, plains, valleys and deserts. India had also changing accounts of human history.

In the midst of the presence of different groups of people, history is proof that non – Aryan roots like Dalits and tribals were its first settlers and inhabitants.⁴ Though their origins could have been from outside the country but they were among the founding communities in India. The excavation and study under the leadership of Sir John Marshall in 1922-23 that led to the discovery of the lost communities and civilizations of non-Aryan origins at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro was at least authentic and officially valid.⁵ Their settlements were evident in their occupation in agricultural and pastoral, farming and commerce.

Dalits⁶ and tribals⁷ in India who were the original and indigenous inhabitants had developed their own religious systems. Traditional religious faith was there long before the introduction of the much sophisticated Hinduistic persuasion. Though their way of worship was flexible and with less rules and disciplines, Dalits and tribals did not believe in idolatry. There were no religious texts, creeds or song books. Religion was part of their life and existence and it was indigenous.⁸

Ancient dalit and tribal societies were in most cases communitarian and collective.⁹ Clan and kinship code that had developed over a period of time had contributed much to their solidarity. Again, ancient society witnessed collective participation in the decision making bodies, developing a sense of responsibility, cooperation, sharing of natural resources, community development, mutual caring and respect and united protection against the enemies.

Indigenous people did not regard nature to be an object of exploitation.¹⁰ It was regarded as an integral part of human essence for survival, sustainability and existence. There was also an inherent perception of its importance and necessity that soon made them developed a deep sense of belonging. That was the reason that witnessed the system of preserving of forests and the presence of sacred groves, community lands and clan reserved forests. These dedicated forests were placed under the control and

supervision of community's bodies so that they could prevent the indiscriminate felling down of trees and vegetations including the animals and inhuman exploitation.

Another significant feature was the indigenous growth and development of democracy.¹¹ The introduction of an electoral procedure in which male adults could take part in it was in any human community a sound and healthy development. A well designed democratic structure that functioned from the ground level of a clan, a village, a sub-ethnic council and the collective community's council was never an outside imposition but a political institution that was significant of the pre-Aryan situation. It was in the context of these democratic levels that the people in the ancient period could administer, legislate and dispense the judicial court of justice. The chief was a titular head and belonged to the accepted dynastic family.

Second, **Areas of Negative Cultural Development:** Their socio-cultural positive aspects were by no means cultural perfection. Unless there is a discussion on the negative cultural areas of the people in the ancient past such investigation would have remained incomplete.

Firstly, **Loss of A Written Culture:** Most hill tribal people and other people's group of India's ancient past were not only illiterate but did not have any written alphabet or script.¹² The indigenous people did not give importance to a written culture. This attitude could have emerged because of their being materialistic and egoistic in addition to their devotion and commitment to benefited agriculture, pastoral and farming. It was also a question of survival and so saw written culture as immaterial. Besides that, as lands and forests were collectively owned and as there were equal distribution for use, the indigenous people did not anticipate any setback whether on their profession or habitation. They gave importance to a spoken word. As a result, primal people remained illiterate. While illiteracy was not a problem in ancient primal setting it was in due course an element of backwardness.

Secondly, **Cultural Division From Within:** Another significant development among the indigenous people was the fast growth of cultural differences among people from the same community. The first development was the rise of distinctive unintelligible dialects.¹³ The adverse impact of the emergence of innumerable dialects was ethnic division. It also placed the dividing people in a vulnerable situation from outside conquest, domination and incapacitation culturally. It was not just a loss of alphabet and illiteracy but the indigenous people preferred to divide the once common spoken language. Why did they do so one found it difficult to answer, however, I assume that people wanted to exercise their free will and looked for an independent life. The development was an indication of maturity and long time of existence. Though the people could have become proud of their long history and maturity but it just had the consequence of weakening their culture. Rise of a new dialect means at least a creation of a separate identity.

The second development was the gradual emergence of independent kingdoms and sub-ethnic identities.¹⁴ Indigenous people were different because of their sensitivity to their individuality, clan identity, family unity and freedom. It was because of this perception that resulted in the creation of independent kingdoms, languages and separate of sub-ethnic society. Differences became evident even in lifestyle, dresses and manners.

The third negative dimension was evident in the presence of fragmented religion in the same community.¹⁵ Though their religion was in most cases believed to have been one but in over a long long period of their movement and settlement had lost its unifying power. Though the dalits and tribals appeared to have rejected religious idolatry, they were however become victims to natural spirits, superstition and witchcraft. Differences in their religion were mostly observed in devotion, sacrificial rites and people's festivals. Superstitious belief system was a kind of

hallucination and imagination without reasonable proof and placed them on an enslaved fear psychosis, fatalistic and put oneself and the family in the vicious cycle of misfortunes.

Thirdly, **Rise of Inhuman Practices:** Besides the rise of superstitious belief, there developed among the indigenous people some kind of inhuman concern that jeopardized people social relationship and unity. Three instances are in order, viz; headhunting, slavery and taboo. First, **Headhunting:**¹⁶ Certain tribal groups like those who lived in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and elsewhere were in the ancient period practicing some form of hunting for human heads and people tended to have respected this practice. The person who did it was placed in high honour and women would prefer to marry someone who had had the distinction of cutting many heads. Two, **Practice of Slavery:**¹⁷ Certain groups of people, like the kings in Mizoram, practiced what was known as the *bawi* system, i.e., the system of maintaining slaves for protection. Though people who were employed in this job were in most cases remained for life because of being in debt trap or captured but the objective was at least to protect their life and for security also. Be that as it may such developments were rather uncalled for in what would have been society of mutual respect and help besides sharing of resources.

Three, **A Religious Taboo that Prevented Samaritan Service:** Some people's groups like the Khasi-Jaintias had perceived religious understanding that did not make them sociable when a neighbour became victim to unfortunate accident, like tragic death, unnatural death of child delivery or death by committing suicide. People believed in the presence of *ka tyrut* (goddess of unnatural death) and were always afraid of its attack if someone was helping the victims. There was no immediate service in such cases except those who belonged to the same family.

These negative cultural dimensions have not just affected the people but threatened the unity and integrity of the nation.

2. Impact of Aryan Domination in India: History is proof that people of Aryan roots have come to India from central Asia. In other words, the findings from the archaeological excavation and study of the Harrapan and Mohenjodaro civilization did not give any signs of the presence of Aryan culture in the centuries well before at least a millennium and half BC. These groups of people who were culturally advanced had invaded India. Their mighty army, wisdom, wealth and religion could easily defeat the simple agricultural people. The tribals were pushed to the jungles, dalits placed outside the Aryan social order and made them servants and the Dravidians who inhabited the Deccan region were also driven that they had to move southward up to the South. Following the Aryan rule, indigenous people experienced displacement, alienation, classification and oppression.

The invaders did not seem to have a sympathetic spirit or human concern for the primal people. Conquest resulted in occupation, rule and expansion. In this situation, indigenous people lost their land and habitation. Their life was in due course pushed out of the new imposed social order. Again, the imposition of social distinction and institutional means had over a period of time resulted in alienation and outside domination. In a traditional unsophisticated world, the new power introduced a well designed polity, economy, religion, and education. Under the new dispensation, the primal peoples were outside human social order.

Closely related to this inhuman development was the introduction of the new religion. Aryan religion did not come to offer the good news of God's salvation of the unsaved and poor indigenous peoples. It did not offer hope neither for the present nor for the future. Rather, it had come with strict imperialistic motive that produced judgment, exclusion and subjugation. Dalits and tribals were regarded as monkeys or ravanans and treated as chamals.¹⁸ The new religion is synonymous with domination and oppression.

Caste system was a non issue in ancient primal society.¹⁹ The invaders put it as a determining rod to differentiate and subjugate the indigenous citizens. The law of karma though is part of the larger Hindu philosophy, is however, disastrous on its application on the indigenous people. Karma believed in rebirth or transmigration of souls and someone's next life is determined by the present one's action or works. In this connection, the sufferings and plight of dalits and tribals were seen as God's judgment because of their doings and so they deserved so. Such interpretation made the dalits and tribals to accept so and looked at their situation as self-defeating and in the process placed them upon perpetual slavery.

