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UNDERSTANDING SHAME IN THE CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

Sylvia Jeanes

Introduction

Understanding the Pauline correspondence has never been an easy task. Since the letters are occasional we don't know exactly what the historical situation was. Neither do we know enough about the world of ideas and the methods of conveying them in the first century. To what extent is Paul a rhetorician? What in his letters is irony, hyperbole, metaphor and so on? Nor do we adequately understand the social and cultural milieu in which the letters were written. To what extent were the writings culturally and sociologically conditioned? We have only the text and nearly 2,000 years in between. In the past we have depended on the criticisms of linguistics, theology, history, and archeology and have engaged these in the task of theological and historical-grammatical analysis in order to understand the text. However, in recent years other sciences such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology, have been employed by Biblical scholars to aid our understanding of the world and texts of the first century.

Many shame words and concepts appear in different contexts in the Pauline correspondence. These concepts are rooted in the social and cultural milieu of the first century world. We need to understand something of that world if we are to comprehend more exactly the meaning of this correspondence.

It is the task of this essay to enlarge the meaning of the "shame" words and concepts by means of the insights from the research of cultural anthropology and sociology. The method is descriptive and by survey of existing works. Only the Corinthian correspondence will be examined because there are more shame references there than in other books of the

New Testament and of 11 different issues 10 are behavioral[1]   These issues are worked out in a society where shame and honour are pivotal values.[2]   It is accepted that 1 and 2 Corinthians are undisputedly coming from the apostle Paul.

A brief overview of the research of the human sciences of psychology, anthropology and sociology highlights the new interest in shame is followed by an introduction to those who have applied the insights to the study of the *sitz im leben* of Paul's letters. Then the honour/shame value system of the world of the first century is seen from the Jewish standpoint and then from the Greco-Roman writings.

Secondly, the historical background of 1 and 2 Corinthians is surveyed. The social configuration of the city of Corinth sets the scene for the planting of the church by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles and the *raison d'être* of the letters Paul writes.

Thirdly, the semantic field of shame vocabulary is analysed and the behavioral problems are examined in the light of the honour/shame values of the surrounding society. Paul's answer to the problems and Paul's boasting are considered briefly followed by Paul's shame for the Gospel.

Honour, Shame, and Guilt in the Human Sciences

Until recently, studies in the human sciences concentrated on guilt and had little interest in shame. However, during this century, there has been a shift in focus from guilt to shame. Asian scholars have challenged the emphasis, presuppositions and conclusions of the western world-view that focus more on guilt than shame. P.M. Yapp, challenged the dichotomy between guilt and shame,[3] and Francis Hsu,[4] takes exception to the

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[1]Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 5.

[2]This is the term used by Pitt-Rivers, Peristany and others who have researched the field.

[3]David J. Hesselgrave, *Counselling Cross-Culturally*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 206.

[4]David W. Augsburger, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures,* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 120.

individualistic orientation of Freud and Erikson and maintains that the most important environment is the social environment.

Insights from Psychology

Theorists beginning with Sigmund Freud focussed on the individual identity of human beings, and contrasted guilt with shame which is based upon disapproval coming from outside, from other persons. Erik Eriksen, also focussing on the individual, supplements Freud's theory of periods of development and traces 8 stages of psycho-social development of personality. Each stage experiences a conflict between two extremes. The first stage he sees as a conflict between acquiring trust or mistrust, while the second stage is between acquiring autonomy against shame. The conflict between guilt and initiative follows as a higher and more advanced stage of development. From Eriksen's analysis, shame is distinguished from guilt and is experienced earlier.[5]

The dichotomy between guilt and shame has led psychologists such as Ruth Benedict to draw a distinction between outer-directed cultures which are controlled primarily by shame and inner-directed cultures which are shaped by guilt. This contrast has been applied to entire societies so that some have been called shame cultures (eastern) while others have been typed guilt cultures (western). However, this has shown to be somewhat of a false dichotomy because all cultures experience both guilt and shame.[6]

Insights from Anthropology

Anthropologists and sociologists see it a little differently. They tend to classify honour with shame rather than guilt. Secular anthropologists, beginning with British structuralists Julian Pitt-Rivers, and J.G. Peristiany, in the sixties, led the way in discerning the unity of a distinctive Mediterranean culture that focused around honour and shame. They conjured up a Mediterranean archetype, a paradigm of honour and shame. Jane Schneider (1971) led the way for American anthropologists whose work is reflected by Black-Mechaud, John Davis and others who have accepted the implicit assumption that the Mediterranean Basin represents

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[5]Helen M. Lynd, *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 204-207.

[6]David W. Augsberger, 120.

a cultural unity, a bounded entity where the honour/shame syndrome is diacritical to this coherance and differentiation.[7] Since then, diverse approaches to the subject have been undertaken; by David Gilmore (psychoanalytic), Michael Herzfeld (semiotic), Carol Delaney (cultural-particularist) and others. All of these dimensions reinforce the central importance of honour and shame to the Mediterranean value system.[8]

However, this is not to presume that the honour/shame phenomenon as experienced now in the Mediterranean region is identical to that of the first century, to the world of St Paul. Cultures change with the passing of time and the change of circumstances. Howard Kee has warned us of the danger of "parallelomania", that is when a superficial analysis of two institutions in two different cultures suggests they resemble each other. It is an easy step from that to the conclusion that they are parallel phenomena.[9] Nonetheless, where the way of life has changed little, cultures have a way of sticking and being passed down from one generation to another.[10] So from a cultural-anthropological dimension, contemporary models and traces from the Mediterranean can help to point us in the direction of our search in the first century. Given that human nature is basically the same by the very fact of its humanness and fallenness, there will be some universals true to all generations. It is permissible to understand these universals from the texts without being guilty of eisegesis. Bruce Malina has put it this way. "All human beings are entirely the same, entirely different, and somewhat the same and somewhat different at the same time".[11]

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[7]David Gilmore, *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed., David Gilmore, American Anthropological Association, (Washington, DC: nd), 2-3.

[8]Stanley Brandes, "Reflections on Honor and Shame in the Mediterranean", *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed., David Gilmore, American Anthropological Association, (Washington, DC: nd), 133.

[9]Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age,* (S.C.M., 1977), 9, quoted by Derek Tidball, *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament*, (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), 21.

[10]David W. Augsberger, 120.

[11]Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 7,23.

Bruce Malina drawing on the insights from cultural anthropology traces the outworking of the value of honour and shame in New Testament culture in relation to personality, possessions, kinship and purity. Although aware of the limitation of models, Malina uses models from various anthropologists who have studied Mediterranean society in order to understand various and broad areas of behavior. He invites us to validate the models to see if they do indeed explain, and to realize the spread of cultural difference that separates us from first-century Christians. A number of scholars have done this while others have drawn on Malina's insights to validate their work in one way or other. Some of these are A.J. Dewey[12] who examines the question of honour as a specific aspect of social status; Charles Muenchow acknowledges the work of Malina in his insightful discussion of Job 42:6.[13] David M. May,[14] reads Mark 3:20-35 with a sense of the social conditionedness of shame/honour setting in the life of Mark; Halvor Moxnes[15] traces the shame motif in Paul's letter to the Romans; Gregory Corrigan focuses on Paul's shame for the Gospel[16] and Anthony Phillips[17] skillfully shows how the shame motif is the clue to the purpose of the book of Ruth. We shall look again at Malina's model later in the essay.

Jerome Neyrey has studied Paul from the perspective of cultural anthropology and social psychology. He takes up just one aspect, that is the description of Paul's symbolic universe.[18] Neyrey confirms that the ancient Mediterranean culture was strongly structured around the pivotal

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[12]A.J. Dewey, "A Matter of Honor: A Social-Historical Analysis of 2 Corinthians 10", *HTR* 78, (1985), 209-217.

[13]Charles Muenchow, "Dust and Dirt in Job 42:6", *JBL*, 108:4, (1989) 602-603.

[14]David M. May, "Mark 3:20-35 from the Perspective of Shame/honor", *Biblical Theology Bulletin,* 17:3, (July, 1987).

[15]Halvor Moxnes, "Honor, Shame, and the Outside World in Paul's Letter to the Romans", *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism,* ed. Jacob Neusner and others, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

[16]Gregory Corrigan, "Paul's Shame for the Gospel", *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 16:1, (Jan, 1986), 23-27.

[17]Anthony Phillips, "The Book of Ruth - Deception and Shame", *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 37/1, (1986), 1-17.

[18]Jerome H. Neyrey, *Paul, in other Words*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 14.

values of honour and shame. Honour and shame, moreover, explain the highly agonistic nature of Paul's culture. Honour, name, and reputation were the primary values of an individual, but ones that could be lost when challenged.[19] Much remains to be done if we would truly understand Paul in terms of his specific Mediterranean, first-century, non-elite culture. For example, some work has been done on the rural milieu but much is needed on the pre-industrial city and the social relations that took place in such an environment.[20]

Insights from Sociology

To understand how shame is a pivotal value regulating relationships in society we need to draw upon the resources from the field of sociology. Francis Hsu has noted that our most important environment is the social environment.[21] Sociologists' primary interest is in groups and collectivities, in the normal pattern of behavior, in structural homologies.[22] What binds any society together is a vast set of common assumptions about human origin and destiny, about values, limits, responsibilities. Jonathan Smith[23] outlined four areas in which sociology illuminates the New Testament. Those areas are the description of social facts in social context, a construction of social history, an examination of social forces and social institutions, and an investigation of the creation of a Christian's world view.

Howard Clark Kee[24] has outlined the contribution of scholars to Biblical studies from the sociological perspective. The beginning of serious efforts at historical reconstruction of early Christianity through critical analysis of the sources began in the early nineteenth century. The prime mover was Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) who was interested in the factors that shaped the understanding of the early Christian writers. Then came Adolf von Harnack[25] (1851-1930) who, influenced by pre-

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[19]Jerome H. Neyrey, 222.

[20]Jerome H. Neyrey, 222.

[21]David W. Augsberger, 120.

[22]John H. Schutz, "Introduction", Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, (Edinburgh, T & T. Clark, 1982), 3.

[23]Jonathan Swift, "Chicago lecture", (1973), quoted by Derek Tidball, *Sociology of the New Testament*, (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), 14.

[24]Howard Clark Kee, 11-27.

[25]Howard Clark Kee, 14.

vailing liberal idealism, treated Jesus as a Jew of his time and culture and extracted from that socially conditioned setting the timeless essence of universal religion. By the middle of the twentieth century Rudolf Bultmann, influenced by the existential thought of Martin Heidegger, and Martin Dibelius, by means of form-critical analysis appealed to the social setting (*sitz-im-leben*) of the tradition as the clue to understanding its function in primitive Christianity. Interestingly, neither gave adequate attention to what the setting might be.[26]

In America, Shirley Jackson Case[27] urged that Christian origins be studied as social process rather than as literary or institutional history. Later, Max Weber, Peter Brown, E.R. Dodds, Abraham Malherbe, John Gager pursued this approach to the historical study of early Christianity. In Germany, the work of Gerd Theissen[28] has been monumental in his sociological analyses of Palestinian Christianity and of the Pauline churches. Theissen has demonstrated that one can expose the social structures that transcend individuals by the analysis of conflicts, events that yield basic attitudes, customs, and social assumptions.[29]

The research of the social sciences thus has it's contribution to make in understanding the world of St Paul, and the social matrix of the documents coming from first century. However, a danger lies in using the sociology research itself. Sociology tends to look for the common thread between movements. In so doing it is possible that it overstresses the similarities and underplays the differences between one movement and another.[30] Likewise, the risk of becoming reductionistic is always present. Both the tasks of historical reconstruction of Christian origins and the interpretation of the literature which emerged from that movement require a comprehensive approach.

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[26]Howard Clark Kee, 14-15.

[27]Howard Clark Kee, 17.

[28]Howard Clark Kee, 17

[29]Arthur J. Dewey, 120; see also John Schutz, "Introduction" to Gerd Theissen, 2.

[30]Derek Tidball, *Sociology of the New Testament*, (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), 19.

The Meaning of Shame

Shame is a multi-faceted word. "Shame has been one of the least known and understood dimensions of human experience and is paradoxically one of great significance"[31] Shame has a wide range of meaning. What is a shame to me may not be a shame to you, and there are linguistic difficulties. The Indo-European root *skem* or *sham* from which the English word is derived means "to hide". In English the word "shame" is synonymous with being "ashamed", and the German word (*scham*) combines the meaning of shame in one's own eyes with shame in the eyes of others. French and classical Greek each have two words for shame, connoting respectively its more private and its more public aspects. The Greek word αἰδώς as used by Homer made little distinction between private and public shame. Later, αἰσχύνη was differentiated from αἰδώς. Αἰσχύνη became associated with dishonour, with the emphasis on man-made codes. "Shameless" is a term of opprobrium. To be shameless is to be insensible to one's self; it is to be lacking in shame, unblushing, brazen, incorrigible.[32] Other cognate words include "shameful", "unashamed", "shamelessness". We shall look more closely at the Greek words used in the Corinthian correspondence later.

Definitions from Various Perspectives

Definitions vary according to the point of view of the one who is making it. Some definitions will be considered.

From Psychology

Shame becomes inevitably bound up with the process of identity formation which underlies man's striving for self, for valuing, and for meaning. The experience of shame is a fundamental sense of being defective as a person, accompanied by fear of exposure and self-protective rage. The shame-inducing process involves one significant person breaking the inter-personal bridge with another.[33]

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[31]Gershen Kaufman, "The Meaning of Shame: toward a self-Affirming identity", *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 21:6, (1974), 568.
[32]Helen M. Lynd, 24.
[33]Gershen Kaufman, 568.

Tomkins (1963) defined shame as the affect of indignity, or defeat, of transgression and of alienation. Shame is felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul.[34]

From Sociology

In shame cultures, individuals are controlled by public threats to personal reputation and honour. Public shame reflects not only on the individual but on his family and kin, and there are strong familial sanctions on deviations from communal norms. Shame as a mechanism of social control can only operate in small groups where visibility and intimacy are prominent, and is thus characteristic of village rather than urban existence.[35]

From Philosophy

From a philosophical sense, shame can be considered natural and good.

Fully faced, shame may become not something to be covered, but a positive experience of revelation.[36]

From Theology

Shame is our ineffaceable recollection of our estrangement from the origin; it is grief for this estrangement, and the powerless longing to return to unity with the origin; shame is more original than remorse.[37]

From Anthropology

Julian Pitt-Rivers, a pioneer in the honour-shame phenomenon in the Mediterranean area defines shame in the context of honour.[38] Honour is a sentiment, a manifestation of this sentiment in conduct, and the evalua-

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[34]Gershen Kaufman, 569.

[35]"Shame", Penguin Dictionary of Sociology.

[36]Gershen Kaufman, 569.

[37]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, cited by David W. Augsberger, 111.

[38]Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honor", *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, No. 6, 503-511.

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tion of this conduct by others, that is to say, reputation. Then follows a definition of dishonour (shame).

> Dishonour is the withdrawal of respect. To be put to shame is to be denied honour, and it follows that this can only be done to those who have some pretension to it. Honour and dishonour provide the currency in which people compete for reputation and the means whereby their appraisal of themselves can be validated and integrated into the social system, or rejected, thus obliging them to revise it.[39]

Some common strands in the above definitions include humiliating exposure before an audience, hiding, inter-relatedness, evaluation by significant others, the loss of personal honour, loss of face, physical sensations such as blushing, bowing the head, related to the private parts of the body. Shame is also a positive value in that it is a disposition to virtue.

A Closer Look at Bruce Malina's Model[40]

Bruce Malina draws upon anthropological models to understand the socio-cultural world of the New Testament. The purpose is to understand the why of their behaviour. Malina defines honour succinctly. It is the "value of a person in his or her own eyes (that is, one's claim to worth) *plus* that person's value in the eyes of his or her social group". Honour as a pivotal value in a society implies a chosen way of conduct undertaken with a view to and because of entitlement to certain social treatment in return.

Honour, Ascribed and Acquired

Ascribed honour derives from the fact of birth, family connections, or endowment by notable persons of power, by God, by the king and others of rank. Jesus is utterly shamed yet He is ascribed honour by the highest authority, God Himself.

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[39]Julian Pitt-Rivers, 504.
[40]This review of Malina's thesis is summarised from pages 25-50 of his book.

Acquired honour is obtained by excelling over others in the social interaction called challenge and response, which is a sort of social game in which contestants compete according to socially-defined rules. The game can only take place between equals and is played publicly. The game opens with a challenge, in a positive way by a word of praise, the giving of a gift, the request for help, or the promise of help; or in a negative way by an insult, a physical affront, a threat, and an attempt at fulfilling it. Then the receiver perceives the message according to the norms of judging. The third step is the reaction to the message, through acceptance of the message to a negative refusal to act. When his honour is impugned, a man of valor will attempt to restore it. When a counterchallenge is offered, the game goes on.

An Agonistic Culture

In the first-century Mediterranean world, every social interaction that takes place outside one's family or one's circle of friends is perceived as a challenge to honour. Thus gift-giving, invitations to dinner, buying and selling, arranging marriages are interactions that take place according to the patterns of challenge-response. To be unable to respond is to be shamed, or dishonoured. Because of this constant challenge and counterchallenge, anthropologists call it an agonistic culture. *"Agon"* is Greek for an athletic contest or a contest between equals.

Symbols of Honour

Honour is symbolized by blood, (blood relations, etc.) and a good name and prestige are the most valuable of assets. Attempts to damage reputations are constantly made, yet great stress is laid on face-to-face courtesy in terms of formalities. Other symbols include the head and the face. For example, honour is shown when the head is crowned, and dishonour shown when the head is slapped. Just as the head symbolizes a person's honour, so also does the head of a group symbol the honour of that group. In honour societies, actions are more important than words, and how one speaks is more important than what one says.

Individual and Collective Honour

Honour-shame can be individual or it can be collective. Collective honour is to be found in natural groupings such as the family and voluntary groupings such as the Pharisees. The heads of both natural and vol-

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untary groupings set the tone and embody the honour rating of the group. It is considered highly dishonourable and against the rules of honour to go to court. By going to court, he aggravates his dishonour by publicizing it. Moreover, satisfaction in court does not restore one's honour. Honour demands restoration or satisfaction by oneself or extended self (e.g. a family member taking revenge).

Male and Female Components

Honour has a male and a female component. Honour and shame become sexually specific. The male is to defend both corporate honour and any female honour embedded in the corporate honour, e.g. a male intrudes upon the family space and desecrates the daughter of the family. The family as a group is shamed. It is up to the men-folk to restore the honour of the family in some way. The female symbols the shame aspect of corporate honour, that positive sensitivity to the good repute of individuals and groups.

Malina's further insights include reference to the honourable man as one who avoids the appearance of presuming on others, lest such presumption be interpreted as trying to take something that belongs to another. He does not borrow so as not to upset the community balance. He never admits to initiating bonds or alliance with others. He never compliments his fellows, or expresses gratitude, for to do this is to be guilty of aggression. To express gratitude is to close off reciprocal relationship.

Weaknesses of Malina's Model

Malina's thesis is very helpful and insightful. However, there are some weaknesses. Firstly, his model presumes honour to be more emphatic. However, shame figures strongly in the first-century Mediterranean world and may be even more accentuated than honour.

Linguistically there is a fairly even weight in the both semantic fields of honour and shame in the New Testament documents. However, the use of the honour cognates in the New Testament documents δόξα, δοξάζω, ἐνδόξος, τιμή, τιμάω, τίμιος, ἔντιμος, and shame words αἰδώς, αἰσχρός, αἰσχύνη, ἀτιμία, ἀτιμάζω, αἰσχύνομαι, ἐπαισχύνομαι, καταισχύνομαι, καταισχύνω, ἀνεπαισχύντος, ἀσχημόσυνη, ἐντρόπη, ἐντρέπω have a wider and more diverse meaning than the confines of Malina's thesis.

Further, his model is inclined to be too rigid. His use of superlative adverbs, "always", "every", and "only" closes off the meaning and does not leave room for other possibilities. He stresses that the conflict for honour can only be between equals, and that honour is collective, in groups as well as individual. He has not mentioned the possibility of the competition for honour within the family itself, internal rather than externally controlled. Also, when fathers provoke their children to anger they shame their children. Paul tells them not to do this, so presumably they did (Ephesians 6:4). If the child retaliates, the father will be shamed because of his rebellious children. Presumably they did, for children had to be told to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1). The model has not made room for this dimension of shame.

Thirdly, his model is an hypothetical one. It is not based on the evidence of the New Testament itself, or other manuscripts from the period. He has not told us from where he got his ideas. His argument is inductive to be validated rather than deductive, that is created from a study of the texts themselves.

Fourthly, he invites us to validate the model by examining the New Testament. Such validations run the risk of being reductionistic, encouraging eisegesis rather than exegesis, pressing every conflict into the model, when it may not fit well at all. They may also be anachronistic and interpret the documents by contemporary understanding.

However, Malina's model is a very useful one and opens up an investigation of the culture and society of the world of the first century. It may be used with caution, but it is not the sum of all there is to say on the matter.

Shame in the First Century

Jewish Thinking

The background to Jewish thinking is to be found in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is rich in references to shame. There are over 150 occurrences of shame and its derivative words.[41] The semantic field of the shame references in the Septuagint include αἰσχύνη, the sense of disgrace, the feeling of shame which attends the performance of a dis-

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[41]David W. Augsberger, 138.

honourable deed; ἐντρόπη, a turning in upon oneself, causing a recoil from what is unseemly or impure; and ἀτιμία dishonour, disgrace.

For the Jew, the sense of shame is portrayed as the first effect of sin against God. The pursuit in life was to avoid shame and return to the pristine shamelessness of the pre-fall experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden. David Daube has observed the Book of Deuteronomy's affiliation with wisdom whose ideal was to find favour and avoid disgrace.[42]

The Wisdom literature both from the Proverbs and also from Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha, and the writings of Philo and Josephus abound in reference to acts of discretion to avoid shame or disgrace (e.g. Proverbs 5:14).

Begging was shameful and it was demoralizing to live on another man's food. Only when he has lost all sense of shame does he speak as if begging were sweet (Ecclesiasticus 40:28-30). Lies, crime, dishonesty, theft, were also causes for shame (Ecclesiasticus 41:17).

For Jews, "freedom is honourable and slavery a disgrace; no person of true worth is a slave."[43] Josephus gives advice in regard to "youths who scorn their parents and do not pay them the honour due."[44] "Not taking care of one's parents was a shameful thing and to dishonour ones parents was to dishonour also the Lord.[45] No shame was worse than the degradation of the body.[46] Brothel-keeping was forbidden, for all the world condemns this as shameful, upon brutishness and lust."[47] It was a shame to be found guilty of fornication by one's parents (Ecclesiasticus 41:17) and to eye another man's wife, or meddle with his slave-girl (Ecclesiasticus 41:21-22). A daughter was a secret anxiety to her father. His fears were that she would not marry, may lose her husband's love, may be seduced and become pregnant in her father's house, may misbehave, may be barren. A headstrong daughter may give your enemies cause to gloat, making you the talk of the town and a byword among the people,

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[42]David Daube, 356.

[43]Philo, *quod omnis probus, 136*, cited by F. Gerald Downing, *Strangely Familiar*, (Manchester: 1985), 30.

[44]*Antiquities*, 260, Gerald Downing, 59.

[45]Philo, *de decal*, 118 ff, Gerald Downing, 58.

[46]Josephus, "Antiquities", IV, 206, Gerald Downing, 61.

[47]"Dio Chrysostom 7", 133, Gerald Downing, 66.

and shaming you in the eyes of the world. It is the woman who brings shame and disgrace (Ecclesiasticus 41:9-14).

To be beaten by one's enemies was indeed shameful and the frequent prayer of the psalmist was "do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me" (Psalm 25:2).

The most important source of shame is to shun God's wisdom (Proverbs 3:35) and devotion to false idols. The prophets warn that in the long run trusting idols leads to shame (Isaiah 42:17; 44:9-11; Hosea 4:7,19; 10:6). Ezekiel and Jeremiah warn that the worst shame of all is to fall under God's judgment (Ezek. 5:14-15; 7:18; Jeremiah 2:14-19,36; 12:13).[48]

Greco-Roman Thinking

There is abundant reference to what constitutes shame and disgrace in the writings of the philosophers. In Homer, αἰδώς is what one felt when confronted with the things nature tells one to revere and not violate such as shame related to sexual matters. αἰσχύνη was differentiated from αἰδώς and was associated with dishonour with the emphasis on man-made codes.[49] It was to have a sense of modesty in all things. Friedrich (1973) and Redfeld (1975:160-223) discuss Homeric honour in terms of integrity and purity.[50] "That honour can be more important than life itself is pointed out by Tacitus, who wrote in *Agricola* (ch.33) 'an honourable death would be better than a disgraceful attempt to save our lives'".[51]

Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics, Book 2, chapter 7 points out that honour and dishonour are bound up with the necessity of intermediate means in all behaviours. To incur passions is to be shameful and shame is not a virtue. The bashful man is ashamed of everything; while he who is not ashamed of anything at all is shameless.[52] Epictetus taught that to commit adultery with the neighbour's wife was to bring disgrace

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[48]Tom Goodhue, "Shame", *Quarterly Review*, 4/2 (1984), 57-65.

[49]Helen M. Lynd, 25.

[50]Anton Blok, "Rams and Billy-Goats: A Key to the Mediterranean Code of Honour", *Man* 16, (1981), footnote 9, p. 437.

[51]Anton Blok, footnote 14, p. 438.

[52]Robert Hutchins, (ed.), Great Books of the Western World, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Inc., (London: William Benton, nd,) 1108-9.

not only upon the man of modesty, but on the whole neighbourhood, and the community.[53]

Αἰσχύνη is also a sense of disgrace or ignominy which comes to someone. Ample evidence of this meaning in seen in the writings of Diodorus, (S.2, 23, 2); Appian, Samn.4:11; in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus (271, 78) and in the Elephantine Papyri.[54] Sexual matters were integrally related to the shame-honour matrix in the ancient world. Both Jews and Greeks associated women with shame.   To be a woman was to be ashamed.   The woman was but the receptacle for the regenerative seed that comes from males.   In Aischylus' drama *The Eumenides*, it is stated that "the mother is not the parent of that which is called her child, but only the nurse of the new planted seed."[55] It is the male that contributes the generative and formal principle of life. This was the opinion of Aristotle.[56] Hence the female reproductive organs were inward and hidden, whereas the male reproductive organ was his glory. Both for the Greco-Romans and for the Jews, castration and the crushing of the testicles were shameful. At puberty, a woman is under the protection of her father and brothers until transferred to her husband upon marriage. Her long hair was symbolic of the entanglements by which men are ensnared and therefore must be covered. In Tarsus, all women went veiled.[57] Male honour is vulnerable through women.   A man is shamed by an adulterous woman.

It is clear that the world of the first century included the values of honour and shame which controlled much of the life of an individual and of society.

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[53]Epictetus, "Discourses", Book II, Chapter 4, *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, 142.

[54]Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature,* (trans.) William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [2]1979), 25.

[55]Carol Delaney, "Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame", *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean,* David Gilmore, (ed.), (Washington, DC; American Anthropological Association, nd.) footnote 6, 47.

[56]Carol Delaney, footnote 5, 46.

[57]Dio, Discourse 33:48, Gerald Downing, 68.

The Historical Background of 1 and 2 Corinthians

The City of Corinth

Situated at the southern end of Greece, Corinth was a new city. The original Greek city had been destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC and had laid waste for a hundred years before being re-established by Julius Caesar in 44 BC. The Roman colony became the seat of provincial government under the direction of a pro-consul answerable to the Senate of Rome. As a Roman colony, Corinth took on Roman customs and political structures.

The city prospered by its commerce, its banking, bronze artistry, and government bureaucracy. There were all kinds of cottage industries including leather working and tent-making. There were many shops and markets. Most of the people had their roots elsewhere. They had come from the four corners of the empire. No doubt when they reached the city they looked for their own kind and congregated according to their language groups, and their socio-economic levels. A great number were there on business. Those of the same trade banded together into guilds or *collegia*. It is likely that Aquila belonged to such a group, and this would have provided contacts for Paul's ministry and ideas for a *koinonia* beyond the individual household.[58] Some were rich, and as much as two-thirds of its estimated population of 600,000 were slaves.[59] The rich had access to the courts, the slaves had none. The poor were often protected by a patron in a patron-client relationship. According to Strabo, the majority of the new settlers were freedmen. Public celebration of marriages and other events were well catered for by special dining areas attached to the temples such as that of Asclepius. Other religions also had their sanctuaries there. The ruins of temples dedicated to Hera Acraea, Aethena, Fortune, Tyche, Apollo, Aphrodite, Isis, Asclepius, Poseidon, and Artemis, have been located there indicating the multi-cultural, multi-religious, and pluralistic nature of the city.[60]

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[58]Vincent Branick, *The Housechurch in Paul's Theology of Church*, Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament, (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989), 61.

[59]Vincent Branick, 58.

[60]Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 147-158.

Latin predominated as the language of inscriptions. Nonetheless the predominant Greek culture was to be seen in its Greek people, the use of Greek as the *lingua franca*, and in many religious shrines and temples especially the worship of Aphrodite, in the theatre and sports.[61] Social attitudes were seen in the appreciation of rhetorical speakers, love of philosophy, and love of sport. The Isthmian games were held every two years and attracted visitors from all over the Mediterranean world. Social class was based on birth rather than wealth. Patron-client, and friendship relationships were sustained by mutual obligation.

Some Jews had congregated there and a broken lintel with the crude inscription "synagogue of the Hebrew," was found.[62] Philo reminds us that Corinth had been a prominent city in the Jewish Diaspora.[63] Paul begins his ministry in the synagogue (Acts 18:4) and both Jews and Greeks were in attendance. When Paul experienced opposition, he moved next-door into the house of Titius Justus who was a "God-fearer" a "worshipper of God". Later, Crispus, the official of the synagogue and his household became believers (Acts 18:1-17). Paul's letters to the church there have about 30 Old Testament quotations from 11 different books including Isaiah, Psalms, Deuteronomy, Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Zechariah, Job, Jeremiah, Hosea, Malachi. About 25 are in substantial agreement with the LXX. Other verses more resemble the Hebrew form.[64] This would indicate that it is likely the early church had a distinctive Jewish background.

Paul in His Society

Troeltsch's assessment of Paul as an "unliterary person who was spiritually gifted and rose out of his class"[65] cannot be sustained in view of the Scriptural evidence. Paul was born in a Greco-Roman city of Tarsus, educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, and socialised as a Pharisaic Jew. As a Jewish Rabbi, he was at home in the synagogue among teach-

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[61]Gordon D. Fee, 1-4.

[62]Jerome Murphy O'Connor, 153.

[63]Barbara Ellen Bowe, *A Church in Crisis*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 23, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 9.

[64]Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1914), lii-liv.

[65]Derek Tidball, 92.

ers of the Law. He was well-versed in the Scriptures and oral tradition of the scribes. At the same time, it is likely that he received a Greek education at Tarsus that included training in rhetoric, and knowledge of Greek philosophy and poetry. His style of argumentation, use of metaphor, quotation of Greek poets and so on would indicate this. To cap it all off, Paul enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizenship, which put him among the social elite of the empire. Paul therefore belongs very much to the pluralistic world of his day. As such, a proper sense of shame was interwoven in his life, both from the Jewish standpoint and also of the Greco-Roman world around him. He is aware of challenges to his honour. He knows how to respond to these challenges.

Paul in Corinth

It is generally agreed that the church in Corinth was founded by Paul in A.D. 50-51 (1 Cor 4:15; 2:1-5; Acts 18:1-11). While in Corinth, he supported himself by manual labour (1 Corinthians 9:3-19) as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3) and worker in leather. While there, his first converts were the household of Stephanus (1 Cor 16:15) whom he baptised followed by Gaius, and Crispus. His preaching of the Gospel brought a church into being from the diverse strata of people in the city. His preaching also brought much opposition from the Jews which culminated in his being brought before the tribunal of the Proconsul Gallio (Acts 18:12-17). The charges could not be sustained, and after a while Paul left the brothers and set sail for Syria.

The Christian Community in Corinth

Gerd Theissen assesses the size of the Christian community in Corinth to be about 100 persons at the time of Paul. He identifies 17 persons, nine of whom belong to the upper classes, based on the criteria of houses, travel, and services rendered. He thus implies a high social status. Half the persons connected with the Corinthian church had Latin names, the other half, Greek.[66]

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[66]Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians; The Social World of the Apostle Paul,* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1983), 48.

An inscription bearing the name of Erastus would indicate that he was a man of some wealth. This Erastus has been identified with one of Paul's converts in Romans 16:23 who Paul called the treasurer of the city. Erastus is the only person whose status is mentioned. Prisca and Aquila, tent-makers or leather-workers (Acts 18:3), were probably Christians already in Corinth before Paul reached there (Acts 18:3. Later, they are responsible for house churches in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) and Rome (Rom 16:3). After Paul left Corinth, their house was a place of Christian instruction, at least for Apollos (Acts 18:26). Prisca is usually named before her husband, and may indicate a higher social status.

Another house-holder was Titius Justus whose house next-door to the synagogue became the meeting place for Paul after he left the synagogue. Then there was Gaius. Paul sends greetings to the Christians in Rome from Gaius and Erastus. At that time Gaius is Paul's host and that of the whole church (Rom 16:23).

Nine kilometers away, the nearby town of Cenchreae had a Christian community directed by Phoebe (Romans 16:2). Phoebe is described as a benefactor (*prostatis*) of many and also for Paul. *Prostatis* is often translated as "patron", and Phoebe may have been a wealthy patron of Paul, someone who has put her property at the service of Paul and many others. Her ability to make the long journey to Rome shows an economic status consistent with the picture of her as a patron of the church.[67]

Contrary to Troeltsch, Deissman, and Marxists Engel and Kautsky, a close study of the Christian community at Corinth makes clear that the church were not just those "from below" who rose to conquer classical society as an internal proletariat as has been the orthodox view of the beginnings of Christianity cultivated alike by ecclesiastical and Marxist historians.[68] The social stratification of this community as analysed by Theissen and Meeks[69] seemed to be a very diverse group, mainly consisting of middle class persons. They included neither "the landed aristocrats, senators and decurions nor the destitute poor". The community was made up of slaves, free artisans and traders, people of varying de-

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[67]Vincent Branick, 66.

[68]E.A. Judge, *The Conversion of Rome, Ancient Sources of Modern Social Tensions*, (Sydney: The Macquarie Ancient History Association, 1, 1978). See also Derek Tidball, 92.

[69]Gerd Theissen, 69-119; Wayne Meeks, 51-73.

grees of wealth, Jews and Gentiles.[70] This seems to be underlined by the way Paul appeals to them for the Jerusalem collection (1 Cor 16:1-4). On the first day of every week, they are to put aside and save whatever extra they earn, so that collections need not be taken when Paul comes (1 Cor 16:2). This directive would seem to be more appropriate to those with regular income. That they are people with money seems to be supported too by the fact that Paul seems to have offended some of them by earning his own living and not accepting their support (1 Cor 9:12-15; 2 Cor 11:7-12; 12:13) as was the usual practice for the wandering philosophers. As pointed out by Vincent Branick[71] this attitude sounds like a group which wants to display its resources and acquire the power that comes from patronage. Going to court also needed sufficient funds for a good lawyer.

The basic unit of society was the household with the father as the *pater familias*. Both the Greeks and Romans placed much importance on the household system. Under Augustus, the household reflected in microcosm what the Empire was in macrocosm. The household was bound together under the authority of a senior male. Under him was an hierarchy of authority beginning with the eldest son. Included were members of the immediate family, friends, clients, and slaves. The solidarity of the household was expressed in a common religion, which marked off the family boundary from others who worshipped different gods. For any one member to choose another god was to bring shame on the whole family. It was important then to convert the household head to avoid bringing shame on the family. It is likely that Crispus, Gaius, and Stefanus who were the few baptized by Paul were household heads (1 Cor 1:14-16) and became patrons and leaders of the church.[72]

The House Church in Corinth

We are indebted particularly to the recent studies of Wayne Meeks and Robert Banks for the illumination they have shed on the details of house churches where Paul's converts assembled. The most likely place of assembly was in the dining room and the atrium just outside which probably measured no more than 50 square metres, reduced by the area taken up by furniture. No more than 40-50 people could meet comforta-

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[70]Wayne Meeks, 73.
[71]Vincent Branick, 59.
[72]Derek Tidball, 79-81.

bly. Some would be able to recline at ease in the triclinium while the rest had to stand or sit in the atrium.[73] Therefore as the number of believers grew, a network of house churches developed in a city. Robert Banks suggests that Paul's allusion to "the whole church" implies that smaller groups existed in the city.[74] Although there was a relatedness to each other so that Paul sends only one letter for all groups, these smaller groups would be prone to a competitiveness which would lead to divisiveness.

