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EDITORIAL

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Mrs. Devapriya Somaratna (18 April 1943 – 21 December 2017) who ably assisted Prof. G. P. V. Somaratna, in the work of editing this journal from its inception in 2001. The CTS community was blessed by her constant maternal encouragement of our academic pursuits in the theological disciplines in the service of Christ and His church. We stand with Prof. Somaratna during this time bereavement and pray to the Lord for His peace and strength to journey onward in the ministry for which Christ has called and so richly enabled him.

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As I write this editorial our country is embroiled in a grave political crisis. The entire system of party politics, parliamentary democracy and constitutional safeguards that are meant to protect the rights and freedoms of all citizens has been dangerously compromised by the reckless ambitions of a few.

In this volume, Dr. Ivor Poobalan exegetes the curiously optimistic conclusion of the otherwise doleful Book of Amos. He reminds us that unlike human beings God does not break His covenant commitments, and while He deals justly with human sin, He does not let it frustrate His ultimate intention to bringing about our redemption and restoration.

Dr. Mano Emmanuel provides us with some excellent tools for handling conflict in an honour-shame oriented culture such as ours. Christian leaders, as much as politicians, need to acquire the wisdom of these biblically-grounded principles when dealing with their own emotions and those of the people they serve. If the Sri Lankan church is to be an example to the nation, these are the very necessary and practical relational sensibilities we need to inculcate.

Written in the context of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation which we celebrated last year, Dr. Edward Naumann makes a courageous and uncompromising plea for biblical integrity in the social and ecclesiastical debates that confront us at the beginning of the 21st century. The struggle for real Christian unity is never at odds with the struggle for Christian truth. The commitment to understand and obey God's truth, incarnate in the person of Christ himself, is the surest guarantee of the church's united witness in a divided world.

My own article on the ancient connection between the Indus Valley Civilization and Mesopotamia in the time of Abraham and Sarah concludes with a reflection, among other things, of how we as a pilgrim people must always be conscious of our primary allegiance to the Living God and His ways even as we grapple with the very real demands upon our loyalty which come with our earthly citizenship.

May we always be found doing in the here and now what is right before our God who will one day heal the nations, including our own, from the evils that bind them in confusion and strife.

On a 'housekeeping' matter, I am delighted to record that beginning with this volume the *Journal of the Colombo Theological Seminary* is a peer-reviewed journal. We are grateful to our external panel academic peers for their critical reviews and commendations of articles published in this volume.

Prabo Mihindukulasuriya
Co-Editor

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL VISION OF AMOS

IVOR POOBALAN

Abstract: The subject of 'the last things' or eschatology has enjoyed high priority among Christian communities globally for over one hundred years. While the question of 'the destiny of man and the world' became particularly pressing as a result of the two World Wars, pessimism has only grown in the light of a world at odds with itself. Multiplying human conflicts, climate change, and the increasing likelihood that technology will soon overrule the human will, have given eschatology renewed vitality. Despite the common assumption that the answers can only be found in the NT in general and the Book of Revelation in particular, this article proposes that it is the OT's explicit 'forward look' that provides the conceptual framework for NT writers to express their eschatology in the light of Jesus and the Gospel. Somewhat surprisingly even Amos, with his insistence that God's dealings with Israel have ended, dedicates the last words of his prophecy to a vision of the distant future. His final message, couched in metaphor, inspired generations after him until the Early Church saw its fulfilment in Christ (Acts 15).

Key words: Eschatology, covenant, Book of Amos, typology.

Introduction

Over a hundred years ago James Orr wrote,

> Probably I am not mistaken in thinking . . . that the modern mind has given itself with special earnestness to eschatological questions, moved thereto, perhaps, by the

solemn impression that on it the ends of the world have come.[1]

Orr's analysis and insight were remarkable in that they were expressed before the turning of the ages marked by the two World Wars. Twentieth century Christianity indeed saw an unprecedented interest in the doctrine of the last things. But, does this mean that the issues are clearer today than, say, in the time of Orr?

An increasing number of scholars today are expressing disillusionment about the direction of the academy on the subject. Stephen Williams comments, "At no point is contemporary theology more lacking in candor than in its pronouncements about the 'last things.'"[2] Howard Marshall's thoroughgoing analysis of how "eschatology" has been used over the past century presents us with *nine* different conceptions that vie for the status of "referent" in any contemporary "future talk" in the Christian community.[3] The problem is that the partners-in-dialogue, while using the one term, could be intending any *one of nine* meanings that Marshall has identified. What could be the cause of this "slipperiness"? Williams offers two reasons: "Firstly, eschatological statements have no sound basis in human experience or knowledge. Secondly, the mythological elements they contain lack clear conceptual meaning."[4]

Although bewilderment within the present morass might tempt one, like Jean Carmignac, to want to "bury eschatology,"[5]

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[1] See, Millard J. Erickson, *Contemporary Options in Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977), 11.

[2] Stephen Williams, "Thirty Years of Hope: A Generation of Writing on Eschatology," in *Eschatology in Bible and Theology*, eds. Kent E. Brower and Mark W. Elliot (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997), 243.

[3] Howard Marshall, "Slippery Words I. Eschatology," *Expository Times* 89 (1978): 267.

[4] See Williams, "Thirty Years": 243.

[5] See Marshall, "Slippery": 264.

such an option is not open to the serious student of the Bible. Before explaining why this is so, we need to set forth how we intend to use the term "eschatology". For a working definition we find the one ventured by G. B. Caird as particularly apt, "Eschatology is the study of, or the corpus of beliefs held about, the destiny of man and the world."[6]

Biblical faith is historical faith. The Bible reveals a God who exists in eternity yet creates time. His dealings with his creation, including humans, happen within the framework of history. His ultimate self-revelation took the shape of the incarnate Jesus. By virtue of his atoning death and subsequent resurrection, Jesus now invites his people to live in the light of the future, as he accompanies them to that end.

But eschatology does not begin with the incarnation. The "corpus of beliefs held about the destiny of man and the world" has, for its prolegomena, the first chapters of Genesis. In fact John Goldingay argues for the "Old Testament's explicit forward look" when he says, "an orientation towards what God is going to do in the future characterizes most expressions of OT faith."[7]

Amos 9:11-15 is one OT text that stands out for its "explicit forward look", especially because of its seeming abruptness and radical contrast with almost the entirety of the prophecy of Amos that precedes it. As I have stated elsewhere,

> No one who reads the book of Amos from the beginning will fail to be surprised by the way it ends. The book is so filled with judgment and destruction that it sounds as if no one will be spared . . . But the day of the Lord is not only a day of

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[6] G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1980), 243.

[7] John Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2002), 117.

judgment and destruction. After judgment comes restoration.[8]

In what follows we shall attempt to gain a better understanding of this "forward look" by engaging with Amos 9:11-15 which – by its own language, inter-textual linkages within the corpus of biblical prophecy, and its appropriation by Jewish Christians in the first century – is pregnant with potential for a fruitful discussion on biblical eschatology.

Amos 9:11-15: Translation and Notes

11. On that day[9] I will raise[10] the fallen booth of David,[11] I will wall up their breaches,[12] and I will raise his ruins,[13] and I shall build her as in days long ago.[14]

12. So that[15] they will possess[16] the remnant of Edom, and all the nations where[17] my name has been named[18] over them, declares Yahweh who is doing this.[19]

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[8] Ivor Poobalan, "Amos," *South Asia Bible Commentary* (Rajasthan: Open Door, 2015), 1151.

