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*Articles and book reviews reflecting
global evangelical theology for the purpose
of discerning the obedience of faith*



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Editorial:

Revival and the Global Context

TO COINCIDE WITH THE exact centenary of the Korean revival, we continue our theme of revival in this issue with a major article by Wolfgang Reinhardt who is preparing a pioneering study of the Welsh revival from a German perspective with the advantage of considerable experience in East Africa, the seat of significant revivals as outlined in our previous issue. As well as giving an insightful analysis of the influential Welsh movement, Reinhardt makes a strong plea for international research on revival, which is important both historically and as a challenge for the life of the church today.

We also present two keynote papers from our WEA Theological Commission consultation on Fundamentalism and our symposium on African Theology held in September 2006 at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST). The first by Yusufu Turaki, a Nigerian theologian living in Kenya, gives a wide perspective on the religious and social context of Africa, while the second by James Nkansah-Obrempong, a Ghanaian theologian serving at NEGST, provides a keen insight into the development of African theology and highlights important issues which need serious attention for the future. Both of these papers emphasize just how crucial good strong theology is, one that is rooted in

the realities of contemporary life with full attention to global and local issues and their intense interaction. This is especially the case for Africa, but equally true elsewhere.

It is in this context therefore that we can see how important it is to think clearly about the nature of Christian mission. Kevin Daugherty outlines an interesting and helpful approach in terms of Trinitarian reflection, showing that the mission of God 'as Trinity, is seeking through the Son and the Spirit to establish relationships with fallen humanity'. Therefore this also is 'the mission of the church'.

At the root of all our work, of course, is the person and work of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, making it necessary to continue reflecting on our understanding and presentation of the cross. In our final article, William Atkinson draws attention to one form of teaching popular in some areas that has potential to distort the truth of the gospel. His careful and sensitive analysis highlights not only the substance of the problem but also methods and sources that may affect the outcome. This reminds us strongly that it is not enough to preach Christ out of true heart but also be sure of our foundation and 'to rightly divide the word of truth' in these critical days.

David Parker, Editor

'A Year of Rejoicing': The Welsh Revival 1904-05 and its International Challenges

Wolfgang Reinhardt

KEYWORDS: *Modernity, emotionalism, media, social change, industrialisation, secularity, Keswick Convention, Pietism, Pentecostalism, Charismatic Movement, confession*

I. Introduction

As we celebrate the centenaries of great revivals and spiritual movements, the Welsh revival of 1904-05 stands out as one of the most important. If we define 'big revival' as an awakening which influences the whole nation and brings changes apparent for everybody, *Wales 04* (as it is called in an abbreviated form) was certainly the *last big revival in Europe*—it was even the daily news of secular newspapers in Wales and attracted many visitors from Europe and abroad. Its origins are

mainly indigenous, in a long tradition of Welsh revivals.

But even more impressive seems to be the worldwide influence of this very well documented revival.¹ It was not the actuator of *all* these worldwide awakenings even though it was certainly the most impressive part of a general simultaneous movement. Never before in church history had there been such a great revival influence flowing from one country into so many others in literally all continents

¹ See the books mentioned in the notes to this article and the following: Brynmore P. Jones, *Voices from the Welsh Revival. An Anthology of Testimonies, Reports, and Eyewitness Statements from Wales's Year of Blessing, 1904-05* (Bridgend, 1995); Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Awakening in Wales and Some of Its Hidden Springs* (n.p., 1905, new edition, 1993).

Wolfgang Reinhardt (PhD theology, Kirchl. Hochschule Wuppertal), is Rwanda coordinator of the MFB e.V. (*Mission for All*), which offers German support for traumatized widows and orphans of the genocide in Rwanda. An ordained pastor in the Evangelical Church of Germany with experience in the industrial areas and a lecturer at several theological seminaries, he is now writing the first German monograph on the Welsh revival, and seeking to build up a network for international research on revival history. He has written extensively on ecclesiology, church growth, Lukan theology, and the church in Rwanda. This article is a strongly revised version of an unpublished paper 'The Welsh Revival of 1904-05 between Modernity and a Strong Tradition of Pietism and Revivals', given at the International Conference on 'Pietism, Revivalism and Modernity...' at Umeå University (Sweden) in 2005.

in such a short time.² Thus there were historical connections and influences between Wales and other movements, such as India 1905-07, Los Angeles 1906, Korea 1906-07, to name only a few. So this worldwide revival in the first decade of the 20th century was called the ‘furthest reaching revival movement of all times’.³ As Edwin Orr states,

The early 20th century Evangelical Awakening was a worldwide movement. It did not begin with the phenomenal Welsh Revival of 1904-05. Rather the sources were in the springs of little prayer meetings which seemed to arise spontaneously all over the world, combining into streams of expectation which became a river of blessing in which the Welsh revival became the greatest cataract.⁴

The last revival in Wales is also a good example for discussion of important *theological questions* about revival: the relationship of divine and human factors in the preparation of a revival; the very essence of a revival as seen in relation to God’s overwhelming presence; personal and social changes; and (ephemeral) enthusiasm and unusual ‘phenomena’; blessing and failure of key persons; and finally the cessation and the long term lasting effects of a

revival. On the level of historiography and comparative revival research, *Wales 04* shows the necessity of a *network of international research on revivals* in a worldwide perspective, which is a proposal which I shall make in the last part of this paper.

II. Historical and spiritual context—influencing factors before the revival of 1904-05

When we enquire about the causes, context and origin of the last Welsh revival we have to consider, as in all revivals since the beginnings of the growth of the early church, sociological, economical, political and other secular contexts on one hand, and theological and ecclesiastical causes on the other.⁵ Historians of revivals have sometimes tended to isolate one or the other dimension which produces a defective and incomplete picture.

A. The Welsh revival in the context of the challenge of ‘modernity’

At the beginning of the 20th century Welsh society was in a period of great change and turmoil. On one side it nearly exploded with energy and optimism. People were fascinated by the technical progress and amazing inventions which ‘followed hot on one

2 The Welsh theologian Noel Gibbard has given the most detailed description: *On the Wings of the Dove: The International Effects of the Welsh Revival of 1904-05* (Bridgend, 2002).

3 On the cover of Edwin J. Orr, *The Flaming Tongue. The Impact of the Twentieth Century Revivals* (Chicago, 1973).

4 Orr, *Flaming Tongue*, p. 192.

5 For the early church, see e.g., a summary of factors in Wolfgang Reinhardt, *Das Wachstum des Gottesvolkes. Biblische Theologie des Gemeindegewachstums (The Growth of the People of God, Biblical Theology of Church Growth)* (Göttingen 1995), pp. 336-338.

another's heels.' 'The romance of progress continued to mesmerize those people who remembered Wales as a wholly agricultural society.'⁶ But also ordinary people took profit from the minor products of the new industries like cheap coal and newspapers, chemical discoveries and the sewing machine.

But beside the optimism there was great economical, political and social unrest which could not fail to affect the Christian faith of the people. Already since 1850 industry had begun to change the face of the country. An aggressive capitalism of heavy industry expanded, coal mining employed more people than any other industry, and Cardiff became the biggest coal export harbour of the world. But the quick and unstructured growth of the industrial cities created many social, spiritual and moral problems, with which the church had to deal.⁷

A first effect of industrialisation was the enormous growth and migration of the population. In some areas the number multiplied tenfold, and the total population of Wales grew in the 40 years between 1871 und 1911 by one million to 2.4 million inhabitants, people who to their greatest extent

filled the churches and chapels and demanded an army of new ministers. Migration from the rural areas was remarkable and enhanced by the hopes of a better income. Though poor housing and brutal working conditions raised the wrath of social reformers, thousands were glad to flee from the poverty, uniformity and social oppression in the rural areas. But the negative side was that the churches which, in the rural areas had been so much influenced by the Christian tradition, were weakened. The workers who went to the highly industrialized areas mainly in the southern valleys lost to a large extent their bonds with Christian tradition and traditional values.

A second division and danger was linguistic: in 1901 half of the population spoke Welsh, and the further west the more Welsh was the main or even the only spoken language. However, the relative decrease of Welsh speaking people was considered to be a threat to national identity which was closely connected to Christian identity. Many heroes of the nation were Christian heroes, the classics of Welsh literature were often Christian classics, and the Bible offered the ideals for society and private life. After 1890 the relative uniformity and robust Christian language culture seemed to give way to pluralism.

At the end of the 19th century Wales saw a battle between 'church and chapel'. According to detailed census figures, in 1905 two in five Welsh people were church members—25.9 % were communicants of the Anglican church, 23.5 % members of the Independents (Congregationalists), nearly the same percentage (23%) were Calvinistic Methodists, 19.2 % Bap-

6 R. Tudur Jones, *Faith and the Crisis of a Nation: Wales 1890-1914* (Cardiff 2004) (English translation of *Ffydd ac Argyfwng Cenedl*, 2 vol. 1981 u. 1982), p. 8.

7 The following summary relies mainly on Jones, *Faith*, pp. 1ff; and the introductory paper of Prof. Densil Morgan, at the *Interdisciplinary Centenary Conference to the Welsh Revival of 1904-1905* at the University of Bangor, 2004, to be published in the forthcoming conference volume.

tists, only 5.4 Wesleyan Methodists and 3 % members of smaller denominations. This meant that although the portion of Anglicans had increased in the second part of the 19th century, it now represented only a minority; about three-quarters of the religious population was non-Conformist. Non-Conformity became highly politicised and radically committed for the disestablishment of the Anglican Church which did not represent the majority of the population but still enjoyed the privileges of tithing and church rates. The 'Church in Wales'—as it was known—on the other side was fighting tooth and nail to retain its status. So the revival occurred when the atmosphere was rather poisoned by this tragic battle between church and chapel.

Another conflict and one of the ironies of modernity arose in the field of education. The chapel goers wanted the best education possible for their children, so they founded, for example, the University of Wales. But it was precisely this higher education which became the means of secularization. The Sunday School had been the university of the nation, the Sunday School had made Wales into a reading nation. Now secular education challenged the convictions and creeds which they were taught by the Bible and the Sunday School.

These were some of the conflicts and turmoil which threatened the national identity and Christian tradition of Wales.

B. It was the Wales of a long pietistic revival tradition

Talking about a strong '*Pietist*' tradition in Wales, we are aware of course

that the Methodist tradition and British 'evangelicalism' are not identical with continental 'Pietism'. But without entering into discussion on the wider or more narrow definition of 'Pietismus'⁸, 'Pietist' and 'Evangelical' have much more in common than in contrast.⁹ We can name at least five or six common features: the importance of conversion, the role of the Bible in daily life, vital fellowship among believers, evangelism and social responsibility, interdenominational unity, and eschatological interests.¹⁰

We must also never forget that the vital church life of Wales was not just a branch of English Methodism but the Welsh had their own great preachers, especially in the Golden Age of Welsh Methodism, the 18th century. Extraordinary personalities like Howel Harris

8 I consider it an unnecessary dispute as it is reasonable to differentiate between a narrower meaning of the term 'Pietismus' (for the epoch of classical Pietism in 17th and 18th century) and a wider understanding as a typological term including 'Pietists' from the 17th to the 21st century (see below note 101).

9 If one considers the characteristics of Pietism in the narrower sense (see Martin Brecht, 'Einleitung' (Introduction) to *Geschichte des Pietismus* I, p.1) and the specifics of Anglo-Saxon 'evangelicalism' (as e.g. Reginald Ward has described it in *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge 1992, 1994)), the English term 'evangelicals' is older and wider than the modern German term 'Evangelikale'.

10 For a synopsis of definitions of the term 'evangelical', see David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 1989, who identifies conversionism, activism, biblicism, crucicentrism as its characteristics; in my opinion he should have added at least '(vital) fellowship'!

and Daniel Rowland cannot be forgotten, and the preacher and 'poet of the revival', William Williams of Pantycelyn, has given the country many hymns which were sung even much later, e.g. in the revival of 1904-05. The early Methodists were members of the Anglican Church, but when they faced growing opposition they formed the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in 1811.

Talking about Welsh Pietism and evangelicalism is not possible without mentioning the long chain of revivals. Obviously no other country in Europe had seen so many revivals as Wales—one book title calls it 'The country favoured by many revivals'.¹¹ Between 1762 and 1862 alone there were at least 15 major revivals. After the glorious time of the 18th century it was especially the year 1859 which saw a huge revival connected with the names of Dafydd Morgan and Humphrey Jones. It was linked with the nationwide revivals in Northern Ireland, Scotland and America.

There were witnesses of the 1859 revival still alive at the beginning of the 20th century and they expected a similar revival at that time. Furthermore, an expression of the continuity with these former revivals was the spirit of prayer and expectation of a new nationwide revival.

On one hand there was a growing prayer movement following the example of the famous *Concert of Prayer* from Scotland, which was published by

Jonathan Edwards in 1747.¹² In the 19th century James Haldane Stewart had organized even more far-reaching interdenominational prayer unions,¹³ which received a new boost at the turn of the century. Besides, it is one of the most fascinating facts of that time that independently in many widely separated countries like Australia, India, America and Wales, growing concerts of prayer for a world wide revival were organized with huge numbers responding. Another expression of the growing interest in the Holy Spirit were intensified efforts for *evangelism*, within the Welsh denominations but also across denominations, such as the highly influential *Forward Movement* founded by John Pugh, and joined by Seth and Frank Joshua.

There were other single evangelists, such as the highly influential lady, Rosina Davies, who foreshadowed the great role that young women would play in the great revival of 1904-05. Another preaching woman, who itinerated in many countries outside Wales too, Jessie Penn-Lewis, wrote a widely read book on 'The Awakening in Wales and Some of the Hidden

¹² Edwards endorsed these 'concerts of prayer' in his *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer, for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth*.

¹³ 'Hints for a General Union of Christians for the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit' (1821); by 1855 already 332,137 copies had been distributed by the Religious Tract Society. R.Rouse/ S.T.Neill, *Geschichte der ökumenischen Bewegung 1517-1948* (Erster Teil, Göttingen 21963), p. 476.

¹¹ D. Geraint Jones, *Favoured with Frequent Revivals. A Brief History of Revivals in Wales 1762-1862* (Cardiff 2001).

Springs'.¹⁴ As a prominent speaker in the first Keswick 'conventions for the deepening of spiritual life' she stressed the influence of the Keswick conferences for the Welsh revival. Certainly some Welsh ministers were deeply influenced as participants in Keswick and later in their own 'Keswick in Wales', the annual holiness conventions in the Welsh Llandrindod (since 1903), which were influenced also by Welsh traditions; their lives were transformed in terms of prayer, holiness and effectiveness of their service.

Though 'Keswick in Wales was an integral part of the prayer movement for revival',¹⁵ according to some Welsh authors the Keswick influence was overestimated—the roots were more to be seen in the old revival tradition of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists than in the new Holiness Movement. The Welsh hymns 'gave expression to the truths of redemption and assurance rather than holiness and consecration',¹⁶ as in the mighty 18th century revival. Typical is *the* hymn of the revival which impressed the audience especially by the presentation of one of the young singers, Miss Annie Davies: 'Dyma garyad fel ye moroedd' ('*Here is Love, vast as the ocean, Loving kindness as the flood, When the Prince of Life, our ransom Shed for us, His precious blood;*').

There are two remarkable statements which were made before the start of the national revival and which later turned out to be prophetic. One is the spiritual legacy of Dean *David Howell*, who was one of the most respected personalities in the Anglican Church (and also beyond its boundaries). His declaration 'The Great Need of Wales' was published in the month of his death, January 1903:

... What is Wales' greatest need?... There has never before been so much preaching, but what of the effects?... Take note, if this was to be my last message to my fellow countrymen... before I am taken to the judgement it would remain thus... The greatest need of my dear nation and country at this time is spiritual revival through a specific outpouring of the Holy Spirit... Not a local disturbance... but a kind of spiritual saturation, that overflows into the country as a whole, that would immerse all classes with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit...¹⁷

This eloquent and powerful statement incited great sensation and attention because it was not uttered by any excited non-conformist evangelist but by the highly respected authority of the Established Church, and it was seen as his spiritual last will and testament. He could not see personally the reali-

14 Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The Awakening in Wales and Some of the Hidden Springs* (New York : Revell, 1905; new edition 1953).

15 Noel Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar: A History and Evaluation of the 1904-05 Welsh Revival* (Bridgend, 2005), p. 25.

16 Eifion Evans, *The Welsh Revival of 1904* (Bridgend, 1969), 1987, p. 170.

17 Originally mentioned in Dec. 1902, here cited according to Kevin Adams, & Emyr Jones, *A Pictorial History of Revival. The Outbreak of the 1904 Welsh Awakening* (Farnham, Surrey, 2004), p. 35; and R. Tudor Jones, *Faith*, p. 284.

sation of these prophetic words only a few months later.

The second remarkable word is from the influential evangelist *Seth Joshua* who ‘had felt the danger of the prevailing emphasis upon educational rather than spiritual attainments, and after a “very heated discussion over the intellectual qualifications for the pulpit”, he “had it laid upon his heart to pray to God to go and take a lad from the coal-mine or from the field, even as He took Elisha from the plough, to revive His work”. Not only was his prayer answered, but he was to witness the divine mantle fall on God’s chosen instrument.’¹⁸ It seemed that a young coal miner from the south should be that chosen vessel. But before Evan Roberts came on to the scene other events happened.

III. The beginnings of the revival and the mission of Evan Roberts

Ignition by the testimony of a girl

Sometimes Evan Robert’s spiritual experiences and first missions are seen as the beginning of the broader national revival, but there was an independent outburst in the north.¹⁹ And if

one wants to undertake the difficult task of fixing a specific date, a different event is to be noted: on the 2nd Sunday in February 1904, a girl named Florrie Evans, who was personally touched by the sermons of Joseph Jenkins, the Calvinistic-Methodist minister of New Quai, gave a very simple testimony in a meeting of young people: ‘I am not able to say very much today but I love the Lord Jesus with all my heart—he died for me.’

These unpretentious words became a spark which would ignite a widespread revival. The gathering was said to have become very quiet and then excited in sensing *the awful and overwhelming presence of God*—a description which would be given of many meetings of the later revival (as well as in other countries). Other young women were set aflame too; some of them played an important role in the later revival team of Evan Roberts, while others worked independently of him. The young people spread the flame in neighbouring congregations; Seth Joshua notes in his diary:

The revival is breaking out here in greater power.. The spirit of prayer and of testimony is falling in a marvellous manner. The young are receiving the greatest measure of blessing.... The revival goes on. I cannot leave the building... until 12 and even 1 o’clock in the morning—I have closed the service several times and yet it would break out again quite beyond the control of human power.... Group after group came out to the front seeking the full assurance of faith. What was wonderful to me was the fact that every person engaged in

¹⁸ Evans, *Revival*, p. 63;

¹⁹ R.B. Jones, *Rent heavens: The revival of 1904, some of its hidden springs and prominent results* (1948, CD Welsh Revival Library, Centenary Edition 1904-2004). A comprehensive digital collection of source materials, 1. series, (High St. Bishop’s Waltham 2004), p. 28; Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 65-67.

prayer, without one exception....
We lost all sense of time in this service.²⁰

Evan Roberts

The best known figure of the revival, having been raised in a Welsh Calvinist Methodist family in Loughor in the south, had an intensive spiritual life already as a boy. Later he could write: 'I have prayed for revival. I could sit up all night to read or talk about revivals. It was the Spirit who moved me to think about revival.' After working in a coal mine and as a blacksmith, at the age of 25 in 1903 he entered a preparatory school for the ministry at Newcastle Emlyn. Already at that time he had mystical experiences, felt raised to the third heaven and spent hours of the night in intensive 'divine fellowship'.

During this time Roberts attended a meeting in Blaenannerch at the West coast of Wales, where Seth Joshua was preaching and praying, 'Lord, bend us.' On September 28, Evan Roberts experienced a powerful filling with the Holy Spirit and the decisive call for his future life which he describes in the words.

I felt a living power pervading my bosom... the tears flowed in streams... I cried out 'Bend me! Bend me! Bend us!'... It was God's commending His love which bent me... I was filled with compassion for those who must bend at the judgment, and I wept.... I felt ablaze with a desire to go through the length and breadth of Wales to

tell of the Saviour.²¹

Soon afterwards Roberts felt that he could not continue his studies and he formed a team with his young friends, Sidney Evans and the young women of New Quay, to preach the gospel everywhere in Wales. During the nights Roberts had visions which indicated for him the victory of Christ over hell and the progress of the kingdom of God in an unprecedented way. He saw for example a paper appearing on which the number '100,000' was written and from that time on he prayed specifically for that number of souls which should be won.²² The estimations of numbers of all converts until summer 1905 vary around 100,000, but one has to be careful with numbers as will be discussed below.

Another vision in which he spoke to his former classmates led him to return to his home town and to conduct meetings with the young people of Loughor, which after discouraging beginnings, increased in numbers and intensity. Already during those early meetings Evan announced four conditions for gaining the full blessing of the Spirit which he claimed to have received by the Holy Spirit:

- 1 Confessing openly and fully to God any sin not confessed to him before;
- 2 doing away with anything doubtful in ourselves;
- 3 giving prompt obedience to the influences of the Holy Spirit in the heart;
- 4 confessing Christ openly and pub-

20 Evans, *Revival*, p. 59.

21 Evans, *Revival*, 70.

22 Evans, *Revival* p. 79.

licly before the world.²³

In the early meeting people felt a mighty 'outpouring of the spirit'. There was a lot of weeping, shouting, crying out, joy and brokenness. The news of the events spread like wildfire, newspapers as well as Christian journals reported and raised further expectations. Here there came for the first time a reporter of the national newspaper, *The Western Mail*, who would play an important role in the publication of the later revival, at least as so far Evan Roberts is concerned. He wrote:

Shopkeepers are closing earlier in order to get a place in the chapel, and tin and steel workers through the place in their working clothes. The only theme of conversation among all classes and sects is 'Evan Roberts.' Even the taprooms of the public-houses are given over to discussion on the origin of the powers possessed by him. Although barely in his majority, Roberts is enabled to attract the people for many miles around.²⁴

These unexpected and incredible events raised the expectation far beyond a local revival to give it a nationwide prominence. Roberts started his missions with his team, the young women singing and giving testimony. Roberts sometimes came late, remained hours in prayer, often in

tears on his knees or lying prostrate on the floor; he never gave a prepared sermon, but claimed to be guided by the Spirit alone. Sometimes he did not preach at all but the meetings seemed to guide themselves. They began long before he arrived and lasted late into the night, people losing the sense of time. In the most well known history of the revival it says that 'a sense of the presence and holiness of God pervaded every area of human experience: at home, at work, in shops and public houses. Eternity seemed inescapably near and real.'²⁵ The numbers increased, with often thousands, sometimes ten thousands waiting for him.

The revival was strongly supported—even bishops of the Anglican Church declared publicly that it was a genuine work of God. A famous sharp critique came from the minister Peter Price who accused Evan Roberts of falsely imitating true revival. But the sympathies in this heated newspaper debate were with Evan Roberts as Price was boasting of his academic qualifications and referred to Roberts' intellectual inferiority. Students of theology turned against him as he seemed to want to damage a movement which was obviously a blessing for the whole country.

Roberts did not take part in this debate but observers stated that he suffered from it and that this was a turning point in his ministry. In the following missions in Wales, Roberts interrupted the meetings more often, saying that the Spirit could not work as there were obstacles for God to pour

²³ According to the version in D. M. Philipps, *Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Works* (London, 1906), 1923 edition in *CD Welsh Revival Library*, Centenary Edition 1904-2004. A comprehensive digital collection of source materials, 1. series, (High St. Bishop's Waltham 2004), p. 188

²⁴ *The Western Mail*, November 10, 1904.

²⁵ Evans, *Revival*, p. 95.

out his blessings; a few times he named persons. At this time we see some of the more unpleasant events in Roberts mission—the sad climax being in Cwmafan on the 21 February 1905 where he cried that there was a lost soul in the meeting. When the congregation prayed for him he stopped them crying in agony, 'Too late! Too late!' There was no purpose in praying as this soul was already lost.²⁶

At the end of March 1905 Roberts started his fourth campaign, invited by the Welsh Free Church Council in Liverpool (which had a large Welsh population). In contrast to former campaigns, the meetings in Liverpool were systematically organized. Roberts was received with greatest expectation. Despite some joyful and blessed meetings in Liverpool it became the most controversial of all campaigns with a lot of tension. Even more than had been normal in South Wales, Robert interrupted singing and prayers, stating that there were obstacles and that the 'place must be cleansed', for example, because there were some who were refusing to forgive. The most spectacular announcement 'in the spirit' was that there was a person in the meeting who was trying to hypnotize him; this person should leave or ask the Lord to forgive. On the following day a well known hypnotist who was performing at a local theatre at that time admitted that he had sent somebody of his team to try to hypnotize Roberts. Robert's

announcement of 'a direct message from God' that the *Free Church of the Welsh* 'is not founded on the Rock' created great uproar. In the newspaper he was attacked on the grounds that 'his public work was a sham and that his methods indicated a master of hypnotism and the art of mind reading'.²⁷

The main reason for the stormy and unhappy events in Liverpool (despite some edifying and blessed meetings) was the shift of attention by the press from the message to the messenger, which rejoiced in reporting the sensational and seduced a leading minister to follow this unhealthy shift.²⁸ Even in the case of Roberts, one of his sympathetic biographers wrote that 'in the heat of the moment Evan Roberts was claiming powers for himself that no individual can ever have'.²⁹ Later Roberts asked himself if he was deceived by demonic powers but a humane interpretation may be more adequate for the man who only wanted to do the will of his Lord: 'He was undoubtedly used by the Spirit but could not easily distinguish between what was of God and what arose from his own unconscious. He was a patently good man, but dangerously exposed by virtue of his own sensitivity. Intense spirituality and the consequent exposure to public gaze was more than he could bear.'³⁰

26 Brynmore P. Jones, *Instrument of Revival. The Complete Life of Evan Roberts 1978-1951. An Anatomy of True Revival* (Gainsville 2001), p. 90f; Jones, *Faith*, p. 316; Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, p. 46.

27 Jones, *Faith*, p. 325.

28 So Jones, *Faith*, p. 325.

29 Jones, *Instrument of Revival*, p. 101.

30 Nigel Wright, 'Does Revival Quicken or Deaden the Church? A comparison of the 1904 Welsh Revival and John Wimber', in A. Walker & K. Aune (eds.), *On Revival. A Critical Examination* (Carlisle, 2003), pp. 121-135, 132.

Having followed advice to undergo a medical examination which testified to his being mentally and physically sound but over-worked, he took a rest for nearly a month in the heart of Snowdonia which became a blessing for all. Roberts led his last missions, now in the northwest, on the island of Anglesey. There had been great revival here already before Roberts came, so that H. Elvet Lewis could say, 'Anglesey almost belongs to Christ'.³¹ Here Roberts was seen 'at his best' and 'most blessed'. He was concerned about extremes of emotionalism and emphasized the task of inviting and winning others. Thousands again gathered, supported by the local ministers, and Evans seemed to be more balanced though the meetings were relatively enthusiastic. On his seventh and last campaign, restricted to Caernavonshire, he abandoned his former emphasis on the 'four conditions' to get the full blessings, and concentrated on 'Christ's saving work on the cross'.³²

After his missions Roberts suffered extreme spiritual-physical stress—we would call it 'burnout' and 'PTSD'.³³ In 1906 Jessie Penn-Lewis took him under her care in her and her husband's house in Leicester. The years following until his death 1951 are in a certain way a mystery. Many have asked why he only very rarely returned to speak publicly but mainly restricted himself to the task of intercession, private group counselling and writing

articles and books. Jessie Penn-Lewis' influence on him is seen as problematic because of her anthropology and demonology, especially in the book they published under their joint names, *War on the Saints* (translated also into German and read widely around the world). Apparently she convinced Roberts that he was deceived by evil spirits, but this created confusion rather than helping to give clear criteria of discernment. Theologians of Wales found her and his late statements unbalanced.

IV. Not 'the Evan Roberts Revival'!

Considering the role of Evan Roberts in the 1904 revival overall, one has to be clear: it was not, as often stated, 'the Evan Roberts revival'. Already the French theologian Henri Bois in one of the most thorough investigations of the revival had made the criticism 'The *Western Mail* increasingly, and in a rather extreme fashion, came to identify the Revival in Wales with Evan Roberts'.³⁴ This was corroborated by the greatest church historian of Wales, Tudur Jones, 'In fact it is high time that Evan Robert's limited, though important, role in the movement be recognized. Of the tens of thousands of meetings held between 1904 and 1906, Roberts was only present in about 250 of these meetings.... The truth is that "Evan Robert's Revival" was the creation of the newspapers, and it is their biased portrayal that has remained

³¹ Jones, *Faith*, p. 42.