Paul in the Corinthian Correspondence

It is likely that Paul wrote four letters to the Corinthian church and received at least one letter from them. Also there were reports back and forth.[75]

In A.D. 55, three years after Paul's visit, while on his second missionary journey, Paul writes directing them not to associate with those who call themselves "brother" and are guilty of immorality, greed, or idolatry (1 Cor 5:9). This first letter has been lost. Some time later, news came from Chloe's people (1 Cor 1:11) that there were serious divisions in the church. Also Paul received a letter from them probably in reply to the letter he had previously sent (1 Cor 7:1). The letter sought his guidance on various matters such as marriage and related issues, food sacrificed to idols, spiritual gifts and the relief fund. The bearers of the letter probably told him more of the alarming practices in the church, the illicit sexual relations (chapter 5), the taking of another before pagan courts (6:1-11), their misuse of the Lord's supper (11:17-34) and certain disagreements over the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (15:12-57). Paul deals with these problems in 1 Corinthians which he writes from Ephesus during his last year in that city.

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[73]Jerome Murphy O'Connor, 157.

[74]Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, (Homebush West: Anzea, 1981), 38.

[75]The most widely held position suggests four letters from Paul; one that was lost and three found in the canonical lists. Some commentators see two sections in 2 Corinthians. Chapters 10-13 represent a harsh letter coinciding with the "painful visit" (2 Cor 2:1-11) while chapters 1-9 are filled with words of reconciliation.

Later Paul writes another "tearful letter" (2 Cor 2:3-4:9; 7:8-12), and, the situation in Corinth changed for the worse. The church opposed him in favour of "superlative" apostles[76] (2 Cor 11:5). Paul sends Titus down as a middle man to straighten things out and to organise the Jerusalem collection. Titus returns to Paul who has now moved on to Macedonia and assures him that all is well (2 Cor 7:6, 13). With a great sigh of relief, Paul writes 2 Corinthians in which Paul reveals himself and defends his apostleship. He urges them to get on with the collection and he intends himself to come down to collect it with some brothers from Macedonia (2 Cor 12:14, 13:1).

The Shame Motif in the Corinthian Correspondence[77]

The pursuit of a shame background in Corinthians has more to do with the context than the contents. A sense of shame, disgrace and embarrassment permeates the whole of the Corinthian correspondence. A range of words, metaphors, concepts, events, depict the shame aspect. Words from the αἰσχύνη word group occur 10 times; those from the ἀτιμία word group 6 times; those from the ἐντροπή group 3 times; from ἀσχημόσυνη 3 times; and others. The semantic field of shame terminology can be grouped around the following words.

The Semantic Field

Αἰσχύνη; shame, disgrace, the cause or source of shame, those things which shame conceals; it is associated with dishonour and the emphasis is on man-made codes.

Αἰσχυνόμαι; αἰσχυθήσομαι; always used in the passive voice, the feeling of shame that arises from something that has been done, to be disappointed in a hope; 2 Cor. 10:8. Paul uses this passive word of himself.

Καταισχύνω; καταισχύνει; καταισχύνετε; καταισχυνθῇ; καταισχυνθῶμεν; to cause someone to be much ashamed; to humiliate, to disgrace, to be put to shame; to put to the blush; with κατα an inten-

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[76]Just who the superlative apostles were is one of the unsolved problems of Biblical research.

[77]See the Bibliography for the various dictionaries and lexicons that have been used in the search for definitions and meanings.

sive or perfective form of αἰσχυνω (1 Cor 1:27; 11:4,5; 11:22; 2 Cor. 7:14; 9:4). This intensive form is used more than the lesser term αἰσχύνω. Ἐπαισκύνω does not occur at all. This word group is used as verbs. When active, the subjects are God (1:27); a man and a woman (11:4,5); the richer members of the church (11:22); When passive Paul, the Macedonians, and the Corinthians are the ones who are humiliated (2 Cor 7:14; 9:4).

Αἰσχρόν; opposed to καλόν; indecorous, indecent, dishonourable, vile, base; 1 Cor 11:6; 14:35. In both verses, this strong word applies to women.

Ἀσχρημοσύνη; ἀσχρημονεῖν; ἀσχήμονα; ἀσχρημονεῖ; indecorous, indecent, naked; to behave in an uncomely manner open to censure. (1 Cor 7:36, 12:23, 13:5). Applied to conduct of a man towards a woman (7:36); to the private parts of the body (12:23); love does not act in this way (13:5).

Ἄτιμος; ἀτιμοτέρα; ἀτιμία; ἀτιμίαν unhonoured; without honour; (1 Cor 4:10; 11:14; 12:23; 15:43; 2 Cor 6:8; 11:21). The words describe the state of Paul (4:10, 2 Cor. 6:8); a man (11:14); members of the body (12:23); the dead body (15:43). This word is not applied to women. These words are used as adjectives or nouns.

Δειγματίζω; This is a rare word meaning to exhibit, make public, bring to public notice. It has this sense in 1 Cor 4:9 where ἀπέδειχεν refers to the spectacle of the apostles as those being condemned to death.

Εντροπε; ἐντρέπω; ἐντρέπων; ἐντρόπεν; a composite word from εν + τρεπω lit. to turn one upon himself and so produce a feeling of shame, a wholesome shame which involves a change of conduct; to put to shame; to bring to reflection; in the passive, to be ashamed; as a noun, shame that is a recoil from what is unseemly or vile, a feeling of embarrassment resulting from what one has done or failed to do; embarrassment. (1 Cor 4:14; 6:5; 15:34). These words differ from αἰσχύνη and αἰσχύνομαι in seeming to focus upon the embarrassment which is involved in the feeling of shame. Paul is the subject in each case. In 4:14, he does not wish to shame, but in 6:5 and 15:34, this is the purpose of what he is saying. His initial cordial approach turns to rebuke when he thinks of their sins of taking one another to court and eating and drinking gluttonously.

Ταπεινόω; ταπεινώσει; metaphorically used in a good sense meaning to humble; In 2 Cor 7:6 God comforts the humble, the downcast (ταπεινούς). It can also mean to humiliate, to put to shame. In 2 Cor 11:7, Paul humbles himself while in 12:21, it is God who will humble Paul if when he comes to Corinth on his next visit, he finds those who are still unrepentant.

Θέατρον a public display; a spectacle implying shame in 1 Cor 4:9, where it applies to the apostles doomed to death. A similar meaning is conveyed metaphorically by θριαμβεύοντι leading in triumph in 2 Cor 2:14.[78] Both Scott Hafemann and Peter Marshall pick up the metaphor of social shame implied in this word. Hafemann concludes that the metaphor θριαμβεύοντι applies to Paul as a conquered slave of Christ who is led to death. Marshall concludes in a more general way that the metaphor refers to the shame Paul felt because of his enmity with the Corinthians.

Other Related Words

Shame (ἀτιμία) is contrasted with glory (δόξα), which usually has to do with God rather than man. δοξα words occur more than 22 times. There are more shame-related words than there are glory words. These include weak (ἀσθένεια) more than 26 times and permeating the whole letter, 1:25, 2:3, 8:7, 9:22, 2 Cor 12:9-1, 13:4, 13:9; foolish (μωρία) 1:20,23; 2:14; perishing 1:18, 10:9-10, 2 Cor 4:9; lowly, despised, things that are not, abolish, fear, trembling, labour, naked, reviled, off-scouring, refuse, fornicators, failure, wronged, deprived, adulterers, prostitutes, homosexuals, slave, falls, denounced, uncovered, to be shorn, shaven, feeble, smell of death, mad, out of mind, and others.

Contrasted with these and glory/honour related are wisdom and wise σόφος (10 times) and σοφία (16 times) each time with a slightly different shade of meaning. Also strong (ἰσχυρός), influential, noble, excellence, rich, held in honour, receiving the prize, standing firm, praise, play the man, authority and others.

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[78]Scott Hafemann, *Suffering and the Spirit, An Exegetical Study of II Cor.2:14-3:3 within the Context of the Corinthian Correspondence*, [Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986], 39, and Peter Marshall, "A Metaphor of Social Shame: 'ΨΡΙΑΜΒΕΥΕΙΝ' in 2 Cor. 2:14", *Novum Testamentum* XXV, 4, (1983), 317.

Thus by the prevalence of specific words that are spread out through the text, it can be seen that the shame motif is important and needs to be examined in order to comprehend more fully the meaning in social context. Not only is this motif carried by the specific vocabulary but with the help of sociological and anthropological research, fresh light is thrown onto the behavioral problems Paul addresses.

The Shameful Situations in Corinth and
Paul's Radical Response in the First
Letter to the Corinthians

Divisions in the Church (1 Cor 1-4)

Since Paul left the city of Corinth, in A.D. 51, three years had elapsed before his correspondence with them was written. Not that he had forgotten them, as he prayed for them. No doubt, he would pray that they would continue in his teaching and so discover their new identity in Christ Jesus. However there were problems in establishing the community. They were faced with establishing a life together, of agreeing to common beliefs and values, of forming a collective conscience. They had become a sub-culture within the wider society. They continued to share in the norms of the larger society but formed some norms of their own. They needed to learn not only how to relate to each other, but how to relate to society around them which came to despise them. Instead of forging a unity, the church was marked by a contentiousness among its various members. The sources of this contentiousness were different apostolic allegiances (1 Cor 1:10-13), conflicting theological positions (1 Cor 1:18-31), different views of freedom and perfection (1 Cor 8:7-13), different socio-economic positions (1 Cor 1:10-13), and conflicting claims to superiority on the basis of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12).[79] The implication of their contentiousness was to divide the body of Christ into many pieces or to apportion out Christ to one of the many groups.[80]

Their divisions are not just personal preferences but they had ramifications for the Gospel. Fee suggests that they were 'modifying the gospel

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[79]Barbara Ellen Bowe, 11.

[80]Gordon D. Fee contra: Leon Morris concludes that the more natural meaning is that Christ is apportioned out as only one among many which is absurd.

towards Hellenism'[81] and that their actions were akin to a return to their pagan ways (6:9-11; 8:7; 12:1-3). They were beginning to think of their faith in terms of the teaching of the wandering *sophists*. Bruce Winter favours the idea that the Sophistic movement was at the back of the divisions.[82] The Sophists were popular travelling lecturers. They were eloquent teachers of Wisdom. The desire for good meat was replaced by the entertainment of the Sophists skill. Paul rebukes and appeals to the Corinthians to come back to centre, to realise the profundity and power of the Gospel does not consist of this world's wisdom. It is not clever verbal tricks that will save people but only the power of the Gospel, the truth of God applied to an honest conscience. Their behaviour of favouring one teacher over against another was worldly, and in the pattern of their former competition for honour and recognition.

We can see the honour/shame culture displayed in these divisions. Perpetuating such divisions is to return to the agonistic world around them (1 Cor 3:3). As believers in Christ they have been lifted above and they are called to live supra-culturally. Those who think they are wise need to choose the way of foolishness for they belong to Christ (1 Cor 3:18-23).

Sexual Immorality (1 Cor 5)

The city of Corinth was famed for its sexual laxity. The reputation of the city was so well-known that a term to "Corinthianize" meant to live in sexual freedom from the restraints of normal decency. Most of the pagan temples had their prostitutes to serve their devotees. Likewise the prevailing philosophy advocated freedom.

The Cynic, Diogenes, declared that marriage, like all social institutions, was artificial, invented only by society, and therefore dangerous because it was contrary to nature. The life lived according to nature demanded the abandonment of marriage. The Stoic philosopher, Zeno, held that community of wives was itself a law of nature which had been suppressed by civilization imposing monogamous limits on it. However,

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[81]Gordon D. Fee, 10.

[82]Bruce Winter, *lecture notes*, (Singapore: Trinity College, 1986).

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only the wise, Zeno thought, were capable of realizing in practice the community of wives.[83]

We are not sure exactly what the sexual problem was that outraged Paul, except that it has to do with a man and his father's wife. Since there were those in Corinth who were puffing themselves up because of their claim to wisdom, and were wrongly understanding their freedom in Christ, it is possible that this philosophy lay behind this man's sin. However, Paul called to witness the pagans themselves to whom this was a gross aberration. Barrett cites Lightfoot who quotes the Latin writers, Cicero and Gaius.[84] Gaius writes, "Neither can I marry her who has aforetime been my mother-in-law or step-mother, or daughter-in-law or step-daughter".[85] Cicero likewise condemns the practice of marriage of a woman with her son-in-law: "Oh! to think of the woman's sin, unbelievable, unheard of in all experience save for this single instance!"[86]

If such an action was a shameful thing in the eyes of the world, how much more in the community of Christ's followers. Paul's outrage calls for a denouncement in the strongest terms. They are to put the person outside, typified as the world under Satan's control. To commit someone to Satan was to strip them of all claims to status. Life in the new community calls for holy living, and all former sexual license must be put away.

Going to Court (1 Cor 6)[87]

It is considered highly dishonourable and against the rules of honour to go to court and seek legal justice from one's equal. In the case of the Corinthians this was one's fellow believer (1 Cor 6:1). The going to court only serves to aggravate the dishonour by publicizing it. Furthermore legal satisfaction failed to restore one's honour because it demonstrated vulnerability, allowed others to gloat over your predicament, and

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[83]E.A. Judge, "St Paul as a Radical Critic of Society", *Interchange: Papers on Biblical and Current Questions* 16, (1974), 191-203.

[84]C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 121.

[85]Gordon D. Fee, footnote 24, 201.

[86]Gordon D. Fee, footnote 24, 201.

[87]The general thought of the following paragraph is taken from Bruce Malina, 39.

involved asking for an apology from another which in itself is dishonouring. If this was the case in society, how much more it is out of place in the new society.

Paul, aware of society's norms acknowledges that it is already a defeat for them (1 Cor 6:7). Paul lays down the theological reason for them not to do this. It is that they the saints will judge the world (6:2-3). His paranesis is to urge them rather, to be willing to be wronged and to be defrauded by another. A radical change in their attitude towards their brother is needed, a complete reversal of what they had been used to.

Problems concerning Marriage (1 Cor 7)

In chapter 7, Paul begins to answer the questions they wrote about. The difficulties of interpreting this chapter are left to the commentators, grammarians, and lexicographers. Attention is drawn to only a few items in the chapter that are linked with the shame/honour values in society at large. For the Jew it was obligatory to be married. For a Rabbi to be unmarried was most rare. Opinions differ as to whether Paul was ever married, or if he was a widower. He seems to be not married at the time of writing. However, he was not an ascetic. Asceticism has been seen to be behind verse 1 and this may be so if the Christians were competing against one another in terms of their degree of spirituality (πνευ—ματικός). If it was considered more "spiritual" to abstain from sexual relations, and so gain ascendancy over those less spiritual, then Paul gives no ground for boasting. The only concession he allows for remaining in one's state of singleness is so that one may be free to do the work of the Lord. Paul refrains from saying anything to indicate that there is something morally higher about celibacy.[88]

Neither is his answer to their questions solely for the future. Morris[89] disagrees with Barclay who said that "Paul's whole outlook was dominated by the fact that he expected the Second Coming of Christ immediately and at any moment"[90]. Paul's answer relates to the present circumstances and are to be acted upon in the here and now.

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[88]Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians, An Introduction and Commentary*, (London: The Tyndale Press, [R]1966),123.

[89]Leon Morris, 116.

[90]William Barclay, *Letters to Corinthians*, The Daily Study Bible, (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, Rl975),77.

That honour is all male and shame is all female, that only the husband has the authority in the marriage is repudiated by Paul who addressed equally both men and women who have conjugal rights and responsibilities in the marriage. The equalisation of men and women in marriage was not something new. The Roman Stoic Musonius Rufus maintained that women have the same reasoning as men, and they should have the same education in philosophy.[91] However, Rufus's view was not to last, and the doctrines of Greek humanism that women are by nature inferior to men, and that the husband owns the wife are expressed by Seneca who sees women as the corrupters of men.[92] Cato the Elder stated that the husband's power has no limit and he can do with his wife what he chooses.[93] In contrast, Paul in no way deprecated women and both husband and wife are equally addressed.

That women were a commodity to be traded in the competition for honour was an attitude that had to change radically in the new community. As for seeking any change of status by way of marriage, Paul 's advice is "Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called" (1 Cor 7:20). Fee,[94] identifies this as the controlling motif, the guiding principle of Paul's answer. God's call to be in Christ (1:9) transcends their social setting, and they are called to live in this new dimension and not under the fashion of the world (7:31) which is passing away.

Women in the Church (1 Cor 11:5; 1 Cor 14:34-36)

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the seeming contradiction between 1 Cor 11:5 where woman as well as men are praying and prophesying in church and 1 Cor 14:34-36 where in the strongest language (αἰσχρόν) women are to keep silent in churches. Suffice it to say that what is obvious is that men and women are in church together and both sexes are active in the worship together. This was quite a radical departure from the culture around them.

In Jewish synagogues, women were isolated from men. According to the Talmud it was a shame for a woman to let her voice be heard among men, even in the street. Also a woman who did not cover her

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[91]E.A. Judge, "St Paul as a Radical Critic of Society", 201.

[92]E.A. Judge, "St Paul as a Radical Critic of Society", 201.

[93]Howard Clark Kee, 89.

[94]Gordon W. Fee, 268.

head was liable to be shorn, which was the greatest shame possible for a Jewish woman. In the mystery cults, women's participation was limited. For example in the cult of Isis, a woman's role was subsidiary and their participation was limited.[95] Paul's appreciation of his fellow-workers, for example Phoebe (Rom 16:1), and other women who had a church-planting role to play, for example Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), shows that women had an important part to play in the new community.[96] Robin Scroggs maintains that in the early church women were accepted as equals with men.[97] The former boundaries were redrawn to include the liberation of women in the church. However, as the new community had to exist within the context of the surrounding society, the decorum of hair-styles consistent with gender role should be adhered to. To break with these roles will bring shame and disorder. Verses 34-39 function as an inclusio bracketed by verse 33 "for God is a God not of disorder but of peace" and verse 40 "but all things should be done decently and in order". The issue is order and not theology.

Public Dining - Food Offered to Idols and the
Lord's Supper (1 Cor 8; 1 Cor 11:17-34)

Here are two occasions when the Christians are outside of their own homes and engaged in eating. Both of the feasts are in the context of religious observance. In the first instance, the food has been offered to idols (1 Corinthians, chapter 8). The question is, may a Christian eat in the temple of an idol, presumably in the dining rooms attached where the social functions, for example the celebration of a birth or marriage would be held? Sacrificial meat would have been part of the meal.[98] Surprisingly Paul says "Yes". There was no prohibition on joining one's friends for their social celebrations. To refuse their invitation would have brought shame on the one inviting. However, there is a condition. Paul requires of them, that is to "take care that this liberty...does not become a stumbling block to the weak" (1 Cor 8:9). Their behaviour is conditioned by the weaker brother. If previously they used the weak as a stepping-stone to self-glory it was to be so no more.

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[95]Howard Clark Kee, 91, and Derek Tidball, 85.

[96]Derek Tidball, 85.

[97]Robin Scroggs, "Women in the New Testament", *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplement, Nashville: Abingdon, 1972, 966-967.

[98]Jerome Murphy O'Connor, 156.

Likewise in the feast of the Lord's Supper (11:17-26), those who had nothing were humiliated by the opulence of the rich (11:22). The new ceremony was not conditioned by the previous style of conducting a feast, but it was something completely new. It was something Paul had been handed down from the Lord either by tradition or through direct revelation. Either way, it was not Paul's idea, and he could not boast of being the originator of it. The meal was to go on being celebrated regularly until the Lord comes back from heaven (1 Cor 11:26). All ethical instruction is in this context. The future dimension is ever present throughout the letters. All injunctions to conform and yet not to conform are interpreted in the tension of the now and not yet, of the present and the coming age. The value-system of this world is under condemnation and as such Christians, if they are to survive beyond the judgment are called to live differently. How then must they live?

Paul's Answer (1 Cor 12-14)

Paul's answer to the dilemma of living in the world and yet not of the world is simple and profound. Paul explains the theological base for his answer in chapter 12. The new community called out from many strata of society have become one body. The powerful metaphor of the human body conveys the truth of unity in diversity. This ideal can only be achieved by the quality of love. Paul's dominant ethic is "love-patriarchalism" (*liebespatriarchalismus*).[99] By that Theissen means that the value-system of the world around the Christian community with its emphasis on status, competition for honour and avoidance of shame has to be acknowledged. However, the Christian community is one ruled by loving relationships and mutual submission.

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[99]Theissen adapts this term from Troeltsch's "patriarchalism". By this term Troeltsch conveys the basic idea of willing acceptance of given inequalities and of making them fruitful for the ethical values of personal relationships. Theissen adds "love" which reduces friction within the differentiated structure. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, Edinburgh: T.& T.Clark, 1982, 10-11.

PAUL'S HONOUR AND BOASTING
THE SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

Paul's Honour, Ascribed and Acquired

According to Malina, honour is the "value of a person in his or her own eyes (that is, one's claim to worth) plus that person's value in the eyes of his or her social group".[100] Honour can be ascribed or acquired.[101] Applying Malina's insights to Paul, we can see that he has much ascribed and acquired honour. If his ascribed honour is by virtue of his birth, he can boast that he was born a Hebrew, an Israelite, a descendent of Abraham (11:22). As a Roman, he can boast of having Roman citizenship by birth (Acts 16:38), a citizen of no ordinary city, that is Tarsus (Acts 21:39). His ascribed honour would also include his calling as an apostle (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1).

His acquired honour was gained by excelling over others in his education both in Greek and in Hebrew, in Tarsus and in Jerusalem. He had become highly respected as a Jewish rabbi and leader and was able to carry out his own inquisition of the Christians (1 Cor 15:9). His Greek education would have consisted in training in rhetoric, and his knowledge of Greek language and rhetoric is evident in his speeches and letters. He is able to ask and answer questions in the style of Plato and Socrates, uses metaphor, contrast, hyperbole, sarcasm, irony. He is familiar with various popular *topoi* (1 Cor 8:1; 10:23) and Stoic codes of ethics such as the *haustafel* (Ephesus 6:1-4). He is able to quote from the Greek poets (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33) and the Sophists arguments from nature (1 Cor 11:14). Nonetheless, he admits that he was not a trained speaker, but he does have knowledge (2 Cor 11:6).[102]

In a worldly sense, he enjoyed status both as a Jew and as a Roman citizen in a Greek environment. He is not among the noble-born, but as a free-born he enjoys civil liberties, and respect in his own society. His acquired honour also consisted in his spiritual experiences, (2 Cor 12:1-7), his conversion on the Damascus road, his escape from Damascus (2

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[100]Bruce Malina, 27.

[101]Bruce Malina, 29.

[102]See E.A. Judge "Paul's Boasting in Relation to Contemporary Professional Practice", *The Tyndale Paper,* XII: 4 (Melbourne: September, 1967) for a discussion on Paul's ability as a rhetorician.

Cor 11:32-33), his successful ministry with the true signs of an apostle, that is of wonders, signs, and miracles (2 Cor 12:12), his sufferings and hardships as an apostle (1 Cor 15:9,30-32; 2 Cor 1:9, 4:10, 6:3, 7:5; 11:23-29).

His acquired honour is obtained by his work in Corinth, his planting of the church. Three years later at the time of writing the letters, his honour has been challenged, and in the eyes of the Corinthians he has lost face, and so incurred shame. Paul sets that right by entering into the contest of honour, by playing the game. How then has Paul's honour been challenged? It is challenged by their judging of and insults towards him. They accused him on theological, educational and ethical grounds. Some among them said he was misrepresenting God because he testified that God had raised Christ from the dead (1 Cor 15:15), and they desired proof that Christ was speaking in him (2 Cor 13:3). Others accused him of vacillating in regard to his plan to visit them (2 Cor 1:17), that he came unrecommended (2 Cor 3:1), that he was humble to their face but bold when away, (2 Cor 10:1) and in the same vein, that his letters were weighty and strong, but his bodily presence weak and contemptible (2 Cor 10:10), that he was an imposter (2 Cor 6:8). Others criticised him for being untrained in speech (2 Cor 11:6), that he was crafty and deceitful and took advantage of them (2 Cor 12:16b), that he did not conform to the pattern of a wandering philosopher because he did not accept any physical support from them (2 Cor 11:7). To each of these negative challenges Paul responds in order to restore his honour.

Paul Plays the Game of Challenge and Response

Paul plays the game of challenge and response not only by defending himself, but by sending his own provoking comments to them, some of which are negative rebukes, but many of which are positive. He commends them for remembering him and maintaining the traditions just as he handed them on to them (1 Cor 11:2), for standing firm in the faith (2 Cor 1:24), for their godly grief which led to repentance (2 Cor 7:7-9), for their obedience and welcome of Titus (2 Cor 7:15), for their excellence in faith, speech, in knowledge, eagerness (2 Cor 8:7; 9:2). Paul gives himself to them. His emotions are involved with them. His love is overflowing for them (2 Cor 2:4, 6:2-4; 8:7, 11:11; 12:15; 12:19). He rejoices over them, has confidence in them, and often boasts of them (2 Cor 6:4, 7:9, 13:9). He anguishes and weeps for them (2 Cor 2:4). Everything

that he does is for building them up and not tearing them down (2 Cor 12:19).

He claims a relationship with them as a father (1 Cor 4:14-15). They are to him like his children, and his admonishment comes to them as beloved children (2 Cor 12:14). He is willing to be spent and to spend his money for them for parents ought to provide for their children (2 Cor 12:15), but they are ungrateful children and have restricted their love for him (2 Cor 6:12). Above all, and this is his most powerful metaphor depicting his shame, he is a father to the bride-to-be (2 Cor 11:2-3). As such he is deeply shamed because he suspects his virgin daughter flirting with another husband. Paul has pledged them in marriage to one husband, to present them as a chaste virgin to Christ, but he fears that they will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. In this Paul is deeply shamed and his heart is deeply wounded.

Paul suffers loss of face when the Corinthians go off track. He is shamed by their immoral behaviour. It is as if all that he taught them when he was with them for a year and a half three years previously had been forgotten (Acts 18:11). He was humiliated by the corruption that had entered the church. His first response to this challenge is to write them a letter (1 Cor 5:9-11). However, his letter is not heeded and Paul's shame increases. His second letter comes in answer to their first and Chloe's visit. In his letter Paul addresses the various shameful situations in Corinth. He sends this letter with Timothy, but despite his appeal to treat him well, Timothy has to return to Ephesus unsuccessfully. A tone of exasperation and anger in his letter (1 Cor 4:19-21) and his warning of a visit does not bode well for the forthcoming visit. This visit it would seem was a disaster for both sides (2 Cor 2:1, 12:14; 13:1-2). Both sides suffered a loss of face, and Paul's honour as an apostle was in decline. He follows up the visit with a harsh letter (2 Cor 2:3-4,9; 7:8-12) which proved to be like pouring oil onto the fire. During that time other superlative apostles descended upon the city, and Paul's honour was severely challenged. Paul's fierce invective against their claim to equal honour takes the form of hurling insults at them. However, he doesn't do this directly, but through his letter to the church. He cuts the ground from beneath their feet before the rest of the church by calling them false apostles, deceitful workman, masquerading, agents of Satan (2 Cor 11:12-

13).[103] Titus is the middle man, and his efforts paid off in securing their allegiance once again for Paul, and thus restoring his honour (2 Cor 7:6-9). The ultimate loss of face will be when he comes to visit them and to pick up the collection they are organising for the saints in Judea. He fears that he may find many who have not repented of impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced, in which case God will humble (ταπεινοσει) him.

One of the dishonours Paul suffered was to be called deceitful (2 Cor 12:16b), to be considered a liar, to be treated as an imposter (2 Cor 6:8). In a shame-honour society, it was not required of a man of honour to be sincere. Lying and deception can be honourable and legitimate. To deceive by making something ambiguous is to deprive the other of respect, to humiliate him. Thus Paul meets this challenge by stating again and again his sincerity (2 Cor 1:12, 2 Cor 2:7). He is not a peddler of God's word and he refuses to practise cunning and falsify God's Word (2 Cor 2:7; 4:2). He has spoken frankly (2 Cor 6:11) and has wronged no one (2 Cor 7:2). He has not taken advantage of anyone, and he intends to do what is right not only in the Lord's sight but in the sight of others (2 Cor 8:21). He cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth (2 Cor 13:8).

This shaming from the Corinthians was intended to enslave Paul to their opinions and attitudes and force him to conform to their pattern, but Paul refused to do that. He refused to be dominated by anything (1 Cor 6:12), to be free with respect to all (1 Cor 9:9). In honour societies, actions are more important than words. Paul came to the Corinthians in demonstration of the power of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:4). His apostleship was attested by signs, wonders, and mighty works (2 Cor 12:12). He is ready to punish every disobedience (2 Cor 10:5), to come to them with a stick (1 Cor 4:21), that he will not be lenient (2 Cor 13:2). He assures them that what he says by letter when absent, he will also do when present (2 Cor 10:11). Since witnesses are crucial for the acquisition and bestowal

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[103]Jerome Neyrey (*Paul, in Other Words*, 203-207) makes much of this accusation. He claims that accusations of demonic possession tend to occur in groups characterized by intense, disorderly competition for leadership. The function of witchcraft accusations as an act of social aggression is to discredit his rivals and reduce their status.

of honour[104] Paul calls on the highest ascriber of honour, that is God to be his witness (2 Cor 4:2, 8:21).

Paul's Boasting

"To desire honour is acceptable, but if one should desire it to excess, he would be called ambitious".[105] To desire honour to excess would incur boasting of one's own supposed worth and to go beyond the bounds of what is acceptable. Boasting (καύχημα) is prominent all the way through the Corinthian correspondence. This practice is best understand in the context of a society with shame/honour as pivotal values.

"The word-group καυχαομαι–καυχησις–καυχημα occurs 55 of 59 times in Paul in the New Testament; 39 of the 55 occur in 1 Corinthians, the vast majority of which are pejorative".[106] Those boasting in these letters are the schismatic groups whose boasting had gone beyond a recital of their own self-admiration. They were arrogant, puffed up (4:6,19, 5:2, 8:1,4,7) by knowledge and their own sense of superiority. The super-apostles (2 Cor 11:12-13) also boasted themselves to be superior to Paul. It is here that Paul boasts according to human standards, even though he recognises that is not what the Lord would have him to do. He boasts as a fool (2 Cor 11:17). However Paul's boasting contrasts with the boasting of others. His own claims to glory are the opposite of what is normally boasted of.   His boasting consists of a recitation of his sufferings, his weakness, his ordinariness. He recognises the temptation to become conceited and therefore does not go beyond the limits as done by others. He therefore boasts about his weaknesses (2 Cor 12:9).

He also boasts of the Corinthian Christians to Titus (2 Cor 7:14) and to the Macedonians (9:2-3). He hopes that he will be able to boast of them on the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they will be able to boast of them too (2 Cor 1:14). He also boasts of the authority the Lord

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[104]Bruce Malina, 36.

[105]"The Works of Aristotle, Vol II" *Great Books of the Western World, Encyclopaedia Brittanica,* Inc., London: William Benton, 352-353.

[106]Gordon D. Fee, 84. καυχάομαι - 1 Cor 1:29,31; 3:21; 4:7; 2 Cor 5:12; 7:14; 9:2; 10:8,13,15,16,17; 11:12,16,18,30; 12:1,5,6,9,11; καύχημα - 1 Cor 5:6; 9:15,16; 2 Cor 1:14; 5:12; 9:3; καυχησιν - 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 1:12; 7:4,14; 8:24; 9:4; 11:10.

has given for building up and not tearing down the church and of this he is not ashamed (2 Cor 10:8).

Ultimately the only boast one can have is in the Lord. He opens his boasting (1:29-31) with a paraphrase of Jeremiah 9:23-24. The whole of the world's values are turned on their head by the Lord. That which is considered to be wise is made to look foolish. Even the Stoic philosophers could concede this point and admit that no one truly wise ever actually existed.[107] The most foolish event ever to occur in history and the most shameful was the death of Christ Jesus on a cross, as a common criminal (1 Cor 1:23). By this foolishness, God chose to save those who believe. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. It was because of the preaching about Christ that the Corinthian church had come into being. The encounter with the resurrected Christ was the turning point of Paul's life, and from that moment on he gave his life for the proclamation of Christ. He willingly embraced the revolutionary turnabout in this own life, and this was enabled him to wear the other face of shame.

Paul's Shame for the Gospel

The other face of Paul's shame is that which He bears for the sake of Christ and His gospel. Paul considers himself in the same way as Jesus Christ. He calls himself an imitator of Christ (11:1). Just as Christ submitted in weakness to the ignominy of the cross, so weakness is the hallmark of Paul's life (1 Cor 2:3, 9:22, 2 Cor 11:29-30, 12:9-10). He submits himself to the same slander, and persecution Christ suffered. He is reviled, afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down (1 Cor 4:13, 2 Cor 4:7). He suffered hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger (2 Cor 6:4), thirst, nakedness, being homeless, weariness, (1 Cor 4:11-12) floggings, shipwreck, all kinds of dangers, toil, hardship, cold (2 Cor 11:23-27). He acknowledges that the sufferings of Christ are abundant for him (2 Cor 1:5). He identifies with Christ's death in that he is exhibited as though sentenced to death, a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to mortals, (1 Cor 4:9). He claims to despair of life (2 Cor 1:8), to die every day (1 Cor 15:30), to be in the triumphal procession being led to his death and in so doing spreading the aroma of Christ among all along the way. For those who are being saved

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[107] Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 286.

it is an aroma of life, but for those who are perishing it is an aroma of death (2 Cor 2:14). He is always carrying in his body the death of Jesus and is always being given up to death for Jesus' sake (2 Cor 4:10-11).

He considers himself a slave (1 Cor 9:19, 2 Cor 4:5, 9:27),[108] the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things (1 Cor 4:13),[109] as a fool for Christ's sake (1 Cor 4:10). He considers himself to be the least of the apostles because he persecuted the church of God (1 Cor 14:8), as a servant of God and of the church (1 Cor 3:9, 4:1, 2 Cor 6:4).

Paul's Honour Ascribed by God

For Paul to boast of these things is too much. He shows himself to be utterly shameless. Yet, he glories in these things for he knows that glory awaits him on the Day of the Lord (1 Cor 3:13, 17-18, 2 Cor 1:14). His moment of vindication will be on the day of the Lord. So he does not lose heart, for this slight momentary affliction is preparing him for an eternal weight of glory ($\delta o \xi a$) beyond all measure (4:17), being transformed from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 7:18). In this life there is a longing to be clothed with the heavenly dwelling. On the day when he puts off his earthly body, he will not be found naked, that is he will not be shamed (2 Cor 5:3). He will be "in place" and not "out of place".[110] This is a redemptive shame and Paul does nothing to vindicate himself. He makes no apology for this shame. He is not ashamed of this shame. This shame is not something to be covered but a positive experience of revelation. Acceptance of this shame is the ultimate in his commitment.[111]

Conclusion

Shame as a psychological phenomena is a feeling associated with disgrace and humiliation. As such it is an experience of all humans everywhere since Adam's sin. Therefore it is closely associated with guilt

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[108] Both to Jew and Greek, to be a slave was to be at the bottom of the social ranking, the lowest class, and a disgrace.

[109] Here Paul uses the strongest words for the foulest rubbish one could possible think of, περιψεμα, περικαθάρματα.

[110] Jerome Neyrey studies Paul from the viewpoint of his symbolic universe. He uses these phrases to decribe shame and honor.

