

DARE

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Take Courage; Rise, He is Calling you
Celebrating our Faith in Contemporary Africa

DARE

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SCOPE

DARE is a theological journal of Holy Trinity College, an elite school of theology for both laity and religious. It belongs to the Catholic University of Zimbabwe Faculty of theology Harare, Zimbabwe.

The word DARE is a Shona term, which refers to a meeting place for discussion and to some extent, a tribunal of ideas. Let the spelling not confuse you, the reader, with the English 'dare', which means to have courage to do something, or with the Latin verb 'dare' meaning to give.

As a pavilion for discussion, the journal's primary objective is to ensure dialogue by:

- ❖ Stimulating artistic, religious, cultural and social talents in writing.
- ❖ Promoting theological reflection.
- ❖ Providing an effective channel of communication between Holy Trinity College and the People of God.

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Editorial

Take Courage; get up, he is Calling you: *Celebrating our Faith in Contemporary Africa*

Lane Dermot introduces his book, *Foundations for a Social Theology: Praxis, Process and Salvation*, by acknowledging the existence of a changing world. For him cultural, social and political changes were worth citing for the purpose of his book (1). Reverberating Lane's view in our contemporary Africa, one ought to include the economic changes to the list. History has it that changes in these elements have resulted in divisions, conflicts, discriminations, violence and neglect of human rights (1). More so, the changes are experienced equally in both religious and secular circles. This being the case, the adaptations and approaches to be employed ought to be distinct yet constructive to the whole community.

It is unquestionably true that the Christian way of life challenges individuals, families and communities to be exemplary to the volatile world. Each and every day, the Church celebrates liturgy and sacraments in varied forms. The celebration of our faith, in this case, should always become our source of energy and stability, inasmuch as change in culture, politics, society and economy is concerned. This energy is needed because in spite of the hopeless image of life faced by people today they remain united by a common search for healing and wholeness.

Recognising that we are a community separated mainly by the geographical space we ought to share our experiences from every corner of the world. The spirit of sharing the treasures each one of us has received from the Almighty makes the Holy Trinity *Dare* Board continually energised. The articles contributed for this issue by different authors, as per *Dare* tradition, connect together through our sharing of ideas and thoughts. The Holy Trinity College community,

through the *Dare* Journal Publication is always conscious of Dare readers and this 11th issue offers encouragement and stimulation to different people of God, through the sharing of both spiritual and physical experiences.

The previous issue stressed the need for one to think of ways in which one can become an **Authentic Christian to Witness in the Contemporary World**. The present Dare board thought of narrowing down our reflection to the African context in matters to do with achievements, improvements and amendments in matters which concern our faith. The background being that, the Church introduces her members into different liturgical celebrations, to which celebration of sacraments is not an exception. With this in mind, one ought to have the energy emanating from these two elements and be equipped to challenge the daily endeavours encountered in our societies. One can think of engaging the liturgical celebration of sacraments in Africa as a source of emancipation to interacting with our challenges today. Accordingly, the 11th Issue of May 2019, steers a reflection on the riches embedded in the celebration of **Liturgy** and **Sacraments** as essential anchors of our faith. It is through these pillars that God calls us to witness His benevolence among people.

This present Issue is made up of twenty articles from different authors. We take great pride in this issue because more than half of the articles were contributed by the Holy Trinity Students. The Holy Trinity College lecturers and some faithful have also contributed in this issue to share with the rest of the world.

The journal opens with a call to understanding our faith. Alfred Zembe's conviction is that the most difficult thing today is to celebrate faith, especially in our continent where the image of Christ has been repainted and diluted such that if Christ was to return today, He might fail to recognize himself in the sermons and teachings attributed to him in Africa. Amidst the distortion of Christ's message the call '**Take heart, rise. He is calling you**' is always at our disposition to lead the

way to our authentic living of our faith. In his article, Alfred explores the meaning of the words ‘Take heart, arise, he is calling you’ ‘Θάρσει, ἔγειρε, φωνεῖ σε’ as they can be applied to the Church in the present Africa.

Christian life is not a journey in the dark because of the models available for all the believers. Patrick Mullins brings into picture **Blessed Isidore Bakanja**, a man who lived his faith and presented himself as a proto example of our Christian witness in Africa. He outlines the circumstances in which the martyr ‘lived and died in order to draw attention to the generosity with which he responded to the light of Christ when it first reached him. His story challenges each one of us, ‘in our diversity, to reflect on the implications of having only one common Father in heaven’.

Accordingly, Vitalis Chiromba reflected on the issues to do with our faith in Zimbabwe given the present understanding of signs. His article touches the **contemporary Zimbabwean understanding of miracles exhibited in Prophetic Ministries, viewed in the light of Jesus’ signs in John’s gospel**. It is in this gospel that we encounter Jesus, performing signs yet pointing to what is necessary in the life of a human person. Athanase Dushirimana reflected on **the ethics of Jesus**. His point is that our faith has to embrace all that Jesus exhibited. He is convinced that our contemporary society is in the dire need of moral values more than it needs material things. Thus, we ought to obey the ethics of Jesus by placing our faith in Him.

If we are to follow radically the ethics of Jesus, it becomes crystal clear that we all have a moral obligation to take care of one another. This is our Christian call and an expression of our faith. With this background Rodwick Chigumete discusses in his article our **expectations and actions towards the needy**. He expressed that sickness is not only physical but also a spiritual battle. Both circumstances require help from our communities of faith and God. The Church as a community of believers reaches to the world through her members. **She cannot pretend to be unaware of the contemporary propensities**. This is

what Brian Kanyai noted in his reflection on the call from, *Gaudium Et Spes* **Number 4**. For him the Church has to respond to the call of the day if she is to remain relevant. This, she achieves through the authentic Christian living of her members.

The faithful are engaged in different fields in their day to day endeavours. One of the areas that can be pointed to is entrepreneurship. There is a certain way in which those doing business contact themselves. The question that arises is whether a Christian entrepreneur can differ from a non-Christian. **The business environment we perceive in Africa** today exhibits problems. Michael Kyalo is puzzled with the consequences that arise by our failing to practice our Christian values and faith in every situation we find ourselves in. In his article the guiding principle should be ‘I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me’ (Matthew 25: 40).

Our faith becomes authentic and meaningful if we are guided and led by the wisdom from God. Rodney Tom battles with the question of **the place of wisdom and its relevance to the societies in Africa**. The author sorts to explore the concept of wisdom as it is identified and discussed by different sages. He is convinced that the concept of wisdom is not only peculiar to Israel but also to the reality we have to face in Africa because it is a universal reality, a creation of God or object of faith, and also as secular or human experiential reality.

Lovemore Makore reminds us that, our Christian call teaches that, man is **created in the image and likeness of God** (Genesis 1:27). This image is preserved through our authentic reception of the sacraments made available by the Church. If we neglect our Christian path we easily fall into sin thereby misrepresenting the beauty of God in us. With this in mind, Makore assesses the **nature of sin and its consequences considering the Old and New Testaments as well as Irenaeus’ theology of sin**. This ushers us into an **analysis of the sacrament of Penance and sacrament of the Sick**. A scriptural

defence is employed to confirm that the two sacraments are sacraments of healing. Victor Orwa uses John 20:22-23 for the institution of the sacrament of penance. He considered Mark 6:13 for the anointing of the sick, because that is where the elders of the Church were mandated, to pray over and anoint with oil in the name of the Lord.

The celebration of faith evident in most parts of Africa is a result of the mission works from those parts of the world that received the gospel first. Benjamin Yavoo argues that all **Christians are missionaries**. This is because when one embarks on the Christian journey, one is sent to spread the good news. Noting that, some people dedicate themselves for special missionary activities the author appreciates the work done by the missionaries in Africa. He noted that though the road to doing missionary work was not smooth they endured and succeeded. In his appreciation of the challenges of first **missionary work in Ivory Coast**, he notes that there is a lot to be learnt. He reflects on the point that they were then the missionaries, what are we doing as contemporary missionaries?

Givemore Mazhanje dealt with the **liturgical developments in the church focusing on the Roman Rite during the medieval period**. The article helps us to appreciate the origins of the rituals we encounter in our today's liturgical celebrations. Mazhanje gave an examination of the various liturgical books amassed and used during these medieval centuries, books used for Mass, for the Divine Office, and for other liturgical rites.

Accordingly, Shelton Zimondi's article highlights how **Christian liturgy as understood by the Catholic Church is related to Jewish cult**. However, he acknowledged that the discussion will not exhaust the liturgical facets that justify the grafting of the Catholic Christian liturgy on the Jewish cult. He justified, for instance, the Jewish origin of the Liturgy of Hours and Christian initiation. The article by Underson Musina seeks to compare and contrast, the **Christian initiation presented in the Gospel of John and Acts of the Apostles**.

From it we note that as Christians we have the same birth which makes us one people through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist.

More so, Mark Chikuni gives us **a critical analysis of the genre and the message of the prophet Isaiah**. He reflects on the controversial passage, Isaiah 5:1-7. The article is a battle to establishing whether canvassers have complicated or rather simplified matter. Our faith is strengthened or weakened, as well, if we consider our conviction on the matters or what we claim to know. By unpacking the opinions surrounding the prophet Isaiah, our faith is strengthened because of our better understanding of the Word of God conveyed by Isaiah. As such, in his persuasion of his faith William Guri shares with us his findings in the areas of **Religion, Spirituality and Mental Health: Current Trends in Research and Practice**. He presented this at the Holy Trinity College affiliated to the Catholic University in Zimbabwe on the 6th February 2019. His article brings to awareness the complexity of the human person. Thus, what one experiences in faith is in a way related to the physical and mental dispositions.

Christopher Dyczek, unpacks the ways in which **Christian stories** can be told for the benefit of Christian faith. He identified that in all of the settings of Christian teaching, it will be desirable, that the participants should communicate well and creatively with one another. According to him, it is unfortunate that those who turn up may have had little experience of faith sharing at a well-educated level. He used examples from his own experience, most of which has been English, European or North American, but what he experienced in Africa as well. Accordingly, Machada happily shares her experience of faith. In her article she puts forward every **Christian to challenge what the world demands** of us with what we receive at the very beginning of our Christian journey. The Christian life has to equip us to be teachers in the world and not to be swallowed by the world. We assume different positions and responsibilities in different degrees but these ought not to drown our Christian identity and celebration of our faith. The

journal closes with Tsitsi Ngwenya's article on **fear**. She, again, shares her experience, highlighting that our faith can be disturbed by fear. As a result we may not strongly stand with our faith due to fear.

A special word of thanks goes to those who spared their precious time to putting together what has become now the Holy Trinity College Dare Journal 11th Issue. May God reward you abundantly for being generous with your time and energy. To my fellow students, the Dare board is grateful because we understand the pressure of assignments, yet you always squeeze yourselves to contribute to our journal. We do not forget those outside our college who are always there to share their ideas with the world through our publication.

We would also like to acknowledge the support we receive from the college. The lecturers support us in every way towards this project. The dean, who happens to be our academic advisor, is always with us, unsparingly sharing his experience, ideas and guidance. The college supports our work financially as well. Without finances, publishing will be a night mare. Regardless of the economic situation, the college managed to sponsor the running of the project.

The process of compiling and editing the articles, went smooth due to the self-giving of each editorial team and this requires a special recognition. Ultimately, we would like to joyfully thank the Almighty, for the blessings, we receive each and every day of our lives. To come up with this Issue, it was through His providence of time, space and well-being.

We wish you a happy reading, and thank you for supporting us.

Munyaradzi Murungu. O.Carm
Chief Editor

Articles**Take Heart, Rise, He is calling you: Celebrating our Faith in Contemporary Africa***Alfred Zembe***Introduction**

One of the most difficult things today is to celebrate faith, especially in Africa where the message of Christ has been twisted and diluted such that if Christ was to return today, He might fail to recognize himself in the sermons and teachings attributed to him in Africa. In the midst of all this, the Church in Africa is told ‘Take heart, rise. He is calling you’; the final chapter of the document ‘Africae Munus’ by Pope Benedict. Biblical scholars have spent vast amounts of time on this passage trying to figure out the proper meaning of this call. Whether or not this call - φωνεῖ σε *phonei se* - is identical to that of the disciples - προσκαλέσατε *proskalesate* or καλέσατε *kalesate* remains open to interpretation and argumentation. However, considering the Markan cruciform discipleship one is inclined to explore the meaning of this passage, bearing in mind that in this instance Jesus tells those around him to call the blind Bartimaeus. What is certain is the fact that this call is not lesser than that of the disciples. We are also told that, upon his healing, Bartimaeus ‘follows Jesus along the way’; the first time such an event takes place in Mark, conveniently at the Gospel’s final miracle. In this paper, I am going to explore the meaning of this pericope, especially the words ‘Take heart, arise, he is calling you’ ‘Θάρσει, ἔγειρε, φωνεῖ σε’ and what they could mean for the Church in Africa *vis a vis* the prevalent circumstances.

An exegesis of *Tharsei, Egeire, Phonei se*

Firstly, I would like to look at the word ‘Θάρσει’ *tharsei*. The two most dominant translations to this word are ‘Take heart’ and ‘Be of good cheer’. The word presuppose three things, firstly knowledge, secondly trust and lastly past experience that affirms faith. In the word, there is no invitation to faith that doesn’t rely on previous experience.

It is not a word that asks one to have a leap of faith but rather, it calls on the hearer to ‘remember the deeds of the Lord’ Psalm 77. Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui in his article ‘TRUST THE GOD: *Tharsein* in Ancient Greek Religion’ notes that ‘Every few years new ancient religious texts come to light which contain forms of the Greek verb *tharreïn/tharsein*, a term generally agreed to be loaded with religious significance’ however, ‘there has been little research on what kind of religious experience is implied by *tharsein*’ since ‘the usual translations [...] do not convey the full semantic range of the verb, which, when used in religious (not only ritual) situations, implies, above all, being confident that a god will help’ (de Jáuregui 2005). de Jáuregui agrees with the bulk of commentators on the meaning of the term *tharsein* but he adds the aspect of deeds already experienced which would compel one to ‘take heart’ (2005).

In addition, there is a way in which *tharsei* appeals to personal experience. It is an invocation which, even if it comes when one is amongst a community, is always personal and appeals to each individual. Herrero argues that in all religious circumstances and societies the term usually comes when there is risk and danger but ‘... even when a whole community is affected by danger and in need of divine help, the epiphanic experience implied by the imperative *tharsei* is almost always personal’. He adds that, ‘The reason for *tharsos* is the consciousness [that], even at a very intuitive level ...one’s resources are enough to confront the imminent danger with hope of salvation’. This is apparent in almost all the places in the New Testament where the verb is used. It might also be important in understanding Jesus’ frustrations at his disciples’ lack of belief in the instances where he utters these words.

Cranfield in his commentary *The Gospel According to St Mark* notes that, ‘The command Θάρσει (or Θάρσειτε) occurs seven times in the N.T.—always on the lips of Jesus [...] except for Mk x. 49, where it is spoken by those who tell the blind man that Jesus is calling him (227). An interesting point to note that builds from the above argument

is why Jesus would invite the disciples to call the man in this occasion. A logical possibility would be that this man had not experienced Jesus' works before and the call *tharsei* would not be relevant coming from Jesus directly to the blind man but from his disciples who had seen and experienced them. There is a possibility that Mark uses the person of Jesus to convey the type of call he wants for Bartimaeus who in this sense is representing his listeners.

As a result, *tharsei* is not simply a word that strengthens the blind Bartimaeus, rather, it is calling on him to recall what he had heard of Jesus. Looking at the narrative, one cannot help but agree that Bartimaeus had some knowledge of Jesus. Although it could have been limited, no doubt it was enough to spur him to cry out 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' The followers of Jesus' invocation '*tharsei*' can be understood as telling the blind man to remember what he has heard about Jesus on one hand, and on the other, telling him that Jesus can save you; we have seen it happen and we know it is possible. Above all, the disciples call and encouragement of Bartimaeus could also be a self-awakening for they also needed to 'take heart' and rise to the imminent occasion.

The second word to be looked at is ἔγειρε *egeire*. The most common translation of this word is 'rise'. Scholars harbor different opinions as to whether this word had any symbolic meaning or it was just a necessary thing for the man to be healed by Jesus. Maarten JJ. Menken, in his article, 'The call of blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46-52)' is of the view that the whole narrative of the healing of Bartimaeus has to be understood not independent of the section it falls under; 8:27-10:52 which contains three passion predictions and the disciples' continual misunderstanding of who Jesus is. Understood in this light, rise therefore could mean more than just standing up to receive the miracle. Culpepper in the *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary: Mark* ponders the significance of raising people in Mark and asserts that, 'In Mark, Jesus is continually raising people: he lifts up Peter's mother-in-law (1:31), the paralytic (2:9, 11, 12), the man

with the withered hand (3:3), Jairus's daughter (5:41), the epileptic boy (9:27), and now Bartimaeus' (354). Such an observation has led many people to seek a deeper meaning of the word 'rise' or 'arise' considering the disciples' constant fall in misunderstanding Jesus' identity and call. Mark could be telling his community to rise to the occasion of the suffering and crucifixion of Christ.

Prior to this passage, the disciples were lagging behind and failing to get Jesus' point. Menken adds that, 'All three predictions are followed by a series of sayings of Jesus or a dialogue with Jesus in which he makes clear that the fate of his disciples will not be different from his own fate; his utterances to this effect are always provoked by a misunderstanding on the part of the disciples' (Menken 2005). This is evident when 'After the first passion prediction, Peter begins to rebuke Jesus (8:32)... To the second passion prediction, the disciples react with incomprehension (9:32)... after the third passion prediction, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, demonstrate their incomprehension by requesting a position of power in Jesus' glory (10:35-37)' (Menken 2005). The constant failure of the disciples in Mark can be understood as an invitation to the Markan community to do better. As a result, one would be doing injustice to the topic in question if *egeire* is not understood as an invitation to the disciples to rise to the occasion of Christ's suffering and 'follow him along the way'.

The word ἔγειρε *'egeire'* is closely connected with φωνεῖ σε *'phonei se'* in its theological interpretation. This is because Bartimaeus is told to rise as the first step of heeding Jesus' call. Menken is of the idea that the use of the word φωνεῖ over προσκαλέσατε or καλέσατε in this passage does not carry any theological significance since it has been used elsewhere. Culpepper and Stein agree that the use of the verb 'φωνεῖ' is unusual. However, Culpepper maintains that its use does not make it less of a call but, 'The repetition of the verb "to call" three times in v. 49 suggests that like the calling of the first disciples (1:16-20; 2:14), this healing miracle serves also as a call story, even though

the verb to call (*phonein*) does not appear in the earlier stories' (354). My focus here is to develop this idea of the narrative as more of a calling than a miracle and argue that this call was different from *προσκαλέσατε* or *καλέσατε* found in other passages.

As argued earlier, the blind Bartimaeus can be said to have had prior knowledge of Jesus due to the Christological implications of his first cry to Jesus 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me'. Although the scripture passage mentions that Bartimaeus was told that Jesus was coming, calling Jesus 'Son of David' twice means he had prior knowledge of Jesus. As a result, the call of Bartimaeus comes after his cry for mercy. Many scholars are of the view that the impartial blindness of Bartimaeus is not limited to Bartimaeus only but 'but also as [a metaphor] for the disciples, whose spiritual blindness still awaits a cure. In their case, they will need a second touch, as it were, for Jesus to open their eyes fully to his identity and mission' (Green, Brown and Perrin 90).

In addition, Stein argues that, 'The lack of any mention of assistance in the blind man's coming to Jesus has led some to suggest that he was not totally blind' (496). Walter Wessel in his chapter 'Mark' in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* agrees with this suggestion (722). Metaphorically, this was also the state of Jesus' disciples. They had an idea of who Jesus is but they lacked its full comprehension. Hence, the need for another miracle. The threefold repetition of the verb *φωνήσατε* '*phōnēsate*' – a verb not used in the call of any of Jesus' disciples prior to this point – could signal a different and more urgent call of Jesus. This is seen in the way Bartimaeus responds to Jesus' call; he responds immediately, 'throwing away his cloak and walking towards Jesus'.

There is also a connection between the healing of the blind Bartimaeus and 'the way'. The three passion predictions all happen on 'the way' to Jerusalem where Jesus will be exalted but above all, the place of his suffering, crucifixion and death. Menken asserts that, 'The "way" that

determines the entire section Mark 8:27-10:52, is the way to Jerusalem, and this is the way to Jesus' passion and death, as 10:32-34 in particular shows. Bartimaeus is called by Jesus to follow him on this way' (Menken 2005). Green, Brown and Perrin are of the view that this healing was representative rather than personal. They assert that, '...the healing of blind Bartimaeus and his following Jesus on the way into Jerusalem (Mk 10:46-52) echoes Isaiah 35:5-10's picture of the healed and ransomed exiles returning to Zion' (983). As a result, the verb φωνήσατε '*phōnēsate*' as used in this chapter represents a call to healing, faithfulness and supplication; different from that of the first disciples who were simply called to change their trade into students of Jesus.

Mark's exposition is far from coincidental. His choice of words and setting is always deliberate. He would like to make his point about the type of Messiah Jesus was and what is expected of his disciples. Green, Brown and Perrin observe that, 'Only after Jesus' cruciform call has been thoroughly established in his and his "blind" disciples' journey along the "way" to Jerusalem (Mk 8:31-38; 9:30-32; 10:32-45) is the first public affirmation of Jesus' messiahship recorded, and that by a blind man requesting mercy (Mk 10:46-52)' (983). For Menken, the placing of the Bartimaeus pericope is deliberate and calculated. This is because '... it offered Mark an opportunity to include an example of following Jesus on his way of suffering and death. In the present context, the final clause of the pericope is crucial: "and he followed him on the way"' (Menken 2005). He adds that, 'Bartimaeus is presented as an example to Mark's community: they are also called to go the way of service and, if necessary, of martyrdom, following in the footsteps of the Son of Man (cf 10:45) (2005).

What could this mean for the Church in Africa?

Firstly, Mark's narrative can help Africans have a better perspective of who Jesus is and how he works in their lives. There is a need for a proper Christology based on the scriptures rather than one based on

wishful thinking and fantasy. Ronald Rolheiser in his book *The Passion and the Cross* uses the story of Lazarus and Jesus on the cross to argue for an identity of Jesus that is very Markan. He makes the distinction between a savior and a redeemer in explaining the place of Jesus especially in a suffering world. He is of the view that, the fact that Jesus let Lazarus die only to rescue him later and God allowed Jesus to die only to raise him up on the third day is evidence that Jesus is a redeemer not a rescuer. His silence in times of our suffering does not mean we lack faith or do not pray enough – as most Pentecostals and ‘prophets’ say today – because ‘...Jesus never promised us rescue, exemptions, immunity from cancer or escape from death. Rather, he promised that, in the end, there will be redemption, vindication, immunity from suffering, and eternal life’ (Rolheiser 51). Such a theology is not welcome in most circles and even some Catholic priests have fallen prey to it; forgetting the words of Jesus Christ ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me’ Mark 8:34.

Furthermore, understanding the above will help African Christians to know that no amount of suffering should stop them from celebrating their faith. Suffering is part of our earthly pilgrimage and it is in that suffering where, at times, we encounter the Lord. Africa has had good examples of disciples who celebrated their faith even in difficult circumstances; the Ugandan Martyrs, Blessed Peter To Rot, The Tibhirine Monks among other faithful disciples of Christ who carried their cross even unto death. Even at their point of death, they never stopped praising God for such a gift.

Conclusion

African Christians today are facing many challenges and these are affecting their faith. The human being’s need to be relieved from pain has made Africans vulnerable to con pastors who promise them a Jesus who will remove all their pain and suffering. Many people are suffering due to bad governance, injustice, corruption and war. To

stand up and speak out against such evils has become more and more difficult for the truth is not always accepted for what it is. Those with power have created their own truths which other Africans ought to accept or face the consequences. The meaning of discipleship can be easily forgotten in such circumstances and the Gospel can be reduced to one among many 'truths'. Both the political and religious situation has encouraged the spread of pseudo gospels of Jesus Christ. As such, cruciform discipleship and 'the way' of Jesus Christ have lost their meaning in the lives of African Christians. It is in this situation that Mark tells African Christians 'Take heart, rise. He is calling you'.

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The Christian Testimony of Bl. Isidore Bakanja (1887-1909)

Patrick Mullins O.Carm

When African Christians look for a model of how they should respond to the call of the Gospel despite the many difficulties that they face, Bl. Isidore Bakanja provides an example of the power of Christian witness that often lies untapped in the hearts of those who have completed their Christian initiation. This short paper, outlines the circumstances in which this modern martyr lived and died in order to draw attention to the generosity with which he responded to the light of Christ when it was first revealed to him. His story challenges each one of us, in our diversity, to reflect on the implications of having only one common Father in heaven.

Bakanja belonged to the Boangi tribe, who lived in the eastern part of what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo, the former Zaïre. His father, Iyonzwa, and his mother, Inyka, were pagans and Isidore was born sometime between 1884 and 1885 at Bokendela, a small village in the deep equatorial rain forest, not very far from the stream known as Botato, one of the many tributaries of Congo river. In 1904, when he was about 20 years old, Bakanja left Bokendela, travelling on a small boat made of wood as far as Mbandaka (also called Coquihatville) where he hoped to find work. At first he worked as an assistant mason building houses for the Belgian workers at Mbandaka and it was while working there that he first heard of Christianity.

One of those among whom Isidore worked was Linganga, the first Christian that Isidore ever met, who was studying the Catechism with a view to becoming members of the Catholic Church. Through Linganga, Bakanja was introduced to Father Gregory Van Dun and Father Robert Brepols, two Cistercian Monks who were running the Saint Eugen Parish of Bolokwa Nsimba, not far from Mbandaka. It

was under their guidance that he learned how to make the sign of the Cross and to say the usual prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary etc.). He began to study the Catechism and he learned about the Creed, the seven Sacraments of the Church, the Ten Commandments, the six commandments of the Church and the seven Deadly Sins. He began to attend Mass and he also learned some of the Catholic devotional prayers, such as the Rosary, the Way of the Cross, the *Angelus* etc.). The Cistercian Priests also introduced Bakanja to the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which was given to all the newly baptised Christians who desired it after they had been instructed in its significance and purpose.

After three years of training in preparation for Baptism, Bakanja applied for the Sacrament and, having been formally accepted, he was baptised on May 6th 1906 at Saint Peter Claver Parish, Mbandaka, and he was given the Christian name of Isidore, putting him under the patronage and protection of Saint Isidore. His godfather was Boniface Bakutu. After his Baptism, he was enrolled in the Scapular Confraternity and he began to wear the Brown Scapular of our Lady of Mount Carmel, which was known as *Bonkoto Malia*, Mary's habit, in the local language. On May 25th 1906, Isidore received the Sacrament of Confirmation and, a year later, on August 8th 1907, he completed the process of his Christian initiation when he receives his Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the first time in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Having completed his own Christian initiation, Isidore became a catechist, helping others who were making the same journey in faith that he himself had made. By the example of his own daily life, he showed the catechumens under his care that honesty, hard work, love and respect for all were the means by which Christians testify to their life in union with Jesus Christ.

Finding work was not always easy and, having returned to his village for a time, Isidore eventually found work during 1907 at Busira-Lokumo, where he stayed with Camille Boyna, his nephew. Working as a general domestic servant or ‘house-boy’ for the *Société Anonyme Belge*, he was assigned to a Belgian called Reynders, who was an agent of a rubber production company. In 1908, Isidore followed Reynders moved upriver to a place called Ikili, where the manager of the rubber estate was André Van Cauter, a man given to unpredictable rages and occasional brutality if the production of rubber was less than he expected. In Ikili, Isidore was conscientious about his work and he got on well with Reynders, who was aware that Van Cauter was fiercely opposed to Christianity and who warned Isidore to conceal his faith as much as possible. When Van Cauter challenged Isidore about his work in the house, Isidore said:

I always do very well all that I have to do, and is anything lacking?

For Isidore, the salary was not the only goal and he believed that it was important to do one’s work as well and as conscientiously as possible.

Isidore made prayer part of his daily routine and he was happy to explain to the other workers who were interested about the Gospel and about his prayers. Van Cauter was strongly opposed to this kind of activity and, because of the growing opposition that he faced because of his Christianity, Isidore asked Van Cauter for a letter allowing him to leave the rubber plantation and return to his home but Van Cauter replied:

I will not give you any such letter! ... ask your God for that kind of letter! I will not give it to you!

Van Cauter ordered him to stop teaching his Christian faith to the other workers:

You'll have the whole village praying and no one will work.

On one occasion when Isidore was praying the rosary in public, Van Cauter commented:

I don't want to see that contraption here. Go hide it in your box; you're here to work and not mumble prayers.

On another occasion, when Van Cauter saw his Brown Scapular, he said to Isidore:

Bakanja, take that contraption off your neck. It is disgusting. I don't want to see that contraption of stupid priests here anymore.

When Van Cauter saw Isidore wearing the Brown Scapular again, a few days later, on February 2nd 1909, he became very angry and said:

What's the meaning of this? What? I told you to take that thing off. Why didn't you do it? Since you don't want to take it off, you're really going to get it.

When Isidore refused to remove his Scapular, he was given over a hundred blows with a whip of elephant hide with nails on the end. Van Cauter himself said to Isidore:

I'm thrashing you because you are teaching the stupid priests' prayers and all sorts of stupidities to my workers, to my servant-boys, and even to the villagers. If that does not stop, no one will want to work anymore for me because of the stories of stupid priests.

Afterwards, as he was lying in a pool of his own blood, Isidore seems to have realised that he was seriously injured and might not survive. He was heard to say, apparently about Van Cauter:

He did not want me to pray to God ... He killed me because I said my prayers ... I stole nothing from him ... It's because I was praying to God.

After the beating, Van Cauter ordered Isidore to be chained and hidden away in a room that was used as a rubber factory, apparently so that what he had done would not become generally known. Isidore said to his friend Moya Mputsu:

God alone knows whether I will die of these wounds, or if I will live ... if you meet the priests, tell them that I am dying because I am a Christian ... I don't feel anything good in my body anymore.

When Van Cauter heard that a mission of inspection was coming, he forced Isidore to go to Isoko, so that the inspectors would not see that he had been mistreated. Isidore said that he would be unable for the journey because of the wounds but Van Cauter insisted. Isidore then set out on the journey but he was forced to stop to rest in the forest not long after setting out.

One of those who knew him, a man called Iyongo, helped Isidore to hide himself under the trees and he also brought him some food and clothes. On the February 6th 1909, another man, Moya Mputsu, organised that Isidore was shown to Inspector Dorpinghaus who later wrote:

I saw a man come from the forest with his back torn apart by deep, festering, malodorous wounds, covered with filth,

assaulted by flies. He leaned on two sticks in order to come to me - he wasn't walking; he was dragging himself.

The inspector took Isidore home so that his wounds would heal, but Isidore seems to have realised that he would not recover his health and he said:

If you see my mother, or if you go to the judge, or if you meet a Priest, tell them that I am dying because I am a Christian.

On July 24th 1909, Fr. Gregoire administered the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and heard Isidore's confession. During their conversation, Isidore tried to explain Van Cauter's motives to the priest:

He did not want me to wear the scapular ... He yelled at me when I said my prayers.

When Fr. Gregoire recommend to Isidore to forgive his persecutor, Isidore said:

I am not angry with the white man ... He beat me. That's his business; it is none of mine. He should know what he is doing. ... Certainly, I shall pray for him. When I am in heaven, I shall pray for him very much.

Isidore's condition continued to deteriorate because of his wounds. He was never without his rosary. He is quoted as saying:

It is nothing if I die. If God wants me to live, I'll live! If God wants me to die, I'll die. It's all the same to me.

After six months of prayer and suffering, he died, rosary in hand and scapular around his neck. The date of his death has not been established with certainty but it seems to have been either August 8th or 15th 1909.

Isidore's attitude towards his work, and his witness in defending his right to practice his faith despite opposition, were an example for his fellow workers and it was, in part, due to the way he had treated Isidore that Van Cauter was eventually sent for trial by the Dorpinghaus, General Controller of the rubber plantation.

When visiting Africa in 1980, Pope St John Paul II said of Isidore:

After having given all his free time to the evangelization of his brothers as a catechist, he did not hesitate to offer his life to God, strong in the courage he found in his faith and in the faithful recitation of the Rosary ...

Pope St John Paul II beatified Isidore Bakanja on April 24th 1994. During the Beatification ceremony, the Pope addressed these words to Bl. Isidore Bakanja:

In an Africa that is sorely tried by ethnic strife, your shining example is an encouragement to harmony and reconciliation among the children of the same heavenly Father. You showed brotherly love to all, without distinction of race or social class; you earned the esteem and respect of your companions, many of whom were not Christians. In this way, you show us that dialogue between people is necessary.

The feast day of Bl. Isidore Bakanja is celebrated on the 12th of August.

An Investigation of the Relationship between Signs and Faith in the Gospel According to John and its Application to the Zimbabwean Context

Vitalis Chiromba O. Carm

Introduction

This article endeavours to determine whether signs are useful in the pursuit of faith in Zimbabwe today. In this enterprise, the work views the contemporary Zimbabwean understanding of miracles¹ exhibited in Prophets Makandiwa's United Family International Church (UFIC) and Magaya's Prophetic Healing and Deliverance (PHD) ministries in the light of Jesus' signs in John's gospel.² The work limits itself to John's first three signs: the changing of water into wine (2:1-11), the healing of the royal official's son (4:46-54) and the healing at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-18). The enquiry seeks to determine the extent in which Jesus' signs which were relevant to the original Johannine community correspond to the prophets' miracles that seem to bear significance to the Zimbabwean people. Since Johannine signs are designed to produce faith of a particular kind,³ the work also seeks to examine the quality of faith that is demonstrated by Zimbabwean Christians in the sight of the miracles performed by the prophets and pastors of their time.

The Significance of Signs in John's Gospel

Signs appear to be given a fundamental role in respect to the purpose of John's writing. The evangelist clearly states at the end of his gospel that their purpose is to make people believe in Jesus' Messiahship and

¹ Miracles are referred to as *minana* in Shona.

² The work shall use 'the gospel according to John' or 'the gospel of John' or 'John's gospel' or 'the Fourth gospel' or simply 'John' as referring to the same work.

³ It is faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

Divine Sonship (20:30-31).⁴ This means that, in John's context, the correct understanding of signs should culminate in faith, the faith that ultimately leads to a deeper recognition of the revelation of God in the word and person of Jesus. For this reason, in John's framework, one cannot divorce signs from faith. Any attempt of this sort leads to major problems in relation to the meaning and significance of those signs. Signs and faith could simply be understood as two sides of the same coin. In all instances, it is not so much about the externals of the sign exhibited but that for which the sign calls, which is, faith in God through Jesus Christ, His Son.

With the above general understanding, one is safe to state that signs are significant to John's gospel because they lead to faith. To sustain this argument, it is important to first of all attest to the point that signs confer life. Marianne Meye Thompson puts this correctly, "Jesus' signs lead to faith when one discerns in them the manifestation of the character of God as life-giving and responds to Jesus as mediating that life" (96). Even though the healing of the royal official's son is the one that vividly demonstrates the theme of life, each of the three signs illustrates the truth of Thompson's statement. As argued by C. F. D. Moule, although death does not threaten the crippled man at the pool, Jesus reinstates him to the fullness of physical life in granting him health and strength (122). The gratuitous generosity and abundance demonstrated by Jesus in the changing of water into wine is also symbolic of something else that Jesus also provides. His freedom and power in initiating this sign⁵ is an upshot of the belief that God alone is the source of all life and that life is a gift to be received from the gracious and autonomous hand of God (Thompson 103).