³² Jones, *Faith*, 330.

³³ Gaius Davies, 'Evan Roberts: Blessings and Burnout', paper given at the Bangor conference 2004.

³⁴ Henry Bois, *Le Réveil au Pays de Galles* (Toulouse, Genève s.a.), p. 418.

most firmly in people's memories.³⁵ T. Fryer gives a good summary in a psychological study of the Welsh revival:

Although Evan Roberts' name is the most prominent in the Revival, he neither created nor sustained it for the most part. He is the embodiment of the Spirit of the Revival, the most striking manifestation of the force that caused it, and to a very great extent its leader and director, but he did not produce the Revival, nor did the Revival produce him.³⁶

There arose in other parts of the country many revivals which were partly influenced by the testimony of these events but some were completely independent of each other.³⁷ Beside the well known revival preachers such as Sidney Evans, Joseph Jenkins, Frank and Seth Joshua, Evan Roberts' brother Dan, Hugh Hughes, Nantlais Williams, W. S. Jones, R.B. Jones, Keri Evans, the young mission team with the female singers of New Quai was active. But 'there is little point in listing names, since there were a multitude of people in every part of the country who became charismatic leaders in

their own localities'.³⁸ At many places there were processions through the streets including also children evangelizing. There were separate but also unified meetings of Nonconformists and Anglicans at many places. Vicars of the evangelical wing of the Anglican Church were strongly instrumental in the spread of the revival especially in the Diocese of St. David's, e.g. by Canon Camber Williams. The vicar of Abermeurig 'invited the chapel people to the church' and he 'was one of the few that heard singing in the air, as was experienced during the revival of 1817 and 1859'.³⁹

Another unusual phenomenon accompanied the revival service of Mary Jones, a farmer's wife in the hamlet of Egryn on the coast of Merionethshire. After severe losses in her family her faith in God was clouded but revived by reading a spiritual book. Without previous instruction she was led in an immensely fruitful service of prayer and leading people to Christ not only in her small village but also travelling in the country. Apart from beatific visions in Egryn she often saw stars and a light in form of a fire ball, and the light resting over houses guided her as to whom to pray for or announced to her the number of converts to be awaited in the meeting. After these lights had been considered as part of her own imaginations they were seen by sceptical journalists and renowned persons of the place too and in spite of many attempts are not

35 Jones, *Faith*, p. 361.

36 A.T. Fryer, 'The Psychological Aspects of the Welsh Revival 1904-5' (Proceedings for the Society of Psychical Research, LI) Dec 1905, 80-161; The Revival Library CD ROM, 2004; p.10.

37 Overviews and many examples of the revivals not connected with Evan Roberts in Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 47-75, 81-86, 90-94; Evans, *Revival*, pp. 98-129; T. Jones, *Faith*, pp. 283-290; 299ff.

38 Jones, *Faith*, p. 311.

39 Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, p. 61.

explained even today.⁴⁰ But more important is that her evangelistic zeal was enormously blessed, as a journalist even stated, ‘with a success beside which, in proportion of converts to the relative population dealt with, even that which accompanies Evan Roberts’ movement in Glamorgan, pales into insignificance’.⁴¹

A Hurricane of the Spirit

One of many examples can show the very essence of a revival. Rev. John Thomas Job was serving in the small town of Bethesda in the north near Bangor. He had been celebrated nationwide through his successes in the National Eisteddfod, but he was brought low and emptied of all pride and his fame became meaningless when he lost his beloved wife and two children; but he did not lose his faith. The people in his church were shattered too by hard working conditions and a strike which split the congregation. But in these difficulties they looked to God to send a revival. There were already some signs of revival evidenced in growing prayer meetings and

sermons ‘The revival has arrived here.’ ‘They were aware of God’s presence.’ ‘It was an awful two weeks, with people in the words of my grandfather—“conquered by the death of the cross”. Only church members were affected—the world would be moved later.’ The diary read: ‘Jesus is here.’ And yet this was seen as only the first wave, or the beginnings.

Later, evangelist Joseph Jenkins was in the north and he held meetings together with the girls who were set aflame in the beginning of the revival. A description of the night of December 22nd 1904 helps to understand ‘what the core of Revival is’. Thomas Job described the meeting as ‘a Hurricane of the Holy Spirit’ and his grandson Dafydd Job summarises the diary notes (and here we see the non-Arminian, ‘Calvinistic’ type of revival sermon):

... Joseph Jenkins preached from Philippians 2:12-13... His theme was God’s work in us—not God working in us and then we work it out—rather it is God who does it all—from the new birth to the glorification. God taking hold of man’s will, making him captive to Christ. The Holy Spirit turning man’s nature as the tide of the sea towards holiness. Now the sermon is described as full of fiery bolts fired from heaven through the fiery heart of the preacher himself. The people listened in silence as God spoke to their hearts. After twenty minutes the whole place was awash with tears. Someone could not stand it any more—he shouted out—his memory of his father on his knees praying for him overcame him. Another gave out a hymn...

⁴⁰ Evans, *Revival*, pp. 115f; T. Jones, *Faith*, pp. 304f; Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 64f; detailed in A.T Fryer, ‘Psychological Aspects’; Kevin McClure, ‘Stars, and Rumours of Stars. The Egryn Lights and other Mysterious Phenomena in the Welsh Religious Revival, 1904-1905’; ‘Revival in Wales—some historical background’ in <www.magonia.demon.co.uk/abwatch/stars/stars1.html>, referring to several articles in newspapers like the *British Weekly*, the *Barmouth Advertiser*, the *Manchester Guardian*.

⁴¹ In the report of the *Cambrian News* of 13 Jan 1905.

They were brought to that point where it didn't matter who was next to them—all that counted was that they were standing before Christ, naked unless He gave them clothing; Condemned unless forgiveness was found in Him.

The people there were as far as can be ascertained, all professing Christians—and yet they came to a deeper understanding than ever before of the reality of their own sinfulness. Job himself had no doubt been a Christian for many years, and a faithful minister of the gospel—but he writes in his diary—'Is this the great night of my salvation?'—it's not that he wasn't a Christian before, but the veil seemed to be pulled back, and he became aware of a reality which he hadn't known before; an assurance that he had not previously experienced....Then there were broken relationships which had to be healed—the strike had caused so much ill feeling. Mothers who had lost their little ones forgave those whose husbands had been 'traitors'...'⁴²

The small amount or even lack of preaching in the meetings with Evan Roberts and some others was not typical for the majority of the revival meetings. But there were times when the Spirit overcame everything. J. T. Job also experienced that on one Sunday in April 1905 'he could not get further than give out the text, the place was awash with repentant tears and people

being brought through the valley of conviction of sin, to a place of praise. But these were the exceptions. So whilst there were others who were denigrating preaching, saying that singing and praying were to carry the day, Job believed that preaching would last throughout the days of this world. And the message preached should be Christ and the cross.'⁴³

V. Evaluation of Revival and Emotionalism

Unusual phenomena

There have been ecstatic and other unusual phenomena in all revivals, for example in the early Pietist times, but there were also very early discriminating and wise evaluations, for example by Philipp Jacob Spener, August Hermann Francke, Johann Albrecht Bengel, Nikolaus Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf, and Gerhard Tersteegen. Beside theological and spiritual categories they also used biography and human characters for the evaluation of the manifold prophetic and ecstatic phenomena in early Pietism (normally called 'radikaler Pietismus').⁴⁴ In the more recent discussion of unusual experiences most of which were evident already 300 years ago but gained new attention in connection e.g. with

⁴² Unpublished manuscript of Dafydd Job 'A Hurricane of the Holy Spirit', 2004.

⁴³ Job, 'Hurricane'.

⁴⁴ Oskar Föller has collected them in his interesting book, *Pietismus und Enthusiasmus—Streit unter Verwandten Geschichtliche Aspekte der Einordnung und Beurteilung enthusiastisch-charismatischer Frömmigkeit* (Wuppertal, 1998).

the 'Toronto Blessing', these phenomena are often seen as 'black or white' alternatives—either the work of the Holy Spirit or as a work of the demons. Some 'Power Charismatics' of our times as well as the stout anti-charismatics could learn a lot from these differentiated statements of our Pietist Fathers.

Very noteworthy are also the detailed accounts and balanced argumentations of the great preacher and theologian of the First Great Awakening, *Jonathan Edwards*.⁴⁵ As an apologist of the Great Awakening he was fighting two extremes:

He dispatched with the reductionist rationalism of those like Chauncy, who despised all physical and emotional phenomena and claimed their very presence precluded an authentic work of God. But he gave equal space to refuting the enthusiasts who wanted emotional and physical phenomena thrust centre stage, because they assumed their very presence demonstrated a significant work of God.⁴⁶

So, generalizing, one can draw the conclusion that

firstly, the revival phenomena are neutral in themselves, neither proving nor disproving an authentic work of God. Secondly, the phenomena neither guarantee nor pre-

clude significant inner change.... Such eruptions may be spontaneous and authentic, but placed centre stage they tend to generate inauthentic conformity, exhaustion, disillusion and unreality.⁴⁷

Helpful aspects are given also by Nigel Wright.⁴⁸ Despite all differences he sees a connecting link in 'the experience of striking and unusual phenomena of profound spiritual intensity'. He sees 'no particular need to resort to the category of the demonic at this point' (as Jessie Penn-Lewis and Evan Robert did in their book), as it would be 'usually unhelpful and high-blown to do so, just as it is to assess all unusual phenomena as necessarily being inspired by God'. More helpful would be to take seriously the theological category of *the Elemental*⁴⁹ and two anthropological categories: the first is *the Natural*, as no experience of God is 'pure', but 'in the presence of God varying responses are evoked, sometimes dramatically and sometimes not, which are appropriate to the particular configuration of body, soul and spirit that constitutes each person'.⁵⁰ The second is *the Primal*, the deposit of the past at the root of our personality formation which is also part of religious experience. 'Unusual phenomena in times of

⁴⁵ *The Great Awakening* (The Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. 4), New Haven/ London.

⁴⁶ Rob Warner, 'Ecstatic Spirituality and Entrepreneurial Revivalism. Reflections on the "Toronto Blessing"', in Walker & Aune, *On Revival*, pp. 221-238, 225.

⁴⁷ Warner, 'Spirituality', p. 226.

⁴⁸ Wright, 'Revival', pp. 121-135.

⁴⁹ *The mysterium tremendum*: '... we cannot eliminate from our understanding of God the notion of the elemental power of God that overwhelms and sometimes threatens us, or at least threatens the sin that clings so closely to us' (Wright, 'Revival', p. 124)

⁵⁰ Wright, 'Revival', p. 126.

revival or dramatic renewal can be the rising to the surface of otherwise repressed and contained feelings.' They can effect a positive catharsis, when they 'awaken new depths of emotional energy into people's lives', but become problematic when this enjoyable experience is effected and repeated intentionally.⁵¹

He also refers to the often mentioned difference between *revival* and *revivalism*: *Revival* is 'a free work of God that comes as divine gift, although it may be prepared for in prayer and the search for God,' and one in which unusual phenomena are not 'intrinsically problematic'. *Revivalism* he calls 'the attempt to reproduce through human methodology what is essentially a response to divine gift', 'manipulating phenomena by force of human personality and suggestibility', seeking the 'pleasurable and addictive'. Wright's conclusion is therefore that 'revival quickens, revivalism deadens' the church.⁵² Both sides can be seen in Evan Roberts' mission, though in his case it was not directly intended to manipulate, but he was more a victim of his belief in the absolute reliance on immediate guidance by the Holy Spirit and his lack of fellowship and correction.

There is also a big difference between Evan Roberts and the 'Third Wave' of the Charismatic movement; the Welsh Revival 1904-05 is a world apart from some 'Power Charismatics' like Rodney Howard Browne. The former had unusual experiences, visions

and spiritual agonies, and showed unpredictable reactions, but the emphasis was on the love of God, humbled in the presence of God, while the latter concentrated on power, used a certain technique in every meeting: '[W]hen the Holy Spirit was present, Evan Roberts looked for conversions, but Rodney Howard Browne for physical manifestations.... Evan Roberts did give too much attention to gifts at the expense of the Word, but he was never led on to advocate such excesses as were found in Toronto. And when leaders other than Evan Roberts are considered, it is even clearer that 1904-5 was no Toronto.'⁵³

It was only in the late phase of the revival in 1906 that extremists like Pastor R. Howton rose up, claiming among his healing abilities that he had raised a young man from the dead. This led the revivalist Seth Joshua to make a bitter attack on Howton stating: that the devil 'is raising a counterfeit revival... It is a mixture of spiritualism and mesmerism, and will need a strong hand to keep it down...'⁵⁴ Here again it seems that a shift of focus on the gifts and an intentional use of the paranormal can be observed but this was not typical of the whole revival.

51 Wright, 'Revival', p. 127.

52 Wright, 'Revival', p. 128.

53 Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 164f, against the comparison of Evan Roberts and Rodney Howard Browne as well as between Wales 04 and Toronto-Pensacola by Graham Hind, 'Azusa Street and Pentecostalism III: Pentecostal Influence in the Welsh Revival of 1904', *CRN Journal*, Summer 1998; and idem, 'Weaknesses and Excesses', *The Evangelical Magazine* (Jan-Febr., 2004).

54 Jones, *Faith*, p. 336.

Emotionalism and revival

Furthermore, the differences between the last Welsh revival and the former revivals have been exaggerated. Enthusiasm, excesses and disorder were present in many revivals of the 18th and 19th century in Wales too. Sweeping generalisations that many of the enthusiastic aspects were not new in Wales 1904-05 are not helpful.⁵⁵ To summarise this aspect we may listen to a generalising and balanced judgement of the Welsh historian Tudur Jones:

If there is any truth in the conviction that humankind's fate is of eternal importance, there would be something gravely wrong if the gospel never stirred the emotions. A faith that never excites the emotional side of one's personality is a crippled faith. On the other hand, if there is any truth in the conviction that the heart is deceitful above all things, it would be surprising if the emotional aspect of the Holy Spirit's work did not provide some people with an excuse for yielding to emotionalism in order to feed the lust of the flesh.⁵⁶

Especially in relation to the last Welsh revival, he adds a comment about the failures of some leaders and about others who were circumspect:

⁵⁵ See the details with references to the works on previous revivals in Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 159-163 [against the misleading generalisations of Graham Hind, Gwyne Ll Williams, 'The 1904 Revival Revisited', *Reformation Today* (Nov-Dec. 1982); Ian Murray, *Pentecost Today?* (Edinburgh, 1998, pp. 153-64)].

⁵⁶ Jones, *Faith*, p. 358.

Many leaders were concerned with the overemphasis on feelings.... In the same spirit W.W. Lewis and Keri Evans—'the Camarthan fire-brigade', according to Nantlais Williams—placed a ban on 'fainting fits and pangs of sighing or weeping'. Newspaper reports did much damage by giving excessive coverage of extraordinary events. H. Elvet Lewis (Elfed) believed that the meetings where quiet and deep emotion was experienced had more lasting influence than the meetings where there was great excitement.... All this is true, but it would be foolish to dismiss the passion and emotional excitement of the revival simply because the psychological excesses of wicked people were mingled with the sincerity of true converts.⁵⁷

VI. Immediate and lasting results in Wales

'White gloves' and puzzled pit ponies—social effects

The immediate social effects of the revival were obvious to everybody and some became proverbial. In many places in Wales for some months magistrates found themselves presented with white gloves as a sign that there were no criminal cases to be treated.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Jones, *Faith*., p. 359.

⁵⁸ For social effects see e.g. the revival edition of the *Western Mail* (Awstin et. al.), e.g. issue 5, p. 14. R.B. Jones, *Rent Heavens*, pp. 42ff.

The usual hundreds of cases of drunkenness in the populous centres were significantly reduced. In one place the policemen were so unemployed that they had nothing better to do than to form a church choir. The effect on the drinking habits of many was very striking. Many public-houses, almost at a stroke, became practically empty. Workers brought their wages home to their poor families or gave part of them for charitable purposes instead of wasting them in public houses. Many homes had undergone a complete transformation through the parents having been brought to a better life through the Revival.

The correspondent of *The Daily News* (December, 1904) told the story,

The worst class of worker in the colliery is the haulier, who has charge of the poor horses doomed to perpetual underground darkness. These men, as a class, are proverbial for their profanity and cruelty, but now the change is so marked that the poor, bewildered horses do not know what to make of it. Accustomed to words of command, every one of which is either a curse or an obscenity, they hardly know how to obey the requests now couched in quiet and gentle phrases.⁵⁹

In the pits there were organized underground services. The miners gathered to pray and praise God before they began their hard work. The revival resulted in lots of debts being repaid and the reconciliation of bitter enemies, especially those families who

had suffered from the strike and strike breakers in the northern Bethesda quarry. 'Many converts immediately became practical philanthropists': Young people in different areas visited the poor and sick, providing bibles, food and clothing for the needy, there were ministries to the gypsies and tramps.⁶⁰ More long lasting were the institutions formed by the revival like Rescue Homes for women who had earned their money by prostitution and for homeless men.

Attitude to politics

As in the evangelical movement today there were different attitudes and debates over political engagement and socialism. The political activities of the Nonconformists concentrated mainly on the already mentioned battle against the Education Act of 1902 by which even the Nonconformists were forced to support Church Schools even though the Anglican Church formed only a minority in the country.

While Nonconformist ministers usually were Liberal in politics and some were active supporters of the Party, there were also prominent revival ministers who voted for the Labour Party. In the years after the revival Socialism often became obsolete in the eyes of believers because it did not only attack the failures of the churches on the social field but offered a new gospel when many passionately tried 'to provide a religious justification for the political battle'.⁶¹ The 'Kingdom Con-

59 R.B. Jones, *Rent Heavens*, p. 45.

60 Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 130f; Jones, *Faith*, p. 367.

61 Jones, *Faith*, p. 410.

cept' of Keir Hardy and others was not interested in a heavenly kingdom but wanted to create heaven on earth. 'Socialism was the true revelation and Christian doctrine had to be pruned to respond to its requirements.'⁶² But a minority welcomed socialism, and in some the 'social conscience was quickened during the Revival'.⁶³

After the revival there was a debate about whether the revival had prevented or intensified the churches' interest in the social implications of the gospel. In some cases, especially where there was a Keswick influence on personal perfection, social interest was weakened. But a more comprehensive and balanced consideration comes to the conclusion that 'There was a clear tendency within perfectionist movements—as in America with the emancipation of slaves—to encourage social activity. There is a very close link between aiming for personal holiness and the sanctification of society and there is room to believe that social interest was heightened rather than diminished by the revival.'⁶⁴ If one looks for abolition of structural evils of society as a result of revival, the general observation from comparative studies should also be taken into account, viz. that 'significant changes, like abolishing slavery, were due to more long-term campaigning led by Evangelical parliamentarians and slave uprisings led by Baptist

deacons than to revivalism as such'.⁶⁵

Socialism turned Christian reasoning on its head but the critical question has to be raised, not so much as to the revival which provided a different and specific chance and challenge, but as to the churches in the years until the First World War: whether they missed the chance to 'open the door to a social doctrine that would be derived from the Bible and that would simultaneously get to grips with the complexities of contemporary society.... Socialism stepped into the gap and offered holistic doctrine of life, and Welsh Christian thinkers did not really know how to criticize it creatively while accepting what was valuable in it and rejecting those elements which were false.'⁶⁶ This may be *one* of several reasons for the decline of Welsh Christianity in the following decades.

Lasting Influence in Wales?

The total *number* of converts given varies between 80,000 and 162,000. Although there was 'an obsession with the numbers of converts during the revival'⁶⁷ exact figures especially of the influx of new members cannot be given as the relationship between converts and members is not documented; many converts may have been already members, and different terms were used in

⁶² Jones, *Faith.*, p. 409.

⁶³ Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, p. 146. and pp 140-7.

⁶⁴ Jones, *Faith*, p. 368.

⁶⁵ Steve Latham, "'God came from Teman": Revival and Contemporary Revivalism', in Walker & Aune, *On Revival*, pp. 171-186, 179.

⁶⁶ Jones, *Faith*, p. 411.

⁶⁷ Jones, *Faith*, p. 362; Gibbard adds that the counting of converts had also occurred in the 1839 and 1859 revivals (*Fire on the Altar*, p. 133).

the different denominations such as *members, communicants, adherers or listeners*.⁶⁸ But the real increase of membership in all churches was substantial, e.g. the increase of the four major (non-conformist) churches between 1903 and 1905 was 83,000.⁶⁹ But all these experienced a loss and decrease in the years after the revival though widely varying in different regions. A comparison with former revivals justifies the general statement: 'It seems that, following a spiritual blessing, reaction is inevitable.'⁷⁰ But still in 1912, church membership in the whole of Wales was ten percent higher than in 1903.⁷¹

The existing churches received 'new energy to continue with their daily work', 'enabled the churches to face the terrible crisis of the Great War and the social upheaval of the Depression that followed' and 'a huge phalanx of church leaders emerged who continued to make substantial contribution to Christian life in every part of the country until the outbreak of the Second World War'.⁷² Never before were so many women introduced in the public work of the churches which turned out

to be 'providential' for the following years (of the First World War) 'when many congregations would depend more on women than on men'.⁷³

As result of the revival a number of men and women felt the call to go out in to the world 'by faith' as witnesses, some on their own subjective call, others sent by existing or newly formed missionary societies.⁷⁴ On the institutional level (which is always an expression of the lasting results of revivals)⁷⁵ new independent churches were founded by children of the revival (not only the two Pentecostal churches mentioned below). New conventions (on a smaller scale than Llandrindod) were arranged, three Bible schools were opened, an evangelical magazine⁷⁶ started, as well as the social institutions already mentioned.

And the individual effects should also not be underestimated even when the emotional heat of a revival has disappeared:

It is often argued that revivalism is ephemeral. So are apple blossoms. But apples are born of them. And as the brief historical retrospect shows, the fruits of revivals are among the most permanent things in history... as a matter of fact, while some undoubtedly fall away, and very few indeed ever permanently retain the ecstasy and the vision of the moment of their con-

68 For the facts and the discussion of statistics see Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 132-136, 191f; Jones, *Faith*, pp. 362-365.

69 The figures of the Anglican Church refer only to the number of communicants on Easter Sunday, but the steady growth of these numbers from 1905 even to 1912 is probably influenced also by the positive response of the Anglicans to the revival (Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, p. 136).

70 Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, p. 136.

71 Jones, *Faith*, p. 364.

72 Jones, *Faith*, p. 362.

73 Jones, *Faith*, p. 362.

74 Gibbard, *Wings of the Dove*, pp. 201-211.

75 Wright, 'Does Revival Quicken?', p. 132.

76 Compare for all aspects Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 123-127; 200; R.B. Jones, *Rent Heavens*, pp. 50f, 60ff.

version, the majority of converts made in times of revival remain steadfast.' Professor Starbuck, in his *Psychology of Religion*, concludes that conversion 'brings with it a changed attitude towards life which is fairly constant and permanent, although the feelings fluctuate'.⁷⁷

General summary

Despite all reservations, the work of Roberts and even more the revival in total was mainly seen as a blessing for the country. Some bishops of the Anglican Church praised it as 'clearly the work of the Holy Ghost' and 'expressed a hope that the blessings which had unquestionably come to Wales should be extended to England'.⁷⁸ It was even welcomed by the Welsh member of Parliament, Lloyd George, who became the respected Prime Minister. He once postponed a political meeting in North Wales in order not to interfere with a revival meeting of Roberts which he considered to be more important. He told his ministers: 'The material conditions of this country will not improve until there comes a spiritual awakening', adding, 'and I charge you ministers with the responsibility of promot-

ing and fostering such a revival'.⁷⁹

Eifion Evans finishes his classic book on the revival:

Whatever may have been the aberrations introduced by human ingenuity subsequent to 1904, the revival in the period of its most powerful manifestations was unquestionably due to divine initiative. In its origin there was so much of God's presence, in its extension so little of man's design; its effects were so evidently supernatural, its fruit so patently holy, that none could reasonably deny its divine source.⁸⁰

Tudur Jones summarises his detailed discussion of the weaknesses and strengths of the Welsh revival in the chapter 'Fool's Gold or the Real Thing':

Taking a broad view, it is clear that it was an extremely fruitful blessing. Although Wales would soon turn its back on the God who gave it such a thrilling opportunity in 1904-5, the historian must note that the revival was on the whole, a hugely significant event.⁸¹

VII. Pilgrims from all over the world and international effects

People from many countries made pilgrimages to Wales, including, (taking as an example my country of Germany)

⁷⁷ W. T. S. (Stead), 'The Psychology of the Revival', in Arthur Goodrich [et al.], *The Story of the Welsh revival As Told By Eyewitnesses Together With A Sketch Of Evan Roberts And His Message to the World To which is added a number of incidents of this most remarkable movement* (n.p. 1905, CD ed.), pp. 61-64.

⁷⁸ Shaw, S.B., *The Great Revival in Wales*, 1905, (repr. Pensacola, 2002), pp. 197f; 109; 196.

⁷⁹ R. B. Jones, *Rent heavens*., p.67.

⁸⁰ Evans, *Revival*, p. 199.

⁸¹ Jones, *Faith*, p. 369.

leading persons of the new German Gemeinschaftsbewegung ('Fellowship Movement' in the established *Evangelical Church of Germany*). Many aristocratic women visited Wales and came back enthusiastically giving testimony to the miracles of this revival, and invited others to come with them next time. In her widely read autobiography, Eva von Tiele-Winckler, the founder of a growing sisterhood of deaconesses and the 'Friedenshort' for homeless children and others in Miechowitz (Upper Silesia), describes her impressions of one of the meetings without Evan Roberts and of the changing power of the Holy Spirit on a whole town and a big crowd.⁸²

In consequence of the visits of the members of the German 'Gemeinschaftsbewegung' smaller *regional awakenings* were to be seen in some parts of Germany, although not as large and influential as the great Revival Movement in the Evangelical Church of Germany during the first half of the 19th century. There were also open debates *pro and contra*: in Hamburg one Lutheran pastor published a booklet: 'Wittenberg or Wales? A serious question'. Another Lutheran pastor answered by his pamphlet, 'Wittenberg and Wales!'⁸³ The influence of Wales was seen especially during the

national conference of the Evangelical Alliance in Bad Blankenburg 1905 where people described a revival atmosphere among the 1300 participants. The written report mentions that this was not a simple imitation of Wales as some had feared.⁸⁴

But the attitude changed after the sad ecstatic events 1907 in my home town Kassel during meetings with two young female evangelists from the young Pentecostal movement in Norway, who had been invited to Germany by the missionary Emil Meyer from Hamburg. The young women were part of the 'tongues movement' in Norway, influenced by the Methodist Thomas Ball Barratt who claimed to have received this gift in the USA. So there is a chain between Los Angeles, Christiana, Hamburg and Kassel. But when the gatherings which had been blessed initially got so much out of order with paroxysmal manifestations, they were completely discredited in the eyes of the public of the town of Kassel by reports in the newspaper. Even the police had to intervene and the leadership of the (established) Evangelical

⁸² On her visits to Wales and Keswick see *Denksteine des lebendigen Gottes. Aufzeichnungen selbsterlebter Führungen* (Gießen/ Basel, 1963, pp. 36-49; pp. 38f.).

⁸³ Max Glage, *Wittenberg oder Wales? Eine ernste Frage* (Hamburg, 1905); R. Mumssen, *Wittenberg und Wales! Erwiderung auf P. Glage's Schrift: Wittenberg oder Wales?* (Neumünster n.d.).

⁸⁴ 'Reden und Ansprachen der zwanzigsten Allianz-Konferenz zur Vertiefung des Glaubenslebens, 28. August bis 2. September 1905' (Blankenburg 1905), p. III; also 'Evangelisches Allianzblatt 1905', pp. 357ff; pp. 365ff.

⁸⁵ For the events in Kassel and Hessen, the most detailed account is Ernst Giese, *Und flicken die Netze. Dokumente zur Erweckungsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, (Marburg, 1976), pp. 49-119; more summarised, Paul Fleisch, *Geschichte der Pfingstbewegung in Deutschland von 1900 bis 1950*, (Marburg, 1983), pp. 36-51.

Church decided to forbid everybody from participating in these meetings.⁸⁵ An initial positive evaluation by some leading Pietistic pastors changed to sharp criticism. The events and the theology were condemned by the *Berliner Erklärung (Declaration of Berlin)* 1909.⁸⁶ (These events were said to be 'from below', by Satan or by human emotions but not by God's Spirit.)