[111] Helen M. Lynd, 20.

and of theological prominence in the Bible. The message of the Bible is about how God covers people's shame.

However, as we look more closely another dimension of shame seems to be implied in many texts. This dimension is closely related to cultural values. It is to be found in societies whose values are honour/shame biased. Frequent references in the literature of the first century to what is shameful and honourable, or what is good and what is bad, support the assertion that the values of the Greco-Roman-Jewish world of the first century were dominated by shame and honour. Recent socio-logical and cultural-anthropological research with some psychological study of the first century further support the claim that the society in the context of which Paul wrote his letters was agonistic competing for honour and avoiding shame.

A study of the Corinthian correspondence reveals that the prevailing world views of the Corinthians were associated with a competition for precedence. The behavioural issues have shame overtones. It is important they leave behind all shameful behaviour and strive for holiness. Paul is eager that the church imitate him, their father, and change their attitudes. The new attitudes involve a different kind of shame linked with the anomaly of the cross. The new standard is radical. They are to be in the world but not of it. They are to be identified with God's foolishness, and to bear the ignominy of the cross until the Day of the Lord, that is the resurrection when they enter into their glory. This is the way of Christ; this is the way of Paul and a no lesser way is required for those who would belong to the community of Christ in Corinth or anywhere else.

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GO TO BETHEL AND SIN!
From Text to Sermon
Amos 4:4-13

William H. Lawson

This passage as defined has a recognizable beginning and can be distinguished from the preceding passage because the wives of the elite are no longer addressed. Though the passage contains some diverse material, the different elements are united around a concern for religious pride that leads to complacency and unresponsiveness to God's discipline (see Situation and Purpose). In addition, the diverse elements are united by the announcement of God's judgment in verse 12 (see Form and Function). The inclusion of verse 13 in this passage may be questioned. However, verse 13 contains a hymn praising "the LORD God of Armies" that reinforces the announcement of judgment in verse 12 (see Strategy and Structure).

Study of the Passage

Text and Translation

4:4"Go to Bethel and sin;
    to Gilgal (and) multiply sin.
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
    your tithes every third day.
5Burn that which is leavened, a thanksgiving
    and announce freewill offerings—
proclaim them, sons of Israel,
    for this is what you love to do,"
    declares the Sovereign LORD.

6"I* gave you clean teeth in all your cities and lack of bread in all your places.
    Yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

7"I* also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months
away.

I sent rain on one city, but did not send rain on another city.

One field had rain; and a field that did not have rain dried up.

8So two or three cities wandered to one city to drink water,
but they were not satisfied.

Yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

9"I struck you with blight and mildew,
multiplying (them) in your gardens and vineyards.

Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees.

Yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

10"I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt.
I killed your young men with the sword,
along with the capturing of your horses.

I caused the stench of your camps to go up and into your nostrils.

Yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

11"I overthrew some of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire.

Yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

12 "Therefore, this is what I will do to you, Israel,
and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, Israel."

13For behold! He who forms the mountains, creates the wind,
and reveals his thoughts to man;

he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the
earth—The LORD God of Armies is his name.

*The bold print indicates an emphasis in the Hebrew text that is oth-
erwise difficult to convey in English.

Situation and Purpose

Amos 4:4-13 reflects a situation in which the elite of Israel were
proud, complacent, and unresponsive to God's discipline. Their pride is
reflected in Amos' sarcastic call to worship in verses 4-5, especially
verse 5, "'Burn that which is leavened, a thanksgiving and announce
freewill offerings—proclaim them, sons of Israel, for this is what you
love to do,' declares the Sovereign LORD." They were proud of their
piety and wanted to impress others with their devotion to God. Their
unresponsiveness to God's discipline is reflected in verses 6-10 where
Amos catalogs God acts of discipline against them, concluding each act

of discipline with, "'Yet you have not returned to me,' declares the LORD." Their pride in their religion probably made them complacent and unresponsive to God's discipline. The purpose of this passage was to undermine the complacency of the elite in Israel by warning them of God's displeasure with their worship and judgment for their unresponsiveness to his discipline. Though the passage provides little hope of escaping God's judgment, it probably was intended to lead them to repent of their sin and turn to God for mercy.

Literary Context and Role

From one perspective the Book of Amos can be divided into two halves based on the nature of the material. Amos 4:4-13 is in the first half of the book which is dominated by prophetic exhortations (chapters 1-6) rather than the second half of the book which is dominated by prophetic visions (chapters 7-9). From another perspective these prophetic exhortations and visions address various aspects of the general situation and for the most part warn the people of Israel of God's impending judgment. However, there is a considerable amount of overlapping in the problems addressed and the warnings of judgment. This strategy seems to reinforce the warning through repetition. Amos 4:4-13 continues and reinforces the warning against pride and complacency that was anticipated in 1:3-2:16 and developed in 3:1-15 and 4:1-3. This warning is reinforced especially in 5:1-17, 18-27; 6:1-7, 8-14; 7:1-9, 10-17; and 8:1-14. From still another perspective the Book of Amos seems to be structured to allow for some hope without diminishing the warning of judgment. However, Amos 4:4-13 does not allow much room for hope at this early stage of the book's strategy.

Form and Function

Amos 4:4-13 can be classified generally as a prophetic exhortation. Exhortation can be generally defined as commands or prohibitions reinforced with explanations and reasoned arguments. In prophetic exhortation commands or prohibitions sometimes indicate the appropriate response. However, in most cases the appropriate response is expressed indirectly as an expectation or is only implied. In prophetic exhortation the reasoned arguments provide the motivation for obedience and are dominated by assurance and warning. The warnings alert sinners to the danger of God's displeasure and judgment that results from their sin and thereby encourage repentance. The assurances affirm the faithfulness of

God to the faithful and thereby encourage faithfulness. The Book of Amos is dominated by prophetic exhortations that have warnings of judgment, but few direct commands and prohibitions. Though no direct indication of the appropriate response is provided, the implication is that the readers should heed the warnings of God's judgment and repent. Amos 4:4-13 follows this characteristic form of prophetic exhortation. A command is given in verse 12, "prepare to meet your God, Israel." However, this command does not indicate how they should prepare. Nonetheless, the sarcastic call to worship in verses 4-5, condemning them for their religious pride implies that they should repent of their pride. In addition, the rebuking refrain in verses 6-11, "Yet you have not returned to me," implies that they should return to God. The announcement of God's judgment on them in verse 12a provides the motivation for repenting of their religious pride and returning to God. The hymn in verse 13 reinforces the need to prepare to meet God by emphasizing how awesome he is. Sarcasm and irony play a significant role in this passage and will be discussed later (see Analysis of the Details).

Strategy and Structure

The strategy of Amos 4:4-13 centers around the command in verse 12b, "prepare to meet your God, Israel." The sarcastically rebuking call to worship in verses 4-5 supports this command by identifying the worship of the elite as sin. The rebuking examples and illustration of unresponsiveness to the LORD's discipline in verses 6-11 support this command by identifying the unresponsiveness of the elite as foolish. The announcement of judgment in verse 12a supports this command by warning the elite of God's impending judgment. The song in verse 13 reinforces the command in verse 12 by warning the elite of the awesome prospect of meeting the LORD God of Armies.

I. Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Worship (4:4-5)
    A. Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Worship/Sin at Bethel and Gilgal (4a)
    B. Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Offer Sacrifices, Tithes, and Thank Offerings (4b)
    C. Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Announce and Proclaim Freewill Offerings (5a)
    D. Identified as the Word of the Sovereign LORD (5b)

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II. Rebuking Examples and Illustrations of Unresponsiveness to the LORD's Discipline (4:6-11)
   A. Rebuking Example of Judgment by Famine (6)
      1. Description of judgment
      2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
   B. Rebuking Example of Judgment by Drought (7-8)
      1. Description of judgment
      2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
   C. Rebuking Example of Judgment by Pestilence (9)
      1. Description of judgment
      2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
   D. Rebuking Example of Judgment by Plague and Warfare (10)
      1. Description of judgment
      2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD
   E. Rebuking Example of and Illustration of Cataclysmic Judgment (11)
      1. Description of judgment
         a. Example of Sodom and Gomorrah
         b. Illustration of a burning stick
      2. Rebuking refrain and identification as the word of the LORD

III. Announcement of Judgment (4:12a)

IV. Command to Prepare to Meet God (4:12b)

V. The Awesome God whom they will Meet (4:13)

Message or Messages

The elite in Israel should prepare to meet God by repenting of their religious pride because their religious pride is sin. The elite in Israel should prepare to meet God by repenting of their unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because their unresponsiveness is foolish. The elite in Israel should prepare to meet God by repenting of their religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him

because they will certainly meet him in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

Analysis of the Details

Sarcastically Rebuking Call to Worship

Amos begins dramatically by rebuking the elite in Israel for their religious pride with a sarcastic call to worship. Sarcasm employs statements that are the opposite of what is really meant with a humorous or derisive intent. In this context Amos is clearly being derisive. Amos sarcastically calls them to worship at Bethel and Gilgal; offer sacrifices, tithes, and thank offerings; and announce and proclaim their freewill offerings. From the very outset Amos identifies their worship as sin. Only at the end does he reveal the nature of their sin, their love of announcing and proclaiming their offerings.

Sarcastically rebuking call to worship/sin at Bethel and Gilgal. Amos begins his sarcastic call of the Israelites to worship in the first half of verse 4, "Go to Bethel and sin; to Gilgal (and) multiply sin." Bethel and Gilgal were places where God had revealed himself in Israel's history and important centers of the worship for the people of Israel in Amos' time. Amos employs these geographical references to make the connection with the worship of the Israelites. The unacceptability of their worship is indicated by the word "sin." Through sarcastically calling the people of Israel to worship at Bethel and Gilgal, Amos was dramatically identifying their worship at these religious centers as sin and expressing God's displeasure with their worship. In this way Amos was undermining their religious pride and stressing their need to prepare to meet God by repenting of their pride.

Sarcastically rebuking call to offer sacrifices, tithes, and thank offerings. Amos continues his sarcastic call to worship in the second half of verse 4 and the first line of verse 5, "Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every third day. Burn that which is leavened, a thanksgiving." This detail cluster combines sarcasm and literary allusions. Sarcasm employs statements that are the opposite of what is really meant with a humorous or derisive intent. In this context Amos is clearly being derisive. Numbers 28:3 requires that the people of Israel offer two lambs a year old without defect every day as a regular burnt offering. Deuteronomy 14:28 requires that the people of Israel bring their tithes of

produce every three years. Leviticus 7:13 requires that the people of Israel present an offering with cakes of bread made with yeast along with their fellowship offering of thanksgiving. Amos employs these literary allusions to make the connection with the worship of the Israelites. Amos has already identified the worship of the Israelites as sin in the first half of verse 4. Through sarcastically calling the Israelites to bring their sacrifices, give their tithes, and burn their leavened bread, Amos was dramatically identifying their worship practices as sin and expressing God's displeasure with their worship. In this way Amos was undermining their religious pride and stressing their need to prepare to meet God by repenting of their pride.

Sarcastically rebuking call to announce and proclaim freewill offerings. Amos concludes his sarcastic call to worship in the second half of verse 5, "'and announce freewill offerings—proclaim them, sons of Israel, for this is what you love to do,' declares the Sovereign LORD." This detail cluster combines sarcasm and the use of significant words. Sarcasm employs statements that are the opposite of what is really meant with a humorous or derisive intent. In this context Amos is clearly being derisive. The words "announce" and "proclaim" in the context clearly refer to the Israelites' practice of declaring aloud their participation in worship. Rather than worshiping as an expression of their devotion to God, the elite in Israel were worshiping because of their desire to impress others with their piety. Their misplaced desire in worship is made clear with the explanation, "for this is what you love to do." Through sarcastically calling the Israelites to announce and declare their worship, Amos was dramatically identifying their religious pride as sin and expressing God's displeasure with their worship. In this way Amos was undermining their religious pride and stressing their need to prepare to meet God by repenting of their pride.

Rebuking Examples and Illustrations of
Unresponsiveness to God's Discipline

Amos alludes to several judgments that God had brought against the Israelites in verses 6-11. These verses seem to stress the variety and severity of God's judgments. The variety of God's judgments is stressed by the diverse judgments described, including famine (verse 6), drought (verses 7-8), pestilence (verse 9), plague and warfare (verse 10), and catastrophe (verse 11). The severity of the judgments is stressed at numerous points. The famines were so severe that the Israelites had no need to

brush their teeth (verse 6). The droughts were so severe that even when the Israelites traveled to a city that had water they couldn't get enough to satisfy them (verse 8). The plagues were so severe that they are compared to the plagues with which God struck Egypt as described in Exodus 7-11 (verse 10a). The warfare was so severe that the stench of the rotting bodies was stifling (verse 10b). The catastrophes that struck some Israelites were so severe that they are compared to the utter devastation of Sodom and Gomorrah as described in Genesis 19 (verse 11a). Amos concludes his emphasis on the severity of God's judgments with a simile, "You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire." The Israelites had come so close to being consumed by God's judgment that they had already begun to burn. Through stressing the variety and severity of God's judgments, Amos emphasizes that God had done everything he could to warn the Israelites. Therefore, they had no excuse for their failure to respond.

Amos intertwines a refrain within his allusions to God's judgments in verses 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11, "'Yet you have not returned to me,' declares the LORD." This refrain is repeated five times for emphasis. This refrain is loaded with irony. Irony describes a circumstance or result that is the opposite of what one might expect, frequently to draw attention to its remarkableness, appropriateness, or inappropriateness. In this context Amos is clearly drawing attention to the remarkable inappropriateness of the Israelites' failure to heed God's warning judgments. God had done everything he could do to warn the Israelites through his diverse and severe judgments. They should have heeded his warning. Through this rebuking refrain, Amos was forcing the Israelites to recognize the foolishness of their unresponsiveness to God's discipline. In this way Amos was undermining their complacency and stressing their need to prepare to meet God by returning to him.

Announcement of Judgment

Amos announces God's judgment against the proud, complacent, and unresponsive Israelites in verse 12a, "Therefore, this is what I will do to you, Israel." However, it is uncertain what Amos was referring to with these words. Some commentators think that a more specific announcement of judgment has been lost (Mays, p. 80). Stuart believes that the announcement of judgment refers back to the preceding descriptions of judgment that would be unleashed together without restraint (Stuart, 339). Another possibility is that Amos was pointing to some catastrophe

as he was delivering this prophetic message as an illustration of God's judgment. Amos might even be using a rhetorical figure of speech known as *aposiopesis* or *sudden silence,* which is commonly used in a threatening way (see E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, 151). Whatever Amos is referring to, he announces God's judgment to reinforce the need to obey the command that follows.

Command to Prepare to Meet God

Amos states the implication of the warning of God's judgment in verse 12b, "and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, Israel." Implied within the command is a call to repent of those sins that have previously been identified—religious pride, complacency, and unresponsiveness to God's warning judgments. In addition, the command contains a warning that is developed in the subsequent verse. This warning is ironic. Irony describes a circumstance or result that is the opposite of what one might expect, frequently to draw attention to its remarkableness, appropriateness, or inappropriateness. The elite in Israel had been going to their centers of worship in Bethel and Gilgal. The correct reason for doing so would be to meet God in worship and to hear him speak. However, the elite had been worshiping to impress others with their piety and ignoring God's attempts to get their attention. Nonetheless, Amos warns that they would meet God anyway, but in judgment. It is remarkably appropriate that those who went to God for the wrong reasons would still meet him in judgment. Through this command, Amos was calling the Israelites to repent of their religious pride, complacency, and unresponsiveness to God's discipline and reinforcing the need for them to repent by warning them of the danger of meeting God.

The Awesome God Whom They Will Meet

Amos concludes with a hymn of praise to God that reinforces his command to prepare to meet God in verse 13. Most of the elements of this hymn accentuate the awesome majesty and power of God as the Sovereign Lord of creation. God is the one who "forms the mountains," "creates the wind," "turns dawn to darkness," and "treads the high places of the earth." Amos employs an illustrative figure known as anthropomorphism in the last of these lines. Anthropomorphism is a type of metaphor that illustrates the divine nature by describing God in human terms. The metaphor exalts God literally by elevating him above everything on earth. A distinct element of the hymn is in the third line, "and

reveals his thoughts to man." This line serves in this context to emphasize that people are without excuse since God reveals his thoughts. The final line of the hymn is climactic, "The LORD God of Armies is his name." The Hebrew word translated "Armies" is frequently translated "Almighty" and emphasizes the unlimited power at God's disposal as the commander in chief of all the heavenly host. Through this hymn Amos stresses the frightening prospect of meeting the LORD God of Armies who is the sovereign Lord of creation for those who have violated his revealed will.

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Application of the Message

Establishing the Correspondence

The situation addressed by this passage corresponds closely to a situation in the modern church. Christians sometimes become proud of their faithfulness to the outward forms of Christianity. These Christians may become complacent, thinking that their lives are pleasing to God. As a result they may not be responsive when God disciplines them. These correspondences between the original and modern situations provide a strong basis for applying the message of Amos 4:4-13 to the modern situation.

Distinguishing the Contextualized

Some contextualized elements do occur in this passage. The places and forms of Christian worship are different than those of Israel. Christians don't go to Bethel or Gilgal and don't offer the sacrifices prescribed in the Old Testament law. In addition, the announcement of judgment is specifically addressed to Israel. Nonetheless, these differences can be

generalized or related to contextual equivalents. In the statement of the applied message that follows I have tried to ease the tension between the original a modern situation by employing Israel as a warning example.

Applying the Message

Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride because Amos rebuked the elite in Israel for the sinfulness of their religious pride. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD rebuked the elite in Israel for foolishly ignoring God's discipline and failing to return to him. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD warned the proud and complacent in Israel that they would certainly meet God in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

Proclamation of the Message

Title: Go to Church and Sin

Text: Amos 4:4-13

Objective: The objective of this sermon is to lead Christians to repent of their religious pride, complacency, and unresponsiveness to God's discipline and dedicate themselves to living their lives wholeheartedly for God.

Proposition: Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride because the LORD rebuked the elite in Israel for the sinfulness of their religious pride. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD rebuked the elite in Israel for foolishly ignoring God's discipline and failing to return to him. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD warned the proud and unresponsive elite in Israel that they would certainly meet God in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

Introduction

Why have you come to church today. A primary reason Christians should come to church is to encounter God and hear him speak. However, Christians sometimes come to church because they are proud of their piety and they want to impress others with their devotion. They often do not really want to encounter God and hear him speak and in fact may be ignoring God's attempts to get their attention through discipline. The Israelites of the Northern Kingdom were proud, complacent, and unresponsive to God's discipline. As a result God warned them through the prophet Amos to prepare to meet their God. We also need to hear this warning that is recorded in Amos 4:4-13. *Read Amos 4:4-13.*

I. **Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride because the LORD rebuke the elite in Israel for the sinfulness of their religious pride.**
    A. A call to worship is a common element found in many worship services. One of the most frequently used calls to worship is the *Doxology*—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen." However, it is clear that Amos is being sarcastic in his call to worship. Sarcasm employs statements that are the opposite of what is really meant with a humorous or derisive intent. Amos is not trying to be funny!
    B. Amos rebuked and condemned the spiritual pride of the Israelites by sarcastically calling them to worship at Bethel and Gilgal and equating their worship with sin—"Go to Bethel and sin; go to Gilgal and sin yet more."
    C. Amos rebuked and condemned the spiritual pride of the Israelites by sarcastically calling them to offer their sacrifices and bring their tithes and identifying their sin as pride—"'Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three years. Burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings—boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do,' declares the Sovereign LORD."
    D. *Enlist a member of the congregation or class with dramatic ability the week before to play the role of a modern day Amos. At this point have him interrupt the sermon or Bible study and deliver the following modernization of Amos' sarcastic call to worship.* "'Go to church and sin; go to Sunday School and sin

even more. Read your Bible every morning and bring your tithe every week. Thank the Lord for how wonderful you are and brag about your willingness to give to him—boast about it, you Christians, for this is what you love to do,' declares the Sovereign LORD."

E. You should prepare to meet God if you are proud of your piety because religious pride is sin.

II. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any unresponsive to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD rebuked the elite in Israel for foolishly ignoring his discipline and failing to return to him.

A. Amos described the various and severe judgments that God had brought against the Israelites because of their sin.

B. Amos emphasized the severity of God's judgments in two ways. First, he compared God's judgments against some Israelites to his judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah—"I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." According to Genesis 19:24-26, God rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah and everyone on the entire plain was consumed along with the vegetation. Even Lot's wife became a pillar of salt when she looked back. Second, Amos compared the Israelites to a burning stick—"You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire." They had come so close to being consumed by God's judgment that they had already begun to burn.

C. Amos rebuked the Israelites by repeatedly emphasizing their ironic failure to heed God's warning judgments despite their variety and severity—"'Yet you have not returned to me . . . yet you have not returned to me . . . yet you have not returned to me . . . yet you have not returned to me . . . yet you have not returned to me,' declares the LORD." By repeatedly emphasizing their failure Amos underscored their extreme foolishness.

D. You should prepare to meet God if you have been unresponsive to his discipline because unresponsiveness to his discipline is foolish.

III. Christians should prepare to meet God by repenting of any religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and returning to him because the LORD warned the proud and unresponsive elite in Israel that they would certainly meet God in judgment

and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

A. Amos announced God's judgment against the Israelites because of their pride, complacency, and unresponsiveness to his discipline—"Therefore, this is what I will do to you, Israel." The meaning of Amos' warning is uncertain. Some think that a more specific announcement of judgment has been lost. Others think that Amos is referring back to the judgments already described that will be unleashed together without restraint. Another possibility is that Amos was pointing to some catastrophe as an illustration of God's judgment of Israel. Whatever the specific meaning of Amos' words, he was clearly warning the people of Israel of the reality of God's judgment of them for their religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline.

B. Amos warned the Israelites to prepare to meet their God—"and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel." The desired result of worship is to meet God. However, the people of Israel had been going to Bethel and Gilgal because of their religious pride while being unresponsive to God's discipline. Amos warned them that they would still meet God, but for judgment rather than worship.

C. Amos described the frightening prospect of meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment—"He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth—the LORD God of Armies is his name." *Prepare a brief slide presentation depicting the awesome majesty and power of God as revealed in the wonders of nature and show it as Amos 4:13 is read slowly, emphasizing the final line.*

D. You should prepare to meet God if you are proud of your piety and unresponsive to his discipline because you will certainly meet him in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect.

Conclusion

Why have you come to church today? A primary reason Christians should come to church is to encounter God and hear him speak. However, Christians today sometimes come to church because they are proud of their piety and they want to impress others with their devotion. They often do not really want to encounter God and hear him speak and in fact

may be ignoring God's attempts to get their attention through discipline. The Israelites of the Northern Kingdom were also proud, complacent, and unresponsive to God's discipline. As a result God warned them through the prophet Amos to prepare to meet their God. We also need to hear this warning that is recorded in Amos 4:4-13. You should prepare to meet God if you are proud of your piety and unresponsive to his discipline because religious pride is sin, unresponsiveness to his discipline is foolish, you will certainly meet him in judgment and meeting the LORD God of Armies in judgment is a frightening prospect. You can be prepared to meet God by repenting of your religious pride and unresponsiveness to his discipline and truly devoting yourself to him.

A CHRISTIAN GERONTOLOGY: CARING FOR THE AGEING

Lim Ah Bah

"Growing older is a process that begins at birth and ends with death."[1] The church and individual Christians share an important role to minister to the ageing[2] especially in terms of crises counseling.

According to the government census in 2000, Malaysia had a population of 23.27 million. An average 3.9 percent of the population was sixty-five and over. There should be more than 907,530 senior citizens who live in the country. Among these people there are at least 300,000 who are either Chinese or Indians to whom the church can minister.

In order to minister to the ageing, a program is thus needed to enable the church and individuals to follow. In the preparation phase, the ageing are instructed to identify the crises facing senior adults and how to prepare themselves to cope with the crises. In addition, the church and individual counselors also need to set a contingent plan to respond to the anticipated crises, if they occur. This paper is designed to provide some guidelines for Christians and churches to assist the elderly in their families and churches, as well as their ageing relatives and friends in nursing homes.

Identifying the Crises Facing the Ageing

Chronological age, ageing, and ageism are related but not the same. Calendar age is counted from a birth certificate. And ageing does not just become a problem in old age, it is faced by every age group as a crisis in the transitions of life. Only ageism, which is the practice of stereotype, assuming that all people of a given age are alike, has become the

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[1]Sheldon S. Tobin, Enabling the Elderly (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 3.

[2]"Ageing" used in this paper is to refer to old age, sixty-five and above.

major problem.[3] First of all, the ageing need to be taught to adopt the positive understanding of ageing from the perspectives of the Bible.

In the span of many centuries covered by the Bible, it is not surprising that different perspectives appear on age and ageing. Prevailingly, old age is esteemed. Age is not often a deliberate subject, but there are some direct and significant treatments of the subject. That age received less attention than many other subjects probably implies that discrimination against older people was not a major problem in Judaism and early Christianity. If either, age was more favored than youth, although generalization here is extremely precarious. At least, there was no "cult of youth" as in much modern society.[4]

In Enabling the Elderly, the author points out it is useful to think of two categories of ageing, namely, the "young-old" and the "old-old." The young-old is defined as those people over the age of fifty-five, who are relatively healthy, affluent, and free from traditional family and work responsibilities. This has become a well-educated group of individuals who remain socially and politically active. In contrast, the old-old are generally identified as people of advanced old age who suffer from declining health, decreasing financial resources, and more limited social involvement. Those over the age of seventy-five can normally be characterized in this manner.[5]

Amazingly, four of five older people still live within one-half hour drive from at least one child.[6] The same author also divides the elderly into three groups according to their abilities to function in the communities. Sheldon estimates that there were about 80 percent of the elderly to be well-elderly living in the community. About 14 percent are severely impaired elderly and the remaining are living in some government or private nursing homes.[7]

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[3]Frank Stagg, The Bible Speaks on Ageing (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 178-179.

[4]Ibid., 181.

[5]Sheldon S. Tobin, Enabling the Elderly (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 4-5.

[6]Ibid., 7.

[7]Ibid., 12.

These statistics and findings should be able to clear some doubts and take away the unnecessary fears faced by the ageing. Margaret J. Anderson looks at the individual character traits of the ageing and classifies the responses into five categories:

> (1)the mature—well-integrated persons who enjoy whatever they are doing at the moment; (2)the rocking-chair type—passive, dependent men and women who are glad to take it easy; (3)the self-protective—their motto: "I have to keep active or I will die"; (4)the bitter—they adjust poorly to ageing—blame others for their disappointments and lack of success; (5)the self-derogatory—depressed and gloomy, they adjust poorly, blame themselves for frustrations and failures.[8]

Positive thinking about ageing is very crucial when preparing the ageing to face with crises in life. The problems faced by the ageing can be categorized into general, shared crises, personal crises, and unique senior crises.[9]

General and Shared Crises

General and shared crises are caused by some events commonly shared by the people in a certain place. Such events may be war, economic depression or emergency, and political change. Other socially shared events are crime, especially the increase in violent crime among youth, and problems related to drug abuse and trafficking. The ageing also share the concern about AIDS and other sudden climatic changes.[10] These general crises shared by the community may not directly affect the individuals but certainly they will indirectly become the causes of many crises facing the ageing.

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[8]Margaret J. Anderson, You can enjoy Your Ageing Parents (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 13.

[9]Barbara Pittard Payne, Responding to Senior Adults in Crises (Nashville: Convention Press, 1993), 7.

[10]Ibid., 7-8.

Personal Crises

Personal crises facing the ageing may be divided into physical, spiritual, emotional and mental crises. These are common crises due to development and different person may encounter different crises.

Physical Disability

For many people old age is associated with endless troubles caused by physical impairment. This may come in the form of a crippling arthritis or "just" a hearing loss.[11]

Jeffrey A. Watson has a clear picture of ageing in terms of physical decline. According to him normal physical changes with age include:
1. Cardiovascular stamina decreases 30 percent by age 70.
2. Muscle strength decreases 20 percent by age 70.
3. Rate of reflex slows 10 percent by age 70.
4. Height and shoulder breadth decreases 1 inch by age 70.
5. Weight increases 20 pounds from age 20-50, losing 6 from age 50-70; total body weight is 15 percent fat at age 20 and 30 percent by age 70.
6. Skin thins, becomes less elastic, and wrinkles.
7. Hairs decrease 20 percent in diameter by age 70; grays from reduction in pigment; whitens from loss of all pigment.
8. Nails decrease in growth rate 30 percent by age 70.
9. Ten teeth are lost by age 70.
10. Vision requires reading glasses and glare protection by age 50; greens and blues almost indistinguishable by age 60; peripheral and night vision diminished by age 70.
11. Skull bone thickens; cranial circumference increases; nose and earlobes become longer and wider.
12. Taste buds decrease 65 percent by age 70; mouth is drier.
13. Voice pitch rises and tremors more.
14. Brain loses neurons; timed IQ and short-term memory scores decrease 20 percent by age 70; sleep region affected.
15. Bones have less calcium, looser cartilage, harder ligaments, and less joint lubrication.

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[11]William M. Clements, Care and Counseling of the Ageing (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 39.

16. Kidney and bladder function decreases 50 percent by age 70.
17. Hearing misses higher pitches like S and T, making the words of others sound garbled.
18. Orgasm requires more time in foreplay; frequency of orgasm decreases.
19. Cholesterol increases 25 percent in the blood by age 70; blood pressure increases 20 percent over 15 percent by age 70.[12]

Spiritual Crises

Jeffrey's further findings about the spiritual development of the ageing also arouses the interest of many counselors: 82 percent of the senior adults above the age of 65 consider religion to be the most important influence in life; 87 percent believe that this will give personal comfort; nd 89 percent will try hard to practice.[13]

One of the problems facing the ageing is the fear of the future, especially death, which often torments the conscious or the subconscious mind of the ageing person who cannot help but realizes that he or she is nearing the grave. When other problems interfere, it may be difficult to attend church in order to engage in public worship and in fellowship with others. Sometimes many personal acts of devotion to God often suffer because of poor eyesight or forgetfulness.[14]

Many senior adults carry a burden of guilt that sends them prematurely to the grave. They sometimes have a sense of failure and regret for not having attained goals set early in life. Some may have even committed unlawful deeds in the past. Their guilty consciences may result from truly despicable activities or from misconceived notions of moral and ethical standards.[15]

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[12]Jeffrey A. Watson, The Courage to Care (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), 125-127.

[13]Ibid., 128.

[14]Robert M. Gray The Church and the Older Person (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 48.

[15]Ibid., 49.

Emotional and Mental Crises

In addition to the physical and spiritual crises, the ageing are likely suffering from some kinds of mental disorders as a result of the above physical and spiritual crises.

Worry that one's partner may become ill or die, fear of the possibility of prolonged physical illness or disability, anxiety about financial problems, a sense of worthlessness at not contributing anything recognized as worthwhile to society, and feelings of disgrace because of dependence upon others for a livelihood all contribute to the emotional ailments of older people.[16]

Some senior adults regress to infancy and actually experience a second childhood to gain much-desired attention.   They thus escape emotionally from the stark realities of life.   Another common escape mechanism is found in hallucinations. Some speak to absent persons or loved ones long since departed from this life, and they may engage in other forms of deviant behavior. The memory of many older persons for distant events is sharp, but their memory for yesterday is obscure and distorted.[17]

Unique Senior Crises

The senior adults have situations that contribute to the uniqueness of the crises they face. The development tasks of late adulthood include major transitions in retirement, widowhood, and institutionalization.[18] Some of the unique senior crises may appear as follows:

Depression

Depression is almost experienced by every senior adult under different circumstances and during different period of times.   This prolonged down feeling may be caused by one of the situations below:

Disappointment. No one becomes depressed when everything is going well. High hopes may have been shattered. Children may have

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[16]Ibid., 42.
[17]Ibid., 43.
[18]Payne, 10.

let a parent down. They may have become neglectful. Many parents have waited endlessly for a promised visit, only to have as son or daughter call with some flimsy excuse for not keeping his or her word.

Low self-esteem. A parent may say, "I can't do anything right anymore. I'm no good to anyone. I'm just a bother. I wish I were dead." Coupled with lack of self-esteem is the feeling of unfulfillment—of not having attained one's goals.

Unfair Comparison. Again related to lack of esteem, comparing oneself with another can cause despondency. . . .

Ambivalence. Some psychiatrists say this is the most common cause of depression. It involves a feeling of being trapped, unable to remedy an intolerable situation. . . .

Sickness. Every person has a breaking point. Prolonged intensive pain can be devastating. . . .

Biological malfunction. Thyroid problems, low blood sugar, or chemical changes of one kind or another can trigger depression.

Rejection. A pastor visited a woman who, he had heard, was extremely depressed. He found her arranging a lovely bouquet of roses. "How nice," he said. "Is this a special day? A birthday?"
    The woman nodded. Then she burst into tears.
    The pastor asked, "Are the flowers from one of your children?"
    "From my son." She shook her head sadly. "But, I'd rather have him."
    "Where does your son live?"
    "Right here, in this very town." She answered, then in an effort to tone down her disappointment, she added, "He's so busy."[19]

When depressed, the ability to function mentally and physically is affected. The National Institute on Ageing in USA has listed the following most common signs of depression and warn that if they persist continuously for more than two weeks, the person involved should seek the help of a doctor:

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[19]Anderson, 86-87.

- An "empty" feeling, ongoing sadness, and anxiety.
- Tiredness, lack of energy.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities, including sex.
- Sleep problems, including very early morning waking.
- Problems with eating and weight (gain or loss).
- Excessive crying.
- Aches and pains that just won't go away.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
- Feelings that the future looks grim; feeling guilty, helpless, or worthless.
- Irritability.
- Thoughts of death or suicide; a suicide attempt.[20]

Role Changes

During this period of life many of the roles which were previously assumed have begun to fall away—less significance is attached to them and opportunities are fewer for enacting them in day-to-day activities. For many people work has been the significant preoccupation throughout the middle years, and almost inadvertently the self has been closely identified with a particular work role. If this identification has been close, the anticipation of retirement is considered as a threat, and actual withdrawal from work, when it comes, brings a sense of loss.[21]

Death

Death is not an unexpected event among the ageing. In the presence of degrading and painful infirmities it may even be welcomed. Sometimes plans are set in anticipation of its coming, plans affecting the prolongation of life in the event of lingering illness, or for the distribution personal property and wealth, or for last rites.

Many aged persons have puzzled over the meaning of their life and already reached some resolution concerning the termination of conscious personality as we know it. For persons of a religious orientation this resolution might be expressed in biblical terms, such as the hope of resurrection. . . . Regardless of the terminology or the orien-

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[20]Payne, 25.
[21]Clements, 36-37.

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tation, the struggle to comprehend and incorporate death meaningfully into the life cycle continues until the task is accomplished.[22]

Loss

Apart from the loss of social supports like spouse, siblings, close friends, and employment, widowhood is becoming a serious crisis facing the ageing.[23]

About 95 percent of senior adults have been married. . . . The reality is that over half of older women are widows . . . five times as many as widowers. The implications are that men and women need to be prepared for the stress associated with the loss of spouses and the accompanying loneliness and depression. Remember that the changes in life-style and personal habits related to the death of a spouse are rated the most stressful.[24]

The Stages of Grief due to the loss of a loved one can be described as below:
1. Shock. This is the person's temporary anesthesia, his brief escape from reality. How do we help at this point? Be near the person and available to help. But do not take away from the person what he can do for himself. The sooner he has to make some decisions and deal with the immediate problem, the better off he will be.
2. Emotional release. Encourage the person to cry or talk it out.
3. Depression and loneliness. Be available to the person, and let him know that whether he can believe it or not, this stage will pass, too.
4. Distress. The person may have symptoms of distress. Some of these could be due to repressed emotions.
5. Panic. The person may have panic about himself or the futures. This can come because the death is ever present in his mind.
6. Guilt. The person needs to be able to talk through feelings of guilt with another person.
7. Hostility and resentment.

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[22]Ibid., 42-43.
[23]Payne, 10.
[24]Ibid., 19.