⁴ John 20:30-31, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of (his) disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may (come to) believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name."

⁵ Where someone approaches Jesus with a request to act or to heal, for instance, in 2:3 and 4:47, he first of all distances himself from the petitioner (2:4, 4:48), showing that he acts only in his own hour and only at his Father's bidding (Giblin 197-211).

The life-giving character of the signs thus provides the basis for the discernment of God's work and one's decision for or against Jesus (Theissen 297). This is because, in Marinus de Jonge's words, "A *semeion*⁶ is a demonstration which asks for reaction. In the case of positive reaction, the principal question is, 'What power and authority do you believe to be demonstrated here?'" (122). In answer to this question, one is right in stating that the power and authority demonstrated through Jesus is God's power and authority. This is known not simply by the sheer manifestation of power, but through what is offered and effected by the sign, and that is, life. The response sought is not simply wonder, but trust and obedience (Thompson 105; Kasper 97-98). In fact, because the signs are God's works, His deeds of grace and deliverance, serve to call people to repentance, obedience, and faith.⁷

John also understands the signs of Jesus to be a continuation and manifestation of the activity through which God calls out a people (106). This is mainly deduced from the judgemental character of Jesus' signs. However, when it serves to judge, the sign has not failed. Neither in the Old Testament nor in John's gospel is unbelief an indication that signs have failed. It is rather an indication of judgment as explicated in John 3:18.⁸ The purported failure of the signs is actually a failure of seeing, discernment and faith on the part of the people to whom the sign is directed. Unbelief and disobedience are not

⁶ *Σημεῖον* is a Greek noun for 'sign.'

⁷ The Old Testament provides the crucial backdrop for understanding this point (see Deut 29:2-4 and Jer 32:20-23).

⁸ John also summarises Jesus' ministry by quoting Isaiah 6:10 and 53:1 which show the reality of unbelief. Although neither of these speaks explicitly of signs, it is clear that in John's view the unbelief of which Isaiah spoke has its counterpart in the unbelief which Jesus encountered in the healing at the pool of Bethsaida.

surprising, though in the light of God's gracious deeds on the people's behalf, they are culpable and guilty of sin (107).⁹

The Notion of Miracles in the Pentecostal Churches in Zimbabwe

Pentecostalism is one of the fastest growing religious movements in Zimbabwe and one of its main attractions today is 'miracles.' Ngonidzashe Marongwe and Richard S. Maposa comment, "The deployment of mystical power in the terrain of miracle-making continues to grow amongst the high profile Pentecostal religious luminaries in Zimbabwe today" (12). This segment reconnoitres the notion of miracles in Prophets Makandiwa's UFIC and Magaya's PHD ministries in light of Johannine signs. Despite the point that the two movements are known by different names, prophecy,¹⁰ healing and deliverance¹¹ are their three cornerstones in Zimbabwe today. Although the three ministries are interlinked, this work mainly explores the latter two as they are reported in Zimbabwean newspapers and other parts of the media.

The Zimbabwean newspapers report about the 'miracle gold' and 'miracle money' that are claimed to have been eye witnessed by Makandiwa's congregants. On the 21st of January 2013, the Newsday Online records that some UFIC members became "ecstatic when they found themselves clutching pieces of gold and diamonds in their hands during a Church service conducted (by Makandiwa) at City Sports Centre in Harare." Takunda Maodza, reporter of The Herald Online,

⁹ According to Keener, it is not the purpose of signs to control one's response (275).

¹⁰ Prophesying can be defined as simply the ability to foresee and foretell the future, the ability to interpret dreams and other events in one's life, as well as the ability to diagnose problems in an individual's life (Marongwe and Maposa 13).

¹¹ Healing and deliverance mostly involves demonic exorcism and is meant to cast away demons that are accused of stalling individual successes in various endeavours of life.

confirms this miraculous experience on the 6th of February 2013 when he also notes more miracles that were experienced on the same day. Veneranda Langa of the *Newsday* also reports about the birth of a ‘miracle baby’ on the 21st of February 2013. The baby is said to have been delivered after a three-day-pregnancy following a miracle prayer by Prophet Makandiwa. According to *Nehanda Radio*, Mrs Moffat, the miracle baby’s mother, confirmed this event when interviewed on radio by Tilda Moyo on the 4th of February 2013. Besides the ‘miracle baby,’ the Bulawayo staff reporter reports the ‘miracle-weight-loss’ by Prophet Makandiwa on the 23rd of January 2013. According to the video clip posted on You Tube on the 11th of February, Prophet Makandiwa prayed for healing powers to descend upon his congregants and a woman who identified herself as Margaret Scubu and two others testified that they had miraculously lost weight.

Similar to Prophet Makandiwa’s miracles, Prophet Magaya is also claimed to have performed miracles during his so-called “the service of miracles.” The *Standard* newspaper of 28 July 2013 points to three miracle cases by Prophet Magaya. The first case is that of Sophia Njanina from Chitungwiza who had exceeded her expected date of delivery by four weeks. Once she attended the PHD ministries and was touched by Prophet Magaya, she gave birth the following day. In the second case, Theresa Mandishaya from Nyazura was miraculously healed of breast cancer and went home free of pain. The third case is that of Shuvai Mavhondo from Budiriro who also claimed that she was cured of a growth on her right leg.¹²

Makandiwa and Magaya’s Miracles in the Light of Johannine Signs

This section begins by outlining the similarities and differences between the alleged miracles and Johannine signs and, in a third subsection; it presents an overall assessment of the alleged miracles.

¹² The growth is reported, had “burst(ed) into a festering wound which emitted a horrible smell.”

Similarities with Johannine Signs

Deducing from the miracles of the two prophets, the notion of miracles as life giving, which is also emphasised by Johannine signs, is fundamental. D. Stinton comments that life is of cardinal value in African societies that it has become the starting point of some theologies (120). As a way of preserving this life, Tabona Shoko notes that health is of primary significance (87). For this reason, it is plausible to conclude that the promotion and preservation of life is one of the major reasons behind these prophets' venture into healing and deliverance ministries. Kudzai Biri actually states this as the reason for the dominance of the theology of deliverance in these prophets' services in Zimbabwe today. From that conviction, he concludes that the African concept of life is fundamental to the ways in which Christians interpret and appropriate the gospel today (4).

Similar to John's gospel, Prophet Makandiwa, in particular, also used a popular Johannine expression, 'signs and wonders' in Jesus' first sign at Cana (John 4:48) as he explained the character of his miracles. According to the *Newsday* of 21 January 2013, Prophet Makandiwa claimed that, "These are not miracles, they are signs and wonders. God does them to prove a point." In order to justify his assertion, Makandiwa then alleged that miracles were for those who did not believe. Analysing this, one can conclude that Makandiwa's point is that his miracles happen to a person who has faith, a point somehow similar to the notion of faith leading to a sign exhibited in Jesus' healing of the royal official's son.

Just like the crippled man and the Jews in the healing at the pool of Bethesda, it is equally unclear whether the two prophets' miracles also make specific reference to a faith response. David Bishau's interview and analysis puts it clearly that, "Some of the respondents who attend these gatherings openly acknowledge that they attend to have their problems solved not necessarily to have faith in Jesus Christ" (73). Isaac Zhou backs this up when, in one of his interviews on miracles in

Makandiwa's UFIC, he notes that most of his interviewees dodged the question of faith and only concentrated on how they felt when the power of healing was operating in them. Although some of them, following Prophet Makandiwa's assertion, confirmed that they were not just miracles but 'signs and wonders' that point to the presence of God in UFIC, according to Zhou, few of them pointed out that the miraculous experiences of the power of God working in their church strengthened their faith (34, 37).

Differences with Johannine Signs

Having highlighted the similarities that can be drawn between the two presentations, it is also fundamental to pay adequate attention to some differences. Important questions that can help to indicate these are: firstly, when one assumes that the deliverance ministry of the two prophets seeks to promote or give 'life,' what specifically is this kind of 'life?' Secondly, if these two prophets' miracles are signs in the real sense of Johannine signs, what is it that they point to? Thirdly, when these prophets' miracles do not get a faith reaction, is the implication the same as in Jesus' third sign in John's gospel which seems to share the same fate?

In the first three signs, although John indicates the restoration of the physical life of people, his ultimate focus is on the eternal or spiritual life.¹³ The physical life only serves as a symbol of the later. This life is realised in genuine discipleship and in a right relationship with God.¹⁴ Viewing prophets Makandiwa and Magaya's miracles with these Johannine eyes, it is plausible to conclude that it is not clear as to the type of life which they seek to promote. Besides it not being specified or depicted in their ministry as in John's gospel, one can also cast doubts if their primary concern is the Johannine eternal life basing

¹³ See John 20:30-31.

¹⁴ See Thompson 99-100.

on some observations. The first is the quest for material wealth¹⁵ that accompanies these miracles. As noted by Biri, the love of material wealth advocated in the message of prosperity betrays these prophets' interpretation of the Bible. Her basis for this is that, in this quest, spiritual matters (focus on eternal life) are often ignored and material wealth (the physical life) is often overemphasised (8). This theology betrays Jesus' teaching about the cost of discipleship implied in Johannine signs when one makes a faith response.

Arguing further, Biri also highlights that miracles in these churches are not offered free of charge (8), a phenomenon that has no evidence in Johannine signs. He indicates that, for instance, in UFIC people are categorised into three groups: "the gold class, composed of those who pay \$1000 (US) per month, the silver class, who pay \$500 (US) a month, and the bronze class who pay \$100 (US)." In addition, anyone wishing to participate in Makandiwa's deliverance sessions is supposed to pay a certain amount (8). This has also culminated in the belief and practice which these churches coined as 'seeding' or 'sowing,' that sometimes the person in need of a miracle has to give money, especially to the prophet, in order for their petition to be granted (8).¹⁶ Given this, one can question, what about those like the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda who have nothing to offer? Is it that there is no salvation for them, and if so, how can that be reconciled with Jesus' ministry and mission, and with the gospel values? Such questions trigger comments by scholars like Fortunate Sibanda, Tobias Marevesa and Prosper Muzambi who allege that these pastors use the 'gospel of prosperity' as a way of amassing wealth at the expense of the people's spiritual development (256).

The second observation can be stated as the confusion or illogicality that some of these prophets' miracles contain. A typical example is

¹⁵ The so-called 'Gospel of Prosperity' gives more information on this point.

¹⁶ This is a gospel that appears to function as financing the ever-expanding movements and the lavish lifestyles of their founders.

that, on Nehanda Radio, Charles Mushinga reports the death of Mrs Moffat's 'miracle baby' which happened on 20th of May 2013, few months after the miraculous conception and delivery. This first of all provokes questions as to the humanity of this 'miracle baby' given that it contradicts human nature. Besides, if Jesus Christ himself, as fully human, stayed in the womb of Mary for nine months, what message does this three-day-miracle-baby seek to convey? Another contradiction can be drawn from Sibanda *et al*'s research in Masvingo. They note reports of some people in this area who are said to have gained property miraculously, but which then vanished mysteriously (258). These are some of the issues that are difficult to reconcile in these miracles. They provoke questions as to the type of 'life' that these prophets advocate for. Hence, one can be forgiven to ask, do these prophets offer physical life as a symbol of eternal life as in Johannine signs or they consider physical life an end in itself? The temporality and quest for immediate gratifications and quick fix solutions evident in these movements suggest the latter.

In response to the second question, it is important to highlight that signs in John's gospel are meant to point the attention to the person of Jesus Christ.¹⁷ In the light of this, David Bishau puts to question the veneration of the person of some of these prophets instead of Jesus who stands beyond them. He notes that in one of the services he attended, "devotees actually bowed down, hands clasped together as if in prayer, as the prophet passed by to the stage with his entourage of body guards" (73). Highlighting the same point, Sibanda *et al* also note that the scepticism that some people hold on the prophets of this generation has been summarised in a Shona proverb that says "*Makandiwa kana Magaya havasi Jesu Kristu*" (Makandiwa or Magaya are not Jesus Christ). They further explain that this saying has been coined to describe the qualitative difference that exist between Jesus Christ and those who claim to possess the same authority and

¹⁷ In Kasper's words, "A miracle turns people's eyes upwards, towards God" (92). The envoy revealer model gives more on this (See the Johannine Prologue 1:1-18).

power as him (257). This makes it clear that unlike the Johannine signs, there is a shift of focus from the person of Jesus to the persons of the performers of these miracles. This shift can force one to conclude that if their miracles are real signs which point to something beyond, that something is the prophet or pastor. In this regard, commenting on Makandiwa's miracles, the *Newsday* of 21 January 2013 which states that, "Makandiwa declared that the miracles were meant for people who doubted 'his' ability to perform supernatural wonders" says it correctly.

In relation to the above point, there are also statements that are made by the congregants of these churches that categorically applaud these prophets, for instance, "*Ndiri mwana we Muporofita*" (I am the prophet's child), either verbally or visually presented on T-shirts, plastic bangles and other regalia of these churches across Zimbabwe. As Sibanda *et al* put it, "This shows that most congregants are held at ransom in some instances as they are hypnotised by miracle performers whom they end up hero-worshipping" (257). Taking this further, other expressions by these churches' congregants like "*Tiri vana veminana*" or simply "*Vana veminana*" (children of miracles) also drive Sibanda *et al*'s, point home. The expressions mean that these people's lives are shrouded by miracles. Precisely, their lives and everything that they do is simply a miracle. This goes contrary to John's understanding of a miracle which is presented as an extraordinary and unexpected event which happens when need arises, provoking amazement and wonder (Kasper 92). Deducing from Jesus' statement to the royal official in the second sign, Jesus is actually against people who come to him intentionally looking for a sign or who want to believe when they have seen a sign.¹⁸ This is the attitude that is demonstrated by many Zimbabwean Christians today. They yearn for miracles to redeem all the problems of their lives (Sibanda *et al* 258). This quest, as Michael Mukwati states, has obviously overtaken the value of the cross, the need for persistence in prayer and

¹⁸ Cf. John 4:48

has led to a utility kind of relationship with God (Mbanje, *The Standard*).

The answer to the second question also determines the response to the third question. In the gospel of John, that which the sign testifies to is that which the people put their faith in, that is, the object of their faith. Although there is no specific reference to faith in John's third sign, it is clear that Johannine signs are presented in such a way that they evoke a faith response and a deep commitment to Jesus Christ as a person. Failure in this regard does not mean failure on the part of the sign, but it actually says more about the people to whom the sign is intended. This is a different case when one wants to imply the same understanding to these prophets' miracles because the first premise, that is, Jesus as the real object of faith is not clearly specified or cannot be categorically determined. Specifically, the lack of clarity in terms of that to which these prophets' signs point to, have a strong bearing on determining the person to whom the people are supposed to put their faith in. Thus, unlike in John's gospel where the failure of a faith response is not because of the problem of the sign given, the opposite is most likely true in these prophets' miracles.

An Assessment of the Alleged Miracles

An analysis of the similarities and differences between prophets Makandiwa and Magaya's miracles and the Johannine signs can force one to be very sceptical and more reserved about the whole notion of miracles in Zimbabwe today. This, however, does not explicitly suggest that all the miracles performed by these prophets are fake, but that they need to be put into serious questioning when they are juxtaposed with Johannine signs by any Johannine reader. The disparity between the two raises many questions about the true identity of the performers, the real character of their miracles and the source of power beyond them all.

According to Sibanda *et al*, the nature of some miracles evokes the question of the spirit working in them (258; 2 Cor 11:4). The three

base their argument on the foundation that in a theological sense, it is possible that one may have the right word but employ the wrong spirit (cf. Acts 16:16-18). In these scholars' language, in contemporary times, "false prophets, anti-Christians and Satanists are masquerading as servants of Christ in order to lure people to themselves instead of Christ through counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders that deceive those languishing" (258). In other words, when these people make themselves the answer instead of God (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess 2:9), the result is the replacement of the rightful place of Jesus Christ in these churches and in the lives of all their adherences.

Albert Chikuni also warns that people should take heed of some prophets and pastors who claim to perform miracles. He notes that some prophets exaggerate the power of God present in their ministry stressing miracles at the expense of the salvation of souls; and desire personal gain by making merchandise out of people's ignorance. As he puts it, they "offer prosperity on a gold platter, success without struggling [...] sweet without sweat" (qtd. in Sibanda *et al.* 259). Deducing from this, it can be argued that instead of emphasising the God of miracles as in the gospel of John, it is undeniable that some contemporary Zimbabwean prophets and pastors are now emphasising the miracles of God, above all, miracle money. Thus, according to F. Kwaramba, when money multiplies miraculously the rationalists may be justified to suspect the use of magic and manipulation in such miracles (2).

All this leaves the question of how one can separate a true from a false miracle in the contemporary times open-ended (Sibanda *et al.* 259). Putting this in context, the question of miracles today remains an unsolved puzzle to many Zimbabweans. A lot of prophets and pastors have abused the pulpit to the extent of hosting 'stage managed miracles' due to a wide range of motives. This is not to deny that real miracles do happen today. The point is, as Bishau notes, to question their significance as real signs that manifest the character of God as life-giving that evokes a true faith and deep commitment to Jesus who

mediates that life (72; Thompson 96). For John, this is, in fact, the source of eternal life. Hence, any understanding of the New Testament that does not culminate in such a conclusion regarding the symbolic meaning of miracles is most likely dubious (Bishau 72).

Conclusion

Signs as God's work, for John, serve to call people to repentance, commitment and faith. Johannine signs produce genuine faith when they bring those observing them to a single-hearted conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This comes about when one discerns in them God's character as life-giving and responds to Jesus as the only door to that life. Thus, signs in John's gospel are a stage on the way to belief, and ultimately to Sonship and life for those who optimise true faith. However, it should be highlighted that this faith is not a once-for-all intense possession. It gradually matures through a willingness to see and hear the continuous activity of God in his Church, and in the nexus of life, love and glory authenticated by Jesus Christ.

Looking at the phenomenon of miracles in prophets Makandiwa's UFIC and Magaya's PHD ministries in Zimbabwe today in light of the Johannine understanding of signs, one notices some similarities. They both seek to promote life, can be considered as signs¹⁹ and do not present all miracles as culminating in a faith reaction. However, given that Jesus' signs in John's gospel restore physical life only as a symbol of eternal life, one is justified to still seek for a clarification in terms of the type of 'life' which these two prophets' miracles purport to offer since one cannot deduce clear references to eternal life from them. Unlike Johannine signs which point to theological and Christological portraits of Jesus, it is difficult to have a clear sight of that which the two prophets' miracles point to. Although there is no specific reference to faith in John's third signs, Johannine signs are presented

¹⁹ This is in the sense of them not being ends in themselves but pointing to something beyond them.

in such a way that they evoke a faith response and a commitment to Jesus Christ as a person. This is unlike these prophets' miracles which do not specify their object of faith, given that there is hardly any faith response at all.

It is from the above backdrop that the author of this work is justified in stating that any community of believers which relishes miracles above the God who gives them is treading on dangerous grounds. The sign they see glare and blind them to the God who loves and extends eternal life. This is the category in which some Zimbabwean Pentecostal pastors and Christians are prone to be found. The discrepancies that are evident when the whole notion of miracles in these churches is contrasted with the Johannine signs should hint the Christian faithful that not all miraculous works performed by various pastors and prophets in Zimbabwe today must be taken at gospel value. Some of these miracles are not innocent, but a product of cunning and nature manipulations. As a result, strange elements characterising some so-called 'miracles' in Zimbabwe today should continually be interrogated and John's gospel gives crucial pointers that can be used to help in that regard.

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Ethics of Jesus in Addressing the Challenges Facing Human Life

Athanase Dushimirimana S.J.

Introduction

Our contemporary society is in the appealing need of moral values more than it needs material things. The moral values constitute of a steppingstone which can help adequately man of today to approach and solve his material problems effectively. In case the problems of ethical values are neglected, our society will always suffer from misunderstanding of its basic needs and the solutions which will be reached to the problems of material order will be misleading. Jesus' ethics is all about hope; it tells us: take courage and rise, he is calling you. Therefore, obedience of the ethics of Jesus requires placing faith in Him because his ethics is solely grounded on respect and defence of life in all its aspects. This article intends to describe the ethics of Jesus which can guide man along the journey of his existence.

Supremacy of Human Life over Obedience of the Laws

Laurent Magesa says: "*Human dignity is intrinsically grounded in respect of human rights of every individual and these human rights are God given privileges and they entail duties.*"¹ Ethics of Jesus is against hypocrisy which turns down dignity of a human person. Fundamentally, the ethics of Jesus is for life. Therefore, Jesus is against hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the Scribes and the elders who undermine the duty of addressing the issues related to human life on account of dogmatic religiosity and obedience of the laws. The Ethics of Jesus takes human life as a standard of everything. The ethics of Jesus is a call for the respect of the dignity of a human person who must be treated as the rule to measure the soundness of human actions. When we pretend to do something good we should think how it will

¹ Laurent Magesa, *Christian Ethics in Africa*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002, p. 67.

bring happiness in our lives and the lives of our fellow human beings. The ethical attitude of Jesus was pro life; Jesus defended life in all its forms. Jesus asked the Pharisees if it is allowed on the Sabbath day to save the life of human being or to let him die.² Jesus, was an advocate of human rights in a very wonderful way, he rebuked those who pretended to practice the traditions marginalizing and dehumanizing those who were weak. Thus, the ethics of Jesus shows that we must always make a rigorous evaluation in order to give priority to human life instead of blindly obey the laws on the detriment of our fellow human beings.

In rebuking hypocrisy, Jesus shows us an ethical conduct which calls us to stand for our brothers and sisters without fear whenever they need our assistance. Sometimes we fear to show up and help those who are in need. This fear is motivated by many things but it is fundamentally based on hypocrisy. Jesus calls us to overcome this hypocrisy and break with all traditional ties which hinder us to go out in order to meet and to help our fellow human beings. We must be pro life as Jesus was in a way that we should stop all our activities in order to save lives of our neighbors. We must take courage and rise up in order to speak out against various forms of violating life on ground like abortion, euthanasia, sterilization, etc. Ethics of Jesus requires courage of getting rid of fear of those who may oppose the actions of mercy and love in order to save life of any human being.

Love

Love is the foundation of ethics of Jesus. Jesus said that any good deed that we perform to the little ones is done to him.³ With this serious instruction, Jesus reminds us a commandment which is above all commandments: love your brother as you love yourself.⁴ In Kantian categorical imperatives this can be understood as: treat humanity as an

² Mark 3, 4

³ Mathew 25, 40; Mathew 25, 45

⁴ Luck 10, 27; cfr also Lev. 19, 18.

end and not as means. The love that we show to our brothers and sisters is the measure of how we serve Jesus; the way we help those who are in need determines how we shall be judged; love is the standard measure to determine if the moral values we follow are justified; it is a way to be used in order to evaluate our moral performance.⁵ Jesus is love; love is his intrinsic essence. His entire ethics is based on love. Love of Jesus encompasses all his actions.

Love of Jesus is attractive. Being love, Jesus is the ultimate end to whom we should direct all our means. Jesus is the ultimate end at whom all human beings should aim because the perfect happiness is found in Him. This is to say that Jesus is the destination on which human beings should focus. Therefore, the ethics of Jesus teaches us to use things of this world as means which lead to Him. In other words, we should not be obsessed by material things; rather we should put priority on spiritual matters. In using material things, we should be reminded that they have a temporal value. We should use worldly things as means which direct to the absolute end which is Jesus Himself. In this particular matter, Jesus calls us to be detached from material things and set out for his mission as a mere pilgrim who has only a stick in his hand and one gown covering his body. In this way, the ethics of Jesus puts emphasis on material poverty in order to prevent the hearts of his disciples from being overloaded by the anxiety of accumulation of the worldly wealth and the jealous competition in pursuing vain glory and they forget to devotedly focus on the heavenly matters. The hearts of the disciples should be directed to Jesus Himself. This is what Saint Augustine affirms in saying that our souls are not at peace unless they find rest in God: "*For you have made us for yourself, Lord, and our heart is not at peace until it rests in you.*"⁶ We are created to make use of worldly things directing them to him.⁷ Jesus' ethics is based on the concept love. He told to his

⁵ Cfr Mathew 7, 2

⁶ Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, book 1, 1.

⁷ Luigi Bogliolo, op. cit. p. 149

disciples to love one another as He loved them.⁸ Love is the foundation on which He laid ethics. The ethics of Jesus commits each one of us to the service of love: “*if you love one another they shall know that you are my disciples.*”⁹ Then you said: “*Go and do the same*”.¹⁰ Ethics of Jesus is the ethics of love.

Human Dignity

Ethics of Jesus shows that He is absolutely prolife. Pope Paul VI said:

He is the good shepherd of humanity. There is no human value which he has not respected, elevated and redeemed. There is no human suffering which he has not understood, shared, and rendered precious. There is no human need that is not a moral defect which he has not taken on and endured in very person, and proposed to the spirit and understanding of other men as theme of interest and love, as though the condition of their very salvation. He had infinite compassion even for evil, which he, the doctor of humanity, knew and denounced with insuperable vigor, to the extent that by means of grace he caused ineffable springs of redemption and life to well up in the heart of man.”¹¹

Jesus came from heaven to the earth to defend life, to redeem life, to save it from the miseries and surrounding forms of death. Jesus said clearly that He is life.¹² Thus, following the principle of non-contradiction, we can say that Jesus cannot be life and act against life.

⁸ John 15, 12

⁹ John 13, 35

¹⁰ Luck 10, 37

¹¹ Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, “*The Interreligious Dialogue, the Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*” ed. by Francesco Gioia. Boston : Pauline Books & Media, 1994, p. 119

¹² John 14, 6

Jesus confirmed his identity of being life saying that He is a good shepherd who came to lay down his life for the sake of his lambs.¹³

Ethics of Jesus teaches to respect life; it lays a foundation of life as the guideline of moral values. This ethics is embraced in faith and lived in total obedience of divine commandments. It requires the Christians renouncing themselves and carrying their daily crosses.¹⁴ Thus, Christian ethics is demanding requires renouncing to the pleasures of the world. The Church was entrusted to be the bearer of the light of Jesus' ethics; the Church repeatedly teaches to respect life. The world needs this light because it is in darkness of human rights violation; the Church supports the promotion of human rights¹⁵; the Church teaches about morality centred on respect of human life; it teaches about human dignity and virtues of brotherly and social life.¹⁶

Furthermore, Jesus' ethics teaches to choose the moral values which promote life; it prohibits to kill or to let someone die.¹⁷ Jesus Christ came to take care of his people who were looking tired and discouraged like the sheep without a shepherd.¹⁸ Jesus' ethics is against any action that is opposed to life itself or whatever violates the integrity of the human person. This ethics is against any action which tends to treat men as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons.¹⁹ The ethics of Jesus promotes human dignity. It

¹³ John 10, 11

¹⁴ Mark 8, 34

¹⁵ Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, "*The Interreligious Dialogue, The Official teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*", op. cit, p. 57

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 163-164

¹⁷ Mark 3, 4

¹⁸ Mathew 9, 36

¹⁹ The Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no 27, cfr also The USA Catholic Bishops Testimony on Constitutional Amendment Protecting Unborn Human Life before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 07 March 1974, p.1

can be inferred from the ethics of Jesus that to kill someone is to usurp the divine authority of creation; every person is created in the image and likeness of God; and therefore, he has right to life. From these asserted premises, it can be logically deduced that the unborn is not an unjust aggressor to be killed or a parasite that has to be removed from the womb of the mother. The unborn is a human being from the very moment of conception²⁰; he has intrinsic right to life; he is sacred.²¹ The unborn is a special image and likeness of Jesus; we have to pay a particular attention to him. The unborn expresses the dignity of human person which must be respected. Jesus identified himself with those who are weak, undermined and neglected in our society to attract our attention so that we can care for you in those persons. We shall be judged considering how we have cared for Jesus through these weak and marginalized persons.²²

Jesus' ethics is all about life; it rejects whatever is against the preservation of human race in its dignity due to a human person. Therefore, it is easy to reasonably notice that lesbianism and homosexuality are wrong because they contradict life of the next generation. In the same context, the use of contraception is wrong because it contradicts life between the spouses and it can easily lead them to prostitution; the use of contraception tends to treat a human person as a mere object. Therefore, contraception is one of the barriers of procreation which is the primary end of marriage.

Freedom of Choice

Human beings are free to choose; human beings are primarily called to choose what is the best for them and for their salvation. Jesus

²⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *On Respect for Human Life, Instruction Replies to certain Questions of the Day*. Nairobi : Paulines Publications Africa, reprint, 2005, p. 14

²¹ Pope Paul VI, the Encyclical Letter "*Humanae Vitae*". Nairobi : Paulines Publications Africa, 5th print, 2008, p. 12.

²² Mathew 25, 31-46

promised to send us the Holy Spirit who will guide us in the truth so that the choices we make our daily lives may please you. The parable of talents²³ shows that Jesus Christ entrusted free of charge to one of us the talents (good things) that we use with freedom of choice in order to sustain us in our lives but it happens that we misuse them. This parable shows that Jesus doesn't compel us to follow his ethics. Moreover, the parable of the prodigal son shows that we are free to remain with our Father or to leave Him.²⁴ This parable shows that one of the sons left freely his father and went away. Another parable shows that two sons who were sent to work in the field of their father one refused and later he changed his mind and another accepted but later he refused.²⁵ This parable shows that Jesus Christ does not force us to follow his ethics.

The Ethics of Jesus upholds "freedom of choice" of human beings. This freedom of choice leads us to the moral values not as Jean Paul Sartre and other atheists conceive them but in a way of "truth" that reveals the true nature of human being through right reason. Thus, the ethics of Jesus is based on the true identity of human being because Jesus is the truth.²⁶ Therefore, in the process of choice-making, Jesus guides us. He shows us the ethical way to follow; he conducts the Christians in the truth. Jesus is the mirror through which the Christians sees what is right and what is wrong because he is the truth and he cannot lie.

The Christians learn from Jesus the moral values which are right. Jesus directs us on our ways of making choices because he is essentially the way, truth and life. Therefore, Jesus is like an open book from which the Christians read what is the best for themselves and for others. In regard to freedom of choice that is an intrinsic characteristic of the

²³ Mathew 25, 14-30

²⁴ Luck 15, 11-32

²⁵ Mathew 21, 28-32

²⁶ John 14, 6

children of God, Jesus is the basic moral principle which shows to the Christians the measure of serving their brothers and sisters; He is the foundation on which the Christians build their lives in a manner that the waves and flood of moral relativism or moral anarchy cannot destroy them.

Morality of Jesus is one and eternal, it is universal and absolute, it brings life to those who choose to follow it, it is light and not heavy because Jesus Christ said that his burden is light. In crossroads of cultures, Jesus show us the morality to follow, the morality that highlights the culture of service and love, the morality that is opposed to the oppression and injustice, the morality that transcends the earthly values in order to aim at the eternal life. Therefore, ethics of Jesus Christ is transcendental because it goes beyond relative values caused by diversity of cultures. Ethics of Jesus is transcendental because it goes beyond space and time and therefore, this ethics is universal and eternal, it remains the same forever and ever. This is the reason why the Christians, in making choices, are very sure that they are following a right way which is traced in the heart of Jesus Christ Himself. The Ethics of Jesus comes from his heart of love without measure and it is printed in the conscience of the Christians. Thus, in following the ethics of Jesus Christ the Christians show obedience to their own conscience. However, they are not coerced to follow this ethics; they are free to choose to follow it or not bearing in mind that on the last day every person will be judged out of his actions.

Natural Law

The eternal law is the governance of God of all things in the universe. All things are governed by God.²⁷ Eternal law and natural law intermingle because divine wisdom manifests itself in how things strive to naturally achieve their respective ends. By his reason, a

²⁷ William E. May, *An Introduction to Moral Theology*. Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1991, p. 39

human being is naturally directed to what is good.²⁸ Jesus Christ's ethics is entirely based on natural law which expresses the natures and the ends of things to which they are directed. This means that in following the ethics of Jesus, the Christians must obey natures of things living in conformity with their fundamental laws which govern their basic behaviour. In this case, Jesus Christ's ethics reveals to human being how they must treat one another in order to preserve life. This ethics is teleological because it is based on the final cause of things which stress on how things develop in their respective stages until they reach their ultimate end. Given that the ultimate end of man is happiness, therefore, the ethics of Jesus Christ directs man to the way of searching for his happiness. Pope John Paul II says that the natural law is the truth revealed by the Spirit of God in order to defend and protect the values of marriage.²⁹ Moral values between the spouses should be preserved in the light of natural law. Apart from the sacred texts, natural law is the basic foundation of social catholic teachings; on basis of natural law the Church stands firmly to defend the respect of life at any of its stage.

The Church teaches: "*God has wisely disposed laws and rhythms of fecundity which, of themselves, cause a separation in the succession of births. Nonetheless the Church, calling men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life.*"³⁰ The ethics of Jesus Christ highlights natural law which urges the Christians to transmit life as God called them to do so during the creation. Thus, the ethics of Jesus Christ is transmitted by the Church which wants the Christians to respect the values of human dignity in conjugal life. This is the reason why Jesus Christ teaches the Christians to respect the marriages of others and for these reasons he teaches them how to promote the values in conjugal

²⁸ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, q. 94, art.2.

²⁹ Pope Paul VI, the Encyclical Letter "On Human Life", 18-19

³⁰ Ibid, 11.

love following the laws that are transmitted by the Church. In warning the people not to divorce, Jesus teaches the Christians to emulate fidelity and abstinence in conjugal life.

Jesus regarded things as they are directed to serve the unique end of eternal life because He always warned his disciple not to put too much their hope in earthly pursuits and wealth; rather the disciples should gaze their eyes on eternal kingdom of God. The natural law of Jesus promotes the values of human life as he showed us in healing the sick and raising the dead; it was incompatible with mosaic laws to touch a person suffering from leprosy but he breached this natural order and he healed many persons who were rejected because of this illness. Tissa states:

What Jesus is proposing are new values concerning society and social relationships. He is presenting a new attitude towards human life, a new culture in which the human person and service to him are a supreme concern. In this sense the message he brings from God is human-centred. It is different from the type of values prevailing in Jewish and Roman society which he contested. His teaching can be the basis of a permanent critique and contestation of hypocrisy, bigotry and selfishness which are inbuilt in human nature and consequently in human institutions.³¹

Jesus went beyond what was naturally conceived; for instance he sat with the sinners and women who were considered as inferior beings in comparison to men. Thus, the ethics of Jesus, prohibits all kinds of discrimination which was naturally legitimate.

Jesus rebuked dehumanization based on various forms of social injustice hidden in social and political institutions in order to pay

³¹ Tissa Bahasuriya, OMI. *Jesus Christ and Human Liberation*. Sri Lanka : A Centre for Society and Religion Publication, September, 1976, p. 54

attention to those were exploited and oppressed like the widow that He described in the Gospel of Luck who was denied her rights by a judge.³² The moral values of Jesus stress on human dignity that is a call addressed to each one of us to take care of the poor as it happened to the rich man and Lazarus.³³

Peace

Peace is a sine qua none condition of human existence. Without peace human life would be a hazard. This is the reason why there is no wonder that Jesus' ethics promotes peace and justice. Jesus said: "*happy are you the instruments of peace because you shall be called the children of God*".³⁴ The ethics of Jesus teaches the Christians that they must be the instruments of peace forgiving one another as He essentially teaches in the prayer of "Our Father". Peace was the central message of Jesus after his resurrection. When Jesus appeared to his disciples he told them: "*Peace be with you*"³⁵. Human life is possible if all human beings accept the message of one of the beatitudes which called them to be peacemakers.