These new socio-religious codes were suppressing mechanisms to oppress the primal peoples. It was through these means that had made them to assert that their religion was superior and final and regarded others as inferior or sinful. Justification was evident not just in their attitude but actions alike. Aryans who believed in their religious purity did not regard other's faiths as faith at all. In other words, Aryan religion lent credence to the efficacy of caste and karmic belief system. The plight of the dalits or tribals was well seen under the new imposed social order as the outcome of their bad deeds and so the divine judgment.

III. Christianity and India's Renaissance

It is a fact that Christian Missions and missionaries have come to India because of their faith in Jesus Christ, the Bible and service.²⁰ But, their attitude to the people and nation had never been negative.²¹ The word 'renaissance' is used to mean a positive attitude towards the downtrodden people who are victim of injustices, having a compassionate heart with a great burden and passion for their plight, identifying, searching and working for and with the poor, orphans and victims in the society, helping the downtrodden and the marginalized for freedom, growth and development and leading the citizen a forward outlook and movement.

Christian attitude towards people's culture was mixed. While it approved most cultural component like polity, social structure, language, literature, agriculture, art and many others, it did not have positive attitude towards religion. Religious elements like traditional belief and practices were in most cases no longer entertained in a Christian community. By this it does not mean that Christianity did not respect other religious faiths. It did show greater respect but insofar as its belief system functions on a different pattern, therefore, those who willingly accept Christian faith have to abide by its religious order and discipline.

The role of Christianity in India's renaissance can also be understood by its activities viz; the creation of standard language and literature, promotion of indigenous literatures like Bengali, Mahrathi etc.; development of educational institutions right from the nursery level up to the higher College and University degree levels; introduction of wide network of clinics, dispensaries, hospitals and medical colleges; provision of indigenous leadership; raising the standard of the marginalized and downtrodden people; fighting against poverty, illiteracy and against caste distinction; taking care of the aged, orphans, the disabled and the poor; providing relief and rehabilitation; caring the mother earth, nature and environment; starting education for girls and women; rural reconstruction; career guidance and training for young people and communal peace and harmony. Hence, Christian attitude and their participation and involvement have in the process contributed to the rise of modern Indian civilization and human culture.

Christian missionaries have come, identified with the dalits, tribals and all people and worked with and for their well being in life style, social growth through education and dynamic vision.²² Their missionary operations in rural areas have in the process contributed to rural reconstruction. It was Christian missionaries who have introduced alphabet and written script among the hill people in Northeast India and led to the development of indigenous literatures. Through these educational institutions,²³ the standard of living of the downtrodden had been raised to a level of dignity.

Educated women could become leaders in what would have been the reserved frontiers of men alone. Christian missionaries like William Carey and others, were among the pioneers to raise their voices against suttee, female infanticide and caste system in addition to voicing their concerns for the care and protection of the blue planet and its surroundings.

Christian teachings have shaped the traditional system especially in Northeast India that headhunting was obliterated completely in the region, slavery was no more in practice and that under the new dispensation service is done to the injured, wounded and even the dead without any religious taboo. Discrimination in the society was curbed. Even the practice of caste system was at least no longer severe as it was in the traditional set up.

Given the above mentioned areas that Christianity had contributed to the people and the nation, it is appropriate to endorse that Jesus Christ brings the good news of peace and non-violence. Christianity becomes a religion that gives hope to the sinners through repentance, faith and new life but it condemns all sorts of sinful acts. It fights against hypocrisy, injustice and corruption. A system that entertains corrupted practices is not Christian by Biblical principle. These teachings are among the contributing factors towards the larger modern Indian civilization.

However, it is rather unfortunate that the post Independence India especially in states with majority of Christian population and leadership, there appeared significant demonstration of unfair means even in public places. Besides that, the country witnessed the growing rise of uncivilized, barbaric, inhuman and genocidal spirit among section of India's population. The intolerant spirit and a culture of inhumanity appeared to have reemerged even in the most advanced scientific and technological world of the 21st century.

IV. Conclusion

Although, Christianity composes of different traditions but the way in which it had carried out its work among the people in

India, especially among the dalits, tribals and women, was in most cases very similar and pointed out to the growth, development, participation and wide dispersal of the marginalized communities in the country. In most cases, it was Christianity that had at least become instrumental in introducing dynamic institutional ways and means for people's progress, freedom and work culture and in creating a kind of cultural synthesis. Through their vision, mission involvement and dynamic implementation, Christian missionaries though did not work for the destruction of people's culture but the infusion of new ideas and institutional elements had in the process contributed to making the nation forward looking and action for people's welfare, liberation, self-reliant and living with greater sense of justice, equality and move beyond borders.

In this wider vision and mission among the neglected and marginalized sections in Indian society, Dr. Carey and the Serampore Mission had been instrumental in ushering new progressive ideas and dynamic work ethics among all sections of humanity in general and among the alienated and depressed groups of people in the country. Their commitment and works for the general welfare of the downtrodden people and even for their liberty and equality were testimonies of their contribution to unleashing a world of renaissance and became evident in liberating the people from the oppressive shackles of caste system, female infanticide, burning alive of a wife on the funeral pyre of her dead husband, from illiteracy, poverty and from certain elements of superstition. Their works had also contributed to unifying the different groups of people and endowing a sense of national unity even in the midst of diversity. They also left behind precious treasures of wealth, spiritual resources and created avenues for progressive vision, mission, thinking and a work culture.

Finally, therefore, Christianity in India and the Serampore Mission had in most cases demonstrated positive attitude toward the marginalized group of people like the dalits, tribals, women, the poor and the disabled persons in the society who are victims

of injustices, expressed a compassionate heart with a great burden and passion for their plight, have identified, searched for them and worked for and with the poor, orphans and victims in the society, helped them for freedom, growth and development and leading them with hope, courage, sharing and co-existence. It is these visions, missions and implementations for true humanity among the ostracized in-human world for liberation and life, hope and rightful existence, for physical and mental health that the word “renaissance” may well carry true meaning and realistic hermeneutics in a world of un-philosophical human beings.

End Notes

- 1 Cf. S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey* (1934). Some popular and academic biographies like Basil Miller, *William Carey: Cobbler to Missionary* (1952); Sunil Kumar Chatterjee, *William Carey and Serampore*. 2nd Edition (2004); Hamlet Bareh Ngapkynta, *William Carey in a New Perspective* (2004); Kellsye M. Finnie, *William Carey: Missionary Pioneer* (2015); Sam Wellman, *William Carey: Father of Modern Missions* (2017); Malay Dewanji, *William Carey and the Indian Renaissance* (1996) and others may be referred for broad-based opinions and interpretations.
- 2 See E. Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793 – 1837: History of Serampore and its Missions* (1967); J. T. K Daniel & R. E. Hedlund, eds., *Carey's Obligation and India's Renaissance* (1993); A. Christopher Smith, *The Serampore Mission Enterprise* (2006) for more background historical information.
- 3 Some studies on ancient Indian history like R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India* (1952/1994); Hermann Kulke & Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India* (1991) may well provide basic information on this historical aspect.
- 4 Read R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India* (1952/1994), pp. 16 – 17; Hermann Kulke & Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India* (1991), pp. 19 – 28; Romila Thapar, “The Historiography of the Concept of ‘Aryan’” in *India: Historical Beginnings and the Concept of the Aryan* (A National Book Trust Publication. First published 2006, reprinted 2013), p. 2.
- 5 Cf. Marshall, John *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization* Vols. I & II (1931/2004).
- 6 See James Massey, *Roots: A Concise History of the Dalits* (1991).
- 7 Read Nirmal Minz, *Rise Up, My People and Claim the Promise* (1997).
- 8 Sujata Miri, *Religion and Society in North East India* (1980).
- 9 K. Thanzaiva in his book titled *Theology of Community* (1997), though has done a micro study on the Mizos in Mizoram, has come up with a clear explanation on communitarian and collective life of the people.
- 10 The value of land and nature in tribal community is well expounded by A. Wati Longchar, “Dancing with the Land: Significance of Land for Doing Tribal Theology” in *Doing Theology with Tribal Resources* (1999); pp. 117 – 126.
- 11 See Bareh, H. *Khasi Democracy* (1964).
- 12 For in stance in Northeast India. With an exception of the Assamese of Assam, Metheis of Manipur and Monpas in Arunachal Pradesh who possessed clear written alphabet and literature, others like different Naga groups in the region, the Khasi – Jaintias and Garos of Meghalaya; Mizos in Mizoram; Karbis and many others were people without alphabet or written literature.
- 13 See books by Hamlet Bareh, *The Language and Literature of Meghalaya* (1977) & *A Short History of Khasi Literature* (1979) that speak about the presence of unintelligible dialects in a Khasi community.
- 14 U Homiwell Lyngdoh Nonglait in his book entitled *Ki Syiem Khasi Bad Synteng* (Originally published 1938, reprinted, Shillong, 1964) mentioned and described the emergence of more than 25 Khasi independent states in a minority Khasi – Jaintia community.
- 15 Cf. Henry H. Presler, *Primitive Religions in India* (1971); C. A. Bixel Tirkey, *Religion/Primal Religions* (2005); Sujata Miri, *Religion and Society in North East India* (1980).
- 16 Read Gohain, B. C. *Human Sacrifice, and Head-hunting in North-Eastern India* (1977).
- 17 Read Mangkhosat Kipgen, *Christianity and Mizo Culture* (1996), pp. 153 – 170.
- 18 Cf. Nirmal Minz, *Rise Up, My People and Claim the Promise* (1997), p. 8.
- 19 See G. H. Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India* (1932), pp. 13ff.
- 20 Some significant history books on the History of Christianity in India include C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (1961/1983); Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From the Beginnings to the Present* (2008); L. Fernando & G. Gispert – Sauch, *Christianity in India: Two Thousand Years of Faith* (2004).
- 21 For more information on Christian role in building the nation, Read Aerath, C. & G. Menachery, eds., *Christian Contribution to Nation Building: A Third Millennium Enquiry* (2004); Ezra Sargunam, ed., *Christian Contribution to Nation Building* (2006); Binu John, *Christian Contribution to Nation*