8. Inability to return to usual activities. Unfortunately, friends of the bereaved tend not to talk about the deceased. They may remember an important time in the person's life or a humorous incident gut refrain from talking about it in the presence of the remaining partner. And yet if they were to do so, they would probable find a positive response. The person may express gratitude that someone talked about his loved one in this way. He is aware that those around him are very cautious about what they say, but fond remembrances talked about are healthy.
9. Hope. Gradually hope begins to return. . . .
10. Struggle to affirm reality. This does not mean the person becomes his old self again. When one goes through any grief experience, he comes out of it a different person. Depending upon how a person responds, he can come out either stronger or weaker.[25]

A person who is facing this crisis needs to complete his grief work. Grief work means (1)emancipating oneself from the deceased; (2)adjusting to life without the deceased; and (3)making new relationships and attachments.[26] The pastors or counselors are most needed in this period to time. A support group, comprised of individuals or a team, can mean a lot to the person.

Chronic Diseases

Death rates among the ageing due to malignant neoplasms, vascular lesions, heart disease, ulcers, and infection are considerably above those of the general population. Cardiovascular disease is the major cause of death among the ageing, accounting for nearly 40 percent of all deaths in this age group.[27]

Another disease threatening many senior adults is Alzheimer's disease, which "is a progressive and irreversible deterioration of the brain

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[25]H. Norman Wright, Crisis Counseling (USA: Regal Books, 1993), 157-158.

[26]Ibid., 158-159.

[27]Judith Stevens-Long, Adult Life (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1984), 260-261.

affecting memory, judgment, and loss of identity. In time, personality and behavior change so that there is a premature loss of self."[28]

Death due to these diseases is not the only threat to the elderly, sometimes the shattering of filial relationships caused by diseases poses even a greater threat to the ageing who are already sick and dying.[29]

Economic Security

The crises resulted from economic insecurity are felt mainly by those senior adults who do not have any close relatives to take care of them and at the same time, they had not stored up enough fortune while they were still young. Accommodation and malnutrition are considered problems in this connection.[30] Many senior adults in this country who fall into this category do not want to stay in any government-run old folks' home. Some just stay in any temporary shelters they can find, and eat anything that people give.

Positive Approach towards Crises

"It has been said that a problem well defined is half-solved." Therefore if we want to succeed in ageing, we must define the two specific challenges which lie in our path: first, to accept our new physical limitations, and second, to maintain an optimistic outlook on life.[31] Although no individual will experience all of the decremental changes, these potential declines signal the priority for sound nutrition, exercise, rest, safety precautions, health care, and the setting of reasonable expectations and goals in life.[32]

With actual preparation done and knowledge acquired, the ageing must choose to cultivate an optimistic outlook on life. Genuine optimism will be rooted in realistic faith, not panicky denial.[33]

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[28]Payne, 22.

[29]Anderson, 93.

[30]Clyde M. Narramore, ed., The Mature Years (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 35.

[31]Jeffrey, 129.

[32]Ibid., 130.

[33]Ibid., 131.

Coping with Crises

Coping is the effort to overcome difficulties. It helps to protect us from crises and mediates the impact that they can have on us. Crises occur whenever the perceived demand placed on the person is greater than the perceived ability to respond. How one faces crises is based on the skills of thought and behavior that helped us deal with past problems. We need to bear in mind that there is no single helping skill for dealing with crises. Senior adults may employ a combination of techniques that have worked for them in the past. Although many crises are similar, the circumstances and relationships vary as to individual response patterns. These variations and differences need to be kept in mind as we explore old and new ways to assist the ageing cope with the unique crises of the late life. [34]

Adaptation

Adaptation to the changes related to ageing is considered by many gerontologists (those who study ageing) an indication of successful ageing. Senior adults have a greater capacity for adaptation because they have a life time of experience with change and expect certain changes as a normal part to growing old. Normally, they will adjust to fit the changes of ageing rather than straining to maintain behavior that fits another age and situation.

Most of the adaptations that ageing related changes force upon senior adults are gradual. Those who are successful have moved beyond ageing as a crisis, have adapted to the senior years, and are satisfied with their present life.

The characteristics defined by Atchley can help to identify the successful adapters who have high life satisfaction.

1. Zest—showing vitality in several areas of life; being enthusiastic.
2. Resolution and fortitude—not giving up; taking the good with the bad and making the most of it; accepting responsibility for your own personal life.

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[34]Payne, 11.

3. Completion—a feeling of having accomplished what one wanted to.
4. Self-esteem—thinking of oneself as a person of worth.
5. Outlook—being optimistic, having hope.[35]

Some strategies are less positive and involve escape and denial rather than facing and coping with crises. These may include isolation, use of alcohol and drugs, and suicide. In the end, more stress and crises will be resulted. Withdrawal or disengagement may be considered by some as normal ageing, but normal withdrawal is actually selective increased involvement in activities and organizations that are more appropriate and of more interest.[36]

Continuity

"The successful way to cope with ageing is to continue, as many as possible, midlife activities, interests, and organizational involvements into retirement."[37] The emphasis is on the continuity in environment, relationships, social roles, and in organization such as the church. Many professionals recognize continuity of place and community as significant coping strategies. Familiarity with neighborhood stores and streets extends the possibility of doing ones' own shopping and driving. For Christians, continuing to be a part of the church cell-group members, the worship and training programs, to be involved in some aspect of the church's ministry, and have regular contact with church friends provide continuity amidst change.

Support Networks

Informal and formal support groups form a safety net for coping in times of crises. The informal network is made up of friends, neighbors, church, and family. These are people the ageing can count on for emotional support, personal support and affirmation, and assistance in times of crises. These people can be expected to respond immediately with support and some coping assistance when a crisis strikes.

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[35]Ibid., 12.
[36]Ibid.
[37]Ibid., 13.

Formal support networks (social service agencies) complement the informal support network needed to cope with ageing crises. They usually provide support over a more extended period of time than the informal network. Their services include providing meals, home healthcare, homemaker services, transportation, and housing.[38]

Planning

Planning is essential to prepare the ageing for anticipatory crises. It has become a way to delay or minimize the impact of crises on the lives of the ageing.

With regard to health problems, the following tips are given:

1. Eat a balanced diet.
2. Exercise regularly.
3. Get regular check-ups.
4. Don't smoke. It's never too late to quit.
5. Practice safety habits at home to prevent falls and fractures. Always wear your seat belt when traveling by car.
6. Maintain contacts with family and friends, and stay active through work, recreation, and community.
7. Avoid overexposure to the sun and cold.
8. Keep personal and financial records in order to simplify budgeting and investing. Plan for long-term housing and financial needs.
9. Keep a positive attitude toward life. Do things that make you happy.

Financial planning and budgeting are needed to cope with the anxiety and trauma of maintenance crises and keeps the senior adults in balance.[39]

Spiritual Agenda

This is the most crucial help the church and individuals can provide for the ageing to cope with crises.

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[38]Ibid.
[39]Ibid., 14-15.

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1. Accept your own life story.
   - Affirm that every life has meaning and is of value.
   - Come to grip with the past and the present with all sins and mistakes and accidents of fortune.
   - Forgive others and yourself.

2. Deal with loss.
   - Loss of others, friends, children, spouse.
   - Loss of our bodies and mental functioning.

3. Relocate personal dignity.
   - Shift toward being, rather than possessions and prestige. We are more than what we own or do.

4. Rediscover God.
   - The search may lead toward meditation, prayer, and reflection.
   - Learn to expect not a god of consolation, but the ONE who tries us.
   - The casting away of earlier illusions can lead to a more genuine experience of the spirit.

5. Care about the community.
   - Genuine spiritual development leads toward concern for the common good rather than away from it.
   - Disability may take us away from physical involvement in struggles for social welfare, but the good of society can remain a concern. Passing on vital traditions to others has been seen a belonging to the responsibilities of old age.[40]

The Church Responding to Crises

The crises facing the ageing cannot be dealt with by either the church or the senior adults alone, they have to be faced together by both parties. The church needs to develop an appropriate program to minister to the ageing both inside and outside the church.

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[40]Ibid., 31.

Pastors and Counselors

The response of the church begins at the pastoral and lay leadership level. Most churches still need to plan for the contemporary senior adults, whether it be in the area of programs, pastoral ministry, or special ministries. However, there is not much difficulty to start at least a small scale ministry by involving the pastors and some lay counselors in the church.

Basic courses and resources for crises counseling are essential for the pastors and counselors. The first can be done by sending them to attend some organized seminars or by inviting some trainers to come to the church. How to collect and discover various resources will be discussed in the subsequent section. Some fundamental techniques to counsel someone in crises are listed below:

Steps in Crises Counseling

These are basic procedure one can use to apply to various types of crises counseling. However, special types of crises may need some special skills to handle.

1. Quiet the person. Crises are emotional times. Strong emotion is like an alarm clock on a tin tub. It gets our attention. How can we get people's minds off their emotion? We can try to change their bodily responses and their thinking. Here's how.
    - Have them sit down if they are not already sitting.
    - Have them take a deep breath.
    - Reassure them that you are there and willing to listen and help.
    - Speak more softly than they do.
    - Speak slowly—space your sentences.
    - Be firm.
    - Be explicit.
    - Ask a question that requires a short response, such as yes or no.
    - Ask, at first, questions that are concrete. As the person calms down, ask questions requiring longer answers.

2. Listen to the person. Try to understand what the person is saying, doing and thinking. At first, steer clear of what the person

is feeling, especially if the person is emotional. Listen actively to understand the problem.

3. Evaluate. What does the person want to accomplish? What does the person want you to do? Can you do it? You cannot solve long-term problems during a crisis. Don't try. Concentrate on the emergency. Emergency implies something NEW and NOW emerging. What is new? What can be done about it? In crisis situations, be more interested in what the person can do NOW than in how they got in this predicament.

4. Help the person explore alternatives. The person may have thought more about the alternatives than you. Chances are, however, that the crisis has focused his or her thinking on one or two alternatives and on catastrophic consequences for each. So help the person break out of the prison of restricted thinking. Here are several ways to do this.
    *   Ask, "What can you do to help yourself?"
    *   Ask, "What other alternatives have you already considered?"
    *   Brainstorm. Brainstorming is a technique often useful for thinking up alternatives. The rules of brainstorming are as follows: (a) Set a limited time period. (b) Mention alternatives without regard to how practical they are. Emphasize quantity and originality of suggestions rather than quality. (c) Write down each alternative as it is mentioned. (d) At the end of the time period set aside for brainstorming, investigate each alternative.

5. Develop an action plan. As the person explores alternatives, determine what steps must be taken to move the person out of crisis. Help the person set goals and decide what order to accomplish them. Stress the actions that will accomplish goals rather than the goals themselves. Help the person decide in what order to perform the actions.

6. Have the person repeat the plan of action. When the person has a definite plan for action, ask, "What will you do when you leave here?" By having the person repeat the plan, you accomplish two important things—you assure yourself that he or she

does have a plan, and you help the person "own" the plan, increasing the chances he or she will carry it out.

7. Follow up after the talk. Once you have helped the person through a crisis, follow up on whether the person resolved the problem that precipitated the crisis. Be available for additional help or refer the person to someone who can give the help the person still needs. Your continued follow-up will show that you really care for the person; it conveys Christian love. It might also provide opportunities for long-term helping or, if you had been previously involved with long-term helping for the person, this might strengthen your relationship with the person and give him or her increased confidence in your ability to help.[41]

The Church

The initial task of the church is to discover the actual needs of the older generation. The stereotypical view is to look at the ageing as ones who need special services which the church could or should provide. The discovery that seniors are people with strengths and weaknesses, hopes and fears, cares and concerns, who have a variety of skills, experience, and commitment is the beginning of an effective response to the ageing.

In order to cope with crises facing the ageing, formal and informal education about ageing is basic yet essential. Five basic facts should be included:

1. Not all older adults are alike and they will be even more different when the baby boomers retire. Many are physically healthy and active long past the chronological age of 65. Frailty is a matter of health and disease, not just birth dates. Seniors are the most complex and idiosyncratic group of church members. They grow more and more different from each other the more experiences they have. Remember more than one activity is needed, more than one support service, and more than one opportunity to volunteer for ministry.

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[41]Everett L. Worthington, Jr., How to Help the Hurting (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1986),148-151.

2. Seniors were raised in an era of intense religious training. They can help younger members who have missed this or been inactive. As Nouwen suggests, we need to help the older adults become teachers again and to restore the broken communication between the generations.

3. No two of us age spiritually at the same rate or reach the same stage of faith at the same time. The need for continued faith development and study should take into account these differences. To be old does not bestow spiritual maturity on the senior adult.

4. Seniors have a variety of skills and education that are major resources for the development of the crises intervention program.

5. Some seniors will try to escape into retirement and avoid service through the church and particularly with other seniors. But most seniors are and have been loyal to their church and support its programs through their participation and finances.[42]

Programs for Crises Counseling

In addition to the individuals who voluntarily get involved in the ministry, the church needs to appoint a task force or special committee to determine a contingent plan to respond to the anticipated crises, if they occur. This Crises Counseling Committee should make regular report to the church its findings. The required program should include cognitive understanding and practical training in the following areas:

Information and Referral

This service of information and referral provides information which helps meet needs by providing the necessary information, resources, and making referrals to deal with crises and problems. The service is constantly reviewed and evaluated to enhance the effectiveness. A need and referral card on each caller provides a way of reviewing the services most needed and a record for follow up.

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[42]Ibid., 33-34.

In order to start the program, the coordinator and the volunteers need to identify the services and programs currently offered by the church and compile a list of agencies and services available in the community.

The information can be corrected through various means like para-church organisations, welfare centres, information department, or social service agencies. Finding and identifying physicians, dentist, and other health care professionals requires a search by the volunteers. Other organisations provide information and services in many areas of need.

Volunteers can compile a list of books, articles, and films for each of the crises areas and recommend books for the church library. The congregation can be made aware of these resources through displays and newsletters. Two methods are suggested to make this information available in an organised form:

- A computerized program is the best tool. The material entered by programs and services using a user friendly computer program would make it easy for persons to stop by the church and access the needed information. It could be printed out for home use.
- A notebook with the same information is satisfactory, but is not as easy to maintain or provide take out information.[43]

Education on Ageing

One of the causes of crises is because of the limited experience with older adults, knowledge of developmental issues, and negative stereotypes. The purpose of this service area is thus to provide a systematic effort to address these concerns. Some suggestions for programming are as follow:

- Involve the church staff. The pastor reaches the total church and influences community views. Other church staff members also have similar opportunities. It is the responsibility of volunteers in this area to provide the pastor and other staff members with facts and information to use in their efforts to combat ageism and speak in behalf of seniors. Utilize the regular publications of the church to reinforce this work.
- Advocacy. This group becomes advocates who raise the congregational awareness of the needs and speak in behalf of these

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[43]Ibid., 35.

needs and interest of seniors within the church and the community.

- Interpret ageing in Christian terms. The church has the responsibility to interpret ageing in Christian, not secular or social terms. What does a Christian do as a Christian with the last season of life? How do we plan to call seniors to be an integral part of the total ministry of the church? Some churches are developing new commitment services as persons retire or reach age 65. Services of celebration and commitment are being developed to serve the same purpose as those for youth and young adults.
- Education. To educate church members, this program area's responsibility is to plan or assist in planning special courses on ageing. This includes identifying and securing qualified speakers and teachers for special topics on ageing, and finding a time and place for this to happen.
- Participate in state, regional, and national programs on ageing. These volunteers should recruit church members to participate in state, regional, and national programs on ageing. These programs provide information, inspiration, and motivation to action in the local church.
- Review and recommend books, articles, films, and other resources for studying about ageing to the Information and Referral program area.[44]

Widowed Persons Program

This program provides physical assistance, emotional, and social support to seniors who recently lost a spouse. It offers help through group support, friendship support, and increased contact and involvement in church related activities.

Volunteers in this program are constantly on the lookout for newly widowed persons in the church or friends of the church members. A "friend" will be assigned to keep up with and be a friend to the newly widowed person. Specific problems, including financial and legal issues, faced by the newly widowed person will be addressed and a social network linking them to the church will be initiated.

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[44]Ibid., 36.

Transportation and Driving

This program will help to meet the needs of transportation and driving. The service includes planning transportation for health, social, recreational, religious, and other areas after persona "wheels" are removed.

The second task is to explore the alternatives available for the non-driving senior adults. These include the services of public transportation and special buses for the handicapped. Sometimes a church van with a driver will be made available.

Pre-retirement Planning

The purpose of this service is to develop and offer pre-retirement seminars that include planning for a Christian response to the senior years. Budgeting and a regular service of insurance evaluation need to be offered. Housing and some other related topics should also be addressed.

Health Care Services

The purpose is to plan and implement ways the church can support the health care needs of its seniors. An exercise, nutrition, and stress reduction program benefits all ages and impacts the ageing process. Services for those with specific handicaps and needs for rehabilitation, diseases, or with terminal illness should be provided to help the caregiver and the care-receiver. Referrals should be made whenever necessary.

Dora Elaine Tiller has identified 20 ways a church may be able to help the caregivers and care-receivers.

1. Recruit and train volunteers to be health care advocates for anyone in the congregation who goes into the hospital or a nursing home. No one should be alone in dealing with health systems, especially when the person is ill.

2. Provide workshops and educational events on topics such as:
    *   Legal and financial issues
    *   Living will and durable power of attorney
    *   Funeral pre-planning
    *   Bereavement counseling and grief support groups
    *   Relationship skills for caregivers and care-receivers.

3. Incorporate caregiving issues into sermons, week night dinners, and church educational classes.

4. Provide seminars on specific chronic illnesses an how to help persons who have them.

5. Provide seminars on basic care issues such as lifting and transferring, nutrition, and emergency procedures.

6. Set up a community resource file on services which support caregivers; organize a health fair,; provide a newsletter; provide information about:
   - Hospice program
   - Adult day care
   - Area Agency on Ageing programs (geriatric assessments, meals on wheels, etc.)
   - Respite care
   - Volunteer caregiver programs
   - Transportation services
   - Nursing homes; personal care homes
   - Emergency call systems
   - Visiting nurse program and other home care programs
   - Alzheimer's, stroke, and heart disease associations and other supportive associations
   - Cancer groups such as "Make Today Count"
   - Caregiver support groups.

7. Train laypersons and pastors in care and counseling with caregivers and care-receivers:
   - Offer specific training on issues of guilt and decision making
   - Help caregivers uncover the underlying value system which is driving their decisions and limiting their choices
   - Provide counseling in negotiation and relationship building within the family.

8. Initiate a volunteer caregivers group, a respite caregivers group, and adult day care or other elder care ministry.

9. Hire a nurse to coordinate health care counseling for homebound frail older people and provide health education for all members of the congregation.

10. Become involved in public policy making and legislative advocacy on health care issues.

11. Provide a central filing system to maintain records concerning an individual's desires about health care decisions and funeral pre-planning.

12. Offer opportunities to learn how to become better care-receivers, including the use of biblical models. The church can enable us to learn to receive care in ways that encourage our caregivers and help us as care-receivers to maintain our dignity.

13. Create a library on caregiving / care-receiving issues.

14. Sponsor a hospital equipment loan program.

15. Phone and visit regularly.

16. Ask about the caregiver during calls not just about the care-receiver.

17. Help the caregiver share feelings and memories.

18. Support caregivers when they need to set limits on their involvement in another's care.

19. Encourage the caregiver to maintain social contacts and to use friends, relatives, and social agencies in order to lessen their burden.

20. Encourage caregivers to nurture and take care of themselves even if that might offend or irritate another member of the family. In the long run, each individual is the final authority on how much care he is able to give. Perhaps the most important help the congregation can provide is to support caregivers as they make their own decisions.

Spiritual Development and Evangelism

The purpose is to provide for spiritual development. It includes an evangelism effort to identify and reach seniors who are church drop-outs and unchurched at a time when they need the church the most. In Malaysia this may include the ministry among the residents in both private and government nursing homes. Planning for this area can include several types of programming.

1. Organize spiritual development groups on self-esteem, depression, fear and anxiety about dying and death, loneliness and solitude, and guilt/forgiveness.
2. Establish Bible study groups that focus on themes related to spiritual needs of seniors.
3. Recruit and train leaders for these groups.
4. Compile a list of books, videotapes, audio tapes as guides and make these resources available for individual study.
5. Train seniors for peer evangelism and faith sharing.[45]

Conclusion

Caring for the ageing is a lifelong process. A set program may bring help to certain senior adults. But in order to minister to the vast population of the ageing, volunteers are more important. People who believe that God still loves the ageing and has a special plan for the ageing—these are the volunteers needed most. Anyway, we are going to be "old" one day. What we have been doing will surely help us to enter into this unknown area of life. Ageing is not the major problem, one intelligent senior has said this well, "Age is a matter of mind. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter!" (Our Daily Bread, RBC)

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[45]Ibid., 37-41.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE USE OF RHETORICAL QUESTIONS IN THE POST-EXILIC MINOR PROPHETS

Mak Wai Sing

Introduction

The statement of problem of this research is: How are rhetorical questions used in the post-exilic Minor Prophets? The post-exilic prophets employed numerous rhetorical questions as they proclaimed the word of God to the Jewish people. These rhetorical questions occur in several grammatical constructions with a variety of implied responses and with many uses. Haggai employs rhetorical questions eight times in three prophetic words. Zechariah employs rhetorical questions thirteen times in six prophetic words. Malachi employs rhetorical questions twenty-three times in six prophetic words.

The Interrogative Particle הַ, h^a

The post-exilic Minor Prophets most often introduce rhetorical questions with the interrogative particle הַ, h^a. The post-exilic Minor Prophets employ the interrogative particle on twenty-one occasions to introduce rhetorical questions. Haggai uses the interrogative particle five times to introduce rhetorical questions. Zechariah uses it eight times to introduce rhetorical questions. Malachi also uses it eight times to introduce rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions occur in two constructions.

With the Adverb of Negation

The post-exilic Minor Prophets use the interrogative particle הַ, h^a with the adverb of negation לֹא, lo in rhetorical questions that imply an emphatic positive response on ten occasions. Haggai uses the interrogative particle and adverb of negation in one rhetorical question. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to anticipate and identify a pos-

sible source of discouragement in Haggai 2:3, "Is it not like nothing in your eyes?"

Zechariah uses the interrogative particle and adverb of negation in six rhetorical questions. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to assert the immortality of God's word in 1:6: "But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers?" This question is part of a series of rhetorical questions that forces God's people to consider the transience of human life and the immortality of God's word. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to rebuke Satan and conversely to encourage God's people and introduce the assurances that follow in 3:2: "Is this not a brand plucked from fire?" He uses this construction in rhetorical questions to mildly rebuke in 4:5 and 13: "Do you not know what these are?" He employs this construction in a rhetorical question to rebuke God's people for their selfishness and introduce a warning of judgment in 7:6: "And when you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves?" He uses this construction to affirm that these were the same words that God spoke at an earlier time in 7:7: "Were these not the words that Yahweh proclaimed by the earlier prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity with its cities round her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?" This question is part of a series of rhetorical questions that leads to a warning of judgment.

Malachi employs the interrogative particle and adverb of negation in three rhetorical questions. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to establish the close relationship of Esau to Jacob in 1:2: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" This question accentuates the assurance of God's love to Jacob and his descendants that follows. He uses this construction in two rhetorical questions to establish that all of God's people have one father and creator in 2:10: "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?" These questions establish a truth that provides the basis for a final rhetorical question that rebukes them for dealing treacherously with one another.

Without the Adverb of Negation

The post-exilic Minor Prophets also employ the interrogative particle הֲ, $\underline{h}^a$ without the adverb of negation in rhetorical questions on eleven occasions. These rhetorical questions normally have an implied emphatic negative response. Haggai uses the interrogative particle in four

rhetorical questions. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to rebuke God's people for being preoccupied with their own houses while neglecting the temple in 1:4: "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house is desolate?" He uses this construction in a rhetorical question in 2:12 to establish a truth by analogy that serves as the basis for his appeal, "Will it be holy?" He uses this construction in a rhetorical question in 2:19 to accentuate the concluding assurance: "Is the seed still in the storehouse?" However, he also uses this construction with an implied emphatic positive reply in 2:13: "Will it be unclean?" The reason that this question has an implied emphatic positive reply is that it has the negative word "unclean." Therefore, this construction is equivalent to the interrogative particle with the adverb of negation (see above). This question establishes a truth by analogy that serves as the basis for his appeal.

Zechariah uses the interrogative particle without the adverb of negation in rhetorical questions on two occasions. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to warn of the transience of human life in 1:5: "And the prophets, do they live forever?" This question is part of a series of rhetorical questions that forces God's people to consider the transience of human life and the immortality of God's word. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to rebuke God's people for their insincere fasting in 7:5: "Say to all the people of the land and the priests, saying, 'when you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted?'" This question is part of a series of rhetorical questions that leads to a warning of judgment.

Malachi employs the interrogative particle without the adverb of negation in five rhetorical questions. The first question with this construction is found in Malachi 1:8, "Please bring it to your governor, will he be pleased with you?" This question establishes a truth by analogy that serves along with other questions in a series as a warning. The second rhetorical question with this construction is located in 1:8: "Will he lift up your face?" This question also establishes a truth by analogy that serves along with other questions in a series as a warning. The third question with this construction is found in 1:9: "will he (God) lift up your faces?" This question serves as a warning based on an analogy established by preceding questions in a series. The fourth question with this construction is located in 1:13: "Shall I accept it from your hand?" This question also serves as a warning based on an analogy established by preceding questions in a series. The fifth question with this construc-

tion is found in 3:8: "Will a man rob God?" This question serves to rebuke God's people for their failure to give the tithe.

The Interrogative Pronoun מָה, mah

Haggai and Malachi employ the interrogative pronoun מָה, mah on six occasions to introduce rhetorical questions. Haggai uses the interrogative pronoun two times to introduce rhetorical questions. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to introduce an explanation of the bad experiences of God's people to encourage them to rebuild the temple in 1:9: "'Why?' An utterance of Yahweh of hosts, 'because my house is desolate while you run each man to his own house.'" He also employs this construction in a rhetorical question in 2:3: "How do you see it now?" This question is part of a series of rhetorical questions that anticipates and emphasizes a possible source of discouragement.

Malachi uses the interrogative pronoun in a rhetorical questions four times. He uses this construction in 2:14 to anticipate the confusion of God's people by putting a question in their mouths, "Why?" This question is followed immediately by a warning explanation. He employs this construction in a rhetorical question in 2:15 to introduce the reason for God making them one in 2:15, "And why one?" The answer to this question provides one of the key arguments for remaining faithful to their wives. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question in 3:13 to anticipate an objection of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and to introduce the rebuking explanation that follows: "What have we spoken against you?" Finally, he employs the interrogative pronoun in a rhetorical question in 3:14 to express the doubts and discouragement of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and to introduce the assurances and warnings that follow: "And what profit is it when we have kept his injunctions and have walked as mourners before the face of Yahweh?"

The Interrogative Pronoun and Preposition בַּמָּה, bammah

Closely related to the preceding construction is the use of rhetorical questions introduced by the interrogative pronoun with the preposition, בַּמָּה, bammah. This construction is the most distinctive construction that Malachi employs for rhetorical questions. Haggai and Zechariah do not employ this construction. Malachi characteristically employs this construction with an implied negative response to anticipate an objection

of God's people and introduce further explanations, assurances, and warnings in 1:2, 6, 7, and 2:10. He uses this construction in a rhetorical question to anticipate an objection by putting a question in their mouths and to introduce further assurances of God's love in 1:2: "How have you loved us?" He employs this construction in two rhetorical questions to anticipate an objection by putting a question in their mouths and to introduce a rebuking explanation in 1:6: "In what way have we spoiled your name?"; and 1:7 "In what way have we defiled you?" He uses the interrogative pronoun and preposition in a rhetorical question in 2:17 to anticipate an objection by putting a question in their mouths and to introduce the warning explanation that follows: "How have we wearied him?"

The Interrogative Pronoun מִי, mi

The post-exilic Minor Prophets also employ a construction in rhetorical questions that is introduced with the interrogative pronoun מִי, mi. Haggai uses this construction only one time, while Zechariah and Malachi employ this construction two times each. Haggai uses this construction in a rhetorical question in 2:3a: "Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory?" This question is part of a series of rhetorical questions that anticipates and emphasizes a possible source of discouragement. Zechariah employs this construction in a rhetorical question in 4:7: "What are you, O great mountain?" This question implies an emphatic negative response, assures God's people of the insignificance of any obstacle, and introduces the assurances that follow. Zechariah also uses the interrogative pronoun in a rhetorical question in 4:10: "For who despises the day of small thing?" This question rebukes God's people for their lack of faith and emphasizes the assurances that follow. Malachi uses this construction in two rhetorical questions in 3:2: "But who can endure the day of his coming?"; and "Who can stand when he appears?" These questions have an implied emphatic negative response and warn of the severity of God's judgment.

The Interrogative Pronoun אַיֵּה, 'ayyeh

Zechariah and Malachi employ a construction in rhetorical questions with the interrogative pronoun אַיֵּה, 'ayyeh. These questions have an implied emphatic negative response. Zechariah employs this construction for one of his rhetorical questions, whereas Malachi uses this construction three times for his rhetorical questions. Zechariah uses this

construction in a rhetorical question in 1:5: "Where are your fathers?" This question warns of transience of human life as part of a series of rhetorical questions that forces God's people to consider the transience of human life and the immortality of God's word. Malachi employs this construction in two rhetorical questions to rebuke God's people for their failure to honor and reverence God in 1:6: "And if I am a father, where is the honor due me? And if I am the Lord, where is the reverence due me?" Finally, he employs this construction in a question in 2:17: "Where is the God of justice?" This question expresses the doubts and discouragement of God's people and introduces the assurances that follow.

Other Constructions

Zechariah and Malachi also use four other constructions in rhetorical questions. Haggai does not use any other constructions. Zechariah employs two other constructions in rhetorical questions. The first is introduced by the interrogative pronoun מָתַי, mati with the preposition עַד, ʿad in 1:2, "Yahweh of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which you have been indignant these seventy years?" This rhetorical question echoes the discouragement of God's people and introduces the assurances that follow. In the second construction, Zechariah shapes the contexts to indicate a rhetorical question in 8:6: "If it is marvelous in the sight of remnant of this people in these days, should it be marvelous in my sight?" This question implies an emphatic negative response. Thus it affirms God's ability to accomplish his purposes and rebuke his people for their lack of faith in him.

Malachi also employs two other constructions in rhetorical questions. First, he uses the interrogative pronoun מַדּוּעַ, maddua' to introduce a rhetorical question in 2:10: "Why do we act treacherously so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?" This rhetorical question has no satisfactory reply. Thus it rebukes God's people for treachery based on preceding questions in a series of rhetorical questions. Second, Malachi employs the adverb of negation and conjunction וְלֹא, wᵉlo' to ask a rhetorical question in 2:15, "Has he not made one?" This question expects an emphatic positive reply. Thus it establishes the unity of husband and wife as the basis for his appeal for husbands to remain committed to their wives.

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Conclusion

Each of the rhetorical questions in the post-exilic Minor Prophets has been examined and categorized into groups that are similar in form and use. The table below categorizes these rhetorical questions by their grammatical constructions, rhetorical effects, and function within the passage. This thesis may serve as a helpful guide for students of the Bible as they consider the significance of rhetorical questions they encounter in the Bible. This thesis should especially be relevant for those studying the post-exilic Minor Prophets.

TABLE OF RHETORICAL QUESTIONS USED IN THE
POST-EXILIC MINOR PROPHETS

Location	Translation	Grammatical Construction	Rhetorical Effect	Function
Haggai 1:4	Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house is desolate?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative reply	Rebukes God's people for being preoccupied with their own houses while neglecting the temple
Haggai 1:9	"Why?" An utterance of Yahweh of hosts, "because my house is desolate while you run each man to his own house."	Interrogative pronoun מָה	Reemphasizes their bad experience	Introduces an explanation of the bad experiences of God's people to encourage them to rebuild the temple
Haggai 2:3	Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory?	Interrogative pronoun מִי	Identifies a particular group of people	Part of a series of rhetorical questions that anticipate and emphasize a possible source of discouragement
Haggai 2:3	How do you see it now?	Interrogative pronpoun מָה	Identifies a par-ticular concern	Part of a series of rhetorical questions that anticipates and emphasizes a possible source of discouragement

Haggai 2:3c	Is it not like nothing in your eyes?	Interrogative particle הֲ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects an emphatic positive reply	Part of a series of rhetorical questions that anticipates and emphasizes a possible source of discouragement
Haggai 2:12	Will it be holy?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative response	Establishes a truth by analogy that serves as the basis for the appeal
Haggai 2:13	Will it be unclean?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic positive response (because the verb used has a negative sense)	Establishes a truth by analogy that serves as the basis for the appeal
Haggai 2:19	Is the seed still in the store-house?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative response	Accentuates the concluding assurance
Zechariah 1:5a	Where are your fathers?	Interrogative pronoun אַיֵּה	Expects emphatic negative response	Warns of the transience of human life as part of a series of rhetorical questions that forces God's people to consider the transience of human life and the immortality of God's word

Zechariah 1:5b	And the prophets, do they live forever?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative response	Warns of the transience of human life as part of a series of rhetorical questions that forces God's people to consider the transience of human life and immortality of God's word
Zechariah 1:6	But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers?	Interrogative particle הֲ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects emphatic positive response	Asserts the immortality of God's word as part of a series of rhetorical questions that forces God's people to consider the transience of human life and the immortality of God's word
Zechariah 1:12	Yahweh of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which you have been indignant these seventy years?	Interrogative pronoun מָתַי with the preposition עַד		Echoes the discouragement of God's people and introduces the assurances that follow
Zechariah 3:2	Is this not a brand plucked from fire?	Interrogative particle הֲ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects an emphatic positive response	Rebukes Satan and conversely encourages God's people and introduces the assurances that follow

Zechariah 4:5	Do you not know what these are?	Interrogative particle הֲ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects an emphatic positive response	Serves as a mild rebuke
Zechariah 4:7	What are you, O great mountain?	Interrogative pronoun מִי	Expects an emphatic negative response	Assures God's people of the insignificance of any obstacle and introduces the assurances that follow
Zechariah 4:10	For who despises the day of small things?	Interrogative pronoun מִי	Expects an emphatic negative response	Rebukes God's people for their lack of faith and emphasizes the assurances that follow
Zechariah 4:13	Do you not know what these are?	Interrogative particle הֲ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects an emphatic positive response	Serves as a mild rebuke
Zechariah 7:5	Say to all the people of the land and the priests, saying, "When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for these seventy years, was it for <u>me</u> that you fasted?"	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects an emphatic negative response	Rebukes God's people for their insincere fasting and is part of a series of rhetorical questions that leads to a warning of judgment

Zechariah 7:6	And when you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves?	Interrogative particle הַ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects an emphatic positive response	Rebukes God's people for their selfishness and is part of a series of rhetorical questions that leads to a warning of judgment
Zechariah 7:7	Were these not the words that Yahweh proclaimed by the earlier prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity with its cities round her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?	Interrogative particle הַ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects an emphatic positive response	Affirms that these were God's words and is part of a series of rhetorical questions that leads to a warning of judgment
Zechariah 8:6	If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in these days, should it be marvelous in my sight?	Implied within the context	Expects an emphatic negative response	Affirms God's ability and rebukes his people for their lack of faith in him
Malachi 1:2	How have you loved us?	Interrogative pronoun with the preposition בַּמָּה	Expects emphatic negative response;	Anticipate an objection of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and introduces further assurances of God's love
Malachi 1:2	Was not Esau Jacob's brother?	Interrogative particle הַ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects emphatic positive response;	Establishes the close relationship of Esau to Jacob to accentuate God's love for Jacob and his descendants

Malachi 1:6	And if I am a father, where is the honor due me?	Interrogative pronoun אַיֵּה	Expects emphatic negative response	Rebukes God's people for their failure to honor God
Malachi 1:6	And if I am the Lord, where is the reverence due me?	Interrogative pronoun אַיֵּה	Expects emphatic negative response	Rebukes God's people for their failure to reverence God
Malachi 1:6	In what way have we spoiled your name?	Interrogative pronoun with the preposition בַּמֶּה	Expects emphatic negative response	Anticipates an objection of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and introduces a rebuking explanation
Malachi 1:7	In what way have we defiled you?	Interrogative pronoun combined with preposition בַּמֶּה	Expects emphatic negative response	Anticipates an objection of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and introduces a rebuking explanation
Malachi 1:8	Please bring it to your governor, will he be pleased with you?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative response	Establishes an analogy that serves along with other questions in a series as a warning
Malachi 1:8	Will he lift up your face?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative response	Establishes an analogy that serves along with other questions in a series as a warning
Malachi 1:9	will he (God) lift up your faces?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative response	Serves as a warning based on an analogy established by preceding questions in a series

Malachi 1:13	Shall I accept it from your hand?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative response	Serves as an warning based on an analogy established by preceding questions in a series
Malachi 2:10	Have we not all one father?	Interrogative particle הֲ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects emphatic positive response	Establishes the basis for a rebuke in the final question in a series of rhetorical questions
Malachi 2:10	Has not one God created us?	Interrogative particle הֲ with the adverb of negation לֹא	Expects emphatic positive response	Establishes the basis for a rebuke in the final question in a series of rhetorical questions
Malachi 2:10	Why do we act treacherously so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?	Interrogative pronoun מַדּוּעַ	Has no satisfactory reply	Rebukes God's people for treachery based on preceding questions in a series of rhetorical questions
Malachi 2:14	Why?	Interrogative pronoun מָה		Anticipates the confusion of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and introduces the warning explanation that follows
Malachi 2:15	Has he not made one?	Negative and conjunction וְלֹא	Expects emphatic positive reply	Establishes the unity of husband and wife as the basis for the appeal to remain committed to their wives

Malachi 2:15	And why one?	Interrogative pronoun מָה		Creates interest and introduces the reason for God making them one as the basis for the appeal to remain committed to their wives
Malachi 2:17	How have we wearied him?	Interrogative pronoun with the preposition בַּמָּה	Expects an emphatic negative response	Anticipates an objection of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and introduces the warning explanation that follows
Malachi 2:17	Where is the God of justice?	Interrogative pronoun אַיֵּה	Expects a negative response	Expresses the doubts and discouragement of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and introduces the assurances that follow
Malachi 3:2	But who can endure the day of his coming?	Interrogative pronoun מִי	Expects emphatic negative response	Serves as a warning of the severity of God's judgment along with the subsequent question
Malachi 3:2	Who can stand when he appears?	Interrogative pronoun מִי	Expects emphatic negative response	Serves as a warning of the severity of God's judgment along with the preceding question
Malachi 3:8	Will a man rob God?	Interrogative particle הֲ	Expects emphatic negative response	Rebukes God's people for their failure to give the tithe

Malachi 3:13	What have we spoken against you?	Interrogative pronoun מָה	Expects emphatic negative response	Anticipates an objection of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and introduces the rebuking explanation that follows
Malachi 3:14	And what profit is it when we have kept his injunctions and have walked as mourners before the face of Yahweh?	Interrogative pronoun מָה	Expects emphatic negative response	Expresses the doubts and discouragement of God's people by putting a question in their mouths and introduces the assurances and warnings that follow

Nurturing Partnerships in Missions

Jeffrey Oh

Introduction

The Apostle Paul thanked God every time he remembered the church at Philippi and always prayed with joy because of the <u>partnership</u> of the church in the gospel.[1] The partnership in the gospel that Paul was thankful for and rejoicing over in the 1st century needs to be rediscovered by today's church.[2] In recent years, it has become 'fashionable' to speak of relationships between/among different groups of Christians in terms of partnerships.[3] This is true for the relationships between churches and movements in the Two Thirds World (TTW) and the West, and also between churches and mission agencies within the TTW as well as within the West. The basic characteristic of the partnership is that the groups share a commitment to act cooperatively with common vision and values to fulfill a common goal.[4] Mission partnerships usually have formal mission agreements that describe what each partner will do to help accomplish the stated mission purpose for a specific mission field in a specific period of time.[5] How might we further understand partnerships in missions? More importantly, as Christians, how might we nurture partnerships in missions?