Peace of Jesus is only possible if the Christians forgive one another. Thus, ethics of Jesus stresses on the virtue of forgiveness and reconciliation; it is the ethics which promotes unity and coexistence among his people. Our Father in heaven shall forgive us if and only if we forgive one another.³⁶ Love, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation are the core virtues that we can draw from the ethical teachings of Jesus. Without peace, human life will be impossible because the state of war of all against all will reign as Hobbes said in Leviathan; the stronger will eliminate the weaker.

³² Luck 18, 1-8

³³ Luck 16, 19-31

³⁴ Mathew 5, 9

³⁵ Luke, 24, 36.

³⁶ Mathew 6, 14-15

Conclusion

Ethics of Jesus is a steppingstone on which the Christians can rely to stand firmly and unshakably in refuting the erroneous opinions of moral anarchy based on the fact of denying natural law which is the basic foundation of Social Catholic Teachings. The denial of natural law has led some people to deny life in all its forms gravely violating the basic human rights of an unborn; it has led some people to offend the plan of God of procreation propagating marriages between the men and men and between women and women.

Ethics of Jesus teaches the respect of life. His ethics is the fountain of life from which the Christian can fetch the water of life. In following the ethics of Jesus, the Christians will have life in Him. If the Christians adopt another way of life which contradicts the ethics of Jesus they will face insurmountable challenges. Thus, Jesus' ethics is the light which shows the way of life; it directs to the eternal life which is the purpose of our pilgrimage on earth. The ethics of Jesus is the foundation of the conception of universal and objective moral principles. Thus, Jesus is the foundation of the values.

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Taking Care of the Sick People in Small Christian Communities

Rodwick Chigumete

Sickness has always been viewed as a fall from God's grace, caused by sin and evil. The first man, Adam chose to rebel against God; thus cut himself from Him, and hence became imperfect, vulnerable to sickness and eventually died. (Gen. 2:17; 3:1-19; Ps. 36:9). Sickness has therefore been linked to sin ever since. According to CCC 1502, the man of the Old Testament leaves his sickness in the presence of God. It is before God that he laments his illness, and it is to God, Master of life and death, that he implores healing. Informed by this school of thought, I am looking at how the sick are cared for, spiritually and physically, in their communities in line with the dictates of Sacred Scripture, focusing on the role of the Small Christian Community (SCC).

Spiritual Care

The SCC is viewed as the primary Church, a family of worshipers of the "Body of Christ." It is the Community where everyone is bound to be part of the society. The society therefore takes responsibility in the welfare of its people, with an underlining thought that "we are created for the other." It is through all men that the right relationship of the entire world of Christ is established, to be partakers in redemption and salvation, and it is through such groupings that this can be achieved (Flannery 767-68).

When one falls sick in a community, members of the SCC arrange special prayer visits for the sick, with frequency being determined by the intensity of the illness. The prayer sessions are meant to keep the spirit of the sick up, so that he may not feel neglected. It is always during the time of sickness that we get close to God. It therefore becomes more appealing to the sick when members of their community come for prayer, as this will give them hope and feel God's visit and presence. CCC 1503 states that Christ has compassion toward

the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity, are a sign that “God has visited His people” and the Kingdom is at hand. This is how visits by members of the SCC help in the healing of the sick person; the presence of Christ.

The SCC leadership has the responsibility of informing the priest, of the sickness in the area. Our priests have dedicated days for visits to the sick. This is a very welcome development that gives hope to our sick and help in recovery psychologically as they feel they still belong to the greater community of Jesus Christ. With the prayers, penance and the communion offered by our priests, the sick are spiritually uplifted and feel the belonging to the society.

We have ministers of the Eucharist, who every Sunday visit the sick and administer communion. This is also one positive development that our parish has kept going which is greatly appreciated. The sick are not left to their close family alone but are included in the greater community of Christ.

Physical Care

The leadership of the SCCs are required to assess situations on the physical care of the sick. Where families are found to struggle in terms of finance, which may affect the supply of food and medicines for the sick, they bring the issue to the community and discuss ways of how the family might be helped. It does not help to pray for someone and then leave him hungry when there is a clear sign that hunger is going to kill him. As St. James says; “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:14-26) it is from the schooling of this scripture that the community must be concerned with the physical welfare of the sick. Those who can afford, do bring the necessities on individual basis and offer for the sick.

Conclusion

A sick person requires attention. He gets it from his close family members, but if that attention is spread to the greater community, he

gets extra hope of life and feels the closeness of God. Care for the sick from a community based perspective, must be greatly encouraged as it brings togetherness in the love of Christ and the Father. It binds communities together and that feeling of “created for the other” grows.

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The Church cannot Afford to be Indifferent to Contemporary Tendencies, a Call from *Gaudium Et Spes* Number 4

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Introduction

As a living reality, the Church is affected by both informal and external forces. In this way, she has to respond to the call of the day if she is to remain relevant. Pastoral theology ought to have a particular vision of the current world and humanity. A vision that must be founded upon the relationship between God and all that He created as revealed in the person, life, and ministry of Jesus Christ. Guided by these views, this article seeks to discuss the proposition that, “In her pastoral endeavors, the Church cannot afford to be indifferent to contemporary tendencies” in the light of *Gaudium et Spes* Number 4.

The Church through the Second Vatican Council situated her reflections of faith directly in relationship with the joys and hopes, the real griefs and anxieties of the world. *Gaudium et Spes* then gives more priority to those who are poor or afflicted in any way. The message of the Gospel and the call to faith must address humanity together with their problems. The message should be grounded on issues of poverty, social injustices, and incurable diseases that are giving the faithful untold suffering.

Accordingly, for the Church to remain relevant and continue proclaiming the Good News effectively, she must recognize her responsibility to understand the dynamics of the world and to address real problems, hopes, and longings affecting humanity in its daily activities (Sachs 5). This means that the Church in her pastoral endeavors has the responsibility of responding to the needs of her members. The answers come from dialoging with the contemporary tendencies and responding to them. Some areas like politics will demand prudence on the part of the Church when addressing them.

A theology that pays renewed attention to life dynamics in the world brews a wonderful theological creativity. “Rather than operating in a detached abstract realm of theological speculation, pastoral theology seeks to pay attention to people’s various life situations and contexts” (Veling 8). Though the Church should not be reduced to a social organization, pastoral care can be provided in hospitals or creation of institutions to deal with AIDS victims and or other pandemics. Pastoral care can work very well with medical care, counseling, and education of people. It is the duty of the Church to provide pastoral care to these victims because the Church always seeks to align herself with the joys and hopes, griefs and anguishes of the people in every moment of their history. Pastoral theology should, “always be attentive to the context of human culture and human experience in its unique singularity and concrete particularity” (Veling 8 – 9). This helps it to be more relevant since it will be dealing with real life situations. The Church as the people of God cannot afford to be indifferent to contemporary tendencies since these tendencies impact on the lives of the people who happen to be members of this reality called the Church.

The understanding of the Church is slowly shifting to the idea of her being the people of God. By being a community of people, the Church has a duty towards its subjects. The word which became flesh in Christ has to become flesh in the members of the Church (John 1: 1). The Church understands herself not just as people without a vision but as people with a pastoral vocation. “The truth of baptism and confirmation confronts people regularly, and they begin to see that being incorporated into the Church carries with it responsibilities” (Harris 23). The message or responsibilities have to be relevant to the space and time in which one is inserted.

The Church has an obligation to continue the healing ministry of Jesus through provision of medical care both physical and psychological. It should also continue to play its prophetic role of exposing the ills of society and also going a step further to rehabilitate the victims of

human selfishness and greed. The Church is made up of people called by the Word of God to make a difference to the world in which they live (Harris 24), and the Church cannot make a difference if she chooses to remain indifferent. In this way, she cannot afford to remain indifferent to contemporary tendencies but as a living reality respond to the needs, hopes, and longings of her members.

Pastoral theology struggles to keep the relationship between the Church and the world open and in a balance. This makes pastoral theology ready to embrace the new dynamics and try to implement them in a way that brings about life to the Church (Veling 7). Reading the signs of the times becomes very important because reality is always there waiting for responses. It is the duty of the Church to avail her people with a vision and hope in her response to the contemporary tendencies. The spirit of *Gaudium et Spes* is to open avenues that makes the Church relevant by being in touch with the realities of life that affect her members at every stage in space and time. The Church remains the source of hope and courage to her members in whatever social, political or economic situation they find themselves in.

At the heart of a pastoral vocation is an attempt to make a difference. Pastoral implies caring for the other and the universe with practical engagement with the same. It is a call to care for the self, the other, and the universe. This makes it impossible for the Church to be indifferent to contemporary tendencies because her life affects what surrounds her and her life is at the same time affected by what surrounds her (Harris 24). This can be understood more clearly through a realization that the Church is a people with a mission. Their mission is “to go into the world and to be in the world as Jesus was, as the revelation of God. The mission of the people who are the Church is to reveal God as present to the world, as God who cares for the world and is in an ongoing relation with the world” (Harris 24 – 25). To actualize this, there is great need to be in touch with the joys and sorrows of the world. To be connected to the reality of the issues affecting the Church and her people.

Borrowing from the thought of Heidegger, Veling affirms that, “practical theology suggests that we cannot separate knowing from being, thinking from acting, and theological reflection from pastoral and practical involvement. Theology is always shaped by, and embodied in the practices of historical, cultural, and linguistic communities” (6). One has to relate with the realities of the time and space to remain relevant in the field of pastoral care. It is important to remain relevant by responding to the joys and sorrows of the people of God because a good pastor will engage the people of God in trying to help them maneuver in the presence of contemporary tendencies. The Church should devise a language which her members understand in responding to their concerns. It should also embark on practical engagement and involvement through works of charity thereby instilling faith and hope in the faithful.

The fact that makes the Church not to be indifferent to contemporary realities is her duty to, “establish mutually critical correlations between an interpretation of the Christian tradition and an interpretation of the contemporary situation” (Tracy 170). Don Browning argues that the work of the Church should remain interpretive or hermeneutical in order to read and interpret the signs of God in the midst of the signs of the times (80). This was exactly what was intended by the Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in *Gaudium et Spes* Number 4. They called for the will to read the signs of the times and respond to them being guided by Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium which is the teaching authority of the Church.

The Church necessarily ought to attend to the conditions of human life in every stage of life her members find themselves in. *Gaudium et Spes* reminds the Church that if she is not paying attention to “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time” (# 1), she will have little or no connection to the realization of the Kingdom of God here on earth. For her to remain relevant, “at all times, the Church carries the responsibility of reading of the signs of the times and of

interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” (*Gaudium et Spes* # 4). At all times, the Church has to be attentive to the needs of herself and of those her life impact, giving concrete responses. This makes her not to afford to be indifferent to contemporary tendencies.

The message of Jesus in the Gospel according to Luke reminds the Church that her duty has to be a visionary responding to the contemporary realities. “When you see a cloud looming up in the west you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does. And when the wind is from the south you say it will be hot, and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the face of the earth and the sky. How is it you do not know how to interpret the present time?” (12: 54 – 56). Veling argues in the same line affirming that the Church cannot afford to be indifferent to contemporary realities when he says, “to read the signs of the times is one of the most difficult tasks, yet it is a theological imperative” (17). It is one of the elements pastoral theology cannot do without thus it has to embrace the contemporary tendencies with a concrete response.

Pastoral theology is primarily interested in hermeneutics and the art of interpretation. It calls the Church to listening and paying great attention to the biblical testimony and the way biblical testimony has been understood across generations. The word of God is a word always addressed to humanity and for humanity, which is why it calls for a response. Reading the signs of the times means paying attention to the concern of God for the world. It also means listening and responding to contemporary questions and issues, instead of shying away from these questions and issues, the Church has the duty to respond (Veling 25).

The living word of God addresses humanity in the signs of life which happens to it. The Second Vatican Council can be credited for opening the eyes and ears of the Church to dialogue and engagement with the world. This matches the definition of theology as faith seeking understanding. This understanding cannot be alienated from the

context in which humanity finds itself in. Understanding is something that affects the way in which humanity lives. It is guided by revelation (Veling 44).

Conclusion

Pastoral theology calls for selfless people who are concerned with the welfare of the entire universe. In simple terms, the work of pastoral theology is a vocational work in which the purpose of the pilgrim Church is the will of God for the universe. The whole idea is to respond to the call of the moment guided by the divine will. The Church has to be active and thoughtful. This makes her not to risk being silent or indifferent to realities around her since she has a responsibility to proclaim the truth and live the truth.

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The Complex Nature of the African Business Environment

Michael Kyalo S.J.

Abstract

The complex issues encapsulated in the African business environment can be settled from a moral perspective. For instance, the problem of corruption, poverty, unemployment, poor working conditions, poor systems of social control, illiteracy, bad governance and the lack of proper information disclosure. Such dilemmas in most cases emerge from undemocratic systems of governance. Undemocratic systems undermine democratic structures, systems of checks and balances, and the safe-guarding of common well-being. The consequences are a palpable increase in social injustices *cum* corrupt practices that include rampant embezzlement of funds and nepotism. As such, these consequently lead to an unwarranted violation of human rights.¹ Such immoral practices project a tragic failure in our duty as human beings and responsible stewards vested with the noble duty to safeguard/protect the dignity of others. This is emphasized by the teachings of the Christian worldview²: “In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me” (Matthew 25: 40).³

Introduction

Although the African way of living used to be largely communal, that does not seem to hold any longer. As the rich get richer, the poor are becoming marginalized. Morality is no longer considered *en masse* as

¹ The Ecumenical Trust for Justice and Peace in Kenya stresses that human rights: “...are God-given and are therefore, inherent, and inalienable. This means that you are born with them, they should not be violated nor should they be taken away from you. These rights are natural to our humanity because they enable us to live like human beings” (The Ecumenical Trust 1).

² B. J. Walt defines Christian worldview as “an integrated, interpretive set of confessional perspectives on reality which underlies, shapes, motivates and gives direction and meaning to human activity” (Walt 39).

³ All scriptural quotations in this work are from the New Jerusalem Bible.

far as the acquisition of wealth or doing business is concerned. For that reason, the African business environment, like everywhere else, requires an approach which is integral and encompassing in nature. The African business environment faces a myriad of problems that include the following: corruption, lack of employment, poor working conditions, poverty, poor systems of social control, illiteracy, bad governance and lack of proper information disclosure among others. These problems are too sophisticated to be addressed without a personal commitment to re-construct our ways of thinking and functioning. Thus, moral responsibility is recommended. Accordingly, the article will treat the African business environment and ethics, the sources of harmful practices in the African business environment and conclude with some recommendations that can be instrumental in remedying the situation. I begin with the African business environment and ethics.

The African Business Environment and Ethics

The application of ethics⁴ in business is piquant. Any harmful way of behaving affects all aspects of relating in business and otherwise. In this consideration, the application of ethics in an African business context is very complex. For example, corruption in business dealings creates a vacuum of distrust, which is detrimental towards the development of a socially integrated society.

Ethics or morality should be distinguished from other values since it is not all values that are moral. The way we relate with others depends on our particular values. As argued by Bestuursetiek, “there is no way in which values of the people involved in bribery could be described as moral values.”ⁱ Hoffman and More in their claim that ethics is the study of what is good or right for human beings suppose the idea of good values and how they should be encouraged.ⁱⁱ Morality is a concept which transcends individual interests to the interests of

⁴ I use the term ‘Ethics’ here to refer to norms governing human behaviour both mental and practical.

everyone. This is the purpose of business ethics in the sense that business should be done in tandem with moral principles. Our business actions will be appropriate if they promote the common good of the others.

In the African situation as well as in other parts of the world, there have been loopholes in as far as the practice of morality in business is concerned. These loopholes can be explained theoretically through the way in which individuals or members of a group progress through stages of moral growth. As a human institution, business matures to moral stance through a train of stages.

Three Stages of Development to Moral Maturity in Business

As argued by G. J. Rossouw, there are three stages that propel to moral maturity in business. These three stages are: the **survival phase**, **reactive phase** and **pro-active phase**.ⁱⁱⁱ The process to moral maturity is not obvious for it may happen or not happen at all depending on various conditions and circumstances.

At the **survival phase** one can make any desperate move to survive in business. In such a situation, the key idea is to behave in a way that enables one to remain in business. This may include bluffing, exploitation of customers or the marketing expired products among others. It is otiose therefore to talk of morality in such a situation. As Bestuursetiek puts it, “In this situation, moral considerations are often overridden by the prospect of material gain, people cannot afford losing any income whatsoever.”^{iv} However, business people who wish to make progress in business have to learn how to deal with their consumers. Otherwise, very few consumers are ready to deal with business persons who bluff. For Bestuursetiek, “It goes without saying that very few will respect, appreciate or support a business that is continuously involved in cheating, or other immoral activities.”^v

The second stage of business development is the **reactive phase**. This occurs when the minimum requirements for survival have been

achieved and business considers doing business from an ethical perspective. At this level also, business comes to realize the wellbeing of consumers as the only way to make progress in future business transactions. Business which does not respect or deal well with those it offers services is bound to collapse for they will seek an alternative. Any business destined to flourish is bound to respect the laws of the state, protect ecology and enhance the quality of life of its employees.^{vi} Any sound business therefore is to work towards establishing a modicum of a healthy relationship with the entire society by providing palpable services.

The third level is the **pro-active phase**. Here, business has the responsibility of making ethical decisions. In the previous level the demand for a business to behave morally is determined by the society. A business which wishes to survive has to conform to the needs/demands of the entire society. Under pro-active phase, a business undertaking realizes its pivotal role in the society and opts to operate in a way that promotes the wellbeing of its *clientele*. As Bestuursetiek indicates, “At this stage, business sees itself as an integral part of the larger community and makes an explicit choice to act in such a way that its activities will contribute to the creation of a healthier and more human society.”^{vii}

Most of the business activities at the pro-active level aim at contributing to both people and the natural environment. This is achieved by avoiding exploiting consumers, pollution of rivers and so on. Business begins to consider how it can adjust itself in order to promote the social wellbeing of everyone including ecology. When this is achieved, a business becomes meaningful, popular and quintessential to the society. Astoundingly, most of the businesses in Africa are on the survival stage and morality is not the issue. The aim here is to try by all means to remain in business for the means do not matter whether moral or immoral. However, the survival nature of business does not justify the absence of morality in the way it deals

with others. Hence, the famous old adage that, “We should not do to others what we would not like them do to us.”

The Sources of Harmful Practices in the African Business Environment

One of the elements that promote harmful practices in business is limited resources. This fact propels to high and unhealthy competition. In such a situation, some business persons argue that the concern is basically the survival of the business first before considering other people’s well-fare. For this group of entrepreneurs, the moment one’s survival is at stake it is only human to address one’s own needs first. In other words, it becomes a case of bread first and morals later.^{viii} Peter Singer underscores this fact when he argues that our attempts to assist the needy should never affect our own survival and wellbeing.^{ix} Singer insists that we have to struggle for our survival first even though this is not morally justifiable. However, Singer’s position is fundamentally problematic because human dignity is sacrosanct. In my view, although most of the businesses in Africa are in the survival stage, the survival nature of business may not justify the absence of morality in the way it handles its customers or transacts its business. Further complication in the African business environment is highlighted by the following factors:

Corruption

The tales and trails of corruption have thrived in most of the African countries since independence days. Corruption is a ubiquitous phenomenon that poses threat to institutions, governing structures and accountable leadership. Corruption Like climate change, crop pests, dirty politics and mismanagement is a major threat to development in Africa. For instance, “Leaders and experts say “dirty,” politics and poor management of resources are hurting the agriculture sector leading to persistent food insecurity in the continent.”^x Speaking during this year’s African Green Revolution Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer said “corruption in agriculture sector and vested interests of

politicians and government officials, have serious impact on food production.”^{xi} Underscoring the same concept, Dr. Frazer said, “A leader gets elected today and the following day starts accumulating money for the next election’s campaign. The few projects they implement are meant to attract votes and not to empower the people.”^{xii} Rockefeller Foundation president Rajiv Shah said, “It is a fact that corruption in agriculture sector is rampant and it needs strong leaders to uproot it,” said Dr. Shah. He added that if corruption is tackled properly, agricultural production could increase even in the face of climate change and other threats be-devilling the sector.”^{xiii}

In a country like Kenya, corruption has affected agricultural production in large scale ranging from distribution of fake fertilizer to importation of contraband food items that flood the market to the detriment of local farmers. Agriculture PS (Permanent Secretary) Richard Lesiyampe and former National Cereals and produce Board (NCPB) managing director Newton Terer are currently facing corruption charges relating to a 5.6 billion maize purchase that saw thousands of farmers short-changed as cartels lined their pockets with money.^{xiv} The African Union (AU,) during its 30th Assembly of Heads of State and Government held early this year in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, declared 2018 the year of fighting corruption, saying the vice is a hindrance to sustainable development.^{xv}

In common parlance, corruption can be expressed as an abuse of public responsibility, a conduit to fulfill egotistic interests. As an epitome of structural chaos, K. S. Kuhumba describes it as “an abuse of the power that has been entrusted to officials presiding over public institutions. It includes fraud, bribery, and rejection of established ethical conduct.”^{xvi} From a political perspective, M. McMullan elaborates on what it means to be corrupt by saying, “a public official is corrupt if he accepts money...for doing something that he is under duty to do anyway, that he is under duty not to do, or to exercise a legitimate discretion for improper reasons.”^{xvii} For Varda Eker, Corruption is

nexus to the “practice of using the power of office for making private gain in breach of laws and regulations nominally in force.”^{xxviii}

E. Ekweme defines corruption as “the violation of the fundamental human desire to know, to ask further relevant questions, especially moral questions that pertain to the individual’s wellbeing and that of his or her fellow human beings irrespective of the family, kin, country, institution, race, and country.”^{xxix} In Kenya for example, trade in illegal sugar and other commodities has been thriving for years with the full knowledge of authorities—Kenya Bureau of Standards, Kenya Revenue Authority, Kenya Ports Authority, Anti-Counterfeit Agency, the Police and investigative agencies have always known the presence of illegal trade.^{xx} As a case study, K. Kuhumba cites the venture of multinational companies from the developed world that bstride the continent like a colossus in search for resources that include minerals, scrap metal and fossil fuel among others. Wherever these multinationals have succeeded in their venture, the outcome is achieved in cahoots with the germ of local leaders.

E. Ekwueme refers to this wanton malpractice as “‘corruption-with;’ that is, where shareholders of multinational companies collaborate with local leaders to carry out fraudulent activities.”^{xxxi} Similarly, the same multinationals are also said to purchase huge swathes of land for agribusiness or mining hence compelling locals to be evicted from their ancestral dwellings. For them, its business first without bothering about what happens to the *hoi polloi*. This fact propels to what Ekwueme calls ‘corruption-against’ a kind of mismanagement that denies people from benefiting from resources fraudulently harvested from their land.^{xxii} Corruption therefore has rampantly played a key role in engendering environmental pollution, ethnic conflicts *cum* tensions, land clashes and persistent lack of job opportunities.

Bad Governance

Dictatorship regimes in Africa have contributed towards the lack of moral practices in business. Due to porous systems of governance,

material individualism operates as the order of the day in most of the African countries. Any clinched political position is meant to influence and enhance the proverbial saying that “it is our time to eat.” As argued by Van Der Walt, “Government is only a tool for enhancing the welfare of the individual or certain social classes like politicians, retired army generals and so on.”^{xxiii} Here, the duty of the government to propel its energies to common good is debilitated.

In such situations human rights are always at stake where consumers are exploited through poor quality products and underpayment among others. Such consumers cannot make any complaints against this especially in places where corruption is rampant otherwise they may risk their jobs. As it stands, this is against the *ethos* of human rights. Consequently, it is hard for employees or even consumers to challenge business persons when they violate their consumers rights. Donna J. Wood claims that “The under developed or even lack of democratic procedures make it extremely difficult for workers and employees and consumers to respond effectively when business people treat them morally.”^{xxiv}

Lack of Employment

Lack of employment is a common phenomenon in Africa. Most of the African countries are constantly grappling with the issue of shortage of jobs most especially for the youth. For instance, Zimbabwe’s economists predicted that the number of the unemployed was growing very high to the extent of hitting 50 and 60 per cent from 1999 to 2000. Some years back more than 30, 000 workers lost their jobs. Under employment is becoming a way of life for the broad mass in most of the African countries.^{xxv} Consequently, the rate of inflation continues to rise as interest rates continue to multiply; such a situation is said to breed a high rate of unemployment.

Furthermore, a country like South Africa, which has an estimated population of about 14 million is able to create about 30, 000 jobs or more every year in its formal sector. However, economists have

already suggested that this may not be the case for the next few years. In short, many people in Africa are generally going through difficult economic crisis hence widening the chasm between the rich and the poor. Lack of employment is in most cases caused by corruption and monopolization of resources. Such situations are highly challenged by the Second Vatican Council which claims that “there must be made available to all humanity everything necessary for living a life truly human, such as food, clothing, shelter;...the right to education, to employment...”^{xxvi}

Poor Working Conditions

Most of the business companies in Africa cannot afford to provide better working conditions for their employees. According to the Herald Reporter some years back, “Many companies are not protecting their workers against occupational hazards, including providing them with protective clothing particularly in milling and construction industries.”^{xxvii} Although this poses a lot of risk on people’s lives, the workers involved have little choice apart from working to eke out a living. Annexed to this is the blatant disrespect of workers at their places of work. Some bosses still address workers as unqualified idiots.^{xxviii} Such dilemmas leave people with minimal or no option at all. In such cases, morality becomes otiose.

Poverty

Poverty has different interpretations to different people. The poverty emphasized here is the fact of being impecunious, that is, the lack of means to meet the basic human needs in order to function economically or socially. A. Dale defines poverty as “a lack of sufficient resources, or money or to obtain nutritious food, rest, shelter, clothing in cold areas, medical care and sanitation in civilized nations, recreation and entertainment in affluent ones.”^{xxix} In most of the African countries people are so poor to the extent of not being able to afford a meal every day. Such problems have propelled many to engage in immoral practices as a conduit to earn a living. Due to high poverty levels, consumers have also not been able to make a clear

distinction between fake and genuine products as counterfeits and contraband dominate the market. Peter Warutere argues that “poverty is a major contributing factor particularly in the consumption of illicit alcohol and drugs, where consumers make choices based on price.”^{xxx} This can be directly linked to Carr’s argument which compares business to a game of poker.

Poor Systems of Social Control

Another problem that breeds immorality in the African business milieu is the absence of social control by the community in which a business offers its services and products. Any society has got a right to be treated fairly in the services it receives from business enterprises. Previously, we highlighted on reactive phase as the first level towards moral growth. This simply means fulfilling the needs of the society hence promoting common good.^{xxxi} In order to meet the needs of the society from business, the society has to be well structured, and well informed about their rights in the sense that business has the obligation to handle its consumers appropriately. Environmental consumer watch dogs are pressure groups that have to be put in place if need be. This is lacking in most African business contexts. Even where they exist, their influence is extremely minimal.

Illiteracy

There is a very close relationship between education and poverty. Going to school is very expensive and actually has become a luxury because it can be afforded by a handful. Some people have qualified to join secondary schools or even universities but due to lack of money they are unable to carry on with their education. For that reason, the level of education acquired depends on the amount of money one can afford. As Bobbs Merrill indicates, “A person is likely to get education in proportion to how much one has.”^{xxxii} This has contributed a lot towards the violation of people’s rights since they are not well informed. For example, in business people will buy a particular product just because it is well advertised while they may not be critical

about its side effects or a business person who sells expired products not knowing they can harm people health wise.

Since the greatest resource in every society is the development of people's minds, African societies need to work for a way of offering free education. This is the only radical way through which illiteracy can be eliminated. The kind of education offered also must put in to consideration the rapid changes going through the African society, that is, learning helpful courses relevant to make a living. The lack of structured and literate community can propel incessantly towards immoral practices in African business environment.

Lack of Proper Information Disclosure in Marketing Products

In business transactions, when consumers are not given adequate information, it compromises the decisions that they are likely to make. The poor, the elderly, and other marginalized groups have often been victims of exaggerated prices, substantial or highly priced products which they cannot afford from their skewed income. Arguing from the human rights point of view, workers have the right to proper, safe and healthy working conditions. By 'human rights' here I mean the existence of some condition to which persons are entitled simply because they are human beings or citizens of a nation.^{xxxiii} Employers are therefore obliged to establish safe working conditions for their workers. In such a case, workers have the right to be informed about the risks involved in a particular job.

Similarly, some employers in most cases do not inform workers about the harmful effects that may be involved in their work places. For example, inhaling poisonous gases or the handling of dangerous chemicals if inhaled. It is not easy to determine the amount of information to be disclosed to workers by a particular company but workers need at least to be warned about the dangers involved. Although employers may warn their workers about the dangers involved in their working environment, there may be no law to protect the company from being sued by affected workers. This is a dilemma

facing many business enterprises. As Donna Wood indicates, “The problem of companies is that disclosure of information on possible health hazards does not protect them from lawsuits from workers injured or sickened on the job.”^{xxxiv}

In order to avoid being sued by affected workers (through which a business might lose a staggering amount of money), most business corporations opt to keep the information secretly until a case is proved to be true. As Wood continues to argue, “The temptation is therefore to resist disclosure until health hazards have been proven, rather than giving workers information about chemicals they have been using or other hazards they have been facing which may provide ammunition for future lawsuits.”^{xxxv} Lack of proper information to workers about the dangers involved in a working milieu are quite serious. The reason being, the workers are not well informed to make a free choice on whether to accept the job or not. Also consumers who are not well informed about a particular product end up disenchanted while their needs are not professionally met. Zoeb Tayebjee’s claims that “Some supermarkets have various brands that look genuine from the colour and mode of packaging. Arresting the dealers, he adds, is laudable but more importantly educate the public on how to tell if a product is genuine or not.”^{xxxvi} Once consumers have the proper knowledge about a certain products, it is easier for them to tell the difference between genuine products from counterfeit.

Recommendations

In my attempts of trying to address the malaise, I have developed a repertoire of themes that I believe can be pivotal in restoring sanity into the African business environment. As far as I am concerned, these themes are: good stewardship, respecting rights of consumers, professional management and administration, proper checks and balances against corruption and the Christian Worldview. I begin with good stewardship.

Good Stewardship

The term steward/stewardship is etymologically coined from the Greek word *oikonomos*. In common parlance, stewardship is also closely connected to the term, economics. *Oikonomos* therefore refers to an authentic or a genuine house keeper. According to K. Kuhumba, stewardship with regard to management of natural resources involves care-holding where natural resources are managed not to fulfil the egoistic needs of the managers but to provide for both the living and the generations to come.^{xxxvii} As social beings, God persuades every human person to be an accountable steward. For B. Mondin,

Man is created in the image of God, among other reasons, by the mandate received from his creator to subject and dominate the earth. In execution of this mandate, every human being reflects the same action of the creator of the universe.^{xxxviii}

As stewards we have a duty to take good care of environment by ensuring that it becomes prolific even in business. Business as such is not simply a conduit of producing goods and services for consumption as articulated by the capitalistic ideology, neither is it a liberation for man as Marxist socialist ideology pontificates. Business in this case should be a fulfilling task, a vocation to service. However, it is important to note that stewardship is not only business oriented but an aspect that permeates each aspect of life.

In his Encyclical *laudato Si*,¹ Pope Francis argues that human beings are persuasive and relentless in operating like self-proclaimed lords and masters possessing intrinsic claims to violate the world (our common home) of her God given resources. Such violence which is candidly visible in our hearts, propelled by sin, is also noticeable in the environmental destruction facing soil, water, and air in various spheres of life. “This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she groans in travail” (Rom 8:22).^{xxxix} As endowed stewards, we therefore possess candid responsibility towards God, towards nature and also towards our neighbour.^{xl} The obvious way of taking responsibility towards others as business people is by being genuine and transparent in the

way we do business. As stewards we have the onus to take care of creation to the level of being fruitful even in business.

Respecting Rights of Consumers

As human institutions, businesses provide goods and services for the purpose of improving the standards of living for its consumers, but sometimes they damage peoples' livelihoods, exploit workers and even displace people from their homesteads. In case of such unanticipated tragedies, it has always been a devastating experience for the affected to find the appropriate means to have their claims addressed. For most of the communities, it is a Sisyphean task to hold such businesses accountable due to candid absence of proper legal structures in business operations and obligation. Alternatively, the Kenyan Constitution for example, bears the significant legal provisions as far as the grammar of rights is concerned.

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPBS) also acknowledges the responsibility of any business enterprise as far as human rights are concerned. In tandem, those businesses that violate consumer's rights should be compelled under the relevant legal procedures to shoulder the responsibility of any harm suffered or inflicted on their business clientele. For example, the tragedy of the Nyakinyua villagers in Solai (Nakuru County) following the collapse of its dam walls on the fateful night of May 9th 2018. The dam unleashed roughly 70 million litres of water cascading tragically down slope. As reported, "the water and the sludge left 47 people dead and 2000 homeless and destroyed property and infrastructure worthy millions of shillings."^{xli}

Consequently, all the business operations of the company (Patel Coffee Estate Limited) are subject to applicable laws and regulations enforceable by State institutions such as the National Environment Management Agency (NEMA and Water Resources Authority (WEMA)).^{xlii} As stipulated by the Constitution of Kenya Article 20

(1), “the Bill of rights applies to all law and binds all state organs and all persons equally.”

As human institutions therefore, businesses have the obligations to produce safe products and enterprising services to their consumers. In case, a manufactured product causes harm to its consumers, the manufacturer must take responsibility as stipulated by the law. The *ethos* of producing quality products can cushion manufacturer companies from incurring colossal loses through compensation. Ensuring safety in the production of goods and services should in most cases determine the *raison d'etre* of any prominent business.

In the case of Patel Coffee Estate Limited dam tragedy, both the government of Kenya and the company have shared responsibility to protect, promote and vindicate the rights of the victims of the tragic event. As argued by R. W. Kimotho, In 2008, the UN adopted the “Protect, Respect and Remedy framework and human rights that hinged on *three main pillars*: State duty to protect citizens against human rights abuses by third parties, including business; corporate responsibility to respect human rights; and the need for governments and businesses to ensure effective access to remedies.”^{xliii}

In similar vein, the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 approved 31 UNGPs, that operate as an authoritative blueprint on how to conduct business *vis-à-vis* the grammar of rights. The Kenya government is currently working on National Action on Business and Human Rights in reference to the three pillars cited previously. Article 21 (1) of the Kenyan Constitution acknowledges the duty of the State to promote human rights from being violated by third parties including business entrepreneurs. This will practically be achieved through promulgated laws and other legal means of proceeding with regard to operating businesses. The Article also stipulates enforcement mechanisms in reference to such significant laws and a process of redress to victims of any harm caused whenever such laws are violated in pursuit of any business transactions.

Business corporations should therefore operate without violating the rights of their employees, the rights of communities annexed to them, the rights of their consumers and those of the entire society. Any business that causes harm to its consumers should seek appropriate means to address the perpetrated harm. Since it is not obvious for a business to detect its role in violating other people's rights, the UNGPs calls upon ALL businesses to be aware of its responsibility as far as human rights are concerned, to protect and embellish human rights carefully and responsibly. For R. W. Kimotho, "Businesses need to regularly conduct human rights impact assessments or integrate human rights into environmental and social impact assessments."^{xliv} For instance, a prompt inspection of the Patel Dam tragedy before the long rains could have been instrumental in identifying the possibility of a titanic overflow to the detriment of hapless inhabitants of the milieu. That way a plausible solution would have been established to remedy the situation in advance.