- Building* (2004); Kalyan Basu, *The Sovereignty of God and Christian Nationalism* (2003); E. C. John & S. Prabhakar, eds., *Christian Identity and Cultural Nationalism: Challenges and Opportunities* (2006). Also see A. Thumma & A. D. Sahayam, eds., *Christian Commitment to Nation Building* (2003).
- 22 Cf. Pickett, J. W. *Christian Mass Movements in India* (1933), F. Hrangkhuma, ed., *Christianity in India: Search for Liberation and Identity* (2000).
- 23 J. C. Ingleby, *Missionaries, Education and India* (2011).

Relevance of Theological Education in Contemporary North East India Context*

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When the theologian governed the world, it was covered with huts and hovels for the many, palaces and cathedrals for the few. To nearly all the children of men, reading and writing were unknown arts. The poor were clad in rags and skins-they devoured crusts, and gnawed bones. The day of Science dawned, and the luxuries of a century ago are the necessities of to-day. Men in the middle ranks of life have more of the conveniences and elegancies than the princes and kings of the theological times. But, above and over all this, is the development of mind. There is more of value in the brain of an average man of to-day... than there was in the brain of the world four hundred years ago.

- Robert Green Ingersoll

Preliminary Remarks

The premise of my paper has two grounding. First, if theological education is for Church/Christian Ministry, there is no alternative but to be relevant to the context. Relevant in the sense of impact

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that brings sensible and conspicuous transformation. At present, theological education faces a monumental challenge. It has to respond to both the rapid globalization and the reassertion of local socio-cultural identities. In a way, it is caught in the apparent contradictory trends of cultural homogenization and cultural resistance. Therefore theological education must consciously confront these critical questions. Second, I am presenting this paper “Relevance of Theological Education in the Contemporary North East India Context” among *the* “Theological Educators.”¹ Theological educators I believe are scholars who are not merely with certain accepted degrees to be theological educators, rather scholars who possess certain “authority” in a particular subject matter. Therefore, at the backdrop of these, as student of Communication and Cultural Studies I have decided on presenting a very simple thought, i.e., “Going Beyond” the present social scientific positivism or objectivism and rather propose a perspective of “engaged form” of theological education. I feel this “going beyond” may contribute towards relevancy of our contemporary Theological Education in the region.

Ethnic Politics in the Region

Ethnicity may be defined as a social group who are set apart and bound together by common ties of descent, race, kinship, territory, language, history and culture. Anthony Smith wrote, “the sense of collective belonging to a named community of common myths or origin and shared memories, associated with an historic homeland.”² It may be argued that ethnicity is the outcome of the establishment of social boundaries. As a boundary ‘marker’ that separates one group of people from another. It is also important to note that ethnicity is also related to the concept of nativism which seeks a revival, preservation and protection of native culture and identity. It is a policy, an attitude, a revolution aimed at reviving, preserving and practicing an indigenous culture. And it is the result of culture contact that necessitates nativism. Ethnicity therefore is

an expression of group consciousness to protect, preserve and to revive their group’s identity.

An assessment of the dynamics of ethnicity in our north east India is rooted in several connected events and realities that touch the consciousness of the ethnic communities of the region resulting into conflict, crisis and even violent conflicts. For instance, on the one hand, as a result of new political and economic circumstances, center’s tendency to homogenize the multi-ethnic block into a single entity have generated feeling of alienation and exclusionary tendencies, suppression, resistance, etc.³ We are recognized into the national sphere not as ourselves—Mizos, Nagas, Khasis, Garos, Assamese, Karbis, Bodos, Meities, etc. – but in the way, the nation wants to see us. The ethnic communities of the region thus become victims of humiliation as well as homogenization in national public sphere. On the other hand, influx of immigrants from neighbouring nations, the international strategy of globalize, glocalize and homogenize the culture of the whole world in the western line of culture has altered the folk narratives. This displacement of culture has led to a displacement of history and identity and these new alignments have aggressively pushed ‘away’ the ethnic communities from their roots, history and space resulting natives responding to the crisis in many ways. And to my mind, one of the obvious reactions is the feeling in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the process of generating ethnic consciousness. It is important to note that the sense of being always ‘other’ in the new alignment is one which defines, and perhaps accounts for ethnicity of tribal communities of the region.

Samuel Huntington argues that “modernization, economic development, urbanization and globalization have led people to rethink their identities and to redefine them in narrower, more intimate, communal terms.”⁴ If north east India is primarily a region with a collection of cultural and ethnic entities, and if as argued by Huntington, all these shifting realities have impacted our identities, then the question is, “who are we?” “where do we belong?” what

distinguishes us “we” from the “them” who are not us? Is it race, religion, ethnicity, values, culture, wealth, politics, language or what? I suppose that with all the advancement in our academic pursuit and achievements, north east communities are still in “in-between-ness.” Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci almost a century ago observed, “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born.”⁵ This observation is apt in the sense that we have experienced and continue to experience how our “old is dying”. We also have identified the factors, reasons and circumstances on why and how our old is dying. Gramsci second observation, “the new cannot be born” is what ‘must’ worry us. In spite of our common effort, we are still struggling to find *usable* methodological approach that address effectively. Leaving aside any other realm, when we examine the relationship between theological community and congregation, what Lenin observed on the “revolutionary situation” is again very apt.⁶ For Lenin, revolutionary situation as a condition in which the rulers no longer *can* rule while the ruled no longer *wish* to be ruled. At the same time, looking at the theological curriculum used in our north east India theological institutions and the theological orientation we have, apart from the purpose of theological education, we need to seriously deliberate on, “who designs the curriculum and particularly for what context?” in other words, if context is where *discourse* takes place, then the context of such as 90% Christian population is certainly different from the context of 2.7% Christian population from where *the* theological curriculum is designed and implemented. Is this a worrisome reality of the relationship between theological education and the congregation? Here are few perspectives I would like to share to strengthen our approach towards challenges posed by the outcome and ramification of ethnicity to our theological education in the region.⁷

1. Going Beyond “Subject”

Way back in 1947, Miss Dorothy Sayers presented her revolutionary essay in Oxford, entitled “The Lost Tools of Learning.” In her essay Dorothy Sayers said,

Do you often come across people for whom, all their lives, a “subject” remains a “subject,” divided by watertight bulkheads from all other “subjects,” so that they experience very great difficulty in making an immediate mental connection between let us say, algebra and detective fiction, sewage disposal and the price of salmon—or, more generally, between such spheres of knowledge as philosophy and economics, or chemistry and art?⁸

These are very relevant lines for us. For many, theological education remains a ‘subject’ and not a means of transformative information. I wonder why the churches in the west from where most of the theological resources comes have become empty? Is it not a serious challenge to us, who are involved in theological education? Do our theological education “still” remains only as subject? Only as “play on words?”⁹ At the same time Sayers observed ‘we remember what we have learnt but forgets altogether how we learned it.’ In other words, we often succeed in teaching our pupils “subjects” but we fail lamentably on the whole in teaching them how to think. They learn everything, except the art of learning to apply in a context. Every academic research is marked by two crucial points. First, when the central idea is conceived of and articulated and the second point at which it is affirmed that the idea is a valid one. Going beyond ‘subject’ means not forgetting the second point. In other words, it means, when the researcher realizes that the theoretical construct with which he/she is operating has a real-life bearing; that one’s research actually matters to society.