Before we attempt to respond to the latter question above, we would look back at some historical and biblical aspects with regards to partner-

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[1] Philippians 1:3-5.

[2] Internet file on GCOWE95 Task Force: Partnership Development.

[3] J. A. Kirk, *What is Mission?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) 184.

[4] GCOWE95... A partnership should be distinguished from a "network". The basic characteristic of a network is the sharing of information of common interest to the individuals/groups.

[5] Internet file from LCMS World Mission, *Partnership,* 1.

ships. This is essential to help us to be clear in our understanding of God's intention for partnerships in missions. Having considered those aspects we would attempt to crystallize the reasons/needs for partnerships. Only then would we be in a proper stage to deliberate the ways that should be employed in the nurturing of partnerships in missions. We would also consider the hindrances and hazards that might arise in mission partnerships.

Historical Background to Mission Partnerships

The idea of "Partnership in Obedience" was proposed in the International Missionary Council at Whitby, Canada back in 1947. Although not so much is remembered about the conference, Bishop Stephen Neill said that it was much more important than is recognized with regards to mission partnerships.[6] According to Neill, Whitby "acknowledged the 'younger' Churches 'as the primary factor and the principal agent in the evangelization of the world.'" It was a partnership idea that recognizes the equal standing of the newer churches in the TTW with their "parent" churches in the West. This was also the start of the period of decolonization, e.g. the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. Increasingly, it became common to talk also of "independent" and "autonomous" churches.[7] These were in reference to those, which had been formerly established by the churches and mission agencies of the West. However, the proposed concept of partnership did not really work out well in practice over the next few decades. In the late 60's and early 70's there was a debate on or call for a moratorium of Western missionaries. Instead of a maturing partnership that enhances world evangelization, "too often the missions became entangled in the internal affairs of the Churches with frustrations on both sides."[8] A Philippine Christian, Emerito P. Nacpil, wrote in the *International Review of Mission* that the " most missionary service a missionary under the present system can do today in Asia is to go home!"[9] This resonated with the strong sentiment among many Christians in the TTW that missionaries from the West had stifled and inhibited the growth of a truly indigenous faith. It was timely then that

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[6]R. E. Hedlund, "A New Partnership for Mission", *Readings in the Third World Missions* (ed M. L. Nelson; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976), 227.

[7]Kirk, *What is Mission?*, 185.

[8]Hedlund, "New Partnership", 228.

[9]Kirk, *What is Mission?*, 186

Hedlund urged for a re-direction of the missionary partnership but not an end to it, in his article "A New Partnership in Mission". [10] He pleaded to the "Western mission structures, why go your own way? Why go away? ...Restructure if necessary, join hands and hearts with your brothers in the East..."[11]

Another vital area of mission partnerships concerns the relationship between the modality (i.e. the church) and the sodality (i.e. the mission agency). Ralph Winter has argued that these two "redemptive structures" have been crucial to the Christian missions throughout the history of the church since the New Testament times.[12] There were the NT church (the modality in NT), "a structured fellowship in which there is no distinction of sex or age" and there was Paul's missionary band (the sodality in NT), "a structured fellowship in which membership involves an adult second decision beyond modality membership and is limited by either age or sex or marital status"[13] This phenomenon with the *functions* of modality and the sodality continued on through the Roman Empire, the Medieval Period, after the Reformation and till today ... though not with the exact *forms*. With the Reformation, the Protestants attempted to do without any sodality structure. Johnstone wrote "The Reformation led to a healthy reformation of theology but an unwitting, tragic deformation of structure in the biblical model of the Church."[14] By their dismantling the monastic structure (i.e. the sodality structure of the Roman and Medieval eras), the Protestants lost much in terms of missions. Fortunately, they recovered the crucial contribution of the sodality structure in the late 18th century with William Carey's proposition of "the use of *means* for the conversion of the heathen."[15] In spite of this 'recovery', there continues a deep con-

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[10]Hedlund, "New Partnership", 230.

[11]Hedlund, "New Partnership", 233.

[12]R. D. Winter, "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission", *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (eds Winter & Hawthorne; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 220-230.

[13]Winter, "The Two Structures", 224.

[14]P. Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger than You Think* (Manila: OMF Literature Inc., 1998), 154. In the next 2 chapters of the book 155-183, Johnstone argues cogently from scriptures and history that there was and there needs be a partnership of the tripartite structure for mission, i.e. the ecclesial or gathering structure, the sending or apostolic structure and the discipling or training structure.

[15]Winter, "The Two Structures", 227.

fusion about the legitimacy and proper relationship of these two structures among the Protestants for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.[16]

However, with the dramatic growth of missionary societies/agencies, the missionary nature of the church both at home and on the field has unfortunately diminished in the in the later part of the 19th and the early part of the 20th centuries. "Today the vast majority of missionaries being sent out, are being sent by interdenominational missions."[17] Following the 2nd World War, the technological advances have opened up the worldwide door of the local church as never before. Prior to the 2nd WW, there was the widespread tendency within evangelicals to view the local church as merely a medium for world missions. They are now freed from the 'utter dependence' upon the sodality structure in their engagement in global missions. The local church may now be the *message* of God's mission, as well as the *medium* for evangelism to reach the lost world. Engel & Dyrness contend that the church "is far more than an institutional source from which funds and missionaries are sent or agency-developed programs carried out. Indeed it is both the message and the medium expressing the fullness of the reign of Christ."[18] There is, therefore, a need for the rediscovery of the responsible partnership in which the mission agencies (compare to the arms) would serve the churches (compare to the body) in constructive ways.

Biblical Perspectives on Mission Partnerships

Neill had said, "Partnership starts with the recognition that the source of fellowship is in common obedience to the living Word of God..."[19] Indeed, the motivation and the means for partnerships in missions must find their source from the Bible. It is probably true to say that the many parachurch agencies and missions that have arisen have organized themselves around the Great Commandment and the Great Commis-

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[16]Winter, "The Two Structures", 228-229.

[17]J. F. Engel & W. A. Dyrness, *Changing the Mind of Missions* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 75.

[18]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind*, 74.

[19]K. Rajendran, *Which Way Forward Indian Missions?* (Bangalore: SAIACS Press, 1998), 176.

sion passages in the Bible.[20] Likewise, the church has no rationale for meaningful existence apart from its calling to be part of the *Missio Dei*. This is the essence of the church. However, Kirk argues that "partnership in mission also belongs to the essence of the Church: partnership is not so much what the Church *does* as what it *is*."[21] God has called believers "into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" [22] In the letter to the Ephesian believers, Paul exhorted them to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope…one Lord, one faith…one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."[23] Kirk feels that the nearest word to partnership in the New Testament may be *koinonia.* "Its most basic meaning is 'partaking together in' a group which has a common identity, goals and responsibility."[24]

As the church in the New Testament grew and expanded across cultural, racial and linguistic boundaries, both Paul and James were confronted with Christians of diverse backgrounds with the potential for disunity within the body of Christ.[25] There were the fast-growing Gentile believers tending to marginalize the Jewish Christian minority in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Roman Empire. But Paul was also conscious of the minority Jewish Christians attempting to assert their superior heritage. James was there at the Jerusalem Council, the first church council. Based on scriptures and the experiences of the apostles as Peter, Paul and Barnabas, James summed up the importance of partnership of the Jewish and Gentile believers in the faith and in missions. James in his letter also admonished the rich in the church not to dominate or marginalize the poor. Later on Paul called for a wide-scale Christian collaboration among believers in Asia Minor and Greece to help the material needs of the Jerusalem church.[26] The above are some examples from ministries of Paul

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[20]J. W. Nyquist, "Parachurch Agencies and Mission", *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (ed Moreau; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 723

[21]Kirk, *What is Mission?,* 187.

[22]1 Cor 1:9.

[23]Ephs 4: 3-6.

[24]Kirk, *What is Mission?,* 188.

[25]V. Samuel & C. Sugden, *Partnership for Mission – A View from the Two Thirds World* (Bangalore: Naveen Mudran Pvt. Ltd., 1983), 31-32.

[26]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind,* 96.

and James who saw the necessity of true partnership in the diverse body of Christ.

In his prayer before his arrest and crucifixion, Jesus prayed at least four times that ultimately God would enable all believers to demonstrate a marvelous unity so that the world may believe that God indeed has sent Jesus (John 17: 11, 21-23). Taylor writes, "surely there is some relationship between partnership in mission and the prayer of our Lord..."[27] Therefore, partnership in missions is not only in obedience to the Word of God, but will bring much delight to the heart of God.

The Reasons for Mission Partnerships

Do we need this section? Have we not already discussed the historical and the Biblical bases for partnership in missions? It is upon the Biblical and historical bases that we are really staged to attempt to crystallize the reasons/needs of mission partnerships, and later on too, the ways of nurturing such partnerships. We shall try not to overlap and reiterate those historical and biblical considerations in this section. By now we should already have a clearer understanding and conviction about God's intention for partnerships in mission.

First, let us consider the negative consequences for the global church if we neglect to develop mutual and responsible partnerships in this 21st century. It is stated in the Lausanne Covenant of 1974 that our *testimony* would continue to be "marred by sinful individualism and needless duplication" if we fail to be closely united in fellowship, work and witness.[28] Indeed, Christians and unbelievers have observed the ministries of churches and mission agencies, and remarked that they are like "a team of horses pulling in different directions."[29] The separatism between the modality and the sodality may be due to financial or theological considerations. The former consideration is quite obvious; the latter consideration could be due to the mis-conception of the churches that they are "the

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[27]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (eds Winter & Hawthorne; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 752.

[28]R. Winter & S. Hawthorne (eds), *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 759.

[29]S. Guthrie, "New Paradigms for Churches and Mission Agencies", *Mission Frontiers 24:1* (Jan-Feb 2002), 7.

only legitimate sender of missionaries. Independent boards are seen as, at best, necessary evils, because the church hasn't gotten its mission act together."[30] These sort of non-cooperation causes a credibility gap between reality and the gospel message. A continued Western paternalistic relationship with the TTW churches would *inhibit the development of indigenous resources*, both people and funding.[31] Without genuine partnerships, there is a tendency for foreign mission agencies to launch programs and initiatives that are conceived in the West but not critically contextualized for application in the TTW. "Not surprisingly, such efforts more often than not prove to be inappropriate and even harmful in other contexts."[32] Again, it would only curb the development of the indigenous churches.

Secondly, let us consider the positive consequences, when we have developed responsible and mutual partnerships between Western and TTW churches and mission agencies. Instead of duplication and waste of time, money and human resources, there will be a tremendous *synergy*. Working closely together in mature partnerships would enable the production of creative ways in missions. Challenging past stereotypes and correcting past mistakes could also be facilitated where necessary.

With the reality of globalization with its complexity today and the also the existence of the global church and mission, Engel & Dyrness expressed the need for a truly global conversation and collaboration to achieve a synergistic impact for missions.[33] This happens only when mission alliances, made up of agencies and churches, both indigenous and expatriate, move in obedient partnerships for the mission of God. When the churches are willing to partner constructively with the mission agencies, there are significant *benefits for the churches*. They will be exposed to a better understanding of the global mission challenges and opportunities. It will result in better focus in the mission education of the church, and may help to bring new ideas for urban evangelism and social ministries to the neighborhood communities.[34] Butler, the President of Interdev, has two helpful insights as to the positive consequences of mission

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[30]Guthrie, "New Paradigms", 7.

[31]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind,* 20.

[32]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind,* 20-21

[33]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind* 96,

[34]Internet file from LCMS World Mission, *Partnership,* 1-2.

partnerships. *Partnerships model the power of community witness[35]*. People from 'traditional societies' normally live their lives as an integral part of the extended family or even the whole village. Missionaries should be able to offer a Christian community at least as strong and relational as the one from which the converts have come. Another insight is that *partnerships are the most effective way to develop a church[36]*. Missionaries may plant churches but the ultimate goal is always that they become a functioning local body of Christ. Mission partnerships provide the variety of contacts and giftings, necessary for the congregation to be wholesomely integrated and viable for the Kingdom of God.

Undeniably, the reasons for partnerships in mission vary considerably, and much more than has been discussed above or can be discussed in this paper. Among the other reasons are *fear and joy!* The declining missionary population from the West in contrast to those in the TTW has raised the issues of control, with the motivation of fear as the basis for cooperation of the traditional mission agencies in particular.[37] However, we would end this section with a truly positive reason, i.e. great joy. Jesus said of the harvest of souls, "'One sows and another reaps' is true…so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together." [38] "There is a profound joy that we can experience only when we enter the labor of others as true partners."[39] Co-laboring in true mutual partnership will be our supreme joy and will also give God the greatest glory.

Nurturing Mission Partnerships

As Christians in TTW, how could we nurture partnerships for missions? What are some important factors to look for in enhancing the development of genuine and viable partnerships? While considering these,

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[35]P. Butler, "The Power of Partnership", *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (eds Winter & Hawthorne; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 755.

[36]Butler, "The Power of Partnership", 755.

[37]T. A. Steffen, "Partnership", *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (eds Winter & Hawthorne; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 727.

[38]Jn 4:36-37.

[39]L. Keyes, "A Global Harvest Force", *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (eds Winter & Hawthorne; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 747.

we would also reflect upon several important issues that could pose as hindrances to the nurturing of mission partnerships, e.g. accountability, paternalistic partnerships and the lack of ongoing evaluation. It behooves upon us to be alert to these, and to minimize or to avoid altogether their detrimental effects to partnership in missions.

Communication

"Fundamental to the success of any strategic partnership is trust."[40] Trust is built upon open and sincere communication among the partners. Frequent communication should be started even in the stage of "exploration", and continued on in the formation and operational phases of the mission partnership. Meaningful communication requires attentive listening with regards to the various needs, giftings and circumstances of the potential partners. From his experiences, Bill Taylor shared, "Listen before entering a partnership, and be willing to learn from mistakes and try again."[41] We could reduce and minimize mistakes in mission partnerships when we are willing to listen and not to "unilaterally" moved ahead of our partners. Often in the enthusiasm of the "richer" partner, financial and human resources are spent in the wrong projects. It is crucial to take the time to listen and truly communicate in partnerships. It is through an open and continued communication that the terms of partnership could be worked out and clearly understood and adjusted by the partners over the whole duration of the cooperation.

Common Objectives and the Choice of Partners

As indicated above, most agencies and churches involved in missions would subscribe to the overarching goals as stated in the Great Commandment of love and in the Great Commission. Notwithstanding, there could be such diverse objectives and varying strategies that must need to be considered before we decide on the choice and alliance of partners. An example from Kirk is:

Thus, for example, it would be difficult to cooperate in evangelism if some people held that it was inappropriate to share the message with people of (some) other religious traditions, or if some believed that

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[40]Steffen, "Partnership", 727.
[41]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", 749.

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salvation depended on joining a particular church, or if some were convinced that salvation was possible outside Jesus Christ.[42]

We have seen how partnerships can offer tremendous synergy and joy. But they must be entered with wisdom, humility and a teachable spirit.[43] Taylor would counsel potential churches to consider the motives, expectations and the short and long range objectives of their potential partners. Wise churches will also recognize what they can and cannot do and will seek to partner with those who could assist them in their mission objectives. Areas that churches might be assisted in include missionary training, field-based member care and on-going hands-on training.[44] According to Taylor's evaluation, mission partnerships tend to work well when "there is a commitment to a common objective, and the recognition that the partners truly need each other."[45] Therefore it is vital that the choice of partners must be carried out with due consideration of one another's common objectives. But let us also be mindful of the principle, "Unity in essentials and Freedom in nonessentials."[46]

Relationship

The relationship, that has been established through open and honest communication and a commitment to the common objectives for the mission task, needs to be nurtured and sustained. It must not be taken for granted. If the mutual trust is replaced by suspicions of one another's motives, or if personal conflicts and ego are allowed to fester unrecognized, the partnership would soon become ineffective and possibly breakdown. Sometimes the "pragmatic, let's get-it-done, we've got-the-funds and-the-technology people, like the Americans",[47] with their great programs and managerial skills can become problematic to the nurturing of relationships among other partners. Potential strengths can become weaknesses in cross-cultural mission partnerships, if we are not sensitive to personal relationships! Partners need to develop a *real concern* for one another.[48] Relationship is much stronger when there is a commitment not

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[42]Kirk, *What is Mission?*, 202..

[43]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", 750.

[44]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", 751.

[45]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", 751-752.

[46]Rajendran, *Which Way Forward Indian Missions?*, 176.

[47]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", 751.

[48]Kirk, *What is Mission?*, 202.

just to a particular mission task, but to a deepening sense of responsibility and care for each other. There should be a growth in Christian love and fellowship among the partners. Unity in relationships would enhance the shared ownership of the mission project. *Committed, skilled servant-leaders* would certainly need to be mindful of the significance of relationships among the mission partners as well as between the missionaries and the local populace.

Cross-cultural Understanding

Every culture has features that are good, neutral and bad. The good aspects might have been derived from divine revelation and should be affirmed; the neutral features might be of human origin and could be accepted or tolerated; the bad aspects might well be of demonic origin and should be rejected. All cross-cultural missions/missionaries need to be mindful of not just the culture of the recipients of the gospel, but also the missionaries' own culture, and the culture of the Bible. Additional wisdom is obviously needed with an international partnership in missions. The aim of missions is to plant or to transplant the *seed* (the gospel or the Word of God) onto 'foreign soil', but not to do so with a *potted plant* (the gospel with the cultural context of the missionary or even that of the Biblical world). "Unfortunately, some church and mission leaders still operate from their monocultural framework of values and behavior."[49] It is not only the Westerners who have the monopoly on this sort of harmful attitude. We, from the TTW, are equally vulnerable to have this lack of cross-cultural understanding. On the other hand, mission agencies and partnerships that are truly internationalized would often prove to be a better model in partnerships.[50] The principle of unity in diversity is being worked out through these internationalized cooperations. There is also a better chance that resources would be the better and more wisely distributed by them.

Accountability

The strengths of mission agencies have tended to lie with their entrepreneurial leadership. Historically and biblically they have the tradition of being quite autonomous, even though they receive their financial

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[49]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", 751.
[50]Kirk, *What is Mission?,* 203.

and human resources from the ecclesial structure. A board or a council of individual people who do not necessarily act as the churches' representatives often governs them. Therefore there is often a lack of accountability outside the parachurch organization itself, and particularly to the local churches.[51] "As long as they can persuade the general Christian public to support their venture financially, they can continue without having to answer for their decisions...Again there are exceptions"[52] It behooves upon the churches who have mission partnerships with these parachurch organizations to conduct responsible reviews of the partnering agencies. In reviewing them, the churches should "go far beyond the 'bigness is a sign of greatness' mentality so prevalent today."[53] The evaluation of the agencies should go beyond a description of numerical data; it should consider the documentation of "sustained outcomes over time in the lives of individuals, a community and a whole nation."[54] Partnerships tend to be viable and effective when what have been agreed upon are maintained, and when a partner would not change responsibilities mid-stream without communication with and consent from the other partner(s). The understanding of the concept of accountability is critical.[55] Accountability is not quite tantamount to control. The following are the words of a Missions Pastor in his exhortation to mission agencies, to help elucidate what might be expected of in accountability by the mission agencies:

> On behalf of churches that want more involvement than sending paychecks, I encourage you to understand that we do not abdicate responsibility for our missionaries to you when they go. We have invested much in them and want to remain vitally involved. We want feedback from you and interaction with you...Finally, it frustrates me to see such need around the world, yet to see agencies erect unnecessary and artificial barriers that stifle cooperation. Please keep the big picture in view.[56]

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[51]Nyquist, "Parachurch Agencies and Mission", 723.

[52]Kirk, *What is Mission?,* 200.

[53]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind,* 126.

[54]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind,* 127...There are available, ministry evaluation tools to assist agencies in this kind of assessment.

[55]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", 752.

[56]P. Speakman, "Two Case Studies on Church-Agency Partnerships", *Mission Frontiers 24:1* (Jan-Feb 2002), 11.

"Parternalistic Partnership"

A true spirit of partnership would be eroded when any participant assumes a dominant role, and not willing to function with a spirit of mutual submission and interdependency. Whether intentionally or not, mission representatives have often been the offenders, when they adopt the posture of those who "have" coming to those who "have not".[57] This issue will remain problematic for the global church so long as material resources are so unevenly distributed. This is true of missions, whether coming from the West or some of the more affluent TTW countries. However, in addition, among Western mission representatives and missionaries, "an unfortunate spirit of expatriate missionary imperialism often infuses alliances and partnerships between Western entities and their Two-Third counterparts."[58] Often there is a tacit operational understanding that indigenous bodies who receive support from the West are to conform to their Western missiological stances. To put it more bluntly and metaphorically, the outsider drives the program, or the one who pays the piper calls the tune. Not only does this run counter to true partnership, the indigenous churches and agencies "cannot set its priorities for mission independently of priorities set by the western partner agency."[59] On the other hand, "a bad conscience about former patterns of relationship inclines (some) Western mission agencies to respond by giving without accepting the responsibility of genuine consultation with the recipient."[60] Indeed, both TTW Christian leaders and Western mission agencies need to change their minds as to who should be in the "driver's seat". It should be a Paul-Barnabas, rather than a Paul-Timothy relationship at this era of mission history.[61] The infant church in many TTW countries has come of age.

Ongoing Care and Evaluation

Just as members need to be continually cared for, so does the mission partnership. Participants need to progressively revaluate the personal relationships, the purpose, the procedures, and the performances of the

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[57]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind,* 96.

[58]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind,* 96.

[59]Samuel & Sugden, *Partnership for Mission – A View from the Two Thirds World,* 3-4.

[60]Kirk, *What is Mission?,* 192.

[61]Engel & Dyrness, *Changing the Mind,* 97.

partnership.[62] Taylor puts it more dramatically, "If the partners don't treat the venture like a living organism, it will die"[63] We need to be particularly careful with the strategies of many new agencies subsumed under the relief and development movement.[64] They are able to raise a lot of money and are not burdened with the history of the colonial past. They are often for the "short-term". Long-term partnerships with the local Christians and the fostering of relationship with the local populace are not given prior importance. Sometimes misguided relief and development might even cause damaging social repercussions. Ongoing care and evaluation will also help the partners to discern when the objectives of the project have been completed. The dismantling phase then needs to be carefully planned by the participants. "Every joint venture has a scheduled life cycle, which will end sooner or later."[65]

Conclusion

How might the church in Asia nurture partnerships in mission? First the objectives, strategies and methodologies of mission partnerships must be clearly motivated and underpinned by Biblical principles and also clarified in their applications by historical bases. The source of fellowship of the partners should ultimately lie in the common obedience to the Word of God. We have looked briefly at history and have already noted the shortcomings and failings of the Church in partnerships. Much has been learnt from past mistakes; many responsible leaders in missions have called for a rediscovery for true partnership in missions, both in the West and in the TTW.

Secondly, there is legitimacy for the functional structures of modality and sodality, though they may not be quite in the same forms as before. They need "to work together harmoniously for the fulfillment of the Great Commission and for the fulfillment of all that God desires for our time."[66] The Church needs to rediscover that its essence is missionary. It is not just the medium for missions but it is intrinsically by its very nature the message of the *Missio Dei* as well. On the other hand, the mis-

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[62]Steffen, "Partnership", 728.

[63]B. Taylor, "Lessons of Partnership", 752.

[64]Samuel & Sugden, *Partnership for Mission – A View from the Two Thirds World,* 19-21.

[65]Rajendran, *Which Way Forward Indian Missions?*, 177.

[66]Winter, "The Two Structures", 229.

sion agencies need to recognize that the "local churches are the key to world missions."[67] The mission agencies need to rediscover that they are not just a stopgap measure to compensate for the inadequacy of the churches; they were, are and will continue to be an essential component of world evangelization. They bring great synergy and benefits to churches as together they labor in the missionary task.

Thirdly, the section on "Nurturing Mission Partnerships" has noted and discussed some significant factors and issues that need to be borne in mind in the enhancement of mission partnerships. It is far from being comprehensive because of the constraints of time and space and also the limitations of the writer. There are still factors and issues, relevant to the diverse mission contexts that are significant for the nurturing of partnerships that have not been raised in this essay.

Finally, notwithstanding our human shortcomings and sinful imperfections, let us not lose heart in our partnerships in mission. Let us not be deterred in striving to work together towards true partnership. Let us remember that true partnership in missions bring great joy to both the sower and the reaper in the Harvest of the Lord. John Piper in his book, *Let the Nations Be Glad* writes:

> All of history is moving towards one great goal, the white hot worship of God and his Son among all the peoples of the earth. Missions is not that goal. It is the means. And for that reason it is the second greatest human activity in the world.[68]

He argues that the greatest human activity is worship and it is going to abide forever. If we cannot be true partners in missions on earth can we truly worship together in eternity? So let us be true partners in mission and in worship.

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[67]Guthrie, "New Paradigms", 8.

[68]J. Piper, "Let the Nations Be Glad", *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (eds Winter & Hawthorne; Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 50.

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A STUDY OF SYMBOLISM IN VISUAL ARTS AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH IN MALAYSIA

Solomon Rajah

Introduction

Symbolism is the very life-breath of religion. Every sentiment, every ideal, every institution associated with the phenomenon of religion, be it noble or ignoble, subsists in an atmosphere of symbols. It is through symbols that religions survive in our midst and through symbols that we gain access to the religious life of past or alien cultures.[1] Symbols may be objects, colours, sounds, odors, acts and events. In short, anything that be experienced, to which people have assigned meaning or value.[2] Difficulty and confusion may arise from the paradox that one thing may be a sign in one context and a symbol in another.[3] For example, no two persons mean precisely the same thing by the same symbol and that no two symbols in any one language or culture are identical. *Swastikas*, which may evoke nationalistic feelings in certain parts of Europe, are symbols with religious significance in India.[4] All people create symbols by linking

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[1]James W. Heisig, "Symbolism" cited in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Volume 14, ed., Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987), pp. 198-199.

[2]Paul G. Heibert, *Cultural Anthropology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), p. 114.

[3]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, p. 120.

[4]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, p. 120, *Swastikas*, used by Hindus as the symbol of peace and harmony in a religious context. *Swastika* is

ideas to forms of expression, and all people arrange symbols into elaborate systems, whereby they store and communicate these ideas.[5] Therefore particularly in cross-cultural communication, the result is often a loss or misinterpretation of the message. Symbolic systems form the core of any culture, linking thought to behaviour and objects, and thereby bringing a measure of order and meaning to life, itself.[6]

Dewey's *Art as Experience*[7] destroys the dichotomy sanctioned by custom, of art and non-art, the artist and non-artist. His analysis proves that there is no dichotomy between artistic expression and the experience behind the expression. Evidently, this analysis relates to the Malaysian Tamil Christian or Hindu way of life, where there is no dichotomous understanding between experience and expression, and between sacred and secular. For Dewey, artistic activity is a human attribute expressed or suppressed in myriad ways depending on features of the social context and wider culture.[8] Generally speaking, the content and process of any activity are suffused with a worldview derived from culture, ideology and history.[9] Dewey sees that what we ordinarily mean by artistic activity (its products or appreciation of them) contains features characteristic of everyday experience.[10] Though Dewey's *Art as Experience* is a psychologist's analysis of artistic experience rather than of a religious experience, but it has relevance to the socio-cultural background and worldviews of the Tamil people in Malaysia. In the Malaysian Tamil cultural context, there is a constant dialectic between a symbolic system and the most mundane activities of life. The symbols arising out of this movement provide cultural orientation with crucial roles and actions for the Tamil

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also attributed to *Ganapathy*, the elephant-faced; pot bellied Hindu deity with human body.

[5]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, p. 136.

[6]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, p. 137.

[7]Seymour B. Sarason, *The Challenge of Art to Psychology*, (USA: Yale University Press, 1990). Sarason's chapter five is based on Dewey's analysis of man's artistic expressions built on "ordinary experiences," pp. 84-95. Dewey, J., *Art as Experience*, (New York: Minton & Balch, 1934).

[8]Dewey cited in *The Challenge of Art*, p. 16.

[9]Dewey cited in *The Challenge of Art*, p. 90.

[10]Dewey cited in *The Challenge of Art*, pp. 84-85 & 89. Dewey wrote his analysis in order to establish a connection between the conception of art and ordinary human experience.

Christians. These symbols can be seen as playing some prominent role in relation to other elements of the Malaysian Tamil Christian cultural system of thought.

Briefly, the following is some of the symbolism associated with the current Malaysian Tamil Christian socio-culture: The symbolism of purity and pollution is associated with food utensils, washing of fingers before eating and the use of right-hand. This in turn is associated to the male symbolism where the male must operate on the right hand-side. For example: when a Tamil couple is married in the Church, the groom has to stand on the right hand-side of the bride. When they walk down the middle aisle from the altar, the bride has to walk on the left hand-side. On their "first night" as married couple, the bridegroom has to sleep on the right hand-side of their wedding bed. Left-handedness is considered unclean, weak, polluted or profane. There is a constant association of right-handedness in order to build the value of the male symbol. The symbolism involved here is: "anything to do with left-handedness is always unclean, weak, polluted or profane." This is one of the reasons why Tamils or generally Indians use fingers of the right-hand to eat their food. This symbolism is all-pervasive and embraces all aspects and roles of the Tamil Christian way of life. In a house warming in the Tamil Christian tradition, the milk is boiled-a symbol of purifying the new house; one cannot enter into an Indian house without removing footwear-a symbol of purity and sanctity. Even in Tamil Christian Churches, women cover their heads with the ends of their sarees when approaching the altar for receiving the elements of the Eucharist-a symbol of reverence and submission. This is the same practice found of Hindu women when they enter a temple. This practice must be seen in light of their attitude to God. One may find it impossible to draw a distinctive line between what is secular and sacred in the Tamil socio-cultural way of life. Every artistic action has a symbolic connotation closely attached to a particular symbol. Tamil Christians fall into the same realm because it has to do with the deep-seated symbolic system of the Tamil way of life.

The word symbol is derived from two Greek words, *syn* meaning "together," and *ballein*, meaning "to throw." Hence, *symbolon*, a sign, mark or token, implying throwing together or joining of an abstract idea and a visible sign of it; the sign serving to recall it, not by exact resem-

blance but by suggestion.[11] In this respect, a symbol is the falling together of an idea and its representation in such a way that they are inseparable. Thus, Christian teaching deals, in part, with supernatural elements that can be vividly suggested to the human mind only by symbolic words and signs.[12] In the early Christian Church, symbols were freely used as convenient fixatives of doctrinal points for many Christians who could not read and, during periods of persecution, as a secret language.[13] In our days, symbols are used on Church windows and furnishings for the purpose of indicating pictographically the cardinal elements of Christian faith, tradition and teaching by representing to the eye an interesting and valuable supplement to preaching and religious education. Christian symbols convey much about the fundamentals of Christianity. For example, symbolism is so powerful that if one takes two sticks to form a cross, the whole message, including the theology is conveyed. Symbolism is so definitive a language that the message conveyed, regardless of origin or context, is perfectly clear, whether one agrees with the message or not.[14] However, symbols can also be suggestive and ambiguous as each person interprets in light of personal experience.

All people, regardless of ethnic background or geographic placement, live by symbols in every area of their daily lives. Preceding all current manifestations of the universality of symbolism, there are the powerful symbols that speak of communal convictions and corporate commitments.[15] For example: The lotus immediately brings Buddhism to our mind; the Star of David, Judaism; the Cross, Christianity; the crescent moon and star, Islam; the hammer and sickle, Communism. These are not only agreed upon symbols but also they are visual evidence and art for which people and individuals have suffered and died. People's symbols reveal the ideology by which they live.[16] Much discussion has

[11]F. W. Dillistone, *The Power of Symbols*, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1986), pp. 13-14.

[12]F. Van Der Meer, *Early Christian Art*, trans. Peter & F. Brown, (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1967), p. 13.

[13]Meer, *Early Christian Art*, pp. 27-28.

[14]Canon E. N. West, *Outward Signs*, (New York: Walker Publishing Co., 1989), p. xv.

[15]Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 9.