But the evangelical Gnadau brethren opposed also the words and writings of one of the renowned speakers of the Fellowship Movement, Rev. Jonathan Paul, on the 'pure heart' and the possibility of not sinning any more. Also the teachings of a 'Baptism in the Spirit' as a separate act after conversion was regarded as unevangelical and not consistent with the doctrine of Reformation. They rejected the expectation of a 'new Pentecost' as it had been obvious already in 'Irvingianism' with all its failures. At the Gnadau Conference of 1910 there was not only a reaction against the rising Pentecostal movement but more generally against the new (American-British) influences which were considered to be foreign to the rich theological tradition of the reformation in Germany.⁸⁷

So, unbalanced adoptions of Anglo-Saxon influences on Holiness teaching and the Baptism by the Spirit, some excesses in Kassel, a leadership weak and unprepared for the events and the radical opposition of the largest part of

the 'evangelicals' within the Evangelical Church of Germany led to a deep split in the German Fellowship Movement and the formation of a Pentecostal movement outside the (established) Evangelical Church of Germany. All these developments were to poison the relationship between the Pietists of the Evangelical Church of Germany and the later Pentecostal and charismatic movements in Germany for about hundred years up to the present. Unfortunately these events certainly affected the later evaluation of and the silence about the great Welsh revival too.

Wales and the Pentecostal Movement

The relationship of the Welsh Revival to the revival of Los Angeles 1907 and the rising Pentecostal Movement can be answered only in a differentiated way. During his sabbatical, Joseph Smale, the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Los Angeles, visited Evan Roberts in Wales and reported in his home church where they started to pray for a revival similar to that in Wales. The biographer of the events, Frank Bartleman, had correspondence with Roberts who encouraged him and prayed for the congregation in America. In his articles Bartleman spoke about the worldwide revival which, as he saw it, had been rocked in the cradle of the small country of Wales, broken out in India and later fully grown up in Los Angeles.

More important was the direct influence of the Welsh revival on the birth of two new Pentecostal churches by children of the revival: the *Elim Church* by George Jeffreys, an important

⁸⁶ For text, see Giese, *Netze*, pp. 126-129..

⁸⁷ 'Verhandlungen der achten Gnadauer Pfingstkonferenz gehalten zu Wernigerode', 17.-19. Mai, Stuttgart 1910.

British evangelist of the 20th century,⁸⁸ and the *Apostolic Church* founded by Daniel Powell Williams in Pen-y-Groes in Camarthenshire.⁸⁹ One can mention also Alexander A. Boddy, the vicar of All Saints' Parish Church, Sunderland, who had met Evan Roberts in Tony-pandy and T.B. Barratt in Norway. He encouraged people to exercise the gift of tongues within denominations. In 1909 he formed the Pentecostal Missionary Union which was to send many missionaries overseas.⁹⁰

Comparing the phenomena, the most important distinctive criterion of the new Pentecostal movement, speaking in tongues, *glossolalia*, played only a very small role in Wales 1904-05.⁹¹ There are also parallels in the influence of visions and auditions for some leaders of the revival. But a more important parallel—though not only to

the Pentecostal churches—was the character of the enthusiastic meetings which seemed to be led not by human will.⁹²

Donald Gee remarks that perhaps the most formative result of Wales 'was the creation of a widespread spirit of expectation for still greater things. Men justly asked "Why Wales only? Why not other lands? Why not a worldwide Revival?"... Faith was rising to visualise a return to apostolic Christianity in all its pristine beauty and power... In this manner the spiritual soil was prepared in the providence of God for the rise of the Pentecostal Movement.'⁹³

Worldwide results

Reflecting on the results of the Welsh Revival after 1905-05, we have to mention the *effects* outside Wales, sometimes by Welsh people all over the world, or by visitors or simply by the sharing of news from the huge events in Wales. There were greater or smaller effects and local revivals in England, Scotland and Ireland,⁹⁴ on the continent the most effective were in France, Germany, and Norway,⁹⁵ but

88 Neil Hudson & Andrew Walker, 'George Jeffreys, Revivalist and Reformer: A Reevaluation', in Walker & Aune, (ed.), *On Revival*, pp. 137-156.

89 T. N. Turnbull, *What God hath Wrought: A Short History of the Apostolic Church* (Bradford, 1959); James E. Worsfold, *The Origins of the Apostolic Church in Great Britain* (Thorndon, Wellington NZ, 1991); B. Llewellyn, 'A study in the History of the Apostolic Church in Wales in the Context of Pentecostalism', Unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Bangor, 1997.

90 Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, p. 183; idem, *Wings*, pp. 201f.; Donald Gee, *Wind and Flame, The Pentecostal Movement*, (London 1941; revised, enlarged and re-entitled, Croydon, 1967), p. 6.

91 See Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, p. 182. Russell Davies, *Secret Sins. Sex, Violence and Society in Camarthenshire 1870-1920* (Cardiff, 1996), p. 201.

92 This similarity is also emphasized by Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit. 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001* (Nashville, 2001), p. 42.

93 Gee, *Wind and Flame*, pp. 5f.

94 Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar*, pp. 95-122; Jones, *Faith*, pp. 337-342; Orr, *Flaming Tongue*, pp. 29-49.

95 'Nowhere outside of Wales was the revival more powerful than in Norway, and Albert Lunde was regarded as the Evan Roberts of that country.' (Gibbard, *Wings of the Dove*, p. 49).

less in Sweden, Denmark and Russia,⁹⁶ There were smaller effects in Holland, Belgium and Switzerland, and not such direct links to revivals in Hungary, Latvia and Bulgaria.⁹⁷ Outside Europe there were great effects in America: in the United States, Patagonia and the West Indies. There were great results in Asia: in China, Korea, Manchuria, Japan and most of all in India!⁹⁸ In South Africa, Congo and especially in Madagascar (where the pioneers of Protestant mission were Welsh missionaries),⁹⁹ also in Australia and New Zealand.¹⁰⁰

Gibbard differentiates between primary and secondary influences of Wales. It was certainly the most important source for the revivals in India, Madagascar, Patagonia, and France while its influence on Korea, Australia and New Zealand was not so direct but not unimportant. In countries with revivals directly influenced by Wales, it is possible to detect a different level of intensity: thus the revival meetings in India 1905-06 and Madagascar were more similar to those in Wales than those in Russia which were quieter.¹⁰¹

96 For Europe, see Gibbard, *Wings of the Dove*, pp. 23-66.

97 Jones, *Faith*, p.347; his contributions to France, Scandinavia, Germany and Eastern Europe pp. 345-347.

98 Gibbard, *Wings of the Dove*, pp. 117-167; Orr, *Flaming Tongue*, pp. 130ff.

99 Gibbard, *Wings of the Dove*, pp. 101-113; Orr, *Flaming Tongue*, pp. 116f; 122.

100 *Wings of the Dove*, pp. 171-73; Compare Orr, *Flaming Tongue*, pp. 109f.

101 Gibbard, *Wings of the Dove*, p. 220.

VIII. A call for a network of international research on the newer revival movements¹⁰²

All these highly interesting international connections deserve further research. As the majority of World Christianity is no longer living in the western and northern world, the revivals in the new churches of all continents must be part of future church histories and historical research. The synchronic (regional) and diachronic links and networks between European and Non-European revivals must be taken seriously, so the continental European studies should no longer be restricted to a too narrow definition of 'The Revival Movement' excluding the 20th century and neglecting scholars from Asia, Africa, Australia, Latin America and their research.¹⁰³

102 For details see my papers, 'Revival movements in the 20th century as an urgent task of international research network. The deficit and challenge with special reference to the Welsh Revival of 1904/05', forthcoming volume of the Interdisciplinary Centenary Conference to the Welsh Revival of 1904-1905, University of Bangor, 2004; and: 'Die Erforschung der Erweckungsbewegungen des 20. Jahrhunderts als dringendes Desiderat der internationalen Pietismusforschung', in *Interdisziplinäre Pietismusforschungen. Beiträge zum Ersten Internationalen Kongress für Pietismusforschung 2001*, ed. Udo Sträter (Hallesche Forschungen 17) Tübingen 2005, vol. II, pp. 813-23.

103 Here I disagree sharply with Ulrich Gäbler who wanted to restrict the term 'Erweckungsbewegung' ('The Revival Movement') to the one renewal movement in the context of the Enlightenment in Europe and North America at the beginning of the 19th century, which is untenable for several reasons (Gäbler, *Auferstehungszeit. Erweckung-*

Important investigational work has been done by J. Edwin Orr who probably had the largest knowledge and greatest overview in historical and regional respects¹⁰⁴ due to his many visits to all continents and his life-long investigations of revival movements. Certainly his works are methodically weak and need to be supplemented.¹⁰⁵ The huge task of a 'History of Revival Movements' and the comparative investigation of the phenomenology of revivals is still ahead of us¹⁰⁶ and can never be done by one person as Orr attempted to achieve. This includes of course a lot of methodological work and a thorough discussion of the defin-

ition of the term 'Revival Movement'.¹⁰⁷ This task may be difficult, but it would be wrong to overestimate the difficulties of defining the movement.¹⁰⁸

In order to make progress in revival research I make the following proposals:

a) Organize well prepared *international conferences* with the best experts on revivals of *all* continents about specific subjects which promote inter-linked and comparative research on historical and systematic aspects of revivals (like 'Revival and social effects on society'). A first congress could concentrate in connection with the centenaries on the phenomenon of worldwide revivals during the first decade of the last century.

b) As this very large task cannot be undertaken by isolated scholars, there should be more permanent cooperation between scholars all over the world. Too often researchers on 'The Revival Movement' on the European continent do not know much of the work of their colleagues even in Britain, to say nothing of research in other continents. Even the great revival in Wales is not mentioned in our most popular handbooks of general Church History, the 'Heussi' and the 'Hauschild'; the same is true for most articles on worldwide

spreidiger des 19. Jahrhunderts. Sechs Porträts, München 1991, p. 179, n.7. Idem, Article 'Erweckungsbewegung' in: EKL3 I, col. 1081-1088.

104 E.g. his five regional works on 'Evangelical Awakenings' in Africa (1974); Eastern Asia (1975); Latin America (1978); Southern Asia (1976); and in the South Seas (1976).

105 'Orr is often doing no more than chronicling a long series of facts without much attempt at assessing their significance... sometimes he sees revivals where there are none!' But 'he is the only researcher who has done any work at all on revivals in certain periods and places. Orr's pioneering work needs to be supplemented, and at times, possibly be corrected by further study, but for the present, his is the only work which has been done in bringing together the host of evidence present in newspaper and magazine reports, and other contemporary writings.' (R.E. Davies, *I Will Pour out My Spirit. A History and Theology of Revivals and Evangelical Awakenings*, (Tunbridge Wells, 1992), p. 13, n. 5, 7.

106 Tudor Jones: 'No doubt wide-ranging and detailed research in the countries where revival has been experienced would reveal common elements but this research is hitherto far from complete.' (*Faith*, p. 356.)

107 See e.g. Latham, 'God came from Teman', and other articles in Walker & Aune, *On Revival*; R. E. Davies, *I will Pour out my Spirit*, p. 15.

108 As Hartmut Lehmann said in the context of the difficulties defining the term 'Pietismus': Zur Definition des 'Pietismus'. in Martin Greschat (ed.) *Zur neueren Pietismusforschung* (WdF 440), (Darmstadt, 1977), pp. 82-90.

revivals of the 20th century in the biggest lexica or monographs.¹⁰⁹ Information in the other direction is no better—it is astonishing how little some English publications know about revivals in Germany. Perhaps such cooperation could be initiated and organized by the new *Centre for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements* at Asbury Seminary, Wilmore. But we need a similar centre in Europe and perhaps in other continents too.¹¹⁰

The last word shall be from one of the Welsh authors (whose historical works on the revival deserve to be more widely known all over the world). It can inspire us to desire revivals

despite their ephemeral character and impress us 'with a sense of the infinite importance of Revivals, and of the need of making the most of them while they last'. One of the most fruitful revival preachers of 1904-05, Rhys Bevan Jones, commented 25 years later:

They do not come so frequently as to justify indifference and negligence. They are tides in the life of a generation which, if not taken advantage of, leave the vessel high and dry on the shore. They are but few who live long enough to have the privilege of experiencing more than one of these stirring movements of the Spirit. Recognizing this fact, Mr. Roberts in 1904 warned his congregation, saying, that that sort of thing would not go on for ever; that fever-heat could not be kept going long; but they must keep at it until the Churches could be raised to a higher level, and then they could 'settle down to business'.¹¹¹

109 For references, examples and discussions see my more detailed papers of Bangor and Halle in note 101 above.

110 Perhaps in cooperation with one of the existing centres on similar subjects like the *Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Pietism* in Halle, or the *Hollenweger Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Pentecostalism and Charismatic Movements* in Amsterdam, if the focus could be widened to include the majority of non-Pentecostal revivals.

111 Jones, *Rent Heavens*, p. 56.

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African Christianity in Global Religious and Cultural Conflict

Yusufu Turaki

KEYWORDS: *Cultural wars, religious wars, Islam, Jihad, globalization, freedom, missions, North African Christianity, indigenous religions, biblical authority, fundamentalism*

I WAS ASKED TO write and present a paper on the topic 'Theological Reflection on Religious Fundamentalism as a Global Issue' from an African perspective. Having researched and read materials available on 'Religious Fundamentalism', the following important major global issues emerged that are relevant and important to our theological reflection:

- The Western (North America and Europe) war on the resurgent militant Islam and its involvement in physical combat with militant Islamists in the Middle East;
- the great threat and challenge to African Christianity by resurgent militant Islam;
- the emerging revived neo-pagan-

ism, religious cults and syncretism in western nations that have great implications for Christianity worldwide;

- the revival of indigenous traditional religions and cultures in the world caused by contemporary powerful global religious and cultural conflict;
- the emerging rift and conflict between western Christianity and African Christianity.

This paper describes the global religious and cultural wars and conflicts that involve the West as a regional block comprising North America and Europe; Islam as a religious and cultural block in the Middle East; and Africa as a regional block with historical ties to Christianity, the West and Islam.

The primary objective of this paper is to raise global religious and cultural issues for theological reflection. Hopefully this will raise the need of defining

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the identity, role and status of African Christianity vis-à-vis western Christianity and Islam. It also raises some important issues for theological reflection on the current state of Christianity in the West and the influence of western global civilizing forces (democracy, advanced science and technology and capitalism) on the global scene.

The paper seeks to place African Christianity amid global religious and cultural wars between the West and Islam and its general impact upon Christianity; the threat and challenge of western modern philosophies (secularism, pluralism, relativism and modernism), global civilizing forces (democracy, advanced science and technology and capitalism) and neopaganism on Christianity and Islam; and the enduring and pervasive influence of traditional religions and cultures upon African Christianity and the revival of paganism in the West.

The West is not only waging a contemporary war against militant Islamists, but historically and ironically, it has been waging a religious war principally against Christianity and its own ethnocentrism. It is important that we examine this theological implication for world Christianity as a result of the decline of western Christianity; western rebellion against Christianity; and the revival of neopaganism in the West.

On the whole, the paper aims at raising theological questions and issues that are beyond the traditional discourse on religious fundamentalism. It is significant that we engage ourselves with major global issues of religious and cultural conflict that have grave implications not only for Christianity, but for the whole world.

1. The West, Christianity and Islam

Since 9/11 in 2001 the West (North America and Europe) has intensified its war against Islamic terrorism, or Islamic fascists, or Islamic fundamentalists or militant Islamists. This is a global religious and cultural war that is generating fierce socio-political and religious conflict and violence globally. Does Christian theology have something to contribute to the world about this on-going religious and cultural war?

From the western perspective, the on-going war between the West and Islam in general is not religious and neither is it cultural because in the West, both western culture and Christianity have been pushed to the periphery of society. Christian influence has been weakened and Christianity is generally being rejected. All those who adhere to orthodox Christianity are called various names such as fundamentalist, conservative or primitive. But the war between the West and Islam is indeed a war of civilization, a war to entrench western democracy, advanced science and technology and capitalism in the world. But Islam and other religions or cultures, on the other hand, are waging not a war of civilization as the West does, but a religious and cultural war of self-defence, survival and preservation of their religions and cultures. There is a strong fear that western global civilizing forces may take away the only thing which they have, their own religions and cultures. Islam has never shied away from emphasizing the fact that she is fighting a religious war against the West. It is a *Jihad*.

Besides waging a war against Islamists, there is another serious war which the West has been waging since the Renaissance, principally against Christianity. The West uses three powerful forces within its civilization to fight against Christianity, namely: modern philosophies (secularism, pluralism, relativism and modernism); global civilizing forces (democracy, advanced science and technology and capitalism); and the current revival of pagan religion (neo-paganism). These global civilizing forces from the West have devastating global consequences for Christianity and other religions and cultures.

It is important to note that the West does not use modern philosophies or neo-paganism in its wars against Islamists and other civilizations. Its warfare with them is not a religious one, but that of civilization as already noted. It uses its global civilizing forces (democracy, advanced science and technology and capitalism) to fight Islam and other civilizations. Westerners do not have to be Christians in order to fight these global wars of civilization. They may do so, but only privately as Christians or secularists or atheists or neo-pagans. The West is not out to defend Christianity or ethnocentrism. Rather, it is out to defend principally its global civilizing forces, especially the values of democracy and the free world. The war is to defend and promote individualism, human rights and freedoms of all peoples of the world. It is not a war to defend religion, but a civilization that is not religious. This is the point of difference between the West and Islam and other religions and cultures.

In Islam, you can fight this war only

when you are a Muslim. It is not a war to be fought by unbelievers or infidels. If one believes in the cause of Islam, one should be ready to die any kind of death for the sake of Islam.

Looking back, the World Council of Churches (WCC) sponsored conferences and research on the dialogue of religions and cultures between the late 1950s and 1970s. The United Nations Organization (UNO) did the same in the 1980s up to 2000s. Unfortunately, the world has moved beyond the state of dialogue and the search for peaceful co-existence of religions and cultures to belligerency, conflict, violence and warfare. In the wake of contemporary resurgent militant Islam since 1979, the language has changed from dialogue and peaceful co-existence to 'let's unite behind Islam to fight Satan and Evil America' or 'let's unite behind America (Freedom) to fight Islamic terrorists or Islamic Fascists'. The only language left is militaristic in order to crush the terrorists or the Islamist cry *Allahu Akbar*. Is there any Christian theological language that we can use today? The Muslims have rejected 'dialogue' and 'human rights' as western clichés. They have turned a deaf ear to the West. How is the West reading Islamist language of violence and terrorism? What does Christianity make of this?

In the contemporary world, there is a strong demand for Christian theologians to have a fresh look at western concepts of democracy, human rights and freedoms. Furthermore, the western conception of individualism tends to place autonomous man above God his Creator. The non-western conception of man and his rights is radically different from that of the West. In

Islam, human rights are rooted in both Shari'a and Allah. The custodian of both Shari'a and Allah is the Islamic Authority or the Theocratic State. In traditional Africa, human rights are rooted not in the individual but in the community. Western concepts of human rights are deeply humanistic and secular. The secular doctrines of human rights are rooted in absolute individualism or absolute human autonomy. Both Christianity and Islam reject such.

In Christianity, man can be free only in God and not apart from him. Man lives responsibly under God's moral and spiritual order. Human rights are a godly demand of a man under oppression by another man or any human institution. Rights and the moral social order (morality) are intertwined and go hand in hand and are inseparable. The bane of western claims of human rights is its lack of the authority of the moral and social order. It is simply rights without any moral order.

2. Historical Ties between Western Christianity and African Christianity

There is a strong historical tie and relationship between western Christianity and African Christianity. For centuries, western Christianity has exerted a very powerful influence over African Christianity. If western Christianity should reject its biblical and apostolic roots, it is most likely to affect African Christianity profoundly as a result of this historical tie and relationship.

Africa has two forms of historical Christianity: (1) the Hellenistic North African Christianity which had its

roots and origins directly from Palestine; and (2) Western Missionary Christianity of the 15th to the 21st centuries. This is the form of Christianity which came to Africa via Europe and North America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Western Missionary Christianity forms the largest sector of Christianity in Africa. Islam invaded North Africa in the 7th century and destroyed the North African Christianity. However, the Coptic Church of Egypt and the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia have survived against all odds to the present. The Nubian Church in Sudan was finally crushed by the Muslims in the 16th century.

Looking at contemporary world affairs, we are not sure of the future of Christianity in the West, especially Europe. Christianity is fast declining both in numbers and influence amid (1) the pagan revival; and (2) the resurgent militant world-wide Islam. Pagan revival in the West has very serious religious consequences on African Christianity as these are being exported into Africa through the CNN, BBC World and other Mega Media organisations. The Muslims have theirs also—Al Jezeerah that propagates its own Islamic gospel to the world. Similarly, the resurgent militant Islam in its war against both western culture and Christianity has great consequences for the survival of Christianity in Africa. Furthermore, western modern philosophies and neo-paganism are forces of destruction for Christianity.

We must understand the nature of this warfare. Modern western philosophies and neo-paganism do not attack religions or cultures of other peoples outside of the West. Their attacks are

only directed at western culture and Christianity. If Christianity in the West does not escape the onslaughts of western modern philosophies and neo-paganism, certainly, Christianity cannot survive anywhere in the world. Christianity in Africa is equally vulnerable to attacks from these major global fronts from the West: (1) modern western philosophies; (2) the emerging western neo-paganism; and (3) the resurgent militant Islam. African Christianity now faces these formidable global forces.

The numerical size of Christians in Africa (over 350 million) is increasingly becoming a factor that is bound to shape and affect world Christianity. But we cannot ignore the great threats and challenges which African Christianity is currently facing as already mentioned. Professor Andrew Walls has called the attention of world Christianity to the fact that the majority of Christians in the world live in the non-western world which means that the centre of Christianity is shifting from the North (western nations) to the South (non-western nations). Professor Kwame Bediako asserts that the vibrant life and size of the African Church demand that a serious study of African Christianity be made so as to ascertain its place and role in global Christianity. The recognition and acceptance of this fact will go a long way in shaping and strengthening Christianity in Africa.

Recently, Professor Philip Jenkins in his latest book, *New Faces of Christianity* (2006), has made a similar call to the western Church to listen to and learn from African and Asian Christianity by virtue of its numerical size and vibrant forms of Christianity.

Given these facts, I strongly feel that we should pay great attention to this emerging force of Christianity. We should also be fully aware of its global religious and cultural threats from both the West and Islam.

The historical ties and relationships between African Christianity and western Christianity are crucial in shaping and influencing the emerging identity, role and status of African Christianity. This historical factor is essential to our understanding of the emerging conflict that is beginning to rear its head between western Christianity and African Christianity. This emerging crisis will pose a great threat and challenge to the voice and influence of African Christianity in the world.

Does African Christianity have a voice or influence within world Christianity?

Just a few years ago, we noticed this new emerging trend creating a potential for crisis between western Christianity and African Christianity. Jenkins observed that there is an emerging conflict between western forms of Christianity and African and Asian forms of Christianity as already alluded to. His observation and conclusion were drawn from the research he undertook on the use and interpretation of the Bible. He identified one key social fact as the cause of this rift and conflict, that is, *culture*. He identified African and Asian approaches to the use and interpretation of the Bible as *conservative, traditional, Biblicist, literalist, fundamentalist*, while that of western Christianity is *liberal, modernist, secularist*.

Jenkins seems to agree with Profes-

sor Samuel P. Huntington and Dr. Geert Hofstede that *culture* exerts a powerful and pervasive influence upon human civilizations and organizations. Jenkins' conclusion seems to endorse the concept of *cultural determinism*. The new emerging forms of Christianity whether in the West or in Africa or Asia are simply cultural expressions and are bound to be different. This view has been echoed in the West as regards the question of the ordination of homosexual priests. African and Asian priests of the Anglican Communion strongly opposed western theology and the practice of homosexuality in church leadership. This attitude of the African and Asian priests angered some of the western Anglican priests.

This matter of homosexual priests was brought into the open by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as a reason for the division between western priests and African and Asian priests of the Anglican Communion. The BBC interviewed one African Archbishop in 2005 and charged African Christians with holding to African cultural views about homosexuality and using these against western Christians in the name of Christianity and the Bible. The BBC also stated that the views on homosexuality of western Christians reflected deeply their own culture. The real issue at hand according to the BBC was not the Bible but culture.

In this western thinking, Christianity could be dismissed on cultural or civilization grounds, but not so in the theological thinking of most African or Asian Christians. In African theological thinking, the apostolic faith and the authority of the Bible are superior to anything in contemporary thought by

virtue of their divine origins and source. To some westerners, African reverence and adherence to the teachings of the Bible and Apostolic faith are fundamentalist, literalist, conservative or traditional. African interpretations of the Bible, apostolic Christianity and Church traditions may be labelled conservative or primitive, but history, or reason, or science does not change what has been divinely given or handed down from an authoritative divine source or origin, and which cannot be changed or altered. Christianity in its divine essence is not answerable to human historicism, or rationalism, or scienticism. For most Africans, there is no conflict between faith and science or between faith and reason. Both are well accommodated under God in their own African worldview as well as in the biblical worldview.

This emerging conflict between western Anglicans and African and Asian Anglicans has been identified wrongly by some western apologists as deeply cultural and not theological or biblical. Such arguments of cultural determinism lack any theological reflection and depth. However, African and Asian priests of the Anglican Communion stood their grounds and dismissed western cultural determinism and a neo-paganistic theology of homosexuality. They asserted their theological grounds and appealed to biblical and apostolic Christianity as authoritative and of divine source and origin. Some western Christians labelled this position as conservative or biblicist.

No doubt, such Christian apologists from the West are not free from the powerful and pervasive influence of secularism, religious pluralism, cultural relativism and postmodernism.

For most Africans, their deep Christian faith is not enlightened by these western modern philosophies. They are guided by the Holy Spirit, the Bible, apostolic Christianity and their African worldview which is very similar to the biblical worldview.

In modern western thinking, both the Bible and historical Christianity should be subjected to the old historical criticism or the contemporary fad of extra-biblical and Gnostic literature which are held in high esteem and are also said to contain the hidden truths about the Bible, Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Church history, etc. In some western circles, there is a strong demand for the rewriting of the Bible, the history of Jesus, the Apostles and Church history. This view has already produced en masse the new pagan-feminist-Christian literature, such as Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, or Kathleen McGowan's *The Expected One* (the descended one from Jesus and Mary Magdalene). This emerging neo-pagan literature is meant to shake the foundations of and discredit the Christian faith. The rising literary and communicable powers of neo-paganism in the contemporary world are something which must concern Christian theologians today.

It is certain that the size and influence of African Anglicans could force a rift within the Anglican Communion. Some Anglican priests were quoted as saying, 'Western money cannot buy our conscience.' The stage is already set for possible future conflict between western Christianity and African Christianity. There are deeper historical and theological roots that will throw more light on this emerging conflict between western Christianity and African Chris-

tianity, that is beyond the simplistic explanation of cultural determinism or to say that one is a fundamentalist and the other a liberal.

The labels of liberal, modern, traditional, conservative, fundamentalist, literalist, or biblicist as religious name tags, or the familiar theological discourse on liberal-fundamentalist, conservative-modernist, or secular-religious are inadequate in addressing the deep rooted cultural and theological issues of various expressions of Christianity all over the world. We are dealing with religious and cultural megatrends in the world today. The real issues at hand are not about splinter religious cults, or peoples' theological opinions or traditions. The pressing issues can be put in this way: just imagine an Islamist piloting a plane consisting of Christians, Muslims, atheists, fundamentalists, liberals, terrorists, democrats, fascists, etc. into flames—or a sovereign State invading another sovereign State and wrecking society and citizens. These are the pressing issues that demand our theological reflection and solutions.

A lot has been offered as regards the psychology and reasons behind Christian or Muslim fundamentalism. The results of such analysis only reinforce our unique differences from each other and the burning quest for dialogue, understanding and tolerance among religions and cultures. But the unfolding drama of contemporary world affairs have shown only how the world by itself has pitched religion against religion, culture against culture, ideology against ideology, civilization against civilization, etc. In the words of Huntington, everything has turned to a 'clash of civilizations'.

We are reminded of the good hard work of both the World Council of Churches (WCC) from the late 1950s to the 1970s and the United Nations Organization (UNO) from the 1980s to the present. They have devoted their efforts and resources towards forging an understanding of other faiths, religions and cultures for the purposes of creating dialogue, tolerance, peace and mutual respect among world religions and cultures. Professor Hans Kung has produced a master piece on *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* that deals with issues of dialogue, understanding, tolerance, mutual respect, world ethic, etc.