Knowing “subject” is useful but it becomes usable only when ‘subject’ become transformative information and can connect to all walks of life. For instance, how far theological education in the region empowered church leaders and her congregation to provide equal space and opportunity to women in public sphere. How far revitalization of tribal communitarianism in our theological conversations played transformative role in our tribal societies? We need to address this ethnic problem with new methodological framework, which addresses both ‘actual language’ and ‘theory of grammar.’ Subject that address both ‘what’ as well as ‘why’ and ‘how’ and such approach certainly will provide usable information and knowledge.

2. Going Beyond Methodological Communitarianism

Ethnic and racial differences are not the problem. Prejudice and racism inject our differences with the sinful notion (*colonial mindset*) that our difference leads to superiority and inferiority or the distorted belief that our differences are merely cultural cues for determining who is in and who is out, rather than emblems of God’s gift of diversity.¹⁰

Throughout, the reality of ethnic and racial differences in our region have been successfully used either to build up or tear down communities and neighbourhoods. We have had the attitude and practice of harbouring such strong feelings of loyalty or bonds to one’s ethnic community that one excludes or even demonizes those ‘others’ who do not belong to that group. It prompts one to have a positive attitude towards those who are connected to “us” through kinship, family and clan, and it de facto (directly or indirectly) alienates “them” who are not related to “us.” Amartya Sen argues that, “our focus on particular identities can enrich our bonds and make us do many things for each other and can help to take us beyond our self-centred lives.”¹¹ Of course he further observed that the well-integrated community in which residents

instinctively do absolutely wonderful things for each other with great immediacy and solidarity can be the very same community in which bricks are thrown through the windows of immigrants who move into our villages and region from elsewhere.¹² More so, we have sad period of history, though not explicit, when church members become involved politically and sided (race and ethnicity) with their ethnic community rather than following biblical principles.¹³ Thus, ethnic and racial identity politics are a challenge not only to society in general but to the Christian Church and in our theologizing process. Roger Gaikward in his essay, “Doing Theology with Tribal Resources: Cautionary Remarks” observed,

Nobel as the community-centred focus of tribal life is, one wonders how much harm such a position has done by providing little space for individual freedom of thought and expression, for different views and creative talents of minorities who have to fall in line with customary traditional views and ways of life of their respective tribal communities.¹⁴

This observation particularly made me think passionately about our tribal worldview of inter-human relationship. The cautionary remark, “while there is much to be learned from tribal worldviews, we should be careful that we do not ‘romanticize’ them”¹⁵ made me think cautiously and prudently while discussing tribal worldview like communitarianism.¹⁶ We need to open up possibilities for resisting dominant discourses of representation and power by framing our own ‘counter-narratives’ and challenge the hegemonic narratives.¹⁷ I suppose that we may need to *go beyond* the present methodological communitarianism and look at the consequences of political communitarianism at play in the present tribal society.

3. Going Beyond Formal Procedure of Justice

Universalizing and legitimizing of women playing secondary role in society and insistence to impose such categorization within tribal society has been discussed and debated without much break through because what we see in reality is, women in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in relation to men, a position comparable in many ways with a racial minorities. Tribal women's citizenship is being constructed and bracketed as 'the other.'¹⁸ The exclusion of women as co-makers of history and culture has been and continue to be an unrelenting conspiracy and obstruction in creating inclusive tribal community. The unfairness and discrimination against women is always argued upon and justified as normal tribal customary practice. The observation made by political philosopher and orator Edmund Burke in the Parliament in London on 5 May 1789 is very fitting for us. He said, "an event has happened, upon which it is difficult to speak, and impossible to be silent."¹⁹ Movements for women's just participation in public sphere (Naga Church and Society) is constrained by such dilemma. The acceptance of gender bias allows the tribal society to devalue and distance ourselves from women, and encourages maker of history to develop policy based on gender stereotypes.²⁰ We need to reflect in a fresh way on the engines driving political conversations and social division in the present discussion on race and ethnicity in tribal society. Customary laws and practices are human construct and is a means of exercising power. And if it is human construct, it is all about possibilities and there is no truth in it. In other words, customary laws and practices, to me are formal procedure of justice²¹ and that it has been manipulated in *Manufacturing Consent* and creating *False Consciousness*.²² I suppose that we may need to go beyond the present descriptive approach to our customary laws and practices and employ Critical Political Economy²³ approach to tribal customary law and practices with an aim to deconstruct formal procedures of justice that undermine, discriminate and stereotype women in tribal

public sphere. Cultural Studies scholar Stuart Hall once said, "to tell the truth is revolutionary."

4. Going Beyond Colonized Mind

Reading history may reveal that during the Colonial rule in India, British Governor General Lord Macaulay introduced an educational policy that raises a fleet of clerks who would be trained to assist and facilitate in the smooth functioning of the British government administration in different parts of India where ever they ruled.²⁴ In our case, the indigenous inhabitants of the region as producers and as consumers are drawn into the center in search of manufactured identity. And interestingly, many of us are not free from such perspectives and perceptions. For world renowned psychoanalyst and philosopher Frantz Fanon, colonialism encompasses not just politics and economics, but 'consciousness.'²⁵ He argued that colonial mentality or colonized mind is the internalized attitude of ethnic or cultural inferiority felt by people/natives as a result of knowledge invasion. Colonized mind, thus corresponds with the belief that the cultural values of the colonizer are inherently superior to one's own. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire also talks about mind-colonizing educational paradigm.²⁶

Colonization of mind is so strong that for instance, land which is part of our tribal life and identity is now considered as commodity. We have detached ourselves not only from our Mother Earth but from our indigenous schemata of relationship with Mother Earth. During my college days in the South India almost 24 years ago, the words of a Dalit scholar (whose name I unfortunately cannot recollect) changed my whole perspective on theological thinking. He said (paraphrased form), "if your message says that human flesh is good to consume for you to live a thousand years, tomorrow there won't be any one alive. Everyone will be eaten up". The enlightenment manufactured false consciousness such as our everyday life was "savagery", "heathen", our everyday life and religion as preliterate, animalistic, superstitious,

etc. All the derogatory remarks are attributed, rather sealed to our people by the outsiders and interestingly we do presume that such manufactured attributes are what speaks about our past and about ourselves. Not only about us, but our relationship and communication. For instance, feminist communication theorists like Dale Spender, Robin Lakoff, Julia Penelope Wolf among others, argued about colonized mind and began to theorize about the way gender constrained and influenced women's and men's communication styles and practices.²⁷

Going beyond Colonized Mind therefore is imperative. We need to re-write and re-claim language so that it reflects human-centred ideology rather than one grounded in imperialistic-hierarchical and male-centred perspectives and politics. We need to challenge colonized mind by launching mind that focuses on inter-subjectivity and explain the way individuals can negotiate, resist and transcend their identities in a highly imperialistic, hierarchical gendered society. Going beyond Colonized Mind (among many) also means, as Jurgan Habermas argued, asking the questions, “who actually has access to the public sphere?” or “who has a voice in the public sphere?” “What communicative language is used in public sphere?” For Habermas, public sphere is for public interest discourses. We need to go beyond or rather dismantle hegemonic structure that privileges profit and power over social justice and sustainability and how the discourses in the “constructed public sphere” constrain and construct assumptions about best practices in an organization. I consider alternative public spheres such as “Naga Mother's Associations”, “WatsüMungdang”, “Women Department in the Churches” and other “dichotomies” in public sphere as *the* result of hegemonic structure. For me, going beyond colonized mind therefore is access to the public sphere, using the language that communicate publicness and voice ‘withinthat’ sphere.