Any promising business should therefore ensure proper checks and balances are in place and establish—reliable means that ensure their operations do not by any means violate other people's rights. Many at time, businesses focus on maximizing profits rather than promoting people's rights or even producing quality products and noble services which contradicts the essence of business.

Professional Management and Administration

For any sound organization to achieve its prospective goals, professional management is quintessential. T. Erickson argues that, management is the driving force that leads, guides, and directs an organization towards the accomplishment of pre-determined goals and objectives.^{xlv} As an administrative strategy, management can be exercised through a myriad of activities that include planning, monitoring and evaluation, recruiting competent staff and establishing tight control systems. Good management skills that pay attention to

the welfare of the personnel and the world in general is prolific for any promising and reliable business venture.

In similar vein, Bob Collymore, CEO, Safaricom (one of the leading telecommunication companies in Kenya) and a member of the B Team⁵ argues “There is no business argument for a world that continues to consume and produce itself into oblivion. We need an economic system that does a better job of extending prosperity to all, reducing inequality, and preserving the planet for the future generations.”^{xlvi} This is the germ of ideology behind the prospects of the B Team with regard to efficiency and productivity in doing business.

The organization is upbeat to reach out to CEOs, various investors and business entrepreneurs and equip them with the required skills on how to manage their businesses in a more productive, profitable and transparent manner. B Team is encouraging business leaders to channel their efforts in three main initiatives: Net Zero green-house gas emissions by 2050; Governance & transparency; 100 per cent Human at Work.^{xlvi} A healthy business environment is that in which employees feel valued and their work highly appreciated. This way they feel encouraged and fired to produce even more since besides working they also cherish a palpable sense of belonging. As Collymore argues, “Happy employees are better decision makers, more effective managers and become better leaders, and that results in happy customers and better business performance. This has made employee satisfaction a critical function of the leadership team, and this is where “100pc human at work” begins.”^{xlvi}

Collymore^{xlvi} gives five elements that he believes can be instrumental towards establishing professional and transparent management. First, acknowledge that employees are human beings who desire to be

⁵ Not-for-profit initiative formed by international business and civil society leaders to advocate for a better way of doing business for the wellbeing of people and the planet.

treated with respect. Leave days, flexible working hours and the ability to switch off after work is a minor investment that can be pivotal in making a business efficient. It is such a great feeling for an employee to sign off with the assurance of having some time to catch some rest. Second, establish a conducive working ambiance in the place of work. Employees should be able to abstract a sense of being at home in the place of work. Third, invest in both personal and professional growth and assist people to bring out the best of themselves. Four, pay attention to relationships by encouraging transparent communication and make an effort to listen. Those employees who feel appreciated and respected can easily cultivate the habit of being transparent, hard-working and can persevere in times of challenges and difficulties.

Proper Checks and Balances Against Corruption

In order to fight corruption, some formidable checks and balances have to be put in place. Some African countries are already in the front line in this regard. Tanzania has the *Tanzania Prevention and Combating of Corruption Institution* (PCCB). Kenya has the *Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission* (EACC). South Africa has the *Public Protector* (PP) while Namibia has the *Anti-Corruption Commission of Namibia* (ACC).¹ Such institutions can be helpful in minimizing the vice that is overwhelmingly becoming problematic even in the world of business.

The Christian Worldview

Business mal-practices in Africa seem to contradict the essence of the Christian worldview of caring for others. The Christian Worldview obliges us to be good and to avoid hurting others.^{li} In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus underscores this idea in the context of God and his relationship with man. “You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy; but I say to you love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be the sons of your father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5: 43-45).

Business persons have the candid obligation to heed the noble words of I. Kant that underscore the Christian worldview: “Now I say, man and, in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will. In all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, he must be regarded at the time as an end.”^{lii} The ideal Christian conception that God is love is the first step towards being ethical in business. Since God himself is holy and full of love, human beings, created in His image need to exercise this love. As Jesus says in the gospel of Mark: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk 12:31).

Conclusion

Although business and ethics are compatible, the African business environment has been complicated to some extent in as far as the integration of ethics and business is concerned. Such an exacerbation has been jettisoned by a number of factors that propel businesses to operate against moral business practices although this fact does not make immoral practices moral. A pronounced awareness in some of these factors can help raise concerns on how the African society is organized, managed or governed by practices that at times can be harmful to business. As a consequence of this complication, the paper argues for moral sobriety and responsibility as a tenable way in dealing with some of the moral dilemmas persisting in the African social milieu. First, the African business environment should consider carefully the suggested solutions that most probably bear some insights that can be pivotal in addressing problems in business. Second, since we have an African worldview, philosophy and culture, these are already stepping stones towards the establishment of formidable structures with regard to doing business in a manner that promotes common good, justice, fairness and respect for human rights. Third, Anti-Counterfeit agencies in our respective countries should scale up consumer awareness campaigns to regulate consumer’s inclination for contraband goods and services. It is the responsibility

of such agencies to educate consumers not to engage in malpractices that threaten moral principles in business. Fourth, Anti-Counterfeit Agencies should be in the forefront to educate consumers on the bad-side of acquiring fake certificates online, or from unscrupulous colleges because this contributes to both illicit trade in knowledge and technology products.^{liii} Lastly, any effort made towards creating moral consciousness in the society will be instrumental in the fight against all kinds of illegal trade, cushion the drivers of economic development and nurture a booming social renaissance.

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Wisdom and the Place of Wisdom Literature in the Thinking of Sages

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Introduction

Among the most prominent thoughts in Christian theology is Wisdom Literature. People often ask what the concept “wisdom” means and if at all there is the place of Wisdom Literature in the thinking of the sages. This article seeks to explore the above question. The paper will do this first, by identifying and discussing the concept of wisdom and thereafter, the place of Wisdom Literature in the thinking of the sages. Among others, it will argue by the use of various scholars, that the sages’ position of Wisdom Literature as a phenomenon is not unique to Israel; it is a universal reality, a creation of God or object of faith, and also as secular or human experiential reality.

The Concept of Wisdom

The term wisdom has a number of connotations. Roland Murphy understands wisdom [*hokmah* in Hebrew and *Sophia* in Greek] as a wider ranging term designating the skill of an artisan [Exod 36:8], loyal judgement [1 Kgs 3:28], cleverness [Prov 30:24-28], proper rules of conduct [Prov 2:1-22], piety [Job 1:1], or a way of coping with life (447).

Scott asserts that wisdom corresponds to what we usually think of today; that is, sagacity, insight and good judgement, in the light of human values and goals. Importantly, there is no sharp lines differentiating wisdom from knowledge as in old times in Ancient Israel as the wise man then was with some special skill and above all a man who could teach others because he had superior understanding on how life ought to be lived and its meaning (3). Scott continues to claim that the primary meaning of *hokmah* is superior mental ability or special skill with no necessarily moral reference. Broadly speaking, the moral and religious element is a later enlargement of the meaning

of the term. Yet somewhere, Scott tells us that in Job 38:36, thus, “who gave the ibis wisdom and endowed the cock with foreknowledge?” Here, *Hokmah* simply means intelligence as affirmed or denied to natural objects (7). Natural objects like stones and plants are claimed to possess neither wisdom nor intelligence. Animals too lack wisdom or reason.

The Place of Wisdom Literature in the Thinking of the Sages

Gerhard von Rad had a special place for Wisdom literature in his writings. He regarded Israel’s wisdom as not unique. He notes that the assumption that wisdom was a religious phenomenon of post-exilic Israel proved to be completely out of place as it was clear that it was a phenomenon common to Ancient East, “a cultural commodity with respect to which Israel was to a greater extent a recipient not a donor” (9). This implies that wisdom Literature was never unique to Israel scholars discovered texts similar to Israel’s in other cultures and traditions.

In an attempt to find the place of wisdom literature in the thinking of the sages, Evode Beaucamp preferred to link wisdom to creation and redemption. He asserts that the Lord by wisdom created the earth and is the principal who placed every mortal in existence. Accordingly, this urges one to acknowledge one of the great truths of the Scripture which asserts that, “one and the same plan embraces creation and human history. The creative act, is the first act of the great drama that terminates in the Redemption” (40). Certainly, wisdom belongs to God and it is through the very wisdom that he created everything that exists. The redemption came through the Messiah who is personified with wisdom. This wisdom existed before creation. This is why, for Beaucamp, the Jews were preparing for the coming of the Messiah and were already able to read in the hymn of Proverbs the statement of St Paul “all things are yours” [1 Cor. 3:22-23] (44). That is to say, we own everything in Christ and this very Christ, who is wisdom itself, is God.

In theological writings Claus Westermann gives a more significant and constructive place to creation and wisdom than other writers. Westermann's theological construction consists of two interactive poles: Soteriology [history] and blessing [creation]. His presentation of history follows essentially Von Rad in setting forth an ancient historical credo that becomes the basis for themes or traditions developed in the Exodus-Sinai complex that later joined with the covenant of Deuteronomy. He sees the Old Testament as eschatological in its basis movement, meaning that the goal of history is the salvation of the world. Within this driving thrust of history, Yahweh saves his chosen people through the means of great acts of Redemption.

The second pole, "blessing", incorporates the divine power that preserves and enhances life and undergirds the continuing order of creation. Divine blessing includes the gifts and continuation of the power of procreation, the provision of sustenance, and support for the structure of life (Perdue 35). In his view of the Old Testament, creation is beyond history, meaning that it does not exist with a temporal movement. While creation is a presupposition of faith, it is not a historical saving act and that is not the object of confession. Creation was not the part of the ancient belief for the Old Testament could not conceive of an alternative to God's creation of the world. In his view, creation theology does seek to secure the present by linking the order of reality to the wellspring of prime origins. Creation theology embraces universalism; just as pointed out earlier that Israel inherited its understanding of divine creation from the Ancient Near East, and like its sources, developed two separate traditions: the creation of humanity and order of the two, and creation of the world.

Subsumed in the pole of blessing [creation], Westermann gives wisdom an important place in Wisdom Literature. Wisdom's gifts are maturity, longevity, reproduction, and general enhancement of life but those come as a result of divine blessing. Wisdom sayings summarize God's power of blessing. Like a larger theme of creation, wisdom is

not specifically limited to the chosen people, rather, it is universal in scope. Wisdom and creation share this universalism for God creates, sustains, and blesses all of life. Wisdom is the power, design, and life enhancing gift of God that shapes and undergirds reality (Perdue 26). This means that Westermann offers at least an approach to theology that gives an important place to creation and wisdom. However, while regarded as an important pole of dialectic with history, creation is still not for him an object of faith but rather, only a given that provides a prologue to an Israelite faith still centred in salvation history (Perdue 26).

In approaching creation theology in wisdom tradition, Childs largely summarizes the work of Gerhard Van Rad's wisdom in Israel. Childs notes that wisdom is not a later tradition on Old Testament but rather belongs to the earliest layer of tradition. While rejecting the characterization of early wisdom as secular, Childs still contrasts old wisdom rooted in human experience with late wisdom's propensity for theological reflection. Childs emphasizes that wisdom looks to nature and not history as its theological reflection. Wisdom, not history is the voice of divine revelation in creation that testifies the divine order that provides the basis for faith and life. He notes that at least this is true until Ben Sira finally includes salvation history within the theology. Childs argue that wisdom offers an important witness, for it demonstrates how divine revelation and human experience could be brought into profound harmony without destroying either testimony (32). This implies that wisdom does not rely on history but on creation. Wisdom has God as its origin and it is the same God who brings order in the world. Moreover, revelation and human experience do not contradict each other but rather remain concord in as far as Wisdom is concerned.

Walther Zimmerli agrees that wisdom theology is grounded in creation. Noting the absence of salvation history in the writings of the wise that made their way into Jewish Canon, he contended that wisdom has its own structure for theological expression, while such

divine names like “maker” and “creator” constantly occur in wisdom text (Prov 14:31), he realizes that God is never addressed as ‘God of Israel’ [...] the book does not bring up the theme of election and salvation history. Jesus Ben Sira writing in 2nd early BC is the first to integrate redemptive history and creation (34). Here, it is clear to claim that creation is truly at the centre of wisdom theology implying that it brings together all the dimensions of God-talk as well as man, morality, knowledge and the society at large. It is inclusive.

Many scholars contended that wisdom Literature is largely a human enterprise with its focus on human nature and function. They argue that at least this is true of early wisdom, if not also for the entire realm of canonical literature. Perdue argues that wisdom is either largely concerned with the individual person or with humanity but not with God and the general theme of Israel faith. This is why Zimmerli, early in his study of Literature of the sages, contended that wisdom was in essence the quest to master life. Accordingly, “wisdom is radically anthropocentric” (qtd. in Perdue 34). Thus, he brought the notion of wisdom as a human enterprise and the theological rubric of creation, stressing the nature and role of humanity. Moreover, Zimmerli referred wisdom to an art of steering and argued that the objective of the wise person is in the mastering of life by the means of coming to the knowledge of the world and in applying such knowledge to any and all circumstances in life of humans by means of human institutions (Perdue 34-35).

In the words and thinking of Perdue, each approach to wisdom theology has something to offer and the tradition of the sages is surely directed to the human beings who are invited to take up the call of wisdom. According to him, this call is issued to those who would live in harmony with God, creation and human society and hope to experience wellbeing. Certainly his stand is that “it is incorrect to regard even the earliest stages of wisdom as largely anthropocentric and secular” (45). He continues to say that wisdom, even from the earliest stages is a teaching grounded in the fear of God, an expression

that points both to worship and faithful affirmation that God is Creator and Sustained of life. This again means that efforts to view tradition as basically individualistic are wrong in his view.

Roland Murphy is of the view that wisdom literature is anthropocentric at its base. He points out that the sages asked about human good, which they viewed to rest in long life, health, wealth, children and reputation. He adds that, the focus was on individual not larger groups or nation itself. Truth was “believed to be universal” (802). This means that even the insights from abroad were equally valid and everyone despite nationality difference was allowed to contribute to the thinking arena. Universality of wisdom here, points out the special place that Wisdom literature has in the thinking of the sages, that is to say, no one can limit wisdom to geographic boundary.

Another sole place of wisdom literature in the thinking of the sages is that of looking at wisdom from an international context. Scott notes that Hebrew wisdom was by no means unique phenomenon in the ancient world, but rather, “its literature has been found to have to have much in common with similar records from contemporary records and older cultures notably those of Egypt and Mesopotamia” (23). This implies that Old Testament wisdom literature bears little marks of distinctively Israel belief found in the Law and the Prophets. We can therefore argue that in their debates about wisdom, the sages realize that wisdom literature is not a unique to Israel only but rather, it is a common phenomenon. The international feature wisdom dominates the thinking of the sages.

Walther Zimmerli sought to legitimize wisdom theology, which he correctly characterized as creation theology (Murphy 4). He anchored it in Gen 1:28. Thus the Lord authorizes human dominion over creation-wisdom’s task. He further raised the question whether the creation doctrine and wisdom experience might be considered as possibly a second source of revelation. He denied this and claimed that “what happened was that Israel opened the entire world of creation and

entered it with its faith in Yahweh, by subordinating the realms it discovered there to Yahweh. This is the locus of wisdom lore, whose international character [...] was well known to Israel” (qtd. in Murthy 4). His view of creation reflects his understanding of wisdom, which required neither revelation nor theological reflection. This is to say that, he placed Wisdom as something secular or profane. Simply put, Israel became a people under the overwhelming name, *YHWH* and it was by this name that they identified with the God of creation and the God of wisdom. There was in fact no other alternative for the true believer. That means there is no mark that they regarded creation and wisdom as outside their faith.

Conclusion

This paper identified and discussed the concept of wisdom and the place of Wisdom Literature in the thinking of the Sages. It defined wisdom, among other definitions as the natural ability to make crucial decisions in a particular situation. The article went on to argue that the sages gave a special place to Wisdom Literature in their thinking. They place Wisdom Literature as not a unique phenomenon to Israel, a universal reality, an object of revelation or faith and as a secular or anthropocentric reality, among others.

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An Assessment on the Nature and Consequences of Sin According to the Old, New Testaments, and one of the Patristic Writers

Lovemore Makore CMM

Introduction

A fundamental principle that Christian anthropology teaches is that man is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). On the contrary, having been created in God's image, man is tainted with sin. Revelation in scripture and patristic tradition attempts to explain this reality. This article, assess the nature of sin and its consequences as is revealed in the Old and New Testament as well as Irenaeus' theology of sin.

Sin in the Old Testament

The nature of sin in the Old Testament is quite diverse, explained in many different ways. Sin is even personified in some images found in the Old Testament. Fundamentally sin is conceived as the breaking off of a personal relationship with God (Gelin 11). The first instance we encounter man breaking his relationship with God is in the story of the fall in Genesis 3. In this account, Gelin understands the cause of sin to be the pursuit of inordinate aspiration, one unbefitting to a mortal. In other words, man disobeys the commandment of God not to eat of the tree because of the desire to be at par with God.

Associated with the idea of breaking off of a relationship, is the view of sin as rebellion. In Isaiah 1:2 – 4 the prophet speaks of the rebellion of the nation of Israel towards God. Appended to this rebellion is the abandoning of God that characterizes the behaviour of the people of Israel. A despising of the law of God is what characterizes sin in the Old Testament. Hence to sin is to fail or to miss the target, to fail to follow the precepts of the Lord.

In the Old Testament sin is personified, treated as though it were a being that carries out positive actions attributed to being. In Genesis 4:7, sin is characterized as a crouching beast on the doorstep ready to devour Cain. Hence, in the Old Testament sin is viewed as an active power that corrupts the flesh. The sin of man has its consequences, to the individual, community and humanity at large. Gelin makes reference to Leviticus 19:17 in showing that sin was not only transgression towards God but also the human community (16). Summed up the consequences of sin are alienation from God and the community, punishment on both a personal and corporate level. Pervasion is also a consequence of sin. Sin spreads from one act of defiance to the entire progeny.

In analysis, it is apparent that there cannot be any talk of sin in the Old Testament without mention of a relationship. To be precise, sin cannot be talked of without mention of a covenant. Two very important covenants in the Old Testament are the Adamic and Sinaitic covenant from which we get the Torah. What is also worth noting is that we see a covenant of unequal partners, God being the Superior and man being the subject. Man is supposed to fulfil the law of God. Failure to obey the law of God is to act without concern for one's obligations. Israel sinned because she did not fulfil her obligations towards God.

Complementary to the notion above, is that the consequences of sin reveal the relationship between sin and evil in the world. Sin spreads and it pervades the will of the human person. The serpent in the Garden of Eden is indicative of sin as an active force, a being that pervades the will humans. This active force has the capacity to spread throughout the human race. The defiance of Adam and Eve in the story of the fall of man is the defiance shown by their descendants when they abandon God. Hence sin perverts human being's religious inclination towards God to the glorification of oneself. Religious attention is shifted towards idols, man's own creation. The New Testaments builds on some Jewish anthropology in its concept of sin.

Sin in the New Testament

The Gospels identify the Kingdom of God as the emergence of the reign of God over evil. Christ preaches the message of the forgiveness of sin and repentance as prerequisites to the entry into the Kingdom of God. Albert Descamps says that for Christ sin is all that is resistance to the coming of the Kingdom. Victory over sin is to be understood as the total adherence of the disciple to the cause of the Kingdom (78). The implication being that to be in the state of sin is to be excluded from the Kingdom. This is why Jesus has an empathetic approach towards sinners.

Jesus somehow adheres to the Jewish idea that sickness and death are the wages of sin (Descamps 65). Apart from the liberation from illness and evil spirits, Jesus' healings and exorcisms were also a remedy against sin and its consequences. In Matthew 9:12, Jesus responds to the Pharisees' allegations of him eating with sinners by emphasizing that it is the sick who need a doctor not the healthy. Jesus associates sin with 'sickness'. In Jewish anthropology the salvation of the body is seen as the salvation of the total man: body, soul and spirit. Probably Jesus likened being in the state of sin to sickness of the soul. Paul juggles between the concepts of life in death in his theology on sin.

Sin in Pauline Theology

According to Paul, sin is a power. It is a compulsion or constraint that humans generally experience within themselves or in their social context. A compulsion towards attitudes and actions not always of their own willing or approving (Dunn 112). For Paul sin is a power that fully masters the fleshly, people driven by the passions of the flesh. In accordance with his understanding of sin, Paul personifies it with the imagery of the master as in Romans 7:14. In this text Paul mentions himself as being unspiritual and has been sold as a slave to sin.

Paul outlines the consequences of sin as misdirected religion, self – indulgence and death. Sin creates, according to Paul, perversion of the basic instinct of the creature to honour God. The creature fails to acknowledge God and his dependence on Him. Hence the creature glorifies oneself. Instead of giving ultimate significance to God, humans can readily give that significance to what they more easily define, attain or control like money, governance and idols (Dunn 114). Second, sin then creates self-indulgence. Sin provokes the desires of the mortal body. In Romans 7:7 – 8 Paul says that it was sin that stirred up covetousness. Hence sin creates a desire for something forbidden ‘lust’ or ‘covetousness’.

The last of all the effects of sin is death, says Paul. The outcome of life lived in accordance with the flesh is death (Dunn 125). Sin corrupts the flesh, as Paul puts it and death is the end of the process of decay, the final destruction of the corruptible. In Pauline theology death is seen as the last and worst effect of sin. It is a dominating power, inescapable (1 Corinthians 15:26).

A deep inspection of the New Testament concept of sin and its consequences brings new ideas into light. Its power is greatly emphasized in between the two extreme poles of life and death. A summative analysis would comply with Romans 6:23 that the wage paid by sin is death and the present given by God is eternal life in Jesus Christ. One can concur that sin does have an effect on man’s mortal body. It corrupts the flesh, takes away life from it and this is expressed in moral decay like self-indulgence as Paul puts it.

From a different perspective, sin can then be assessed as the reality that stands between man and his salvation. In Jesus’ healings and exorcisms he utters the statement that the Kingdom of God is upon the one he delivers. This is recognition of how sin brings about disunity in the total man. The soul becomes imprisoned in the body so to say and the spirit also suffers. Therefore sin can be looked at as that active force that pervades the will of man such that he lives in a ‘state of

sickness' through which only repentance and forgiveness of sins can bring about healing.

Irenaeus on Sin

Irenaeus looks at sin from the point of the emergence of sin into the human race and its redemption. He states that sin plays a big part in God's design. He views disobedience as constitutive of the nature of sin (Rondet 45). Sin is a transgression, a disobedience to the command of God. However, in reference to the sin of Adam, Irenaeus defines sin as the growing pains and mistakes of man. He does not take the hard stance that man rebelled against God in the garden but that man erred with the caprice similar to that of an infant (40).

The consequence of sin in Irenaeus' teaching is the loss of immortality and innocence. The major aspect though that man loses is his likeness to God. He defines this likeness to the spiritual similarity we have with God. Like God, before the sin of Adam and Eve, man was like God in that he possessed glory and fullness of grace. Irenaeus sees the loss of this likeness to God as what prompted God's remedy of deification of man through Christ. Hence according to Irenaeus sin is detestable and providential. God, who in his providence had foreseen the evil, also envisaged the remedy (Rondet 49). God recapitulated fallen humanity back to Himself through Christ (Ephesians 1:10). In summary, Irenaeus looks at sin in the context of the entire discourse on the economy of salvation.

There appears to be an overwhelming intersecting of ideas of sin with scripture and the discourse by Irenaeus. Common to scripture and Irenaeus' theology, is that man is in a relationship with God. This relationship is a covenant, governed by the law of God and man is to obey this law. Sin as disobedience is the major description of the nature of sin that runs throughout the Old and New Testaments and is quite elaborated in Irenaeus' theology. However, in the Old Testament not much discourse on sin is from the point of mortality. Paul is quite distinguished in the explanation of sin whose consequence is death.

However, one is inclined to assert that Irenaeus deals with sin quite holistically. He speaks of sin and its consequences in light of the entire dialogue between God and humanity. For him man in the garden was just a ‘new creature’, not yet ready to receive the gift of perfection. Due to this, man made a mistake and experienced growing pains because of his lack of maturity (Rondet 42). In his response in the dialogue, God sends Jesus, the perfect man in whom humanity finds its maturity and fullness. Hence, in Christ’s salvific act of redemption there occurred a filial adoption. In Christ, humanity was adopted to be the children of God.

Conclusion

Sin is an anomaly of the fallen human condition if we are to follow the teaching of scripture. The understanding of sin has developed in different epochs from Old Testament times to the patristic era. However, there have been common understandings towards the phenomenon sin throughout this period. Irenaeus gives a good summation of the reality of sin. It was in God’s design. Having known that man had the propensity to sin; God foresaw a remedy through which man could retain his likeness to God. Sin is part of the whole story of redemption.

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A Scriptural Defence for the View that both Penance and the Sacrament of the Sick are Sacraments of Healing

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Introduction

John 20:22-23 points to the Institution the Sacrament of penance, 'receive the Holy Spirit, if you forgive sin of any they are forgiven and if you retain they are retained. It is therefore, a remedy to those who, after baptism have delivered themselves to the bondage of sin. Anointing of the Sick on the other hand (Mark 6:13), promulgated by Apostle James that the sick are to be presented to the elders of the Church, prayed over and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of the faith will save the sick person and the Lord will forgive the person (James 5:14-15). This article shall use the Scriptural texts to defend the view that both Penance and Sacrament of the sick are sacraments of healing.

Nature of the Sacrament of the Penance and Anointing of the Sick

Penance is a sacrament in which by the virtue of the sin committed after baptism is forgiven by the absolution of the priest. It makes the sinner reject sin, confess and amend one's life in the future hence, suggest conversion or therapy. O'Neils states that, penance is responsible for justification, the transit of person from the state of sin to friendship with God based on grace (O, Neil, 278). Hence, it restores and heals the member of Christ to grace after personal sin for which he now has sorrow. Sometimes it is called Reconciliation because, after the confession an individual feels satisfied and love God who forgives (2 Cor 5:20). The confession of the sins and forgiveness one receives, are related to the reconciliation with God, the Church, in the home, neighbourhood and the whole world hence healing.

On the other hand, Anointing of the sick is a sacrament of the living and not of the dead. The sick are anointed with oil by the priest, then prayers follows. This sacrament strengthens, heals and comforts the soul of an individual. It also remits sin and restores health when God sees it necessary. This sacrament offers a sort of spiritual antidote to the demanding effects of illness. This brings the spiritual healing through the comforting grace of the sacrament. Jesus went on healing the sick in his ministry. He heals the man tormented with evil and anointing of the sick.

Sacrament of Penance and of the Sick as Sacraments of Healing

The sacrament of Penance

Martos in his book, *Doors to the Sacred* talks of Jesus as a sacrament of divine forgiveness to many who had encountered him in his ministry. He talks of (Mark 1:15) as Jesus beginning his ministry with a call to repentance. To those who show sorrow for their sinfulness, he announced that they were forgiven by the power of God (Luke 5:18-26). Christ visited the sinners who were rejected by the society saying that He has been sent to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 7:24), at the same time He spoke of the love of the Father even to those who have strayed away from God. Hence, penance brings reconciliation and healing to the people thereby restoring broken relationship with God (Martos, 314).

From the beginning, man had always known the alienation we call sin. Man yearns to be healed from sin and be made whole again. Jesus made the theme of his ministry, as Salvation. His name Jesus is a translation of the word Saviour. For he shall save his people from sins (Matthew, 1:2). His mission was, repent and believe in Good News (Mark 1:15). He told stories about the prodigal son- the merciful Father and the forgiveness of sins. Luke 24:47, talks of penance for the remission of sins to be preached to all nations (Bausch, 154).

The Acts of the Apostles (19:18), shows how Christians in Ephesus confessed their sins. Some of them had done wrong by dabbling in magic. To express their sorrow, they confessed their sins and burnt their books as a way for seeking healing and reconciliation with God. They realized that that the prayer and forgiveness of the Church are important of being brought back to God. James tells us (5:16) that people should confess their sins to enhance healing within themselves and to God. John in 1:8-9 talks of being aware of our sins that destroy our relationship with God. It is God who cleanses us from all evil (Duffy, 9).

Sacraments are outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace. The outward sign of this sacrament is contrition for sins. Sacraments has matter and form. In penance, the matter is sorrow for the sin. The form is how the church deals with the matter that is confession to the priest that brings healing to the penitent. Matthew (16:18-19) present the confession of Peter. Jesus asked his disciples who people say He is. Simon Peter responded that, 'Christ the Messiah, the Son of the living God'. Jesus then made Peter the rock. He is given the keys for kingdom of heaven in which whatever he binds on earth are bound in heaven and whatever he loosened on earth is loosened in heaven (Bausch, 154).

Matthew (18:18), the context of the previous verse suggest that, 'to bind and to lose' mean that the community has the authority to condemn and to acquit in such a case but where these actions are seen as part of the process of bringing the sinful brother to his senses. In John 20:21-24, he told his disciples that, if they forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them. And if they retain the sins of any, thy have been retained.

The sacrament of penance can also be seen in the context of conversion from sin and turning to God. Luke 22:54-62 and John 21:15-19 present Peter weeping bitterly over triple denial of Christ but he later received

the grace of conversation and confessed love for Jesus. Paul too was converted from persecuting Christians to become one of the greatest disciple of Christ (Acts 9:1-31). Therefore, sin hams our relationship with God and damages our communion with the Church. Conversion is the beginning of healing and getting back to God.

Haring talks of the warning Paul is giving us that the chief source of perversion and misery in human relations is the lack of gratitude to God. Refusal to honour God and to render Him thanks, futile thinking and the misguided mind is plunged into darkness as seen in Romans (1:21-22). The new liturgy of the sacrament of penance directs the celebration of thanksgiving and praise that marks divine milieu that prevails peace and joy hence healthy relationships, we continue to carry on the healing power of the sacrament of Penance (Haring, 182).

The Sacrament of Anointing the Sick

Martos comments that, the disciples of Jesus shared in his ministry of healing. The Gospel recounts that He had sent them out into the country side to cure the sick and preach the good news of the Kingdome (Luke 9:1-6). In Mark (6:12-13), the disciples are sent to preach metanoia . The followers of Jesus were casting out, anointing and were healing, as if it was usual thing for them. In the Greek text, we are told that anointing was done with oil and in this case, the olive oil. In the ancient times, the use of oil for healing was common. Healing is regarded as a gentle art hence, we can use our gifts to help people with physical or spiritual illness. Therefore, Mark describes the activities of the disciples as preaching and healing and this reflects the words in Mark (1:14-15), the common mission of Jesus (Martos, 371).

The scripture teaches us that Jesus forgave sins and restored the health of those he encountered during his ministry. On his way to Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:21-43), he healed the woman with an issues of blood and commended her faith. He raised the Jairus's daughter from the

dead. He healed those whom he encountered who were sick. He also commanded his apostles to heal the sick (Matthew 10:8).

The book of James (5:15), talks of the effect of the sacrament of anointing the sick. This include properties of oil and prayer (James 5:14-16). Mark 6:13 mentions that the disciples anointed many sick people with oil and cured them (Martos, 371).The prayer of the faith will save the sick person and the Lord will raise that person up. If he or she has committed sin, he or she will be forgiven. This implies that, the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose anointing takes away the sins. This sacrament, comforts and strengthens the soul of the sick person. It also awakens in him or her confidence in the divine mercy. With this, the sick person bears more lightly the trials of their illness and resists more easily the temptations of the devil.

Bausch says that, this sacrament as written in Mark (6:13), is commended to the faithful and promulgated by Apostle James. It talks of the sick person being called by the elders of the Church who will in turn pray for her or him, and being anointed with the oil in the name of the Lord, James (5:14-15). Afterwards, the prayer of the faith will save the person and the Lord will raise that person up and if he or she had committed any sin, he or she will be forgiven (Bausch, 205).

Moreover, in the Gospel of Mark (6:7-113), Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. So they went off and preached repentance. They drove out many demons and they anointed them with oil, many who were sick and cured them. In the Acts of the Apostles as Tobin puts it, the Apostles in many occasions were empowered by the Holy Spirit, so that they healed the sick Acts 2:43, 3:1-10. The opening quote in the article of James, traditionally used as the scriptural foundation of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, suggest that the recipient of the sacrament of anointing could he healed both spiritually and physically (Tobin, 2)

Furthermore, in Mark, Jesus sent his disciples two by two to preach repentance and acceptance of the Gospel. Jesus gave them a share in his powers and with that, Mark adds that, they went off preaching the need of repentance; that all evil (including sickness) are part of network of sin. They expelled many demons, anointed the sick with oil and work many cures (Mark 6:11). This presents the ministry of healing as related to sin, repentance and faith that would be the essence of the sacrament of anointing the sick (Bausch, 204)

However, Duffy points out that, Jesus is presented as always compassionate to those who were ill. At the beginning of his working life as presented in Matthew (11:4-6) he sent the disciples of John the Baptist to tell John that, the blind can see again, the lame can walk, those suffering from ultra-skin-disease are cleansed, the deaf can hear. When He called his first disciples, he gave them authority to heal diseases and illness of every kind (Matthew 10:1). After he was raised from the dead, he told his disciples that those who are sick would recover from illness after his disciples had laid their hands on them and prayed over them Mark 16:18 (Duffy, 22).

Conclusion

Therefore, as we have already discussed above, the Sacrament of Penance reminds us that we are human. As humans we are not perfect. We always tend to do well but sometimes fail. Through sacrament of penance Christians experience a healing of their moral illness, at the same time they give sign of faith in loving God and healing relationship between them and God. The reconciliation with God brings a healing within the heart of a Christian hence an encounter with the love of God within us.

The Catholic Church has always been faithful to the instruction of St. James that is, anyone who is ill should be sent to the elders of the

Church and they must anoint the sick with the oil in the name of the Lord and pray for him (5:14-15). It had also been known as ‘extreme unction’ but in the recent days emphasis is on the healing of the living and their illnesses. Anointing brings spiritual healing as well as physical healing to the believers. Hence, sacrament of Anointing of the sick and penance are sacraments of healing.

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The First Missionaries' Work in Africa: Ivory Coast Case Study

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Introduction

All Christians are missionaries. However, some people dedicate themselves especially for missionary activities. And through their laborious work, the Gospel reached many parts of the world. Ivory Coast, country situated in West Africa, knew Christianity through missionary work. After many trials, the first missionaries succeeded to put a strong foundation to Christianity into this country. This article will try to elaborate on the strengths and weaknesses of the first missionaries in Ivory Coast and the lessons to take from it. To do so, three parts will constitute the article. First, a brief story of the beginning of mission in this country will be given. After that, from that story the strengths and weaknesses of the missionaries will be exposed. Lastly, the lessons from it will follow.

Brief Story of the First Missions in Ivory Coast

Mission in Ivory Coast begins in the 17th Century. In fact, the first attempt of evangelization began in 1637 with five Capuchins who lived for a short time in Assinie (a town in the south of the country), before being swept away by diseases. The first Ivorian baptized was named Aniaba, son of a chief in Ivory Coast. *Nouvelle Evangelisation* gives some details explaining that in 1687 during a military and religious expedition sent by King Louis XIV of France, he was brought back to France. He received a French education and was baptized by the bishop Bossuet, with Louis XIV as godfather. In 1700, Aniaba returned to his country and immediately afterwards became pagan.

Another attempt was in 1742 with the Franciscans who tried to settle in the same region, but a year later they succumbed under the lances of the pagans. From that time until the end of the nineteenth century, Christianity had hardly succeeded in establishing itself in this country.