[9] בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, a neutral term that can introduce an oracle of judgment (Amos 8:3, 9, 13) or salvation (Isa 11:10, 11; Zeph 3:16). Shalom Paul, *Amos* (Minneapolis, MI: Fortress, 1991), 290.

[10] אָקִים, occurs twice in 9:11.

[11] סֻכַּת, n.f. "Thicket, booth (rude or temporary shelter, for cattle, also for warriors", BDB, 697.

[12] פִּרְצֵיהֶן, cf. Amos 4:3 the antecedent to the use פרץ, "bursting forth, breach". The connotation is clearly exile. Also note how the metaphor has shifted from a temporary "booth" to more solid constructions.

[13] וַהֲרִסֹתָיו, n.f.p. + 3 m.s.sf. MT hapax. Cognates connote "overthrow, destruction"; keeps the imagery within the context of war, *BDB*, 249.

[14] כִּימֵי עוֹלָם, this expression is also found in other texts with strong eschatological overtones; cf. Mic 7:14, Mal 3:4.

13. Look the days are coming, declares Yahweh, when the plowman will draw near the reaper, and the one treading grapes near the seed-sower. The mountains shall drip[20] new wine[21] and all the hills will melt themselves.[22]

14. I shall reverse the captivity of my people Israel.[23] They shall build desolate cities and they shall live, they shall plant

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[15] לְמַעַן, "indicates the result of a former action," Paul, *Amos,* 291 n.28.

[16] ירש, "possess, inherit"; term used in Yahweh's covenant with Abram, Gene 15:7-8; only other occurrence in Amos is 2:10, in a reference to the Exodus and Conquest in Israel's history.

[17] אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא "Where" is a possible rendering "after words denoting time, place or manner," *BDB*, 82. NRSV, "*who* are called by my name." However נִקְרָא, *niphal*, "he/it *is named*" implies the subject to be שְׁמִי.

[18] קָרָא carries the notion of naming, "denoting ownership," *BDB*, 896.

[19] עֹשֶׂה זֹאת, the use of the participle and demonstrative pronoun. However what does "this" refer to? We propose that being an active participle עֹשֶׂה does not refer to the *future* actions anticipated in 9:11, but the more immediate antecedent action of naming the nations after שְׁמִי.

[20] וְהִטִּיפוּ, [נטף] used 18 times in MT (10x "drip/drop/fall"; 8x "prophecy/preach/prophet"). See parallel use in Joel 4:18.

[21] עָסִיס, found only *five* times in MT: Songs 8:2, Isa 49:26, Joel 1:5, 4:18; NRSV, "sweet wine."

[22] תִּתְמוֹגַגְנָה, Hithpolel impf. 3 f.p. of מוג, "to melt." The *binyan* suggests an auto-induced action, "melt themselves." But see Paul, *Amos*, 294, "and all the hills shall wave with grain."

[23] וְשַׁבְתִּי אֶת־שְׁבוּת, lit. "I shall turn a turning."

vineyards[24] and drink their wine, they shall make gardens and shall eat their fruit.[25]

15. And I shall plant them upon their land, and they will certainly not be uprooted again from their land, which I have given them, declares Yahweh God.

The Significance of Amos 9:11 – 15
Amos 9:11-15 even to the most casual reader is quite an astonishing end to a book that thunders forth judgment oracles from beginning to near-end. Wellhausen's pithy broadside on the text, "Rosen und Lavendel statt Blut und Eisen" ("roses and lavender instead of blood and iron")[26] has, for over a hundred years, handicapped this text from making its valid contribution to biblical theology. It appears that when Christian scholars do show interest in the Amos 9:11-15, it is more to do with its citation in Acts 15:16-18 than with any independent message it may bear.[27]

The text predominantly uses futurist language. Its expressions and imagery makes it kin to other OT literature of the same genre. Furthermore, it is quoted in the NT as scriptural support for the post-Pentecost phenomenon of Gentile

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[24] וְנָטְעוּ כְרָמִים, cf. Amos 5:11, Isa 65:21-22, Gen 2:8. Other than Isaiah and Amos none of the other eighth century B.C. prophets use נטע. "Vineyards" used in Isa 65:21, Jer 31:5, 32:15, 39:10, Hos 2:15, Zeph 1:13 as vocabulary of eschatological language.

[25] "Cities", "vineyards" and "gardens" are all indefinite indicating that the prophet is speaking metaphorically rather than literal-historically.

[26] Paul, *Amos*, 288.

[27] See Willard M. Aldrich, "The Interpretation of Acts 15:13-18," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 111 (1954): 317-23; Walter Kaiser, "The Davidic Promise and the Inclusion of the Gentiles (Amos 9:9-15 and Acts 15:13-18): A Test Passage for Theological Systems," *JETS* 20 (1977) 97-111; O. Palmer Robertson, "Hermeneutics of Continuity" in *Continuity and Discontinuity*, ed. John S. Feinberg (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988), 89-108.

incorporation into the community of the Messiah. Our purpose is to read the text on its own terms so that we may grasp to the closest approximation the expectations fostered by its message and consider its relevance to contemporary Christian thought.

The Argument of Amos 9:11-15
Our text occurs immediately following the most graphic and severe of the visions of judgment in the book of Amos (9:1-6), and the final confirmation of the end of the "sinful kingdom" (9:7-10). This is precisely why many scholars have been perplexed by the words of promise, restoration and blessing that characterize 9:11-15.

This, however, this is to be expected. As Willem VanGemeren explains,

> The prophets were given a twofold ministry. On the one hand, they were messengers of judgment and closure, proclaiming an end to an era of God's favor and blessings; on the other, they were heralds of salvation, preaching a new era of divine favor.[28]

In Amos it is the inordinate delay in the appearance of the latter that makes it seem somewhat abrupt and out of place.

Amos 9:11-12 – The Booth of David: The Locus of a Restored Humanity
The message of promise begins with "On that day" referring to the Day of Judgment just announced. This is true to the nature of Yahweh in the scriptures; he is at the same time judge and saviour. "I will raise the *fallen booth of David*" is a striking promise because it is made in the Northern Kingdom. But we suggest that Amos coined this phrase deliberately for at least three reasons:

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[28] *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 78.

1. The use of סֻכָּה "thicket, rude or temporary shelter for warriors, but also cattle" implies Yahweh's stringent critique of Samaria's opulence and indulgence expressed in "great houses" and "ivory houses" (3:15). Instead he will restore a people marked by humility, dependence and the pilgrim spirit.

2. "David" marks the last point in the nation's history when Yahweh ratified his covenant with his people (2 Sam 7). By the reference to David there is an indication of the promise of the *continuance* of covenant relationship.

3. "David" also marks the high point of the *unified* people of Israel. Despite all the efforts and the pretensions of Jeroboam II to imitate David and Solomon in that "he restored the border of Israel from Lebo-Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah" (2 Kgs 14:25, cf. 1 Chr 13:5, 1 Kgs 8:65), God envisioned only the entire people, Judah and Israel together, as his covenant partners.

If the raising of the booth of David might be expected from Yahweh, the purpose of this action is a complete surprise because it envisages both "the remnant of Edom" and "all the nations" as becoming the "possession" (ירשׁ) of Israel. ירשׁ is a theologically significant term in the Hebrew scriptures because of its association with covenant language. It may imply military conquest, as when Israel entered the land, and yet the nuance here is shaped by its context. Christopher Wright points to its use, "as part of the eschatological vocabulary of the OT", and comments: "the rightful possession of the land is one of the distinguishing marks of those counted worthy to belong to the confessional community of the righteous."[29]

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[29] See, ירשׁ in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* Vol. 2, ed. Willem Van Gemeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 547-549.