5. Going Beyond Disciplinarity

In just a few decades, the academic researcher in global context are attempting to “go beyond” and explore the options that might be generated by blending the concerns and methodologies of the various disciplines within the context of convergence. They have moved from an exclusive to an inclusive conceptualization and understanding. More so, today the decision in contemporary critical theory has posed a major alternative view. For instance, Theological Education and Cultural Studies show a significant overlap in terms of their subject of analysis, but are currently separated by methodological gap, which in a way prevents them from harvesting what they otherwise could. Cultural Studies researches power, which the discipline regards as the underlying variable of most social relations. Though may not be explicit, theological education also deeply concerned with power relations and investigates concepts such as Race, Gender, Ethnicity, Church, Community, Context, Institutions and the like, which are not “fixed givens” but the outcome of discursive process that constitute and shape them. Theological education in the contemporary society needs to become interdisciplinary or at least activate the many disciplinary components that already make it an interdisciplinary subject, raising questions beyond one's own subject, methodology and boundary.

This, however, is a challenging undertaking. Interdisciplinarity, (a noun) which means to say, analyzes, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole by drawing on knowledge from different disciplines, integrates the natural, social and different sciences in a humanities context, and transcends their traditional boundaries, the term which was added to the *Oxford English Dictionary* as recently as 1993 supplementing the earlier I should say adjective entries ‘interdiscipline’ (1930) and ‘interdisciplinary’ (1937) and is not always a welcome guest at the academic table.²⁸ The challenges and doubts such

as, the additional knowledge which interdisciplinary research brings might be limited. Or questions such as, how can any single scholar sufficiently master peripheral disciplines so as to increase his or her competence in his/her own discipline? Can we find a common vocabulary or a metalanguage²⁹ in which to communicate? Is there any possibility of evolving a mutually understandable language? Or the most crucial question and challenge, “are we reducing each discipline to a section in an intellectual supermarket? Does it suggest that the existing disciplines are a row of old curiosity shop which now merely subserve administrative convenience? All these challenges and questions as well as opposition for interdisciplinarity in research is, I feel, in the name of disciplinary purity. To make our theological education relevant we need to go beyond one’s academic boundary, to provide different perspectives on problems, to create comprehensive research questions, to draw data and remedies from different directions and sides, to develop consensus in proposing guidelines and procedures and to provide comprehensive approach. More so, our contemporary postcolonial context of our region, marked by an inherent identity politics and diversity in language, ethnicity, history, culture, religion and in power relations, we cannot ignore the invitation of interdisciplinarity in our theological education.

6. Going Beyond Conventional Ethnicities

Though it appears to be recent development, use of information and communication technology in our everyday life has become ordinary everyday experience. As a result, for Stuart Hall³⁰ there is an emergence of new ethnicities. And for him this new ethnicities is, ‘the contradictory, stony ground of the present conjuncture.’ Multiple identities, multiculturalism, online exchange of views about race and ethnicity, ethnic and collective consciousness on the internet, discussion on new way of life-food habits, new relationships, new worldviews, new language, new communities based on interest and test, etc., explains this new ethnicities.

Leaving aside all these emerging ethnicities in our region, I would like to address only one dimension, i.e., “information overload” as one of the features of this new ethnicities. What Robert Green Ingersoll observed, “But above and over all this, is the development of mind. There is more of value in the brain of an average man (*sic*) of to-day... than there was in the brain of the world four hundred years ago”³¹ has become already a serious challenge to our theological education. In other words, over the past few years, a new generation of ‘committed’ tribal scholars, artists, activists, image-makers and intellectuals have emerged to contribute a wealth of insights into the changing meaning of both “identity”, “race” and “ethnicity” that has been taking place in tribal societies³² at the same time in theological/religious conversations. We are no more in charge of theological information and knowledge; it is already exposed in public sphere as a result of explosion in information and communication technologies. Let me cite only one example out of many I received from young tribal (secular) intellectuals³³ on their knowledge about Church history, theology as well as their observation on theological education and church ministry and its impact in public sphere:

Historically Christianity is an intellectually rich tradition. Think of Apostle Paul, Justin Martyr, Augustine, Aquinas, Anselm etc. All these Christian leaders could outthink their contemporary secular thinkers. However when it comes to Naga Christianity, the intellectual aspect seems totally missing. Part of the reason maybe that Naga Christianity is the result of the great revival movements in the West. To get back to history: In the middle 1800s, emotionally directed preaching of George Whitefield in the First Great Awakening in the United States from the 1730s to the 1750s. This was followed during the middle of 1800s, where three awakenings broke out in the United States: the Second Great Awakening (1800–1820),

the revivals of Charles Finney (1824–1837), and the Layman’s Prayer Revival (1856–1858). Though many good things can be said about those revivals, one drawback was, revivals were characterized with “popular preaching instead of intellectually careful and doctrinally precise sermons” and personal feelings and relationship to Christ was emphasized a lot at the cost of deep grasp of the nature of Christian teaching and ideas. The result was predictable: “intellectually shallow, theologically illiterate form of Christianity that came to be part of the populist Christian religion that emerged.”³⁴ So as Christian educators, we can acknowledge the positive aspects of the great revivals and at the same time should be aware of its negative aspect and thereby reclaim the intellectual tradition we were known for. Secondly, the view of Christianity in Nagaland is that it seems to be limited to spiritual compartment of our life. Theological institutes can perhaps help cure this situation by listening to the wisdom of our predecessor. In 1756 Wesley’s lecture titled as “*An Address to the Clergy*”, Wesley envisioned a pastor as someone skilled in the Scriptures but comfortable with history, philosophy and the science as well. With subjects so specialized these days, mastering all those disciplines may be too challenging a task but theological institute should seek to train its students to think deeply on theological matters and to integrate those theological truth with other disciplines of their interest. Such training should not just remain a matter of intellectual exercise within the walls of academia. Imagine the impact of Christian congregations who seeks to integrate their faith with their everyday affair rather than compartmentalize their faith...the point is the rigorous theological training, i.e., the intellectual

aspect of Christianity does not translate well in the pulpit of Nagaland and in daily living.

Simple reading of this comments suggest their knowledge about the development, purpose and nature of theological education, the problem and constrains in our present theological education and their expectations from theological community. Majority of the tribal population may be living each day with oriental philosophy,³⁵ however, over the past few years new generation of tribal intellectuals have emerged, articulating, realigning and repositioning ethnicity in the context of north east India. The observation and comments cited above in a way speak about the outcome and ramification of new ethnicities in our midst.

7. Going Beyond Individual Interest

Jon Elster, the Norwegian social and political theorist in his essay “Selfishness and Altruism” published in Jane J. Mansbridge’s edited book, *Beyond Self-interest*³⁶ observed, “In the state of Nature, nobody cares about other people. Fortunately, we do not live in this dismal state”. Elster’s comment probably would be more appropriate if it were worded like ‘it is usually fortunate when we do not live in this dismal/depressing state.’ “Is it true in our context?” The presence of caring relationships³⁷ and the experience of social support we provide and receive indisputably contribute to the quality of a person’s life. Supportive, prosocial behavior received from friends, acquaintances, work associates has remarkable effects, both direct and indirect, on psychology, cognition and emotion. Leaving aside, the psychological dimension, I would like to focus this ‘social support’ in the context of *our* theological educators and insert two words i.e., being “esteemed” and “valued” of belonging to a network of communication and mutual obligation. The fact of the matter is, a massive body of research findings has accumulated over the past, I should say, two decades or so on theological/academic scholarship in our north east India context, all with an aim to

contribute towards making theological education or Christian ministry 'relevant' by addressing social, political, cultural and religious issues and problems.