However, a progress came in 1893, when Ivory Coast became a French colony. Binger Gustav, governor of this colony, immediately opened some schools to train the interpreters and employees of the administration, necessary to assist French officials. Since he observed that in other French colonies in West Africa, public schools were often entrusted to missionaries, he sent in 1895 a letter to the Society of African Missions of Lyon, founded in 1856 Bishop Marion Brésilla, to ask for missionaries.

From 1895 to 1896 some priest of the Society of African Missions such as Emile Bonhomme, Pierre Meraud, Mathieu Ray, Julien Bailleul and Hammard, landed in the south of the country and founded the first missions of Memni, Grand-Bassam, Moosou and Dabou (D'Almeida).

The new governor of the colony, M. Mouttet, seeing the success of this enterprise, urged the Prefect Apostolic to multiply his efforts. Thus, in 1898, the missionaries were seconded by the nuns of the congregation Our Lady of the Apostles (Baur 147). They immediately invested in the management of schools and the foundation of orphanages and dispensaries.

During the first years of evangelization the missionaries met many obstacles: yellow fever and malaria, fires, drownings. Despite these so many trials, there were always substituted by others. As a matter of fact, a year after their arrival in Ivory Coast, the first missionaries met an epidemic of yellow fever. Many of them died. However, others came to substitute them. Among the new comers, two fathers Bedel and Fer, escorted by a catechist, Louis Ouandété, went to evangelize the north of the country. In 21 days, they travel about 500 kilometres on foot. They passed by Dabou, Tiassalé, Toumodi, Bouaké, Katiola, Korhogo. They latter came back through Abengourou, and the river Comoé in pirogue (D'Almeida).

Finally, in the twentieth century came the mass conversions and it was necessary to multiply the apostolic prefectures, not only in the forest but also in the savannah zone.

From 1900, the face of the mission changed, following the republican law, which decreed the separation of the Church and the State. One of the reasons of this separation was the disagreement between the missionaries and the government about the abolition of slavery (Hasting 430). Adrian Hasting clarified that, from this misunderstanding,

the bond of the Church and State were severed, religious orders were expelled from France, diplomatic relations with the Vatican terminated. While missionaries were not expelled from French Africa, their subsidies were terminated, their schools closed, and deprived of State assistance, they were expected to pack up and go (430).

In other words, the missionaries were forbidden to teach in schools and did not receive any allocation for the missions any more. Despite that, they decided to continue their mission, and initiated some activities to gain money. They bought a field of cocoa in order to support their mission (D'Almeida). Driven out of schools, they decided to intensify the visits of the villages and to install the catechetical structures where they had received a favourable reception from the chief and the population. Thus, the progress of evangelization did not stop, but took another turn, turning more towards the interior of the country where Islam progressed considerably.

In 1904 and 1908, Korhogo and Katiola that were the main cities of the North, received the Catholic missions, even if the population remained rather still and even hostile to the Christian religion.

From 1922, following international agreements, the French Government authorized the opening of private schools. The missionaries, seizing this opportunity, again embarked on the founding of schools and their governance with the help of lay staff. The whole country saw the creation of many Catholic schools,

including the minor seminary of Bingerville in 1936, followed by the major seminary of Anyama in 1956.

In this period of evangelization, the number of missionaries increased and they were better prepared for the accomplishment of the mission. As reinforcement for the European missionaries also came the native priests, the first of whom, René Kouassi, was ordained in 1934 and the second, Bernard Yago, in 1947.

From 1937, Catholic Action movements made a timid appearance. But their true golden age extended after 1945. The Catholic Youth Workers (JOC), the ACF (Catholic Action of the Families, conceived as the adult branch of the JOC), Scouts, the Legion of Mary, the Catholic Youth Students (JEC) and the JAC (Catholic Agricultural Youth) mobilized the most dynamic and generous young people and adults until the launching of national or local branches.

In 1960, The Vatican considered this country strong enough to be set up as dioceses in its own right, led by the bishops chosen from among the native clergy.

With regard to the Ivory Coast, the choice was made on the prelate Bernard Yago, who after having received the episcopal ordination from the hands of Pope John XXIII, on May 8,, 1960, immediately succeeded the French archbishop of Abidjan, Bishop Jean Baptiste Boivin (Baur 388).

From then on, whenever a missionary bishop was to leave the Ivorian diocese that he governed, he was replaced by a son of the country. Ecclesial structures were thus transformed until 1975, the year in which all dioceses in Côte d'Ivoire had only indigenous bishops at their head.

In 1983, under the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, came a new honour for the Ivorian Church, which received its first cardinal in the person

of Bishop Bernard Yago. He reached his age limit and was replaced by Monsignor Bernard Agré.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the First Missionaries

From the story above mentioned, many elements can be pointed out as strengths of the first missionaries. First of all, the missionaries used the building and running of schools, hospitals and orphanages as a ‘vehicle of evangelization’ (Dorr 225). In addition, they were ready to adapt themselves through other means of evangelization, when the government took back those means of evangelization.

Another strength, was their determination and courage for the preaching of the Good News. As a matter of fact, they were ready to sacrifice themselves in order to announce the Gospel. This can be seen with the example of Fathers Bedel and Fer who walked about 500 kilometres on foot, from the south to the north of the country just because of evangelization. Other than that, there is also the substitution of the missionaries after the death of others from diseases. Furthermore, their sacrifice is also showed by the work they did through the plantation of cocoa in order to sustain financially their mission.

A third strength is that there were open to collaborate with other missionaries from other congregations. That is why they made appeal to the nuns of the congregation Our Lady of the Apostles and managed to work with them.

In addition to this strength, there is also, the creation of many catholic schools for evangelization and seminaries for the future local clergy. In fact, they managed to form and replace the missionaries by the local clergy.

Finally, the missionaries, through the creation of Catholic action movements, succeeded to implicate the laity in the missionary activity. This helped a lot as for the spreading of the gospel by the local people themselves.

Besides this positive description, there is to notice some weaknesses to be attributed to these missionaries.

As weaknesses, they were not prepared to face the diseases they met. Hence, many of them died during their missions. The other weakness to be mentioned is the rejection of many Ivorian culture and practices. Frans Vertraelen explains it well when he says that ‘in the colonial period, “substitution” was characteristic of foreign missionary work’ (75). He goes further pointing that

with the introduction of the technically more developed medical care...the valuable contribution of traditional treatment of psychosomatic illnesses and the beneficial effects of certain traditional herbs with medicinal qualities were, however, simply disregarded. African concepts faith concepts were dismissed as superstitious; this dismissal applied not only to magic or witchcraft, but also to expressions of genuine religiosity’ (75).

Lessons to Keep From the First Missionaries in Ivory Coast

It is obvious that one should follow the example of the first missionaries in imitating their strengths and in working on their weaknesses. That is to say, to avoid the same errors like theirs. Nonetheless, in this part a stress on some church documents will help to appreciate some elements to consider in missionary activity.

There are two categories of the missionary. There are

those who focus primarily on the building up of the church both as a community and in its institutional aspects; and those who are primarily concerned not about the church but about certain key Christian values- living these values, giving witness to them, and promoting them in society. They may, for instance, be devoting their time and energy to building up primary health care system, or to literacy work, or to the promotion of human rights, or to working for liberation, or reconciliation (Dorr 194).

Both these aspects of mission can be identified in the first missionaries in Ivory Coast who were able to adapt themselves to the situation in which they were. In mission, there is not only a need of adaptation because ‘the difficulties seem insurmountable and could easily lead to discouragement’ (RM 35) but there is a great need for perseverance. Pius XII mentioned this point in *Fidei Donum*, as he asked the missionaries to ‘persevere trustingly in the task undertaken, [and to] be proud to serve the Church’ (Hickey 128).

Another lesson is the importance of collaboration or cooperation with other missionaries. This idea was repeated in many encyclical documents such as *Rerum Ecclesiae*, *Evangelii praecones*, *Ad gentes* 35-41 and *Redemptoris Missio* (77). In *Rerum Ecclesiae*, Pius XI said in the same line to missionaries, that ‘in the missions, do not hesitate to summon to your aid as your co-workers missionaries who are not of your own religious family’ (Hickey 70).

In addition, missionaries should have respect for existing customs. As taught by *Evangelii praecones* the office of the missionary and messenger of Christ ‘does not demand that he transplant European civilization and culture, and no other, to foreign soil, there to take root and propagate itself’ (qtd. in Hickey 99). Therefore the missionary should only teach Christ to others, rather than his culture.

Finally, there is not to neglect the formation of local clergy. Actually, Benedict XV through *Maximum Illud*, affirmed that ‘it is absolutely necessary to mould and build up an indigenous clergy in a way that is satisfactory (qtd. in Hickey 35). *Rerum Ecclesiae*, and *Evangelii Praecones* carried the same idea. As for *Evangelii Praecones* it added also the utility of schools for the young in order to establish ‘advantageous relationships between the missionaries and pagans of every class’ and help them ‘understand, appreciate and embrace Catholic doctrine’ (Hickey 91).

Conclusion

At the end of this article, it is worthy to mention that it was to show the strengths and weaknesses of the first missionaries in Ivory Coast and the lesson from it. In short, since 1898 Ivory Coast received the creation of the first missions. After many trials, the missionaries managed to plant the seed of a strong Christianity in this country. From their work, one can learn that a missionary of the gospel should give himself fully to the mission; he should adapt himself to every situation and find all means to carry the gospel to the people. He should cultivate perseverance and courage and mostly he should have a respect for the other culture in preaching not his own culture but Jesus Christ.

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History of liturgical development

Givemore Mazhanje OFM

Introduction

The task of this article is to give an analysis of the liturgical developments that took place in the Roman Rite during the Medieval Period. These developments can be traced between the fifth to the fifteenth centuries. The shape of the Roman rite liturgy can be attributed to the progress in distinctive practices in the liturgy of the medieval Christian West which were entrenched in Christian antiquity, like the early liturgical forms of Initiation and Eucharist and also the observance of daily prayer. In this way, the medieval period encountered a widening elaboration and expansion of the liturgical life of Christians in various dimensions. A careful examination of the various liturgical books compiled and used during these medieval centuries, books used for Mass, for the Divine Office, and for other liturgical rites can be another better way to study the growth and diversity of liturgical in this epoch.

The Historical Development of the Roman Liturgy

The Roman Rite is the most widespread liturgical rite in the Catholic Church, as well as the most popular and widespread Rite in all of Christendom, and is one of the rites which gradually became the leading rite used by the Western Church (Oxford Research). It is also the oldest and enjoys the Apostolic foundation. It can be pointed out that the Medieval liturgy of the Roman rite was rooted in the liturgical developments which took place in the late antiquity; therefore it is worthy to briefly mention the fundamental acts of worship of the early Church. These included “the celebration of the Eucharist, the rites of the Sacraments, prayer in common and the liturgical sermons” (Klauser 5). Some of the practices which gave shape to what became the Roman rite were borrowed from the liturgical customs of Judaism like the festivals of Easter and Pentecost. Not only that but also it

borrowed practice like cult of martyrs and elements in the liturgy of hours such as the morning and evening devotions (6).

Another influential factor is the reality that the Roman liturgy was not the only existing liturgical system during the early medieval period. Originally, different western rites, developed in several areas, including Rome, Benevento, and the Ambrosian Rite of Milan in Italy, Spain (the Mozarabic Rite in Spain, and the Gallican Rite in France (Oxford Research). In the beginning of the seventh century, the early Roman rite was diffused to many other areas of the western church and continued its development with lesser or greater local adaptation. This is especially true of the strong Gallican (and later, Germanic) influence on the shape and content of the Roman liturgy (Oxford Research).

At a point in time, there was an era of transition in Roman liturgy simply known as the ‘period for liturgical exchange’. During this epoch, there was the beginning of the mixture of the Roman and the Gallican-Frankish liturgies. The adoption of the Roman rite had become common in many regions. For instance, Boniface (an Anglo Saxon missionary bishop) found it significant to bind his Germanic tribes more closely with Rome and its liturgy (Adam 27). Also King Pepin in 754 prescribed the Roman liturgy for his kingdom. Charlemagne did likewise by issuing laws that would bring a complete use of the Roman liturgy. Subsequently, the Roman rite had already underwent the some adaptations and revisions with the Gallican rite. These were evident in the multiplication and lengthening of prayers and rites and the subjective silent prayers by the Bishops and Priests (27).

Towards the end of the eighth century, the elements used and actions done during Mass were profoundly elucidated to the faithful. As Adam Adolf says in his book *Foundations of Liturgy* that, “everything got significance: vestments, persons, church, vessels, utensils, dates, actions and motions” (27). During this era, the sense of sinfulness and

unworthiness grew among the faithful; this led to the frequency in the confession of sins.

The Roman Liturgical Year

Most of the Roman liturgical rituals were influenced by the array of seasons and feasts celebrated over the course of a year. There were two cycles of liturgical time: the *temporal* cycle, which was connected with the commemoration of events in the life of Christ; and the *sanctoral* cycle, that was composed of the feasts and commemorations of universal and local saints (Oxford Research). In this period also, the Church realized several liturgical seasons of the year: two of them were periods of preparation: Advent, which preceded Christmas; and Lent, which came before Easter (Klauser 86). The date of Easter followed the lunar cycle as in the Jewish celebration of Passover, and is thus it is a feast that can shift. Essentially, Easter fell on the Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox. The date of Christmas was set as December 25 in the middle of the fourth century and was therefore celebrated on that fixed date (Eisenhofer and Luchner 223).

The *sanctoral* cycle was composed of feasts of the saints. These feasts were for celebrating the life of the early Christian martyrs and confessors at Rome and other places. With time, other pious figures of the surrounding communities were also considered for veneration as saints (Eisenhofer and Luchner 39). By tradition, the commemoration of a saint was done on the day he or she died; which they considered as the day of birth into eternal life. Some saints' feast days would be celebrated universally, while others might be celebrated locally by members of certain religious orders or associations (40).

Such a framework of liturgical time had a positive influence on the texts of the liturgy especially the Eucharistic prayers and the Divine Office. Copies of this liturgical calendar came to be included in the Missal and the Breviary, with local additions for feasts observed on the local level of diocese or religious order (Oxford Research).

Liturgical Books

As for the Roman liturgical books, it is told that they had contained almost nothing but only texts. The books did not give the way or directions for carrying out rituals and ceremonies during the course of service. With the development of this rite, the liturgical books began to come into existence; these books contained what they called ‘ordines’ or the methodical arrangements, which we call ‘rubrics’ today (Adam 29). Later, these ordines were compiled to make comprehensive liturgical books. In the earliest period, there were a number of different collections or books used during the celebration of the Mass, the Divine Office, and other liturgical rites (King 175). Some of these books could vary, except a few, with the titles used for them. Then in the later centuries, there was a marked propensity to compile small sets of volumes that were more comprehensive in which a single book could contain at least most of the textual material which were required for that specific rite or by that specific presider (Oxford Research).

Some of the liturgical books for the Roman rite were:

The *Missale*, which contained all of the texts necessary for the priest or bishop to celebrate Mass with also the scriptural readings and basic chants. The *Pontificale* : the book for the bishop, containing the texts for the rites at which he was expected to preside. The *Rituale* was the priest’s book, containing the texts of the rites that formed part of his liturgical ministry. The *Breviarium* (breviary), the book(s) used by the major clergy as well as men and women members of religious orders for the daily celebration of the Divine Office (Oxford Research).

In addition there were other liturgical books which were also used, both in the earlier and later medieval periods; for example, books used by those involved with liturgical music or those charged with preparation for individual liturgical celebrations (King 176). Some were more fully expounded extracts from one of the major liturgical books for use on specific occasions, for example, liturgical processions held at certain times of the year called the *Processionale*

(176). In addition, some liturgical books used by monastic communities would differ in a number of ways from those used by diocesan clergy or communities of canons associated with a cathedral.

The Liturgy of the Roman Rite from Gregory VII to Reformation

Under the papacy of Gregory VII (1073-1085), the Church in Rome underwent a period of consolidation of liturgical and ecclesiastical life (Adam 30). All the bishops were encouraged to follow the liturgical practice of the Roman Curia. This move did not achieve much until the emergency of the Franciscan Order in the thirteenth century who promote the use of the Roman Curia and spread it abroad (30). However, the liturgical books of this era permitted the celebration of private Masses, thus liturgy became more and more clerical, at which the priest alone could do everything during the celebration. The participation of the faithful during Mass was suppressed. Nevertheless, the introduction of new feasts of the Lord, Mary and the cult of Saints, led to the expansion of the liturgical year (30).

It is also important to mention that the medieval liturgy of the Roman liturgy was also characterized by the effects of the crusades. The crusades intensified the veneration of the humanity of Jesus involving all the phases of his earthly life; for example the devotion to the passion of Christ and of mysticism; also veneration of Saints' relics (Oxford Research). Pilgrimages became prevalent. During the second half of the thirteenth century, the feast of the *Corpus Christi* having a procession together with Christmas and its Crib came to be the favorite feasts of the year. Even during the time for the Eucharist people would want to gaze upon the Lord who is present in the consecrated host (Adam 31). On the other side, it can however not be forgotten that regardless of the prevailing distortions, there was a significant growth and development of people's deep and interior faith in addition to the spirit of self-sacrifice which characterized a large number of people. There were great figures who rose at this period like Bernard of Clairvaux. Life of prayer and worship of the Church was improving (33).

The Celebration of Mass

At the heart of medieval liturgical life was the celebration of the Eucharist (the Mass) regardless of the season. It is therefore worthwhile to briefly analyze the interaction between medieval Eucharistic theology and the actual celebration of the Mass. Progressively, the celebration of Mass had been extended to every day of the week, with the exception of Good Friday, on which no Mass was offered, but communion was distributed from previously consecrated hosts (Oxford Research). The texts and music used would vary according to the liturgical season, feast, or day of the week. The practice of offering private Masses developed from the earlier custom of offering a more simple version of the Eucharist with small groups on certain occasions or for certain intentions or reason. Some of these were developed more formally into *votive* Masses with their own proper sets of prayer texts, or formularies (King 208).

In the later medieval centuries, the number of these private Masses increased dramatically; the theological theme of the Mass as sacrifice, a depiction or recurrence of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, played an important role in this development (Walker and Dijk 51). These Masses could be offered for any one of a number of special intentions or reasons, but came to be most frequently offered on behalf of a deceased person, for which the priest would be offered a stipend which was normally a small sum of money (52). This is the period when the doctrine of purgatory developed and it stated that persons who died either in a state of lesser or venial sin, would need to be spiritually purified before admission to Heaven. However, the prayers of the living on their behalf could shorten this period of purifying penitential suffering, so the powerful spiritual benefits of the Mass could be applied to the deceased on whose behalf it was offered (Oxford Research).

Conclusion

The above assertion is an analysis to establish the liturgical developments which took place in the sacred liturgy of the Roman rite in the Medieval period. It can be concluded that the development of the Roman liturgy was a process. Beginning from adoption of some of the Jewish practices and latter amalgamation with other rite like Gallican from France, all these led to the gradual development of the rite. Several contributions were also done by the Popes like Gregory VII and others. The contribution of the Monks and religious Orders such as the Franciscans cannot be underestimated.

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A Journey from Jewish Cult to Christian Liturgy

Shelton Zimondi O. Carm

Introduction

Cults have left people with ambivalent feelings, since on one hand they have been associated with malice or animus enormity and on the other hand they have brought people together to the extent people have become a unified entity with intimate relationships because of common interests. It has been alleged that there is no much of a difference between a religion and a cult since most of the religions of the world began as cults like Jansenism and Taoism. This article seeks to show how Christian liturgy as understood by the Catholic Church is rooted on Jewish cult. However, the discussion will not exhaust the liturgical facets that justify the grafting of the Catholic Christian liturgy on Jewish cult. The work commences with the definition of terms, explaining the three centres of Jewish worship that influenced Christian liturgy and then discuss the connection between the Jewish cult and the Mass, liturgical vestments, and the calendar. Thereafter, I will justify the Jewish origin of the Liturgy of Hours and Christian initiation (Baptism). This will be followed by an evaluation and a conclusion drawn that to a great extent the Catholic Christian liturgy was prompted and exacerbated from the Jewish cult.

Definition of Terms

The term cult is a controversial term that has diverse definitions in popular culture and in academia. In sociological classifications of religious movements, a cult is a religious or a social group with socially deviant or novel beliefs and practices. However, the word cult was originally used not to describe a group of religious but for the act of worship or religious ceremony (Garde 21). Hence, the purview of this essay will intend to understand the word cult in that regard. Sacred Liturgy as cemented by the Mediator Dei as well as the Sanctrosanctum Concilium can be referred to as the “celebration of an on-going process of redemption of the people of God”. It is an officially organised worship by the Church which is open to all people

and it distinguishes this from private prayers and devotions of individual Christians and even common prayers by voluntary or selected groups within the church like, societies and guilds (Dix 1). Thus the sacred liturgy is a public worship not an individual enterprise. In line with that the Vatican II Council describes the Sacred Liturgy as the “source and summit” of Christian life.

The Jewish Centres and their Influence on Christianity

There were three main centres of Jewish worship which seem to have impacted on Christianity in general and liturgy in particular. Namely, the Temple, the synagogue and the home (Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold 41). These three were key in the Jewish worship. First, the Temple was fundamentally a place of sacrifice and nowhere else was it permitted. It was also a point of meeting where the Jews would meet for their prayers as well as meeting with God (1 King 8:2ff). In addition, the religious teachings also took place in the Temple, a custom which was adhered to by Jesus and the Apostles. The sacrifices that took place in the Jewish Temple included the burnt offerings, the sin and guilty offerings, which was done by the priest and the peace offerings. Therefore, it is plausible from this background that one might assert that Christian worship and its liturgy emerged from the Jewish worship since it is characterised with such worship. In the Christian liturgy, people seem to have continued with the visiting of the “Temple” (the church) and its sacrifices though they have taken a new dimension with Christ as the sacrificial victim.

Second, the synagogue might have influenced the Christian congregation in a broad context in which the Christian teachings take place. Third, the home was important in the Jewish family worship since they used to partake the Sabbath meals in their homes. According to the Mishnah (Berakoth) “grace was said several times at meals, over each main dish, over bread and over wine; and when people were eating together. Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold, asserted that the benedictions were said by one person for all, and a responsive grace was added at the end of the meal” (43). This implies in the Jewish cult

benedictions falls in the private devotions just as it is placed in the Catholic tradition. However, the grace of meals especially the Berekah praxis on the Passover should have prompted the Eucharistic celebration in the present day Catholic Mass. A link or a relation between the prayers of the Berekah and the Eucharistic consecration in terms of structure is vivid. The Berekah commence with the Eulogy of how the Israelites were emancipated in the Egyptian slavery and how God has revealed God's self in the history of salvation in favour of them. This seem the same structure followed by the Eucharistic Consecration prayers especially Eucharistic Prayer 1, also shows that there is eulogy that praises God's self-revelation as Triune reaching its culmination in the Theopaschite namely Christ in order to save humanity from the yoke of sin. This evidently points out where the two graces said by Jesus at the Last Supper emanated from – a tradition which still prevails today in the Eucharistic celebration.

The Jewish Influence on Mass, Liturgical Vestments and Calendar

To clearly understand the Eucharistic faith and practice of Christianity one has to review the history from the New Testament back to the Old Testament and fundamentally to the Jewish practice and beliefs (Pitre 1). According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), “a better knowledge of the Jewish people's faith and religious life as professed and lived even now can help our better understanding of certain aspects of Christian liturgy” (1096). This suggests that Christian liturgy emerged from the Jewish tradition and as such, to understand the Christian liturgy fully one must first understand Jewish liturgy (1096).

The two parts of the blessings over bread and wine at Last Supper as already hinted and recorded by the evangelists are consonant with the pattern of Jewish meal (berreca meal). In the Jewish tradition the blessing prayers were as follows: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who brings forth bread from earth”. Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine” (Pitre 2). This

is similarly found in the Eucharistic prayer. Nevertheless, the variance lies in Jesus' interpretative and eschatological words and the command to repeat (Mk 14: 22-25). This also became the basis from which Christ said a blessing before feeding the five thousand and the four thousand people. It is imperative to note that the Jewish Passover was basically commemorative and commemoration is the meaning of Christ's word anamnesis (Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold 49). In addition, "when the Church celebrates the Eucharist, it commemorates Christ's Passover and it is made present: the sacrifice Christ offered once and for all on the cross remains ever present" (CCC 1364, John's gospel). Thus, the Christian Eucharist, like the Jewish Passover itself is both a sacrifice and a meal.

The priests' vestments like the chasuble, has its roots from the Old Testament when God told Moses to make for the glorious embellishment and beauty, garments for Aaron his brother and sons who were to serve God as priests (Ex 28: 2,4). The presents of the tabernacle in the Catholic Church resembles the one found in the Jewish synagogue. The ancient scrolls hold that the tabernacle was a dwelling place of the Word of God, and besides it lies a candle (Barrack 15-20). This had its foundation from the Jewish experience with God when they travelled with the tabernacle day and night and light was always present. The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day and fire was in it by night (Ex 40: 35). This seems to be the basis of having Christian liturgy where besides the tabernacle there is a steady candle and we are cognitively aware that Jesus Christ is present in the tabernacle.

The liturgical seasons' readings (Easter, Lent, Advent, Christmas and Ordinary time) also have roots grafted on Jewish format of readings. The Torah readings began on the Sabbath post the Feast of Tabernacles and reading portion weekly for three years (Barrack 15-20). Our Sunday Gospel readings today are classified into three liturgical years, cycle A, B, and C. In the Church liturgy, homilies are only reserved for the clergy. Their task is to break the Word of God,

which has just been proclaimed to the faithful. This notion arose from the Jewish synagogue tradition where only the rabbi offered a sermon and the rabbi was the one to teach people (15-20). On a different note, according to the ancient Jewish culture as recorded in the book of Leviticus, people brought offerings to their priests for sacrifice. The priest was to carry out this mandate on the altar of God [...] (7: 29). This was adopted into the Christian liturgy and today people bring gifts of food and money as thanksgiving offering in a procession.

The Liturgy of Hours and its Jewish Origin

Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold stated that the Jewish law prescribed morning (lauds) and evening (vespers) sacrifices on a daily basis with additional sacrifices on Sabbaths (42). This can be viewed in the light of the Liturgy of Hours where the Christians are sanctified and encouraged to say the prayer of the Church during canonical hours but obliged to say lauds and vespers at all times. In lauds people praise the Lord and in the vespers they offer thanksgiving to God. The psalter is recognised as one of the most ancient and venerable part of the Breviary. It is the composition of these psalms that formed the Jewish liturgy for about twelve centuries before Christ (Barrack 15-20). These are the psalms that Jesus also used as he quoted them many times. Indisputably, the Apostles used these psalms and handed them down to Christians and presently psalms are held as the command form of Christian prayer enshrined in the Liturgy of Hours. Hence, the Liturgy of Hours has its roots grafted on the Jewish liturgy.

The Jewish Influence on Christian Initiation

According to the letter to the Hebrews, Christian Baptism seems to be classed with Jewish cleansing ceremonies (10:22). In the Jewish culture candidates were examined about their motives, thought and some of the laws they were expected to observe before consent for circumcision (Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold 46). In the celebration of Christian Baptism, catechumens are questioned with regard to their faith and consent before the profession of faith and Baptism takes place. In circumcision, the Jews were cleansed; in Baptism,

catechumens are forgiven their original sin and other sins, and so made clean of both original sin and sins of their own commission. However, the laying on of hands in Confirmation does not seem to have any antecedent in the Jewish initiation ceremonies (46). Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that the anointing constituted part of proselyte baptism and the Church did not mention it. This would have emanated from the “widespread custom, shared by the Jews of using oil after taking bath” (46).

Evaluation

It is important to note that Christianity came after Judaism. As such, some similarities between these two religions presuppose that the former was grafted on the latter. In addition, considering that the early Palestinian Jews were greatly influenced by Greek thought, culture and language though their roots still immersed in the Old Testament and having Hebrew and Aramaic as their basic languages, these suggest that Jesus’ teachings must have been founded on the Jewish tradition rather than any other sources (Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold 39). However, this does not mean that it diminished Jesus’ great originality. During his ministry, Jesus and his followers conformed to the Jewish worship. Hence, the only cognitive foundation of the Christian worship is both implicitly and explicitly given in the Jewish worship. Despite the immense Jewish influence on the Christian liturgy, exceptions existed in ancient Syria and Palestine who were spared by their geographical position and language that prolonged Jewish influence. Exceptions would also be during the time when cultural dominance of Christianity in a sense influenced Jewish worship (40).

Conclusion

This article has elucidated some of the liturgical similarities between Christian liturgy and the Jewish cult that justifies the notion that the former was grafted on the latter. It highlighted that in order to understand fully the Christian liturgy one needs to review the Jewish beliefs and practices, among other things. It also discussed how the

Liturgy of Hours, Mass, and other liturgical aspects are linked to Jewish liturgy. Evidently, the article has shown that a number of Christian liturgical aspects are in commensurate or clearly shows their roots to be founded on Jewish cult. Hence, to a great extent the Christian liturgy was influenced and developed from its worship.

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Christian Initiation Presented in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Gospel of John

Underson Musina O.Carm

Introduction

Christian initiation is defined by Marsh as a process whereby new believers enter and become full members of the community (63). This article seeks to compare and contrast Christian initiation as presented in the Gospel of John and Acts of the Apostles. Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus and passages of Acts which record initiation are going to be used. Apart from the catechesis, initiation comprises the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist. These three are required for a full Christian initiation.

Similarities of Christian Initiation as Presented in Acts and Gospel of John

For one to be baptised the Good News of Christ had to be shared. There was some catechesis before the initiation. It was after hearing the word that people would ask the apostles; 'what should we do now?' (Acts 1:38). The answer was baptism. In the gospel of John, Nicodemus interaction with Jesus led him to conversion. The coming of Nicodemus to Jesus explains Christian initiation in the sense that for one to be baptised, the person is not forced but should willingly do so. Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night. Notably, the night is associated with darkness, and in this respect, Nicodemus through listening to Christ was gradually coming out of darkness into the light of the Christ (Fuller 1044).

In addition, baptism comes as a response to the act believing. Before a person is baptised conversion was expected. Paul preached to the jailer and exhorted him to believe in Jesus the Lord. The jailer believed and his entire household was baptised (Acts 16: 31-33). In the story of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8: 26-40), the pattern which is followed

is clearly shown: the good news of Christ was preached to him, the eunuch professed and believed the word, and then he was baptised. Those who believed, the whole household was baptised (Acts 16:32). This can also point that there was infant baptism since the apostolic age. In the Gospel of John, what is preached should make one believe that Jesus is the Messiah and through this belief they may gain life (John 20:31). The interaction of Jesus and Nicodemus clearly shows that, everyone who believes in Jesus has eternal life (3:14). Therefore, baptism was always viewed as connected with faith and it is a gift of God who wishes all to be saved by it (Walsh 87).

More so, the prerequisite of Christian initiation is faith in Jesus. The one who is going to receive life to the fullest is the one who believes (John 3:15). In Acts, baptism was extended to all people who showed a sign of repentance including non-Jews like Ethiopian eunuch and Simon the Samaritan (Acts 2:41, 8:12). Peter said God promised forgiveness and Holy Spirit to Jews and all those far off, whomever the Lord will choose (2:40). In the Gospel of John, 'The wind blows where it wills, and from or where it goes; so, it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit' (3:8). The Greek word for wind is *pneuma* which is same as the word for 'spirit.' Thus, this verse entails that, as wind blows where ever it wants to, so the spirit has freedom in selecting whom it drives to be a believer (Fuller 1042).

Another similarity is that, in both Acts of the Apostles and in the Gospel of John, baptism was to be conducted through the use of water. John the Baptist as recorded in the Gospel of John baptised with water (1:25). Jesus said to Nicodemus that one was incapable of entering the Kingdom of God without being born of water and spirit (John 3:5). Jesus here did not use the term 'water' in a metaphorical way but he meant that, 'true and natural water is necessary for baptism' (ND 1421). In the Acts of the Apostles, Christian initiation was done with water. When Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch, they reached where there was water and the eunuch requested to be baptised (Acts 8: 36-37). Another notable example is that incident when Peter

preached to the Gentiles and they believed. Peter asked if anyone could withhold water of baptism for these people who have believed (Acts 10: 44-49). This clearly shows that, in both Acts and John baptism with water was a pivotal for being admitted into the Christian community (Ronzani 38).

Furthermore, Christian initiation as presented in the Acts and the Gospel of John shows that it comprises the water and spirit. John the Baptist clearly indicated in his ministry that Jesus was coming to baptise with the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:8). This shows that, the Church has two distinct sacraments; baptism and confirmation. Jesus before ascension promised that his apostles will baptise in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). Similarly, in the Acts of the Apostles after baptism with water, the believers received Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. Receiving the Holy Spirit is clearly shown that it is not a necessary effect of water baptism. Acts 8:16-17, demonstrates that one can be baptised yet without receiving the Holy Spirit. At Ephesus, the believers received the Holy Spirit not when they were baptised but later when Apostle Paul laid his hands on them. Thus, there is a distinction between baptism and receiving of the Holy Spirit.

To add, in John 3:3 uses the word *anōthen* which has double meaning: 'born from above' and 'again.' These words make it clear that to be born *anōthen* there is need of water and spirit. The human being is a composite of body and soul; it will also take both water and spirit to create him anew; thereby initiating him into the Christian community. Christian baptism is followed by laying on of hands which seals and completes the union between the Church and Christ. One is confirmed so as to proclaim the word of God without fear and thus the fruits and virtues of the Spirit are actualised in this sacrament therefore baptism by water and Spirit gives an indelible mark that no sin can erase it (CCC 1242). As such, it is evident that water-bath and the gift of the Spirit are in some way distinguishable but they can never be totally separated (Austin 7).

The Christian initiation comprised repentance and forgiveness. The baptism in the Gospel of John was baptism of repentance (3:15). Believing in the good news eventually leads to repentance and the forgiveness of sins. There is a close relationship among repentance, baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The salvation given by baptism is described in the Acts simply as the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38/Walsh 87). This continues to demonstrate connection between sacraments of baptism and confirmation. Mark 2: 15-16 mentions that two things are required for one to be saved: believing and being baptised. The person who fails to believe will be condemned. For instance, Ananias and Sapphira who had converted to Christianity baptised and became members of the Christian community but they failed to adhere to the apostles' teaching. They sinned against the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). Even if one is baptised one cannot receive salvation unless he believes.

Differences in Christian Initiation as Presented in Acts and Gospel of John

Baptism in the Acts is conducted 'in the name of Jesus' (2:37-41). Baptism was supposed to be done in his name because the one believes in Jesus consequently belongs to him. For Marsh, being initiated in the name of Jesus meant entering into service of Christ, assuming and bearing the name of Christ, being called a Christian (50). Being initiated 'in the name of Jesus' entailed the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). The forgiveness of sins could mean the removal of the obstacles which separate human beings from their creator (Marsh 50). Baptism 'in the name of Jesus' is not mentioned in the Gospel of John because this was a post resurrection event, a direct result of the exaltation and glorification of Jesus (Marsh 44).