However, from the late 1970s to the present, the world has increasingly become more belligerent than being understanding, peaceful and tolerant of other religions and cultures. We have witnessed a prevalent and increasing rise of violent Christian fundamentalism, the resurgent militant Islamic fundamentalism and vicious ethnic and cultural wars of genocide and ethnic cleansing in many parts of the world. The list of such places is endless. The dogmas of peace, human rights, freedoms, democracy, free market economy and free speech have been rendered impotent in the face of violent forces and powers of resurgent religions, cultures and civilizations. Religious, cultural, economic and political crisis and conflict are not only *intra* and *micro*, but also *inter* and *macro* in nature. They are increasingly becoming global conflagrations.

Deeply inherent in the bellicose posture of religions, cultures and peoples towards each other in the global scene, are their deep seated differences, founded and rooted in their cultures,

religions, and identities. The way of seeing, understanding, interpreting and applying life in general differs from culture to culture or from religion to religion. These deep seated cultural and religious roots are what baffle, frustrate, twist and limit human desire to communicate across cultures or religions, and make us unable to forge peaceful alliances. We must have a fresh theological look at the role of culture and religion in our understanding and interpretation of religious fundamentalism and political activism. We must also try to understand the nature and mission of religions, cultures, or civilizations.

These are powerful social forces that entangle human beings and hold them captive. What is in the nature of religion that holds people captive and sometimes turns them into fundamentalist? We need to understand the power of a religious cause and its mission. Islam has not shied away from telling us where her militant adherents are coming from. When people are hooked on to certain teachings, or beliefs, or associations, all else is secondary or non-existent. Sometimes we question whether such people are free to think for themselves or whether they might have been religiously programmed into zombies. We call such people religious fundamentalists, fanatics, fascists, conservatives, liberals, modernists, etc. All these religious variants are found in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and in others.

But true Christianity parts company with extreme Judaism or extreme Islam, or any other extremes on grounds of creedal statements or beliefs. In Judaism, the creedal state-

ment is: 'Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One...' (Deut. 6:4). In Islam, it is: 'There is no god but Allah; and Mohammed his Apostle.' In Christianity, it is: 'Jesus is both Lord and Christ (Messiah), the Son of God.' In his teachings Jesus revealed something hidden about all creedal beliefs. Throughout his interactions with Jewish religious leaders, he clearly charged them with not knowing their God. But these creedal statements are said to have issued from God. 'You know neither me nor my Father, if you knew me, you would know my Father' (John 8:19). In other words, 'If they had known God (the Father), they would have believed in him.'

What was the problem with Jewish religious leaders or any creedalist? Something was missing in their creedal religion. They had a religion that lacked *personal active faith in God*. They were not seeking after God, but the ends of religion. They were not open to God, but had shut their eyes, ears and hearts against God. They had hardened their hearts against God. Jesus identified both their *god* and *father* as Satan.

Creedalism in religion shuts out God. It dries up faith in God. It blinds the eyes from seeing God and his works in the world. It shuts the ears. It hardens the hearts. The worshippers are not open to God, but only creedalism that blinds. For this reason, God shuts the secrets of the Kingdom from them (Matt. 13:13-15). Jesus did not cure the Jewish religious leaders of their creedalism because they had an incurable religious disease.

The western doctrine of the freedom of speech or freedom of expression is currently under Islamic cross fire. The

Danish magazine published derogatory cartoons about Prophet Mohammed late in 2005. The West discovered that in global reality, freedom of expression means a sense of Muslim insult, anger and world-wide demonstrations. Islam settled its scores by drawing blood and embarrassing the West regarding its foolish example of freedom of expression. National morality may not be global morality. During 2006, Pope Benedict XVI discovered that quoting a derogatory historical statement made about Prophet Mohammed to an exclusively Christian/Western audience could spark off Muslim world-wide anger and condemnation. Islam has made its voice and reactions very clear to the West. Defamation or lampooning of its religious figures can incur Islamic *fatwah* (death sentence) or wrath. It is ironic that only in the Christian West can Jesus be defamed and lampooned in a way that passes for freedom of speech or expression (*Da Vinci Code*).

3. Historical Ties between Islam and African Christianity

The historical ties between Islam and African Christianity are an important issue that needs to be examined as the threat of Islam in Africa is real. In view of the on-going war between the West and Islam, African Christianity needs to establish its unique identity, role and status before the Muslim world. African Christians need to develop a theology that will address Islamic militancy and violence against Christians in Africa. The militancy of Islam against Christianity in Africa cannot be taken lightly. As far as militant

Islamists are concerned, African Christianity is western culture and religion. But historically, Islam destroyed almost all of Christianity in North Africa. We cannot rule out the fact that contemporary resurgent militant Islam could still wreak the same havoc as older Islam did in North Africa.

Historically, Islam confronted Christianity in Africa at these levels: (1) the level of religion where Islam replaced African religions or Christianity in North Africa and elsewhere; (2) the level of culture where Islamic and Arabic culture replaced African cultures or Hellenistic Christian culture of North Africa and elsewhere; (3) the level of politics and economics where Islamic states and economies replaced the African indigenous kingdoms and economies; and (4) the human level where the African people as different from the Muslims/Arabs were subjected to humiliation and slavery. It is important to note that Islam has dealt with African Christianity and African peoples directly for over 14 centuries. Africans have had direct contacts with Islam since the 7th century up to this date where Muslims are still holding black Muslims, African Christians or animists as slaves in Sudan, Mauritania and Niger. Africans have written their own stories about their contacts and experiences of Islam over these centuries which are kept in colonial and Islamic archives.

Muslims need to be reminded of the sources and origins of Christianity in Africa: (1) the Hellenistic North African Christianity which had its roots and origins directly in Palestine and was almost destroyed by Islam; (2) Western Missionary Christianity of the 15th to 20th centuries which had its

roots and origins in western Christian missions. When Islam invaded North Africa in the 7th century, the Christianity which it destroyed was not western in origin because it predated western Christianity, and originated from the Middle East (Mediterranean and Palestinian). Nevertheless, the Coptic Church of Egypt and the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia have survived against all odds to the present date. Later Muslims destroyed the Nubian Church in Sudan in the 16th century.

The historical conflict between Islam and Christianity in Africa was inherent within the nature of the two religions and cultures as regards their Abrahamic origins in Palestine, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Both Islam and North African Christianity have had centuries of relationships. Africans for centuries have interacted with Muslims and Arabs.

The historical conflict between Islam and Christianity in Africa was not originally an Islamic reaction against western colonialism and imperialism as the current justification for Islamic attacks on the West and Christianity seem to suggest. Rather, it originated from the Islamic spirit of exploitation, expansion, colonialism and imperialism. Islamic colonialism and imperialism in Africa, Middle East and Asia predated that of western powers which came into being as from the 16th to the 20th centuries. During the height of Islamic colonialism and imperialism in the world, nation-states were just being formed in Europe and in fact, Europe had no political power or influence over the world. It was still struggling with its barbaric and pagan past with increasing Christianization. This was evidenced by the historical domi-

nant presence of Islam in North Africa, the Mediterranean, Middle East and Asia. The contemporary reason for Islamic conflict with Christianity in Africa seems to contradict this historical reality and the historical experience of non-western Christianity in North Africa, the Mediterranean, Middle East and Asia.

Contemporary militant Islamists are seriously engaging the West, its culture and Christianity in an extensive global war. But unfortunately, these Islamic zealots see African Christianity as western culture and religion. For example, the militant conflict between the West and Islam has always expressed itself violently in clashes between Christians and Muslims across Africa. Militant Islamists have used the Gulf War of the early 1990s, the recent invasion of Iraq in 2003 by western powers and the current western war on Islamic terrorists as an excuse for turning their anger and violence upon innocent African Christians. From Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran to the present, African Christians have experienced their fair share of militant and violent Islam. Their lives and property have been destroyed on account of Islamic anger and outbursts against the West. Certainly, contemporary Islamists identify African Christianity as an offshoot of western culture. This identification is then used to justify violent Islamic attacks on African Christians.

Contemporary militant Islamists do not have an historical understanding of the roots and origins of Christianity in Palestine and the Middle East. The historical nature and origin of Christianity has been overlooked in their zeal to

confront and arrest western global civilizing forces from overrunning and dominating Islam. It was Christianity with its roots and origins in Palestine that later helped transform western society and culture by Christianizing it. African Christianity must engage contemporary militant Islamists from this historical perspective.

There are abundant historical primary sources of Islam which define the role and status of the African as against that of the Muslim/Arab within the context of Islam prior to any western influence on Africa or on the Islamic world. One major area that brought Islam face to face with Africa was the notorious, degrading and the inhuman treatment of Africans by Muslim slave-raiders and slave-traders for over 14 centuries. The inhuman Islamic trade of African slaves has left an indelible derogatory mark on Africans generally, whether African Muslims, or Christians, or animists (pagans). Contemporary African Christianity has the task of addressing this historical Islamic treatment of Africans from the 7th century to the 21st century. African Christianity has a duty of defining historically the experiences of Africans under Islamic colonialism, imperialism and slavery which went on for centuries without any influence of western colonialism, imperialism or slavery.

4. Historical Ties between Traditional Religions and Cultures and African Christianity

We have already mentioned the pagan revival in the West as having serious

implications for Christianity world-wide. Besides western neo-paganism, there are new forms of Christianity coming out of the West that have serious theological implications for Christianity world-wide. There are Christian cults and syncretism that are coming out from the West into Africa. Let me mention one such, not in any way to demean this new Christian group, but used only as an example. The American Prosperity Pentecostalism is rapidly eclipsing the older and established Pentecostals. Because of the global power of television and money this religious sect has influenced not only Christian theology, but Christian forms of worship, ritual and practices. Its theology is easily adaptable to the traditional African religious beliefs and worldview. The older Pentecostals in Africa have always sought to differentiate and distance themselves from this new arrival from the West. The weakening power and influence of western Christianity in general and the poverty level of Africans generally leave African Christians vulnerable to the menacing local and global religious forces from the West.

Nevertheless, Africa also has its own home-grown revived neo-paganism, religious cults and syncretism. These contemporary religious movements are being boosted by (1) pagan revival in the West; and (2) the religious vibrancy and fervour of American Prosperity Pentecostalism. Western neo-paganism and American Prosperity Pentecostalism are external challenges to African Christianity, especially in the area of theology, music, worship, rituals, religious garments and practices. Furthermore, the emerging American churches have

also exported their ecclesiology, theology, worship, music and life-style to African cities. It is very difficult for the older denominations to maintain their traditional forms of worship, music, rituals and life-styles against these new religious forces from the West. African Christianity has a task of redefining these new entrants and the impact of their teachings on Africans and African Christian theology.

Let us turn to consider the challenge from within. In fact, Christianity is rooted in an African traditional and religious background. The power and influence of the traditional religions and worldview are enduring, pervasive and invariant. It was through an African religious worldview and spirituality that Christianity was understood and accepted. Generally, Christianity in Africa reflects the way Africans see, understand, interpret and apply it. This however, gives room for the possibility for Africans to create new forms and expressions of Christianity. Christianization of Africa has the possibility of error, heresy, or syncretism. The revival and resurgence of African cultures after independence in the 1960s have led to the emergence of various new religious cults, neo-paganism and syncretism.

How Africans express their Christianity is bound to differ from that of other cultures and regions of the world. This can be observed in its forms of worship, liturgy, theological teachings, reading and understanding of the Bible and Christian life-style. However, not every form of Christian expression is authentic, biblical and culturally relevant in an African setting. Not every theological experiment, teaching and model is acceptable and

relevant. The believing Christian community has the duty of ascertaining what is acceptable or not. Not every cultural understanding, interpretation and expression is valid as this has to be authenticated by the believing Christian community. In its own self and spiritual understanding of the Scriptures and apostolic Christianity, the believing Christian community can set guidelines as to what forms of Christian expressions are valid or not. Only sound biblical hermeneutics or exegesis and theological methods can help guard against possible errors, heresies and syncretism which may tend towards the emergence of new cults and neo-paganism.

5. Summary

African Christianity holds a strategic position in the emerging world Chris-

tianity. But it faces the challenges of global religious and cultural conflict, especially between the West and Islam in their religious and civilization conflict. African Christianity faces the challenges of the socio-political, cultural and religious implications of the conflict between the West and Islam, on the one hand and, on the other, of the conflict between Islam and Africa with deep historical roots into the origins of both Christianity and Islam in the Middle East. In addition to these, Christianity in Africa faces the challenges of pagan revival in both the West and Africa and the devastating influences of both western civilizing global forces and modern philosophies of spirituality and religion. These challenges call for a new Christian theological reflection that will address this global religious and cultural conflict.

The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900–1994

Tharcisse Gatwa

Since the early years of the twentieth century Christianity has become a new factor in Rwandan society. This book investigates the role Christian churches played in the formulation and development of the racial ideology that culminated in the 1994 genocide.

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The Contemporary Theological Situation in Africa: An Overview

James Nkansah-Obrempong

KEYWORDS: *Inculturation, contextualization, Liberation, Reconstruction, hermeneutics, Mother-tongue theology, oral traditions, symbols, proverbs, myths*

THIS PAPER IS AN overview of the contemporary theological situation in Africa. Since the inception of Christianity on African soil, there has been a growing sense of the need to make the Christian faith African in its form and expression. The concern was to uphold the cardinal tenets of the Christian faith and yet express that core belief in a way that would reflect the life and thought of the African's religious experience. It is in this light that there was a call and need from both African politicians and Christian theologians to develop African Christian theology. This paper is a survey of this process and where we are today on that project.

I. 'African Theology'

The term 'African theology' needs def-

inition to avoid any misunderstanding. Some regard African theology as 'theology of Africans'. This is not what we mean by African theology. We need to affirm that there is only one Christian theology since there is only one gospel. By 'African theology', we mean Christian theology in Africa. This theology is based on biblical reflection on the Christ event as recorded in the Christian scriptures, which reflects the insights and the experiences of African Christians. African theology seeks to reformulate or reinterpret the one biblical, historical, Judeo-Christian message in the idioms of the African peoples in response to the issues and concerns confronting African believers in their historical contexts.

II. Historical Background of African Theology

Two major African ideologies influenced African theological reflection namely: African *personality* in the

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Anglophone Africa and the *Négritude*¹ movement of Francophone Africa.

African theology developed because African theologians and politicians expressed the need for the Christian faith to be rooted in the African Christian religious consciousness and experience. The initial attempt to deal with the dehumanization of the African person through the colonization of the African continent was for the African to get her dignity back. The gospel restored that dignity and gave the Africans back their identity.

These two concepts, '*African personality*' and '*négritude*', performed a useful function for the African to regain that identity. They also motivated African theologians to begin to reinterpret the Christian faith in terms that reflect this identity, so Africans can understand and relate to the Christian faith as their own. These cultural and socio-political movements laid the foundation for African theology of indigenization or inculturation that sees the African culture and religion as important sources for theological reflection on the Christian faith. At the same period in the southern Africa region, the black movement contributed to Black theology of liberation.

Two principal theologies, therefore, emerged in African Christianity in the post-independence and post-missionary eras from the late 1950s to the late 1980s—the theology of inculturation or contextualization and the theology of liberation. African theology's goal is

to reinterpret the Christian faith in light of the cultural, religious and socio-political contexts in which African people live. We now look at how these two theologies function in the contemporary Africa.

III. Theologies and Culture

African Christians living south of the Sahara are advocating a theology that takes seriously the religio-cultural context of African people in theological reflection. The concern is to make theology more relevant and practical so it can address the concrete issues African Christians are facing. The African religio-cultural heritage and the political subjugation by the colonial and modern African authoritarian regimes provided the context for engaging the Christian message and using the same to understand and reinterpret the historic Christian faith. This hermeneutical practice was seen to be viable and appropriate because the Christian gospel by nature is 'linguistically and culturally translatable when it encounters new cultures'.²

Since the inception of the Christian gospel in Africa, African theologians have emphasized the need to relate the Christian message to African thought forms in order to make the Christian gospel meaningful. African Christians strongly believed that if the Christian faith was to take deep roots in Africa, theology must be related to African culture and that theological reflection on the faith must be culturally and bib-

1 An anti-colonial literary and political movement from the 1930s, expressing pride in being African and black (Ed.).

2 Andrew F. Walls, 'The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture', *Faith and Thought*, vol. 108, nos. 1-2 (1981), p. 39.

lically appropriate.

The problem of relating theology and culture has its root in the history of the Christian church and in the New Testament itself; it is not a problem peculiar to African Christianity.³ Culture played an important and critical role in the early church's formulation of theological ideas and concepts. For example, the early Jewish believers re-interpreted the Old Testament traditions in light of their new experience in the Christ event, his death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus Christ was seen as the exalted Lord and Christ, terms that have the roots in the Hellenistic culture in which the Jewish Christians lived. Jesus, the Messiah becomes the 'Logos'.

Western theologies developed in the same way with the European Enlightenment as the underlying influence on theological reflection. Issues raised by the Enlightenment changed the way theological reflection was done. Theologies developed from the west took cognizance of these cultural and philosophical changes taking place in the different societies. So the theologies that were developed reflected the cultural and philosophical traditions of the period, which in most cases do not speak to the experiences, belief systems, cultural values, and needs of African Christian communities.

³ Kwame Bediako, 'Gospel and Culture: Some Insights for our Time from the Experience of the Early Church', *Journal of African Christian Thought*, vol. 2, no. 2 (December 1999), p. 9.

IV. Theological Methodology and Sources for Theological Reflection

The question of method becomes a central issue in the minds of African Christian theologians if the theology they are envisioning is to be worth the name. To be faithful to the historical Christian faith, African Christians have stressed the need to construct African theology on sound biblical foundations. In African theological reflection of the faith, the primacy of the Scripture in shaping such reflection is critical⁴ African Christians affirmed this at the Pan-African Conference of the Third World Theologians held in Accra in 1977:

The Bible is the basic source of African theology, because it is the primary witness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. No theology can retain its Christian identity apart from Scripture. The Christian heritage is also important for African theology because African

⁴ See John S. Mbiti, *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Kwesi Dickson, 'The Old Testament and African Theology', *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 4:31-41; K. Dickson and Paul Ellingworth, eds., *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969); Byang Kato, *Biblical Christianity in Africa* (Achimota, Ghana: African Christian Press, 1985); Samuel Ngewa, Mark Shaw, and Tite Tienou, eds., *Issues in African Christian Theology* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers, 1998); especially Parts II and I. See Richard J. Gehman, *Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1987), pp. 44-75.

Christianity is a part of worldwide Christianity.⁵

Two important sources for Christian theology are delineated in this statement: namely the Bible and Christian history. Africans need to reflect on the history of Christian dogma and traditions so they can learn from them and therefore avoid repeating the errors made earlier.

In his article, 'Hebrewisms in West Africa—The Old Testament and African Life and Thought', published in 1974, Prof. Kwesi Dickson warned that, 'African theologians who are searching for an African theology can... hardly afford to base their exercise solely on African religion and culture and Western theology'.⁶ Dickson, a biblical scholar, stressed the importance of relating the Bible to African life and thought.

In addition to the commitment to orthodoxy, to uphold the central beliefs concerning the Bible, God, the person of Christ, etc, African Christians accommodated certain aspects of African worldview in theological reflection. Using African philosophical, anthropological, and sociological concepts and ideas on African beliefs, rites, and practices as well as careful, systematic study of oral traditions—particularly African proverbs, symbols,

myths and legends—African Christians are developing a theology that 'suit[s] the tongue, style, genius, character, and culture of African peoples'.⁷

This hermeneutical approach and reflection has yielded new insights into and understandings of the Christian faith. If African theology will yield any lasting fruit for the community of faith, it has to make full use of biblical scholarship—sound biblical exegesis and sound cultural exegesis of the contemporary culture—in constructing a relevant theology, a theology that will not be sterile and bankrupt. There should be a constant creative dialogue between African culture and biblical culture.

However, the global nature of theology requires that African theology must consider the teachings of the wider Christian community and learn from some of the insights they have gained on their reflection on the Christian faith to enrich their own reflection on the faith; as an African proverb has warned, wisdom is not found in one person's head. It is also important to subject such theological reflection on the faith to the traditions of the Christian faith developed over the years of Christian history.

Theology in Africa finds its common

5 'Final Communiqué: Pan African Conference of Third World Theologians, December 17-23, 1977, Accra, Ghana', *African Theology en Route*, eds., Kofi Appiah-Kubi and S. Torres (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1977), pp. 192-93.

6 Kwesi Dickson, 'Hebrewisms in West Africa—The Old Testament and African Life and Thought', *Legon Journal of Humanities*, vol.1 (1974), p. 32.

7 Edward Fasholé-Luke, 'The Quest for African Christian Theology,' *The Journal of Religious Thought*, vol. XXXII, no. 2, (Fall-Winter 1975), p. 77. For a discussion on the role of the Bible in theology from the perspective of South African Christians see Gerald West, 'The Bible and Theology,' *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspective*, eds., John De Gruchy and C. Villa-Vicencio (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), pp. 15-25.

ground in these four basic elements: the Bible and Christian tradition, African religious and cultural traditions, the contemporary socio-political situation, and the African Independent Churches.⁸ This is not new to western theological thinking: The Wesleyan sources for theology include the Bible, reason, tradition and experience.

V. Fruit of Such Theological Reflection

1. Culture and Context⁹

Methodologically, both Catholics and Protestants have made some seminal contributions to doing African Christian theology. In his book, *Reinventing*

Christianity: African Theology Today,¹⁰ John Parratt discusses some of the approaches Catholics and Protestants theologians have used in doing African theology.

Placide Tempels, a Belgian Catholic priest, attempted to relate theology and culture, and this led him to discover a central motif in Bantu thinking, *vital force*; this provided the basis for his theological reflection on the doctrine of grace.¹¹ His classical study, *Bantu Philosophy*, was an attempt to develop systematically the fundamental elements of Bantu thought or Bantu philosophy. He found a significant connection between the Bantu *vital force* and the Christian doctrine of grace or life and attempted to adapt Bantu thought to the Christian faith and teaching of the Catholic Church.

Theological ideas and theological formulation become more fruitful and relevant if they reflect the thought forms of the recipient's culture. True

⁸ John Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity*, 27. Mbiti suggests four sources of African theology: biblical theology, 'Christian theology from the major traditions of Christendom', African religions and philosophy and 'the Theology of the living Church as it expands in its Life and Mission in African societies', J. S. Mbiti, 1978a, pp. 189-190. In another writing Mbiti adds two more sources for African theology: African culture and African history, Mbiti, (1979, 68); E. W. Fasholé-Luke, 'The Quest for African Theology', in *The Journal of Religious Thought*, vol. XXXII, no. 2 (Fall-Winter, 1975), pp. 78-85.

⁹ Since the process of indigenization involves the interaction or dialogue between Christianity and African culture, the term inculturation has been suggested. Aylward Shorter points out that the terms 'accommodation' and 'adaptation' were popular among the Catholics before Vatican II. These concepts he points out to be inadequate, although it was an important stage in the Church's thinking. See Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1988),

p. 11; Joseph Blomjous, 'Development in Mission Thinking and Practice 1959-1980: Inculturation and Interculturation', *AFER*, vol. 22, no. 6, (1980), pp. 393-398; Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), pp. 63-94; Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1996), pp. 17-50; Peter Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), pp. 14-24; Kwesi Dickson, *Theology in Africa* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984), pp. 116-120.

¹⁰ John Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today*, see especially chapter 2.

¹¹ Placide Tempels is a Belgium Franciscan missionary in the Congo. He was best known for his book, *Bantu Philosophy*.

theological reflection emerges as we construct theology by using metaphors, ideas, and concepts that form the central core of values in a culture. *Bantu Philosophy* provided a 'significant literary and missiological precedent for Mulago's attempt to bring a Christian theological perspective to bear on the interpretation of his Bantu religious heritage'.¹²

Heeding this methodological approach, African Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians have done some work in the area of the doctrines of God, Christology, salvation, and ecclesiology, using African cultural ideas and thought forms such as ancestor, community, hospitality, family, etc. These attempts have proved helpful and shed more light on the Christian faith. There is, however, need to ground these reflections on solid biblical exegesis. So, there is still more to do. We need to engage critically the African thinking on these doctrines with scripture to challenge the misconceptions that some of these understandings or beliefs may pose, thus discrediting the true nature of the biblical story. We have more work to do in the area of ecclesiology, anthropology, soteriology, eschatology, and other important Christian doctrines.

2. Theology of Liberation

Liberation theology, like that of the theology of inculturation, interprets the Christ event in light of the political and economic struggles to which the African people are subjected. The theological reflection in the southern part

of Africa has remained unchanged. The socio-political nature of liberation theology has created other theologies like feminist/womanist theologies that seek to 'engage in the reconstruction of theology and religion in the service of the transformation process, in the specificity of many contexts in which women live'.¹³ The concern of this theology is to liberate all women, even men, by transforming religious, social, economic and cultural structures that often enslave them or discriminate against them. Liberation theologians have constructed Christological theologies, employing titles such as healer, Saviour, Lord, Victor and Liberator.

All these titles have their roots in the Christian Bible. However, these meaningful metaphors speak to the many contextual situations in which African people find themselves, and therefore the work of Christ becomes real in their experience. These titles describe different aspects of Christ's redemptive work on the cross to free humanity from oppression, sin, and its power. The main concern of African feminist theologians is to heal the brokenness between men and women. As far as there are inequalities, oppression and discrimination in our societies, liberation theology will have an enduring presence in African theological reflection.

¹² Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, p. 361.

¹³ Mary Grey, 'Feminist Theology: A critical Theology of Liberation' in Christopher Rowland (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 89.

3. Recent Voices in Africa Theology

In recent years, there has been a major shift from the theology of liberation to that of reconstruction and social transformation.¹⁴ Mugambi, one of the leading proponents of the theology of reconstruction, proposes that 'the shift from liberation to social transformation... involves discerning alternative structures, symbols, rituals, myths, and interpretations of African social reality by Africans themselves'. This is a task that is multidisciplinary in nature and requires not only theology but also social scientists and philosophers.¹⁵ Its proponents have argued that the Exodus motif that underlined most of liberation theology is no longer necessary. What Africa needs today is a theology of reconstruction. Reconstruction and renewal is a new form of theological hermeneutics being advocated by African theologians to bring full humanity to the African peoples. With this new hermeneutic, these theologians have suggested the Nehemiah motif in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem as a model for Africa's social reconstruction efforts. This is an attempt to release the African from a culture of shame to regain his/her self-esteem and dignity.

¹⁴ M.N. Getui, E. A. Obeng (eds.), *Theology of Reconstruction* (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers, 1999); Valentin Dedji, *Reconstruction and Renewal in African Christian Theology* (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2003); J. N. K. Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction* (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton, 2003).

¹⁵ Mugambi, *Christian Theology*, p. 40.

VI. Achievements and Agenda for African Theology

African Theologians have made great strides in this area of constructing an African theology in the post-missionary and post-independence eras. In this part, I will outline some of the achievements and suggest some key improvements we need to look at.

A. Achievements of African Theology

1. A Theological Appraisal of African Primal Religions and Cultural Heritage

The pioneers of African theology, through their various approaches, set forth the terms and direction in which African theological reflection should go. What African Christians say about their faith, experience, and commitment provided 'the determining factors in the development of African Christian thought'.¹⁶ Desmond Tutu's assessment of African theology's achievement is worth mentioning.

African theologians have set about demonstrating that African religious experience and heritage were not illusory, and that they should have formed the vehicle for conveying the Gospel verities to Africa.... It is the theological counterpart of what has happened in, say, the study of African history. The significance of Tutu's statement lies in African theology's affirmation to 'rehabilitate Africa's rich cultural heritage and religious conscious-

¹⁶ Bediako, 'African Theology', p. 434.

ness.' African Theology in the post-missionary era is a response to missionary misinterpretation of the value of African religious traditions. Bediako asserts that African theology emerged as a theology of African Christian identity.¹⁷

African theology is successful in providing models for reinterpreting 'Africa pre-Christian religious tradition in ways which have ensured the pursuit of a creative, constructive and perhaps also a self-critical theological enterprise in Africa'.¹⁸

2. New Idiom for Doing Theology

The rehabilitation or the integration of African religious and cultural heritage for theology provided for the next generation of African theologians new paths, new concepts, and terms in their theological works. This resulted in monographs on Christology in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the new concerns with Christological exploration began around African categories such as Christ as Ancestor, as Healer, as Master of Initiation—all of which were derived directly from the apprehension of reality and of the Transcendent as experienced within the worldviews of African primal religions'.¹⁹

17 See Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, especially his Introduction, pp. 1-5.

18 Bediako, 'African Theology', 435.

19 Bediako, 'Theology in Africa', p. 434. See John S. Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville: 1979); Kwame Bediako, 'Biblical Christologies in the Context of African Traditional Religions', eds., Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, *Sharing Jesus in the Two-Thirds World* (Grand Rapids: 1984), pp. 81-121; K. Bediako, *Jesus in African Culture: A Ghanaian*

Theologians like Kwame Bediako, Charles Nyamiti, Anselme Sanon, and John Pobee have used primal categories like Ancestor in their reflection on the African experience of the actuality of Jesus Christ. Diane Stinton's *Jesus of Africa* is a new addition. Besides Christology, African theologians seriously engaged with subjects such as ecclesiology, soteriology and conversion²⁰ and theological methodology.²¹

African theology has helped us to shift from the level of abstraction or conceptualization that has mainly dominated western theological method. Linking theology with experience has made the resultant theology practical. The current monumental work, the *Africa Bible Commentary*, is a move in the right direction. The project has shown that it is possible to do sound biblical exegesis and express those thoughts in culture without missing the basic truth scripture is

Perspective (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990); Anselme T. Sanon and Rene Luneau, *Enraciner l'Évangile: Initiations africaines et pédagogie de la foi* (Paris, 1982); Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective* (Gweru, 1984); Benezet Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992); Robert Schreier, *Faces of Jesus in Africa* (London, 1991).