As editor of two important journal during the past few years, the *Journal of Tribal Studies* published by Tribal Study Centre, Eastern Theological College, Jorhat for few years and presently doing as the Editor of the *Clark Journal of Theology*, I have gone through and edited several amazing articles/essays written by our scholars. And in the course of my editorial work, one very obvious, rather disturbing thing I notice in many of these writings is, "we don't read each other's writings". Some of the scholars have written their good essays with "they came, they saw they named and they owned" mindset. Added to this, during the last few years many doctoral scholars receives from the dissertation examiners, comments such as "he only quotes xx and yy in some places. Are there no other tribal theologians/scholars in India and Asia", "the researcher totally ignored the work of xx in his methodology", "There is nothing new in this research because xx have done an extensive research in this area almost ten years ago", "the present scholar should have referred the book written by xx for his chapter 4, because he is dealing with the same subject matter." I feel that we do research in the same/similar context though subject matter may be different. I think, as theological scholars, we need to acknowledge research works done by community members with the purpose to agree or disagree. We need to go beyond individual interest.

8. Going Beyond Empiricism

Relevancy of theological education for our context means going beyond empirical claims of Christianity. I wish to illustrate 'empirical claims of Christianity', as the 'other truths' that Christianity hold dear. For instance, the *Apostolic Creed* or *Nicene Creed*- a statement recited weekly in many Christian churches starts with (Nicene Creed), "I believe in One God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth..." and ends with "I confess

one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins ... to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to Come. Amen". In summary, the creed claims a monotheistic God, who nevertheless somehow consists of three parts (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit); the creation of the universe by that God... and concludes by saying that Baptism is deemed essential for eternal life. Many believers certainly see them as true, however many Christians may piously mouth these words without believing them. In other words. For many, such creed or for that matter, our theologizing have become just an empirical statements.

I believe that our theological mind is endlessly creative, always able to find a moral/ethical or philosophical point in everything. And in doing so, sometimes unconsciously or even consciously what we do and know is only 'science' – knowledge. Unfortunately in the mighty ocean of our knowledge is our ignorance of God. Theological educators, to be relevant in the present context need to go beyond empirical claims of Christianity by not only believing but rather 'accepting' what we theologize. It means, our theological education must not stop with mouthing alone, rather each of us must be doer. For Christians "faith" is a gift, and it is also interesting to know that in German language, "faith" means poison. To look from another angle, I realized that in my theological journey, on several occasions, I was doing nothing less than *running* ahead of God, though Jesus said, "follow me." One of the best illustration about this is found in the life of Jonah in the Old Testament. Jonah run ahead of God ... ahead toward his own agenda that did not include the purpose of God, i.e., salvation of Nineveh. It was a "Lost zeal-run." However, in step with God or when Jonah delivered God's message in God's time in God's place he became one of the most effective evangelists of all time. *Everyone* in the great city of Nineveh believed in God. It demands not merely mouthing our mind to our pupil. Rather, mouthing our mind become effective when we 'accept' and 'live by' what we know and believe.

By Way of Conclusion

Critical and creative theological education in this part of the world ought to raise critical questions about “us” and the world around—be it secular or theological. Theological education has now become just a ‘subject’-loading knowledge by abdicating application and transformation parts. We must develop theoretical framework that allows usable inter-face between theological education to the ground levels where people and communities everyday life is confronted with bewildering changes and transformations. Theological education has ghettoized itself by not fusing itself with the reality around. Revisiting and re-visioning theological education and mission should happen ‘all the time’ because education should facilitate critical and creative thinking and mission should involve application of it. My conclusion may suggest a dystopian perspective to the present theological education, but looking at the considerable uncertainty and confusion at present, Lenin’s ‘revolutionary situation as a condition in which the rulers no longer *can* rule while the ruled no longer *wish* to be ruled’ seems to have resurrected in our region. Theological education that brings usable transformation therefore needs ‘revolution’ in the present theological education. Because, people don’t just want to see theological education walking in our region; they also want to see sermons walking in our region.

End Notes

- 1 For the sake of this paper, I am using ‘theological education’ and ‘theological educators’ interchangeably.
- 2 Anthony D Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 262.
- 3 According to Mint, an Indian financial daily newspaper published by HT Media, New Delhi, Nagaland has been dubbed as the most linguistically diverse state of India. See *Morung Express* July 12, 2018.
- 4 Samuel P. Huntington, *Who are We* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004), 13.
- 5 Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 276.
- 6 Zygmunt Bauman, “Times of Interregnum.” *Ethics & Global Politics*, 5/1, (2012), 49.
- 7 This is not necessarily systematic outline but rather random noting to help generate further conversations.
- 8 See Dorothy Sayers, (1947). “The Lost Tools of Learning”, <http://www.gbt.org/text/sayers.html> (accessed on 30 June 2018).
- 9 “play on words” in Cultural Studies can be termed as “bullshitting”. It means to illustrate that someone is allowed to write a full essay about nothing yet make it look as if they know what they are talking about and are answering the question.
- 10 Barreto, E. D. “Negotiating Difference: Theology and Ethnicity in the Acts of Apostles,” *Word & World*, 31 (2), (2011), 129-137.
- 11 Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2006), 2.
- 12 Cf. Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence*, 2.
- 13 Looking at the present ramification of ethnicity in our Naga society, I sense that ISM is more powerful and destructive than MONEY power.
- 14 Roger Gaikwad, “Doing Theology with Tribal Resources: Cautionary Remarks.” In *Doing Theology with Tribal Resources: Context and Perspective*. Edited by A. Wati Longchar & Larry E. Davis (Jorhat: Tribal Study Centre, ETC., 1999), 134.
- 15 Roger Gaikwad, “Doing Theology with Tribal Resources: Cautionary Remarks”, 132.
- 16 See L. Imsutoshi Jamir, *Sites in Tribal Cultural Studies* (Mokokchung: TDCC, 2015), 58-63.
- 17 Siba N. Grovogui, Postcolonial Criticism: International Reality and Modes of Inquiry. In Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair eds. *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations. Reading Race, Gender and Class*. London: Routledge, 2003), 33.
- 18 Saeed Naqvi, *Being the Other: The Muslim in India* (New Delhi: Alebb Book Company, 2016), x.
- 19 Cf. Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 1.
- 20 For more elaborate discussion, see L. Imsutoshi Jamir, *Sites in Tribal Cultural Studies...*, 169 ff.
- 21 Cf. L. Imsutoshi Jamir, *Sites in Tribal Cultural Studies...*, 176.
- 22 For detail study, see Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. London: Vintage Books, 1994).
- 23 Jonathan Hardy, *Critical Political Economy of the Media: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2014), 3ff.
- 24 The truth is that they are in the business of manufacturing ideology to both justify their own hegemonic propositions as well as to rubbish any chances

of dismantling their empire. Their manufactured consent suggests that there is nothing left for the natives to imagine, create, reflect and produce. Rather enlightenment have done everything for us and determines and imposed their own language'. Our responsibility is to comprehend, understand, believe and follow their designs. In other words, the whole world, including indigenous communities of the region is made to pass through the filter of the manufactured ideology of imperialism.

- 25 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967); Gibson C. Nigel, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2003).
- 26 See Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973).
- 27 They argued that language is man-made and that it has been controlled by men for centuries and reflects a bias toward masculine styles of communication as well as masculine ideologies.
- 28 For more detail discussion refer Lion Konig, *Cultural Citizenship in India: Politics, Power, and Media* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- 29 In logic and linguistics, a *metalanguage* is a language used to make statements about statements in another language.
- 30 Stuart Hall, 'New Ethnicities' (1988) http://www.archiviodipartimentolingue.unito.it/concilio/documents/oss-materiali-aiseli2015/Stuart%20Hall-New%20Ethnicities_CATTANI4.pdf (accessed on 19 June 2018). Cf. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds, (1996). *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), 442ff.
- 31 Jerry A Coyne, *Faith vs. Fact: Why Science and Religion are Incompatible* (New York: Penguin Book, 2015), vii.
- 32 Cf. L. Imsutoshi Jamir, *Sites in Tribal Cultural Studies...* 132-146.
- 33 This comment is received from an assistant professor of Social Anthropology, Nagaland University.
- 34 James Porter Moreland, *Love your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2012), 16-17.
- 35 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Vintage Books, 1978); Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 2004).
- 36 Jane J. Mansbridge (Ed.), *Beyond Self-interest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 44.
- 37 It means caring, helping, support, appreciating and acknowledging each other's works etc., on individual well-being.