Another difference in the type of Christian initiation in the book of Acts and Gospel of John is that, in Acts, baptism is seen as human sharing in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus that is, sharing in his passion, death and resurrection. Through the Christian initiation as recorded in the Acts believers are immersed into Christ's death and rise with him

by the power of his resurrection (Chrichton 34). It is through baptism that believers pass from death to life and are ‘engrafted into his death and rise with him by the power of his resurrection’ (34). The aspect of baptism being a sharing in the Paschal Mystery was not mentioned in the Gospel of John, probably because it was not yet appropriate as it was before Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Ultimately, in Acts of the Apostles, baptism brings new believers to the Christian community (2:41). The Christians were devoted to the teaching of the apostles and to communal life. This shows that, the preaching of the apostles was followed by continual teaching which would assist believers to build and maintain the faith they had received and expressed. Baptism and laying on of hands finally lead to the celebration of the Eucharist which is the last part of the Christian initiation. There is evidence to show that Christians gather on the first day of the week to celebrate the Eucharist (20:7). The celebration of the Eucharist as a community is evidently a sign of full membership in the community of believers and fully participates in its life (Marsh 56). Baptism did not only unite believers to Christ but also to one another. The celebration of the Eucharist and believing in Christ united Christians, heart and soul, sharing all their possessions (4:32). Consequently, the celebration of the Eucharist is the climax of the Christian initiation. The word is preached; people believed and baptised then received the Holy Spirit and finally participate in the breaking of bread.

Conclusion

The book of the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of John clearly outline the Christian practice and understanding of Christian initiation. The initiation comprised of baptism, laying on of hands and completed with participation at the Eucharist. Jesus’ life, ministry, passion, death and resurrection give a special meaning and significance to the initiation rites of Christians. There are, in the Gospel of John and Acts of the Apostles, similarities regarding the

way Christian initiation is explained and expressed. There is preparation before baptism which includes the teaching of the mystery of Christ. The candidates for baptism should show conversion and repentance. Baptism was conducted using water and the baptised received Holy Spirit. There are also some notable differences which are found regarding Christian initiation in these books. In Acts baptism is presented as sharing in the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. Sharing the Eucharist culminates the initiation in Acts. Whereas in John there is no mention of these aspects undoubtedly because Jesus had not yet died and resurrected.

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A Critical Analysis of the Genre and the Message of Isaiah 5:1-7

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Introduction

Isaiah 5:1-7 has given rise to many varied and largely conflicting theories concerning both its genre and message.¹ In fact, many renowned scholars concur that there is something wrong in the current approaches which tend to provide so many different solutions. Instead of proposing another methodology to an already cluttered area of study, this article wonders whether researchers have complicated a rather simple matter. Could it be that we are dealing with a straight forward parable? Perhaps scholars came up with many diverse theories because they allowed themselves to be diverted by catch-phrases and words such as ‘lover’ which led them to seek cross-references about sexual imagery and so forth. Or could they have been misled by legal elements in the passage to talk about a ‘juridical parable’ and so on? In brief, with these suspicions in mind, this article seeks a more simple explanation of the pericope. It will be argued that Isaiah 5:1-7 is a parable in which Yahweh wants a targeted group of people to appreciate why his threatened action is justified in the face of their injustices.

The Problem

As noted by several biblical commentators, there is an enduring problem with the way scholars approach the Song of the Vineyard; namely, Isaiah 5:1-7. For example, in 1977 Willis noticed that scholars generally underestimate the difficulty in determining the genre of the passage.² Childs also notes that scholars are too preoccupied with

¹ *New Revised Standard Version: Cambridge Annotated Study Bible*, ed. by Howard Clarke Kee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 582. Further references to this work are provided in parentheses in the text.

² John T. Willis, ‘The genre of Isaiah 5: 1-7’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977), 337-362, (p. 359).

finding a formally consistent pattern with one genre.³ Williamson, as well, says there must be a fundamental problem with the method or its application given the diverse results.⁴ Indeed Willis, identifies several propositions that have resulted from the many different approaches. He writes,

Some scholars determine the genre of a text by their interpretation of its content (the prophet's song concerning his own vineyard, a bride's love song, a groom's love song); others, by this occasion (a drinking song, a song of the friend of the bridegroom, a lawsuit or accusation); others, by its purpose (a satirical polemic against Palestinian fertility cults, the prophet's song expressing sympathy for his friend Yahweh, a bride's love song, a groom's love song, a lawsuit or accusation); and still others, by its literary type (an uncle's song, a fable, an allegory, a parable).⁵

Childs says fixation with a formally consistent pattern led some scholars to be diverted by the presence of such words as 'lover' (*dôd*) to explore all the metaphors of love especially in the Song of Songs even though these elements are mentioned in passing and are not developed in the passage.⁶

Williamson tries to provide a solution by making a clear distinction between form and genre: 'Form should apply to the shape, structure or outline of a passage ... Genre, on the other hand, concerns the literary type of the passage.'⁷ However, the distinction Williamson seeks to make changes very little in terms of a simple solution. For example, after making such a distinction he still comes up with the possibility

³ Brevards S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 44-45.

⁴ H. G. M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary (ICC)* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 327.

⁵ Willis, p. 359.

⁶ Childs, p. 45.

⁷ Williamson, p. 327.

of several genres for a very tiny passage such as Isaiah 5:1-7. He argues that there could be a genre of a whole book, of a passage and then several genres within a passage.⁸ In other words, Williamson perpetuates the unhelpful search for subgenres in Isaiah 5:1-7.

Even in terms of the ‘form’ of the passage, available propositions tend to require complex reconstructions and numerous conjectures to substantiate themselves. Just to take one example, Kwok Chi Keung wrote a doctoral thesis in which he argues that the existence of Isaiah 5:7 has set the boundary on what scholars can possibly read out of the song.⁹ With numerous reconstructions to come up with his favoured form, he suggests the dropping out of Isaiah 5:7 from the song. By the time Keung comes to the conclusion, his propositions appear artificial and speculative. Ironically, he notes that ‘a number of literary devices were available to the Isaianic School: songs, oracles, visions, lawsuit speech, judgment speech and historical narratives etc. Isaiah’s disciples were free to press home their points in whichever forms they found most appropriate.’¹⁰

A Parable

Perhaps scholars have complicated a very simple task for themselves. It might well be that Isaiah 5:1-7 is a simple parable that should be read as a unit without sophisticated attempts to find several genres that compose it. Put simply, the most appropriate interpretation of the song seems to be a parable. Willis’ initial suggestion, therefore, is the most plausible. He says the song should be understood as ‘a parabolic song of a disappointed husbandman.’¹¹ He argues that the passage possesses the elements which are deemed essential to a parable. A parable

⁸ Williamson, p. 327.

⁹ Kwok Chi Keung, ‘An analysis of the 2 Vineyard songs in Isaiah’, <http://www.stc.edu.hk/2005/subjects/rs/2000/cbi/thesis_200407.pdf>, [accessed 4 April 2016], p. 40.

¹⁰ Keung, p. 34.

¹¹ Willis, p. 327.

usually contains a single lesson. In a parable there is correspondence between parabolic figures and real characters. Many parables have legal elements. A parable also depicts a specific situation rather than a typical condition.

Isaiah 5:1-7 fulfils all these conditions as we shall see in our rereading of the passage. Therefore, as we will see, what appears to be subgenres are merely several twists and turns. These are not necessarily subgenres but devices that serve to heighten the tension as we move from one part of the parable to the next as Williamson himself noted.¹² Again, Childs makes an important observation that such references might simply function to puzzle the audience, grow their curiosity before driving a point.¹³

A Judicial Parable?

Some scholars insist that the song is a specific type of parable, a judicial parable. Writing in 1981, Gale Yee argued that the song is a combination of two genres. She said, 'I submit that two similar but also functionally different literary forms compose Isa 5:1-7, viz., a song and a juridical parable. It is through these two forms that Isaiah manipulates the southern kingdom, "the inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah (5:3)."'¹⁴

It would appear that proponents of this view are right. Indeed, a juridical parable has a setting of a courtroom in which the plaintiff or complainant brought a lawsuit against the offender before the judge and demands that justice be done between him and the accused. In Isaiah 5, the plaintiff could be identified as Yahweh (through the agency of the prophet), the accused might be seen as the house of Judah and the judges considered the people themselves.

¹² Williamson, p. 329.

¹³ Childs, p. 45.

¹⁴ Gale A. Yee, 'The Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5: 1-7 as a Song and a Juridical Parable', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 43 (1981), 30-40 (p. 30-31).

In defence of this perspective, it is often pointed out that the device was used by the prophet Nathan while trying to confront David with the sins of both adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11 and 12). Again Yee suggests that a comparison be made between the pericope with the juridical parable in 2 Samuel 12:1-14.¹⁵ In that story David gave the punishment of what was to be done to the culprit without knowing that he was actually being invited to pass judgement on himself.

This argument fails. It misses the point by placing undue focus on parts of the parable rather than the whole of it. Yee, herself concedes that not all of the elements of the typical juridical parable are to be found in the Song of the Vineyard.¹⁶ One of those glaring differences is that the audience is not given the chance to respond in this monologue. Gerald Sheppard tries to account for the differences that Yee found difficult to solve but he unhelpfully made a series of speculative and complicated reconstructions to demonstrate his proposal.¹⁷ Willis had earlier speculated that the people might have pronounced some sort of agreement in their supposed silence between Isaiah 5:5 and Isaiah 5:7. However, there is no evidence in the text that the people (audience) gave such a response. At best this is an invitation for the real audience to ponder on why Yahweh's expectations are justified and the possible action he will take. Therefore, the suggestion that the passage is a juridical parable seems to rise from placing undue emphasis on legal elements in it.

Rereading the Parable

Let us now reread-the passage and possibly demonstrate that it is a simple and straightforward parable. In Isaiah 5:1, the author begins by

¹⁵ Yee, p. 33-34.

¹⁶ Yee, p. 33.

¹⁷ Gerald Sheppard, 'More on Isaiah 5:1-7 as a Juridical Parable', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 44 (1982), (45-47). For example, he placed Isaiah 3:13-14 (Interpretation and indictment) after Isaiah 5:1-2 (judgement) followed by Isaiah 5:7 (further interpretation), 5:3-4 (summons to judge) and 5:5-6 (sentence) respectively.

claiming to sing a song that is directed to his ‘beloved’ who has a vineyard. Scholars have gone at length to debate the Hebrew terms used to construct this verse. Attention focuses largely on the interpretations of the words *dôd* and *yadîd*. Some commentators such as Jerome translate *dôd* as ‘my (paternal) cousin.’ Others including Aquila and Ewald render it as ‘my (paternal) cousin.’ However, according to Willis, the term occurs in other Old Testament canticles exclusively on the lips of the young maiden speaking about or to the young man she loves.¹⁸ In this situation it means ‘beloved, darling, friend’, for Willis, this is the most natural meaning intended in Isaiah 5:1.¹⁹

Some scholars focus on the mention of the ‘beloved’ leading them to conclude that the song describes the relationship between the friend of the author (husband) and his vineyard (wife). For example, according to G. R. Williams the poet’s friend must be understood allegorically and not literally. He reckons that it is a female lover.²⁰ Thus, for him, the song is about the marital relationship between the friend of the poet and the wife of the former.

Such a view has found support in several scholarly quarters. There are scholars who try to provide evidence to show that in the Old Testament and in the literature, the vineyard, the garden and the field are used to describe erotic sexual relationship between the two lovers. It is also argued that Yahweh’s relationship with Israel has been portrayed by many prophets as that between husband and wife. It is recalled that the prophets frequently use the relationship of a groom and bride or husband and wife in speaking of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. For example, Malul gives a detailed argument to show that the

¹⁸ Willis, p. 344.

¹⁹ Willis, p. 338.

²⁰ Gary R. Williams, ‘Frustrated Expectations in Isaiah V 1-7: A Literary Interpretation,’ *Vetus Testamentum*, 35 (1985), 459-465 (p. 459).

land is often a metaphor for women and concludes that the pericope is about Yahweh the husband and Israel the wife.²¹

However, although it is true that the prophetic literature is replete with sexual imagery and that there is a possibility of Yahweh being the husband of Israel (the wine), this motif is not clearly developed in the current passage. In other words, while the speaker (whose identity will be revealed later as Yahweh) was communicating something to his vineyard (whole identity will be revealed later as the people of Judah) the sexual motif is less pronounced. Thus, Williamson rightly insists that there is lack of evidence that vineyard imagery had ever been applied to Israel before Isaiah's time and that vineyard imagery was used of women in Israel or the ancient Near East at this time.²² He also says there is no evidence that would allow us to say that this is specifically a love-song.²³ In fact, for him, the audience would have had no clue of such a bizarre notion.

The second verse (Isaiah 5:2) of the pericope describes the efforts of the vineyard owner. He dug it, cleared it of stones, planted it with choice wines, built a watchtower in the midst of it and hewed out wine vat in it. Due to his efforts the owner of the vineyard is full of expectations, the expectations which were not fulfilled. In fact, Williams notes that the passage as a whole is 'full of frustrated expectations.'²⁴ The owner of the vineyard 'expected it to yield grapes,' instead, the opposite happened as 'it yielded wild grapes.' Once again scholars miss the point by seeing the sexual overtones in every step of the pericope. Williams, again, interprets the care given to the vineyard as indications of the care a husband might render to his wife resulting in some justified expectations. He says good grapes

²¹ Meir Malul, 'The Relationship Between Tearing the Fence Down in the Song of the Vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7) and Stripping the Woman Naked in the Old Testament', *Beit Mikra*, 168 (2001), 11-24.

²² Williamson, p. 329.

²³ Williamson, p. 335.

²⁴ Williams, p. 459.

refer to children and the wild grapes perhaps refer to illegitimate children. To put it in his own words:

The description of the location of the vineyard and the care that it received from the husbandman (vv.1b-2b) implies a matrimonial relationship in which the husband admirably provided for his wife. The expectations of grapes (v. 2c), perhaps a symbol of children, was fully justified, and the final word of the verse ... “stinking grapes”, perhaps representing illegitimate children comes as a great surprise.²⁵

However, there is no need to speculate concerning what the expectations are or what the grapes are. The passage itself provides the answer at the end, in Isaiah 5:7. The expectations are justice and righteousness but the frustration was that the outcome was bloodshed and a cry.²⁶

Isaiah 5:3 has an unexpected shift of speakers as the owner of the vineyard now speaks in the first person. As alluded above, this shift has led many to assume that the passage is made up of several different genres. However, the swing is part of the passage’s deliberate rhetorical strategy. The listener is moved from hearing about a third party with his vineyard to hearing about the speaker himself and some other character.²⁷ Again, it is no longer a mere call to reflection but an appeal from the author calling on the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the people of Judah to judge between him and his vineyard. The invitation for the audience to judge is a tactic used by the author to let the audience see, in the light of Isaiah 5:2, that the vineyard owner’s actions are justified. As already argued, the juridical elements do not merit to interpret the passage as a juridical parable. An ordinary parable can simply contain such legal elements in the background.

²⁵ Williams, p. 460-461.

²⁶ This point will be developed in the discussion on Isaiah 5:7.

²⁷ Williamson, p. 339.

In Isaiah 5:4, the author, probably in view of Isaiah 5:2, asks his audience what they thought he could have done in addition to what he did for the vineyard. He let the audience see that his expectations were not met. As he put it, ‘When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?’ (Isaiah 5:4). Williamson rightly commented that ‘It is besides the point to ask why the owner did not undertake measures first to remedy the situation, as any normal farmer would ... The tale was told for the sake of the judgement to follow, and so the singer hurries on to that with the minimum delay.’²⁸ Put tersely, the questions are rhetorically posed to the audience to let them see that the vineyard owner’s expectations are justified. There is no indication that the audience is expected to respond.

Isaiah 5:5 and 5:6 contain the vineyard owner’s threat of punishment to his vineyard. His threats are made up of the following actions and consequences:

- Removal of the hedge: it shall be devoured
- Breaking of its wall: it shall be trampled down
- Render it a waste: it shall not be pruned or hoed; it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns
- Commandment of clouds not to rain any rain upon it

Some writers have focused on this threat of punishment to the vineyard to discuss the character of Yahweh. For example, Robert Carroll advances the argument that Yahweh is frequently portrayed through the image of food and drink in the prophetic writings and often brings harsh and violent destruction on his enemies. He writes,

Butchery is food and drink to YHWH. Such a proposition would appear to reflect one of the most dominant strands in the Hebrew Bible ... especially in the prophetic literature. Images of YHWH in the prophets frequently reflect a blood-thirsty figure, wading through blood, blasting everything in sight and threatening further violence to generations and generations of people and their children's children (e.g., Jer 2:9). The

²⁸ Williamson, p. 338.

representation of the deity is generally that of a berserker god.²⁹

In Carroll's opinion, divine justice in the prophetic writings is a questionable notion. He says Isaiah 5:1-7 reflects a bloody thirsty god who seeks to destroy,

I would especially want to focus on and highlight the notion of "YHWH's sour grapes" in Isa 5:1-7 which, in my opinion, seems to give promise of a wrecking notion which would deconstruct any sense of YHWH's justice in the prophetic discourses and which would raise fundamental problems about the prophetic construction of the idea of divine justice as a basis for the destruction of the community.³⁰

Although this dimension on the characterisation of Yahweh in the passage can be important, it misses the main point of the parable. The threat is not given as injustice per se but is an attempt to remedy injustice. In fact, complaint against injustice seems to be the overall motif of the passage as indicated by the conclusion of the passage. Chaney contends that the passage is more a specific critique of those who ruled the political economies of ancient Judah and Israel.³¹ For him, the notion of nation states and land grabbing by the elite reflected in Isaiah 5:1-7 is familiar to the modern reader. Story concurs that Isaiah 5:1-7 is about social justice. In his study, he explores the theme of paradoxical hope.³² He says the passage is about Yahweh who brings about hope even in the midst of tragedy. He argues that the lesson of the song is that the prophet announces 'divine judgement upon the recipients of privilege and blessing, for God expects

²⁹ Robert P. Carroll, 'YHWH's Sour Grape: Images of Food and Drink in the Prophetic Discourses of the Hebrew Bible', *Semeia*, 86 (1999), 113-131 (p. 114).

³⁰ Carroll, p. 129.

³¹ Marvin Chaney, 'Whose Sour Grapes? : The Addressees of Isaiah 5:1-7 in the Light of Political Economy', *Semeia*, 87 (1999), 105-123 (p. 118).

³² Lyle J. Story 'Hope in the Midst of Tragedy: (Isa 5: 1-7; 27: 2-6; Matt 21: 33-46 par.)', *Horizons in Biblical Theology*, 31 (2009), 178-195.

responsible social conduct from whomever.’³³ However, for Story, ‘Isaiah’s two Songs (5: 1-7; 27:2-6) and Jesus’ parable are united in the truth that hope is still to be found in the midst of tragedy and destruction.’³⁴

Isaiah 5:7 provides a sudden twist of events. More importantly, the author reveals the true meaning of the parable. This is what evades many biblical commentators. This passage is the climax; it provides the key to interpreting the parable.

- The author’s friend is the Lord of Hosts
- The vineyard is the house of Israel and the people of Judah
- The people of Judah are the pleasant planting
- The expectations were justice and righteousness; the outcome was bloodshed and a cry.

It is clear from this interpretation that the vineyard is ‘the house of Israel and the people of Judah.’ There is no need to speculate about the identity of the lover with various references from the Old Testament and elsewhere. However, scholars have attempted to determine specifically what is meant by that. According to Williamson, Israel refers to the people of God as a whole, further defined more specifically as the people of Judah.³⁵ Judah, he writes, is the primary target of the polemic, but it is in their capacity as part of the people of God that they come in for judgement. He says by further specifying the people of Judah as the planting in which he took delight, the author implies that they were especially favoured or privileged section within the wider group.

However, although it is plausible that the passage was used by subsequent generations to refer to the whole people of Israel, the passage seems to focus on the people of Judah. According to Weren, the connection between Isaiah 5:7 and 5:3 makes it clear that the house

³³ Story, p. 184.

³⁴ Story, p. 195.

³⁵ Williamson, p. 342.

of Israel refers to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the people of Judah, namely the southern kingdom.³⁶ Chaney, approaching the text from a social scientific perspective, argues that the parable targets an even more specific group, the elite. He describes the economic life of the eighth century Israel as follows:

Eighth-century Israel and Judah saw an increase in international trade, in which their leaders imported luxury goods, military materiel, and the wherewithal of monumental architecture. To pay for these imports, food-stuffs ... particularly the triad of wheat, olive oil, and wine ... were exported. Imports mostly benefited an elite minority, while the exports necessary to procure them cut deeply into the sustenance of the peasant majority.³⁷

Building on this context, Chaney argues that, Yahweh's harsh acts are not primarily directed to the entire populations of Jerusalem, Judah and Israel.³⁸ Instead they are aimed at the elite, the wealthy landowners of Judah and Israel.

It is, therefore, more plausible to conclude that Isaiah 5:1-7 is a parable in which the prophet wants his audience, the elite, to understand that God's concern is social justice but instead they perpetrate social injustice. The prophet wants the audience to make a negative evaluation of the way they are responding to the call for social justice. The parable thus targets a specific group of people, the urban elites who exploited the peasant majority, and not the victims of oppression. Understood this way, the periscope is about Yahweh, the just judge and defender of the oppressed.

³⁶ Wim J. C. Weren, 'The use of Isaiah 5, 1-7 in the parable of the tenants (Mark 12, 1-12; Matthew 21, 33-46)', *Biblic*, 79 (1998), 1-26.

³⁷ Chaney, p. 107.

³⁸ Chaney, p. 109.

The Meaning of the Parable

The rereading of the passage in the preceding paragraphs allows us to determine its motif. Several propositions have already been put forward. For example, Childs argues that in studying the passage we must go beyond simply describing a history of interpretation or formalising features of literary continuity.³⁹ He says we must rather relate the theological substance of both. In his view, this passage has theological significance beyond the sharp existential formulation of the prophet Isaiah. In the Old Testament it reverberates with the entire Mosaic witness to Israel as God's special possessions, while in the New Testament God the father is glorified by the righteous fruit that the following of Jesus Christ produce. It could also be speculated that the passage can be regarded as song about the unfruitfulness and wastefulness of God's resources by the people of Judah. Having been given everything they yielded wild grapes instead of good fruit.

However, this must be seen as a simple parable addressed to a specific group of people, the elite to try and convince them to stop perpetrating injustices. Thus, Williamson rightly argues that Isaiah is trying to persuade his audience to acknowledge some point of view that they evidently would not have done had he addressed them directly about the matter.⁴⁰ Thus, Isaiah wishes the audience to agree with the Lord's verdict that they are guilty of grave social injustice, and that their destruction is a fair punishment or consequence. Indeed as Williamson notes this view 'accounts for the passage's present literary position, for only then are the audience's ears open to hear some more specific charges in the woe sayings which follow, for they serve merely to amplify the nature of the charge.'⁴¹ This is an appealing conclusion given that Isaiah 5:1-7 is found in proto-Isaiah, the first part of Isaiah that narrates the strained relationship between the southern kingdom and Yahweh. These people constantly disobeyed God resulting in

³⁹ Childs, p. 45.

⁴⁰ Williamson, p. 329.

⁴¹ Williamson, p. 330.

various oracles of judgement. Their unjust behaviour necessitated the complaint.

Conclusion

The varied approaches and methodologies from biblical scholars pertaining to Isaiah 5:1-7 happened because these scholars allowed themselves to be diverted by false leads. The reality is that we are dealing with a simple parable that should not necessarily be broken into smaller units of purported subgenres. Such a reading enables us to easily identify the characters in the passage and to see that its message is an appeal against injustice. Yahweh (the vineyard owner) wants his targeted hearers (the elite of Judah) to see that his threatened action (withdrawal of protection and possible destruction) is justified because they have failed to do as expected (yield Justice and righteousness), but instead did the opposite (yield bloodshed and an outcry). Therefore, theories regarding the sexual imagery or the juridical nature of the passage are a result of a misreading of the rhetorical tactics of the author. None of those speculations have proved to be consistent.

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Religion, Spirituality and Mental Health: Current Trends in Research and Practice

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Introduction.

A young woman of 35 years walks into the Parish Priest's office for consultation. When she leaves, the priest is left mesmerized by the issues that this parishioner brought up. While he has prayed with her, suggested some scripture and spiritual reading, and promised to continue to pray for her, he cannot quite wrap his mind and heart around the complexity of issues that she presented. He detects that she has a mental health issue which remains to him indeterminate. Similarly, after the same woman consults with a medical professional, she receives a prescription and is offered a follow-up visit. Like the priest, the medical doctor remains puzzled. He detects that she has an underlying religious or spiritual issue somehow interacting with her physical and mental health concerns. Many religious practitioners encounter people with mental health issues which require clinical intervention beyond their pastoral ministry. Likewise, many medical professionals encounter individuals with religious and spiritual issues that require pastoral interventions beyond their clinical care. Religious, spiritual and mental health issues coexist in the same individual in a manner that can be confounding to the helping professionals whether they are religious ministers or clinicians. There is always the danger of treating religious or spiritual issues as if they were clinical matters and vice versa. This is a real challenge to those who attend to distressed people in pastoral ministry and to those who attend to the same people in clinical settings. Present methods of assessment, conceptualization, diagnosis and intervention may not

offer clear cut ways for dealing with clinical emergencies in the pastoral setting, and pastoral challenges in the clinical setting. This is an area where we hope that research will enlighten the helping professionals, both clinical and pastoral, with empirically derived or evidence-based conceptualizations that will lead to pastorally sound and clinically effective assessments, diagnoses and interventions. While such research here in Zimbabwe is still emerging, there is an encouraging body of research from other parts of the world from which useful insights may be learnt.

Statement of the Problem

A question that challenges both religious practitioners and medical health practitioners is about the relationships among religion and spirituality on one hand and physical and mental health on the other hand. What is the difference between religion and spirituality? Is the distinction between religion and spirituality real or superficial, necessary or nonconsequential? How do religion and spirituality influence mental health, and how does mental health influence religion and spirituality? Do individuals who are more religious and less spiritual have more or less mental health problems? Do individuals who are more spiritual than religions have more or less mental health struggles? Does having a mental health problem make an individual more or less religious or spiritual? Do religion and spirituality have positive or negative influences on mental health, and under what conditions? These and many others are some of the questions that academics and researchers, as well as practitioners grapple with in the quest to understand better the relationships among these critical human variables: religion, spirituality and mental health.

Current trends in research and practice can enlighten us on how relationships among these variables may be conceptualized, understood, operationalized and utilized. In order to explore these relationships, it is important to clarify what is meant by terms such as

mental health, mental illness, religion, and spirituality in academic research, and in clinical and pastoral practice.

Definitions

Mental Health & Mental Illness

Mental health and illness have been defined in many ways, sometimes being seen as synonymous, interchangeable, or two different sides of the same coin. These two concepts should always be viewed in the ethnocultural context and epistemological assumptions that produce and influence them. In scholarly research and in professional practice definitions of mental health and illness are dominantly influenced by Euro-American or Western philosophical and scientific paradigms. They are further influenced by the religious beliefs that are often salient and unacknowledged. Application of these concepts in non-Western and non-Christian cultural settings need to be cautious and sensitive to local and individual differences. Political power, socio-economic privilege, racial and ethnic superiority, religious exclusivity, gender dominance, and other biases, have often significantly determined the mapping and naming of bodies and spaces as either mentally healthy or ill.

Mental Health

In the Western model, mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (Workplace Mental Health Promotion, 2019). According to the US Surgeon General Report (1999), mental health is defined as: a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity. This definition aligns well with the Euro-American Western cultural values of individualism,

democracy, independence, productivity, efficiency, consumption etc., that undergird first world societies. How appropriate is this definition for non-Western, non-industrialized, non-democratic, third world societies? In our beloved worldview, philosophy and ethics of Ubuntu or Hunhu, how do we conceptualize and operationalize the constructs of mental health and illness?

Mental Illness

Mental illness is a recognized, medically diagnosable illness that results in the significant impairment of an individual's cognitive, affective or relational abilities. Mental disorders result from biological, developmental, and or psychosocial factors, and can be managed using approaches comparable to those applied to physical disease, namely prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. According to the Diagnostical Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-5) a mental disorder or illness is:

characterized by significant dysfunction in an individual's cognitions, emotions, or behaviors that reflects a disturbance in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. A mental disorder is not merely an expectable or culturally sanctioned response to a specific event, such as the death of a loved one. The deviation from the norm is not political, religious, or sexual, but results from dysfunction in the individual (APA 2013).

This definition privileges a Euro-American or Western conceptualization. Research waits to be done to explore and develop alternative constructs that adequately capture and represent the lived experiences of people in other world contexts. An interesting conceptualization is that of the therapy management and therapy management group developed by Janzen (1987). Janzen pointed out that the control of therapeutic knowledge and resources is often perceived in terms of lay versus professional realms of discourse and understanding, or in terms of doctor-patient relationship. But the reality of medical decision-making shows that information and critical

symbols are embedded in the totality of social relationships in which neither professionals nor the laity dominate. A therapy management perspective helps to understand the dynamic qualities of lay and professional interactions, rather than imposing a lay-professional binary.

Mental Health or Illness?

Mental health and mental illness are often used interchangeably but they are not the same thing, and they are not mutually exclusive. Fundamentally, mental health and mental illness differ in that everyone has some level of mental health all the time, just like physical health, whereas it is possible to be without mental illness. Figure 1., below illustrates how mental health and mental illness are found on two separate continua. Optimal mental health, or mental wellbeing or mental wellness, is at one end of the continuum, and poor mental health, or languishing, at the other end of the same vertical axis. Serious mental illness is at one end of the horizontal continuum, while no symptoms of a mental illness is at the opposite end of the same axis. This means that one can be mentally healthy with a mental illness, while another can have poor mental health without a mental illness. Even though poor mental health is not defined as an illness, it is associated with emotional distress and psychosocial impairment comparable to that of a major depressive episode. The effects of poor mental health are both severe and prevalent, with poor mental health being more common than depression. When exploring the relationships between mental health and religion and spirituality, it is important to be clear whether we are measuring mental health or mental illness, and whether we are comparing that with religion or with spirituality, however we construct, conceptualize and operationalize these variables. When we talk of religion and spirituality, you will notice that these are also very complex and multidimensional constructs whose aspects or certain features can be engaged at one time in research and practice. This intentional selection of certain aspects of a phenomenon for practical research and practice

purposes can be justifiable, but at the same time can lead to a reductionism that fails to account for the totality of a reality.

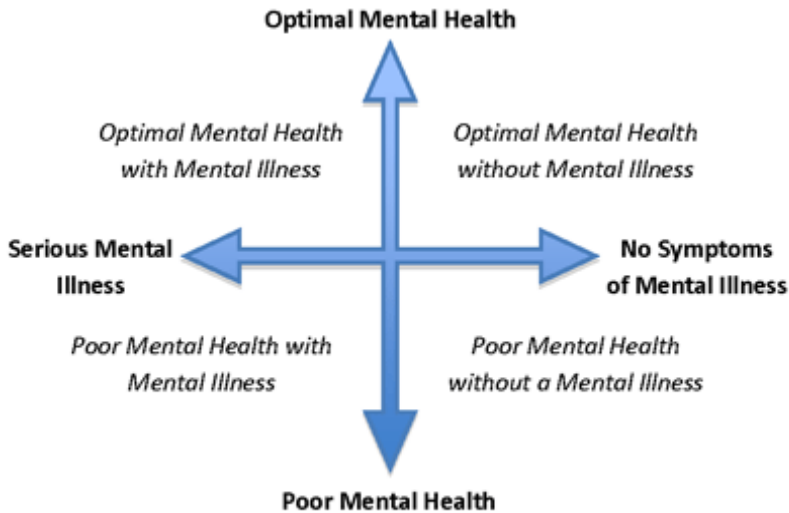


Figure 1: The Mental Health/Illness Continuum

There are three most significant determinants of mental health, namely: social inclusion, freedom from discrimination and violence; and access to economic resources. These factors are intricately intertwined with other factors such as employment, culture, politics, religion, age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, geography, and socio-economic status. These and other pertinent determinants of mental health need to be factored in research, practice and programing.

There are many different types of mental illness. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for mental disorders (DSM 5) and the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Mental Disorders (ICD-10; WHO, 1992), are the leading classifications of mental illness in use. Some of the important defining characteristics of mental illness are that:

- It is a recognized and medically diagnosable illness
- It causes significant cognitive, affective, behavioral, and or, relational impairment
- It results from biological, developmental, and or, psychosocial factors
- That it can be managed using disease approaches i.e., prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation.

As research on mental illness continues to evolve, more mental illnesses are being discovered and diagnosed. Some of the more common and well researched mental illness categories include:

- Mood disorders (affective disorders) such as depression, mania and bipolar
- Anxiety disorders such as generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder
- Psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia
- Concurrent disorders such as addictions and substance abuse
- Personality disorders such as antisocial personality disorder, obsessive compulsive personality disorder.

Mental illness, like physical illness, is something that one can live with, and, or recover from. Recovery does not mean the individual no longer has the illness, but that one has stabilized and regained their functionality.

The DSM-5 includes a glossary of terms for culturally specific mental health conditions. This goes to show the awareness among scholars that the categories of the dominant Euro-American culture may not be arbitrarily applied to non-Western contexts. An interesting item on that glossary is the condition called *kufungisisa*:

The experience of thinking too much (Shona: *kufungisisa*) is associated with general psychological distress and common mental disorders in Zimbabwe. Thinking too much is considered both a symptom of distress and a cause of other physical and psychological health problems: thinking too much can cause pain and feelings of physical pressure on the heart (APA, 2013, p.834).

The inclusion of *kufungisisa* in the DSM-5 is the result of the work of researchers and practitioners in Zimbabwe who seek to develop concepts and constructs that adequately capture the reality of mental health and illness informed by the lived experiences of people in this context. Much remains to be done in research and practice to develop culturally sensitive and contextually relevant ways of describing the lived experiences of people with mental health problems in their localities. Kohrt and colleagues (2014), in a meta-analysis of research on cultural concepts of distress and psychiatric disorders found that these concepts are difficult to study. They cited poor study quality as impeding conceptual advancement and service application. By improving study design research can enhance the detection of mental health problems, reduce cultural bias, and increase cultural salience of interventions. Patel (1995), and others, have pioneered in the research on alternative explanatory models of mental distress in Zimbabwe and in other non-Western environments. Still, much remains to be done to incorporate indigenous, Afro-centric epistemologies into the conceptualization and operationalization of the constructs of mental health and illness.

Defining Religion and Spirituality

There is no consensus of the definition of any of these terms. Each definition proffered must be understood in the context and positionality of the author. We owe much to Western and Christian scholarship for the developments in the scientific study of religion and spirituality. Non-Western and non-Christian religions and spiritualities may not be captured adequately by the dominant epistemologies and methodologies in currency. Scholars of religion from other parts of world have the double burden to develop indigenous methodologies and enunciate indigenous experiences in alternative ways to the received Western Christian tradition. The epistemological and methodological positions of a scholar, as well as their assumptive worldview influence how they define religion and spirituality. Working definitions are functional and useful in starting a

conversation, are at best descriptive rather than prescriptive, open ended rather than closed. The most useful definition remains open-ended and amenable to change, abandonment, or improvement, in the face of new evidence and evolving understanding.

Religion.

Traditionally the term religion was used to refer to all aspects of human relationship to the Divine or Transcendent – that which is great than us, the source and goal of all human life and value. More recently scholars have started to understand religion as activities and a way of life along with a distinctive way of living together, and a language for expressing this reality. This conceptualization of religion is on one hand about the transcendent and on the other hand the immanent. Some religions stress the transcendent, e.g., Islam, while others stress the immanent, e.g., Eastern religions. Christianity stresses both. Religion is therefore multidimensional, a complexity which must be understood if religion is to be properly grasped and evaluated (Nelson, 2009). In research and practice when we talk about religion, we want to be specific about the aspect or dimension or facet of religion that we are engaging. A researcher can study the relationship between daily mass attendance, as an aspect of religion, and compliance with antidepressant medication, rather than the relationship between being a catholic in its totality and have a major depressive diagnosis. In research religion needs to be parceled out in order to be studied meaningfully. Similarly, in clinical practice treatment goals and objectives can be established on the basis of the targeted parts of a religion that might seem to be associated with a psychopathological or a disordered personality presentation.