20 See Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Salvation in African Tradition* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, 1979); Cyril C. Okorochoa, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa: The Case of the Igbo of Nigeria* (Avebury, 1987).

21 Charles Nyamiti, *African Theology: Its Nature, Problems and Methods* (Kampala: Gaba Publications, 1971); Tite Tienou, 'The Problem of Methodology in African Christian Theology' (An Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Fuller theological Seminary, 1984).

teaching. It is my hope and dream that African scholars will come up and publish a book on theology that is grounded in African Christian thought that the church in Africa can use.

African theology may have relevance for the church universal and in cultures where people are struggling to relate the Christian faith to other cultures. The African Christian thought that has emerged in this process may have relevance for similar processes of engagement of the Christian faith with other cultures. In this way, African theology may hold promise for modern western theology which is now asking serious questions about how to relate the Christian message in a missionary sense to western culture.²²

In its effort to relate the gospel to African thought and life in order to enhance the church's evangelistic efforts, 'African theologians have recaptured the character of theology as Christian intellectual activity on the frontier with the non-Christian world', and have made theology 'as essentially *communicative, evangelistic, and missionary*'.²³

22 See especially Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Geneva, 1986); Lesslie Newbigin, 'Can the West be converted?' *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 11(1987), 2-7; Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989); *Mission and the Crisis of Western Culture* (Edinburgh, 1989).

23 Bediako, 'African Theology' in *Modern Theologians*, p. 438.

B. The Problem of African Christian Theology

While we appreciate the important place and role the African primal religions and cultural heritages play in theology, it is disappointing that African Evangelicals have not made good use of these resources in developing the theology coming from Africa. Much of these sources are untapped for the African theological task. For fear of being branded syncretistic, evangelical theologians have shied away from using African categories in their theological reflection. If we wish to preserve the gains of African theology, then the Evangelical Church should play a leading role in this theological task. Today, Roman Catholic theologians are leading in this area and are writing on some of the major doctrines of the Christian church using African categories.

Second, African theologians often fail to engage the African worldview critically, systematically and completely, especially with its multiplicity of spiritual beings. Although the African culture and religious traditions are close to the biblical culture, there must be critical assessment of it. The founding fathers of African theology, with their aim of presenting African theology, focused on fostering continuity of the African traditional religions with the new faith. Bediako points out this failure in African theology. The claim by African Christian writers in arguing for monotheism in African Traditional Religions is a failure to engage adequately with the dimension of this multiplicity.²⁴ African theologians need

24 Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 98.

to deal critically with the issue of God and his relationship to the spirits.

The other failure of African theology is that most of the discussions have remained at the speculative and talk level. This is mostly true with the African Evangelical movement. There has been no serious attempt on the part of African Evangelical theologians to explore in depth the African cultural and religious heritage on the one hand and biblical revelation on the other hand to construct a Christian theology that is unique and meets the aspirations and needs of African Christians. Many evangelicals have not taken seriously the African culture, indeed they have often ignored it. This is why many African Christians are tempted to consult the divinities when they are facing threats against their lives.

African theology has failed to produce a comprehensive and systematic theology that is biblically and culturally relevant for the church in Africa. We need to do more work on subjects such as ecclesiology, Christian community, sin, and ethics that engage African ideas and concepts with that of Scripture. This is a great need for the church in Africa.

VII. The Future of African Theology

1. Grassroots Theological Reflection

The theological climate in the African Independent Churches (AICs) is one that needs serious attention. By ignoring this area, evangelical communities have neglected the theology of some of the fastest growing churches in Africa.

Since most of the leaders of these communities are not theologically trained, there is a greater risk of syncretism developing among them. However, these groups are making a frantic effort to relate theology and religious experience to the African culture. They have a distinctive form of African Christianity. African theological institutions should initiate dialogue with the leadership of these Christian communities to train them so they can teach sound biblical faith. In doing so the wider Christian church can learn from them the progress and success they have made toward inculturation of the faith in African societies.

2. Theological Influences from the West

The global nature of Christianity and the influence of information technology have opened African Christians to certain western theological influence. The current cults, such as the House of Yahweh with all their heretic tendencies and theological heresies, are alleged to be hatched from the west. These theologies have the potential to destroy the purity of the Christian faith in Africa. The African church must guard against such infiltration of religious and heretical influences from the west.

In addition, the theology of prosperity that has come from the west is leading the church into a philosophy of materialism, which, if not checked, could have devastating effects upon Christianity in Africa. This theology is undermining the teaching of Scripture at many critical levels and this can lead to rejection or at least undermining of certain teachings of the Christian faith

on suffering and persecution, which are central to the Christian faith.

3. The Dynamic Nature of Culture and Modernity

The challenge to reinterpret the Christian message in our context is one that will not go away if the Christian message is to be relevant for Africans. Our current context demands we reflect critically, theologically, and biblically on some of the serious social and economic issues confronting the African continent, including suffering, HIV/AIDS, and political and ethical issues. These challenges need thoughtful theological response. Similarly, theology in Africa must be relevant in addressing the many challenges facing the African church today such as ethnic and religious pluralism.

4. The Place of Mother Tongue Theology

Many Africans cannot read and understand the English language. Therefore, the challenge to do theology in the mother tongue so that they can be taught theology in a way that they can understand is critical. African Christians need to reflect on doing popular theology not only at the academic levels in Bible and theological institutions but in local Christian communities. Grass roots theological reflection will give this venture enduring effects on the faith and practice of African Christians.

5. Charting Christian Theology for the Worldwide Church

With the shift of Christianity from the global north to the southern continents, sound theological reflection on the Christian faith is all the more important. If African Christianity is going to shape the world's faith for the future as has been the case with other cultures, then theology must be given important attention in our theological institutions. In addition, there should be serious theological reflection on the theology of the AICs. African Christianity might hold the key to saving the world church from ideologies that would militate against it.

The African Church faces the challenge to document and publish these theological reflections on the Christian faith so that other Christian communities can benefit from their insights and contributions to world Christianity.

Conclusion

The critical place African Christianity occupies in relation to world Christianity demands for its voice to be heard. No longer can Christians in the West ignore African Christianity and its theological reflection. The theological problems African Christians are dealing with and the insights they are gaining from such reflection might be the key for the west to deal with the cultural issues being raised there.

Missio Dei: The Trinity and Christian Missions

Kevin Daugherty

KEYWORDS: *Economic Trinity, Immanent Trinity, Social Trinity, missions, contemporary theology, contextualization, pluralism, interreligious dialogue, revelation, salvation.*

THE DOCTRINE OF the Trinity has traditionally been understood as the quintessentially *Christian* doctrine of God. The difficulty of explaining it, however, has sometimes made it problematic for missions. Monotheistic faiths in particular tend to take it as some form of tritheism. One proposed solution has been simply to dispense with the doctrine as a relic of medieval Christianity. This proposal is especially popular among the champions of interreligious dialogue.¹ On the other hand, even some advocates of religious pluralism have tried to salvage the Trinity

through a reinterpretation of its meaning. The Trinity has even been proposed as a sort of ground for unity among the religions.² On the other hand, when evangelical missiologists defend the importance of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity for missions, the focus is often on the individual roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.³ While this is certainly legitimate, it falls short of a treatment of the Trinity as such.

² Reference is often made to the following: Raimundo Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973); Raimundo Panikkar, 'The Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges' in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1987), pp. 89-116.

³ E.g., G. William Schweer, 'The Missionary Mandate of God's Nature' in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), pp. 97-113.

¹ E.g., John Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), p. 124.

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This paper will adumbrate a trinitarian theology that highlights implications of God's trinitarian nature for missions. This will involve two primary arguments. First, some contemporary trinitarian thinking suggests that the trinitarian being of God is his own being-on-mission. In classical terms, this is an *economic* Trinity: through his trinitarian nature, God has acted in order to establish relationships beyond himself (*ad extra*). But the proposal below also attempts to describe the being of God as he is 'in himself' (*ad intra*)—an *immanent* Trinity. In fact, this approach may obviate the distinction between the economic and the immanent Trinity.

The second argument will build upon the theological foundation of God's trinitarian nature. God's being-on-mission has implications for the *practice* of Christian missions. With respect to the suggestions of an inter-religious Trinity, the proposal will reaffirm the belief that the Trinity is distinctively *Christian*. On the other hand, the exigencies of the Christian mission do call for a rethinking of *how* the trinitarian God is proclaimed. If the explanation of the Trinity in terms of 'substance', 'nature', and 'person' is the *sine qua non* of the gospel, then contextualizing the gospel for non-western cultures may be a hopeless dream after all. But if God's trinitarian being is conceived as his own reaching out of himself, then the Trinity, so far from being the Nemesis of contextualization, is actually a model of God's own self-contextualization.

1. The Trinity as the Missional Being of God

a) The Death and Resurrection of the Doctrine of the Trinity

The understanding of the Trinity as God's own mission-oriented nature has been made possible by a rediscovery of the doctrine's practical implications. The loss of this practical aspect of the Trinity began very early in Christian history. According to Catherine Mowry LaCugna, a shift in focus took place in the early development of the Trinity from the salvific plan of God as revealed in history (*oikonomia*) to a description of the intradivine relationships within the Godhead (*theologia*). Prior to the Council of Nicea, theologians sought to understand the Father, Son, and Spirit according to their respective roles in salvation history.⁴

By the time Augustine addressed the sending of the Son and the Spirit into the world, he argued that these sendings 'in time' do not reveal anything happening in the heart of God, but only mirror the eternal generations and processions within God.⁵ Following Augustine, the medieval exposition of the Trinity was a discourse about God *in se*, with scarce reference to how God has acted in human history. Karl

4 Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991), pp. 19-205. See also Roger Haight, 'The Point of Trinitarian Theology', *Toronto Journal of Theology* 4 (1988): pp. 198-99.

5 Augustine *De Trin.*, II-IV; LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 86.

Rahner focused on the dénouement of the economic/immanent distinction in Thomas Aquinas, who divided the doctrine of God into two treatises: *De Deo Uno* (*On the One God*) and *De Deo Trino* (*On the Triune God*). The first treatise is characterized by philosophical abstraction, while the treatise on the triune God is limited to formal statements about 'a Trinity which is absolutely locked up within itself'.⁶

The leading magisterial reformers were quick to affirm the orthodox Trinity, although they were sometimes critical of the subtlety of scholastic discussions of it. The doctrine remained relatively untouched from the end of the Reformation to the beginning of the twentieth century.⁷ Friedrich Schleiermacher's brief treatment in *The Christian Faith* began by stating: 'This doctrine itself, as ecclesiastically framed, is not an immediate utterance concerning the Christian self consciousness.'⁸ By the dawn of the twentieth century, the doctrine of the Trinity 'was in danger of becoming a useless relic within the museum of dusty theological tomes'.⁹

The neglect of the Trinity came to a screeching halt when Karl Barth placed the doctrine at the beginning of his *Church Dogmatics*. Barth specifically tied the Trinity to the economy of God's self-revelation. Inasmuch as theology is *Christian* theology, which is dependent on revelation, it is immediately and always in the sphere of the Trinity. Revelation itself has a trinitarian structure: 'God reveals Himself. He reveals Himself *through Himself*. He reveals *Himself*.'¹⁰ Following Barth, the number of trinitarian monographs has accelerated right up to the present, including contributions from Continental Europe, Great Britain, Latin America, and the United States.

On the Catholic side, Rahner bemoaned the separation of the Trinity from practical Christian concerns. He stated: 'The isolation of the treatise of the Trinity *has* to be wrong. There *must* be a connection between Trinity and man. The Trinity is a mystery of *salvation*, otherwise it would never have been revealed.' Rahner's remedy was to reconnect what the tradition had severed by proposing 'the axiomatic unity of the "economic" and the "immanent" trinity'.¹¹ This unity has, in fact, become axiomatic for many thinkers.

Together, Barth and Rahner constitute the soil out of which has grown much of contemporary trinitarian thought. Practically all recent attempts to explicate the Trinity have

6 Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, transl. Joseph Donceel (New York: Crossroad, 1997), pp. 17-18. For the deleterious effects of this approach on Christian piety, see LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 111-42.

7 Roger E. Olson and Christopher A. Hall, *The Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 67-75, 80.

8 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, transl. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), p. 738.

9 Olson and Hall, *Trinity*, p. 81. See Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God: A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf and Stock, 1982), pp. 250-56.

10 Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, vol. I/1 of *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, transl. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), p. 296.

11 Rahner, *Trinity*, p. 21.

in common the attempt to reassert the doctrine's practical importance.

b) The Trinity and God's Relationship with the World

In line with the revival of the Economic Trinity, contemporary trinitarians are re-evaluating God's relationship with the world. In fact, the denial that the world could affect the being of God may have been behind the economic/immanent distinction in the first place. The doctrine of impassibility inherited from Greek philosophical theism would not allow mutuality in the divine-human relationship. An increasing number of theologians has grown impatient with the application of these ideas to the Christian God.¹² There is also a growing consensus that there is a connection between God's trinitarian nature and his relationship with the world. Several models have been proposed to describe this.

Eberhard Jüngel's primary work on the Trinity is manifestly a 'paraphrase' of Barth.¹³ Jüngel addressed the issue of how God's essential being *in se* was aligned with his relatedness to creation. His solution involved an understanding of God's being as 'becoming', by which he meant eventful and related.¹⁴ From the very beginning,

however, Jüngel offered caveats about what this might mean.¹⁵ The locus of God's eventful being is the *internal* relatedness of the Trinity. This protected God from any necessary relatedness with the world. Freedom, in fact, is the central presupposition for revelation; if God is compelled to reveal, it is not his *self*-revelation.¹⁶ Revelation, however, does say more than the mere fact that God is free: 'The very fact of revelation tells us that it is proper to Him to distinguish Himself from Himself, i.e., to be God in Himself and in concealment, and yet at the same time to be God a second time in a very different way, namely, in manifestation.'¹⁷ Even in this distinguishing of God from himself, however, God is not being other than himself. The ruling concept of revelation that this line of thinking leads to is that revelation is 'the repetition of God'.¹⁸

This kind of language hints at the precise relationship between the immanent and the economic Trinity. For this, Jüngel employed the concept of correspondence (*Entsprechung*).¹⁹ The relatedness of God's nature *ad*

¹² Richard Bauckham, "Only the Suffering God Can Help": Divine Passibility in Modern Theology', *Themelios* 9 (1984): pp. 6-12.

¹³ Eberhard Jüngel, *God's Being Is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Theology of Karl Barth*, transl. John Webster (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 7.

¹⁴ J. B. Webster, *Eberhard Jüngel: An Introduction to His Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 18.

¹⁵ 'The becoming in which God's being is cannot mean either an augmentation or a diminution of *God's being*.' Jüngel, *God's Being*, p. xxv, cf. p. 114.

¹⁶ Jüngel, *God's Being*, p. 31; Barth, *Dogmatics*, I/1, p. 321.

¹⁷ Barth, *Dogmatics*, I/1, p. 316, see p. 321.

¹⁸ Barth, *Dogmatics*, I/1, p. 299. Jüngel also speaks of the 'reiteration' and 'copy' of God in revelation (*God's Being*, pp. 109-10, 118).

¹⁹ Jüngel, *God's Being*, pp. 14-15, 35-36, 114. 'To the unity of Father, Son and Spirit among themselves corresponds their unity *ad extra*.' Barth, *Dogmatics*, I/1, p. 371.

intra grounds or makes possible God's entrance into relationships *ad extra*; the *ad extra* being of God brings the *ad intra* being of God to expression in revelation.²⁰ God's being *ad extra* corresponds to his being *ad intra*. So what is actually revealed (repeated, copied, reiterated) in the works of God *ad extra* is the prior internal self-relatedness of God. This is meant to safeguard the free grace of God, who chose to be related through Christ even though it was not 'necessary' for him to do this to be the God he is.²¹

The result of this schema, however, is that God's love for the world appears incidental to his being. It is true that God has freely chosen to be who he is in Jesus Christ, but the freedom of God requires that he could have done otherwise and been the same God. Revelation only repeats what was already and remains true about God. It seems ironic that what is revealed in God's actions for the world is not primarily God's love for the world, as John 3:16 would have it, but 'the self-giving in which *he* belongs to *himself*'.²²

Karl Barth's concept of revelation as the 'self-interpretation of God' sounds promising at first, but by focusing on the 'fact' of revelation, the content of that revelation is not defined by the revelation *itself*. Rather, Barth logically extrapolates the meaning of the

Trinity based on the 'fact' of revelation. This extrapolation is informed by a formal definition of freedom as bare self-determination.²³ This precludes the possibility that revelation is about the intrinsic importance of God's relationship with the world. Barth insists that revelation reveals God's love for the world, but what can this mean if it also reveals God's complete freedom to love or not to love? If, on the other hand, freedom were to be reinterpreted as always conditioned or defined by God's nature—as his ability to be who he really is—then God would not be free *from* creation, but free *for* it. This is the very approach suggested by Jürgen Moltmann.²⁴

In keeping with his eschatological orientation, Moltmann's understanding of God's relationship with the world invites 'open possibilities' for the future for both creation and God.²⁵ His treatment of the Trinity really began in *The Crucified God*, which spoke of God's trinitarian history with the

20 Jüngel, *God's Being*, p. 37.

21 Jüngel, *God's Being*, pp. 99-100, 121-22; Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of God*, vol. II/1 of *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, transl. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), pp. 260, 280, 301.

22 Jüngel, *God's Being*, p. 41.

23 Barth, *Dogmatics*, II/1, pp. 301-06, 316.

24 Moltmann points out the aporia in Barth. God's decision to reveal either means that God's nature was already revelatory or that the decision to reveal constitutes a change in his nature. The solution is to recognize that a revelation that flows ineluctably from God's nature does not make him a prisoner, but only means that he is true to himself. Moltmann loves to quote 2 Tim. 2:13: 'for he cannot deny himself'. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, transl. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1981), pp. 53-55, 107-08.

25 Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, transl. by James W. Leitch (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 92.

world. In fact, *The Crucified God* seems to present the cross as the beginning of God's trinitarian being.²⁶ Broadening the scope, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* delineates the changes within the Trinity that ensue from a reciprocal relationship with the world. The narrative of God requires not just any trinitarian notion, but a 'social doctrine of the Trinity'.²⁷ This doctrine is the narrative account of the ever-widening fellowship of the trinitarian persons as they incorporate others into their community.²⁸ Of course, Moltmann does speak of divine unity, but he does not base it either on the unity of a divine substance or an absolute subject. God's unity is to be found in *perichoresis* or *circumincessio*: the interpenetrating and interrelating of the divine persons.²⁹

The reciprocity of God's relationship with the world is experienced by

God in the changing patterns of his inner-trinitarian relations. These changes are evident throughout salvation history, moving from Father—Spirit—Son (in the cross/resurrection event) to Father—Son—Spirit (in the exaltation of Christ to Lord and sending of the Spirit) to Spirit—Son—Father (in the consummation of the kingdom).³⁰ Of course, the cross marks a high-point in the inner-trinitarian experience of God: 'The Father forsakes the Son "for us"—that is to say, in order to become the God and Father of the forsaken.'³¹ Since this is done in a 'deep community of will', however, the cross is paradoxically (or dialectically) the moment of the Father and Son's deepest separation and closest union. The Son is separated from the Father in his union with the God-forsaken, but inwardly united in his willful complicity with the Father. The union of wills engenders the Holy Spirit, who seals the breach and also, through the event, 'justifies the godless, fills the forsaken with love and even brings the dead alive'.³²

The creation event is also part of God's trinitarian history, although creation in terms of 'act' and 'worker' is

26 If so, he has since demurred from that position. Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), p. 155.

27 Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. viii, 4-5.

28 Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. viii, 19, 64, 75; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, ed. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 243-46.

29 Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. 148-50, 174-75. Although Moltmann clearly tries to base his social Trinity in scripture, it is also clear that he sees this model as a corrective to political injustices and autocratic systems of government. Characterizing all monotheism as 'monarchism', he asserts, 'the notion of a divine monarch in heaven and on earth... generally provides the justification for earthly domination... and makes it a hierarchy, a "holy rule."' Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. 191-92.

30 Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. 90-96; Bauckham, *Theology*, pp. 15-16, 56.

31 Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 81, referring to 2 Cor. 5:21 and Gal. 3:13.

32 Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p. 244, see p. 243; Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. 82-83; Stanley J. Grenz, *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), p. 78. Bauckham notes the Hegelian structure of this schema (*Theology*, p. 155).

too 'male' an image to fit the reciprocity involved.³³ Moltmann also rejects any version of panentheism in which the Son of God turns out to be nothing other than the world. Nevertheless, he still describes the creation of the world as 'a part of the eternal love affair between the Father and the Son'.³⁴ In sharp contrast with Barth and Jüngel, for Moltmann God's inward relational structure is not the source of God's self-sufficiency. Rather, the inner love of 'like for like' provides the creative drive toward the essentially different. 'Like is not enough for like', so God seeks to include genuine others in his inner-trinitarian fellowship.³⁵ For the manner of creation, Moltmann borrows the kabbalistic notion of an 'inward' creation within the being of God. Through a kenotic act of self-limitation or self-withdrawal, 'The Creator has to concede to his creation the space in which it can exist'.³⁶ Creation, as a kenotic self-surrender, is a 'feminine concept' in which the world, so to speak, is formed within the womb of God.³⁷

Clearly this model of the God-world relationship cannot leave the economic/immanent distinction unaffected. Moltmann's clearest retention of an immanent Trinity is in what he calls the 'doxological Trinity', which is the ultimate focus of Christian worship. God's economy shows that he is good, and so he is to be praised not only

for the gifts he gives but for the goodness itself.³⁸ But even this praise must take into account the changes within God born of a reciprocal relationship with creation. These changes mean that the doxological Trinity is ultimately an eschatological reality: 'When everything is "in God" and "God is all in all", then the economic Trinity is raised into and transcended in the immanent Trinity'.³⁹ Moltmann describes the vision of the eschaton in which God will be 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28) in terms of a panentheistic vision and declares, 'That is *the home of the Trinity*'.⁴⁰

The breadth and subtleties of Moltmann's theology make it difficult to critique in a short space. No aspect of Moltmann's theology has stirred more controversy than his social doctrine of the Trinity. He claims that the language of the New Testament leads inevitably to such a doctrine.⁴¹ Since he offers a narrative theology that is ostensibly a restatement of the biblical narrative, the most important question is, 'Is this really the story of God and the world that the Bible tells?'⁴² Aside

38 Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 153.

39 Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 161.

40 Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 105. See Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, transl. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 98-103, 86; Bauckham, *Theology*, p. 17. This future is the 'Sabbath' of God, when all of creation will enjoy the kingdom of glory in mutual friendship and with no need of authoritarian structures. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 279.

41 Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. 65-94.

42 There are many legitimate critiques of Moltmann's objections to monotheism. That will not be the focus of the following evaluation.

33 Moltmann, *Trinity*, 98-99.

34 Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 59; Bauckham, *Theology*, p. 58.

35 Moltmann, *Trinity*, 59, 106.

36 Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 59, see pp. 108-09.

37 Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 109.

from the fact that the texts he cites (e.g., Rom. 8:32; Gal. 2:20) are open to different interpretations, there are numerous other texts that indicate that the Son is doing precisely the work of the Father in such a way that the Son's activities are revelatory of the Father.⁴³ Moltmann portrays the sending of the Son as the moment of differentiation in God in which God becomes open to relationship—first with himself through the Son, then with humanity.⁴⁴ Here, as in Jüngel and Barth, the sending of the Son is used first to say something about the self-differentiation of God in himself and only secondarily about God's love for the world.

It is true that, in a sense, Christians participate in the Son's relationship with the Father. But is it accurate to say that the sending of the Son *increased* the fellowship between the Son and the Father? In fact, John's language of sending does not support the idea that the Son is a separate centre of activity in the Godhead, but serves to underscore the Son's ability to reveal the Father and accomplish his work?⁴⁵ In other words, the Son did not come to reveal his relationship with the Father, but the Father's love for the world. So, Ted Peters concludes, 'The New Tes-

tament does not speak of the Son as a divine source of activity alongside and equal to the Father. The Father works in the Son.'⁴⁶

Other questions arise with regard to Moltmann's vision of the cross, which is at least partly determined by the Hegelian structure of his grand narrative. Specifically, the cross enacts the dialectic of separation and reunion. Richard Bauckham explains, 'God suffers the estrangement of sinful and suffering humanity from himself and includes it within the loving fellowship of his trinitarian being.'⁴⁷ Of course, scripture itself contains many models of the atonement. The question is, is this one of them? Does it grow out of the narrative of scripture, or does it arise as scripture is read through the lenses of a certain dialectical philosophy of history?

As an answer to the supposed inadequacies of monotheism, the social doctrine of the Trinity constitutes a dangerous example of overkill. It avoids individualism, but risks the unity of God in the process. But if Moltmann wants to posit a God who is reciprocally related to the world, a fully social Trinity is not the only option. This has been demonstrated by Ted Peters and Catherine Mowry LaCugna.

Ted Peters and LaCugna share Moltmann's conviction that God is intrinsically related to the world

⁴³ See Mt. 11:27; Jn. 1:18; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; and Eph. 4:32-5:2. Moltmann acknowledges some of these texts, but still interprets them in line with his social Trinity. Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 64.

⁴⁴ Moltmann, *Trinity*, p. 75.

⁴⁵ See Jn. 3:17, 34; 4:34; 5:23-30, 36-38; 6:29, 38-39, 44, 57; 7:16-18, 28-33; 8:16-18, 26-29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44-49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, 8, 18-25; 20:21.

⁴⁶ Ted Peters, *God as Trinity: Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Louisville, Kent.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 108.

⁴⁷ Bauckham, *Theology*, p. 56.

through his trinitarian being.⁴⁸ What they share with each other is an employment of Rahner's axiom to the highest degree. It is not that there is no immanent Trinity, but that God 'as he is in himself' really *is* economic. Peters believes the way to construct a unified divine life that is relational is 'to conceive of God as in the process of self-constituting, a process that includes God's saving relationship to the world right in the definition of who God is'.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, even in Moltmann Peters finds a residue of the Barth/Jüngel approach that sees the economic Trinity as a window through which to view the inner-trinitarian relations that pre-date and ground the economy. Peters asserts that such a foundation in the immanent trinitarian love is simply not necessary: 'Why not just go all the way and affirm a God whose personhood is itself being constituted through God's ongoing relation to the creation?'⁵⁰ This does not mean that Peters dispenses with traditional concerns altogether. He is particularly concerned that an approach like Moltmann's is 'a thinly veiled tritheism'.⁵¹

'God is love' (1 Jn. 4:16) does not refer, as Moltmann thinks, to the intradivine love of like for like that grounds the love for a genuine other. 'God is love' already and only refers to God's other-seeking nature.⁵²

One of Peters's most unique contributions is his development of the temporal aspect of God, which is a corollary to relationality.⁵³ He embraces Moltmann's vision of an eschatological Trinity. However, the idea that the immanent Trinity is the eschatological goal of the economic Trinity presents problems. What, for example, is gained by saying that God as he relates to the world now is trinitarian in one sense, but will be trinitarian in another sense at the eschaton? If the Bible sanctions the notion of development in God, why should the goal of that development be defined as the Trinity? Historically speaking, the doctrine of the Trinity arose from a reflection on the *present* experience of God's salvation. God is Trinity now because he is outward-reaching now. The Trinity is not so much the future of God; it is the way of God to the future.