In Amos 9:12 the "land" recedes, and "Edom" and "the nations" emerge as the object of possession. The context suggests a *peaceful incorporation*, as we shall later see. At this point we note that Edom is first mentioned in the context of the judgment oracles in 1:2-2:3 where the nation is faulted for pursuing Israel "with the sword" and "maintaining its anger perpetually."

The "nations" too may have as its antecedent the hostile nations of the first two chapters of Amos. The unique phrase, וְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עֲלֵיהֶם, "and all the nations where my name has been called over them" draws attention to the changed status of the nations in their relationship to God. We might also point to the unique ideas found in Amos 9:7 with reference to Ethiopia, Philistia and Aram.

Amos 9:13 – The Reversal of the Curse of Eden

This is the section that most unambiguously uses hyperbolic language to convey the eschatological vision of Amos. He turns from the political metaphor of possessing the nations to the language of nature and the environment. In 13*a* Amos uses ideas most familiar to an agrarian society; ploughing and reaping, sowing and harvesting. However they are not in order and can seem somewhat confused.

Andersen and Freedman helpfully explain that Amos' arrangement has a logic to it that then becomes the key to understand the argument.[30] The plowman is mentioned first "which is appropriate because the agricultural season properly starts with plowing."[31] However he is said to be hard on the heels of the reaper when reaping usually occurs in the spring. In the normal pattern, the land lies fallow after reaping, throughout the summer, before plowing commences in the autumn. Amos

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[30] Francis I Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos*, Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 919-23.

[31] Andersen and Freedman, 920.

pictures a compression of time. The land has no need to lie fallow; it is so fertile that plowing can commence immediately. This implies a double or triple harvest.

The next image of the seed-sower and the one treading grapes also follows the same logic. Normally sowing was done in winter, and grapes were harvested in the summer. Now there is a telescoping of the activities. The land is fertile and bountiful; the picture is exhilarating!

In 9:13b the hyperbole becomes explicit. In language that is echoed in Joel 4:18 Amos speaks of how "the mountains shall drip new wine and all the hills shall melt themselves." The overall idea is of extreme abundance, where the hyperbolic imagery provides a metaphor for abundance and wealth. We note the use of the *hithpolel* form תִּתְמוֹגַגְנָה, from מוּג, "melt itself", and take this as an indication that in Amos' vision he sees nature cooperating with humanity in auto-induced participation.

This brings us inexorably to reflect on how the eschatological vision of Amos involves the notion of the reversal of the curse of Eden; "Cursed is the ground (האדמה) because of you" (Gene 3:17-19). The bleak prospect for humanity had included toil and sweat, thorns and thistles. Now they are reversed. The environment is no longer hostile to the efforts of humanity; on the contrary she has become an active partner.

Amos 9:14-15 – The Reestablishment of Divine-Human Cooperation and Harmony

Our text uses *seven* verbs in the first person singular with a future sense to describe *Yahweh's activities*. It correspondingly uses *seven* third masculine plural verbs to describe the *activities Yahweh's people will do*. This balance cannot be merely coincidental, especially in view of the significance of the number seven. The point may be fairly extrapolated: Amos sees a reestablishment of reciprocity. Yahweh acts on behalf of his

creation, and his image-bearer, his "people Israel," reciprocates by cooperating with the divine plan.

Again, two statements of Yahweh's benevolent actions frame the six clauses referring to Israel's participation: "I will reverse the captivity of my people Israel" (v.14a) and, "I shall plant them upon their land" (v.15a). These two statements together bear the theme of the exodus and conquest.

Finally the vision ends with a picture of a *new creation*. Unlike the first creation when man and woman were confronted with the serpent and failed, and were consequently "driven out" of the land, Amos says, "They will certainly not be uprooted again from their land." Evil, and even the prospect of evil, has disappeared. The future is secure.

These insights then enable us to draw a preliminary conclusion about the intent of Amos's climactic text:

> The Eschatological Vision of Amos sees the continuity of Yahweh's covenantal relationship with Israel, now sharply focussed on is original universalistic orientation. The vision is conveyed using the language of creation, exodus and covenant. However, its essential expectation is the establishment of cooperative, harmonious relationships between formerly estranged parties: Yahweh with humanity; humanity with itself, and humanity with the environment. This, in Amos' vision, is not simply a return to Eden, but the progress towards the full potential of Eden. Since Eden was pervasively corrupted by the reality of human sin, the sovereign actions of God in securing a future as Amos foresees can legitimately be called a new creation.

Issues in Interpretation

How Language Works, or Does Not!
How confident can we be about the accuracy with which we have apprehended Amos's intent? Given the huge gulf that exists, both

in time and culture between the original text and the present interpreters, and given the fact that our text uses the more-complex poetic form, how can we ensure that we 'draw out' the meaning encoded by the author rather than impose our own interests and prejudices onto it?

Peter Cotterell speaks of the "highly sophisticated, complex, but ultimately imprecise" nature of human language. This complexity obtains in spoken discourse, but gets even more difficult when one is dealing with text, because text by nature is one that is "robbed of its phonetic component."[32] Cotterell identifies *two* significant challenges written communication poses to the interpreter:

> Written language in practice involves language with two absences: the absence of the speaker, and the absence of the referents. The interpretation of a written text involves some measure of dialogue with the speaker, and some attempt to identify the referents.[33]

When dealing with the text of Amos we must recognize and admit our distance as interpreters (on the level of history, language and culture) from the assumptions of the text. Our level of understanding of the originally intended meaning will be directly proportional to the reduction of distance between the world of the interpreter and the world of the text. This is the classic burden of historico-grammatical exegesis.

The journey, however, is fraught with danger. Language, as every Bible translator quickly learns, does not easily transfer. In fact, Cotterell has helpfully identified *five* "myths" that commonly

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[32] "Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics and Discourse Analysis" in *Guide to the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 135.

[33] Cottrell, "Linguistics," 135.

skew the interpretation of texts.[34] To this we add Caird's suggestion that all language evinces the characteristics of "opacity, vagueness and ambiguity."[35] This underscores the fact that *precision of understanding* cannot legitimately be assumed. One can only expect approximations of meaning. Furthermore, all language is thoroughly metaphorical. If we recall Cotterell's point about "referents," a communicator is constantly, most often intuitively, grasping for comparisons (referents) whereby he or she may project onto the consciousness of the auditor the image of meaning encoded in the communicator's own mind. In Caird's words,

> Comparison is one of our most valuable sources of knowledge, the main road leading from the known to the unknown. It comprises a large part of our daily speech and almost all the language of theology. God speaks to man in similitudes (Hos 12:10), and man has no language but analogy for speaking about God, however inadequate it may be (Isa 40:18, 25; 46:5).[36]

These brief notes do not exhaust issues that must be considered in the exegesis of biblical texts however, not least because the latter wears a unique claim to divine authorship, and therefore to a divinely intended meaning.