[16]Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, p. 172

occurred in the use of symbolism in visual arts and religion. Visual arts have always been an essential aspect of the language of the Christian tradition. Today there is no corporate act of worship by any group of Christians that does not appropriate some aspect of art to enact its praise and prayer.[17] A critical study of what the Christian tradition have intended in their artistic forms can serve us today to illustrate the role of symbolism in its varied aspects.

Nowadays the word "symbol" seems to be in grave danger of being overemphasised. Almost everything appears to be a "symbol" of something else. In such a situation it is important to safeguard a certain precision in language and to prevent this term from losing all force and meaning. This is certainly the case in theological realm. Symbols have a long history of use in Christian contexts and they have provided significant links between theology, spirituality and culture in the contemporary world. One has to consider the place of symbolism in various sectors of contemporary life, especially in philosophy, in psychology, in visual arts and in religious contexts.

In the climate of the cultural renaissance today, the Churches in Asia are increasingly recognising the creative gifts of artists and appreciating their contributions in the life and mission of the churches.[18] It must be understood that both the Churches in Asia and their diverse cultural settings are under the lordship of Christ. Therefore, the use of indigenous forms of painting and sculpture which carry and express the Christian message naturally are encouraged.[19] These cultural expressions by Asian artists help to communicate the message to contemporary Asian people.[20] By accepting the rich traditions of various symbols within the history of the Christian faith, Asian Christians are beginning to interpret the gospel message through visual arts in Asia today. This is increasingly seen in the fields of theology, mission, ministry and Church structure. Again, it must be understood that the various forms of artistic expression in the

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[17]John W. Cook "Sources for the Study of Christianity and the Arts," cited in Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (ed.), *Art, Creativity and the Sacred*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1984), p. 321.

[18]Masao Takenaka, *Christian Art in Asia*, (Japan: Nissha Printing Co., Ltd., 1975), p. 22.

[19]Takenaka, *Christian Art in Asia*, p. 23.

[20]Takenaka, *Christian Art in Asia*, p. 24.

Asian situation are the outcome of the diverse experience of many Christian communities.

In a cultural setting in which Christianity was a strange new comer, it handled symbols as if they had no cultural limitations.[21] Symbols were absolutised and universalised.[22] The Christian missions that ventured into Asian scene considered local and indigenous symbols as irrelevant to the Christian message. Local symbols were therefore unused or viewed as idolatrous. Hence, local and indigenous symbolism were misrepresented or distorted. In this situation conversion to the Christian faith conveyed proselytism.[23] The early missionaries imposed their own inherited symbols on a cross-cultural setting. One has to appreciate that whatever symbols were implanted by foreign missions in those years stand as the base for a new search for meanings of symbols in Asia. Many of the Asian theologians and others are bias of the already existing Western symbols and images in Asia. Instead of being "critical" of those symbols, they are criticising the foreign missionaries who brought with them those symbols into Asia. Some of the Asian theologians seem to be creating symbols and images idealising a nationalistic Christianity. It is like replacing one set of icons by another set of icons! By ignoring the universal character of the Body of Christ from a global perspective, one may end up creating "inward looking" symbols and theology. For example: A symbol may be appropriate in a locality, but it is not mandatory that it has to be accepted and conceived as the finale by the community at large. It has to be localised and universalised. The old symbols brought by foreign missions into Asia has its own value and implications. Theologies were done from old symbols! There are numerous symbols that still have their own validity in the Asian contexts. Asian theologians must learn to look into what they already have before proceeding to search for new symbols.

Every symbol in Asia has its own cultural reference. Nevertheless, one need to consider seriously the "type" of gospel presented behind

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[21]C. S. Song, "The World of Images and Symbols," cited in Yeow Choo Lak, (ed.), *Doing Theology With People's Symbols & Images*, ATESEA Occasional Papers, (Singapore: ATESEA, 1989), p. 8.

[22]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, p. 8.

[23]Many converts in the past have gone through a process of proselytisation. The early Christian missionaries failed to find meanings in the already established symbolism that the converts inherited from their former cultures.

symbols in that particular cultural setting. It must be recognised that often the message of the gospel and the demand of the context are in tension. Hence, there is no individual or absolute culture significantly congenial to the Christian message. Asia has rich resources within its diversity for creating authentic Asian symbolism to help communicate the Christian message.

In Malaysia, Christianity is not only misunderstood as foreign; its local symbolism also remains foreign. There is a growing sensivity to missiological insights concerning the cultural relevance of symbolism used by the Malaysian Churches. A critical concept of indigenous Church life needs to be developed, by which the Malaysian Church may discern and express its symbolism within its culture. This leads us to re-examine the Malaysian context. This article is concerned with the study of symbolism in Christian visual arts within the Judaeo-Christian traditions, as a Christian means of artistic communication of the gospel in the context of Christian ministry. It will also attempt to identify and suggest some ways of doing theology with symbols emerging from the Malaysian context. Various "models" of symbolism will be proposed that could enrich the message and ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM).

Reflections on the Forms of Symbolism

This section will primarily recapitulate, survey and assess the theological understanding of visual arts and the basis upon which symbolism was incorporated. The issues raised here have much to do with both a theological and a historical understanding. It will attempt to explore (1) Jewish Symbolism in the Graeco-Roman Period; (2) Symbolism in the Early Church; (3) Symbolism and Iconography in the Eastern Church tradition; (4) Major concepts of Symbolism in the Romantic Movement; and (5) Some theories on symbolism after the Symbolist Movement

Jewish Symbolism in the Graeco-Roman Period

One of the most prominent authorities in the field of Jewish symbolism of the Graeco-Roman period and its visual interpretation is Eerwin Ramsdell Goodenough.[24] There were also others who presented a sys-

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[24]Jacob Neusner, "Studying Ancient Judaism through the Art of Synagogue," cited in D. Adams & D. A. Cappadona, (eds.), *Art as Reli-*

tematic interpretation of Jewish symbolism.[25] But they were merely critiques of Goodenough's study on Graeco-Roman Jewish symbolism. A peculiar phenomenon occurred during the centuries when Jewish traditions were being formulated in the *Talmud* and *Midrash*.[26] For example, the Jewish synagogue of *Dura Europos*, which was decorated in A.D. 244-245, reveals a sharp contrast with the usual prohibition about pictorial art. Evidently, there is no common agreement amongst archaeologists on the theme of the paintings in this synagogue. As modern archaeologists uncovered Jewish graves, funerary objects, and synagogues of that period, they found on them various animals and human figures, as well as vines and other pagan forms, in paintings, mosaic, relief, and in a few cases, in the "round."[27] This points to the fact that the early Jews were already actively expressing their religion through arts. This is best represented in the discovery of a Jewish synagogue outside the wall of the town *Dura Europos* in 1932 at the *Via Latina* catacomb.

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gious Studies, (New York: Crossroad, 1987), pp. 29-57. Cf. Goodenough was a historian of religion who produced archaeological evidences describing specific Jewish symbolism and the problems in its interpretation.

[25] Neusner "Studying Ancient Judaism," cited in Cappadona, *Art as Religious Studies*, pp. 43-57. Morton Smith (1915) and Arthur Darby Nock (1902-63), Both these scholars have generally presented a systematic critique of Goodenough's "Jewish Symbols." They were critical reviewers of Goodenough's interpretation of symbols and his hypotheses.

[26] E.R. Goodenough, "Jewish Symbolism in the Graeco-Roman Period" cited in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Volume 15, (Israel: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1985), p. 568. Cf. The Rabbinic tradition followed more rational rules when interpreting the second commandment. For instance, figures that belonged to prophetic visions and all human forms were forbidden because they might be made out to be objects of worship.

[27] Goodenough, "Jewish Symbolism," cited in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Volume 15, p. 569. Cf. "The Round:" The representations of bread symbol often look like "round objects," signifying anything that is round. For example, a basket of bread is considered as a symbol of "round object." See also Neusner cited in Cappadona, *Art as Religious Studies*, p. 41. See also Maguire, Maguire, & Duncan-Flowers, ed. *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House*, (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989) pp. 89-90. "Brimming baskets were also depicted in the mosaics of early Christian art. Baskets (round objects) of produce were symbol of prosperity."

The symbols borrowed from paganism (Hellenistic cults) often appear on monuments inextricably mingled with representations of objects used in Jewish worship. *Lubab* (fish), *ethrog* (bread) and *shofar* (wine) were common symbols in the *menorah*, (the Ark of the Law) of the Torah shrine.[28] These symbols are definitely Jewish and when used in devotion have taken on personal and direct value in expressing a meaning in connection with the death and life of those buried behind them.

At a time when pagans often put cult symbols on their graves, and when Christians were beginning universally to bury their dead with a cross or other Christian symbol in the hope of immortality, the Jews of the period probably used their own symbols to express a similar hope.[29] Fish, bread and wine not only conveyed symbolic religious meanings of immortality, but also were evidently used by Christians in a design scratched on a stone of a Roman catacomb.[30] The Jewish use of symbolism occurred mostly from the third to the sixth centuries. These centuries were the very time when the Christian church used such forms as vine symbols[31] with reverence and meaning. Since Christians began their pic-

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[28]Goodenough, "Jewish Symbolism," cited in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 15, pp. 569-570. Goodenough finds considerable evidence in Jewish cult and observance that fish, bread and wine rites came into Jewish practice during the Hellenistic period. He suggests that one should also review the pagan period at that time, i.e. symbols as represented in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Greece and Rome.

[29]Goodenough, "Jewish Symbolism," cited in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 15, p. 580. When the Jews adopted the same lingua franca of symbols, they used images borrowed from other cultic objects in a new way especially on their tombs to show their hope in the world to come. The theme of deliverance was prominent in their art. Most of these symbols had Old Testament references. For example, depiction of OT figures of Abraham, Noah, Moses, Daniel and the three men-theme of deliverance (symbolised on tombstones).

[30]Goodenough, "Jewish Symbolism," cited in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 15, p. 570 & p. 574. "Birds eating grapes symbolising immortality to Christians," were found in Roman catacombs at *Dura Europos*.

[31]Neusner cited in Cappadona, *Art as Religious Studies*, p. 41. See also Maguire, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House*, pp. 23-24. "The vine was also a symbol that had been widespread in pre-Christian art and that acquire new meanings with the advent of the 'new religion.' It was associated with *Bacchus*, a pagan deity. Grapevine ap-

torial art largely by borrowing and adapting a Jewish tradition of Old Testament art, it is often debated which of the two religions began the adapting of pagan symbolism. The apex of Jewish usage coincides with the apex of Christian usage, so it is difficult to suggest that the Jews were using forms which at that time had no meaning and gave no access to their own belief.[32] Symbols and religious experiences have a way of disengaging themselves from their original explanations. The transition from religion with old forms and values has given rise to new meanings. Apparently, this may have been the case between the Jewish religion and the Christian faith.

Certain objects used in observing Jewish rites and sacraments have become symbols of Judaism, often with a meaning beyond their original function. Some examples are:

1) The *menorah*, a seven-branched gold candelabrum, designed for use in the Temple sanctuary (cf. Exodus 25:31). It has been the characteristic symbol evoking associations with ancient ritual since the destruction of Jerusalem.
2) In response to the commandment "bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead" (cf. Deuteronomy 6:8-9).
3) Another common symbol, devoid of religious significance, is the six-pointed Star known in Hebrew as the *Magen* David (shield, or Star of David). It became the selected symbol of the Zionist Movement in the nineteenth century.

Christian symbolism was expressed within the framework of the common Jewish symbols. The symbols, which had become so meaningful to the Jews, were taken over by the Christians as part of their heritage with newer meanings. The period from the rise of Christianity until the birth of Islam (in the seventh century) is often regarded as the classical age in the development of Judaism.[33] These centuries saw Jews establish the

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peared on household objects i.e. jar, clay lamp. Vine signified the Eucharist, but it was understood as sanctioned by Christ himself as an image for his own people. The vineyard came to be understood as the Kingdom of God."

[32]Neusner cited in Cappadona, *Art as Religious Studies*, p. 42

[33]David and Linda Alshuler, "Judaism and Art," cited in Cappadona, (ed.), *Art, Creativity, and the Sacred*, pp. 156.

home and the synagogue as centers for the ritual life of Judaism. Jews sought to maintain their special identity away from Hellenism. But after many unexpected discoveries, which led to considerable scholarly analysis, the previous views of rabbinic Judaism were modified to include close relationships between Judaism and Hellenism.[34] Jews shared in the Hellenistic cultural environment in which they lived.

From the seventh to the eighteenth century, Jews were living in countries dominated either by Christianity or Islam. Therefore, there were no particular Jewish symbols. Certain Jewish motifs do recur- "the lion of Judah," biblical characters, the ancient Solomon's temple or the Decalogue tablets. The *menorah* is now the symbol of the state of Israel. Jewish art of the Middle Ages is distinguished not so much by style or even by symbols, but by function.[35] Thus, the scope of Jewish symbolism in the Middle Ages was broad. Unfortunately, however, relatively little of it survived the long centuries of discrimination and persecution that Jews endured.[36] It was not until the twentieth century that the nature of Jewish art and symbolism, and its relation to the history of Judaism witnessed a dramatic new interest by academic study. Jewish symbolism enabled the Christian scholars to compare and contrast its artwork with contemporary settings.

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[34]David and Linda Alshuler, "Judaism and Art," cited in Cappadona, (ed.), *Art, Creativity, and the Sacred*, pp. 159-160. Archaeological Discoveries in 1936: a) Burial Caves of the 3rd to 4th century of some of the most important Rabbis, sarcophagi and walls were decorated with Hellenistic symbols of the afterlife and with human and animal forms. b) A naked Egyptian princess is portrayed fetching the infant Moses from the bulrushes, just a few feet away from the niche reserved for scolls of the Torah.

[35]Joseph Gutmann, (ed.), *No Graven Images: Studies in Art and the Hebrew Bible*, (New York: KTAV Publishing House Inc., 1971), pp. 36-38.In Jewish religious documents, ceremonial objects, and synagogue architecture & decorations- the purpose of art is with the idea of " beautification" of the commandments. Art is seen clearly in the *Ketubot* (Jewish Marriage contracts- a document) which includes symbols of wedding scenes, flora & fauna, family coats of arms and often the most common scenes of Jerusalem. The synagogue architecture as adapted to suit local styles, i.e. Roman basilicas, Gothic and Romanesque models.

[36]Altshuler cited in *Art, Creativity and the Sacred*, p. 160.

Among recent Church historians and art historians, it has been widely assumed that the Church Fathers were opposed to the creation of images.[37] It was believed that arts hardly existed until the time of Constantine in A.D. 313. However in recent years, much study of Church history, archaeological and artistic discoveries has provided evidence contrary to these ideas. However it was believed that the early Church Fathers followed the rabbinical practice of interpreting scriptural narratives as elaborate symbolical representations of spiritual truths.[38] This is similar to the Jewish rabbinic tradition as discussed earlier. It implies that the early Church Fathers borrowed Jewish symbols from the Graeco-Roman period. It must be noted that the early Christians and the Church Fathers kept God above the sensual and worldly. Therefore paintings were not specifically forbidden but the carving of statues was not allowed. Hence, the early Church Fathers and Christians contributed another dimension in the early Church symbols. For example: Christian symbols were outward and visible signs of divinity, doctrines, spiritual ideas, rites (Holy Communion and Baptism) and sacred seasons. Creeds and confessions retain their character as symbols of faith. Among other numerous symbols are: doctrine of trinity which is symbolised by the triangle in various forms; the Star symbolizes the Epiphany; symbolic gestures such as laying on of hands; symbolic forms of speech e.g. *maranatha*, the Lord cometh-which served as a watchword by which Christians recognised each other. In later years, when early Christians were permitted to build houses of worship, arts of woodcarving and stained glass painting developed, it is within this context that Christ was often pictured together with the four evangelists. Certain animal and bird symbols were used, so as to distinguish the gospels from one another, for some of the early converts could not read, and names would prove of no value to them.[39]

In the light of the above discussion, one can see clear distinctions and continuities between the early and the post-Constantinian period. There were clear distinctions between a Church that was supposedly rela-

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[37]John Dillenberger, *A Theology of Artistic Sensibilities: The Visual Arts and the Church*, (New York: Crossroad, 1986), p. 6.

[38]Vergilius Ferm, (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, (USA: Poplar Books, N.D.) pp. 753-755.

[39]Ferm, (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, pp. 753-754.

tively pure, simple, clear and spiritual in the early centuries (first century to fourth century) and the Church that followed, which showed corruptions of power, the opulence of art and architecture, and a deadening security through the Constantinian promotion of Christianity.[40] However the fact remains that more art and architecture survived from the latter than the former.

The earliest known extant of Christian art was found in the catacombs, private cemeteries and other sources in the frontier town of *Dura Europos*, a town buried in sand from the third century. Examining the symbolic figure (icon) of Christ of the early Christians confirms the fact that symbols were transformed and used by borrowing from Hellenistic world and culture.[41] Therefore, one sees that iconography (in the form of paintings) had its origins within the early Church context.

Three types of symbols give significant examples of the transformation of previous symbols into Christian ones in the early Church. The first type were heraldic symbols or emblems (badges of identification such as the *Chi Rho*, the Anchor, the Fish and others.[42] The second type

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[40]Dillenberger, *A Theology of Artistic Sensibilities*, p. 3.

[41]See Gutmann, *No Graven Image*, pp. 185-189. Figure of Christ: Christ is represented in the figure of *Orpheus* and as the Good Shepherd. *Orpheus* figure has no biblical basis but the Good Shepherd symbolised Psalm 23. There were other major figures- Shepherd, *Orants* and Philosophers belonging to pagan classical world. *Orants* were painted figures that appears standing with arms and hands uplifted and eyes gazing to heavens. The archaeologists who discovered these figures called them "praying ones." These figures expressed the firm faith of the Christians in the life after death. The *Orant* symbolised faith for the early Christian Church by historical figures not by mere mythical figures used by pagans. The gesture of the *Orant* is symbolic of the resurrection and blessing. *Hermes*, the mythical messenger of the pagan gods was represented as the Good Shepherd-showing Christ as the fulfillment of *Hermes*. These figures were associated with the Good Shepherd theme. However, the *Orpheus* figure and Good Shepherd images evoked beliefs in deliverance through Christ and the possibility of faith being transmitted to the non-believers.

[42]See Ratha Doyle Mcgee, *Symbols: Signposts of Devotion*, (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1956). See also Robert Wetzler & Helen Hunt-

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[39]Ferm, (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, pp. 753-754.

the changing of the Church from its obscure beginnings to its central role in society. The relationship between the Church and the State was established, though at times held in tension.

Throughout these centuries artist sometimes emphasized the human side, other times the divine. In Byzantine art the divine and transcendent Christ was stressed.[45] Today Byzantine centers of Ravenna, Istanbul and Palermo are places of Byzantine art. In Churches of both the East and the West, iconographic programmes of the fifth and sixth centuries include several ingredients, namely, biblical cycles, liturgical elements, and the reigning of Christ.[46] In the Eastern art, the biblical cycles were woven into both sacramental and imperial patterns, whereas in the Western art biblical cycles had a liturgical base.

To summarise the use of symbolism within the Graeco-Roman period and the early Christian tradition reflect both a distinctive and compromising usage in their changing situations. Obviously many factors contributed to the forms of symbolism. However, Jewish and early Christian symbolism had strong and implicit biblical motifs and references.

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the change of the location was a change in art. It resulted in the change of the style of art from Graeco-Roman art into essentially Eastern and Oriental style we designate as Byzantine. Ravenna was made the capital of the Western part and Constantinople for the eastern part. In the Churches of Ravenna there are magnificent examples of early Byzantine art. Two techniques used were fresco and mosaic. Fresco was painted on masonry and in medium of mosaic, tiny cubes of coloured stone or glass are pressed into the plaster while it is still wet. (pp. 47-48). But most important in determining the style of the mosaic are the Eastern and Byzantine characteristics. Discovered from the catacomb of Domitilla-Eastern Mediterranean Art: "Christ had narrower face with long hair, pointed beard and large expressive eyes, (a fresco). Whereas the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (AD 359) a Crypt of St. Peter's, Rome- in a fresco (Christ is beardless when young and is fully bearded in mid-life). Also the mosaic called "The Christ of the Byzantine Mosaic" has arms outstretched, a gesture appropriate to the time-transcending sacramental rites-blesses the loaves and fishes. Here Christ is beardless, (mosaic).

[45] John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Thought,* trans. Yves Dubois, (USA: Athens Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 173, 179, & 195.

[46] Gennadios Limouris, (ed.), *Icons: Windows on Eternity,* (Geneva, WCC Publications, 1990), p. 25.

From the early Christian symbolic forms of art, we have seen the grandeur of both Western and Byzantine art. There are two forms of symbols that are explicitly expressed by the Western and Eastern Churches, namely the Gothic architecture and the eastern icon. A host of symbols and images (symbolism) were used in liturgy, vestments, architecture, flags, banners, sculpture and paintings. It is interesting to note some of the variations of these symbols in the different traditions.[47]

With this background, a discontinuity in the history of art with a violent distortion especially of the image of Christ in the Romanesque art of the medieval period is seen. Thereupon the architecture of Romanesque art, which had a mixture of northern barbarian and Byzantine elements further, combined to create new forms of symbolic expressions. However the thirteenth century replaced Romanesque-distorting art with the versatile Gothic art and architecture. It was during the "high" renaissance that the art of the Gothic and Byzantine periods became the product of a corporate consciousness. Individual artist were known during this period such as Michelangelo and Leonardo.

Symbolism and Iconography in the Eastern Church Tradition

The characteristics of all icon-painting (except the Coptic) derive ultimately from the post-Iconoclastic Byzantine painters and have been preserved today. Icons (for example, of Christ and Mary) play a more conspicuous part in worship than do statues in the West; they are repeatedly kissed, carried in procession, and otherwise reverenced. Some Catholic Churches of Eastern rites now have statues as well as or even instead of icons, a liturgically corrupt practice.[48] In 843, public devotion to icons was resumed with a much more self-conscious theological basis than before: the icons were to have a much more profoundly worked out religious function beyond that of illustration and teachings.[49] The theological defence and veneration of the icons were inextricably bound up

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[47]See West, *Outward Signs*, pp. 87-123. See also in C.F. Weidmann, (ed.), *Dictionary of Church Terms and Symbols*, (Norwalk, Connecticut: C.R.Gibson Co., N.D.).

[48]Donald Attwater, (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia Dictionary*, 2nd ed., (Toronto: Casell & Company Ltd., 1951), p. 242.

[49]John Baggley, *Doors of Perception: Icons & their Spiritual Significance*, (London: Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1987), pp. 21-42.

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with the doctrines of Creation and the Incarnation. There were three main theological issues that formed the bases for theological defence of icons:

1) The first issue was the place of matter in God's scheme of things. **The problem**: If paint and pigment were "mere matter," then any veneration could be interpreted as idolatry. **The basis**: "Matter"is the work of the Divine Artist, and as such mediates divine grace. Man is restored in Christ to share in the creative work of the Divine Artist as the priest of Creation, being the Mediator between the material world and the Creator.

2) The second issue concerns the reality of the incarnation. **The problem**: The whole question of the revelation of God in Christ. The Old Testament (i.e. Mosaic Law) prohibits the worship of images. **The basis**: To argue against icons on the basis of the Old Testament was to ignore the fact that the Son of God had come in the flesh and restored the image of man. Theology and art, Word and Image are to be seen as two aspects of the one Revelation (Jesus Christ).

3) The Third issue was the veneration of icons. **The problem**: The worship of images. **The basis**: The defenders of the icons asserted that images were distinct from the originals they represented- Christ merited relative veneration and honour, different from the worship that is reserved for God alone. Such veneration as was paid to an icon was directed not to the paint and pigment, but to the reality represented in the paint and pigment.

Noting that after the Byzantine triumph of Orthodoxy, throughout the Byzantine world, Churches began iconographic schemes, which were executed through mosaics, frescoes, or painted wood-panel icons. There were three symbolic icons of the Transfiguration, the Raising of Lazarus and Descent into Hell, which were visual images that articulated the revelation given in Christ.

It was already a declining practice in the Western Churches when the Reformation banished the worship of icons. At the Second Council of Nicea in 787, the veneration of worship and honour to the persons of saints through icons was condemned.[50] But the iconoclastic doctrine and

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[50]Todor Sabev, "Social and Political Consequences of the Iconoclastic Crisis," cited in Limouris, (ed.), *Icons: Windows on Eternity*, pp. 46-47.

practice continued with the support of the dominating power in Byzantine. Christian Churches[51] both inside and outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire developed *iconodouleia* (the veneration of icons) traditions, i.e. Egyptian, Nubian, Ethiopian, Syrian, Amernian, Roman and Georgian. Although, the regional Constantiople Church led the triumph over iconoclastic groups, this led to a doubly forceful renewal of iconography and *iconodouleia* in the Byzantine Church. The iconographic tradition first developed in the Syro-Palestinian or Asian geographical cultural context. Both the *iconodouleia* and iconography traditions continue to spread to all pre-Reformation Churches. The difference was mainly in style and a degree of spirituality.

The iconographic movement that began in the Eastern Church was later seen as an influencing force in Medieval traditions of visual art, in Continental Reformed traditions and in popular movements, especially monasticism. Predominantly, the issue was not the role of saints but the images of saints, Christ and the Virgin Mary. These iconoclastic movements appropriated evocatively in societies of cultural pluralism. Iconography and symbolism have their dangerous side. They can lead to idolatry, empty ritualism and legalistic piety.[52] Symbols and images may become laden with so much interpretation that the essential message is obscured.[53] It is said that the icon expresses a link between the incarnation and the economy of God's creation.[54] The iconographic tradition has much to do with the debate about the integrity of life, and the transformation of society.[55] Also in this connection, icons are visualisations of the mystery of God, especially the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The defenders of icons agree that Christian symbol ultimately refers to the sign of the Cross that is a passage through non-

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[51]Todor Sabev, "Social and Political Consequences of the Iconoclastic Crisis," cited in Limouris, (ed.), *Icons: Windows on Eternity*, pp. 46-47. See also Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1981), p. 110. Maguire argues that: "Byzantine artists were unaware of the debt that they owed to late antique oratory, and to its survival in the schools of Constantinople."

[52]"A Report of an Ecumenical Seminar on Renewal through Iconography: 26-31 October 1987," cited in WCC, *Come and See*, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1988), p. 6.

[53]"A Report," cited in WCC, *Come and See*, p. 6.

[54]"A Report," cited in WCC, *Come and See*, pp. 9-10.

[55]"A Report," cited in WCC, *Come and See*, p. 7.

vision, non-representation, and non-*gnosis* (unknowing).[56] But they insists that the icon is a doorway to a deeper, personal contemplation of the Lord.[57] Veneration of icons is holiness and spirituality for them! This holiness is always referred to a model (icon) and is to be taken as absolute. Its function is to open a relationship with "holiness" which in an absolute sense, belongs to God.[58] Therefore, an icon is "holy" because the saints who is represented in that icon is holy. This symbolic image is the medium of a personal relationship that culminates in all the signs and symbols of the liturgical worship and sacraments of the Church.[59]

It is beyond the scope of this article to give a detailed study of iconography and symbolism. By way of concluding the foregoing discussion, the use of symbolism in iconography in the Eastern Church will be recapitulated. Icon, an image or likeness, usually of a religious subject, especially characteristic of Eastern Christian Churches. The term is derived from the Greek *ikenai*, meaning "to be like."[60] After the fourth century, when the early Church finally overcame its Jewish-derived suspicion of attempts to express religious events in visual forms, it arbitrarily applied the word "icon" to religious paintings, mosaics, bas-reliefs, or other objects.[61] Most icons reflect traditions of subject matter and style developed under the supervision of the Eastern Churches. But initially they was under ecclesiastical supervision of Constantinople (Western Church). This was partly the influence of Jewish and early Christian fear of idolatry. Therefore, within these basic conventions, Byzantine icons changed. This culminated in the Iconoclastic Controversy (between 726 and 843 A.D.). Symbols were being depicted in the form of images (i.e. icons). Iconoclastic means "image breaking." Emperor Leo 111 ordered images to be removed from Churches and public buildings. Constantine V developed a theology that opposed all images. All pictorials symbolising and representing Christ and the saints was regarded as creating idol. And any reverence given to such images was considered idolatrous (cf. Nicea II). It was only in the Synod of 843, which affirmed the decisions of the Council of Nicea II that a theological

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[56]"A Report," cited in WCC, *Come and See*, pp. 2-3.

[57]"A Report," cited in WCC, *Come and See*, p. 4.

[58]"A Report," cited in WCC, *Come and See*, p. 3.

[59]"A Report," cited in WCC, *Come and See*, p. 5.

[60]J. Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture*, (New York: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 83.

[61]Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries*, p. 85.

case for iconography and icon veneration was developed. The use of symbols in the Eastern Church tradition had both its richness and corrupting tendencies.

Major Concepts of Symbolism in the Romantic Movements

Romanticism grew from the rejection of the eighteenth century doctrines of restraint, objectivity, decorum, and rationalism as well as the use of fixed forms for artistic expression.[62] It was fed by the growing concerns with folk expression, primitivism, the sublime, the remote past, Gothic architecture, mysticism, and the life of the common people.[63] Within this context, the turning point for contemporary interest in symbolic theory arose with a group thinkers and literary figures who have come to be known collectively as the Romantic Movement. Romanticism was one aspect of the general spirit of resistance against rationalism. Briefly, looking at two of the Romantics:[64] (a) Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) saw the perfection of knowledge not in abstraction but in symbols, since symbols enable one to view all the phenomena of nature and history as a divine communication. His protest was against Kant; and (b) Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) saw that the task of aesthetics lay in the search for a universal logic of artistic symbolisation, to which end he developed his own theory of evolution of language, i.e. folk poetry.

In the final two decades of the nineteenth century, the Symbolist Movement was formed. Unlike the Romantics, who had been more concerned with the interpretation of specific symbols or general theory about symbolisation processes, the Symbolists were preoccupied with creating symbols of ideal beauty, which were appropriate to their age.[65] For instance, [66] Stephane Mallarme (1842-1898) used Christian ritual symbol-

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[62]See C. Hugh Holman, "Romanticism," cited in *Encyclopedia Americana*, Volume 23, (USA: 1983), pp. 678-682.

[63]See C. Hugh Holman, "Romanticism," cited in *Encyclopedia Americana*, Volume 23, p. 680.

[64]See Heisig, "Symbolism," cited in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 14, p. 201.

[65]See Heisig, "Symbolism," cited in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 14, p. 202.

[66]See Heisig, "Symbolism," cited in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 14, p. 203.

ism to erect a metaphysic to explain symbols. Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) exalted the value of symbols by inverting Christian symbols into a sort of diabolism. Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) formed principles of symbolism by locating them within a Christian context. In short, all of the Symbolists stood outside of the Christian frame in their search for an alternate center to their aesthetic-mystico-religious sensibility, namely "ideal Beauty."

The impact the Romantics and the Symbolists had on symbolism influenced the study of symbols at the turn of the twentieth century undertaken by philosophers, historians, anthropologists, psychologists and theologians. For example, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) sought to uncover social implications in the symbols of the society. Mary Douglas showed how the study of symbols is relevant to the modern world. Freud and Jung developed psychological theories of the symbol, i.e. dreams and psyche. Paul Tillich tried to show the place of the symbol in human culture and religious language. Mircea Eliade contended that symbols reveal certain dimensions of reality that would otherwise elude our knowing.

With the progress of technological advancements, religious traditions across the world have found themselves in a modern experience where symbols play an important role. The aim of this article is to translate symbolism in the Malaysian situation but before proceeding to the Malaysian scene and symbolism there is yet one more task, which is to review briefly some theories on symbolism after the impact of Symbolist Movement. The aim here is only to describe the specific nature of some theories on symbolism, and to apply them with "localised language and motifs" in the Malaysian Christian context for doing theology and ministry.

Some Theories on Symbolism after the Symbolist Movement

Although the Symbolist Movement was short-lived, its influence on theories of symbolism cannot be denied. It cross-developed with modern anthropology, psychology, theology, religious-history and philosophy. Many Christian theologians and academic scholars shared many of the Symbolists' instincts of the mystical dimension of symbolism. With the turn of the twentieth century, interest in symbolism continued to strengthen and grow in academic credibility. Having made this general evaluation, four areas of discussion in symbolism of specialised fields and their contributors will be surveyed with a brief comment to suggest

the relevance of the emerging theories of symbolism for the Malaysian context.

Psychologist Jung [67]

Jung came to the conclusion that personal factors-both conscious and unconscious in the human psyche suggest a psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature, which is identical in all individuals. Jung makes a distinction between individual, personal symbols and social or collective symbols. In either case they are natural and spontaneous products. A living symbol gives expression to an unconscious element or factor. Many of the collective symbols are religious images. The believer accepts them as revealed, as being of divine origin. On the other hand, the origins of the symbolic aspect of religious images are deeply buried in the mystery of the past that has no human source. In such cases as implied above, Jung says that symbols are collective representations emanating from primeval dreams and creative fantasies. They are involuntary spontaneous manifestations and by no means intentional inventions. One particular theory that can be derived from Jung is a concept of the archetype and the collective unconscious. This is a significant theory for inculturation of symbolism in the Malaysian context.

Anthropologist Mary Douglas

Douglas states in her book *Natural Symbols*[68] that the intimate relationship, which exists between the human body and human society, represents bodily symbols that are appropriate in a particular society's context. She says that man attempts to establish order and control in matters concerning his own body, so he seeks categories of stability for his social life. Therefore man cannot grow to bodily and cultural maturity except within a coherent symbolic system. One can see this to be the case in the Malaysian Tamil way of life. The most satisfactory symbolic system is that which is structured organically and maintains an intimate relation between social and bodily expression. It is on the basis of this theory that she argues that human language and rituals are influenced by the

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[67]See Wallace B. Cliff, *Jung and Christianity: the Challenge of Reconciliation*, (Melbourne: Dove Communications, 1983), pp. 16-23 & pp. 51-57.

[68]See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, (London: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 112-115.

structure of the society and vice versa. In this connection, every society discovers its most authentic symbols by drawing upon the analogies offered by the patterned behaviour of a human body. Douglas's theory of natural symbols could help us to study and understand the symbolic traditions, rituals, systems and expressions that are contained for example in the Tamil community and the Malaysian society at large.

Theologian Paul Tillich

For Paul Tillich[69] a religious symbol depends on the definition of religion. "That which concerns us ultimately" is the phrase used by him to describe a symbol. If a symbol points to an ultimate concern then it may legitimately be termed as religious symbol. In this case for him the sacramental material is not a sign but a symbol. Tillich distinguishes clearly between symbol and sign. For example, a sacramental symbol is neither a thing nor a sign. It participates in the power of what it symbolises, and therefore it can be a medium of the Spirit. Religious symbols mediate ultimate reality through things, persons and events. This is because of their mediating functions and they thereby receive the quality of being 'holy.' In the experience of Holy places, times, books, words, images and acts, symbols of the 'holy' reveal something of the 'Holy' itself. This in turn produces the experience of 'holiness' in persons and groups, (i.e. Christian Church with its symbols). Therefore symbols are socially rooted and socially supported. Tillich's theological work is directly related to the interpretation of religious symbols, so that the secular man can understand and be moved by those symbols around him. On evaluating Tillich's theory of religious symbolism: Tillich's theory can be applied to understand the existing religious symbols in Malaysia with its socio-religious context. The Christian community could identify certain religious symbols and finds its "ultimate concern" for expressing the gospel with authenticity in a socially pluralistic society like Malaysia.

Religious Historian Mircea Eliade

Eliade is the most establishes and widely informed of the twentieth-century historians of religions.[70] Eliade directs his attention to a multi-

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[69]See F.W. Dillistone, (ed.), *Myth & Symbol*, SPCK 7 series, (London: SPCK, 1966), pp. 15-34.