The structure of LaCugna's work can be characterized as a movement from 'deconstruction' to 'reconstruction'.⁵⁴ After she traces the wrong turns that led to the irrelevance of the Trinity (Part 1), she begins to work out a solution (Part 2). Echoing Rahner,

48 Peters, *God as Trinity*, p. 102. LaCugna states, 'If it is the very nature of God to be related (to-be-toward, to-be-for), then it is difficult to see that God can be *God* without creation' ('The Relational God: Aquinas and Beyond', *Theological Studies* 46 [December 1985]: p. 661).

49 Peters, *God as Trinity*, p. 82.

50 Peters, *God as Trinity*, p. 95.

51 Peters, *God as Trinity*, p. 35. This is not a direct indictment of Moltmann, for Peters recognizes that Moltmann uses a more nuanced understanding of personhood. Nevertheless, Peters is clearly uneasy about the affects of Moltmann's model on the unity of God.

52 It is a little ironic that Barth was one of the persons to see most clearly that 1 Jn. 4:8 and 16 do not refer to intra-divine but to economic love (*Dogmatics*, II/1, p. 275).

53 Peters, *God as Trinity*, pp. 146-87.

54 Grenz, *Triune God*, p. 149.

that solution involves the reconnection of *oikonomia* and *theologia*. In the economy is seen 'a personal self-sharing by which God is forever bending toward God's "other" (cf. Eph. 1:3-14).'⁵⁵ For the actual structure of God's saving activity, LaCugna offers the graphic representation of a parabola. In some respects, this 'chiastic model' bears similarities to Moltmann, although it is not a matter of changing patterns within the life of God. The movement of emanation (*exitus*) and return (*reditus*) is the ecstatic movement of God first outward in creation and then back into union with God. Since this trinitarian movement results in reconciliation or 'divinization' (*theosis*), there is no clear distinction between the doctrines of God and salvation. But that does not mean, as has sometimes been charged, that LaCugna dissolves God into salvation, for 'God's presence to us does not exhaust without remainder the absolute mystery of God'.⁵⁶

The re-unification of *theologia* and *oikonomia* precedes an analysis of personal being in an effort to establish an 'ontology of relation'.⁵⁷ LaCugna's

more nuanced understanding of divine personhood offers new possibilities for understanding the doctrine of the Trinity as the missional being of God—his being on mission. She shows how a fully personal view of God can satisfy the relational concerns of Moltmann without making God into a society.

c) The Trinity as the Missional Being of God

Revitalizing the Western Trinity

LaCugna's approach could be conceived as a revitalization of the Augustinian psychological analogy of the Trinity. She states, 'Augustine's psychological analogy for the Trinity is inadequate... not because it is psychological but because his psychology and anthropology tend to focus on the individual soul.'⁵⁸ Augustine had located a vestige of the Trinity in the psychology of individual persons.⁵⁹ But if the analogy were based not on a single person, but on the ecstatic person-in-relation, then the relational Trinity might yet find an analogy in human being. The vestige of the Trinity is the *imago Dei* not in the isolated individual, but in the

⁵⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 222, see pp. 211, 231. It is important to note that LaCugna does not deny *theologia*. Rather, she denies the traditional distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia* that allows speculation on the inner life of God without attention first to God's saving acts.

⁵⁶ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 228, 320-21.

⁵⁷ LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 243-317. For this she draws primarily from John Macmurray, *The Self as Agent* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1957); idem, *Persons in Relation* (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 1961); John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and*

the Church (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); and various liberation theologies.

⁵⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 103.

⁵⁹ While this was developed in several ways, his final presentation was that of the mind's remembering, understanding, and loving God (*De Trin.*, 14.15-21). For a summary of Augustine's analogies, see Thomas A. Wassmer, 'The Trinitarian Theology of Augustine and His Debt to Plotinus', *Harvard Theological Review* 53 (1960): pp. 261-68.

personal being that seeks relationships. But this is not Moltmann's suggestion that the *imago Dei* be located in a community of divine persons. The trinitarian God is personal in that his essential nature is to seek relationships with a genuine other.

In addition to the psychological analogy, another of Augustine's enduring contributions is the image of the Spirit as the common gift or 'bond of love' (*vinculum amoris*) between the Father and the Son.⁶⁰ At first glance, this seems to be a classic case of immanent trinitarian speculation. On the other hand, Moltmann enlists the idea of the Spirit as the bond of love to say that the Spirit also includes humans in the divine fellowship.⁶¹ In the same way that the psychological analogy can be redeemed through a more relational psychology, Augustine's vision of the Spirit as the bond of love can also be given an economic focus. Whatever the Spirit's role in the intradivine relations, the Spirit is the bond of love joining humans with God and with each other.⁶²

The Perfections of God in Relational Perspective

The suggestion that God's being is con-

stituted through relationship is not a simple adjustment to the tradition. For many, this move gives up too much of the classical emphases on the aseity and perfection of God. These are difficult questions, but trinitarians who accept the shift to relationality have provided some suggestions for affirming traditional concerns, albeit in a decidedly different key. LaCugna, for example, notes that God is still incomprehensible. This is not because he resides in the realm of immutable substance, but because he, like all personal beings, retains an element of mystery. Personal beings are never dissolved into the other, which would supplant the idea of relationship with that of monism.⁶³ Likewise, the very notion of divine perfection can be rethought in light of relationality: 'Divine perfection is the antithesis of self-sufficiency, rather it is the absolute capacity to be who and what one is by being for and from another.'⁶⁴ As the personal being par excellence, God seeks perfectly, loves enduringly, unites eternally. This is his perfection.

But does the image of God as constituted through relationship with the world mean that God is weak and dependent? The question itself betrays a metaphysical bias toward independence. Relational being is not 'weak' because it needs; the yearning of love is not a deficiency, but a part of its peculiar perfection. Nevertheless, a vestige of the independence of God is insinuated in one of the most important

60 Bertrand de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, vol. 1 of *Studies in Historical Theology*, transl. Edmund J. Fortman (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's, 1982), pp. 110-21; Fortman, *Triune God*, pp. 145-46. See Augustine *De Trin.* 6.7; 5.15-16, 29, 47.

61 Moltmann, *Trinity*, pp. 169-70. Augustine may also be interpreted this way. Margerie, *Christian Trinity*, pp. 112, 116-21.

62 LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 296-300.

63 LaCugna, *God for Us*, pp. 289, 300-04.

64 LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 304.

insights of the contemporary analysis of personhood: di-polarity. LaCugna states, 'Personhood requires the balance of self-love and self-gift.... Personhood emerges in the balance between individuation and relationality.'⁶⁵ To say that God is personal does not mean that he has lost all manner of independence in heteronomy. Personal relationships require a stable pole at both ends so that personal being is fulfilled rather than obliterated in relationship. While personal being is 'ecstatic'—able to come out of itself—the event of *ecstasis* does not result in the loss of independent existence, but the enrichment of it.

While it would take considerably more space to develop this notion, the idea of *ecstasis* grounds not only the ability of persons to relate to one another, but a measure of self-relation and self-reflection too. There is a structural similarity here to Moltmann's notion of the love of like for like that grounds love for the other, but this does not require a full-fledged community in God. As a personal being, God in his self-reflection chose to create and love outwardly. This notion has the potential to mediate between the emanationist view that tends to present creation as a mechanical inevitability and the view that a completely self-sufficient God arbitrarily chose to create.

As a personal being, God did 'decide' to create, although any other choice would have been counter to his own relational nature and would have left him unfulfilled. It is not that God is 'ontologically' dependent on the world—as if he would cease to be with-

out the world. But if God's love for the world is to be as meaningful to him as the biblical revelation seems to indicate, it certainly cannot be incidental. In the same way a personal relationship can be enriching without being mandatory, God freely chose to create a world in order to have a meaningful relationship with it.

The 'Point' of the Trinity

The 'point' of the Trinity has two referents. First, it refers to what the doctrine of the Trinity actually says about God. The second point asks, 'What are the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for Christian living?'⁶⁶ Regarding the first point, Roger Haight looks for the point of trinitarian theology in the original impetus for trinitarian language—the experience of salvation. Within the context of Jewish monotheism, salvation mediated through Christ and in the Holy Spirit required a new way of thinking about God. So the doctrine of the Trinity is about the mediation of salvation. It 'is not intended to be information about the internal life of God, but about how God relates to human beings.'⁶⁷ This means that the Trinity could be called the theological statement of the gospel; it is the gospel explained with reference to the being of God. It states that God has a missional essence. The economic focus does not limit God's being to saving humans, but it does say that God is salvific to the core.

⁶⁶ The second point will be addressed in the next section.

⁶⁷ Haight, 'Trinitarian Theology', p. 199. See LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 380.

⁶⁵ LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 290.

2. The Trinity and Christian Missions

a) The Trinity as a Basis for Missions

Theological foundations are important, but if theology stops at the first point of the doctrine of the Trinity, it has stopped short of God's point. That point is the goal of the mission of God himself. The purpose of the incarnation was not to reveal that 'God is relational', or that 'God becomes', or that 'God is temporal in himself'. As valid as such extrapolations may be, God does not just want humans to *know* that he is relational, he wants to *have relationships with them*. Consequently, the theological insight that God is on mission is not just a datum to be pondered; it is a call first to enter into relationship with God, and then to join God's mission to bring others into relationship with him. As John Thompson puts it, 'God is a God of mission, which means a God who sends.'⁶⁸

The missiological implications of the Trinity were not a major theme among twentieth century theologians.⁶⁹ On the other hand, in a paper read at the Brandenburg Missionary

Conference in 1932, Karl Barth became one of the first to articulate missions as God's own activity.⁷⁰ For Barth, 'the goal of missionary work is to make a missionary church, to testify to the nations the God who wills to make them too his witnesses and missionaries'.⁷¹ Barth's thought became influential in the International Missionary Council and reached its peak at the 1952 Willingen Conference. Although the term *missio Dei* was not used there, the conference unambiguously connected the idea of mission with the trinitarian nature of God. The mission of the church was, so to speak, taken out of the doctrine of ecclesiology and resituated within the Father's missionary sendings of the Son and Spirit as an extension of God's own mission.⁷² The term *missio Dei*, then, 'indicates that mission is not primarily a human work but the work of the triune God.'⁷³

The sentiments of the Willingen Conference have been echoed by several contemporary trinitarians. For Moltmann, the church 'discovers itself as one element in the movements of the divine sending, gathering together and experience. It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the Church, creating a church

⁶⁸ John Thompson, *Modern Trinitarian Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 69.

⁶⁹ There are some exceptions: P. T. Forsyth, *Missions in State and Church: Sermons and Addresses* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908); Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981); Colin Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), p. 7.

⁷⁰ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1991), p. 389.

⁷¹ Thompson, *Trinitarian Perspectives*, p. 77.

⁷² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 390.

⁷³ Thompson, *Trinitarian Perspectives*, 68. For a summary of the concept of the *missio Dei* in theology of missions, see Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 389-93.

as it goes on its way.⁷⁴ Thompson offers a similar statement: 'The *ultimate basis* of mission is the triune God—the Father who created the world and sent his Son by the Holy Spirit to be our salvation. The *proximate basis* of mission is the redemption of the Son by his life, death, and resurrection, and the *immediate power* of mission is the Holy Spirit. It is, in trinitarian terms, a *missio Dei*.'⁷⁵ Finally, LaCugna avers,

Living trinitarian faith means living as Jesus Christ lived, *in persona Christi*: preaching the gospel; rely-

ing totally on God; offering healing and reconciliation; rejecting laws, customs, conventions that place persons beneath rules; resisting temptation; praying constantly; eating with modern-day lepers and other outcasts; embracing the enemy and the sinner; dying for the sake of the gospel if it is God's will.⁷⁶

b) The Trinity as a Model for Missions

The Trinity as a 'model for missions' does not suggest that the organization of missionary agencies can be developed through a study of the Trinity—as if, for example, such organizations should be somehow 'three-fold'. Nevertheless, the connection between God's trinitarian nature and the *missio Dei* does suggest certain criteria for the church's missionary efforts, which 'are only authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God'.⁷⁷

The Self-Contextualization of God

Barth's reconnection of the Trinity with revelation suggests that the Trinity can be designated as the self-contextualization of God. This is a far cry from the obscure doctrine of substances and persons that epitomized theological obfuscation. Against the view of the Trinity as a hindrance to missions, Colin Gunton asserts 'that because the theology of the Trinity has so much to teach about the nature of

74 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, transl. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 64. Immediately after saying this, however, Moltmann goes on to speak in ecumenical tones of the Spirit's work that creates the 'church' 'wherever "the manifestation of the Spirit" (I Cor. 12:7) takes place'. He clearly means that the 'church' is not limited to explicit acceptance of or proclamation of the gospel. Rather, the criteria are those of 'uniting of men with one another', 'uniting of society with nature', and 'uniting of creation with God'. Moltmann, *Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 65. Bosch offers a brief account of how the concept of the *missio Dei* was transformed in the ecumenical context to refer to a presumed universal work of the Spirit in world history and other religions. This mutation of Barth's original insight has actually served to exclude the church's involvement in the mission to the extent that any Christological focus is interpreted as arrogant and ethnocentric. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 391-92.

75 Thompson, *Trinitarian Perspectives*, p. 72. 'The task of the church is to bring people not simply to salvation, which could be self-centered and have a certain aspect of egoism in it. Rather, it is to enable them to be witnesses.' Thompson, *Trinitarian Perspectives*, p. 74.

76 LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 401.

77 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 391.

our world and life within it, it is or could be the centre of Christianity's appeal to the unbeliever, as the good news of a God who enters into free relations of creation and redemption with his world'.⁷⁸ The renewed vision of God as a God of loving relationship might have the power to re-focus the gospel on the original call to reconciliation with a loving Creator. The gospel proclaims God's desire and ability to be in relationship with anyone who accepts him. Although the traditional language of *ousia* and *hypostasis* was, in fact, part of the contextualization of the gospel for another generation and culture, the Trinity itself speaks of the mandate to re-contextualize the gospel in every age.

The Trinity also implies that reconciliation calls for a personal encounter. For God, that personal encounter was infinitely costly. Contextualization is costly; it requires meeting people where they are. So the mission of the church is not only to take a message to a people; it is to live a message among them so as to make God visible again. If the church's mission is to extend the *missio Dei*, then it can be nothing short of continuing that embodiment of God in Christ among the people of the world. So the kenotic self-contextualization of God has implications for Christian behaviour in the doing of missions. From the Old Testament imperative to reflect God's holy nature in holy living, God's very nature has included an ethical charge. Likewise, the kenotic self-contextualization of God precludes coercive or manipulative missionary practices. If relation-

ships are mutual, they must be entered into freely.

But already another issue arises. The renewed focus on the economic Trinity seems naturally to highlight the particularity of God's self-contextualization in Jesus Christ. So the church is continuing that contextualization as it preaches a contextualized message of Christ and tries to embody Christ in a contextualized way. The problem here for contemporary theology regards the stance of the church toward the world's religions.

The Trinity and Other Religions

Contemporary theology has seen a ground-swell of interest in a 'theology of religions.' The motivations behind this movement are many, but they certainly include the contemporary climate of multi-culturalism and post-modernism.⁷⁹ Raimundo Panikkar suggests that since the Greek philosophical tradition in which Christian theology first developed has been discredited, perhaps other religious traditions can offer concepts and frameworks to illuminate Christian teaching. Panikkar even incorporates the Trinity itself into his interreligious vision.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ See Paul F. Knitter, 'Preface', in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1987), pp. vii-xii.

⁸⁰ Panikkar, 'The Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges'; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 'Does the Trinity Belong in a Theology of Religions? On Angling in the Rubicon and the "Identity" of God', in *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 45.

In order to understand how a concept like the Trinity could find application in religious pluralism, Stephen Williams offers the following consideration:

We encounter belief in an indescribable ultimate ground; there is conviction of a personal dialogical relationship with the ultimate; and people experience the fathomless depth of their own being. Now the Christian belief in God as Trinity embraces belief in a transcendent principle, a personal manifestation, and an immanent ground of all things. Such a belief suggests how the various spiritualities described may be possible and all have their grounding in an ultimate.⁸¹

The interreligious Trinity also builds upon Augustine's notion of vestiges of the Trinity. Here, however, the vestiges are located in the universal religious experiences of humans. So, for example, according to Nicholas Berdyaev: 'Wherever there is life there is the mystery of three-in-oneness'.⁸² Similarly, Paul Tillich linked the symbol of the Trinity to 'the intrinsic dialectics of experienced life'.⁸³

Because of the historical specificity of Jesus, 'What seems to unite plural-

istic trinitarian theologies of religion is the role of the Spirit as the "universalizer." The Spirit resists the reduction of Being (Father) or Logos (Son); consequently, no one religious "form" can lay claim to have caught the fullness of reality.⁸⁴ The Spirit allows the salvific will of God to move in and through other religious narratives without the limitations implicit in 'Christ'. But such an interpretation of the Spirit seems merely to give Eastern religious categories priority over Christian revelation, usually resulting in a more-or-less monistic version of reality.⁸⁵ Williams is especially concerned that interreligious trinitaries are built upon essentially impersonal views of God as 'the Ultimate', and so on. He asks about the criteria for calling an image 'trinitarian'. Beyond the fact that such interreligious trinitaries have a structure that includes a unity of plural elements, why should any and all notions of unity-in-plurality be described as 'trinitarian'?⁸⁶

Any suggestion that humans have access to God aside from a contextual revelation is suspect for several rea-

81 Stephen Williams, 'The Trinity and "Other Religions"' in *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 27.

82 Nicholas Berdyaev, *Christian Existentialism*, transl. by W. Lowrie (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 53, quoted in Peters, *God as Trinity*, p. 73.

83 Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 283-94.

84 Vanhoozer, 'Does the Trinity Belong?' p. 62. See Gavin D'Costa, 'Christ, the Trinity, and Religious Plurality' in *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. Gavin D'Costa (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1990), p. 19. See the criticism of Rahner's pneumatocentric theology in Gary Badcock, 'Karl Rahner, the Trinity, and Religious Pluralism' in *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 143-54.

85 Vanhoozer, 'Does the Trinity Belong?' p. 66.

86 Williams, 'Trinity and "Other Religions"', p. 28.

sons. The very notion of a non-contextual understanding of anything is dubious. The contextual revelation of God in Christ is often derided as the 'scandal of particularity'. On the other hand, if God is personal, then certain realities obtain regarding how a relationship with him is possible. For example, as in all relationships, there must be a stable pole for relationship. God is not simply an amorphous 'Ultimate', but a person who has encountered the world in concrete expressions. 'If... we do believe in a personal God', Williams argues, 'particular revelation is not the scandal that it is often thought to be in light of other religious traditions. How more effectively can a personal God communicate the truth about his nature than by appearing personally in the world, if that is possible? And how can personal appearance in the world be possible in its fullness unless God remains God in heaven while God is also God on earth?'⁸⁷

Williams's observation is not without difficulties. For the great majority of Christians, access to God through Christ has not included a personal encounter with the historical Jesus; it has been mediated through the Spirit and the gospel. But the biblical teaching on the Spirit does not justify a facile equation of the Spirit with a vague principle of unity behind all particular religious experiences. The role of the Spirit in the New Testament is not to unite pell-mell, but to bring all things to unity through Christ (John 15:26; 16:14).

In a similar vein, Haight argues that

epistemology necessarily entails a dual mediation of revelation: objective and subjective.

Since all human knowledge and self-awareness are bound to the world and history, and are mediated to consciousness through the world and history, so too a clear or explicit awareness of God must be mediated by an external objective medium. But that external medium of itself will not actually mediate an effective internal experience of God, without which there is no real self-communication or revelation, without an internal principle of appropriation.⁸⁸

Haight intends to identify these two mediums as the objective revelation of God in Christ and the subjective appropriation of God's presence in the Spirit. The point is that the structure of the Trinity is fitted to the needs of human knowing and relating. Or, conversely, one might say that humans are designed for relationship with the trinitarian God who is objectively revealed in Christ and subjectively experienced in the Holy Spirit.

But trinitarian exclusivism may not be the final word on the Trinity's significance for interreligious dialogue. Thompson clearly affirms the Trinity as the distinctively Christian vision of God, but he believes that image of God can still provide the conversation of religions with the 'true grammar of dialogue'.⁸⁹ This means three things for Thompson. First, there is an inherent

⁸⁷ Williams, 'Trinity and "Other Religions"', p. 38.

⁸⁸ Haight, 'Trinitarian Theology', p. 197.

⁸⁹ Thompson, *Trinitarian Perspectives*, p. 79, quoting Newbiggin, *Open Secret*, pp. 206-7.

unity in humankind, since all are creations of the one triune God. This unity suggests the possibility of elements of divine truth—'parables of the Kingdom'—appearing outside of the church, although they do not carry the authority of Christian revelation. Second, interreligious dialogue must be carried out from the Christian side on the basis of the uniqueness of Christ. For the third point, Thompson quotes Lesslie Newbigin: 'We participate in the dialogue, believing and expecting that the Holy Spirit can and will use this dialogue to do his own sovereign work, to glorify Jesus by converting to him both the partners in the dialogue.'⁹⁰ These last two points, of course, will be the least palatable for the more pluralistically-minded.

3. Conclusion

Several of the theologians introduced above have suggested that a trinitarian theology built on a relational model of God does not simply surrender the traditional perfections of God; it seeks to

reinterpret them in line with revelation. So Moltmann contends that the impassible God of substantialist metaphysics is the deficient God who cannot love, and LaCugna argues that God's perfection is precisely his ability to enter into genuinely mutual relationships. These insights can be correlated with Jesus' parabolic statement that new wine requires new wineskins (Mt. 9:14-17). The new perspective on the relationality of God claims that for centuries the true meaning of the revelation of love has been straining against the old and rigid structures of substantialist metaphysics.

Contemporary theologians have been trying to construct a new intellectual framework—new wineskins—that will be malleable enough not to distort the self-revelation of God. Relationship has emerged as the central motif in this effort. God's revelation speaks of a God who has come out of himself in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit in order to establish mutually enriching relationships with his creatures. God, as Trinity, is seeking through the Son and the Spirit to establish relationships with fallen humanity. That is the mission of God; that is the mission of the church.

⁹⁰ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, p. 210, quoted in Thompson, *Trinitarian Perspectives*, p. 79.

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The Nature of the Crucified Christ in Word-Faith Teaching

William P. Atkinson

KEY WORDS: *Christology, cross, atonement, dualism, JDS, nature, sin, sacrifice, Satan, Kenyon, Hagin, Copeland.*

A movement that has concerned world-wide evangelicalism in recent years is that known as the word-faith movement (WFM), faith movement, prosperity gospel, or health and wealth teaching, influential through its widespread use of television, conferences, training programmes, and written publications. While it is perhaps most infamous for its teaching on faith, health, and prosperity, its view of the atonement has also caused alarm. Though less well known, this has gained the title 'JDS teaching'—while on the cross and in the grave, 'Jesus Died Spiritually'. JDS teaching is not adhered to by all in WFM, but it is characteristic of the two names most famously associated with the movement: Kenneth Hagin (1917-2003) and Kenneth Copeland (1937-). It was also taught by the man who, since Dan McConnell's influential crit-

icism of WFM,¹ has been recognised to have been its 'grandfather', E. W. Kenyon (1867-1948).

JDS doctrine makes a number of claims about what happened to Jesus on the cross. One is that in his spiritual death Jesus was separated from God; another is that Jesus suffered at Satan's hands. While both of these are handled in an unusual manner within JDS teaching, the fundamental ideas might not meet outright disagreement among evangelicals. Jesus' cry of dereliction, and the testimony that Satan entered Judas might be regarded by some as evidence enough. However, a third element to JDS teaching is more unpalatable. It is that while spiritually dead, Jesus partook of a sinful, satanic nature.

This article will consider the third element, and analyse the views of the

¹ Dan McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988, 1995), published in Great Britain as *The Promise of Health and Wealth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990). References in this article are to the latter.

three JDS proponents mentioned above, Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland. Next, it will consider the response to JDS teaching that has been offered by evangelical critics of WFM, who have produced a number of important works both before and since McConnell.² Thereafter, it will consider the possible genesis of the teaching. In that section, discussion will first focus on Kenyon's possible contemporary sources, for McConnell convincingly demonstrated that, through Hagin, JDS doctrine reached WFM from Kenyon.³ He further claimed that what he called Kenyon's 'spiritualization' of the atonement came not from Christian sources, but from ideas flowing from New Thought and Christian Science. Discussion will then move to consider biblical teaching that is claimed by JDS teachers to support their particular view of Christ's death.

Satan and his sinful nature

These authors' presentations of Christ's death are based upon a highly dualistic cosmology in which God and Satan are powerful participants in

humanity's sin and salvation. For those unused to such writing, Satan is mentioned with surprising frequency, and ascribed surprising authority. They regard Satan as a fallen angel,⁴ so evil that for Kenyon at least, Satan personifies sin.⁵ Turning now to Satan's 'nature', Kenyon used the word in the context under consideration in synonymy with 'substance', 'being', and 'character'.⁶ Thus he seemed to mean 'all that an entity inwardly and innately is'. In assuming this sense, he leant on Ephesians 2:3 ('we were by nature children of wrath').⁷ However, in the contexts of divine and satanic natures, he also wrote in an almost personifying way, for instance that, 'Spiritual death is in reality a Nature', adding in apparent synonymy that, 'Spiritual Death is as much a substance, a force, a fact, as life'.⁸ Here, he envisaged 'nature', if divine or satanic, as a substantial force having an impact on the entity 'partaking' of it.

Kenyon noted that Satan's nature

² Most notably, Andrew Brandon, *Health & Wealth* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1987); H. Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis* (Milton Keynes: Nelson Word: UK edn, 1995 [1993]); T. Smail, A. Walker, & N. Wright, "Revelation Knowledge" and Knowledge of Revelation: The Faith Movement and the Question of Heresy', pp. 57-77, *Journal for Pentecostal Theology* 5 (1994); R. M. Bowman, Jr, *The Word-Faith Controversy: Understanding the Health and Wealth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001); Andrew Perriman (ed.), *Faith, Health & Prosperity* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003).

³ McConnell, *Promise*, ch. 7.

⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, pp. 47, 57, 59-60; Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Origin and Operation of Demons* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 1978), pp. 7-8; Kenneth Copeland, 'The Gates of hell Shall Not Prevail', *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 25.4 (April 1997), p. 6.

⁵ E. W. Kenyon, *Jesus the Healer* (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 29th printing, 2000 [1943]), pp. 62-63; compare *Father*, p. 49.

⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, pp. 47, 57, 64.

⁷ E. W. Kenyon, *The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption* (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 3rd printing, 1969 [posthumously edited and compiled by Ruth Kenyon Housworth]), p. 33; *Father*, p. 53.

⁸ Kenyon, *Bible*, pp. 28, 30; compare p. 37; *Father*, p. 50.

changed when he rebelled. Since then, it 'is the very opposite of God's', 'the very fountain of all that is evil, wicked, and corrupt in the human', 'malignant... evil, unjust, and destructive'.⁹ The best way to perceive the satanic nature was through Satan's names, as Kenyon understood them from the Bible. These included 'accuser', 'defamer', 'slanderer', 'corrupter', 'tempter', 'seducer', 'murderer', and 'liar'.¹⁰

Hagin understood Satan's nature similarly. 'Nature' he used in apparent synonymity with 'characteristics', and these characteristics he listed thus: 'The nature of the devil is hatred and lies.'¹¹ Copeland, in rather circular fashion, simply defined Satan's nature as spiritual death, stating elsewhere that Satan's nature was 'sin'.¹²

Partaking of a sinful, satanic nature

A key term for Kenyon was 'partaking' of the satanic nature.¹³ For Kenyon, Satan's nature, like God's, is communicable to humanity. Humans are so

dependant on a 'higher' spiritual force that they cannot exist without participating in either God's or Satan's nature.¹⁴ This is a mutually exclusive choice, and not a mere claim that an individual could reflect certain aspects of the image of God while exhibiting certain behavioural traits of Satan.¹⁵ Adam, created to participate in God's nature, began instead to participate in Satan's when he fell. Whether participation in the divine nature and participation in the satanic nature were equivalent in their degree and effect is less than clear. Participation in the divine nature was not so great that Adam was divine *rather than* human before the fall: 'He did not have God's nature. He had perfect human nature. He had perfect human life.'

It might thus charitably be assumed that Adam did not become satanic *rather than* human after the fall. Nevertheless, the words quoted immediately above are surrounded by the following:

Satan breathed into Adam his own nature. Adam was actually born again in the Garden... Into his spirit, Satan now poured his own nature. Man instantly became a liar, a cringing, cowardly being. That nature has been reproduced in the human race down through the ages.¹⁶

The profound and intrinsic character of the participation in Satan's

9 Kenyon, *Father*, pp. 47, 57.

10 Kenyon, *Father*, pp. 64-68.

11 Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 1979), p. 31; compare *The New Birth* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 1975), p. 10.