Spirituality

In recent times the term spirituality has begun to be used as an alternate way of describing the search for the transcendent. Originally, “spiritual” contrasted church life with “worldly” or materialistic ways

of being. In the 19th century spirituality was not a common term and “spiritualism” referred to contact with spirits and other psychic phenomena. Today spirituality has a number of common meanings and scholarly definitions vary. These differences show that spirituality is a broad term encompassing multiple domains of meaning that may differ among various cultural, national, and religious groups (Nelson, 2009).

A popular usage of the term spirituality denotes the experiential and personal side of our relationship to the transcendent or sacred” (Hill et al., 2000; Emmons and Crumpler, 1999). This usage typically contrasts spirituality with religion and defines the latter narrowly as the organizational structures, practices, and beliefs of a religious group. Theologians and religious practitioners tend to prefer definitions that draw less of a strict division between religion and spirituality. Thus, they see spirituality as the living reality of religion as experienced by an adherent of the tradition. According to Roof (1999, p.35), spirituality encompasses 4 themes, namely:

1. A sense of values and ultimate meaning or purpose beyond the self, including a sense of mystery and self-transcendence;
2. A way of understanding;
3. Inner awareness, and;
4. Personal integration

The integrative aspect of spirituality is very important because it is the harmonizing function that involves (a) our inner unity, and (b) our relationship and connectedness with others and to a broader reality that powers our ability to be transcendent. Spirituality is therefore not a separate nature or characteristic but an inseparable part of all that we are and do.

Most conceptions of spirituality involve contact with the sacred, whose dominance over humanity seems to increase in proportion to human efforts to master the sacred. Thus, spirituality has a powerful, mysterious quality that cannot be reduced to a simple object of study.

Spirituality takes us beyond ordinary daily experiences and transforms our lives and relationships. It is about being, experience and doing. Contemporary practices of spirituality involve a search for higher values, inner freedom, and things that give life meaning. While this search typically involves a search for God, a nontheistic can also be involved in the quest for meaning.

Conceptions of spirituality can be divided between those that involve thick definitions and those that involve thin or generic ones. Religious conceptions of spirituality generally involve thick definitions that are rich in allusions to specific beliefs and practices. On the other hand, thin or generic definitions focus more on natural experiences, personal values, or human and environmental connectedness. An example of a thin definition is offered by Jernigan (2001, p. 418), “spirituality is the organization (centering) of individual and collective life around dynamic patterns of meanings, values, and relationships that are trusted to make life worthwhile, or at least livable, and death meaningful.” Jernigan offers a thick definition of Christian spirituality: “the organization (centering) of individual and collective life around loving relationships with God, neighbor, self, and all creation – responding to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and at work through the Holy Spirit” (2001, p. 419).

Thick definitions are often theistic, have strong communal content, are multidimensional with experiential, relational, and behavioral components. Thin definitions are attractive to scientists because they are thought to tap universal human qualities related to relevant natural laws that can be scientifically discovered through research. However, some scholars contend that thin definitions may distort the fundamental nature of spirituality (Slife, Hope, & Nebecker, 1999). Thicker definitions may contain important content and contextual information necessary for understanding a particular type of spirituality. Different groups and individuals have diverse ideas about it, making thin or global interpretations difficult. Because religion and spirituality are complex concepts that have different meaning for

different groups it is difficult to articulate a single definition for either of them. However, multidimensionality suggests that definitions that focus on only one aspect of religion or spirituality should be avoided.

There is a scholarly view that sees religion and spirituality as conceptually different. The advantage of separating these two is the recognition that a broadly defined spirituality is possible for those outside of religious traditions and communities. This fits very well within the Western framework that focusses on the individual and their experiences rather than the needs and experiences of the larger community. Scholars who associate the decline in traditional values and religion with a turn towards spirituality see this distinction as attractive.

Research with Western samples has indicated that it is possible to:

1. Develop definitions and measurement tools that reliably measure religion and spirituality separately.
2. Find that religion and spirituality have different qualities and effects, and
3. Identify people who are either spiritual or religious, but not both, although in many people religion and spirituality are highly related.

Dowling and colleagues (2004), found that religion and spirituality have independent effects on thriving, although spirituality also has an effect on religiosity. They found that spirituality involved an orientation to help others and to do good works, as well as to participate in activities of self-interest. This finding contrasts with religiosity, which involves things related to beliefs and institutional influences. Further research with adults has shown that religion and spirituality can be separated and that they change differently during the aging process, with group averages of religiosity staying fairly the same across the lifespan, while spirituality tends to increase, especially after the age 60 (Dillon, Wink, & Fay, 2003). Individuals who are spiritual but not religious have been found to differ in beliefs, for

example, they have higher levels of nihilism – the belief that life has no purpose (Shahabi, et al., 2002).

The separation of the constructs of religion and spirituality in research and practice is not without its objectors. Theologians and religious scholars generally reject the idea that religion and spirituality are separate entities (Merton, 2005, p.46). Zinnbauer and colleagues (1999) pointed out that drawing a distinction between religion and spirituality often polarizes these concepts in value-laden way, with organized, communal religion defined in negative terms and individualistic spirituality portrayed in positive terms. These types of definitions can tell us more about the values and prejudices of the researchers than the phenomenon that they are purporting to study. Zinnbauer and colleagues noted that the people who are studied often do not make the distinction that scholars make between religion and spirituality. There is evidence that in some cultural settings a distinction between religion and spirituality may not be meaningful and that even when the two are distinguished, they tend to support each other in positive ways.

A pertinent question in the empirical research on religion and spirituality is this: Is it possible to be spiritual without being religious? Can an individual engage in a spiritual quest without formal membership in a religious group? Elkins (1998) argued that it is possible, and he presented a program of spiritual life outside religion. However, this program makes extensive use of practices and beliefs taken from major religious traditions, and frequently quotes religious figures to support his arguments. Wittingly or unwittingly, Elkins work illustrates the fact that it is impossible to divorce religion and spirituality (Hill & Pargament 2003; Eliassen, Taylor, & Lloyd, 2005), and that the practice of spirituality without the support of religion is difficult in many ways. Even though there is evidence of the separation of spirituality and religion in some historic periods, in Christianity, religious practitioners and theologians have traditionally resisted the move to split religion and theology from spirituality as inaccurate and

harmful. Christian scholars argue that ultimately the Christian religion and spirituality require each other, and the same is probably true in other religions (Tillich, 1963; Rahner, 1975; Sheldrake, 1995). Furthermore, the study of spirituality among those who are outside of religious groups is particularly difficult, so that research on spirituality to date preponderately involves those affiliated with churches and other religious groups (Emmons, 1999).

Research and Practice

How then must we understand the two concepts of religion and spirituality in research and practice? If these two concepts are distinct yet related, they are two ways of understanding their connection. Firstly, we can suppose that one of these constructs is actually a subset of the other – so that religion can be seen as a response to spirituality, or spirituality is seen as a response to religion. Pargament (1999) defines religion broadly as a “search for significance in ways related to the sacred” (p.32) and sees religion as a broader concept than spirituality (Pargament, 1999; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Stifoss-Hansen (1999) offered an opposite perspective. He argued that spirituality is a broader concept than religion because the quality of sacredness emphasized in religion is not experienced by atheists and agnostics. Demerath (2000) proposes a third perspective that sees religion as related to the sacred, but that sacredness can be approached from other ways. Hill and colleagues (2000), suggest that a sensible way to resolve this issue is to treat religion and spirituality as distinct but overlapping constructs.

Psychological Approaches to Religion and Spirituality

The conceptualization of religion and spirituality as distinct but overlapping and interdependent constructs is of particular importance in psychological research and practice that engages religion and spirituality as variables. Psychology itself is not a homogenous field and its definitions need to be put into consideration. Originally the

term psychology comes from the Greek words *psyche* or soul and *logos* or study. The association of psychology with the human soul implies attention to the interior life of a person, and most definitions have construed it as the study of mental life or the mind. Early works of psychology, before 1850, were written by philosophers. In the latter half of the 19th century the study of psychology moved from the theoretical to the experimental methodology. Researchers began to apply natural science methods to the study of the mind. This led to psychology becoming the scientific study of behavior and this is the definition prevalent in contemporary works of psychology. In North America this emphasis on natural science led to a loss of contact between psychologists and scholars in fields like philosophy and theology that did not have an exclusively scientific outlook (Gorsuch, 2002; Fuchs & Viney, 2002). This split is not as pronounced in Europe, especially on the continent, where interdisciplinary study and cooperation has a much stronger tradition.

Psychology and Religion

Many early psychologists were interested in and sympathetic to religion. Freud, the father of modern psychology, spent much time studying religious texts and behavior. Subsequent developments in psychology namely behaviorism, psychodynamic or psychoanalytic schools, neuroscience and cognitive psychology have not been particularly friendly to religion. In the US psychologists tend to be less religious than the general population. This reality, as well as the disciplinary isolation that begun in the early 20th century, kept psychologists and theologians or religious scholars relatively unacquainted with current trends in each other's work. As a result, theologians and other religious scholars tend to respond to older psychological theories that are no longer of wider interest. Similarly, psychologists are often unaware of the important aspects of the religious traditions that they study. However, recently, an appreciation of alternative perspectives and an openness to more theoretical perspectives by psychologists, and an openness to empirical

perspectives by religionists is helping to bridge the chasm. Multidisciplinary and international research and practice is evolving and is helping to bridge the gap between religion and psychology.

Religion, Spirituality and Mental Health

In recent times, religion and spirituality have become variables of great interest in psychological research and practice especially how they relate to mental health. Research across many countries of the world has found that religious coping is widespread. Researchers found overwhelming evidence of religious coping among people with mental health problems and concluded that religion “serves as a pervasive and potentially effective method of coping for persons with mental illness, thus warranting its integration into psychiatric and psychological practice.” (Koenig, 2009, p. 285). Koenig (2009) reviewed studies examining the relation between religion and mental health focusing on five areas: depression, suicide, anxiety, psychotic disorders and substance abuse. While some of the studies reported no association between religion and mental health, and a few reported negative associations, the majority (476 of 724) reported statistically significant positive associations (p. 285). Koenig concluded that people suffering from the pain of mental illness, emotional problems, or situational difficulties seek refuge in religion for comfort, hope, and meaning. While some are helped, not all such people are completely relieved of their mental distress or destructive behavioral tendencies. Thus, patients displaying unhealthy forms of religion and practice are often encountered in psychological practice. Another finding was that, among the emotionally vulnerable, religious beliefs and doctrines were seen to reinforce neurotic tendencies, enhance fears or guilt, and restrict life rather than enhance it. In such cases religious beliefs were seen to be used in primitive and defensive ways to avoid making necessary life changes.

In general, systematic research published in mental health literature to date does not support the argument that religious involvement usually

has negative effects on mental health. Instead, studies of people in medical, psychiatric, and the general population, from different ethnic backgrounds, in different age groups, and in different locations have found that religious involvement is related to better coping with stress, and less depression, suicide, anxiety, and substance abuse. While religious delusions are common in people with psychotic disorders, healthy normative religious beliefs and practices seem to be stabilizing and may reduce the tremendous isolation, fear and loss of control that is experienced by those with psychosis. Researchers and practitioners, therefore need to be aware of the religious beliefs and spiritual activities of their subjects and patients, appreciate their value and recognize when those beliefs and practices are distorted, limiting and contribute to pathology or mental health suffering, rather than alleviating it. Two constructs developed by researchers that are useful in the clinical treatment, as well as pastoral ministry, with people with mental health problems are that of the spiritual bypass and moral injury.

Spiritual Bypass

Cashwell and colleagues define the spiritual bypass as: the unhealthy misuse of the spiritual life to avoid dealing with psychological difficulties.” (2011, p.2). Essentially, spiritual bypass has an avoidance function. It enables an individual to avoid the often painful and difficult psychological work of healing old wounds. For example, a client may report that she/he uses most of her/his spare time participating in church projects and has strong spiritual convictions, transpersonal experiences, and a disciplined spiritual practice. What is not readily apparent, however, is that this client uses these practices as an unconscious way to avoid dealing with her early experiences of verbal abuse or the shame that she/he associates with her well-hidden sex or alcohol addiction. As such, the person in spiritual bypass actually might be best conceptualized as in a state of developmental arrest, which may result in increased psychological symptoms. Such a

person would be likely to score high on a measure of spirituality or would respond to an initial assessment of spirituality in a way that could easily lead a clinician to believe that she/he has a strong and healthy spiritual life. Although researchers have found significant relationships between spirituality and such mental health issues as depression and anxiety, it is possible that the true relationships between spirituality and psychological symptoms are truncated by respondents who are in spiritual bypass.

Moral Injury

According to Matthews (2018) the concept of moral injury has emerged in research and practice to describe a cluster of symptoms, similar to those associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), that result from personal experiences, which violate a person's deepest and most closely held values and principles. Matthew argued that moral injury is more associated with an existential crisis, stemming from the violation of values relating to the sanctity of life, than with trauma. From this perspective, moral injury involves a more abstract cause than PTSD, which is thought to occur after direct contact with a traumatic event. Nash and colleagues (2013) presented moral injury as an emerging model to explain how events may be traumatic even though they do not involve direct threats to life and safety. They defined moral injury as, "as the enduring consequences of perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations." (p. 373) To the extent they participate morally in military operations and their after- math, while subscribing to military values and ideals, military spouses and children may be as vulnerable to moral injury as military service members. Research on the phenomenology, natural history, and treatment of moral injury has only just begun, and focuses on military combatants and veterans. So far, no research has targeted moral injury in military family members. Nevertheless, the conceptual model of moral injury suggests specific techniques for promoting

recovery and healing from moral injury that may be as useful in military spouses and older children.

Conclusion.

I began this presentation by highlighting the challenges that the relationships among religion, spirituality and mental health pose to pastoral ministry and clinical practice. I looked at the contributions of research to the conceptualization and operationalization of these constructs and how that impacts pastoral and clinical practice. I presented the concepts of spiritual bypass and moral injury as examples, among many, of the products of current research in the area of religion, spirituality and mental health that is promising new and better ways of attending pastorally and intervening clinically. Most of the research that I reviewed has been carried out in the West, by Western scholars, among Western populations. These findings are valuable in the generation of empirically verified knowledge and evidence-based practices. However, the application of such research and practices to other world contexts needs to be carefully adjusted and adapted to local realities. The challenge remains for scholars in their non-Western parts of the world, to engage in robust and rigorous research that produces contextually relevant and culturally sensitive funds of knowledge that will drive effective and timeous intervention with the most pressing issues of human wellbeing and thriving.

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Christian Story-Tellers, Past and Present

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Most readers of this journal, *Dare*, as a forum for ideas, will want to involve themselves in later forums for Christian ideas, in circumstances outside of Holy Trinity College. They may be working with catechists, with school teachers, adult education groups or groups on days of renewal and so on. In all of those settings it will be desirable, at least, that those taking part should communicate well and creatively with one another. But some of those who turn up may have had little experience of faith sharing at a well-educated level. They may feel a little threatened if someone else in their buzz group has done a reasonable amount of reading in the area of theology, spirituality and religion. For these reasons, it is worth realising how diversely Christians, over the course of two thousand years, have felt they can connect with Christ, or how surprisingly they may imagine the benefits of his power in their hearts and minds. I shall have to give examples which come from my own experience, most of which has been English, European or North American, but which does include some previous time in an African classroom.

Getting into the Story-Telling Frame of Mind.

You may already have encountered one or two of the plays of Shakespeare. You will not automatically have notice the Christian aspects, which are greater in some plays than others. For myself, some study of Shakespeare has helped me to distinguish between gentle stories and ones which shake us up. The Bible after all contains both sorts. Shakespeare first all wrote most of his comedies, which are about love making mistakes, before he went on to produce tragedies, often with the message in them of 'how love kills'.

When my sisters and I were children, my mother took us to see two live, outdoors performances of Shakespeare plays. One was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a comedy, showing how foolishly people

can behave when they are in love. The other was *Macbeth*, a Scottish tragedy about an ambitious, powerful family, a man and his wife, who were so longing for political power that they provide hospitality for their rival, the Scottish ruler, King Malcolm. And when this royal guest is asleep, they murder him. But before this killing, we are shown the appearance of three witches, a scene that tells us that this play is not about politics; it is about the drama of facing heaven and hell, of being on the path towards judgement. This spiritual drama is emphasized as something psychological, when the Porter, the doorman to Macbeth's castle, hears the knocking on the gate, which represents the closeness of Malcolm to his uncertain fate.¹

England and Scotland at this period had been pushed and tugged back and forth between Catholicism and Protestantism. There were plots to bring in a Spanish king, and some who supported this would play games with language to gain power. This was called 'equivocation'. The Porter hesitates to open the door because power games are all a matter of cautious, devious calculations, waiting for the best moment to gain more power, and possibly rule the world. People gamble with the destinies of others. The version which I saw, as a boy, was performed in the ruins of a medieval Benedictine Abbey. It has bare rough walls with large gaps in one wall where there had once been windows. In those dark openings, the three witches appeared, lit up from below, a scary image of dangerous futures happening above our heads, whether we want them or not. The actors rode in on horses, so you could feel the energy of the competition for power close up as steam rose from the horses' skin and nostrils. This was exciting and frightening story-telling. It made us aware of our mortality.

It is one of the concerns of religious story-telling, to look at how and why there are human beings whose lives are energetically dedicated to deceiving others. My mother wanted us to imagine the conflicts which

¹ For more detail on this, see M. C. Bradbrook, *Shakespeare – the Poet in his World*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978) p. 187.

might face us as we grew up. So she also read stories to us from a few favourite novelists, such as Charles Dickens. She read them out loud, and made some changes of pitch and sound in her voice, to show us how very different those characters were in the novel. I particularly remember the book *Oliver Twist* because of the contrast which her voice made so clear, between the horrifying Bill Sykes, a tough, harsh murderer and a thief, and the tender-hearted, young and gentle girl Nancy, whom he kidnaps and kills. The story was set in Victorian industrial city circumstances, in which all the evils of modern city life for the poor are dramatized. When Sykes goes on the run from the police, it is a horrific chase across rooftops, until he falls and a rope catches around his neck, and he is strangled. We are being told how worthless he might be even in God's eyes. But not all stories about sin are great as Christian stories, of course. Yet we need to learn to recognise in people's voices the personalities which cause fear, and those which could bring about peace. For this instructs us, that there are both good and bad ways of using our freedom. We are right to suppose that contrasts like this also occur in the Bible.

Some Biblical Story-Telling.

We might wonder whether several stories about one character, about Moses, or David, are told more than once because more than viewpoint on God's help is being portrayed. For instance, stories about King David were told in at least two different ways. In the books of Kings, we hear about him as a warrior hero, with many fears, and also rather too many sins. But in the two books of Chronicles, he seems to be a true freedom fighter, one who creates peace for the people and never seems to make a mistake. Fearful freedom and peaceful freedom are two very dissimilar realities, even though both may come from God. A third view of the freedom given to King David occurs in the gospels, when Jesus pictures his ancestor advising his men as they travel through the fields, telling them to ignore the rabbinical rules relating to the Sabbath. It seems that for Jesus all genuine collaboration in accepting God's guidance is freedom. We can certainly wonder, as we ponder this, whether there are no bad ways of living in freedom. Of

course there are. We get a fuller sense of how Jesus' story-telling reveals God's intentions through the parables. Some are stories about weakness and strength, within which he says we should discover an invitation to a heavenly wedding feast. We are not heading to a birthday party, though. God's marriage to his people was already an Old Testament theme, an occasion for deepening love.

It would be best, in my view, to regard Jesus' intention in his call for freedom as needed in order for us to get to know our true selves better. We need to get deeper inside our hearts, to recognise whether we use the freedom which comes to us from God, as spiritual gift. We then develop our powers of loving generously, as true followers of Jesus should. We have to become aware of the outcomes and endings of our actions, in the awakening of love.

What we find in reading the gospels is sometimes not a whole story but some short sayings. For instance, "Remove the plank or log of wood from your own eye first before you expect to take a splinter out of the eye of someone else." Get a sense of proportion and reality. Since, being in Zimbabwe I have learnt a Shona proverb which is similar. "Even when you are dancing in water, your enemies will accuse you of kicking up the dust." In both sayings, we are reminded that all of us can often be impatient in pointing out the faults of others. Unfortunately, blaming people means we have prevented ourselves from loving people. We need to search further, to learn how God gives us heavenly light, to make us more genuine in our loving. Luke 11:33 copied this from Matthew 5:5, and 6:22, and from Mark 4:21. "No one lights a lamp and puts it under a tub. They put it on a lampstand. The lamp of the body is the eye. When your eye is clear, your whole body is filled with light. See to it that the light inside you is not darkness, and that your eye is not diseased." Mark tells us this very simply. Matthew tells it in two parts, and adds more ideas. We may reasonably ask, what if Matthew is adding his own thoughts; not repeating Jesus words, in fact? Sometimes Christian story-tellers in our modern times do wonder, "surely we should trust Jesus more than Matthew?" We

want to feel that we are right at the feet of Jesus, getting direct attention personally from him. We are uncertain whether his followers and their communities really understood and remembered what Jesus had intended to teach.

While we have four gospels, it is important that three of them provide us with three different versions of the same parable. Mark, Matthew and Luke all contain a narrative of the paralysed man, carried to Jesus on a mattress, to be healed. Mark's is probably the first telling recorded, Luke's the last one. Mark and Luke include the part where the man's friends lift him up to the roof, and remove tiles to lower him down; Matthew leaves all of this out. But all three say that Jesus sees their faith, the faith of the friends. Thus faith and healing are a shared communal reality, not just an individual's experience. Matthew speaks of the man being 'on a mattress' only; Luke says that 'along with the mattress,' a large object, he was lowered. For Luke, then, the healing is like being lowered into a tomb, then brought back to live, by such a great amount of shared faith. In other words, the style of the telling of the story incorporates a message about how faith happens too. Peace of mind can take shape in several ways, then. It makes itself present through forgiveness, by a process of healing, and also by means of the love of a close community.

Shakespeare's plays have stylistic, religious features which can likewise help us to appreciate diverse pathways towards peace of mind. In spite of fears, deprivation and pain, the new reality emerges and is welcomed by the audience. In some plays, such as *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, forgiveness, if it is ever achieved, has to overcome jealousy. Jealousy is a great barrier to peace of mind. In other plays, such as *Coriolanus*, *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *The Merchant of Venice*, greed and malice are the social forces which need to be overcome by the power of forgiveness. Since we do not know which will be the biggest problem we shall have to face in our lives, jealousy or greed, people need a community that can help them, however strong the many pressures arising may appear to be. Therefore, the need is

for the message taught by St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12-13, that a body of social relationships is often discovered to be tearing itself apart. This insight began as a story from Greek and Roman societies about members or parts of the body complaining that the senators are just a stomach. They do the work, but receive all of the benefits. However, as St. Paul tells his Christian listeners, 'you are members of Christ's body; you have many roles and ways of working, but you also experience the workings of the Spirit of Christ.' You must appreciate, he suggests, that what brings peace amongst you is love, the greatest of the gifts of the Spirit. This is the section of St. Paul's letter that was used by Shakespeare to write a whole poem, his Sonnet 116.

Therefore Shakespeare does not just lament the forces seen in *Macbeth*, which produce the clashes between Catholics and Protestants. He lets the remedy, which is love, affect his late plays, six of them, which are all concerned with whether love is strong enough, and whether its reality lasts in people's lives. Will love still be present when we approach the endings of our lives, when death is looming large, an unavoidable reality in our minds? In both *Cymbeline* and *A Winter's Tale*, death and suspicions seem, at first, likely to destroy the families in the story, and also the love which should hold people's relationships together. Then, to our surprise, as the audience of these plays, we observe that one person, a very young woman in the case of *Cymbeline*, who had died tragically, proves to be not dead after all, but has been brought back to life. Christian language about death and resurrection was offered by Shakespeare, as also by St. Paul, as the true focus for a more loving approach to society's future and human relationships.

Aiming to Acquire the Skills of the Story-Teller.

It is not always easy, when any of us try out the gift we suspect we may have for telling stories, especially religious ones. It can be awkward to make some sort of Christian viewpoint fit well into a particular drama that we may have pictured and planned to present. Any story about suspicions, death and fears of rejection can soon end

up like Macbeth. It will remind people of how dangerous life is. But it might not teach those who follow the story-line how deeply we all need forgiveness or compassion. When I was teaching in a secondary school in Malawi, we had a drama club. Two of the students, minor seminarians, asked me to write a play for their group to perform. They wanted a story about an orphan whose father had recently died. The neighbours were expressing suspicions of poisoning, with a strong tendency to blame the boy's uncle, a nasty, deceitful man, who now became his official guardian. It was a typical village story. A sort of inquiry and funeral were conducted, but fears that had been stirred up were not overcome. The group of young actors wanted to leave that uncertainty unresolved and powerful. We entered it into a school drama competition, and did well. It was a lively play, with some longings in it for achieving peace of mind. Yet that reality never happens, because suspicion and accusations remained powerful, while forgiveness and love seemed very weak or even unachievable. In writing it, I was simply copying ordinary village experiences. A funeral is a religious event, but this one had no definite room in it for peace, or faith, or hope. I was dissatisfied afterwards, that this had not become a Christian story. Yet it was the story which felt most real to the teenagers who performed in it.

I had more success later, when I was at a Franciscan parish in Edinburgh, in Scotland. The primary school Religious Education teacher was worried about pupils who had made their First Communion, but who were no longer going to Mass. They did not go, I discovered, because their parents had given up going. Being at the school was not enough support for them to go. I talked it over with the teacher, and agreed to help them to improve their faith by acting out some bible stories. The account of David and Goliath was very useful, because it could be discussed afterwards with the pupils, in terms of how to cope with playground bullying (whether real or imagined). The importance of developing a spirit of supportive kindness was easily appreciated by the class. My hope was that this spirit and the views shared by the class could continue to be real for them. Later they could

decide for themselves whether regular Christian worship might be a valuable aspect of their lives of conversion, by deepening their sense of compassion.

Another opportunity for developing and sharing stories about inner tranquillity emerged during that same year in Edinburgh by means of the parish jubilee. I worked with another friar, Frank Campbell, a jazz pianist, plus some fifty parishioners, to compose and stage a musical which we called *Echoes of Peace*. This was in an area where there was high unemployment and a lot of social tensions. It was based on a number of well-known tales coming from the early years of the growth of communities of St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century. Peace-making was an aim which arose and turned into projects in various ways during Francis' life. He brought calm into a feuding rivalry between the Bishop of Assisi and the Mayor. He asked his religious brothers to sing the Canticle which he wrote about Brother Sun and Sister Moon, about potential harmony between all of God's creatures. Then there was included into the musical the story which I liked the most, when three bandits, living in the Italian hills around Umbria, were sneaking into the friars' simple sleeping place to steal their food, making them angry. He taught the brothers a lesson in loving their enemies. He got them to lay out a cloth on the ground, placing bread and cheese upon it, and then inviting the bandits to share this with them, which they did. It was an act of reconciliation with God, a religious act. This musical embodied within it some very encouraging energies, for all the local people in Edinburgh who were involved. It was a part of the city with good reasons for frustration. Singing these stories in a public show strengthened mutual concern, I believe, between young and old, people who often might not have seen life in similar terms.

From Past to Present.

There are other occasions, earlier than the thirteenth century, and in later times in Christian history, from which we can pull out some surprising narratives about the importance of a new Christian

viewpoint. We may find some of them puzzling, yet they do remind us that Christian imagination will not always speak in predictable terms. Past practitioners of the art of communicating faith are not all famous names, but it is worth spending time listening to their creativity. They have tried to face those fears which make many people half-hearted about sharing some truly Christian love and mercy. Firstly, then, not long after the gospels were written, as Jewish Christians spread widely across the Mediterranean region, other versions of Christian narratives were recorded. One of these comes from second century Italy. We hear about a man called Hermas, perhaps a married deacon, travelling along the great roads of Italy until he comes to a terrifying region where volcanic gases burst out of holes in the rocks, and drift across a fearful, bare landscape close to Pompeii. Everything feels dangerous there. Hermas falls half asleep, while walking along, and is visited in his dream by a woman, in whose household he had been working as a servant. She accuses him of observing her while she took a bath, and says he has been neglecting his wife and children. He protests, and says, "I did not look" but she just laughs and says, "You did look." And your thoughts were bad ones.

So he begins to feel guilty, but then passes on those guilty feelings to his family and the members of his Church. He makes up lists of sins which could be used to accuse the other people he knows of all sorts of moral failings! An old woman appears to him then to tell him how to improve his life. She is the Sibyl, a wise woman who lives in a cave and makes pagan dream predictions when people ask for them. Then he realises that this wise soothsayer is the growing Church, with its collections of ideas about virtues and vices, a very ancient tradition. The book with the whole of this unfolding story in it is called *The Pastor*, or *The Shepherd* (that is, the Shepherd story of Hermas). This book has been a very big influence upon Roman Catholicism, read and repeated by lots of Catholics over centuries. A great fearsome Shepherd next appears to Hermas, expecting the 'living stones' which are the Church members to build up into a structure. This is not the gentle shepherd, full of loving concern and self-denial, which had been

mentioned by Jesus, but a powerful figure, who is going to be the Judge of human wrongdoing.

We see that love was there somewhere, in the heart and the life of Hermas, but he has begun to focus only on the plank of wood which must be present in the eyes of others. He is losing the full reality of forgiveness and salvation. A fierce, imagined Shepherd, who judges even people's thoughts, makes Hermas' usual daily freedoms of movement less spontaneous, less open to peace.

A second historical example of how the power of God's gifts becomes quite limited comes from a number of centuries later, in the eighth century, in a poem called *The Dream of the Rood*. 'Rood' is an Anglo-Saxon name for the Cross. It was written when pagan Viking invaders with their horned helmets and long ships, had been raiding Scotland and England. Some of them settled in the northern county of Yorkshire, but went on plundering, raping and attacking people. The poet wants to teach these warriors about Jesus Christ, but he has to use a language that will impress them: a language about power, not about widows and orphans, or meekness. We can even today travel to the village of Ruthwell in our English or Scots border regions, and see this Anglo-Saxon poem carved into the edges of a stone cross in the church there. This poet tells the tale of Christ on the Cross as a great hero, who is riding on the Cross, which is like a powerful horse, pawing the ground and snorting through its nostrils, eager to give the Roman soldiers a kick in revenge, but only if Christ gives the order to do that. However, it is told to hold back. A message about the great gift of restraining themselves is thus spoken to the Viking fighting men and seamen. Honour is the crucial factor here which prevents further violence. It is an unusual story, but a remarkable one.

A further development of this English viewpoint occurs two centuries later, when the Norsemen have mixed in and married with the local Anglo-Saxons, and sometimes their sons have begun to join the new local Benedictine monasteries. A monk called Anselm comes over

from Aosta in northern Italy to help them, and teaches theology to the warriors' sons. Anselm asks them the great question, "Why did God become Man?" He explains the meaning of this, not in terms of prophecies from the Bible, but with arguments about how human beings need salvation. With this style of theology, many Catholics realised that too many fellow English Christians had not realised that they need God to provide the full-scale reality of forgiveness and salvation. Other Europeans used this writing too.

Consequently, Anselm tackles the question one day when a young monk was running around the cloister and bumped into him. He is kind, but he points out that if he had bumped into the very strict prior, instead of him, he would really see how important forgiveness is. This could be a way of thinking about God. The size of the gift of forgiveness has to match up with the seriousness of the person being offended. If it is God who is being offended, then the gift of forgiveness will have to be cosmically huge. Since no human beings can provide this size of remedy for our faults, God's own Son had to be sent as the overwhelming remedy. This is a story about the gift of reconciliation between human beings and God, based on actual social mentalities, the well-known worries about authority. It is not based on how biblical prophecies point to Jesus but on the tensions between Catholic teaching about God's will and various actual experiences of Church failures. Mutual sympathy is formed between the higher and lower levels of a society through listening to God.

More Recent Quests for Creativity.

I would like to have included here something about the Zimbabwean novelist Charles Mungoshi (born in 1947), who went to All Saints Mission School and St. Augustine's, and later lectured at the universities of Zimbabwe, Durban and Florida. He grew up in Chivhu as an Anglican and published 18 books in all. He died in February this year. His collection of short stories, *Some Kinds of Wounds*, was banned by the British colonial regime for speaking out against oppression. I know only that two of the stories, *'The Mount of Moriah'*

and *'The Flood,'* clearly relate to passages from the Bible. He was a contemporary of two other African writers, Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiongo, whose novels I had to teach in the school in Malawi. Those are excellent story-tellers, but they were not attempting to write novels about Christianity, except indirectly. It would be valuable to bring in some theological insights from African writers.

Accordingly, there is Zimbabwe poetry from the 1970s in which contrasts between sincere and insincere Christianity are used to criticise both Zimbabwean clergy and the colonial clergy, both of whom failed to have enough courage to discover their lack of genuine faith. Both failed to challenge abuses of power. However, I can present here from one short poem by Charles Mungoshi, which has the title "*Prayer*":

"It would be very convenient now
to kneel down in the gritty sand
and beat my chest
and rend my garments
and cry out: 'Why me, O Lord?'
It would be an admirable thing to do
if it were not for the refrain
running beneath it all:
"Do you see me know Lord?
Are not I just wonderful?!"
Until, just like the worst
of all the best of us
I, too, am ambushed
before I have made
my last prayer." (2008).

His topic here seems to be that we can be ambushed into pride, making ourselves stand in place of God, just when we feel that we are being so very obviously humble. We fall into the trap of dishonesty. Yet we should not assume that every expression of confidence would be regarded as pride by Dr. Mungoshi, or therefore be condemned. He

must have had the genuine self-confidence of a Christian believer, in order to write critically against oppressive social situations.²

The same valuable point could also be made about the English Victorian poet Alfred Tennyson. He was a clear-minded critic of the military pride and destructive foolishness which had urged on British troops to fight on horseback against large guns in the south of Russia, in the Crimean war. "Cannon to the left of them, cannon to the right of them, volleyed and thundered. Someone has blundered," he wrote in his protest poem, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. "Into the valley of death rode the six hundred." This is a Christian protest against militarism. Guns are the product of technology; technology has pushed people towards a murderous mentality. The poem was written at a time when many English citizens, in the new industrial era, found it difficult or impossible to see how Christian faith would challenge the structures, because of some unattractive and traditional patterns.

Yet this problem, of how we can regard faith as a gift attractive to outsiders, had already existed in Israel. The tale of Jonah is a short Jewish novel about this difficulty. It is a subversive piece of fiction, asking people in Israel to imagine a prophet who did not want to prophesy. A shocking thought! Jonah, we read, was sure that asking the pagans of Nineveh to put on sackcloth and ashes and seek forgiveness was a ridiculous idea. He ran away from God's call. Then when he was persuaded by God to go ahead with it, he also became angry and upset to watch so many non-Hebrews admitting that they were sinful. As modern Catholics, we can be similarly slow to believe that we should share our faith with all sorts of other members of society.

² More literary insights into how religious practice has been abused, or used to cover up oppression, can be found in K. Z. Muchemwa ed., *Zimbabwe Poetry in English: an anthology*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1978) such as B. Zimunya's 'White Padre' and 'Black Padre' on pp. 81-83.