Relevance of Theological Education in Churches Today

*Akok Amer**

Introduction

The word "church" comes from the Greek adjective *kyriakon*, generally *belonging to a lord* (1Cor 11.20; Rev 1.10).¹ The other Greek word translated "church" is *Ekklesia*.² meaning call out people, *assembly, meeting* (Acts 19.32); the assembled people of Israel *congregation* (Heb 2.12); assembled Christian community *church, congregation, meeting* (Rom 16.5); the totality of Christians living in one place *church* (Acts 8.1); the universal body of believers *church* (Eph 1.22). Kärkkäinen quotes James McClendon Jr. to define church as, "... a narrative community, the home of doctrine. The Local community or readers of scripture, the narrative of and concerning Jesus Christ, meet and work together and face the interpretive task from a shared context of witness in a particular place."³ The principle of gathering church however, does not imply any other kind of social gathering or club party. The Church gathering is God's gathering with a definite purpose and task to witness. The community's task is to keep her self-identity in Christ while forming the diverse streams by accommodating postmodern cultures and speaks for the church that is faithful to its calling.

Too often, the church has forgotten or ignored the fact that it is a Christian community coming together. It is a group of people

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brought together by the Holy Spirit and bound to each other through Christ.⁴ The Postmodern church will therefore, probably remain vibrant as long as it can provide with a strong sense of Christ's centered community, theologically sound, apologetic in its nature and doctrinally centered in the light of the scripture. To quote Robert Wuthnow,

In the middle ages people lived within walking distance of the church, woke to its bells, took their animals to it to be blessed, and followed its calendar. After the Reformation people formed their own churches and called pastors who lived as they did. In our own history the church was first an integral part of the colony, then of towns, and later urban and suburban neighborhood.⁵

But, now our society seems to be at a loss for community. Critics says that individualism is preceding the communal life of the society, obsessed by our jobs, our bank accounts, our feelings, determinations, and self interest. Wuthnow further says that we live in anonymous places, jealousy protecting our personal privacy, and whatever hopes we entertain of finding a warm, supportive community are threatened by our incessant pressures of our time.⁶

In our fragmented world the church is no doubt entering the postmodernism, with so many people looking for their roots and meanings, a community with purpose and hope for the future. Emil Brunner, in his influential *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, argues that the church is nothing but a fellowship of men and women, a fellowship of the Spirit, a *koinonia*. How well-or poorly-the Christian church is able to fulfill this task determines on how relevant the church is going to be⁷ and how the church will solve this world of individualism bring the community back to its real meaning of church. This implication is made possible if every local churches focus on the theological education enabling the congregation to be relevant yet without losing the identity in Christ. To be relevant, Findley Edge proposed the idea that every local church should be a miniature theological seminary.⁸ He

envisage a new period of growth in faith: people being engaged in biblical study and reflection upon their practical implications of faith, ranging from the nature of the church through the professional clergy in pastoral care and evangelism. At the heights of these needs every local church should become a mature community, theologically conscious of its identity and purpose. Edge is also of the opinion that "it is imperative that we become a people who understand who we are, who God is, what God is about in the world and what God is calling us to be about the world."⁹ Outlining the concept of the paper we would look into the impediments of the Local church and the needs for the relevancy of theological education in our churches today.

Impediments of the Local Church

Some of the impediments of our churches today reflect on the verse as narrated by Thomas Bandy who in the field of practical theology focuses on the transformational leadership of the local church, he says, "People never plan to fall in love with Jesus, nor can churches plan to enable others to experience the transforming power of God."¹⁰ Instead they train themselves to be opportunists, not strategic planners. Bandy in his research finds that when the church leaders realize the importance of enabling the good leaders they openly confess with tears that they were never trained to do these:

Holding Back the Clergy

10. We were trained for modesty, not honesty.
9. We were trained to preach, not midwife.
8. We were trained to organize large groups, not multiply cell groups.
7. We were trained to assimilate members, not transform persons.
6. We were trained to fight culture, not use it.
5. We were trained to do ministry, not equip others to do ministry.
4. We were trained to give judicious permission, not risk getting out of the way.

3. We were trained to fear irrational, not celebrate its transforming power.
2. We were trained to encourage self-sacrifice, not self-fulfillment.
1. We were trained to obey the judicatory (Church Guidelines), not surrender to biblical visions.¹¹

Holding Back the Congregation

10. We were encouraged to be loyal, not tackle risks.
9. We were encouraged to read responsively, not pursue spiritual disciplines.
8. We were encouraged to serve offices, not shepherd people.
7. We were encouraged to go to church, not shape a lifestyle.
6. We were encouraged to analyze, not synthesize.
5. We were encouraged to manage institutions, not multiply ministries.
4. We were encouraged to build strategic plans, not seize emerging opportunities.
3. We were encouraged to explain bad things, not overcome gratuitous evil.
2. We were encouraged to be faithful, not transform by joy.
1. We were only encouraged, and never seriously trained.¹²

At the heart of our ministry, the local church leaders and the pastors are so busy in so many unseen ministries. As such, the church appoints so many laity and non-clergymen in the area of the pastoral care and church administration. For instance, the members in all the church committees are a group of people comprising of individuals with or without any theological background. Paul Ballard says, much pastoral work in the churches and other institutions is now done by lay people because, “. . . partly to the absence of sufficient clerical person power.”¹³ Perhaps, it is not the same with our Ao local churches in today’s context since we have produced enough theologians to fill the right places of ministry in their local self governing churches. The distinctive

dichotomy in our local church practices is, we either become skeptical to give room for the younger qualified leaders to enter into the church or we let them go unnoticed. The congregation depends upon professional clergy to do the ministries of the church. However, the few influential clergyman and laity take hold of the congregation and functions according to what they think is best and not what the congregation prays for. Robert H. Craig and Robert C. Worley also writes, “Clergy and the lay elite of the society and the church have acted too frequently to keep members passive.”¹⁴ It’s affirmative to some of our present local churches too.

For long, the church was controlled and ruled by the few elites and the powerful members irrespective of their genuine faith in Christ. In most local church we can see deacons and elders of the church are socially influential person within the community. Most of them stand faithfully even in their state affairs but most don’t. They appear as a wrong model for the younger generation because of their corruption and dishonesty. On the paradox, these people share the ecclesiastical power that holds the church’s highest administrative seat. As a result, the congregation becomes the silent spectators or the audience of the church under these few clergies and lay elite church and societal leaders.

Theological education is a prerequisite for a church minister or for all those becoming church clergies. This requirements confirms his/her commitment in the service of the Lord to have better vision of the church and a deeper scriptural resources to strengthen the Christian spiritual formation, an in-depth understanding of salvation, the discipleship in the making and to discipline the church in the light of the Word. On the dichotomy, apart from the clergies there are a lot more within the congregation who do better services in various church ministries whom we defined them as laities. Without them our church ministries will not be successful at all. We need these dedicated laities beginning from the board of deacons to the least of the ministerial staff.

Acknowledging their active contributions, the church provides an opportunity to explore and understand their faith in unique ways beyond our expectation. If the church is going to remain strong and vibrant in an ever-changing and increasingly contemporary pluralistic emergent culture, then providing its members with a strong foundation on theological education will empower and strengthen believers to stand in the midst of the professing pluralistic age and the challenges of the postmodernity. Thus theological education for both clergy and laities becomes a necessity within the church.

Stanley J. Grenz and Roger Olson challenge the contemporary church with their book, “Who Needs Theology?” Their answer is that every Christian needs theology in order to live a discipline of Jesus. But, this idea can make sense only when theology itself is seen as directly related to the living witness of Christians, individually and collectively. They begin with a distinctive description of theology, which conveys this purpose and relationship: “Christian theology is reflecting on and articulating the God-centered life and beliefs that Christians share as followers of Jesus Christ, it is done in order that God may be glorified in all Christians are and do.”¹⁵

The Need for the Clergies

The nature of the local church for its relevancy in the changing society should not remain stagnant in its ancient traditional practices. Moltmann asserts that, “The church’s institutions and its traditional congregational forms can become a stumbling block for many people, . . . People demand ‘the witness of existence’ . . .”¹⁶ To give this biblical witness of existence against the challenges of the current situation, our churches are either ignorant or remain in negligence. The reason is related with the leaders who are not well trained to lead the congregation or self-centered in themselves. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale remark that, “One of the primary functions of the pastor in the life of the congregation is to be a resident ecclesial theologian – a person who has been trained

in church history and Christian doctrine, and who can assist the congregation in thinking theologically about their lives and the world.”¹⁷ In other words, to strengthen our local churches and to be relevant with the current society, the church should not take for granted that a church leader is a theological graduate but should be evident that he should be well crafted with the doctrine of the Christian faith as well as the context of a given society and culture.