[70]See D.A. Cappadona, (ed.), *Symbolism, the Sacred, and the Arts: Mircea Eliade*, (New York: Crossroad, 1986), pp. 1-52.

tude of particular objects (i.e. icons) and events by considering their significance in the human relationship to the divine. He lays special stress on the importance of what he calls *hierophanies*, that is manifestations of the sacred in the context of the secular world. Such manifestations, he claims, are always represented and later recalled by means of symbols. The symbol participates in the sacredness and may itself come to be considered as a sacred element, i.e. the elements of the Eucharist. Two functions of religious symbols are noted in Eliade's theory: (i) Integration: The religious symbol allows man to discover a certain unity of the world and at the same time to disclose to himself his proper destiny as an integral part of the world. (ii) Conciliation: Religious symbols serve to hold together what seem to be directly contradictory or paradoxical features of the world. Eliade's theory of religious symbolism, with the concepts of integration and conciliation, could help to communicate new symbolic forms, either through extension or combination of historical symbols and symbolic forms, in the multi-religious situation in Malaysia.

The Use of Symbolism in the Malaysian Context

In the light of the discussion so far, this section will recapitulate Luther's theological understanding on symbolism and suggest some ways of doing theology with symbols emerging from the Malaysian situation. Hence, this will set out the background for discussion on appropriating symbolic elements within the historical and ministerial context of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM). While the history and traditions of the medieval period are an important part of the Christian heritage, it was the Reformation that gave birth to the particular challenges and tensions that characterise the modern world-especially in regard to Christians and their relations to the arts.[71]

Luther's Theological Understanding on Symbolism

The Reformation emerged as a departure from the undue emphasis on relics, and the veneration of the icons, i.e. saints. Luther with much wisdom insisted that every form that instills idolatry must be discarded. His primary concern was the preaching of the gospel and administering the sacraments. He was concerned that all acts of discarding the existing icons and images of his time must be done on the basis of the Word of

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[71]See William A. Dyrness, *Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001), pp. 51-67.

God. Luther stressed this because of the act of Karlstadt who led the people to the destruction of the images and icons in Wittenberg. For Luther, the theological position in this matter is that idolatry must be judged on the basis of faith. Therefore arts expressed through any form must be seen in the light of the Scripture and faith. For him, "images for memorial and witness, such as crucifixes and images of saints, are to be tolerated."[72] Luther's understanding of the role of art was firmly based on the Scriptures. He was concerned about the importance of reading and hearing the Word of God. Hence, for Luther, the liturgical and artistic expressions of the former Church (i.e. Catholic Church in Germany) were to be maintained if they were not obstacles to the Christian faith and the believers' freedom. The icons, images and other symbolic paintings were to be treated as examples and models of faith, and not as objects of veneration. Luther saw a unity in the preaching of the Word, sacrament, liturgy and the visual expressions (i.e. music, paintings & etc) of the Church as based on faith. For Luther, the Christian has freedom of expression through any forms of visual arts as long as all arts are tied in their use on faith in Christ.[73] In other words, art forms are to serve the gospel and not become the gospel, in which case they become idols!

Having noted Luther's theological understanding on symbolism in visual arts, the ELCM could consider the following suggestions:

1) To recognize the limitations of inculturation of symbols especially when the ELCM is inclined to use traditional symbols of the past;
2) To ascertain relevant theological basis for developing symbols that addresses issues on culture and social changes;
3) To inculcate in the ELCM a sense of appreciation for visual arts in its historical context;
4) To cultivate in the ELCM a critical understanding of how to proclaim the gospel in the Malaysian context.

In order to avoid labels such as "foreign Tamil Lutheran Church" or "westernised Christian Church," ELCM must meaningfully break away from the shadows of the past. However, ELCM has to appreciate what-

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[72]See *Luther's Works*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), Volume 40, p. 91.
[73]See *Luther's Works*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1996), Volume 51, p. 85.

ever symbols implanted by Swedish missionaries and the pastors of South India in the early years. Those symbols stand as the base for new search for meanings in symbols in the ELCM. There are numerous symbols that still have their own validity in the ELCM. Nevertheless, concerted effort must be taken by the ELCM towards inculturation of its architecture, hymns and music, vestments, liturgy, language (use of *Bahasa* Malaysia), literature, service to non-believers and approach to its ministries. Inculturation is something that should happen naturally when the Christian community appropriates the symbols and images around it and immerses itself in the larger community's life and struggle.[74] Therefore, the symbol that gives meaning always participates in the living experience of the community, which produces and sustains the symbol.[75] This must be done without getting trapped in the tyranny of new contextual forms and symbols.

Doing Theology with Symbols emerging from the Malaysian Context

There are several ways to theologise symbols by thinking, dreaming, reflecting and visualising. Distinctive symbolic concepts like *Muhibbah* (goodwill), *Kesetiaan* (loyalty), *Harmoni* (harmony), *Kesejahteraan* (peace), and *Perpaduan* (unity) are significant people-oriented 'instruments' for creating symbols that would integrate theology and the Malaysian situation. These symbolic concepts are in common usage in the lives of the ordinary Malaysian people. The government with a good intention to establish "a matured and tolerant Malaysian society"[76] promotes these symbolic concepts among the people. Therefore, it is imperative that the Malaysian Church and Christians undertake the task to theologise them. A serious effort must be made to bring theology down to the grass-roots level of the Church.[77] Nonetheless, theology did not deeply take root in the Malaysian soil because of the fear that it may "accommodate" too much from other religious practices and forms of the

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[74]Albert Sundararaj Walters, *We Believe in One God: Reflections on the Trinity in the Malaysian Context*, (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002), p. 259.

[75]Walters, *We Believe in One God*, p. 263.

[76]*Wawasan 2020 (Vision 2020)*, (Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Penerangan Malaysia, 1991), p. 3.

[77]See Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology*, (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1997), pp. 232-233.

nation. An "ideal" Malaysian Church should be one that is in Malaysia but does not "belong" to Malaysia. In other words, it is a Church, which absorbs the nation's principles but does not accept them outright. The best example is the use of the national language, *Bahasa* Malaysia. The Church must adopt the national language policy and use it to enhance the Church's ministry amidst the Malaysian people but must not compromise on unconstitutional and parochial demands.[78] What concerns here are matters pertaining to the use of Bahasa Malaysia terminology for theologising symbolic concepts arising from the Malaysian context. The context has to be taken seriously and the Church needs to develop relevant and meaningful symbolism for the different cultural situations in Malaysia. However this includes the plurality of religious faiths, socio-political structures and socio-economic conditions which are crucial factors in the cultural context of Malaysia. The Church should communicate its faith in language and symbolic actions, which is understood in that particular cultural context of Malaysia. The terminology and symbolic forms emerging from the various cultures in Malaysia could be used appropriately for the expression of the Christian faith.

The Symbol of *Muhibbah*

The word *Muhibbah* or "goodwill" comes from the Arabic word, which denotes the meaning "love," "friendship" or "affection."[79] Evidently, the word *Muhibbah* had a strong emphasis in Malaysia after the racial riot events of 13 May 1969.[80] Malaysians today use the word *Muhibbah* to symbolise goodwill among their neighbours. *Muhibbah* or "friendship" is a vital means for our common social, economic and political well being. Friendship, though it is an ordinary social event, has a powerful effect on our lives in Malaysia and it is the best basis for further deeper and lasting relationship.[81] The word *Muhibbah* can become an expression of the gospel by Christians and the Church as a way of preparing Malaysians to hear the gospel. Significantly, then, the biblical

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[78]See Rev. Dr. Thu En Yu, "The Vision of a Malaysian Church," cited in *The Malaysian Church in the 90s*, (Kuala Lumpur: Christian Federation of Malaysia, 1992), pp. 50-51.

[79]S. Batumalai, *A Malaysian Theology of Muhibbah*, (Kuala Lumpur: Batumalai S. 1990), pp. 1-20.

[80]*A Report of the May 13 Tragedy*, (Kuala Lumpur: The National Operations Council, 1969), pp. 21-24.

[81]Walters, *We Believe in One God*, p. 267.

mandate "love your neighbour" (Leviticus 19:18), continuously motivates Christians to practise *Muhibbah* among their neighbours. Hence it is of vital importance for the Church to theologise and relate the symbol of *Muhibbah* in a pluralistic society. Malaysia is a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural society comprising of Malays, Chinese, Indians and other minorities. To establish a good interaction with others and make known the gospel, Christians need to impart a spirit of goodwill. *Muhibbah* among people was the deepest concern of Christ's ministry. This calls for the Church and Christians to enhance joy, hope and peace while appropriating the concerns of *Muhibbah* among the people of Malaysia.

<center>The Symbol of *Kesetiaan*</center>

In 1969 there was a national racial riot and fear gripped the different communities. A desperate search was made for something that would create a cohesive and united people.[82] There was born a strong determination to establish national unity among all Malaysians and it was in this context that the *Rukunegara* was implemented in 1970.[83] One of the five principles of the *Rukunegara* reiterates "loyalty or *Kesetiaan*" to the King and nation. *Kesetiaan* requires every Malaysian to show loyalty to the King and the state. Today all Malaysians are duty bound to uphold the principle of *Kesetiaan* to the King and nation. How can one theologise the word "*Kesetiaan* or loyalty?" In the Christian parlance, the word "*Kesetiaan* or loyalty" implicates "kindness," "faithfulness," and "obedience." God commanded Abraham: " Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness..." (Genesis 21:23b). This command of God implies the same demand on the issue of loyalty for Christians who are residing as citizens in Malaysia. Loyalty to God and the nation is of importance in the eyes' of God. The primary concern of Christians and the Church is to remain faithful (*Kesetiaan)* to God, but also to be reminded about their loyalty to the nation. The word "faithfulness" to God can be understood in terms of the Christian obligations to God and the state (Romans 13: 1-14). Christians and the Church are called to exemplify stewardship of *Kesetiaan* (loyalty) in terms of obedience to the King and the state. It is only with a Christian perception of

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[82]Bishop Moses Ponniah, "The situation in Malaysia," cited in *Transformation*, Volume 17 No. 1 (January/March 2000), p. 31.

[83]Murugesu Pathmanathan, *Vision 2020: An Extrapolation of the Rukunegara*, (Kuala Lumpur: Jilid XVI Bill, 1992), p. 10.

Kesetiaan or "loyalty" that one can reveal a "genuine loyalty" to the nation as a Church and as individual Christians. This can be seen as Christian witnessing to their neighbours in Malaysia. How does the Church express its loyalty? Is the Malaysian Church being a symbol of *Kesetiaan* (loyalty)? Does the Church know how Malaysians understand *Kesetiaan* in general? It is in this context that the Church could use the already established expressions of loyalty for its missionary endeavour and Christian witnessing. The Church and Christians are challenged to identify themselves with the Malaysian national identity in every aspect of life to demonstrate their loyalty! Can the Church in Malaysia stand up as a symbol of *Kesetiaan* not only to God but also to the nation? The Christians and the Church in Malaysia cannot exist in isolation to preserve their identity but they need to "live" in solidarity with other Malaysians as well. The Church as a symbol of *Kesetiaan* must remain as the light, salt and leaven.

The Symbol of Harmoni

The Bahasa Malaysia word *Harmoni* is a transliteration of the English usage. Plurality of religions has been a significant fact in the Malaysian society. Despite occasional conflicts, people in Malaysia have shown a great measure of religious tolerance and harmonious coexistence. Religious harmony plays an important role in a multi-religious country like Malaysia. This illuminates the notion of allowing people to practise and propagate their faith in freedom but in harmony with others without using unfair means to achieve determined ends.[84] The question now is "how can religious harmony be an effective symbol of *Harmoni* in Malaysia?" Malaysia enforced " religious harmony" against the background of the events of 13 May 1969. Christians were reminded to exercise harmonious attitude towards all other religious communities in Malaysia. The essence of *Harmoni* epitomises "goodwill or love," "loyalty," "peace" and "unity," which are holistically interrelated to the symbol of *Harmoni* (Colossians 3:14). Christians are encouraged to live in harmony amidst people of other faiths in Malaysia. For the symbol of *Harmoni* to prevail in the Malaysian soil, the Church needs to constantly address issues of inter-religious dialogue. However, the religious pluralism of the Malaysian society must not be allowed to obscure the distinctiveness of the gospel.

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[84]Bishop Dennis Dutton, "Lest we forget," in *Harmoni: MCCBCHS*, Vol. 2 No. 3, (March 2000), p. 8.

The Symbol of Kesejahteraan

The word *Kesejahteraan*, meaning "peace" is the most recurring word in the life of the people in Malaysia. So what does peace or *Kesejahteraan* symbolise in the Malaysian context? Compared to other countries, Malaysia is one of the most peaceful countries in the world. Although economic growth was below expectations, Malaysia has remained stable, and it still performed better than most other countries in recent years. After the September 11 incident in America, Malaysia has emerged in the international arena as the only Islamic country that is progressive, peaceful and stable. Although there were assumptions that Malaysia is also involved directly or indirectly in acts of violence, the world has acknowledged that the government is capable of tackling its internal problems related to violence and economy. To tackle violations and terrorism, the Internal Security Act (ISA) has to continue to ensure *Kesejahteraan* or peace in Malaysia. The country is safe and peaceful amid the chaotic economies of countries in the world, which are facing pressure. How could Christians and the Church be a symbol of *Kesejahteraan* in Malaysia? The Church should continue to provide leadership and support to all national efforts to preserve the peace and stability of the country.[85] Christians should be challenged not to give into fear and accept war or violence as natural consequence of differences. There is another, a nobler way, spiritual way, where "might" is not right, but love, compassion and the sanctity of life should provide the way into the future. God is in anguish. He is in pain as he watches his creation doing things that are evil. But in his mercy, he calls his people to be effective witnesses of *Kesejahteraan* or peace on earth and goodwill among all people in Malaysia and the world at large.[86] Christians are reminded that their inspiration springs from their faith and personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Lord, "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), who is continuously present and "is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Jesus Christ reconciled us to God and with each other, proclaiming peace (Ephesians 2:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5: 18) and a new relationship between those who had been separated by alienation and hostility. Christians seeking reconciliation and peace must begin with the ways they act in

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[85]Bishop Julius Paul, "Praying for World Peace," cited in *Berita CCM,* (January-March 2002), p. 7.

[86]Bishop Julius Paul, "Praying for World Peace," cited in *Berita CCM*, p. 7.

their families, neighourhood, and their Churches. The real strength of the Church remains in the seeming powerlessness of faith and love. Christians must seek everyday to rediscover and experience this power.[87] In a way this is to theologise the symbol of *Kesejahteraan* or peace that is from Jesus who is everlasting. The perennial task of Christians and the Church in Malaysia is to invoke peace amidst all people at all times.

The Symbol of Perpaduan

The word *Perpaduan* meaning "unity" is a commonly used terminology in the context of harmonious communal living in Malaysia. The government takes every effort to foster *Perpaduan* or unity among the various ethnic groups in Malaysia. Unity is crucial since Malaysia is a multi-racial country. It is of utmost significance that each racial group cooperates with one another. For example, a slogan emphasising on racial unity is repeatedly shown on the Malaysian Television: An Indian boy in a school shares his *nasi lemak* packet with a Malay and Chinese boy. Positively, this advertisement of "eating together" symbolically depicts that the three races in Malaysia are living in harmonious unity. How can Christians and the Church strive to symbolise *Perpaduan* or unity in Malaysia? Christian unity presents a powerful model of corporate witness to the world. Separate individualistic ministries rob Christianity of believability.[88] Christians and the Church can uphold the King, the government, the people and the whole nation in their prayers. The symbol of *Perpaduan* can be expressed on Independence day, for example, if flags are raised in the premises of the Churches; this act will affirm the Churches' commitment to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Malaysia, thereby signifying justice, peace, unity, harmony, loyalty and goodwill.[89] Christian communities must seek to reconcile their differences to avoid disunity and disharmony. The Church in Malaysia is called to strive towards cooperation, common understanding and mutual recognition of one another despite diverse traditions in order to symbolise unity.

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[87]"Extract of Message on Occasion of the WCC launch of the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace, January 2001," cited in *Berita CCM*, p. 8.

[88]"Partnership beyond the Rhetoric," cited in *Berita NECF*, (November-December 2000), p. 1.

[89]"The Christian Federation of Malaysia National Day Message," cited in *Berita CCM*, p. 20.

Models of Symbolism for Doing Ministry within the Historical Context of the ELCM
A Historical Perspective

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM) inherited traditional forms of symbolism directly from the German Leipzig Mission and the Swedish Mission. Hence, the ELCM's traditions, liturgies, hymns, forms of worship, devotional prayers, admonitions for Christian living and Tamil theological terminologies go back to the work done by Ziegenbalg, who planted the first Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (TELC) in Tranquebar, South India.[90] In the early nineteen century, most of the Lutherans (TELC) who came to Malaysia brought with them their inherited traditions and symbolism. Tamil culture was still an important factor in the lives of Tamil Lutherans in Malaysia. Since they were a small minority of the population surrounded by Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims with their own symbols, they gradually turned "inward." They sheltered themselves from "outside" forces and to large extent "recreated" symbols that had direct ties with their "mother-Church" (TELC) in India. This attitude was reflected in the symbols of the liturgical Tamil form of worship, the Gothic Church building (Zion Cathedral in Kuala Lumpur), the vestments, customs, the music and the organisational structures of the Church, and the general life of the ELCM. They were concerned about the internal matters of Church life that they thereby neglected the call to express the gospel to those of their own community (Tamils) outside the faith. It took several years for the ELCM to become identified within the indigenous cultural context of Malaysia. The ELCM has now increasingly taken efforts to indigenise and to contextualise the form of the gospel within the pluralistic Malaysian society. It is believed that unless this is continuously done the ELCM and the Lutheran community will continue to be regarded as a "foreign Church." So much symbolism evolves from the Malaysian language, art, architecture, music and literature. It is time that ELCM re-examines the appropriateness of many of its inherited symbols in order to replace them with local expressions that are more meaningful and helpful. Perhaps this will inspire Christians in Malaysia to make extra effort to appropriate cultural elements to develop worship and spirituality that is authentically native and

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[90]Solomon Rajah, "The Father of Tamil Lutherans: The Life and Work of Ziegenbalg, (1706-1719)," cited in *The Lutheran Herald: ELCM*, (July 1991), p. 1.

responsive to local sensibilities.[91] Below are some proposals for ELCM to explore and to express all artistic means in order to be a symbolic Lutheran Christian community within the Malaysian context. The proposed symbols are the writer's own views and not the official interpretation of the ELCM.

Symbolism in Worship

"Worship is something we do to honour God, let us bring our best to God. We cannot hold on to traditions rigidly all the time. We must be bold enough to transform in the areas of style and worship."[92] Currently western musical instruments such as electric guitars, keyboards, piano, organs and side-drums are used in worship services in most of the congregations in the ELCM. Perhaps it is time for ELCM to consider using traditional musical instruments in order to add Malaysian or Indian flavour to music (*isai* in Tamil) in the context of worship. Percussion musical instruments like *miruthangam* or *tabala* (Indian drums) could be introduced to accompany some of the melodious Tamil lyrics. Also string musical instruments like *veenai* or *sitar* could replace electric guitars. ELCM needs to encourage its members to be more innovative and creative. For example, local Malaysian folk or traditional songs could also be translated into the Tamil language with Christian meanings. At present most of the congregations in the ELCM use songs and lyrics composed by Christians in India. Traditional dance forms are not used by many of the congregations in the ELCM because they hold a view that these dance forms are attached with Hindu elements. As such only the so-called "tambourine dance" used by some of the "foreign" Churches is currently being used in some of the congregations of the ELCM. It is proposed that a Tamil folk dance like *kolattam* (a village-orientated dance with colourful sticks and simple circular movements) could replace the "tambourine dance" in the context of worship. The worship liturgy of the ELCM, which is adopted from the TELC, originated from the German Church. Though most of the "words" used in the liturgy con-

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[91]Ng Kam Weng, *Doing Responsive Theology in a Developing Nation*, (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: SUFES & KAIROS, 1994), p. 22.

[92]A Talk presented by Rev. Dr. Ezra Kok Hon Seng, "The Relevance of the Traditional Churches Today," at the Diocesan Assembly of the ELCM held in Setiawan, Perak (24 May 2002), cited in the *Minutes of the Diocesan Assembly of the ELCM*, Kuala Lumpur: ELCM, (24-26 May 2002), p. 2.

tains appropriate scriptural verses but the music and melody for "chanting" this liturgy is German in origin. At times this "chanting" alienates us from the Malaysian realities! It has become clear that ELCM needs to review and inculturalise the content and music of its worship liturgy in order to symbolise a "Malaysianised" identity.

Symbolism in Vestment

The decorative art forms in Malaysia include colourful *batik* cloth, pewter items and woodcarvings. Malaysia is known for its creation of *batik* designs. The use of *Batik* designs is a local resource material for making *sarongs* and has become the official national costume. For example, the Malaysian Airline System (MAS) has chosen *Batik* as the national representation of Malaysian culture and costume. One is encouraged to attend official functions in Malaysia in a *Batik* dress or shirt. It is proposed that the borders (lining) of the cassock worn by pastors of the ELCM be stitched with a *Batik* design. ELCM can also introduce the use of *Batik* stoles for its clergy. It symbolises *Kesetiaan* (loyalty) and *Perpaduan* (unity) symbolism to the national culture that Malaysia is now pursuing. The Holy Communion chalice, which is imported from overseas, must be reviewed by the ELCM. Malaysia is already promoting the use of pewter made out of tin, a natural resource mineral. The *Selangor* Pewter, a local internationally known company is manufacturing many types of drinking vessels. ELCM has not considered the use of this local resource. Some of the pewter is engraved with Malaysian countryside scenes. Anyone could place orders with the *Selangor* Pewter in terms of quantity and quality. It is proposed that ELCM start purchasing its chalices for Holy Communion locally. The symbol that could be designed and engraved is the *Bunga Raya* (hibiscus flower) which is the national flower of Malaysia. This symbol can be engraved on the pewter chalice. It symbolises the glory of God and at the same time it symbolises *Kesetiaan* (loyalty) and *Muhibbah* (goodwill).

Symbolism in Architecture

Most of the ELCM architectural structures are based on gothic design. Malaysia is not lacking in vision for this renewal. The external features of a Church may inspire non-believers to explore inside a Church building that reflects Malaysian features. It is proposed that the Church buildings in the future reflect the national styles, which have some Malaysian cultural features. Interior decorations of Churches could include

appropriate scriptural verses in *Bahasa* Malaysia. It is also proposed that a Malaysian *Kampung* (village building) structure and style be used if the government lifts the restrictions on Church buildings. The baptism font could be improvised to suit the Malaysian context. The ELCM is still using foreign and western models. It is proposed that the ELCM's baptism font in its congregations be replaced with the shape of a Malaysian *sampan* (a common fishing boat). A familiar sight and experience for the Malaysian people. The Church door symbols could be carved with a pair of banana plants bearing fruit on either side of the doors. The symbol of fruit bearing banana plant is identical to a fruit bearing Church in the Malaysian community. The banana plant or even palm trees in the Tamil context is suitable because most of the Malaysian Tamils use them as a "welcome" gesture. This attempt will encompass the symbol of *Perpaduan* (unity) in the context of Malaysia.

Emblem and Seal

The ELCM has adopted the *Emblem and Seal* from the Swedish Church. The *Emblem* shows a blue shield with a white crossed cross. Above the shield stands a mitre in white and gold. Behind are crossed keys and a stola in white and gold. The *Seal* has a fish shape with a crossed cross in the centre, a mitre at the top and the Luther rose at the bottom. It is proposed that ELCM rework its *Emblem and Seal* to symbolise its own cultural content within the Malaysian context.

The Symbolism of the Christmas Tree

Already Christians in Malaysia are bemoaning how the portrayal of Christmas and Easter is so western-oriented. The religious meaning of two festive occasions (that of the love and sacrifice of Christ) is ignored and replaced by a worldly and consumer-oriented emphasis. The manner in which Christmas and Easter is celebrated in Malaysia underlines the attraction of western cultural elements (in fact it is a tradition formed in Europe) to the Malaysian Church. It is time that ELCM re-examines this area. It is proposed that instead of having a pine tree as a Christmas tree decorated with cotton wool (resembling snow which we do not have in Malaysia) the congregations in the ELCM could replace it with a tropical plant like a banana tree or a palm tree. In most Malaysian Churches we find that plastic-made pine trees are kept and are brought out of the store once a year to be decorated as the Christmas tree. Then they stand there for the whole season right up to the Epiphany! Pine trees are difficult to

be found, unless one is willing to search in the hill-stations of Malaysia. Whereas banana plants or palm trees are easy to find, they grow in most of the Church members' gardens. The symbol behind the banana plant is "fruit-bearing." It is appropriate for Christmas season because banana plants or palm trees are used as decorations for all festive seasons by all races in Malaysia. It also exemplifies the symbol of *Muhibbah* (goodwill) in the Malaysian context.

Malaysian Art

The Malaysian Church must encourage its members to be creative. The artwork created by Asian artists is very impressive. For example, in the magazine entitled, *Image: Christ and Art in Asia*, a portrayal of one oil painting done on a canvas by a retired Roman Catholic priest in Malaysia on the theme of the parable of the pearl is seen.[93] This painting reflected a scene of typically Malaysian people, costumes and environment. It is proposed that ELCM challenges its members through encouraging art competitions, displaying of exhibitions and other means. It is a challenge to create a truly Malaysian form of art by employing evocative colours, shapes and symbols with localised motifs. ELCM must feel free to explore and to express itself in all artistic means. Both picture-makers and others must be encouraged. Local pastors must be challenged. It must become an important ministry to ELCM in order to add another dimension to Asian Christian artistic expressions.

A Concluding Note:
The Symbol of the Blood of the Cross

The vast majority of Tamil Hindu migrants in Malaysia were from rural villages of Tamilnadu in south India. The early Tamil Hindu migrants in Malaysia brought with them their folk religion that assimilated regional village deities and practices. The focal point of this religion in its ritualistic worship is the practice of ritual slaughter of animals to the deities. Almost a century has passed since the early Tamil Hindu settlers arrived, but the practice of ritual slaughter in Malaysia persists among the present generation till today. Since ELCM is a Tamil oriented Church, mission work among the Tamil Hindus in Malaysia has been its priority; thus the symbol of blood in Malaysian folk Hinduism can become a point

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[93]*Image: Christ and Art in Asia* 50, (March 1992), p. 7.

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of contact for the communication of the gospel.[94] Blood sacrifice is understood as an efficacious ritual employed by Malaysian Tamils practising folk Hinduism in the context of their worship. The practice of blood sacrifice involves the ritual slaughter of goats, cockerels and pigs. These blood sacrifices are offered to the lesser deities either at temples or wayside shrines. The ritual of blood sacrifice is not confined to rural areas only, but it is practised in most towns and sub-urban centres in Malaysia.

In Christianity, the chief symbol of salvation is the cross. The cross has become the one universal symbol of salvation through Christ, emphasising both his death for the sins of the world and the new life he gives to people. One of the most recurring symbolic words in the Hindu sacrifice is the word "blood." It is simply understood that sacrifice to the deities involves blood. Without blood the ritual itself is impossible to comprehend. Blood makes sacrifice efficacious. Thus blood symbolises the nature of Hindu sacrifice. In the same way, the cross of Christ is simply understood by the Hindus as the symbol of the Christian faith. Though blood has a symbolic cultural reference to Hindu sacrifice, nevertheless it can still provide a bridge for communicating the symbol of the cross. The symbol of the cross signifies the atoning death of Christ and points to the blood of Christ, to physical substance that flowed from his body. The shedding of blood points to the offering of life for the believer for forgiveness of sins. The Hindus understand that blood contains life, and the life which is in the blood must be offered to appease the deities or must be drunk by the devotees (especially the priests) to gain power from the deities. Therefore, while the symbol of blood in Hindu sacrifice and in the cross does not convey the same meaning, they do carry similar ideas concerning blood as a symbolic principle of life and death. This symbolic principle finds unique expression in the sacrificial atonement of Christ. It is at this point that ELCM can begin communicating the gospel to Hindus practising folk Hinduism in Malaysia. In spite of the effectiveness achieved through evangelistic work carried among Tamil Hindus in the formative years of the ELCM, it should seriously consider the ritual of blood sacrifice as a vital vehicle and bridge for proclaiming the gospel meaningfully to Tamils practising folk Hinduism in Malaysia.

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[94]See Solomon Rajah, *Folk Hinduism: A Study on the practice of Blood Sacrifice in Peninsular Malaysia from a Christian Perspective,* (Manila: ATESEA, 2000), pp. 159-166.

It is hoped that the suggested models of symbolism in this article would enrich the message and ministry of the Churches in Malaysia. The subject on symbolism in visual arts is an ongoing study. To arrive at concrete conclusion may "kill" the artistic sensibilities! It is not an easy task to keep symbols "alive!" Traditionally the Hindus are a concern for the Malaysian Indian Churches only in terms of mission to bring them into the Christian fold. Such an understanding of the Christian mission needs to be critically reviewed in the light of the present realities in Malaysia. This study is a humble beginning to do theology and ministry within the Malaysian context.

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EPISCOPACY AND APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION: A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES AND A BRIEF REFLECTION

Wilfred J. Samuel

Introduction

As may be noted in history, Episcopal debates have been ongoing since the beginning of the first century. In these debates, opposing views on historical apostolic succession were hinged to three main issues. First, was the status question: who is a bishop - a servant or lord? Second, was concerning the exclusive functions of the bishop. Third, was a status issue: does transmission indicate transference of 'apostolic authority' or 'apostolic responsibility'? At various periods in history, especially after Reformation monarchial Episcopalism has come under sever criticism for a number of reasons. Some argue from the point of non-availability of biblical evidences for monarchial Episcopalism. Others view monarchial Episcopacy with historic succession being theological contradictory (preaching of a servant ministry but practicing monarchial over-lording). For reasons such as these and probably some others, which are secular in nature, a democratic system of church polity has become a favored option for many churches.

Traditional churches that conform to the historic Episcopal system have developed their Episcopal theology and concept of apostolic continuity on the basis of Christ's life and ministry and the High Priesthood doctrine of the Old Testament. Christ's life and ministry was characterized by a call; second, it involved intensive teaching and third, culmination in a sending forth with authority (responsibility). By comparison, the Episcopal model practiced by the Early Church differed from that of the later Romanist monarchial Episcopacy. In the Romanist practice of mo-

narchial episcopacy with historical succession, shows stronger reliance on Jewish High Priesthood of the Old Testament [Num.27:20]. As in the Reformation era, there is a need among modern churches to rediscover the relevance of apostolic succession and Episcopal care in terms of apostolic responsibility. What is the doctrine of apostolic succession?

> The doctrine of apostolic succession means that the mission and sacred power to teach, rule and sanctify that Christ conferred on His Apostles is in accordance with Christ's intentions perpetuated in the college of bishops.[1]

The promise of Christ's continuance in power through the apostles, promise of Christ's imposition of authority and continued presence through the apostles ministry are expressly implied notions of the Episcopal ministry and succession of the Apostles. "For in giving them this mission, Christ promised that he would be with them all days even unto the consummation of the world (Matthew 28 : 20)."[2]

Definition of the Term 'EPISKOPOS' (Bishop)

The term 'episkopos' in singular or the plural 'episkopoi' could be translated as overseer or overseers respectively. "In classical Greek, both gods and men can be described as 'episkopoi' or overseers in general and non-technical sense; inscriptions and papyri of wide distribution use the word to denote magistrates, who some times appear to have administered the revenues of heathen temples...and the word can apply to philosophers, especially Cynics, when acting as spiritual directors or magistrates."[3] However the term 'episkope' is used in the Lexicon to denote chief officers or taskmasters as may be noted in the following texts.

1) Nehemiah 11 : 9, Their chief was Joel, son of Zichri who was assisted by Judah, son of Hassenuah.
2) Isaiah 60:17, I will exchange your brass for gold, your iron for silver, your wood for brass, your stones for iron. Peace and righteousness shall be your taskmasters.

In the New Testament, one could observe 'episcope' being applied in three different contexts. First, it is "applied pre-eminently to Christ (1 Peter 2:25), next to the apostolic office and finally to the leaders of a local congregation (Philippians 1:1)."[4]

Episcopacy and Historical Succession:
A Perspective from the First Six Centuries

In this section I would like to draw attention to the writings of the Early Church fathers in discussing the nature, theology and history of the doctrine of Episcopacy and Historical Apostolic Succession. Primary resources referred to shall include the writings of St. Ignatius, Clement of Rome, St. Polycarp, Origen, Tertullian, Hippolytus and Cyprian. Further reference shall also be made from various synodical decrees.

Clement of Rome

One of the earliest extra biblical documents which sheds light on the development of this concept of ecclesiastical polity is the 'Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthian Church' dated around A.D. 96. In section XLII Clement wrote:

> The Apostles received the Gospel for our sakes from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus the Christ was sent from God. Christ therefore is from God, and the Apostles are to God's will. So when they had received their orders and had been fulfilled with confidence by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in faith by the word of God, they went out in confidence of the Holy Spirit, preaching the gospel, that the Kingdom of Christ was about to come. So, preaching in country and city, they appointed their first fruits, having tested them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should believe. And this was no novelty, for long ago it had been written concerning bishops and deacons.[5]

The objective of this epistle was mainly to correct leadership conflicts in the Corinthian church. St. Clement attempted to resolve the problem by pointing out that the right of Episcopal care and leadership was vested upon the bishop through apostolic appointment or for want of another expression, apostolic succession. Again in section 44, he wrote:

> Our Apostles who knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. So for this reason, since they had perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons and subsequently gave permanence, so that if they should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. Man, therefore who were appointed by the apostles, or subse-

quently by other eminent man, with approval of the whole church and have ministered blamelessly to the flock of Christ in humble, peaceable and worthy way and have testimony borne by all for long periods - such men we consider are unjustly deposed from their ministry. For it will be no small sin on our part if we depose from the Episcopal office those who have in blameless and holy ways offered the gift.[6]

The leadership crisis in the Corinthian church did not focus merely on the Episcopal function, but included a much wider and deeper resentment towards the general ecclesiastical order within the church. Clement recognized it. He therefore attempted to explain the importance of the ecclesiastical structure using the Old Testament analogy of Levitical Priesthood. In section XL of the letter to the Corinthians he wrote:

This being plain, we must do all things decently and in order, as our heavenly Master wills. The appointed times, fixed places, the proper ministers, must be respected in making our offerings...In the law of Moses the high priest, the priests, the Levites, the laity all have their distinct function.[7]

As Bishop Lightfoot, notes the "offence of the Corinthians was contempt of ecclesiastical order. They resisted and ejected their lawfully appointed presbyters."[8] The Corinthian controversy resulted in the poor observation of sacraments and reception of offerings, which was partly due to the eviction of the apostolic representatives. It was therefore Clement's intention to "insist that these offerings should be made at the right time, right place through the right persons."[9] The right persons to Clement were the presbyters appointed by the apostles. Even Paul alluded to this existent problem within the Corinthian church in chapter 9 of his first Epistle to the congregation. Here Paul makes his defense concerning his call and apostleship. However, it must be admitted that in Clement's epistle, one would not be able to trace a systematic development and exposition concerning the doctrine of Episcopacy according to historical succession. Yet one could safely assume that the concept of apostolic succession was slowly taking form. One could therefore conclude that monarchial Episcopacy was still at its early stages of infancy. However, Clement's typical reference to the hierarchical Levitical priesthood in relation to ecclesiastical structure and function makes one wonder if the idea of Episcopal monarchy was already a popular idea then. But what is more emphatic in Clement's writings is the procedure of appointing

church officials; an endowed responsibility of the Apostles. He mentions that apostles appointed leaders in every church either directly or indirectly. Apostles "first appointed approved persons and afterwards provided for a succession so that vacancies by death should be filled by other approved men."[10]

Ignatius

However, in the writings of Ignatius, martyred around A.D. 110-115, we have a progressed account of the monarchial Episcopal doctrine. In Ignatius' writings we also find the first account of the Episcopal office being distinguished from the presbytery and diaconate, and evidence for the practice of the three-fold ministry by the Early Church. Ignatius in his Epistle to the Philadelphians commends the congregation for their submission to the ecclesiastical order and the jurisdiction of the bishop.

> This church I salute in the blood of Christ. She is a source of everlasting joy, especially when the members are at one with the bishop and his assistant the presbyter and the deacons, that have been appointed in accordance with the wish of Jesus Christ and who He has by his own will through the operation of His Holy Spirit, confirmed in loyalty.