Typology as an Interpretive Key

Not unlike "eschatology", "typology" too has shown too great a pliability in the hands of the artisans of language: "the word is used in several different ways in modern literature."[37] Frances Young suggests that, "typology arose through the intentional

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[34] Cottrell, "Linguistics," 148-153.
[35] Caird, *Language and Imagery,* 85.
[36] Caird, *Language and Imagery*, 144.
[37] Goldingay, *Approaches*, 98.

modeling of one story upon another."[38] Von Rad further points out, "[Typology is] by no means a specifically theological concern or, indeed, a peculiarity of ancient Oriental thought. Rather, typological thinking is an elementary function of all human thought and interpretation."[39]

Since the books of the Bible are the products of the one, progressive, revelation, each conveys its message in engagement with what has preceded it. As Goldingay illustrates, "The OT utilizes the exodus from Egypt, for instance, to describe the promised, later deliverance from Babylon."[40] This is why Amos 9:11-15 must not be read in isolation; not in isolation from the co-text of the whole of Amos, nor from the context of the prophetic writings, nor indeed from the whole of the canon of scripture:

> This conviction that there is a fundamental analogy between different divine acts is expressed within the OT itself. As we noted above, the rescue from Babylon will be analogous to the rescue from Egypt. It will thus be a new exodus. But the analogy is not only one between past events and eschatological ones. The historical David is in effect pictured as a new Abraham (*i.e.* he enjoys a covenant like Abraham's and Abraham's blessing) before he himself is a type of a coming king.[41]

Typology then links the testaments together, but also aids in the reading of narratives within a single testament. Its benefit is that it helps us identify motifs or patterns in the way God deals with his creation, especially humanity, throughout biblical history. The

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[38] Frances Young, "Typology" in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder*, eds., S. E. Porter, P. Joyce and D. E. Orter (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 30.

[39] Gerhard Von Rad, "Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament" in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Claus Westermann (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1960), 17.

[40] Goldingay, *Approaches,* 98.

[41] Goldingay, *Approaches,* 99.

biblical interpreter is aided by the discernment of these patterns whereby one text enhances, and even controls the interpretation of another. This compensates somewhat for the "distance" between the world of the interpreter and the world of the text. Young explains typology as

> A heuristic tool for discerning and describing an interpretative device whereby texts (usually narrative but, as we shall see, not exclusively) are shaped or read, consciously or unconsciously, so that they are invested with meaning by correspondence with other texts of a "mimetic" or representational kind.[42]

One reason for the sharp division between biblical scholars, who may be equally committed to historico-grammatical exegesis, is a divergent view about the place of typology. Von Rad pleads for balance. On the one hand, "[typological interpretation] cannot serve as a heuristic principle for the elucidation of particular philological and historical problems," while on the other, "we face the undeniable fact that so very often even the best "historical" exegesis is achieved from a theological point of view – that is to say, in the final analysis, from the side of the Christian faith."[43]

On the contemporary theological landscape we see a polarization between those of a more dispensational disposition who would downplay the role of typology as a "heuristic tool" in exegesis, from those scholars of a covenantal persuasion who use typology to subsume the distinctive messages of OT texts under the one message of the Christ-event.

Unpacking the Summarizing Conclusion of Amos 9:11-15
Our summary statement on the eschatological vision of Amos 9:11-15 may be analyzed under *three* basic components:

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[42] Young, "Typology," 35.
[43] Von Rad, "Typological Interpretation," 37-38.

1. The eschatological vision asserts the continuity of Yahweh's covenant with Israel now sharply focussed on its original universalistic orientation.

2. The eschatological vision is conveyed using the language of creation, exodus and covenant, and the discernment of typological patterning becomes the key to appropriating the intended meaning.

3. The eschatological vision projects the establishment of cooperative, harmonious relationships between formerly estranged parties: Yahweh and humanity, humanity with itself, and humanity and the environment.

The Eschatological Vision Asserts the Continuity of Yahweh's Covenant with Israel now sharply focused on its Original Universalistic Orientation

Amos 9:11-15 was spoken to the covenant people of God. It was presented in the context of a severe warning of the consequences that would follow apostasy and other violations of covenant obligations by the politico-religious leadership of Israel. Judgment would involve destruction, death and exile. Nevertheless, this did not mean the *abrogation* of covenant. On the contrary, punishment was to be the very means by which God would ensure the continuance of the covenant relationship he had instituted with Abraham, and reiterated at Sinai and with David:

> If famine, drought, plague and the sword fail, the last resort is exile from the land. The very act of expelling the rebellious nation from the land has sanctification as its objective. Exile cleanses the land of that which, and of those who, defile it. Exile purifies a people by leaving a remnant who will be fit to reoccupy the land. Cleansing and restoration are therefore integral to the eschatological hope of the prophets, and they

are not for the far-off distant future, but for some time closer at hand.[44]

In Amos 9:8b-10 we noticed how God holds out the promise of a righteous remnant. "The fallen booth of David" is a unique phrase. It is meant to evoke notions of covenant, and the unified people of Israel. It also functions as a metaphor for *faithful* Israel (Psalm 78:70-72) in single-minded devotion to God. It is a nation qualified by these characteristics that God calls, "my people Israel" (9:14).

The promise of the continuance of covenant was not so novel in Israelite thinking. What was radical, and might have been deeply disturbing to some in Amos' day, as it appears to be to some today, is the assertion that this continuance of covenant would incorporate "the remnant of Edom" and "all nations over whom my name has been called."

Exegetically we noticed that Amos uses unique language when he conveys this staggering statement. However it must be admitted that such a vision is not original to Amos; it formed the very foundation of the nation of Israel. When God called Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) he specifically impressed on Abraham the universalistic orientation of God's mission that would be worked out through the patriarch: "In you all nations will bless themselves." This was to be Israel's self-understanding, and was further fortified by the several laws regulating attitudes towards "the alien" within the community. Within the book of Amos, the nations, not unlike Israel, are the object *both* of the judgment of God (1:2-2:3) and the mercy of God (9:7, 11-12). There is a levelling of the playing field of salvation. Isaiah later carried this idea forward when he spoke of the nations streaming up to Zion

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[44] Gordon J. Thomas, "A Holy God among a Holy People in a Holy Place: Enduring Eschatological Hope," in *Eschatology in Bible and Theology*, eds. Kent E. Brower and Mark W. Elliott (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997), 61-62.

under the conviction that therein lay the fulfillment of their longing for the knowledge of Yahweh (Is 2:2-4; cf. Mi 4:1-4).

It is this universalistic emphasis that catches the attention of James as he reflects on the reality of Gentile conversion indubitably demonstrated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them (Acts 15:6-12). Amos 9:11-12 most clearly jumps out at him as the pattern that explicates their present experience. At the same time he doesn't see Amos as an aberration: "With this *the prophets* agree."

Curiously, this later use of Amos 9:11-12 has been a favorite argument in the arsenal of *both* dispensationalist and covenantal theologians. C. I. Scofield for instance saw this as fundamentally supportive of the dispensational position: "Dispensationally this [Acts 15:13-18] is the most important passage in the NT . . .the verses which follow in Amos describe the final regathering of Israel which the other prophets invariably connect with the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant."[45] On the other hand, more recently, Palmer Robertson has argued on the basis of Acts 15 for a position of continuity: "If the blessing of God on the Gentile world assumes the restoration of the dynasty of David, the rebuilding of the tent of David could not be yet future. The inclusion of the Gentiles presupposes the establishment of the promised Davidic line."[46]

The latter, ongoing debate notwithstanding, it is our suggestion that the notion of universalism (defined as the *scope* in Yahweh's salvation) was not first invested in Amos 9:11-12 by its use in Acts. Rather, such is the burden of the *text itself* (as our exegesis has argued) and this is precisely why James highlighted its significance at the Council of Jerusalem. The calling of Israel, as appears to be the thinking of the NT, converged in Jesus Christ – the "son of David," "Son of God," "one greater than Abraham" –

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[45] Cited in Kaiser, "The Davidic Promise," 98.
[46] Robertson, "Hermeneutics," 106.

the fulfilment of Israel. In his incarnation, death and resurrection he embodied God's purposes for Israel to be a light to the nations. Through him the covenant with Israel continues and expands, to incorporate the nations, as foreseen in the original calling of the nation in her founding father Abraham.