For example, the most serious work in our biblical studies concerns with doctrinal issues. No clergyman can afford to neglect what is happening in the more academic circles of theology. On the theology of the Word, there is a need for theological preaching today. By this we mean preaching related to the central doctrines of our faith to the challenging and arrogant movements of our time. For too long, our preaching at all levels has been remarkable for the absence of the doctrinal note. Therefore, it is imperative that we should look at the significance of theology in our preaching and teaching. No man can really preach the Gospel without a theology. There are preachers who say: “I don’t preach theology. I am an evangelist. I preach the gospel.” It is almost as if a medical man were to say: “I don’t believe in all this anatomy and physiology. I am a quack. I sell colored water.” The truth is that, no man can be an effective preacher-teacher of the Gospel unless his preaching/teaching is undergirded by dogmatic affirmations which is illuminated and made intelligible by some sound theological thinking.

It is precisely this issue which must shape our theological thinking. We need an authoritative word which sounds the note of certainty against the world’s insecurity. We need a realistic theology which faces the grim realities of our community. We cannot afford to talk a casual, emotional gospel in the face of the world’s need. We need a concrete theology which offers men a new creation grounded in Christ, which sounds afresh to the good pagans of our day, which talks absolute truth, justification by faith, peace and tranquility, love not hate and the Kingdom to come. We

need a theology which tells men what we do believe; which sets Christ and His cross in the centre; which does not sell out the Gospel to modern thought, and which has no time for negotiating our doctrinal faith and belief with today's syncretism. Concerning the theological institution, Rev. C.V. Jacob in one of his writing stated that,

The number of theological institutions that have no qualified faculty, no measures of accountability to any board of education, no specialization curriculum for various courses offered and no yearly revision of curriculum is still high despite all efforts of development made by individual colleges and national or international affiliation agencies."¹⁸

As such, "Some of the seminaries are neither related to churches nor missions."¹⁹ Lack of quality seminaries, curriculum, and theological teachers has defined the consequences on the local church. This is one reason why some section of people, especially among the AOs, undermine the theologians and the clergies. They say: *Percentage agi matongji theology ang züngti* (As I fall short of percentage, let me do theology); *Theological college nungbo shinga fail masürji* (nobody fails in theological college)." Among us, theological education itself is a mockery and values it cheaply. Any person at any caliber can be a theological graduate and hence turns to be an anemic clergyman.

Theological education cannot be compromised with a cheap labour and less paid ministerial job, but it is a professional ministry: to be apologetic, prophetic, priestly and Kingship. For Nicholls, "Bible Colleges and Seminaries need to take their program to the church, as well as churches need to move closer together and to integrate their discipline programs. It is a call to integrate their respective visions."²⁰ According to him, the faculty of Seminaries should be periodically get refreshed in their evangelistic and pastoral skills by associating with the church. An example is drawn from the Korean churches and seminaries, where

the pastors are professors in the seminaries and the theological professors are expected to be a pastor in a church. A pastor being able to preach and teach at the same time is what the emerging church congregation desires for. The clergies themselves should have a qualified meaning in themselves and should be an active resourceful person who is theologically trained, a motivator, a person who can teach biblical concerns and not just history tellers every Sunday.

The Needs for the Laities

The terms "lay" and "laity" are derived from the Greek word *laos*, meaning "people," and early Christian writings often used *laos theou*, "people of God," to refer to the community of the Church.²¹ Their contributions and volunteering services to the church ministries is to represent Christ and his Church, to bear witness according to the gifts given to them, to carry on Christ's work in worship, governance and leading the church. However, their contribution is not to overlook or misrule the church in comparison with any other non-religious institutions derecognizing the church ordinances and the practices. On the other hand, they should not outsmart the appointed clergies of the church with the misconception of our inabilities seen in such an expression: *percentage matongji or tekolok teyari ka dang-ar science/arts/commerce bosa mezüngtettsüji* (Since he/she is an average student, he/she cannot go for science/arts/commerce studies). Such a mentality must change! God deserves the best from your family! On the high ends, the church appoints them because the church as a witnessing community encourages everyone to witness one another as those who have received a calling from God. For we also believe in the apostolic nature of the church, the priesthood of all believers, and the concept of the Body of Christ. Every Local church constitutes on discipleship, which is a fundamental biblical strategy that is essential for reconstructing the laity's self image congruent with the essence of the church.

Members of the clergy are the most obvious beneficiaries of theological education, but lay people can also benefit from substantive theological training, short term courses, and seminars on biblical issues and doctrines with theological contents and not habitual sermons while on training. On a personal level, it can help them better understand their faith and, in so doing, facilitate spiritual growth. On a congregational level, it can give them resources that they can use to help their church minister more effectively. It can also help them understand some of the challenges faced by members of the clergy and thereby help them to become a better church leader.

The purpose of theological education is to enable the church in serving God's people. "The function of theological education has to be oriented towards equipping all church members for the ministry in various forms, and the professional ordained ministry is one of these forms."²² Theological education for the laity (Deacons, Mapangsür, Women, Youth, children and the sub-committees of the church) has to become a major concern for the seminaries whether by extension education programs or establishing local training schools giving appropriate classes. Another example, to become a deacon or elders in the Korean churches is not as simple as we do here. For them, to become a deacon or an elder they have to undergo a bible/theology training class for atleast a month, then appear bible exams after which for those who get through from these procedure they will finally be elected by the general congregation. Thus, they hold that the church forms the locus of theological reflection. The qualifying criteria for the laity is both accomplished biblically (1 Timothy 3:8-13 & 1 Peter 5:1-3) and even the conceptual theological training. As such, it benefits the entire church to be more effective imparting theological education in the local church. Frank Rees comments,

If theology is to make a constructive and enriching contribution to church life generally, and not just to training of pastors before their life in ministry, we must move beyond some

of the negative perceptions and polarizations to see how the very life of every local church itself involves theological tasks – most fundamentally the challenge of living and responding to God.²³

Concluding Remarks

In order to be relevant with the growing postmodernity, our local churches need to emphasis seriously on the theological aspect without losing our identity in Christ. Theological education benefits the members of the clergy, and giving substantive theological trainings facilitate the laities. In doing so, the church benefits the most. Today, theological education in the local church becomes relevant while assisting the members to become a community of biblical formed and socially responsive Christians, continually engaged in discerning the presence and call of God.

The one challenge to be relevant as a church leader is we should make a clear distinction that we are not a group of people to be mocked because of our poor academic choices. Secondly, in our theological career, we should be firm with our doctrinal values to teach and preach at the same time. Third, every clergy should be a visionary leader who motivates and mobilizes in making every congregation a disciple of Christ. Michael J. Quicke quotes George Barna saying,

The people who fill the positions of leadership in churches today are, for the most part, teachers, - good people, lovers of God, well educated, gifted communicators – but not leaders. They do not have or understand vision. They are incapable of motivating and mobilizing people around God's Vision. They fail to direct people's energies and resources effectively and efficiently.²⁴

Fourth, in our preaching, teaching becomes another level to let the local church grow theologically. In his letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul encourages him to focus on reading the Scriptures in the church and to teach and encourage the believers (1 Tim

4:13). We find Paul's writing in the book of Ephesians that among the gifts that Christ gave to the church are teachers (Eph 4:11). Luke records in his gospel that Jesus regularly taught from the Scriptures in the synagogue (Lk 4:15-16).

Finally, not everyone from the congregation will get the opportunity to be trained theologically but it is the responsibility of the church to provide specific opportunities for the laities. To be more relevant, trainings on biblical contents, church administrations, doctrines, discipleship and Christian spiritual formation etc., will certainly strengthen the local church to become theologically centered community identified in Christ.

End Notes

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