The distinctness of the bishop's office becomes obvious in his epistle to the Symrneans.

> You all must follow the lead of the Bishop as Jesus Christ followed that of the Father, follow the presbytery as you would the Apostles, reverence the deacons as you would God's commandments...He who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop worships the devil.[11]

The leadership function assigned to the office of bishop in the above text not only encompass a distinctiveness but also attaches with it a spiritual character by designating it a divine institution. The study of Ignatius' teaching on Episcopacy according to apostolic succession constitute four characteristic features:

Bishops Share the Mind of Christ

In promoting the primacy of the Episcopal office and collegiality of the bishops, Ignatius maintained that however far they are from each other are still united in the mind of Christ. Implying they share the similar unity as the Son shares with the Father.[12]

Bishop's Office is Superior to the Presbyterate –
Functionally But Not in Status

Ignatius stands as the first Apostolic Church Father to affirm the functional variety found within the three-fold ministry. Although he maintains monarchial Episcopalism, nevertheless he is quick to point out the co-equality in status shared between the bishop, presbyter and deacon. No one is higher than the other in status except in function. Within this given Ignatian framework, although all three officers shared a co-equal and common status, yet leadership responsibility was exclusively vested upon the bishop. "Act in concert with your bishop, as you are now doing. Your presbytery stands in the same relationship to the bishop as the strings to the Lyre"[13] Let us obey our bishop, if we would be God's people.[14] It may also be noted in Ignatius' writings, he always designates the bishop's office in singularity and the presbytery in plurality. It is indicative of a system where each church had one bishop but several presbyters. This is well attested in his letter to the Magnesians. "As the Lord Jesus did nothing without the Father so must ye do nothing without your bishop and presbyters".[15]

Bishops are Successors of the Apostles

In addressing the issue of Apostolic continuity through the Episcopal office and obedience to the bishop, Ignatius often drew connection between obedience to Christ as being exemplified in the obedience to the bishop. "When ye submit to your bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye live after Jesus Christ...Do nothing without your bishop and be obedient also to the presbyters as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ".[16]

The Supremacy of the Bishop in the Church

Ignatius in his letter to the Symrneans advocates that the bishops played a supreme role in the church. "The bishop, argues Ignatius, is the center of each individual church, as Jesus Christ is the center of the uni-

versal church."[17] There are two specific implications to this Ignatian statement, namely:

- Centrality of the Episcopal chair must not be misconstrued as representing mere apostolic authority but responsibility.
- Episcopal responsibility does not imply a mere call to discharge administrative responsibilities but remain a divine institution. The Magnesian Epistle and Philadephian Epistle describe this well. "But for you too, it is fitting not to take advantage of the bishop's youth, but rather because he embodies the authority of God the Father, to show him every mark of respect and you presbyters, so I learn, are doing just that".[18]

  I exhort you to strive to do all things in harmony with God: the bishop is to preside in the place of God, while the presbyters are to function as the council of Apostles, and the deacons who are most dear to me, are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ.[19]

  I cried aloud, when I was among you, I spake with a loud voice, with the voice of God. "Give heed unto the bishop and presbytery and deacons", but they suspected that I said this because I knew beforehand the division caused by some. Yet He is my witness, whose prisoner I am, that I learnt not from human flesh. But it was the Spirit who kept preaching in these words: "Do nothing without the bishop".[20]

Although it would still be premature to arrive at the conclusion that Ignatius was referring to an already consolidated monarchial Episcopal system, we could infer that this was at least the direction the church was moving towards. Nevertheless in Ignatius we have better knowledge concerning the three-fold ministry as exercised in the Early Church. He clearly maintained the supremacy of the Episcopal chair, both from the perspective of apostolic succession and divine institution but carefully avoided attaching authoritarian notions. As we move into the mid-third century, we have a more developed expression on Episcopacy as referred in the writings of Tertullian, Hippolytus and Cyprian.

Tertullian

Tertullian in his 'On Modesty I', differentiates between Episcopal authority and the authority that of the presbytery and deaconate. Within a hierarchical framework he placed the authority of the bishop above the

presbytery and deaconate. The issue Tertullian was addressing then was the conflict that had arisen over the administration of the sacraments. In defending Episcopal supremacy, he affirmed the unity between High Priesthood and the Episcopal office. He said, "The High Priest who is the Bishop has of course the right to confer it, then the presbyter and deacons not however without the bishops authority, out of respect to the church. When this respect is maintained, peace is secure."[21]

Hippolytus of Rome

Hippolytus of Rome, in his celebrated 'Apostolic Tradition', provided a more comprehensive enumeration concerning the primacy of the bishop, manner of election and consecration of the bishop. In this text, he pointed out that the presbytery merely played a secondary role either in the election or consecration of the bishop.

Let the bishop be ordained, being in all things without fault, chosen by all people. And when he has been proposed and found acceptable to all, the people shall assemble on the Lord's Day, together with the presbytery and such bishops as may attend. With agreement of all, let the bishops lay hands on him and the presbytery stand in silence. Let all observe silence, praying in their heart for the descent of the Holy Spirit. Then at the request of all, let one of the bishops standing by impose hands on the candidate for episcopacy, praying over him.[22]

The clear distinction between the office of the bishop and the presbytery is very apparent in the writings of Hippolytus. Functionally and hierarchically, Hippolytus maintains the distinctness of the Episcopal office.

Cyprian

Edward White Benson in his book 'Cyprian-His life-His time- His work', analyzes Cyprian's thought and understanding on Episcopacy. Benson reports that, Cyprian first understood the role of a bishop as a chief arbiter acting from the position of a chief priest and secondly that his post has been endowed with a specific grace which is exclusive and effective. Benson also points to the fact, that by Cyprian's time the office of the bishop had already been elevated to that of the chief ecclesiastical officer and recognized so even by the secular state. Therefore initial per-

secutions were directed against the bishop and their property. "As a matter of order, the eminence of the rank of the bishop was visible to the Roman world. He was the chief of the Christian society, the confiscation of his property was the first, for a time the only edict of persecuting magistrates."[23] Cyprian, being a bishop himself maintained the primacy of the Episcopal office but indicated that the selection of the bishop was from among the presbyters. "In the assembly from the midst of the separate semicircle of presbyters rose his chair or throne, already the universal name and symbol of his authority."[24] Cyprian, like Tertullian, described episcopacy in terms of the Old Testament Levitical High Priesthood and believed "it is (1) an inheritance from the apostles and (2) a succession to the Levitical Priesthood, only more glorious in being the fulfillment of that priesthood type."[25] Though this has been a popular trend, that is associating the high priest with the bishop, priest with the pastor, Levites with the presbyters and Israel with the congregation, theological opinion is very much divided on ascribing episcopacy a Jewish origin.

Cyprian by accepting the Jewish interpretation for Episcopal origin believed that any act against the bishop is a punishable sin. He maintained that, "to invade the office of the rightful bishop is identically the sin of Korak."[26] Cyprian too makes a strong connection between episcopacy and historical apostolic succession. This relatedness is expressed in his letter 'XXVI to the lapsed' where he ascribed to the bishops control, power and authority on the basis of apostolic succession.

> Our Lord, whose precepts and admonitions we ought to observe describing the honor of a bishop and the order of his church, speaks in the Gospel and says to Peter, I say unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock will I built my Church...Thence through the changes of time and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the church flow onwards, so that the church is founded upon the bishops and every act of the church is controlled by these same rulers.[27]

These statements very much coincide with Cyprian's discourse at the Seventh Council of Carthage, indicating that the Episcopal monarchism was by now well established with two characteristic features:
- Historical succession of the Levitical Priesthood.
- Historical succession of the apostolic Priesthood.

At the Seventh Council of Carthage, Cyprian therefore argued using his Episcopal authority to differ on the matter of rebaptism.

No one of us sets himself up a bishop of bishops or by tyrannical ter-
ror forces his colleagues to a necessity of obeying; in as much as
every bishop in the free use of his liberty and power, has the right of
forming his own judgment, and can no more be judges by another
than he can himself judge another. But we all must wait the judg-
ment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has the power, both of set-
ting us in government of His Church, and of judging of our acts
therein.[28]

Again in his proposal to the Church at Carthage and in response to the
reception of the lapsed around A.D. 250, Cyprian reprimands the grave
error of bypassing the Episcopal representative who is the chief adminis-
trator of the church.

I hear, however, that some of the presbyters, neither mindful of the
Gospel nor considering what the martyr have written to me, nor re-
serving to the Bishops the honor due to his priesthood and chair,
have already begun to communicate with the lapsed and to offer for
them, and give them the Eucharist.[29]

The final feature of Cyprian's Episcopal theology is his emphasis on the
shared equality and unity between the apostles, without providing any
room for Petrine supremacy. In his document 'On the Unity of the Catho-
lic Church', Cyprian discusses the question of apostolic succession on
the basis of God's promise to Peter, but consciously affirms that the
apostles carried equal honor, authority and power.

This unity firmly should we hold and maintain, especially we bish-
ops, presiding in the church, in order that we may approve the epis-
copate itself to be one and undivided...The episcopate is one, it is
whole in which each bishop enjoys full possession.[30]

Jerome

As we proceed on to the fourth century, Jerome's extensive writings
on Episcopal monarchism indicate the theological interest generated over
the issue during that period. Through his works (A.D. 347-420) it could
be established that by the mid-fourth century, monarchial episcopalism
had almost become established. Apostolic continuity, investment of au-
thority and divine institution of the office were characteristic features of

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find frequent and interchangeable usage of the terms, presbyters and bishops. This is very evident in his letter CXLVI, where he wrote, "I am told that some one has been mad enough to put deacons before the presbyters, that is before the bishops."[31] Jerome's interpretation of apostolic succession and authority therefore is not only shared by the college of bishops but by the whole presbytery. His theory is dependent of two New Testament texts: 2 John 1 and I Peter 5:1-2. In his exegesis of I Peter 5:1-2, Jerome writes:

> Peter also say in his first epistle: The presbyters which are among you I exhort who am your fellow presbyter and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory of that shall be revealed, feed the flock of Christ ...taking the oversight therefore not by constraint but willingly, according unto God.[32]

But Jerome does explain the synonymy that he considers is present between the office of the bishop and the presbytery. In Jerome's understanding, both offices were co-equal in function and authority but then reluctantly ascribed the leadership function to the Episcopal office. To him Episcopal monarchism was more of a historical development. He therefore rejected the idea of exclusive divine institutionalization and apostolic succession being attached to the office. He attributed heresies being the reason behind the development of Episcopal monarchism. He claimed, when "subsequently one presbyter was chosen to preside over the rest, this was done to remedy and to prevent each individual from rending the church of Christ by drawing it to himself."[33] Again in his letter CXLVII, in refuting the Roman Diaconate in going against the Episcopal leaders, he wrote:

> Even at Alexandria, from the time of Mark the Evangelist to the episcopate of Heracles and Dionysius, the presbyters used always to appoint as bishop one chosen out of their number and placed on the higher grade, as if an army should make a commander, or as if deacons should choose one of themselves whom they should know to be diligent and called him archdeacon. For, with the exception of ordaining what does a bishop do which the presbyter does not? The power of riches or the lowliness of poverty does not make him a higher bishop or lower bishop. But all are successors of the Apostles.[34]

From the above discussion, four aspects stand out clear concerning Jerome's Episcopal theology.

- First, he dates the historical beginning of monarchial episcopalism to the time of Mark the Evangelist.
- Second, he speaks of the apostolic succession in relation to the college of the bishops, which implies all the apostles shared equal honor and authority.
- Third, he does agree that it was the tradition of the Early Church to view the office of the bishop to be functionally higher to that of the presbyters and with the exclusive right to ordain, for practical reasons
- Fourth, one bishop to serve in one church without the right to translate. In his letter to Oceanus in A.D.397, Jerome discusses this issue. He feels that the tradition developed from an erroneous teaching based on the interpretation of bishop's to have the moral character of being a man of one wife.

  Some by strained interpretation say that wives are in this passage are to be taken for churches and husbands for their bishops. A decree was made by the fathers assembled at the Council of Niacea, that non bishops should be translated from one church to another, lest scorning the society of a poor yet virgin see he should seek the embraces of a worthy and adulterous one."[35]

Some historians view Jerome's understanding on non-translation of a bishop a misunderstanding on his part. The restriction by Nicaea on the bishop's translation was motivated by the confusion caused by bishops moving to richer churches for economic reasons. To circumvent such a problem and instill commitment the analogy of marriage was applied by the Council, scholars claim. The Council of Elvira (around 305) has a clearer description of the issue in its canon 19. "Bishops, presbyters and deacons are not to leave their places in order to engage in trade; nor are they to go round of their provinces in search of profitable markets."[36]

In Jerome, we do see certain resentment for monarchial Episcopalism. He is one of the church fathers who strongly felt there was an overglorification of the Episcopal office, whereas the New Testament taught that the presbyters and bishops shared the same functional responsibility. He even calls the development of the doctrine of Episcopal monarchism a bad custom of the Early Church.[37] Jerome would date the commencement of the system to the Corinthian controversy, where one presbyter was eventually chosen to preside over the rest to avoid heresy from flowing

in. The unique feature of Jerome's Episcopal theology may be found in his belief that all the apostles shared common honor, authority and the promise of Christ. Despite of his reservations and opposed view on Episcopal monarchism, nevertheless he emphasized the importance of the Episcopal office for sake of church unity. In his 'Dialogue against the Luciferans' written around A.D.399, he therefore reprimanded those who had over-ridden the bishop's authority in administration of the sacraments. He concludes his epistle by alluding to the Pentecostal experience of the Apostles in validating the bishop's authority, superiority and responsibility and insisted "that without the ordination and the bishop's license neither the presbyter nor the deacon has the power to baptize [38] He further added, that "the well being of a church depends upon the dignity of its chief priest, and unless some extraordinary and unique function be assigned to him we shall have as many schism in the church as they are priests."[39]

In summary, Jerome's Episcopal theology is characterized by the overarching concern for the presbytery, which to him ought to be held in common honor and grade with the Episcopal office. He does make allowance for exercise of Episcopal authority and administrative control over the presbyters, deacons and the church in general, and this may not be disputed. Nevertheless his believes monarchial Episcopacy is just a historical development without a biblical mandate. Historical succession is affirmed in Jerome's writings but with stronger emphasis on apostolic responsibility rather than authority as displayed in monarchial Episcopal system.

The Early Councils, Episcopal Care and Apostolic Succession

In this section apart from the seven Ecumenical Councils, we shall also consider responses from Councils prior to Nicaea.

The Council of Alvira - Common Rank
But Different Functions

The cannons 18, 19 and 33 of the Council of Alvira held in A.D.305, affirmed monarchial Episcopalism and the primacy of the bishop as against the presbyters and deacons. This suggests an already existent system of Episcopal primacy. Cannon 18 ruled that the succession to each one of the offices within the three-fold ministry is only by promotion. This is indicative of a system, which had three distinct offices with

peculiarity in functions. But it accorded a common rank to all officers within the three-fold ministry with the title cleric. Cannon 33 of the same Council affirmed this.

Bishops, presbyters and deacons - indeed all clerics who have a place in ministry [of the altar] shall abstain from wives and shall not beget children - this is a total prohibition: whoever does so, let him forfeit his rank among the clerics.[40]

It could be concluded that by A.D. 300, we already have evidences of a consolidated three tier ecclesiastical system, which had provided the Episcopal office a monarchial outlook, probably out of necessity rather than biblicity.

The Council of Ancyra (A.D.314 - 319) – Episcopal Exclusive Rights

The decrees of the Council of Ancyra point towards further consolidation of the Episcopal office and strengthening of the bishops' authority. This is affirmed when Council of Ancyra decreed that bishops had overriding rights and the right to even grant special concessions.

As many as are being ordained deacons, if at the time of ordination they have made a declaration and stated that they must marry and cannot remain celibate, such persons, should they marry thereafter can remain in their office, as the bishop had granted them the right to marry at their ordination.[41]

The Council of Arles – Episcopal Office is Unique

The Council of Arles emphasized the uniqueness and seriousness of the Episcopal office, where no one should claim the right to consecrate a bishop, except by a minimum of three bishops. The same was later affirmed by a Nicene decree.

Concerning these who claim for themselves alone to have the right of ordaining bishops, we decree that no one take this upon himself, unless he be accompanied by other seven bishops. If seven is impossible then they should not dare ordain without three others. [42]

The Council of Nicaea (A.D.325) - Bishop is Superior

The Council made it emphatic in its canon XVIII that, within the Episcopal monarchial system, the presbyters and the deacons were subjected to the authority of the bishops. A clear demarcation of not only the spiritual authority and responsibility but also a status differentiation between the three offices was also affirmed at Nicaea. The deacons were not allowed to sit with the presbyters or bishops. Being hierarchically inferior, deacons were also required to wait-upon the bishops.

> Let all such practices be utterly done away, and let the deacons remain within their bounds, knowing that they are ministers of the bishop and inferiors of the presbyters. Further more, let not the deacons sit among the presbytery for that is contrary to cannon and order.[43]

Since deacons were not expected to serve the presbyters, indicate that the presbytery functioned under the authority of the bishop with a certain element of autonomy. Yet the exclusive nature of the Episcopal office was undisputed.

The Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381) –
Bishop the Chief Ruler

The Council of Constantinople further endorsed Episcopal distinctiveness in terms of spiritual and administrative functions and jurisdiction. But the Council in granting such authority was mindful of misuse and practical complications that may arise through the breach of territorial jurisdiction. Therefore the decree added a proviso that:

> The bishops are not to go beyond their dioceses to churches lying outside of their bounds, nor bring confusion on the churches. And let not bishops go beyond their dioceses for ordination or any other ecclesiastical ministration, unless they be invited.[44]

The issue of apostolic succession had by now become well constituted and widely accepted. The jurisdiction of the bishop as the top ecclesiastical officer had also become well entrenched within the ecclesiastical system. Therefore in the subsequent ecumenical council at Ephesus, no discussion on Episcopal powers or jurisdiction was raised (except that it was mentioned, bishops played a significant role in arresting heresy).

The Council of Chalcedon (A.D.451) –
Further Powers Granted

At the Council of Chalcedon, we see a resurfacing of the Episcopal issue and further concessions and powers being vested upon the bishop. The most important development at Calcedon was according authority over the monasteries to the bishop by citing an Early Church tradition. "Let the clergy of the poor - homes, monasteries and martyries remain under the authority of the bishops in every city according to the tradition of the holy Fathers."[45] Quoting the neglect of the flock without a bishop, the Council also highlighted the urgency to re-elect a bishop when a vacancy occurred. This too indicates the primacy of the Episcopal office.

> For as mush as certain of the metropolitans, as we have heard, neglect the flocks committed to them, and delay the ordination of bishops. The Holy Synod has decided that ordinations of the bishops shall take place within three months, unless on inevitable necessity should some time require the term of delay to be prolonged.[46]

The same Council also strictly forbade the demotion of a bishop to the position of the presbyter. "It is sacrilege to degrade a bishop to the rank of a presbyter; but if they are for just cause removed from Episcopal functions, neither ought they have the position of a presbyter."[47] The rationale was simple. If a bishop could not discharge duties well, it would indicate non-suitability for ministry in entirety. It becomes obvious that the hierarchical Episcopal system practiced during this period certainly featured the bishop as the exclusive executive of the church with supreme monarchial status. The second and third Councils of Constantinople (the fifth and sixth in the series of the seven ecumenical councils) had probably no real reason to concern themselves with Episcopal matters or jurisdiction any more. Hence the focus of these later councils was entirely different in nature.

Nicaea 2 (A.D.787) - Bishop is Monarch of the Church

This seventh Ecumenical Council endeavored to reaffirm the primacy of the bishop as the monarch of the church. Apart from privileges already granted, this council granted the supreme control of all church property into the hands of the bishop. The spiritual nature of the ecclesiastical offices was also reaffirmed and thereby declared that no state au-

thority had the right to grant ordination. It was maintained that such right was exclusive to the prerogative bishop.

> Canon III - every election of a bishop, presbyter or deacon made by princes stands null...It is most fitting that a bishop be ordained by all the bishops in the province.[48]
> Canon XI1 - Let the bishop take care of all the church goods, and let him administer the same according as in the sight of God.[49]
> Canon XVI - is important as it endorses the need to recognize and obey ecclesiastical orders as a spiritual responsibility. That there is a certain order established in the priesthood is very evident to all, and to guard diligently the promotions of the priesthood is well pleasing to God.[50]

In conclusion to the decrees of the pre and post Nicene councils, we could deduce the following:

- First, that apostolic succession and Episcopal care was accepted and so treated on the basis of the tradition of the early fathers rather than a biblical mandate.
- Second, we see a progressive centralization of power being vested upon the bishop. Again historical reasons, heresy and practical purposes were cited for such development.
- Third, we also notice the spiritualization of the bishop's office. Historical Apostolic succession, which was previously understood in functional terms (apostolic responsibility) evolved to become a status issue (apostolic authority).

Episcopal Monarchism and Theories of Origin

Having considered the historical development and evolvement of monarchial Episcopalism vis-à-vis the Ecumenical Councils, here I would like to focus on theories suggested by historians and theologians for its probable origin.

Theory of Circumstance

Some scholars believe that the presbyters of the Early Church were responsible for the administration of the church since apostolic time. This later evolved into a hierarchical system by circumstance, when some able presbyter took total control of it as a permanent chairman. Their deduction is based on the interpretation of writings from Clement and Poly-

carp, where interchangeable use of the terms bishop and presbyter occur. The theory proposes two things. First, that the presbyters as the original rulers of the church shared the apostolic authority and honor. Second, administration under the bishop should still incorporate the counsel of the presbyters on the basis of the apostolic collegiality. Harnack therefore suggests "the elders were ruling body while the bishops and deacons were liturgical leaders and administrators employed by them."[51]

Lightfoot and the Johannine Theory

According to Bishop Lightfoot, "The early tradition points to St. John as being instrumental in establishing the Episcopal institution in Asia Minor."[52] If this argument is accepted, it invalidates any previous claims, that monarchial Episcopacy is a second century development. Lightfoot bases his arguments on Ignatius' letter to the Trallians and the Ephesians.

It is therefore necessary, whatsoever things ye do, to do nothing without the bishop. And be ye subject to the presbytery.[53]

Wherefore it is fitting that ye also should run together in accordance with the will of the bishop who by God's appointment rules over you...your justly renowned presbytery being worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp.[54]

This argument based on Ignatius, not only attributes the probable beginning to John, but also reveals the existence of a systematic organizational structure endorsed by the apostolic tradition. Lightfoot's argument would support the theory that bishop, presbyters and deacons had varied functions. Expressions such as 'rules over you' and 'fitted to you' from the above quotation is indicative of Episcopal supremacy.

Dr. Burton and the Apostolic Theory

Dr. Edward Burton in his book 'The Apostolic Fathers' suggests that the Apostles were responsible for the development of Episcopal monarchial system. His arguments are based on the letters of Ignatius to the six churches. Burton adds:

The Apostles had also zealous companions who assisted them in their ministry and who were placed by them over the churches in different countries. We have seen the Ephesian coverts were committed by Paul to Timothy and those in Crete to Titus. Luke appears to have resided for some time at Philippi and Mark was sent by Peter to watch over the flock in Alexandria.[55]

This tradition is also confirmed by Clement in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter XLII and chapter XLIV.

The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus; Jesus from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God...And thus preaching through the countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits [of their labors] having proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe.[56]

Clement of Rome, not only confirmed that it was the practice of the apostles to appoint successors to their ministry but also the clear distinctions that existed between office of the bishop, presbyters and deacons.

Jerome's Theory of Heresy

Jerome is of the opinion that historically, both bishop and presbyters had a common call, status and apostolic authority but admits that the former is administratively superior. This is evident in Jerome's 'Dailogue against the Luciferians', where he stated, "without the ordination and bishop's license neither the presbyter nor deacon has the power to baptize"[57]. He viewed monarchial episcopacy as an ecclesiastical solution to a historical problem, mainly in arresting heresy. This concept has been clearly elucidated in his document 'Against the Jovinians'. To Jerome, "bishop, priest (presbyter) and deacons are not honorable distinctions but names of offices."[58] This is very much in line with the Reformation understanding. In arguing for apostolic succession, Jerome concluded that, "the blessedness of a bishop, priest (presbyter) or deacon does not lie in the fact that they are bishops priests (presbyters) of deacons but in their virtues which their names and offices imply."[59] To Jerome, the character of the person holding office was far more important than the dignity of post itself. In other words the dignity of the post was dependent upon the

character of the occupant. It is in this context that Jerome viewed the collegiality of the bishops and presbyters as being common.

The Theory of a Jewish Prototype

A further proposal based on the writings of Early Church fathers like Cyprian, Hippolytus and Tertullian, suggests monarchial episcopalism is of a Jewish origin and shares commonality with the Levitical Priesthood. In this case the bishop is often referred to as the High Priest and the presbyters and deacons as the members of the Levitical Priesthood. Cyprian, being an ardent proponent of this understanding, taught that disobedience to the bishop is equivalent to the 'sin against Korak'. Cyprian had four reasons to believe so:

1) That the bishop had prerogative and control over the church, which characterized the High Priestly function.
2) The concept of territorial boundary and demarcation practiced in Episcopal ministry is understood to be analogous with the Levitical ministerial system.
3) The right to maintenance through offering is seen to be a replication of the Levitical system.
4) Ordination of a bishop is understood in sacramental terms corresponding to the consecration of a High Priest. Both the Apostolic ministry and the Levitical High Priesthood, Cyprian says, are characterized by an endowment of divine grace.

The above four positions of Cyprian have been strongly criticized by modern scholars. In the case of his first argument, as Benson notes, "Although disobedience to the bishop is the sin of disobedience to the High Priest, yet the bishop is not portrayed as surrounded first by the priests, and secondly by the deacon Levites."[60] Again most scholars disagree with Cyprian's second argument, saying, a literal interpretation would only lead to implications inconsistent with the New Testament teaching on priesthood. His third argument would imply not just the superiority of the bishop but the equality shared within the three-fold ministry. As for the fourth argument, it is inconsistent with history. Contrary to High Priesthood, laity played an active role in the appointment of the bishop. "It was they who by the aspiration of God, addressed to him the call to enter on the inheritance of that priesthood and dispensation of that grace. On them rested also the responsibility and duty of withdrawing from him and his administration if he were a sinner."[61] Although Cyprian's argu-

ments are not theologically consistent and cohesive, nevertheless taking into account the Jewish historical background of Christianity, the Jewish influences on Christian spirituality and the existence of the very many Jewish symbolism in Christianity, one could understand and appreciate his effort to theorize in Jewish terms.

The Theory of Pauline Origin

This theory suggests, the origin of the monarchial Episcopal system stemmed out of Paul's assigning of Timothy and Titus to be in charge of congregations. But, some scholars argue that Timothy and Titus were never accorded the Episcopal title. Yet it may be noted that both of them assumed and functioned with monarchial Episcopal right.

The Asiatic Theory

According to the Asiatic theory, Episcopal monarchism had its beginning in Asiatic churches due to easy acceptance of the concept. Some scholars attribute this effort to John who was ministering in Ephesus. This opinion also suggests that the seven angels spoken of in John's Revelation, is in fact a reference to seven bishops. "One person was put over each of them who is called by John the Angel of his respective church."[62] This theory compels one to believe that John's ministry focused strongly on administration and thereby instituted leaders with Episcopal function. As Dr. Edward Burton, says:

> In one sense therefore, there were several bishops or overseers in a church, for every presbyter might have borne that name; but as soon as the system became general, which was established in the seven Asiatic churches, and which we have seen to have been adopted also at Antioch, and Rome and Alexandria, of selecting one man to superintend the church, the term bishop was limited to this one superintendent of the whole body.[63]

Another evidential support for this theory could be found in Polycarp's letters, where he stated that, he received his office through the direct assignment by John. The theory also asserts that the bishops did form a connecting link between the apostolic age and the future church. The laying on of hands then became an essential expression symbolizing apostolic continuity.

Theory of Jewish Family Structure

The most recent study on monarchial Episcopalism attempts to associate it with the concept of Jewish family structure. It presupposes the fact that the Jewish family administration concept had a strong influence on the Early Church, especially in the context of house churches. The theory further elucidates that the host of the house church could have been identified as the overseer and the elders were leaders of the Christian community in general.

> Therefore it has been suggested, the heads of households came to have supervisory responsibilities for the churches, which met in their houses, and that these were the bishops of the early church. Further, it has been suggested as elders in the Jewish community, were not synagogue officials but community leaders, so too elders were community not church officials.[64]

The theory offers two suggestions:
- First, that the origin of the Episcopal system is derived from the Jewish family structure.
- Second, that the bishop is a church official but the presbyters were community leaders.

While the second suggestion is acceptable, the first, may pose some contradiction with the system suggested by Paul in Titus 1:5. Here Paul is talking of the appointment of overseers on the basis of good morals and Christian qualities and does not allude to any automatic assumption of office, on the basis of just being the host of a house church.

Edward Benson - Monarchial Episcopacy a Roman Origin

Edward Benson suggests that monarchial Episcopalism is a development of the Roman see. He suggests, by comparing the functions performed by the Roman bishop and the monarchial Episcopal system, one could notice the synonymy. The functions that the Roman bishop was already performing included he being the "preacher in his church, the chief instructor. Again he was the principal arbitrator in disputes. As to morals and discipline, whether clerical or lay, he was Judge in Christ's stead of disqualifications from communion and propriety of restoration, suitableness for any office.[65] The Roman Catholic Church in retaining

Roman supremacy and Petrine primacy uses this argument. But most scholars agree that the West probably borrowed the idea from the East.

A General Conclusion

From the above analysis and available evidences, one may suggest monarchial Episcopacy could have had its humble beginning during the apostolic era. The distinct nature of the presbytery and Episcopal office and its unique nature in terms of status is also made obvious. It was the Episcopal office however, which seems to have had prerogative to exercise administrative and spiritual authority over and above the presbytery and deacons. Even Jerome and Chrysosthom who would argue for a synonymy in usage of the terms, bishop and presbyter do agree that ordination was the sole prerogative of the bishop. Incidentally, only in Jerome do we find a single statement that a universal decree existed exhorting the establishment of episcopalism. "It was decreed all the world over that one chosen out of the presbyters should be set over the rest, whose office it should be to take the whole care of the church."[66] If one agrees with Jerome, that heresy (specifically in reference to the Corinthian problem of leadership crisis) was the contributing factor for the institutionalization of Episcopal monarchism, one must also agree that the office of a bishop according to monarchial Episcopalism developed out of a historical need and without a sacramental character. Understanding of episcopacy according to the Ignatian theory or Jerome's theory, both would validate an apostolic beginning and succession. Succession here is understood as succession of responsibility rather than authority. I believe, historically the episcopate was allowed to be apostolic and above the presbytery in dignity and jurisdiction only for practical and administrative purposes, rather than arbitrary exercise of authority. Churches of today that subscribe to the monarchial Episcopal system, need to carefully gauge and reassert the role of Episcopal leadership in conformance with the apostolic ministry, which really is the 'Word and Sacrament'.

Summary

1) Episcopal monarchism developed from the apostolic age with the Apostles appointing leaders to take charge of the churches they established.
2) Episcopal ministry therefore has an apostolic continuity.
3) The office of the bishop and the presbyters were distinct from each other. The bishop had the official right to over see while

the presbyters (elders) were elderly churchmen who had general oversight over the church.

4) Apostolic succession has been transmitted through the laying on of hands from the apostolic time: succession of responsibility and function rather than authority and power.

5) The term Episcopal monarchism does not denote the element of over lording but one of service and fulfillment of the functions elucidated in the scriptures and explained by the early church fathers, which is namely: Word and Sacrament.

6) Whatever the cause may be for developing the hierarchical Episcopal system, it is clear that the objective was to divide up the task between the bishop, presbyters and deacons for effective ministration.

7) The Episcopate is functionally a spiritual office rather than administrative involvement.

8) The bishop serves in office based on the call of the church and leaves when the church recommends so.

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[2]Ibid.

[3]The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Volume 1 (Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 199-200.

[4]Ibid., 200.

[5]Lightfoot, J.B. The Apostolic Fathers, Part One, Volume 2, St. Clement of Rome (London : Macmillan and Company, 1890), 293.

[6]Stevenson. J., ed. A New Eusebius (London : S.P.C.K, 1983), 12.

[7]Lightfoot, J.B. The Apostolic Fathers, Part One, Volume 2, op. cit., The Epistle of Clement to the Corithians, 120.

[8]Ibid., 120.

[9]Ibid., 135.

[10]Ibid., 133.

[11]Kleist, James. trans. Ancient Christian Writers, The Epistle of Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch (Maryland : Newman Bookshop, 1946), 93.

[12]Lightfoot, J.B. The Apostolic Fathers, Part Two , Volume 2, St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp (London : Macmillan, 1897), 40.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., 43.

[15]Ibid., 121.

[16]Ibid., 154.

[17]Ibid., 310.

[18]Kliest, James. trans., op. cit., 69-70.

[19]Ibid., 70-71.

[20]Stevenson, J. ed., op. cit., Ignatius to the Philadelphians, 48.

[21]Ibid., Tertullian, 183.

[22]Halton, Thomas. The Church - Message of the Fathers, Volume 4, (Wilmington : Michael Glazier, 1985), 104.

[23]Benson, W. Edward. Cyprian - His Life - His Time - His Work (London : Macmillan and Company, 1897), 32.

[24]Ibid., 32.

[25]Ibid., 39.

[26]Ibid., 34.

[27]Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James. ed., Ante Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian (New York : Charles Scribner and Sons, 1907), 305.

[28]Stevenson, J. ed., op. cit., 258.

[29]Ibid., Cyprian (Ep. XVII : 1-3), 233.

[30]Ibid., The Unity of the Catholic Church, 244.

[31]Schaff, Philip and Wace, Hendry. ed., Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Volume 6, Letters and Selected Works of Jerome (Michigan : Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), 288.

[32]Ibid., 288.

[33]Ibid., 288.

[34]Ibid., 288.

[35]Ibid., 144.

[36]Stevenson. J. ed., op. cit., 307.

[37]Schaff, Philip and Wace, Hendry ed., Volume 6, op. cit., Against Jovinians, 372.

[38]Ibid., Dialogue Against Luciferians, 324.

[39]Ibid., 324.

[40]Stevenson, J. ed., op. cit., Canons of the Council of Elvira, 305.

[41]Ibid., Canons of the Council of Ancyra, 312.

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[43]Ibid., The Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381), 176.

[44]Ibid., 273.

[45]Ibid., 285.

[46]Ibid., 290.

[47]Ibid., 557.

[48]Ibid., 563.

[49]Ibid., 564.

[50]Halton, Thomas. op. cit., 97-98.

[51]The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Volume 1, op. cit., 200.

[52]Lightfoot, J.B. The Apostolic Fathers, Part 2, Volume 2, op. cit., Ignatius to the Trallians, 169.

[53]Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James. ed., Ante Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Justin Martyr and Ireaneus (Buffalo :Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887), 66.

[54]Ibid., 50.

[55]Burton, Edward. op. cit., 7.

[56]Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James, ed., Ante Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, op. cit., 16.

[57]Schaff, Philip and Wace, Hendry. The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Volume 6, op. cit., 324.

[58]Op. cit., 372.

[59]Ibid., 373.

[60]Benson, W. Edward. op. cit., 35.

[61]Ibid., 37

[62]Burton, Edward. op. cit., 8.

[63]Ibid., 8-9

[64]Hawthorne, Gerald F., Martin, Ralph P., and Reid, Daniel G. Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 603.

[65]Benson, Edward. op. cit., 32.

[66]Burton, Edward. op. cit., 225.

Mission Statement of Malaysian Association of Theological Schools

The mission of the Association is to:

* Promote cooperation among theological institutions in Malaysia;

* Enchance the spiritual and academic standards of the institutions concerned;

* Strengthen the bond of relationship within the theological fraternity for the benefit of the Christian movement in the country and beyond.

Preface

By God's grace, I am able to witness the compilation of these articles into the first Malaysian Association of Theological Schools Journal. I count serving with my colleagues in all the seminaries in Malaysia a great joy. I see the publication of the research by the faculty members of the various seminaries as a tremendous milestone in the development of MATS.

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