Language of Creation, Exodus and Covenant, and the Discernment of Typological Patterning becomes the key to appropriating its Intended Meaning

The conclusion of Amos employs the three motifs of creation, exodus and covenant as a communication strategy to give shape to what is envisaged. We have already considered the language of covenant, and hence in this section we will look at the other two.

Creation Language

Words such as וּבְנִיתִיהָ ,עֹשֶׂה ,וּנְטַעְתִּים (*build, make, plant*) recall the language of Genesis 1-2 (see, 1:7, 16, 2:8, 22). The exile marks the commencement of chaos (Gene 1:2). The promise is of a new beginning, so just as he brought order to chaos at creation he will do the same for the remnant. They will on the one hand be "planted" *like the trees* in Eden, full of sap and pleasing to the beholder; on the other hand, they will be *like Adam*, contented in harnessing the resources of a friendly environment as co-rulers with God of his bountiful creation.

The allusion to the curse on the ground of Genesis 3, and the vision of its reversal in Amos 9:13 creates an eschatological trajectory. The initiative of Yahweh on behalf of Israel, and therefore the nations, is not for the sake of a *return* to Eden, but for the progression towards the full potential of Eden, which may conveniently be termed "a new creation."

Exodus (and Conquest) Language

Amos 9:14 alludes to the Exodus, "I shall reverse the captivity of my people Israel." Exile will be followed by a New Exodus and, as in the founding of Israel, the remnant will return to "possess" (9:12); "build," "live," "plant," "drink," "make" and "eat" (9:14).

This theme of a New Exodus is common to the eschatological language of the OT (Isa 49:8-26, Mic 7:15, Zec 10:8-12). Exodus connoted most prominently the concept of an *end to evil*; graphically conveyed in the terse observation, "and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore" (Exod 14:30). With the motif of Exodus *and* Conquest we may find another nuance to the end-of-evil. In the Exodus, evil is overcome because *Yahweh* brought Israel out with a "mighty hand" and "signs and wonders done among the Egyptians." In the Conquest evil is overcome when the *people of Yahweh* in obedience to him "rid the land" of all its abominable practices and polluting influences. This ideal of divine-human cooperation runs all the way through scripture and we shall briefly touch on it again presently.

The Eschatological Vision projects the establishment of Cooperative, Harmonious Relationships between Formerly-Estranged Parties; Yahweh and Humanity, Humanity with Itself, and Humanity and the Environment

The book of Amos portrays all the above estrangements. Yahweh is clearly Israel's adversary determined to destroy the "sinful kingdom." Israel and the nations (and Israel within herself) are deeply alienated with no apparent hope of restoration of human relations. Nature too is hostile, and indeed has been the expression of divine displeasure.

We have argued that the prophet concludes with the refreshing promise that humanity's alienation from God (typified by OT Israel) need not be permanent. Not only does God restore humanity to relationship with him, but ensures the dignity of a covenant partner participating fully in accomplishing the purposes of God. It is an often-ignored truth in scripture that God in his very sovereignty has chosen to accomplish his grandest plans with the cooperation of his human creatures. This is most clearly confirmed in how the Son of God becomes the Son of Man to accomplish "so great a salvation," into which "even angels long to look." Sin frustrated this purpose of God. The sacrificial death

and resurrection of Jesus reopened the way to a restoration of cooperation and harmony in a new creation.

Donald Gowan helpfully pictures the eschatological expectation of the OT in terms of a *threefold* transformation: the human person, human society, and nature itself.[47] The latter two are prominent in Amos 9. Edom and the nations are mentioned with no concomitant language of war, hostility or vengeance:

> What is not so natural among human beings is the appearance within that same group of tormented people of a conviction that their God was also the God of the enemy, of a willingness to accept proselytes from other nations into their community, and (just once in a while) of a desire for a future in which Israel and her enemies would live peaceably as equals.[48]

All the human participants now "are called by [Yahweh's] name." Isaiah 2:4 extends this vision to speak of international cooperation and harmony. Micah 7:11-12 suggests such a transformation of human relations that even hostile Assyria and Egypt will become included within the "boundary that is far extended."

Finally we have the glorious vision of the auto-induced cooperation of nature with God's people. Gone is the curse of Eden. Mountains drip wine and the hills melt themselves. These incipient ideas in Amos 9 are given full expression in Isaiah 65:17-25. In the glorious vision of the latter all the basic themes of Amos 9:11-15 are included, but Isaiah's vision explicitly involves: the creation of the new heaven and new earth, the end of evil, and the restoring of ideal relationships within humanity, and between humanity and nature.

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[47] Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 2.

[48] Gowan, *Eschatology*, 44.

MELUḪḪA AND MESOPOTAMIA

PRABO MIHINDUKULASURIYA

"The Indus Valley forms the eastern limit of the region that we may designate 'the biblical world'…"[1]

Abstract: Archaeological discoveries reveal that the Indus Valley Civilization and Mesopotamia were connected by long-distance maritime trade between c. 2600 – 1800 BC. Sumerian and Akkadian cuneiform texts also testify to the presence of immigrants from 'Meluḫḫa', as the Indus Valley Civilization was known to the residents of the various Mesopotamian city states such as Ur, from where the Old Testament patriarchal narrative begins. The ancient interaction between the earliest South Asian civilization and the birthplace of biblical 'salvation history' expands our atlas of the 'world of the Bible.' Learning about some of the socio-economic conditions that patterned the lives of immigrant families in the Ancient Near East also heightens our appreciation of the risks entailed in God's call to Abraham and Sarah which envisaged the blessing of "all the families of the earth."

Key words: *Biblical geography, Ur, Mesopotamia, Meluḫḫa, Indus Valley Civilization*.

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[1] S. C. Pittman, 'Archaeology of the Indus Valley', *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids, Illinois: Eerdmans, 1979), 282.

Introduction: Ur and the 'World of the Bible'
The Book of Genesis begins with the creation narrative of God forming the earth, its diverse species of living creatures and the common ancestors of humankind who would migrate over its continents and oceans (Gen 1-11). They would develop cultures and civilizations of complex social organization and technological resourcefulness, but also inflict and endure horrific violence, oppression and the full range of human suffering. Genesis then zooms in, introducing the counter-story of God promising to restore wholeness to the nations by committing Himself to Abram and Sarai (17:4, 15), the would-be ancestors of a nation in whose history God would work for the sake of all the other nations (chs. 12-50; see especially 12:3; 18:19; 22:18; 26:4).