It is true, of course, that some aspects of our religion will alarm people, or cause despair. The Victorian literary writer, Sir Leslie Stephen was a clergyman who gave up believing because of the harsh doctrine of hell. He hated hearing it mentioned, and refused to let his two daughters learn about Christianity at all. So, one daughter, Virginia Woolf, grew up to become a great novelist - but with no sense that there is a God. Yet, like others after the First World War, she knew her society was a divided one, divided between those who had stayed at home during the war, and remained patriotic, and those who had fought and suffered in the trenches of the Somme, amongst the rotting bodies of their friends. Her great novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, is about this divided society and the need for a new beginning. The central character, Clarissa Dalloway, is a woman who likes giving parties. She wants to bring all her friends together. Some think that she intends to show off, but that is not true. She is delighted to see her old friends arriving. But then one guest arrives, a doctor, with news of a death. Virginia Woolf did not trust doctors, so here character Clarissa wonders what to do next, since this is sure to ruin her party. Her party is an offering, like a bunch of flowers, but how can she include death in it? "I want to offer this, but oh, to whom?" she says.

The man who has died is Septimus, her friend, who had been in the War, and suffered seriously from shell-shock, and so badly that he committed suicide. Despite being kept ignorant of Christianity, Virginia Woolf's novels show how she took up Christian language from the people around her - language about suffering and offering, about communion and love. We rely on the tellers of stories to fill our thoughts with longings for forgiveness, mercy and wholeness. Even when death is overwhelming us, we need to hear accounts of the integrity of our Being, our possibility for recovering our true potential. Clarissa runs away from the bad news, but as she goes upstairs, she looks out of the window. Her eyes catch the eyes of someone in a neighbouring residence, a woman who is coming downstairs in the house opposite. She offers all she has to her. This is what story-telling does. Through it, we offer all we have to others.

In conclusion, our modern generation craves quick answers and tidy facts, to make them free from problems and difficulties right away. Television viewing sets up these mechanical expectations, but by doing so it stifles our willingness to tackle real questions or to share our faith deeply. Yet if we intend to create communities of worship, celebration and supportiveness for new inquirers (on a Journey of Faith course, for instance) who might join our church and the life of its members, we have to become people of discernment. We should be inviting people to share their individual stories, however unexpected and unfamiliar those will turn out to be. We cannot spot the point where a new direction of conversion is likely in somebody's life, if we always assume we already know the full picture of who that stranger or newcomer is. We have to welcome their stories and give thanks as we see their faith unfolding.

A Public Servant Rooted in the Catholic Doctrine

Mary Margaret Muchada

Assumption of Roles and Influence of the Environment

I write this to you as a woman, Christian, mother, grandmother, diplomat, senior government official, farmer, friend and member of the community and many other roles I care not to mention. Each role has some form of initiation process that underscores its core values and norms. Roles like “friend and community member” require that one has personal values set, otherwise there is the danger of being led astray or being influenced by mob psychology. Each role has some guiding tenets that shape one’s life in one way or the other. Some of the guiding principles come from the family environment, the community, the schools and the work setting. I can only sum it up in Pope John Paul II's words when the European Union removed religion from being an integral part of the European Union constitution. He argued that they were removing the very foundation of their culture! Western culture then was an epitome of its religious values. So, whether one went to church daily or not, they were cultured to live the life of a Christian. Hence, Pope John Paul II was mourning the disappearance of such values from Europe’s everyday life. Since then, many western countries have legalized same sex marriages, a thing that was unheard of in the past.

Likewise, all the titles I have put down for myself would not be true if they do not have a given cultural base to support them. By the same token, each one of those roles has, in some way, influenced my life. The ethics and values I have been groomed in at various stages, have influenced the way I have performed each of those roles.

Primary Socialization

What should guide one as a Christian? One's Christian foundation is nursed in primary socialization of the individual, that is, in the family and the immediate community around; and it is later couched through secondary socialization, obtained in school and from the people around. All these, in later life, will play an important role in how one finally turns out to be. Psychologists and Saul Mcleod identify some key phases that influence people's lives as follows:

- ♣ What happens up to the age of five can influence our adult lives (Saul Mcleod, 2018); and

- ♣ Experiences of the teenage period and their grounding effect.

The best opportunity would be the under-five period when the child is forming and sharpening the cognitive skills. The teenage period is, in a way, seen as the remedial phase where the foundation is reinforced, failure to which the individual would be overwhelmed by a wave of numerous value bases. There, one could be blown by the wind.

The architecture of a family that prepares itself for the role of primary socialization.

Taking my life story as a guinea pig, what could have influenced how I eventually turned out? Well, I was born in a family of nine that had a strong Roman Catholic foundation. My grandfather was a prince of the Chipunza clan, who was educated by the Jesuit Missionaries, while his elder brother was educated by the Anglican Missionaries. To this day, the two religions remain rooted in the two families.

When the priest in charge of Monte Cassino Mission was called to go to take part in the First World War, Boniface, my grandfather, was asked to remain as the caretaker at the Mission. There, he met the love of his life, my grandmother, an orphan from "Chitendero" who had grown up under the tutelage of the Precious Blood Nuns at the Mission. Their children went to Monte Cassino Mission. Later, the

girls went to Empandeni Mission while the boys proceeded to Kutama Mission (Marist Brothers).

On my mother's side, my granny was a staunch Wesleyan Methodist, but my grandfather was an orphan who had attended night school at Chishawasha Mission while he was herding cattle there. He attained enough literacy to be employed in the post office in Hartley (now Chegutu). This stint was to play an influential part in his children's education. For him, Catholic education was all he ever wanted for them.

So, my mother and her siblings were sent to Monte Cassino Mission from lower primary educational level. My father was already studying there. My mother did exceptionally well in Standard six that she went on to become the first non-religious nurse trained at Makumbi Mission.

My parents had first met at Monte Cassino, so tying their knot was easy. Monte Cassino remained influential in our family. I also studied there, Forms I to IV, together with my young brother who also did his primary education there.

This couple worked as a team such that if one strayed, the other would act as a checkmate. I can recall that my father was a very frank person, but my mother would always tone down the rhetoric, if she felt that the other person was receiving a raw deal. At times she would send him a note with a little child to call him for a phone call. This was in the days of land line calls. When he got inside, he would be given a little pep talk, such that by the time he went back to his earlier discussion, all the venom would have dissipated.

My parents sent me to Catholic mission schools from primary to secondary level. At some point, my dad was transferred to a place where there were no Catholic schools. We went to a Methodist school for half of the year. In the meantime, he literally begged Bishop

Lamont and the local Chief to establish Catholicism in Marange. St Thomas Primary School was established then to meet our Christian needs. Today, St Thomas boasts as the first seminary of the Congregation of the Most Holy Ghost (Spiritans) in Zimbabwe.

Role of Parents in Primary Socialisation of a Child

Post modernists carve out a clear role for the family in the primary socialization of a child. As such, I do not wish to take credit that is not mine. It is clear from what I have said so far that primary socialization of Catholic values came from my family. My parents taught us to listen to our conscience. My mother would talk about one's conscience and say before doing anything, be sure it will please God. Mwari haafariri chakaipa (God does not condone evil) was her mantra. This combined with "do unto others what you would want done to you" ensured that we gave due respect to each other when we were taking decisions among the nine of us. It is these little nuances that continue to influence us long after she is gone. She taught us how to talk to God; how to communicate with Our Lady through the rosary, using our fingers (which I still use to this day) and how to be empathetic when talking about how Jesus suffered for us. I can recall her making us feel the pain associated with Good Friday. She made it so real that I cannot eat meat on Friday for whatever reason.

I joined the Legion of Mary when I got the first opportunity at boarding school, because it reminded me of the way my father used to recite the Magnificat when we were praying as a family at home. He had become a member when it was introduced at St Benedict Mission. To this day, I find myself attached to it through the Our Lady of Perpetual Help novena.

From a very early age, we were taught to appreciate the life of a priest and the sacrifice he made of dedicating his life to God. Our parents tried to offer the parish priest a home away from his home (the United States of America). Each time the priest came to our school to say

mass, my mother would prepare a good meal (in those days it was chicken and rice).

On the other hand, dad used his office to reach out to local traditional leaders to pave the way for the missionaries' work. In no time, the Catholic Church, which was hitherto unknown, had a mission and several out stations in Marange. Every Sunday, I mean every, our father made sure we all attended mass. Later on, when I was living alone abroad, mass attendance on Sundays became second nature. I still felt guided by the culture my parents had inculcated in me. Ironically, though they have been gone for years, my daughter still points out to characters that my mother would not have approved of. She still says, "That one never attended ambuya's (grandmother's) school of ethics."

Lessons Learned

From the foregoing, I learned that as parents, we have a huge responsibility of ensuring the development of Christian rooted values in our children. If we fail, we will not only have failed our own children, but those we interact with and those who will interact with our children. No need to talk about it, but children should feel it in their daily interaction with others, that it becomes a second nature for them. When we are far, or long gone, they should feel it as part of their conscience.

We owe to the future generation a legacy what will be their guiding principles. More importantly, we should teach our children to pray. I do not mean to narrate prayers, but to communicate with God, especially when they are down in the dumps, or passing through a phase of uncertainty. That ability to regard a prayer not as a shopping list, but as a way of deepening one's contact with God will help our children when we are long gone. As Catholics, we seem to have failed. Our children are getting attracted to music in Pentecostal churches. Sometimes they are attracted by the singing and dancing, without

having that opportunity we have had to create that special bond and closer relationship with God. There are times in life when they will need to be able to communicate with God as a friend and guardian.

Secondary socialization: Role played by schools and the immediate communities in which I grew up and or live.

Most of my secondary Christian socialization came from the various religious groups of nuns that nursed me along the way at Mount Melleray Mission, Monte Cassino Mission and Maryward at St Ignatius. If after all I have said you still see me as a Catholic, then you have them to thank for that.

I am definitely a product of many congregations of nuns namely: Presentation Sisters, Precious Blood, Maryward Sisters and, of course, the LCBL. Through them, I became a member of the "Legion of Mary" which later changed to "Our Mother of Perpetual Help", from the time I was in primary school. This came with its own values and ethics. In my teens I was a girl guide and proceeded to be a ranger. This too, came with a set of values that influenced my life.

I can recall that one time I had the option to select one subject out of nine that I could drop in Form III. I told my class teacher, a Precious Blood Nun, that I was going to drop Bible Knowledge, and she retorted "You heathen". That was enough to tell me that that was a non-starter. In the end, I proceeded with all the nine subjects and passed them.

Many priestly orders left their mark as well as I was growing up and continue to do so to this day. They include the Carmelites, the Jesuits, the diocesan priests, the Spiritans, the Franciscans, the Order of St Egidio and the Redemptorists. Each one of them left an indelible mark in my life. My Parish, St. Gerards also continues to build on the basic understanding I have of my faith through the various Parish programmes.

As a diplomat, the issue of the ego was put to rest, because one is taught ways of putting messages across without humiliating the other person. Again, I found that diplomacy and my mother's school of thought were not far apart. Not surprisingly so, diplomacy originated in European Royal families during the Middle Ages, when young men of royal households were trained to be the envoys the kings and queens could trust. You will recall from my introduction that Europe then shared one culture; namely, Christian values! So, my new found profession drew heavily from the European Christian culture that is underpinned by the Vienna Convention. This served to buttress what I might have already acquired along the way.

Knowledge of diplomatic protocols enables one to know how to make the other person "feel special"; in service delivery, this goes hand in glove with Ubuntu. An unintended but very positive outcome of my stint as a diplomat, was being stationed in Rome, where the Vatican, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church is situated. Not only did I have the chance to encounter the Christian history in everyday life, but I also benefited from St Helena's foresight. She brought multitudes of Christian relics from the Holy Land that have helped to recreate the life of our Lord Jesus in Rome, to assist Christians visiting the eternal city understand the history of the Church and some of the origins of the theology they have. Among these are:

- a. The holy steps from Pontius Pilate court showing the number of steps a prisoner had to crawl;
- b. Veronica's cloth that is supposed to have wiped the face of Our Lord during his time of agony;
- c. A piece of the wood taken from the Bethlehem manger which is in Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica;
- d. Piece of the scourging pillar in the Basilica of Santa Praxedes. It is believed that this is the pillar on which Our Lord was scourged;
- e. The Holy Cross Basilica where a chip of the real cross on which Our Lord died is exposed;

- f. The remains of St John the Baptist's personal property in the Basilica of St John the Laterano;
- g. The Shroud of Turin which is believed to have wrapped Our Lord;
- h. Loretto and the reconfiguration of the house in which Our Lady lived with her family and the surrounding legend of how the statue of Our Lady of Loretto is supposed to have survived a huge fire that engulfed the church at one time;
- i. The Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at St Alphonsus' House and its history;
- j. The Catacombs and the history of torture of early Christians;
- k. "Quo Vadis" steps, marking an apparition of Our Lord to St Peter, when he had given up and was leaving Rome to go back. He was asked the question "Where are you going?"

The list is long. I cannot list them all, but they all helped to recreate the life of Our Lord in my imagination. Suffice to note that each one contributed to my deeper understanding of the religion I am following.

Though not accredited to the Vatican, as the Ambassador to the Italian Republic, I handled all the issues Italy handles for the Vatican and worked with an International Order of the Community of St Egidio on consular matters. Suffice to note that in all this, St Egidio interfaces with public officials as equals when handling secular negotiations and related interfaces. I had worked with them during the Mozambique government negotiations with Renamo without knowing who they were. In hindsight, this interface taught me: To appreciate the need to be accommodative in the course of my assignments; and not to single apart my Christian practices at work. Instead, they should be practiced as part and parcel of my normal work setup. They should not be separated from "me".

I had the opportunity of studying at the largest papal university, the Gregorian University. Whatever programme one was pursuing there, "Social Teachings of the Church" was a mandatory module. That went a long way in adding value to my theological understanding of issues

in the Catholic Church, particularly, it's relationship with the Jewish religion. This, too, helped me to appreciate that the Catholic doctrine can be approached from many various angles as well as to appreciate inter-religious differences. It further assisted me to accommodate certain challenges one faces at Parish level that have very little to do with church practices.

What Should be the Guiding Principles in the Life of a Catholic?

Put simply, I believe that one should live like an ordinary human being who is guided by the social teachings of the Catholic Church and whose ego does not overshoot each time a misunderstanding breaks. *Zviya zvekuti ndinombonzi aniko ini?* (Do you know who I am!) Or *nhasi wanondiguta* (I will square everything with you today) have no room in the personality we are trying to put across. Better to be confused for an ordinary person than to be considered switched on for the wrong reasons. People should see and read Christian values in the simple things we do. Two ladies whose lives have underscored this in my view are St Therese of the Little Child of Jesus and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. They both highlighted the need to please God with the little things we do, not to dwell on some far-fetched activities that go against promoting love among those we live with.

What is expected of a civil servant?

The Public Service promotes professionalism underpinned by honesty, integrity and a high dosage of humanity, Ubuntu. This should be observable during service delivery. I am not impressed by mission statements that clad our offices, yet service delivery from the very offices is so far from reality that one would not miss them. I would hazard to say that Ubuntu was the traditional version of observing humanity in all we do. Thus, if we look at one of the Christian guiding principles *Ida mumwe wako sekuda kwaunozviita* (love your

neighbour as yourself), while observing humanity in all we do, nobody would go away dissatisfied.

What is expected of a Catholic public servant?

As stated above, one should give due respect to all being served. When responding to or delivering the common goods, we have to address the felt needs in an even-handed manner. Everyone should be made to feel human. We should have a listening ear and ability to put ourselves in the other's shoe. If done well, we respond to the basic values of a human being as enshrined in the United Nations Human Rights Charter that draws heavily from Christian values. The Holy See diplomats always keep watch on the wording of these international or multilateral accords that cater for varying interests. Note, the Holy See is the only non-state office allowed to sit in United Nations meetings as a registered observer. Hence, it ensures that the Christian ethos is maintained in most of the international accords that shape our daily lives.

Language is critical in service delivery. True, I would draw from both diplomacy and the concepts of the psychology of managing relations so that one can convey one's views to people with opposing views, but without clashing with them. The same applies to ego management in everyday experiences. Knowing the correct tactics to put other people at ease would prepare one to manage one's own and other people's egos. One psychologist, the late Dr Forbes Madzongwe, taught me as a junior officer, how to manage other people's egos. I had asked him how he managed to keep quiet when people were yelling at him, but responding to them in the calmest of voices. His response underscored the need to contain one's ego while preparing a response in a message that was so well wrapped that you could be telling someone to jump through the window and one would do it with a smile on the face.

Our experiences and the additional knowledge we acquire as we mature have an important role in ensuring that we have many schools

of thoughts that can influence how we respond to issues. We do not know it all. We should always be open to other people's ideas and avoid rigidity in views. Therefore, as social beings, we should read widely and continue to grow with time despite our age. Prof. Robert White of the Gregorian University, Rome urged us as students that at the end of each single day, we should be able to identify something new that we would have learned.

I would also hazard to add that one discipline that can be very useful is the mastering of comparative studies on given topics. That way, one has different angles to view and deal with the issues encountered along the way. Further, it may help one navigate some difficult moments one will come across in life. For instance, you are going to meet people who claim to "know it all" and will make big noises while the information they have on the subject is sketchy. This is where your pool of knowledge helps. This is the most difficult path to navigate as a Christian to avoid polarization among fellow mates. Applying demonstrable knowledge of the topical issue may be the only way out in trying to dissipate issues that may otherwise threaten the evolution of a healthy team spirit.

We should clearly differentiate between actions and acting out in whatever we do. We should be able to ask ourselves at any stage to define how we are living our lives. This is a checkmate on whether we are living by the standards expected of a Catholic Christian, in other words, living in a Christ like manner? Or, are we acting out to be Christians, when in reality, the guiding principles we are observing are very far off the mark? Unfortunately, many of us choose to act the part, and we happen to be very good at it. As a result, the *amai* (mother) at home or work is not always the same as the one at church! In the household the example we set is even worse, so we end up confusing our own children. Reference to a recent message circulating in the social media, in which a child asked his mother which Jesus she was referring to in her teachings, after realizing that the life she led was incongruent with the paragon of virtue she was painting.

Conclusion

In all this, I would be lying if I say I never stumbled along the way. I had gone into a mixed marriage when I met my first real test. My marriage broke down! I knew what it meant for me as a Catholic. End of the road. I found myself interrogating God as to why he had landed me in this. I had no peace, but I continued with the interrogation, and cried every night. I did not go to church, but I sent the children. My mother had to take time from work every month to come and soothe me. I literally cried in her arms each time she came.

God eventually answered my anguish by showing me a loving couple in which one of them was on the death bed. That seems to have been my Damascene moment, I began to understand that love was voluntary. If my husband did not love me anymore, so be it. My cure started there and then. I started going to church with the children.

Eventually, I was assisted to submit my case to the Vatican and my marriage was annulled on the grounds that my partner had gone into it without full commitment. He later died but I was already a free woman. By then, I had learned to communicate with God in my own way. What is certain is that the church and my family stood by me. I pity my little girl who had to comfort me every night as I cried, instead of it being the other way round. All I can say is that I emerged from this a stronger Christian who could communicate all my moods to the Almighty better than before. This experience has helped me when I have faced trying times at home and in the office.

In time, I met a partner who understands my values, a staunch Anglican who has helped me to deepen my faith. As a Roman Catholic, I have seen many similarities in the Anglican practices that make me understand my partner better. When Pope John II opened one of the Holy doors in 2000 with Archbishop of Canterbury I realized the closeness between the two churches. This in a way helped our relationship at home.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that we have to be clear about the values we want to be known by and live by them all the time, adhering to them to the letter and striving to be a model Christian, parent, worker, colleague that we intend to be known by throughout. It's not easy, but that should be the target. It would make it easy for those around us to write our template with certainty. So, there is no magic formula, but let us be our true selves and live by the Christian values we have received and internalized along the way.

End Notes

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Overcome Fear with Faith¹

Tsitsi Nomsa Ngwenya

As baptized and confirmed Christians that we are, we must not let fear stop us from pursuing what is good and helpful to others. It is true that fear is a bad feeling which sometimes disorients us and cause us to do things we regret later. Fear magnifies problems and situations. It can actually make you see things that are not there. FEAR, has sometimes been seen as an acronym which stands for: *Face Everything and Rise, or Fear Everything and Run*. It is up to the individual how best to behave under threat of fear.

There is a lady I shall call Martha who came to me so that we could pray together about the problems she was facing in her life. Martha is a mother of two boys. She and her husband were going through a divorce. Her husband sold the house they lived in as a family. He abused his wife in front of the children, when the older boy intervened to save his mother he cursed him and moved out of the house to live with a new girlfriend. The younger boy had no school fees for the term. The bigger boy had been accepted at a University outside the country, but had no school fees. He had been home for two years. Martha's company had sent her on forced leave because it could no longer afford to pay salaries like many companies in the country at the time.

Martha could not stop talking when we first met. She would speak for an hour and I would listen without interrupting her. In her talk she would kneel, sit with her legs stretched, sit on a chair, and sit on the floor leaning on the wall. I would observe her body language too as I listened. What I saw in Martha was fear. Martha feared everything she imagined could happen to her and the children, not her present circumstances as such.

¹ The title for this article/chapter is adapted from the *Graduate from the Valley*

We then prayed together. I told her not to be afraid of things that are not there yet and gave her 2 Chronicles 15 verse 15 – 20 and Joshua 1 verse 9 to meditate on. She was called back to work within a week but, still, there was no salary. She did not stop coming to see me so we could pray together. The other thing Martha suffered from was anxiety. She was so anxious, so much so that it was toxic for those around her. Together with the friends we worshipped with, we also prayed against that spirit too.

One day whilst at work, a colleague of hers asked how she was doing, when she told her that she had not been paid for months, the colleague took her to an old lady who helped Martha with school fees for the younger boy, a scholarship for the bigger boy overseas and did not stop there. The woman promised to get her another job. Martha came back to tell me the good news. I persuaded her to do thanksgiving prayers. Before we had hardly finished she interrupted me, ‘Tsitsi I thank God he has sent an angel to pay school fees and the scholarship but how about next term?’

I looked at her and asked when next term was? I reminded her about what God says about worrying. I gave her Mathew 6 verse 25 – 34 and Philippians 4 verse 6 -7 to read and meditate on them. Martha worried too about fuel. She feared the fuel in the tank would run out. The Good Samaritan had given her a food voucher so she could buy groceries she could cook and eat in their house. Even though the house had been sold a month before, the new owner had not occupied it nor given them notice to vacate.

A week later, Martha was called for an interview for a job she had applied some months earlier. Surprisingly too, another interview came before the earlier one had been answered. Congratulations. She was told to come and start work the following Monday. Once again, we thanked God together. On Friday Martha sent me a message asking me to pray that nothing bad happens to her on Monday before she started work. I wondered why she was thinking like that. I ignored her specific

request and instead prayed for her faith to be increased. On Saturday, I sent a message asking how she was doing. She answered that she was fine but once more asked that I should pray that something bad will not happen to her on Monday. I am not a worrier myself. The wilderness experience that I once went through taught me to trust in God. Martha's lack of faith almost discouraged me too. I could avoid her calls, but I failed. Each time she called I assured her that I was going to pray about whatever problems she anticipated. So I asked her why she was so unsure about the job. She said she was sure but only anxious that something might happen before she starts work. Fear. It seemed to me there was nothing which could easily rid of Martha's fear which had made itself comfortable in her system. I encouraged her on and she said she was no longer afraid. On Sunday she sent a message saying she was ready for Monday. I congratulated her and wished God's blessings to accompany her as she started on her new job. Nonetheless, on Monday morning she sent me a message requesting that I should pray that nothing bad happens to her!

You guessed right. Something wrong happened. I do not know what happened on that Monday. Martha could not start work and immediately, she withdrew into her usual feel-sorry-for-me attitude! Fear bound together with self-pity. I did not give up on her. We continued to pray together until the fear was beat out of her system. As soon as she managed to do that, she got a new job and saved money so that when the new owner came to stay, they could comfortably move to a new house. In the end, her older son went to University on full scholarship and she in turn moved on with her life.

I always feel that fear is the opposite of love. Fear is triggered by pain, insecurity and being at the risk of danger, those who oppress others use force, which in turn then induces fear. Husbands who beat and suppress their wives are actually afraid of them. They are afraid of how powerful they may become in their relationship if they let them be and work and earn their own money making them financially independent. If they gave them freedom of association they would

meet clever people who would spur them on to achievement by advising them that they can do better than at present. They are afraid of how beautiful they will look if they let them wear certain types of clothes. Part of their fear is that their own inadequacies as providers would then become exposed and also that other men might snatch them away. As a consequence, they beat and abuse their wives so they can stay to the line.

Women too, who fear that they could be divorced resort to all kinds of unacceptable means of matrimonial oppression. In African culture, it is said that they use *umuthi* or *muti*, to soften, blind and control their husbands. In Europe and other parts of the world, they have their own kinds of unsavoury means like casting spells. An American woman I met at a conference I attended in South Africa confessed to me that she had once cast a spell on her boyfriend so he could not stop thinking about her. She told me that the spell worked in seven days. She told me there are stores in her hometown where such spells were sold openly. Some of those men who have their partners using *umuthi* on them become so afraid of their partners to the extent of not progressing in life. Even some men too use charms and spells on their girlfriends or wives. There is what is known as *runyoka*, a witchcraft charm whereby husbands use it supposedly to lock their wives so that if they indulge in intercourse with other men the consequences are fatal. This sex-locking charm is said to continue working that way even after the husband is deceased. People who do such things do not realize that their problems would never end but multiply. I once attended a funeral of a husband and wife in Eastern Zimbabwe where a husband had made a witchcraft pact that his wife should also die the same day he dies. Even though the community did not condone it, there was nothing they could have done to a man who openly boasted about his evil powers. The deceased people were neighbours to my cousin who I had visited. It was said that the husband had been taken ill on a Friday night and admitted in hospital whereupon he died during early hours of the morning. As he was dying in hospital, his wife also fell

mysteriously ill the same time and she subsequently died too. When the sad news about the passing on of the man reached the family at home, tragically the wife was already dead. They had four young children who were still at primary and pre-school and in addition, they were still building their house which was then at window level at the time of the deaths.

In many instances if someone criticizes you for no apparent reason the reason could be that they are afraid of you. Some men want to be feared as fathers and husbands and not respected instead. I know a woman I shall call Loice whose husband never allowed her to wear jeans, short trousers or miniskirts. He never allowed her to have her hair done or even for her to wear makeup. Loice thought her husband loved her so much, she concluded that his controlling habits were a sign of love. He did not allow her to seek employment despite the fact that she was a professional woman. Loice deteriorated mentally and socially as she stayed at home, cooking and washing clothes for him. He did not allow her to learn to drive a car. He drove her to her relative's funerals and other events. The husband did grocery shopping and all other shopping for her. Loice saw very little of what was happening outside her four walled yard. The only road she knew was the one to church with him on Sundays. But she did not know what her husband did during his free times such as Saturday afternoons. After having had four children she appeared aged. Later on Loice's husband married another woman. Loice was surprised that the new wife was her husband's secretary who wore nice fitting clothes and makeup. The new wife talked about world affairs she read about in newspapers and discussed with others during lunch and any other free time at work. The new wife did not stop being who she had been. She just changed a job and did not allow the husband to make her live in the same house with Loice. He rented a much bigger and better house for her. Loice allowed her husband to instill fear on her until she could no longer think her own thoughts. For Loice it was my husband up, my husband down my husband this and that. There was absolutely

nothing she owned. Loice had allowed her husband to manipulate her to a point where she could no longer imagine living her own life.

If you are afraid you have no freedom, your confidence is crushed, and you do not see anything else other than the problem which induces fear in your being. Jesus saw that his disciples were afraid after his resurrection, thus He visited them often. He appeared to them in John 20 verse 19, 'In the evening of that same day, the first day of week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them,

Peace be with you...verse 21 and he said unto them again, peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.

Jesus came to His disciples when he saw that they were afraid and hiding. His assuring presence dispelled their fear and instead gave them reserves of peace. He came to give them hope, strength and confidence in God's protective and abiding love. In those days being a disciple was a dangerous thing to be because some people did not only hate Jesus, but they were totally against his teaching. The Jewish authorities themselves were not only afraid of Him but they preferred him dead. It is equally true with our lives to this very day. We sometimes want to crush people who threaten us. We do not want people who are clever than us - it has to be us.

During my times of distress I did not pray to God to only help me clear my problems away, but also to use my situation to transform me to become a better person as well as to use my situation as an example to encourage others. And He certainly did. We become true Christians after baptism and following which we should be bold enough to preach the Word of God without fear. Jesus fulfilled His mission here on earth hence He has sent me and you to continue doing His work. He did not just return to heaven to His Father before giving us the assurance and hope of his presence in our very midst by the power of the Holy Spirit – also often aptly referred to as the Comforter. He appeared to his disciples to give them hope. Let us turn to Jesus every time we are afraid because He gives hope and peace. Jesus and God are the

embodiment of peace, love, hope and patience. They are the mother of all virtues – they are all in all. True love of God removes fear and bestows freedom to a true worshipper.

When I shut down my business in 2012 I did not exactly know what I would do. However, I knew fully well that God would never take me to places where His grace would not protect me. The devil visited me often to instil and to toss me around with fear. He visited me time and again to ask me how I was going to pay outstanding debts through his countless willing instruments who wait upon the devil to do his bidding – those so unfortunate people who allow themselves to be used by him. The more I answered them and thought about the pile of those debts outstanding, the more I was tormented by them. The more I thought about them the more the people owed phoned or physically came to my office and even at home to threaten me with all manner of suffering and pain. It did not matter that we were all there helplessly watching everybody's money burning in the banks. Employees went to court for unpaid salaries yet they were there when the economy was sliding and burning. I got to a point where I would ignore the callers and only focus on praying and writing. I was quiet angry then. Sometimes during those painful periods, someone would phone me to talk about books and writing. That would change my mood significantly. I soon realized that writing was truly a precious gift from God. It had some evident therapeutic effect on me considering the mortal emotional wounds suffered by the vast majority of employers at the time. I had started writing two years before when I was still running the business. I wrote my first stories and poetry from my office just as a way of whiling up time since there was not much to do in terms of the primary purpose for which the office had been secured. I was praying alone in my office and the little but gentle voice said to me:

Tsitsi listen to me now, get your pen and papers and visit your writer friend at the University of Zimbabwe, go now. Take all your poems and short stories with you. I want to change your purpose and direction in life. I no longer want you in business because it

makes you vulnerable to the evil people of this world. Take your notebook and pen and go now. The rest you will find there.

It was in September 2010. I took the two manuscripts I had written with me, a poetry anthology, *Silent Drumbeat from eMatojeni* and an unpublished novella entitled, *To Depths Unknown*.

As fear tried to close in its grip on me, I fiercely fought it back with my writing till it disappeared. I quickly made a lot of intellectual friends during the first months of writing. I would write and read to them and their feedback and critique my work taught me all the more about creative writing. I read, read and wrote and wrote. In two years, I had worked and produced a total of six manuscripts. Fear had completely disappeared. In between writing and reading literature, I avidly read the Bible, prayed and meditated.

Fear which paralyses children of God and blocks their good ways disappeared away from me and I found out that I communicated more freely with those I owed money from the inflation induced defunct company. I however did some consultancy work in between out of which I, earned some money and, paid off those whom I owed money. There is nothing God cannot do. He had removed all fear from me. I replaced fear with hope, faith and heartfelt joy.

In the Gospel according to Mark 5 verse 36, **But Jesus overheard what they said and he said to the president of the synagogue, do not be afraid; only have faith.**

The true and voluntary love of God removes fear.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy chapter 1 verse 7, **God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but the spirit of power, love and self-control.**

We are not supposed to fear but to trust in God.

We should know that our Father in heaven has all the power to protect us from all evil. He protected me so He can protect you too. If we put all our trust in God, then, all the fear will disappear. It is not easy

sometimes but we just have to trust God. Worry simply says we do not trust God enough. We must remember that the devil loves those who worry. They are his. It is true that the devil always works with what we fear the most. Those who are afraid that they will fail exams in most cases a very high probability of failing - turning their fear into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Those who are insecure in their jobs sometimes get fired. In his letter to the Romans Apostle Paul encouraged us in Chapter 8 verse 1 -2;

If you belong to Christ Jesus, you will not be punished. The Holy Spirit will give your life that comes from Christ Jesus and will set you free from sin and death.

We must not be ruled by fear, otherwise we will live miserably unfulfilled lives. Let us try by all means that whenever we feel afraid, we put our trust in God the author and finisher of all our lives.

About the Contributors

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Christopher Dyczek: PhD, OFM was born in the town of Reading in England. He went to the University of Kent at Canterbury, taking a BA in philosophy. Soon afterwards he travelled to Malawi, where he taught English language and literature for GCSE students at St. Kizito's School (a minor seminary). He studied historical theology at Fordham University in New York. He then returned to the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury as a lecturer in Church History. He was a lecturer at the University of Kent in Early Christian Writers, Formulation of Christian Doctrine and Theology and Literature. He

did his doctoral research at St. Mary's University in Twickenham, London. The theme was Memory and Journey Symbolism in three nineteenth century writers. The PhD was awarded in January 2009.

Mary Muchada Muzvare (MMM): A married Catholic woman, a member of the Marrian guild at St Gerards Parish, a civil servant and commissioner. She adopted a culture of reading from UN and other multilateral assignments in Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands. She enjoys farming. She mentors young women and young married couples.

Tsitsi Nomsa Ngwenya: A Zimbabwean novelist, short story and inspirational writer who writes in English and Ndebele. Her first novel *Izinyawo Zayizolo* was published in 2016. In 2017 her collection of short stories, *The Fifty Rand Note* was published. Both her books have been received with critical acclaim on the Academia. Her next novel, *Yesterday's Footprints* is coming in January 2019. This chapter, 'Into the Valley' is extracted from her inspiration memoir, *Graduate from the Valley School*. Tsitsi can be contacted on her website... www.tsitsinomsa.co.zw

Dare Style Sheet

In Text Format

1. Text: New Times Roman, size 12
2. Paragraphs: Paragraphs should be separated by a single line space or by the use of 8 spaces indent.
3. Subheadings: should be in bold text, not underlined, and not numbered.
4. Footnotes in text come after the full stop, not before.
e.g. Paul VI was the last Pope to wear the tiara to date. (Footnote)
Not
Paul VI was the last Pope to wear the tiara to date (footnote).

Endnotes:

1. For a book:
Neyrey, Jerome H. *Render to God: New Testament Understandings of the Divine*.
(Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004.), 27.
2. For a translation:
Cicero. *De Officiis*. Trans. Walter Miller. (London: Heinemann, 1951.)
109.
3. For an article in a journal:
Downing, F. Gerard. "The Ambiguity of 'the Pharisee and the Toll-Collector'
(Luke 18:9-14) in the Greco-Roman World of Late Antiquity."
Catholic
Biblical Quarterly 54 (1992) 80-99.
4. For an online source:
King, Peter. "Peter Abelard". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
First
Published Tue 3 Aug 2004; substantive revision Tue 9 Nov 2010.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/Abelard/>
Accessed: 5 Oct 2016.

5. For a source already quoted:

Surname of Author, Title of source (shortened), page number:

Neyrey, *Render to God*, 29.

Note for HTC students

Please note that the *Dare* style sheet differs from the HTC Style sheet on the following:

- i. The name of publisher, its location and the year of publication are all put in brackets

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