12 Kenneth Copeland, *Our Covenant with God* (Fort Worth: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1976), pp. 9-10; *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, audio tape 02-0017 (Fort Worth: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, n.d.), side 2.

13 Kenyon used the phrase frequently with reference to humanity's fall (e.g. *Father*, pp. 37, 41, 47; *Bible*, pp. 30, 33), but also applied it to Christ (e.g. *Father*, p. 137).

14 Kenyon, *Bible*, p. 28.

15 Kenyon, *Bible*, p. 34.

16 E. W. Kenyon, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 13th printing, 1969 [1945]), p. 60.

nature that these words reveal is confirmed elsewhere: 'Man commits Sin, because his Nature produces that kind of conduct.'¹⁷ Kenyon may simply have meant 'fallen nature' by 'Nature', but given the tenor of his writing, it is also possible that he meant to indicate that fallen humanity was such a full participant in Satan's nature that this satanic nature was now humanity's own.¹⁸

Turning now from Adam to Jesus, 'We know that as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness Jesus was also lifted up a serpent; that is, He was a partaker of Satanic Nature, the old Serpent.'¹⁹ Whether Christ's partaking in Satan's nature meant quite the same as Adam's partaking is moot. Kenyon's view of substitution, in which Christ underwent what humanity suffered when it fell in order that humanity might thus be redeemed, might suggest that it was the same. On the other hand, Kenyon's descriptions do not overtly state that Christ, while spiritually dead, was like Adam at enmity with God, a liar or a coward.

In order to consider what Kenyon meant by 'partaking' when specifically applied to Christ, it is helpful to note some of his other language. He wrote, for instance, that Jesus' 'spirit absolutely became impregnated with the sin nature of the world'.²⁰ This continues to suggest large synonymy between 'Satanic nature' and 'sin

nature', but his use of the word 'impregnated' also suggests that Kenyon's use of 'partake' was not a reference merely to an extrinsic 'fellowship with', but rather suggests an intrinsic alteration in, or at least adulteration of, the nature of Christ.

A similar conclusion is suggested by the words 'one' 'united' and 'all' in: 'He became one with Satan when He became sin'; 'He had been lifted up as a serpent. Serpent is Satan. Jesus knew He was going to be lifted up, united with the Adversary'; 'He not only bore our sins, but the sin-nature itself was laid upon Him, until He became all that spiritual death had made man.'²¹ It is thus reasonable to conclude that when Kenyon used the language of identification, he did not only mean that Christ was 'counted' as one of the fallen human race, but that he became what humans had become. However, this is not entirely clear, and so a second uncertainty emerges: not only is it unclear whether Adam partook in Satan's nature to such an extent that this nature was his own, but also whether Jesus partook in Satan's nature to the same extent that Adam did.

No firm answers to these questions are offered. On the one hand, Kenyon insisted that Christ was a full substitute for fallen humanity. On the other hand, Christ's partaking of the satanic nature did not involve the enmity with God that it did for Adam.

While the weight of the evidence

¹⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p. 50.

¹⁸ This is McConnell's understanding (*Promise*, p. 118).

¹⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p. 137.

²⁰ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p. 63.

²¹ E. W. Kenyon, *Identification: A Romance in Redemption* (Los Angeles: E. W. Kenyon, 1941), p. 21; *What Happened*, pp. 44-45; *Bible*, p. 165.

points to an *intrinsic* 'partaking' of the Satanic nature in Christ while he suffered, occasionally Kenyon used more externally orientated language: 'Here we see God taking our sin nature, hideous spiritual death, and making it to strike, as the Prophet says, upon His soul.'²² So Lie speculates that Kenyon may have meant to indicate no more by writing of a 'partaking' of Satan's nature than a recognition that both Christ and Satan must experience hell.²³ This speculation, however, does not cohere with Kenyon's overall portrayal. Whatever precisely Kenyon meant, he was indicating something more intrinsic than simply an experience common to the two.

When one turns from Kenyon's writing to the output of Hagin and Copeland, it quickly becomes clear that they do not refer to this aspect of spiritual death with anything like the frequency that Kenyon did. Hagin believed precisely the same things as Kenyon regarding Adam's partaking of the satanic nature.²⁴ In contrast to Kenyon, however, Hagin stopped short of overtly using the language of 'partaking of Satan's nature' of Christ on the cross. This seems to have been a deliberate choice, and initially suggests divergence from Kenyon's ideas. In fact Hagin, when asked his precise view by Hanegraaff, replied, 'I don't believe that Jesus took on Satan's

nature or submitted to his lordship.'²⁵

However, both Hanegraaff and Bowman are cautious about accepting Hagin's disavowal. Hanegraaff writes, 'It becomes very confusing indeed when someone denies the very thing he affirms.'²⁶ This is slightly misleading, for, as noted above, Hagin did not state in so many words that Christ took on Satan's nature. Bowman is more nuanced:

We ought, of course, to take Hagin at his word that he finds such a way of expressing his teaching somehow unacceptable. On the other hand, we should not assume too quickly that Hagin disagrees with the *idea* expressed by saying that Jesus took on Satan's nature.²⁷

Bowman's accurate thinking is confirmed by Hagin's explicit statements that Christ's suffering involved his taking 'upon Himself our sin nature, the nature of spiritual death'²⁸ and 'He took our spiritual death... our outlawed nature.'²⁹ These show that his concepts did not differ substantially from those of Kenyon, for he had made it clear that 'our' sinful, outlawed nature was that of Satan.³⁰ Further-

²² Kenyon, *Father*, p. 125.

²³ G. Lie, 'The Theology of E. W. Kenyon: Plain Heresy or Within the Boundaries of Pentecostal-Charismatic "Orthodoxy?"', pp. 85-114, *Pneuma*, 22.1 (Spring 2000), p. 100.

²⁴ Hagin, *New Birth*, p. 10.

²⁵ Kenneth E. Hagin, correspondence with H. Hanegraaff, quoted in Bowman, *Controversy*, p. 161; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p. 156.

²⁶ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p. 157.

²⁷ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp. 167-168, italics original.

²⁸ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Redeemed from Poverty, Sickness and Spiritual Death* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 2nd edn, 1983 [1966]), p. 64.

²⁹ Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Present-Day Ministry of Jesus Christ* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 2nd edn 1983 [n.d.]), p. 6.

³⁰ Hagin, *New Birth*, p. 10.

more, even if Hagin succeeded in distancing his views from a belief that Christ partook of Satan's nature itself, it is clear that he believed that Christ participated in a 'sin nature'.

For Copeland, fallen human participation in Satan's nature, and the identity of this concept with spiritual death, emerges in such statements as:

When Adam committed high treason against God and bowed his knee to Satan, spiritual death—the nature of Satan—was lodged in his heart. Actually, Adam was the first person ever to be born again. He was born from life unto death, from spiritual life unto spiritual death... God said that Adam would die the very day he ate the forbidden fruit, yet he lived several hundred years longer. God was not referring to physical death; He meant that Adam would die spiritually—that he would take on the nature of Satan.³¹

He further describes this 'lodging in the heart' and 'taking on' of Satan's nature as a 'union between Satan and mankind'.³²

Copeland is less reticent than Hagin in ascribing participation in Satan's nature to the spiritually dead Christ. He writes that 'Man is a partaker of satanic nature due to the fall; Jesus bore that nature' and, expounding John 3:14, states that 'the serpent denote[s] union and harmony with the nature of

the Adversary'.³³ 'When Jesus went to the cross, He not only bore the penalty for our sinful conduct, He bore sin itself. He took on Himself the sin nature and every manifestation of death and destruction it carries with it.'³⁴ His preaching explicitly links the sin nature to Satan: Christ 'accepted the sin nature of Satan in His own spirit'.³⁵

In conclusion to this section, we see that Kenyon's teaching was fullest and most unambiguous, though his exposition created two significant uncertainties: did Adam partake in Satan's nature to the extent that this nature was intrinsically his, and did Jesus partake of this nature to the same extent as Adam? These uncertainties create further ones: how intrinsic to his being was Christ's participation in this alleged satanic nature, and what effect on his being did this have?

Hagin explicitly denied teaching that Christ partook of Satan's nature. He did teach that Christ took an outlawed sin nature, and in practice made no clear distinction between it and the satanic nature that Adam had allegedly inherited at his fall. Copeland represents a return to Kenyon's more outspoken language. He explicitly relates Christ's spiritual death to the nature of the devil. Neither Hagin nor Copeland, in the varied ways that they approach this subject, dispels the uncertainties created by Kenyon.

³¹ Copeland, *Covenant*, pp. 9-10.

³² Copeland, *Covenant*, p. 11; compare 'The Great Exchange', pp. 4-8, *Believer's Voice Of Victory*, 24.2 (February 1996), p. 5.

³³ Kenneth Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?* (Fort Worth: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, n.d.), p. 3.

³⁴ Kenneth Copeland, 'Worthy to be Anointed', *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 24.9 (October 1996), p. 5.

³⁵ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2.

The Responses of the Critics

A number of responses are offered by the critics of WFM introduced earlier. This aspect of JDS teaching is characterised by some as presenting Christ as 'demonic', or 'a demoniac'.³⁶ This misrepresents Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland, who always use the term 'satanic', not 'demonic'. The Christ of JDS teaching is also characterised as a 'new satanic creation'. McConnell introduces this term, and is followed by Perriman.³⁷ McConnell cites both Kenyon and Hagin in his relevant endnote. However, the two passages McConnell refers to are about Adam, not Christ. The extent to which Christ's experience exactly mirrors Adam's in JDS teaching is debatable.

Turning now to the criticisms, some are banal and require little comment. Hanegraaff worries about whether Satan must have become the recipient of Christ's prayers when the latter cried 'Father' from the cross.³⁸ Dal Bello opines that Christ himself would by JDS reckoning have needed a saviour.³⁹ Others are more thoughtful and require consideration.

Of these, one comments that to state that Christ partook of the satanic nature is to imply that Christ committed sin. Thus, according to McConnell and dal Bello, the Christ of JDS teach-

ing, while on the cross, was 'sinful', for Brandon, he was a 'sinner', for Perriman he was 'inherently sinful', and for McCann, he was 'obedient to Satan'.⁴⁰ Bowman is a lone voice. He recognizes that WFM teachers 'mean that Jesus took on a sinful nature, the nature of Satan, so that somehow Jesus himself, *without committing any sin (as we may gratefully acknowledge the Word-Faith teachers to recognize)*, comes to have the character of sin.'⁴¹ That Bowman's greater caution is justified will emerge in the next few paragraphs.

The critics' rejoinder is consistently to point out that Old Testament sacrifices of which Christ's is seen to be an echo involved blemish-free animals, and that the New Testament presents Christ as a 'lamb without blemish or spot'.⁴² This argument seems to ignore the state of sacrificial animals—and Christ—during the process of killing. However physically blemish-free they were beforehand, they certainly were marred as the knife, nails or spear entered the body.

The rejoinder also fails to acknowl-

36 Brandon, *Health*, p. 126; McConnell, *Promise*, p. 120; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p. 155; Smail, Walker, & Wright, 'Revelation', p. 69.

37 McConnell, *Promise*, pp. 118, 120; Perriman, *Faith*, pp. 24-25.

38 Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp. 160-161.

39 Moreno dal Bello, 'Atonement Where? Part 2', (1994), accessed 25.9.03 from <http://www.banner.org.uk/wof/moreno2.html>.

40 McConnell, *Promise*, p. 127; dal Bello, 'Atonement', p. 6; Brandon, *Health*, p. 126; Perriman, *Faith*, p. 110; Vincent McCann, 'An Evaluation of the Key Doctrines in the Health and Wealth Faith Movement' (1998), accessed 25.9.03 from <http://www.spotlightministries.org.uk/faithmov.htm>.

41 Bowman, *Controversy*, p. 169, italics added.

42 Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p. 158; Brandon, *Health*, p. 126; McConnell, *Promise*, p. 127; Perriman, *Faith*, p. 110; Smail, Walker & Wright, 'Revelation', p. 69. References are made to Lev.4:3, 23, 28, 32; 6:25-29; Deut.15:21; 1 Cor.2:8; Heb.9:14; 1 Pet.1:19; 3:18.

edge the recognition of JDS teaching that Christ was sinless.⁴³ Dal Bello criticises Copeland for being contradictory when the latter states that Christ was spotless when he went to the cross, but accepted Satan's sin-nature when he hung there.⁴⁴ It is not self-evident that this understanding is contradictory. Christ's being could have undergone some sort of change. Nevertheless, Kenyon had taught not only that Christ was sinless during his earthly ministry, but also that he was sinless while separated from God and taken to hell by Satan.⁴⁵ It may be that Copeland's teaching here contradicts not his own, but Kenyon's. However, it remains uncertain that Copeland, any more than Kenyon, conceived of Christ as one who committed sin when he partook of the satanic nature.

A second important criticism is that for Christ to have partaken of the satanic nature, he must either have ceased to be divine,⁴⁶ or exhibited a blend of divine and satanic natures.⁴⁷ The latter criticism presents an idea that Kenyon had in fact rejected,⁴⁸ and which seems foreign to Hagin and Copeland's presentations, with their

focus on Jesus' separation from God. The former criticism requires fuller consideration, and it is at this point that a particular weakness in JDS teaching emerges, for Christ's participation with sin and Satan, while separate from God, is presented in such intrinsic terms that the crucified Christ does seem to be presented in ways which do not support his divinity. Questions are thus raised not only about the understanding of the cross presented in JDS teaching, but also about its incarnational Christology.

While it might charitably be assumed that Christ's divine nature, as understood by WFM, was entirely intrinsic to his person, there is a suspicion that Christ partook of the divine nature in somewhat more extrinsic ways, commensurate only with both Adam's pre-fall partaking of the divine nature, and Christ's own accursed partaking of the satanic nature. So the uniqueness of the incarnation, and in turn of Christ's person, is not clearly maintained in this portrayal. The incarnational Christology of WFM thus seems, when applied to JDS teaching, to exhibit adoptionistic tendencies. If this suspicion is true, it explains the ready freedom with which the authors under review regard Christians as 'as much an Incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth'.⁴⁹

It must, however, be noted that these tendencies are not carried through to their logical conclusions. Kenyon denied adoptionism,⁵⁰ and

43 Kenyon, *Father*, pp. 123-124; Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, ch. 1 (implied in his logic); Kenneth Copeland, 'The Power of Resistance', *Believer's Voice Of Victory*, 25.6 (June 1997), p. 5.

44 Dal Bello, 'Atonement', p. 7.

45 Kenyon, *Father*, pp. 119, 130, 136. Compare Lie, 'Theology', p. 100.

46 Perriman, *Faith*, p. 22; Bowman, *Controversy*, p. 161; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p. 155; Hanegraaff and de Castro, 'What's Wrong'.

47 Dal Bello, 'Atonement', p. 7.

48 Kenyon, *Bible*, p. 34 (with reference to Adam).

49 Kenyon, *Father*, p. 100; compare Kenneth E. Hagin, *Zoe: The God-Kind of Life* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 1981).

50 Kenyon, *Father*, p. 98.

when other aspects of Christ's incarnate life are portrayed, Kenyon and others reveal a Christology that is firmly 'from above': 'God was manifest in the flesh. God lived as a man among us and we know His nature.'⁵¹ Furthermore, Kenyon did *not* write that Christ 'partook' of the divine nature during his incarnate life.

This terminological distinction might, in the final analysis, reveal an unconscious distinction between the extents to which Christ was divine in his life and satanic in his death. It might thus point to an underlying acknowledgement that Christ continued to be divine *in himself* while nevertheless partaking in some unexplained way in the satanic nature.

A third criticism is the stark one, stated by Bowman and by Smail, Walker and Wright, and implied by others, that JDS teaching at this point is simply without biblical support.⁵² This requires considerable further discussion, and the next section will discuss this.

In conclusion to this section, WFM's critics raise three significant objections to the belief that Christ participated in a sinful, satanic nature. The first is the weakest. This is that Christ must thereby have sinned. It represents an inaccurate reading of JDS teaching, and presents a superficial reading of the Bible concerning the

process of sacrifice. The second is more robust. It is that Christ must have ceased to be divine. The uncertainties that emerged earlier concerning precisely how Christ's partaking of a sinful satanic nature is to be construed make it impossible to offer a definitive assessment of Christ's continuing divinity while spiritually dead. The uncertainty that exists is matched by a similar one concerning the participation of the human Christ in the divine nature. Adoptionistic tendencies exist. The third criticism, considered in detail later, is that there is no biblical warrant for this thinking.

Kenyon's, Hagin's and Copeland's sources

As with all their theology, these authors regard the Bible as teaching their views. It is with few exceptions the only source they explicitly cite. However, in more general terms, Kenneth Copeland Ministries acknowledge Copeland's indebtedness to Hagin.⁵³ It is also clear, in view of his widespread plagiarism of Kenyon,⁵⁴ that Hagin used Kenyon repeatedly as a source. In turn, McConnell claims that Kenyon was dependent on New Thought and Christian Science (NT/CS) for his 'spiritualization' of Christ's death.⁵⁵ This section will therefore consider the extent to which Kenyon, and through him Hagin and Copeland, might have been influenced by sources that Chris-

⁵¹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p. 158; compare Hagin, *Zoe*, p. 39; Kenneth Copeland, 'Taking An Offense', *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 23.7 (July 1995), p. 5.

⁵² Bowman, *Controversy*, pp. 168-169; Smail, Walker & Wright, 'Revelation Knowledge', p. 69.

⁵³ N.a., 'It's Harvest Time!', pp. 16-29, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 25.7 (July/August 1997), pp. 18-19.

⁵⁴ See McConnell, *Promise*, pp. 8-12.

⁵⁵ McConnell, *Promise*, p. 120.

tians would regard as heterodox, before discussing those biblical passages which are central to JDS understanding.

A cursory reading of McConnell's work might give the impression that Kenyon gained all his more controversial ideas about Christ's death from NT/CS sources. However, Simmons, Lie and McIntyre have established that Kenyon was as much or more indebted to Higher Life and Faith Cure (HL/FC) authors for his views on the atonement as he was to NT/CS.⁵⁶ Concerning this article's focus, it can simply be noted that *neither* relevant HL/FC *nor* possible NT/CS sources referred to Christ's partaking of a sinful, satanic nature. Even the author who wrote most explicitly about Jesus dying spiritually, Henry C. Mabie,⁵⁷ did not hint that Christ related to Satan in the process. He wrote of Jesus' 'vicarious union with the guilty human race' and that Jesus 'became as it were sin itself',⁵⁸ but he did not correlate Satan with this. Perhaps the greatest terminological similarity is to be found in the writing of A. B. Simpson, who claimed that

the snakes referred to in Numbers 21 represented Satan, and then employed the same logic as does Copeland (see below):

There was also in that brazen serpent the thought of Christ made sin for us, Christ assuming the vile and dishonoured name of sinful man, and counted by God, and treated by men, as if He were indeed a serpent and a criminal. Thus for us has He taken the sting from Satan.⁵⁹

Even here, the thought that Christ was 'counted by God... as if He were... a serpent', while relating Christ tangentially and implicitly to Satan, falls far short of stating that Christ partook of Satan's nature.

In the absence of any reference among these sources to the crucified Christ's partaking with, union with or impregnation by the satanic nature, the only point of note is that NT/CS was essentially monistic.⁶⁰ Those NT/CS authors who, as McConnell has shown,⁶¹ might be regarded as likely to have influenced Kenyon (Phineas P. Quimby; Ralph W. Emerson; Mary B. Eddy; Ralph W. Trine) did not give Satan anything like the attention offered by Kenyon. Quimby mentioned the devil very occasionally, regarding it/him as identical with ignorance or

56 D. H. Simmons, *E. W. Kenyon and the Post-bellum Pursuit of Peace, Power, and Plenty* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1997); G. Lie, 'E. W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister?', *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* vol.16 (1996), pp.71-86; J. McIntyre, *E. W. Kenyon and His Message of Faith: The True Story* (Orlando: Creation House, 1997).

57 His relevant works include *How Does the Death of Christ Save Us?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), and see discussion in Lie, 'Theology' and McIntyre, *Kenyon*.

58 Mabie, *Death*, pp. 39, 42.

59 A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing* (London: Morgan & Scott, new ed. 1915 [1888]), p. 101.

60 Michael York, *The Emerging Network: A Sociology of the New Age and Neo-Pagan Movements* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995), pp. 167-168.

61 McConnell, *Promise*, ch. 3.

error.⁶² Eddy, though she did refer to 'the personification of evil', denied the existence of a personal devil.⁶³ On the other hand, HL/FC was far more dualistic: some of its writers mentioned Satan, the devil, demons, or 'spiritual enemies' with some frequency, though they did so without the attention offered by Kenyon.⁶⁴

A terminological link does emerge between Trine and Kenyon over use of the word 'partaker'. Trine frequently

used this term to refer to humanity's relationship to 'divinity'.⁶⁵ It is conceivable that his use influenced Kenyon. However, 2 Peter 1:4 is likely to be the primary influence on Kenyon, and possibly on Trine as well.

Biblical Sources

Turning now to Kenyon's biblical sources, his thinking began with humanity's fall. Adam's partaking of the satanic nature as a result of his sin was, however, stated with neither biblical material nor logical deduction to support it.⁶⁶ Kenyon believed he had biblical undergirding to his views:

It is very clear that when Spiritual Death entered the life of Adam, his spirit underwent a complete change. Man was actually born again when he sinned. He was born of Satan. He became a partaker of satanic nature. He became a child of Satan. Read 1 John 3:12, John 5:24, 1 John 3:14-15, and Ephesians 2:1-5.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, the texts he listed, while referring to human sin, the agency of 'the prince of the power of the air' in its genesis, 'spiritual' death, and even 'nature', do not indicate any partaking of Satan's nature. Likewise, Hagin offered no direct scriptural evidence for his assertion that, 'When Adam and Eve listened to the devil, the

62 Horatio W. Dresser, ed., *The Quimby Manuscripts* (Electronic Edition: Cornerstone Books, 2000 [1921]), accessed 28.1.05-12.5.06 from <http://cornerstone.www.hubs.com/framepage.htm>), ch.14; Phineas P. Quimby, 'Questions and Answers' (n.d.), accessed 12.5.06 from http://www.ppquimby.com/sub/articles/questions_and_answers.htm.

63 Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, rev. edn 1891 [1875]), pp. 103 (compare p. 357), 469; *No and Yes* (Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1887), pp. 19, 27-30.

64 E. g. A. J. Gordon, *Behold He Cometh* (London: Thynne & Co., 1934 [1896 as *Ecce Venit!*]), pp. 99-100, 103, 141-142, 174; Mabie, *Death*, pp. 5, 41; Carrie J. Montgomery, *The Prayer of Faith* (London: Victory Press, new ed. 1930 [1880]), pp. 18, 26, 68; A. B. Simpson, *The Holy Spirit or Power from On High Volume II* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing, 1896), pp. 176, 248, 269; *Gospel*, pp. 28, 78, 86, 101; *Standing on Faith* (London & Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, n.d.), pp. 49, 67, 97; Hannah W. Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (Westwood: Fleming A. Revell Company, 1952 [n.d.]), pp. 97, 122, 124; R. A. Torrey, *How to Obtain Fulness of Power* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1902), p. 40; G. D. Watson, *Coals of Fire* (n.p.l.: n.pub., 1886), p. 108; *Our Own God* (Blackburn: M.O.V.E. Press, n.d. [1904]), p. 143.

65 R. W. Trine, *In Tune With The Infinite* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1952 [1897]), pp. xiv, 4, 29, 75.

66 Kenyon, *Family*, pp. 35-38; *Bible*, pp. 25-29.

67 Kenyon, *Bible*, p. 30.

devil became their spiritual father and they had the devil's nature in their spirits.' He observed that Cain killed Abel,⁶⁸ but did not ascertain that this event was evidence not only of moral failure, but of participation in Satan's nature. In the same way, John 8:44 indicated to Kenyon that fallen humanity imbibed Satan's nature, for 'the father... has given man his nature'.⁶⁹ It is true that here Jesus is given to say that his interlocutors exhibited some of Satan's characteristics. Insufficient evidence is provided in this brief passage, however, to conclude that the whole of fallen humanity shares in Satan's characteristics to the extent that Kenyon believed.

Turning from any alleged participation in a satanic nature by fallen humanity to that alleged participation by Christ, two passages stand out among the many cited: 2 Corinthians 5:21 and John 3:14. 2 Corinthians 5:21 is often quoted, referred to, or alluded to by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland,⁷⁰ and most especially by Kenyon. For him, it offered direct evidence that Jesus partook of the satanic nature,⁷¹ or of 'the sin-nature itself'.⁷² Similarly

for Copeland, 2 Corinthians 5:21 offers evidence that Jesus 'accepted the sin nature of Satan', and 'was so literally made sin in spirit that He had to be made righteous in spirit again'.⁷³ Hagin was more cautious in his vocabulary. 2 Corinthians 5:21 indicated that Jesus took 'our outlawed nature'.⁷⁴

These authors do not offer any exegesis of the text, but simply accept that it teaches that Christ participated in, became, or took sin, that such sin can be regarded as a 'nature' and that for Kenyon and Copeland at least this nature characterises or emanates from Satan. All three conclusions are controversial. With regard to the first, that Christ became sin, commentators fall into two groups. While some take Paul to have meant that Christ 'became sin' (which in turn is necessarily understood in some metaphorical sense, for a person cannot become a behaviour or moral quality), for others Paul meant that Christ became a sin-offering.

The latter view appeals to the dual meanings of Hebrew words that are each capable of translation as 'sin' and 'sin offering', depending on context,⁷⁵ as a possible background to Paul's expression here.⁷⁶ The former interpretation is not without difficulty: 'sin'

68 Hagin, *New Birth*, p. 10.

69 Kenyon, *Father*, p. 62; compare *What Happened*, pp. 60-61; Hagin, *New Birth*, p. 10.

70 E.g. Kenyon, *Bible*, pp. 47, 159, 220; *Father*, pp. 137, 222; *Jesus the Healer*, pp. 9, 26, 57, 67; *What Happened*, pp. 14, 43, 130, 158; Hagin, *Name of Jesus*, pp. 31, 56; *Present-Day Ministry*, p. 6; Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; 'Great Exchange', p. 5; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p. 1.

71 Kenyon, *What Happened*, p. 20; *Bible*, p. 220.

72 Kenyon, *Bible*, p. 165.

73 Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p. 1.

74 Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, p. 6.

75 R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* Volume 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), pp. 79, 278.

76 E.g. F. F. Bruce, *I & II Corinthians* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971), p. 210; Linda L. Belleville, *2 Corinthians* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p. 159.

must be understood metaphorically as some sort of personification of a quality or a state, but it is not clear what the personification is. Harris lists three options: 'sinner', 'sin-bearer', and 'sin', preferring the last.⁷⁷ Whichever is the case, this interpretation, despite its difficulties, is perhaps preferable, in that it makes fuller use of the internal logic of substitution, representation or exchange that Paul employed.⁷⁸ For the sake of present discussion, it will be tentatively accepted, for it is clearly the starting point for the JDS understanding of the verse.

Accepting, then, that Paul might have meant Christ became 'sin', rather than a 'sin-offering', this still does not allow the logical leap of JDS teaching that Christ thereby partook in some 'nature'. An understanding of Paul's metaphorical use of the terse phrase 'was made sin' emerges from the immediate context. 'Sin' is clearly contrasted here with 'righteousness', and more specifically the righteousness of God (5:21b)⁷⁹ that 'we' are enabled to become through Christ's being made sin. The cluster of ideas characterising this righteousness can be seen from the preceding sentences. Those who have become the righteousness of God are those who live for Christ (5:15) in

newness of life (5:17) and in reconciled friendship with God (5:18), as their sins are no longer counted against them (5:19). In short, they are treated as if they had not sinned.

The contrast between 'our' becoming righteousness and Christ being made sin suggests, then, that the latter phrase is to be understood as Christ's being treated as if he had sinned. As Paul referred to Christ's death at 5:14-15, and linked this to 5:21 with references to 'for all' (5:14, 15) and 'for us' (5:21), it is a safe conclusion that Paul understood this to have happened in Christ's death.⁸⁰ Certainly, his death was portrayed in the gospels as one in which he was treated by people as if he had sinned—it was for alleged crimes that he was arrested, tried and executed.