The biblical writers situated the migration narratives of Israel's ancestors in the social worlds of ancient Mesopotamia, Canaan and Egypt. This complex of civilizations formed a dominant part of what historians (from a Euro-centric perspective) call the 'Ancient Near East' (ANE). There are considerable difficulties in synchronizing biblical accounts with our reconstructions of the ancient past based on current archaeological knowledge.[2] However, the narrative timeline of the biblical writers themselves appear to place the migrations of Abraham and Sarah around 2100 – 1900 BC,[3] and look back to "Ur

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[2] Our knowledge of the 'Ancient Near East' has expanded exponentially due to major archaeological discoveries since the beginning of the 20th century. However, scholars have not been able to agree on when, where and how exactly the persons, events, places and customs named and described in the Bible align with these discoveries. For a helpful evaluation of the methodological and ideological factors that divide scholarly opinion and offers, in my judgment, a balanced critical-conservative position which I have adopted as the basis of this chapter, please read Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Louiville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 3-133. See also Edwin M. Yamauchi, *The Scriptures and Archaeology: Abraham to Daniel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013).

[3] Provan, et al, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 160-68.

of the Chaldeans" as their original point of departure (Gen 11:28, 31; 15:7; Neh 9:7; cf. Acts 7:2, 4).[4]

Ur in Mesopotamia marked a decisive turning point in the salvation history of God's engagement in the civilization histories of humankind. It is truly remarkable that from about 2600-2500 BC, the city-states of Mesopotamia, and especially Ur, engaged in long-distance trade with the city-states of the Indus Valley Civilization, which scholars believe to be the cradle of many subsequent South Asian cultures.[5] In this chapter we will explore the extent of interactions between Mesopotamia and 'Meluḫḫa,' the name by which Abraham and Sarah and their Mesopotamian relations and ancestors would have known the Indus Valley Civilization.

Finding Ur
Following centuries of tradition Jewish, Christian and Muslim pilgrims had believed the Syrian city of Edessa or Urfa (Sunilurfa in modern Turkey) to be the birthplace of their common spiritual patriarch. The correct location of Ur at Tell el-Muqayyar (in southern Iraq) was not identified until John G. Taylor began excavations in the 1854-55 and Sir Henry Rawlinson and others deciphered cuneiform inscriptions from the site in 1857.[6] Sir Leonard Wooley's excavations between 1922-34 revealed the wealth and power of the city's elites as displayed by the abundance of exquisitely crafted artefacts of gold, electrum, lapis

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[4] It seems that the editors who were inspired to update the Book of Genesis in the process of its literary formation added "of the Chaldeans" to help a later generation of Israelite readers locate Ur on a mental map of nations and territories familiar to them. Evidently, the Chaldeans (identified in contemporary Assyrian records as *māt Kaldu* or *Kašdu*) arrived in the southern Mesopotamian region around Ur sometime between 940-860 BC, long after the time of Abraham.

[5] For example, Asko Parpola, *The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[6] Harriet Crawford, *Ur: The City of the Moon God* (London/NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 3-4, 136.

lazuli and carnelian from the 'Royal Cemetery'. Of even greater significance perhaps was the discovery of numerous cuneiform records which confirmed that this was indeed the remains of *Urim* (the original Sumerian name for Ur) from where the 'god-kings' named in the 'Sumerian King List' (which had been substantially decoded between 1906-23) had ruled.

According to these ancient Mesopotamian records, Ur had been elevated to the status of a royal metropolis by King Mesannepada in the mid-2500s BC,[7] about five hundred years before Abraham. The largest quantity of luxury objects in the 'Royal Cemetery' came from that era, indicating that this was the city's most prosperous period. From about 2334 to 2154 BC Ur came under the northern Akkadian Empire founded by Sargon I 'the Great'. It regained prominence under King Ur-Nammu (around 2112 – 2094 BC) who began to build Ur's towering central structure, the ziggurat (stepped-pyramid temple) dedicated to the city's patron deity, the moon god Nannar or Sin. His son King Shulgi (around 2095 – 2046) completed the monument and controlled much of Mesopotamia establishing his legacy as Ur's most renowned ruler. The timeline of the biblical narrative suggests that the departure of Terah and Abram from Ur may have occurred around this period. The city's political dominance ended around 2000 BC when the Elamites, Gutians and others invaded from the east and northeast, destroying the city and its ziggurat. After driving away the Elamites, the rulers of the Akkadian kingdom of Isin took possession of the city, but lost it to their Sumerian rivals of Larsa who ruled it from around 1926 BC. The city walls were destroyed by Samsu-iluna of Babylon around 1750 BC as punishment for rebellion. It was gradually restored under the Kassite rulers and maintained from then onwards as a provincial capital and a centre of learning, religion, and culture by succeeding Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings. Nabinidus (reigned about 556-39 BC) in particular was the last king to rebuilt the ziggurat on a massive scale. However, the city

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[7] This historical summary is based on Crawford, *Ur*, 83-134.

appears to have been abandoned around 500 BC, most probably due to the Euphrates River shifting eastwards, reducing the city's water supply.

Ur as a maritime city
Based on numerous inscriptions that mentioned canals and waterways constructed by Ur's kings as well as references to trading ships and access to the sea, Assyriologist Thorkild Jacobsen proposed that the marshes or lakes in the vicinity of Ur "were considered by the ancients part of the Persian Gulf with which they connected."[8] One such document boasted that "on the shore of the sea in the registry place" King Ur-Nammu restored "the sea trade(rs) safely home and returned the Magan ships to [the god Nanna's] hand."[9] We now know that unlike its modern location about 230 kilometres inland from the coast, in the 2000s and 1900s BC, the shoreline reached much farther inland and that Ur was indeed located in close proximity to where the Euphrates River opened into the Persian Gulf.[10] With access to both river and sea-borne trade Ur profited from regional as well as long-distance trade.

'Meluḫḫa'
One of the earliest references to the distant lands that traded with Mesopotamia is an inscription praising Sargon I of Akkad (around 2334-2279 BC). It claimed that "At the edge of the sea, (Sargon) tied the boat of Meluḫḫa, the boat of Magan, and the boat of Dilmun to the quay of Akkad."[11]

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[8] Thorkild Jacobsen, "The Waters of Ur," *Iraq* 22, nos. 1-2 (Spring-Autumn, 1960): (174-185) 185.

[9] Jacobsen, "The Waters of Ur," 184-5.

[10] Kurt Lambeck, "Shoreline reconstructions for the Persian Gulf since the last glacial maximum," *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* 142 (1996): 57.

[11] *Archiv für Orientforschung* 20 37 v 8-13 (I. J. Gelb and B. Kienast 164), cited in Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 302.

In several texts the lands of Magan and Meluḫḫa represent the farthest eastern horizon of Mesopotamian geography. A temple dedication hymn probably composed in the reign of Gudea of Lagash (about 2144 -2124 BC), boasts that "In response to [the temple's] fame all lands will gather from as far as heaven's borders, even Magan and Meluha will come down from their mountains."[12]

Around the same period, *The Cursing of Akkad* offers a picture of how the importation of exotic animals from distant places such as Meluḫḫa into the royal capitals was seen as a sign of prestige and dominance. "…[T]hat monkeys mighty elephants, water buffalo, exotic animals, as well as thoroughbred dogs, lions, mountain ibexes, and *alum* sheep with long wool would jostle each other in the public squares."[13] Later on, it recalls how in the reign of Naram-sin (who ruled from 2254 – 2218 BC) "The Meluhans, the people of the black land, brought exotic wares up to [Akkad]."[14]

In the mythological composition *Enki and the World Order*, Enki the Sumerian god of cosmic order and fertility, glories over the treasures coming from faraway lands to the central temple of Enlil in Nippur.

> Let the lands of Meluha, Magan and Dilmun look upon me, upon Enki.
> Let the Dilmun boats be loaded (?) with timber.
> Let the Magan boasts be loaded sky-high.
> Let the *magilum* barges of Meluha transport gold and silver…"[15]

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[12] Lines 232-40, "The building of Nirgirsu's temple," Jeremy Black, Graham Cunningham, Eleanor Robson and Gábor Zólyomi, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 50.

[13] Lines 10-24, "The cursing of Agade," Black, et al, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, 118

[14] Lines 40-56, "The cursing of Agade," 119.

[15] Lines 123-130, "Enki and the world order," Black, et al, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, 218.

In the same composition, Enki proceeds to bless the spot on the pre-inhabited earth where Meluḫḫa will arise. The description reveals how Mesopotamians imagined the exotic land of Meluḫḫa.

> Black land, may your trees be great trees, may your forests be
> forests of highland *mes* trees!
> Chairs made from them will grace royal palaces!
> May your reeds be great reeds, may they […]!
> Heroes shall […] them on the battlefield as weapons!
> May your bulls be great bulls, may they be bulls of the
> mountains!
> May their bellowing be the bellowing of wild bulls of the
> mountains!
> The great powers[16] of the gods shall be made be perfected for
> you!
> May the francolins [literally, *dar*-birds][17] of the mountains
> wear carnelian beards!
> May your birds all be peacocks [literally, *Haia*-birds]!
> May their cries grace royal palaces!
> May all your silver be gold!
> May all your copper be tin-bronze!
> Land, may all you possess be plentiful!
> May your people […]!
> May your men go forth like bulls against their fellow men![18]

Scholars quickly observed that the place names "Dilmun, Magan and Meluḫḫa" frequently appeared together and referred to foreign territories reached by sailing down the Persian Gulf. "Dilmun" was described as an island and was identified as

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[16] The *me* were "the offices, arts, and crafts with their associated functional powers that shaped and tooled Sumerian culture and society so that it worked for both gods and people. Richard E. Averbeck, 'Myth, Ritual, and Order in "Enki and the World Order," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, no. 4 (Oct - Dec 2003): (757-771), 761-2.

[17] Possibly, peafowl or domesticated red Indian jungle fowl.

[18] Lines 219-37, "Enki and the world order," 220.

Bahrain. "Magan" was identified as southeastern Arabia, modern Oman and the United Arab Emirates. "Meluḫḫa" therefore was farther still. After careful examination of the texts, scholars are widely agreed that although, centuries later, the name was transferred to the region of Nubia and/or Ethiopia in the Neo-Assyrian period (911 – 621 BC)[19] Mesopotamians in the 2000s BC had originally used it to name the Indus Valley Civilization.[20]

Meluḫḫa's trade with Mesopotamia
Mesopotamian trade with Meluḫḫa appears to have commenced from around 2600 and ended around 1800 BC, a period of 800 years.[21] There are at least 76 references to Meluḫḫa in Mesopotamian documents.[22] From these, Gregory Possehl identified the types of merchandise that were brought from Meluḫḫa into Mesopotamia.[23] There were materials for crafting jewellery such as carnelian (8 references), lapis lazuli (once) and pearls (once). There were also types of wood and plants, including the as-yet unidentified giš-*ab-ba-me-luh-ha* (12 references) and *mesu* wood (7), and fresh dates (1). Also listed

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[19] D. Potts, "The Road to Meluḫḫa," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 41, no. 4 (Oct 1982): 279-288.

[20] W. F. Leemans, *Foreign Trade in the Old Babylonian Period: As Revealed by Texts from Southern Mesopotamia*, Studia et Documenta: Ad Iura Orientis Antiqui Pertinentia Vol. VI (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 159-166; Romila Thapar; "A Possible Identification of Meluḫḫa, Dilmun and Makan," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 18, no. 1 (Jan 1975): 1-42. For earlier, more tentative identifications, see A. L. Oppenheim, "The Seafaring Merchants of Ur," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 74 (1954): 6-17; Geoffrey Bibby, "The 'Ancient Indian Style' Seals from Bahrain," *Antiquity* 32, no. 128 (Dec 1958): 243-246.

[21] Gregory L. Possehl, "Meluḫḫa" in *Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, ed. Julien Reade (London: Keagan Paul, 1996; Oxford/NY: Routledge, 2009), 182.

[22] For the full list, see Possehl, "Meluḫḫa," 139-144.

[23] Gregory L. Possehl, "India's Relations with Western Empires, 2300-600 BC," in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East,* Vol. 1, ed. D. T. Potts (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 762.

were live animals such as a variety of birds (3 references), a dog (1), and a cat (1). Then there were references to metals such as copper (2) and gold (1). Finally, the texts also spoke of "Meluḫḫan-style" ships (2), furniture (3), and bird figurines (5).

Even before scholars realized that 'Meluḫḫa' was the Mesopotamian place-name for the Indus Valley Civilization, archaeologists had already discovered the prevalence of Indus-origin artifacts in Mesopotamian excavations. In 1924, when Sir John Marshall publicized his discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro with images of Indus seals, they were immediately recognized by Rev. Archibald Henry Sayce as identical to the ones his colleagues had found at Susa (in modern Iran). Sayce was able to date them to the 2000s BC and related them to the Third Dynasty of Ur. Sayce marveled,

> It is evident, therefore, that as far back as the third-millennium BC, there was intercourse between Susa and North-West of India. The discovery opens up a new historical vista, and is likely to revolutionize our ideas of the age and origin of Indian civilization.[24]

Soon after, Ernest J. H. Mackay informed Marshall that a Harappan 'unicorn' seal with signs and long-barrel cylindrical beads of carnelian, and etched carnelian beads had been discovered by his team digging at the ancient city of Kish (Tell Ahaimir in modern Iraq).[25] Mackay was then brought to India to assist Marshall. At Chanhu-daro, Mackay unearthed a cache of unfinished carnelian 'long barrel cylindrical beads', the raw materials for their manufacture as well as the stone drills used by

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[24] "Remarkable Discoveries in India," *Illustrated London News* (27 September 1924), 525. Quoted in Nayanjot Lahiri, *Finding Forgotten Cities: How the Indus Civilization was Discovered* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005), 266-68.

[25] Ernest Mackay, "Sumerian Connexions with Ancient India," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 4 (Oct 1925): 697-701.

the Indus craftsmen.[26] Subsequent archaeological work in an expanding number of Mesopotamian and Indus sites, as well as later discoveries in the Persian Gulf have firmly established the trade relations between the peoples of these civilizations. Possehl states that "There are at least 13 Indus – or Indus-type – seals in Mesopotamia … as well as etched carnelian beads, pottery, inlays, cubical weights, and other materials of Indus origin… ."[27] Trade goods of Harappan origin such as carnelian beads were found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur around 2450 BC.[28]

Meluḫḫans in Mesopotamia
Shell cylinder seals in Mesopotamia indicated that the material and technology came from Harappa, but that the seals were manufactured in Mesopotamia, as no cylinder seals were found in Harappan sites. Neither are the faceted beads in Mesopotamia found in any workshop unearthed in the Indus Valley. According to Kenoyer and Vidale, "Indus families in Mesopotamia imported raw materials rather than finished beads and expediently adapted their production to the changing needs of the Mesopotamian demand and markets."[29] Indus craftsmen developed unique technologies for drilling carnelian and vesuvianite long beads with the use of ernestite and chert drills. Of all the excavated

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[26] Mackay, "Bead Making in Ancient Sind," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 57, no. 1 (March 1937): 1-15.