How familiar Paul was with such accounts when he wrote 2 Corinthians is an open question. In the chapter under investigation, he denied knowing Christ 'according to the flesh' (5:16). However, what he meant by this was not that he chose to ignore Christ's human history,⁸¹ to which he made reference elsewhere in this correspondence (1 Corinthians 2:2; 7:10; 11:23-25; 15:3-7; 2 Corinthians 1:5; 4:10; 8:9; 13:4). He knew well that Christ suffered in his dying (4:8-10), and that this death was by crucifixion—reserved as an execution of criminals (13:4).

These considerations confirm that it is reasonable to suppose that Paul wished to indicate in 5:21 that Christ

⁷⁷ Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), p. 453.

⁷⁸ See Harris, *Second Corinthians*, pp. 454-455; C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), p. 180; Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians Volume I* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), pp. 439-442.

⁷⁹ All references in this section are to 2 Corinthians unless otherwise stated.

⁸⁰ So Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 452; etc.

⁸¹ Bruce, *Corinthians*, p. 208.

was treated in his dying as if he had sinned. Furthermore, he indicated that this was ultimately an act of God (5:21a; cf. 5:19). It may go beyond the evidence here to declare that, for Paul, Christ was treated *by God as well as by humans* as if he had sinned.⁸² Nevertheless, what happened was not beyond God's ultimate directorship.

This conclusion may not be incompatible with the idea that Christ partook in the process of a 'nature', but it by no means requires this. Given that Paul's reasoning elsewhere about Christ's death reveals no participation in some alleged 'nature' of sin, there is no reason to assume this in exegeting 5:21. It is not even clear that an idea of a sin 'nature' is necessary in this discussion or in exegeting Paul.

Similarly, the idea that Christ related in some way to Satan and/or his nature in his crucifixion is not incompatible with Christ being treated as if he had sinned, but neither is it necessitated by it. There are three 'players in the drama' summed up in 5:21: God, Christ, and 'us'. Satan is firmly 'off-stage'. He makes a number of appearances in 2 Corinthians (2:11; 11:14; 12:7; cf. 4:4; 6:15), and is portrayed as an enemy of Christ and his people. That he might have played some causative part in Christ's death is not implausible. The difficulty for the JDS reading of 5:21 is that this verse simply does not state this, still less that Satan in some way transferred all or some of his characteristics to Christ in the process.

Turning now to John 3:14, Kenyon and Copeland make use of its allusion to Numbers 21:8 in their understand-

ings of Christ's partaking of the satanic nature. The thinking is explored most fully by Copeland:

Why do you think Moses, upon the instruction of God, raised a serpent upon that pole instead of a lamb? It used to bug me: I asked, 'Why in the world did You ask to put that snake up there—the sign of Satan? Why didn't You put a lamb on that pole?' The Lord said, 'Because it was the sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross.'⁸³

Similar logic is apparent elsewhere: 'The serpent was the likeness of the thing destroying the Israelites. Jesus became sin and died spiritually. The worm and the serpent denote union and harmony with the nature of the Adversary.'⁸⁴

In contrast to 2 Corinthians 5:21, John 3:14 offers a more obvious possible association with Satan, in the form of the serpent. Kenyon and Copeland both implicitly rely upon the broad biblical association between Satan and snakes. Copeland also offers evidence that this link is appropriate in the case of John 3:14. He points out that in Numbers 21 the serpents from whose bites the Israelites needed to be rescued were the 'plague' destroying the Israelites.⁸⁵ This obviously brings Satan to Copeland's mind, for Satan is the one plaguing and destroying humans who need to be rescued from his clutches, and from the sin he incites them to commit.

However, the JDS reading exhibits a

⁸³ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; compare Kenyon, *What Happened*, pp. 44-45.

⁸⁴ Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p. 3.

⁸⁵ Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p. 3.

⁸² So Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, p. 180.

number of significant weaknesses. In Numbers 21, the snakes are neither at enmity with God, nor associated causatively with Israel's sin. Quite the opposite is true: the snakes are in fact *sent* by God, and serve to bring Israel's sin to an end, either by killing the sinners (implied in Numbers 21:6) or by bringing about contrition (Numbers 21:7). Turning now to John 3:14, the parallel that can be drawn between the details in the two passages must not be overestimated. It is possible that John 3:14 contains the words 'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert' only for the reason that the crucifixion and the story recorded in Numbers both involve the act of lifting something or someone up.⁸⁶

That said, if any parallel beyond this between the snakes of Numbers and the crucified Christ is to be drawn, it might follow the significance of the snakes that was elucidated earlier in this paragraph. In other words, just as the snakes were *sent* by God (Numbers 21:6) to end a sin, and the lifted snake was provided by God's instruction (Numbers 21:8) to save from this divine judgement those who looked to it, so too Christ was *sent* by God (John 3:17) effectively to end sin: those who looked to him would be saved from divine judgement (John 3:15); conversely, those who refused to do so would receive divine judgement through his agency (John 3:18-19).

If it is fair to draw this degree of parallel, then such a reading does not support that offered by JDS teaching. Inso-

far as Jesus was the 'serpent', he was not thus God's enemy, nor participating in the nature of God's enemy. Rather, he was God's provision, to bring about salvation from or judgement for sin, depending on the response of people to him.

In conclusion to this section on sources, Copeland and Hagin clearly drew on Kenyon, though Hagin drew back from his avowals that Christ partook of a satanic nature. In turn, while Kenyon might have been influenced by both HL/FC and NT/CS teaching, the whole dualistic milieu of HL/FC thinking, in which Satan often played a prominent part in presentations of Christian thought and life, seems far closer to Kenyon's own scheme than does the largely monistic worldview of NT/CS. However, no *direct* antecedents to Kenyon's thought have been found among those sources to which he was evidently or allegedly indebted in *either* HL/FC *or* NT/CS. The closest links were, from HL/FC, Simpson, who offered some creative use of Numbers 21 and John 3:14, and from NT/CS, Trine, who wrote of people being 'partakers'. Neither source, however, mirrored Kenyon's ideas entirely. Kenyon seems to have reworked existing ideas to create his own distinct thesis.

Turning now to their use of biblical texts, it has emerged that neither 2 Corinthians 5:21 nor John 3:14 has offered the support to JDS teaching that the authors under review claim. The meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:21's reference to 'sin' is disputed. Even if it is not understood as 'sin-offering', it must be handled metaphorically, and seems to indicate that Christ was treated as if he had sinned, rather than that he partook of a 'sin nature'. John

⁸⁶ So C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John* (2nd edn, London: SPCK, 1978 [1955]), p. 214.

3:14 may not perceive a close typological resemblance between Christ and the lifted serpent. If it does, the parallel drawn does not suggest that Christ related in some way to Satan while being crucified.

It must also be stressed that the exegesis of isolated 'proof-texts' is not a sufficient or satisfactory process in seeking to gain an appreciation of the New Testament's teaching on a theme. The whole tenor of the New Testament must be taken into account. Numerous passages throughout its canon record or interpret Christ's death. References to a sinful or satanic 'nature' in these passages are notable for their absence.

Conclusions

This article has surveyed the unusual doctrine, inherent to JDS teaching, that Christ in his spiritual death partook of a sinful, satanic nature. It has been shown that this idea was fashioned in the mind of Kenyon. He had seeds provided for his thoughts, but the precise fusion of language and ideas seems to have been his alone. The resultant scheme is reasonably clear, but does create a number of questions about the extent to which Jesus was, as Kenyon claimed, a full substitute for sinful Adam and his race. It has also emerged that both Hagin and Copeland have followed Kenyon in plentiful reference to 'nature' in this context, declaring with Kenyon that Christ took a sin nature in his spiritual death, although Hagin in particular retreated from referring to this nature as satanic.

In the debate that has been conducted so far concerning this doctrine, three main criticisms have been offered. The article has surveyed

these, noting that there is reason to doubt the uniqueness of the person of Christ expressed in the Christology underlying JDS teaching at this point. The article proceeded to consider the biblical material that JDS teachers call to their aid in expounding their teaching. It concluded that neither 2 Corinthians 5:21 nor John 3:14, nor indeed the whole tenor of biblical teaching, offers the support that the teachers under review claim for it.

To close, the greatest weakness in this part of JDS teaching is its inability to offer satisfactory answers to questions that are demanded by tensions between these teachers' superficial allegiance to traditional incarnational Christology and substitutionary atonement theory, and their actual delineation of the events of the cross. There is contradiction in their teaching between, on the one hand, their insistence that Christ was a full substitute for Adam's fallen state, and on the other hand, their recognition, clearest in Kenyon's exposition, that Christ remained sinless while partaking of the satanic nature.

There is also a considerable degree of uncertainty about what view of the incarnation underlies JDS teaching at this point. Did Christ in becoming 'satanic' cease to be divine? If so, had he previously only 'partaken' of the divine nature, in adoptionistic terms, as opposed to subsisting eternally in his divine nature, in traditional incarnational terms? Some of the explicit avowals of incarnational Christology made by JDS teachers are undermined by their exposition of this theme. It is in the claim that Christ in dying participated in a sinful, satanic nature that JDS teaching is at its weakest.

Books Reviewed

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Book Reviews

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**The Tree of Life: Models of
Christian Prayer**
Steven Chase

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2005.
ISBN: 0801027624
Pb, pp 304, bibliog., indices, illus.

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This is a book for reflection on prayer. This is not a learners' book, intended to teach someone how to pray; it is not a textbook, covering contemporary thought on prayer; it is not a scholar's book, advancing research on the subject. This is a practitioner's book, deepening our

understanding through different perspectives from different times.

Steven Chase, Associate professor of Christian spirituality at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, has polled the Christian divines from the fathers to post-modernity, from the eastern tradition to the diversities of the western tradition. His inclination is clearly the medieval mystics but they don't control his discussion.

The metaphor of a tree provides the central structure of the book (and of this review) in order to indicate the relative importance of each of five models of prayer (that is, each influences the other symbiotically), as well as something of the character of each model.

'Prayer as conversation' comprises the

roots. A conversation with God happens through expression of our words (verbal prayer in adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession, intercession, petition, and lament) and through restraint of our words (silence). I would have thought Chase could have well used 'meditation on Scripture' in this section instead of 'Prayer as Journey' to complete the conversation and allow God his own voice. He did not. The section on forms of verbal prayer is the strongest of the entire book. In less than twenty pages, Chase gives definitions, examples, and uses of each. The section on silence, on the other hand, breeds confusion more rapidly than clarity.

'Prayer as relationship' is the trunk of the tree. Here Chase 'explores relationship as a way of being in prayer'. I never did understand with whom this relationship was to be built: God or man. Here, as elsewhere when I desire an explicit definition, I think Chase would respond, 'both'. Nonetheless, I'm guessing that the relationship with other humans is the primary focus because the majority of the chapter is given over to forgiveness and reconciliation of others. 'Prayer as Journey' provides the branches of prayer. Each of us makes progress as pray-er from beginner, to practised, to advanced, to proficient. Because of Chase's technique of integrating many divergent historical voices, it is unclear toward what goal the journey progresses. Psychological models of development (Erikson, Piaget, etc.) figure largely in this section.

'Prayer as transformation' are the new leaves of prayer. If the previous chapter emphasized our growth in prayer, this one instructs us on how prayer enables a continual awakening to God. Originally, I didn't see a clear and distinct difference between these two chapters. As I read, however, I realized that Chase wasn't

striving for Euclidian perpendicularity. He was trying to communicate the potency of prayer, the value of instruction from those who have preceded us, and to do so in a way that puts prayer in a place to nurture us through life's exigencies even as a living tree weathers fierce storms. 'Prayer as presence' produces the fragrant fruits of prayer. Emmanuel means 'God with us'. That happens as one centres on God in prayer and trusts on his good will to make himself present to us. Chase's thought-provoking book has many values. His highly metaphorical and allegorical style retains the mystery of prayer even though it doesn't fully explain what prayer is (and what it is not). Chase remains very clear in avoiding heresy: He explicitly denied pantheism, panentheism, and self-worship—all dangers in a book on prayer. He explains a wide diversity of traditions and ideas on prayer (some of them several times). And he provides several appreciated appendices. The bibliography and general index are thorough; equally helpful would have been a scripture index. In spite of the awkward organization, I found the book useful in reflecting about prayer and my own narrow habits. May I, and each of us, be more open to the God who wants to be present in prayer to each of his children!

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**Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah,
Jonah, Micah**

Abingdon Old Testament
Commentaries

Daniel J. Sidmunson

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ISBN 0-687-34244-9

Pb, 350pp, Bibliog.

*Reviewed by Joseph Too Shao, Biblical
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Daniel Sidmunson is a professor emeritus of the Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. As a theological educator, he has written a number of commentaries, including work on Micah and Job. This one is part of the newly released series of the Abingdon OT Commentaries (AOTC). Many major scholars have contributed to the series which aims to provoke a deeper understanding of the Bible in all its many facets. Each volume consists of four parts: introduction, literary genre and structure, the occasion and situational context, and the theological and ethical significance of the book.

Sidmunson basically follows this pattern which allows readers to check quickly each book for salient issues. The 'exegetical analysis' is helpful for the reader to dig deeper and find suitable interpretation. Sidmunson is to be commended for his strengths in exposition of the texts by bringing out the essential messages for today's setting.

In the book of Hosea, his analyses of Jezreel (p. 16), Gibeah (pp. 75, 81), Baal-peor (p. 76), and Bethel (p. 80) enable one to understand why the prophet would use geographical places in his presentation. He observes that Hosea's use of Jacob's striving with God differed from its

original use in Genesis 32 (pp 101-102, 114). In his view, Hosea viewed Jacob's striving as a negative behaviour, an act of human pride, whereas the Genesis account was a life-changing experience for Jacob.

The author presents Joel as a relevant prophetic book for interpreting natural disasters (p. 123). His expertise in the Hebrew language gives him an edge in dealing with the traditional problem of older Bible versions in the translation of 'repent' rather than the currently accepted 'relent' when God is the subject (p. 136). He also argues for the democratization of the prophetic office in the new age, and rightly so in the pouring of God's spirit on 'all flesh'.

In the book of Amos, Sidmunson is of the opinion that the poor should be seen as the 'righteous' ones for they 'are in the right in any legal dispute'. Being a modern interpreter with sensitivity to feminist issues, he presents 'cows of Bashan' in its context by giving its implied meaning for the modern world to understand. As far as Obadiah is concerned, Sidmunson states that it is not only an oracle of judgment, but also contains a word of salvation and hope for the exiles. In his short exegetical analysis, he clearly brings out the essential message of Obadiah.

In the book of Jonah, he aptly observes that the subject was a reluctant prophet who refused to heed God's call. It sounds almost comical to flee from God's presence. He rightly interprets key problems of Jonah and explains them in the context of their related passages in the rest of the OT. In the book of Micah, he points out Micah's concern for social justice and true worship. He fittingly presents key exegetical problems of the book of Micah. Having written a commentary on the book of Micah, he dialogues with leading scholars on some issues in the development of

the text. He is quite fair in presenting alternative views.

With his expertise as a teacher and preacher, he allows the text to come alive. His passion to make the OT meaningful can be seen in his presentation of significant Hebrew terms and their wider context of OT. His scholarly approach finds him presenting and arguing key interpretive issues of the text, and also

viewpoints of major interpreters.

The commentary fulfils the aim of the series in giving a fresh understanding of the text. If subject index and scriptural index can be provided in the next edition, they will surely allow the interpreter to easily find the proper page. The book is a useful tool for students and pastors who want to learn from the prophets so as to teach and preach to the modern world.

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Glenn Daman, *Shepherding the Small Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Books, 2002. ISBN 0-8254-2449-6, Pb., 285 pp., Appendices.

Austin B. Tucker, *A Primer For Pastors: A Handbook for Strengthening Ministry Skills*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Books, 2004. ISBN 0-8254-3886-1, Pb., 221 pp., Bibliog.

David Bauer, *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Peabody, MA.: Hendrikson Publishers, 2003. 326 pp. ISBN 1-56563-723-2, Pb., Index.

Reviewed by Charles W. Christian, North Seattle Church of the Nazarene, Seattle, WA

It has always been true that the role of the pastor is diverse and challenging. Very few other professions demand such a wide range of activity and skills in order to accomplish the tasks that face pastors every week. Although it is a calling that is done in community, there are many times when the pastor feels alone and isolated in his/her work, especially (but certainly not exclusively) in smaller congregations. The three books reviewed here are works that attempt to assist pastors in facing their role as leaders, preachers, teachers, counsellors, planners, and disciples in the Church of Jesus Christ. One book seeks to comfort, encourage, and empower the smaller church pastor (churches of 150 or less, which describes 75% of churches in the United States) with a variety of practical

approaches and observations geared toward building healthy community in small church environments. Another book reviewed here seeks to give the pastor updated resources when preparing sermons and guiding parishioners in other ways through the Bible. The third book reviewed is written by a seasoned pastor and scholar who addresses in a mentor-like way the ins and outs of life as a pastor. All three have considerable value both for the novice and the experienced pastor, with particular value to the newcomer. Of course, there are also aspects in each work that may be critiqued, as we will note below.

Glenn Daman of Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, provides a handy reference for pastors of smaller churches (150 or less in attendance), entitled

Shepherding the Small Church. Nearly 75% of all churches fall into this size range, and Daman follows in the footsteps of writers like Lyle Schaller (author of *The Small Church is Different*) in recognizing the smaller churches are not just smaller versions of mega-churches. Rather, they have needs that are specific to their size range. Their needs and strategies should also take into account factors such as location (urban or rural?), economics, and other social dimensions. In a relatively short book, Daman seeks to give an introductory guide to small church pastors, as well as some helpful resources to guide the pastor of a smaller church in discussions with key leaders and in the necessity of developing and implementing a vision for the local congregation.

The book begins with helpful words to churches of any size regarding the need to understand the environment, influencers, and history of the local church (chapters 1 and 2), as well as the need to develop a clear and biblical theology of the church (chapter 3). The key concepts of understanding (the culture), knowing (foundational theology of the church), being (the foundational character of the church), doing (the mission of the church), and envisioning (developing the vision of the church for the long run) guide the structure of the book. While these 'steps' could be useful in churches of any size, along the way Daman tailors the discussion to the nuances of churches in the size range he is addressing.

As one who has pastored smaller churches throughout my ministry, I think that Daman's work is encouraging, well-organized, and useful. Especially helpful is a long overdue recognition that there are varied definitions of 'success' in a biblical model of 'being the church' (not just 'the numbers'). Also particularly helpful and encouraging is the section in Chapter 1

that discusses small church 'family models', or models of small church life. There are times when he seems a bit too formulaic, which probably comes from seeking to put so much information into a relatively small space. However, a discerning pastor can move through these places in order to apply the needed resources and approaches recommended by Daman effectively. The appendices of the book, which contain seventeen worksheets that help ministers and leaders follow the principles and approaches in the book are worth the price of the book.

A book that focuses less on kinds of churches and more on the quality of the pastor's ministry in the context of the community is the book by long time Baptist pastor Austin B. Tucker entitled, *A Primer for Pastors*. Particularly designed for ministerial candidates and/or new pastors, this book is written in an informal, conversational style, as if an older, wiser mentor were reviewing insights gained 'behind the scenes' of pastoral life and ministry. From dealing with the calling process to one's first pastorate, to developing a code of ministerial ethics to being ministry, this book seeks to give a crash course in the life and ministry of a pastor. The informal tone is definitely 'user-friendly' for ministers just starting out, and the topics, though general, do touch upon most of the areas of concern for first-time pastors (I wish I had read the 'weddings and funerals' chapter fifteen years ago when I was beginning my pastoral ministry). The book's informality and perspective also pose some concerns, though. For instance, a pastor not from a Baptist or 'free church' tradition would have to try to 'translate' some areas of the book in a way that would better match his/her denominational structure and approach to doctrinal issues (like church polity, Communion, etc.).

Overall, this book contains some helpful checklists that cover a wide range of ministry, both on the personal and professional level, and would probably make a good supplemental textbook for undergraduate and some seminary-level settings, if one takes into account doctrinal and procedural differences that pop up from time to time. Experienced ministers will probably find much of the book a bit too formulaic; however, some sections are like good affirmations and even corrections from a conversation with an older and wiser colleague.

David S. Bauer, in *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry*, seeks to provide useful resources for the pastor to build his/her Old and New Testament library. Bauer is Beeson Professor of Inductive Biblical Studies at Asbury Seminary. It is important to note that the title could be misunderstood to be a guide to a full range of resources, but the emphasis is upon *biblical* resources, not biblical resources for *ministry*. In other words, ministers who feel the need to dig more deeply into the biblical texts of the Old and New Testaments are given suggestions from a wide range of writers and commentators on how to do so. From Bible dictionaries and works on hermeneutics to Old and New Testament commentaries and monographs, this book takes on the herculean task of recommending resources that will enhance the minister's own grasp of the text and his/her teaching and preaching of the Bible. The breadth of this book is remarkable and represents a wide range of Christian thought and reflection upon hermeneutics in general, language studies, and biblical studies. Bauer organizes each section into the following categories: *Highly Recommended* and *Also Significant*. It is a handy resource for any pastor or professor seeking to enhance his or her library.

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Sufficient Saving Grace: John Wesley's Evangelical Arminianism
Herbert Boyd McGonigle

Carlisle, Cumbria, UK/Waynesboro, GA, USA: Paternoster, 2001
ISBN 1-84227-045-1
Pb, pp 350 pp. Bibliog, Index

Reviewed by Tony Richie, Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, TN,

For anyone interested in an upfront, in depth look into the 'warmed' heart and head of the incomparable Reverend Mr. John Wesley, McGonigle's *Sufficient Saving Grace* is required reading. Though not light reading, it is enlightening. Whether one inclines toward an Arminian, Wesleyan Arminian, or Calvinist theological persuasion, this work will almost certainly challenge and stimulate. Solid scholarship combined with evenhanded evaluations of key persons and their positions make this work a relish. In particular, McGonigle's ability to honestly probe Wesley's strengths and weaknesses is not the least of its attractions. His command of immense resources, both historical and contemporary, is impressive and insightful. A massive amount of information is skillfully disseminated.

McGonigle gives us a historical-theological investigation into the dynamic, progressive development of Wesley's opposition to the famous Five Points of Calvinism (total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints) over his lengthy ministerial career (1725-91). A special feature is its attention to the anti-Calvinism of Wesley's parents, Samuel and Susannah, and Arminian high church Anglicanism as early formative influences. McGonigle argues for at least

some early exposure to Jacobus Arminius himself and an eventual, if perhaps late, open adoption of Arminianism proper.

He focuses on major controversies regarding Calvinism that embroiled Wesley over the course of almost his entire adult life and engaged him in incredible apologetical and polemical literary output. These controversies consisted of the early split with his friend and fellow revivalist George Whitefield over absolute predestination and reprobation (1739-42), a later dispute with old Oxford Holy Club member James Hervey over imputed v. inherent or imparted righteousness (1755-58), and finally the turmoil with Lady Huntingdon and her Calvinist Methodists in the 'Minutes Controversy' over the place of works in justification in response to charges of Pelagianism (1770-77). Throughout these controversies, and indeed his entire career, Wesley evinced a horror of antinomianism, or disparagement of the importance of holiness and good works in the Christian life, which was partly responsible for his entrenched antipathy to Calvinism, which he perceived as tending toward antinomianism. Undoubtedly, as McGonigle observes, for Wesley 'holiness should be the one great concern of the Christian life'.

The book closes with an overview and analysis of the philosophical, theological, biblical, and pastoral guiding principles of Wesley's theology. This section nicely pulls together the main themes of the preceding chapters. Overarching everything is Wesley's understanding of a just and loving God. The major significance of Wesley's theology of prevenient grace, and its development throughout his career, is also here demonstrated. The importance of grace for Mr. Wesley is amply argued.

Finally, McGonigle explicates the precise

nature of Wesleyan Arminianism. He distinguishes Arminianism from Calvinism by its rejection of absolute predestination and reprobation. Consequently, Wesley is clearly Arminian. Wesley's Arminianism, however, is distinguished from that of Arminius and the Dutch Remonstrant movement by exceptional emphasis on scriptural holiness or Christian perfection and from later, liberal or rationalistic wings of 'Arminianism' by its ardent evangelical qualities. Accordingly, 'Wesleyan Arminianism' is an appropriate designation for John Wesley's system of theology identifying its distinctive elements.

An observation and a suggestion: McGonigle's study is an example of an unabated revival of Wesley studies over the last several years that is abundant confirmation of the contemporary applicability of this great revivalist-theologian's faith and life. John Wesley's unique combination of spiritual ardour, intellectual candour, and practical rigour is a gracious gift to Christianity today. Perhaps in an increasingly complex global culture of secular anomie and apathy, on the one hand, and religious pluralism and relativism, on the other hand, we might all (not just Wesleyans per se) receive an assist from his example and ideas.

Though a lot of heavy material is involved, *Sufficient Saving Grace* is surprisingly readable. Minor typos scattered throughout the text are mildly distracting, suggesting some need of further editing for future editions. Perhaps the book's extreme thoroughness makes it a little long but the extra material is instructive also. The extensive Index and Bibliography will be most helpful to researchers. I recommend McGonigle's *Sufficient Saving Grace* to all serious Wesley scholars and students and to anyone interested in insightful discussions on the doctrines of absolute predestination

and reprobation, foreordination and foreknowledge, divine sovereignty and grace, and human liberty and responsibility, as

well as justification, holiness, sanctification, and Christian perfection.

Julie C. Ma, *Mission Possible: Biblical Strategies for Reaching the Lost*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005. ISBN 1-870345-37-1. Pb pp 141 Bibliog, Indices

Mission Possible consists mainly of a series of loosely connected chapters summarising biblical material on the plan of salvation from Genesis to Acts. Written as a text book for a 'Biblical foundation of Mission' course, this small book has a far broader and less focused scope than the sub-title suggests.

The material is organized in eight chapters, covering topics such as the history of salvation, gentiles associated with the people of God, power in mission, the great commission, and the geographical expansion of the church in Acts. The material, which is supported by a very large bibliography of exegetical and theological works, is presented succinctly and objectively—almost in note form—with only a brief section on significance and application at the end of each chapter, and no overall theme to bind them together. The final chapter on 'incarnation' is more thematic and conceptual than the rest. To provide some contact with the contemporary scene, the author has included extra sections with stories of mission work from the Philippines focusing on 'miracles' in two areas, and third one on ministry to children. Although unrelated to the main text, these sections provide interest, and could easily have been multiplied for greater effect.

Reviewed by David Parker, editor of *Evangelical Review of Theology*

Kyle D. Fedler, *Exploring Christian Ethics: Biblical Foundations for Morality*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006. ISBN 978-0-64-22898-9 Pb, pp 233, index.

The sub-title indicates the content of the major part of this book—7 out of its 10 chapters (three-fourths of its pages) covering creation, the Mosaic covenant and the prophets in the OT, and the teaching of Jesus, imitation of his life and the ethics of Paul for the NT. Much of this material is a basic presentation of biblical theology and history, making the book valuable for students without a biblical background, but rather superfluous for others. The introductory chapter in this section is helpful for giving insights on 'the use of Scripture' in ethics, although it too contains much basic material on hermeneutics and exegesis. There are also useful but brief guidelines for the use of other authorities such as reason, experience and tradition. The first part of the book is a lucid, well illustrated introduction to the main systems of ethics such as deontology, utilitarianism and virtue ethics. A feature of this section is an evaluation of each system from a Christian perspective. The author, from Ashland University, has a facility for succinct, clear teaching which is the strength of the book.

Reviewed by David Parker, Editor of *Evangelical Review of Theology*

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Trinity in Human Community

Exploring Congregational Life in the Image of the Social Trinity

Peter R. Holmes

The one God, in Christian thought, is not a single divine 'Person' but a Trinity of three inter-twined 'Persons'. God, on this social Trinitarian view, is a community of love and so relationship lies at the very heart of God's identity. In this book, Peter Holmes builds on growing interest in idea of the Trinity as a divine society by offering a practical application to congregational life. The central issue is how faith community could better reflect the harmony and diversity of the Trinity. Trinity in Human Community outlines aspects of both the author's personal journey and his theological explorations in the context of a particular congregation that has sought to break new ground in radical, relational, community living. Holmes suggests a number of practical principles intended to help local congregations implement at a personal and communal level what it means to love and worship the Trinity within authentic human faith community. This is the first book of a trilogy entitled 'Discipleship as Wholeness' devoted to re-imagining Christian community along the lines of a therapeutic community model.

Peter R. Holmes is a management trainer and co-founder of Christ Church Deal in Kent.

978-1-84227-470-5 / 216x140 mm / 224pp / £11.99

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Kenneth Hylson-Smith

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Kenneth Hylson-Smith has degrees in sociology and in theology and doctorates from Leicester University and King's College, London. He is a former Bursar and Fellow of St Cross College, Oxford, and is the author of nine previous books on church history.

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