[27] Possehl, "India's Relations," 764.

[28] Jonathan M. Kenoyer, "Indus and Mesopotamian trade networks: new insights from shell and carnelian artifacts, in *Intercultural Relations between South and Southwest Asia: Studies in Commemoration of E.C.L. During-Caspers, (1934-1996)*, eds. E. Olidjam and R.H. Spoor (Oxford: Archeopress, 2008), 19-28.

[29] M. Vidale, "Growing in a Foreign World. For a History of the 'Meluḫḫa Villages' in Mesopotamia in the 3rd Millennium BC," in *Melammu Symposia 4*, eds. A. Panaino and A. Piras (Milan: Università di Bologna & Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2004), 263.

Mesopotamian sites, Ur has yielded by far the most Indus-related artefacts.[30]

Ancient documents further reveal that the Meluḫḫans were not merely known to the Mesopotamians as a distant nation, but that immigrant Meluḫḫan communities resided in Mesopotamian cities. A dozen transactional texts written over a period of 45 years (2062-2028 BC) referred to a "Meluḫḫan village" belonging to the city-state of Lagas/Girsu, a "Meluḫḫan granary", and a "Meluḫḫan garden" in the temple of the Sumerian goddess Ninmar. These documents also named individuals identified as "sons of Meluḫḫa" and, in one instance, bore the personal name "Meluḫḫa".[31] The village appears to have functioned as "both a producer and supplier of barley for taxation and revenue purposes."[32] They also observed that the individuals called "sons of Meluḫḫa" each had typical Sumerian first names. Based on this evidence, the Simo and Asko Parpolas and Robert Brunswig proposed that three centuries after the Meluḫḫans were first documented as a "a distinctly foreign commercial people," they had gradually become "an ethnic component of Ur III society."[33] They concluded that these were signs of "Meluḫḫan acculturation into Sumerian society on a personal as well as a politico-economic level."

In 2008 Petrus Vermaak published further inscriptions from the ruined cities og Girsu, Drehem, Umma and Ur that identified the name of the Meluḫḫan village as 'Guabba'.[34]

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[30] Vidale, "Growing in a Foreign World": 272; after D.K. Chakrabarti, *The External Trade of the Indus Civilization* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1990).

[31] Simo Parpola, Asko Parpola and Robert H. Brunswig, Jr., "The Meluḫḫa Village: Evidence of Acculturation of Harappan Traders in Late Third Millennium Mesopotamia?," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 10, no. 2 (May 1977): 129-165.

[32] Parpola, et al, "The Meluḫḫa Village": 150.

[33] Parpola, et al, "The Meluḫḫa Village": 152.

[34] P. S. Vermaak, "Guabba, the *Meluḫḫan* Village in Mesopotamia," *Journal of Semitics* 17, no. 2 (2008): 454-471.

Although the place name Guabba was already known from hundreds of texts, one particular Ur III text specifically called it "Guabba the Meluḫḫan village." It also referred to a person named Ur-Lamma, known from other texts and seals, as a Meluḫḫan.[35] The Meluḫḫan settlement of Guabba provided a large workforce for the weaving industry. As many as 4,272 women and 1,800 children from Guabba worked as weavers.[36] Vermaak speculates that "this group could have been ancestors of a distant group which diffused into this area, bringing their skills of textiles into the region or being used as cheap labour." The occupation of the men is given in a few texts as that of shepherds. Succeeding generations of locally-born Meluḫḫans may therefore have found a place in Mesopotamian society, but they may also have been restricted to assigned functions in the socio-economic systems of the city-states which incorporated them.

The most interesting archaeological finds relating to the presence of Meluḫḫans in Mesopotamia are inscriptions naming individual Meluḫḫans. A cylinder seal from the Late Akkadian period (ca. 2020 BC) depicting the scene of a royal audience and bearing the inscription "Shu-ilishu the Meluḫḫan interpreter" (see Figure 1).

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[35] MVN 7 420 = ITT 4 8024, preserved at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, Turkey.

[36] HSS IV 3, cf. H. Waetzoldt, *Untersuchungen zur Neusumerischen Textilindustrie* (Roma: Centroper le Antichità e la stoia dell'arte del vicino oriente, 1972), 94. For texts connecting Guabba and the weaving industry see list in Vermaak, "Guabba," 465, fn. 37.

Figure 1. Clay seal impression of 'Shu-ilishu the Meluḫḫan interpreter'.
Courtesy of Département des Antiquités Orientales, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The name is an Old Akkadian one, but it appears to have been a common practice for foreigners in Mesopotamia to adopt Sumerian or Akkadian names.[37] A curious exception is found in another Akkadian text about "a man of Meluḫḫa" named Lu-sunzida who was required to pay a fine of ten silver shekels for damaging someone's tooth in a fight.[38] Because Lu-sunzida is not a Mesopotamian name and it is a literal Sumerian translation for "man of the just buffalo cow" it is very probably derived from his original name in his native Indus language.

A seal preserved in the Cabinet des Medailles of Paris shows a rare combination of the typical Indus *gaur* (bull) with a lowered head and a cuneiform inscription, which has been rendered "slave (or 'dog') of Ninildum", the Mesopotamian goddess of timber and carpentry. References elsewhere to 'dogs' receiving rations of bread and beer as payment for work at the dockyards of Lagash during this same period, leads Vidale to suggest that 'dog' might designate "a corp of professional

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[37] Possehl, "India's Relations," 765.
[38] Parpola, et al., "The Meluḫḫa Village": 160f.

guards".[39] Based on the fact that the seal was found in Lebanon, Vidale speculates that its owner may have engaged in procuring timber of a temple building project because Meluḫḫans were known for their skill in woodwork.

The meaning of 'Meluḫḫa'

'Meluḫḫa' is very probably the original Indus language term which has come down to us in its Sanskrit form as *mleccha* and in Pali as *milakkha* or *milakkhu*.[40] In the earliest known use of *mleccha* in the *Śatapatha Brāhmana* (about 600 BC), it means 'barbarian, foreigner, non-Aryan, any person who does not speak Sanskrit and does not conform to the usual Hindu institutions.' *Mleccha* has no obvious root-words in Sanskrit, Pali or any other Indo-Aryan language. Therefore, many scholars believe that the term came from the as-yet unknown Indus language itself.

After decades of painstaking research of his own as well as studying the work of many other scholars, Asko Parpola concluded that "Only one group of South Asian languages remains as a candidate for the Indus language: the Dravidian language family…".[41] He proposed that "the Harappan language was Proto-Dravidian or close to it."[42] Based on his own comprehensive research, Stephan Levitt proposed that 'Meluḫḫa' denoted "something on the order of 'the country above', i.e. 'the eminent country' (< 'that which is above'), or 'the excellent, or superior place (or kingdom)'…"; and that the personal name

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[39] Vidale, "Growing in a Foreign World": 269.

[40] For a comprehensive survey of etymological theories about the derivation of 'Meluḫḫa,' see Stephan Hiller Levitt, "The Ancient Mesopotamian Place Name 'Meluḫḫa,'" *Studia Orientalia Electronica*, [S.l.] 107 (July 2015): 135-76. Available at: <https://journal.fi/store/article/view/51787>. Date accessed: 02 Dec. 2017.

[41] Asko Parpola, *The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 165.

[42] Parpola, *The Roots of Hinduism*, 314.

'Meluḫḫa' which occurs in Mesopotamian records meant "'the eminent one', 'the superior'."[43]

The debate about whether the Indus language and civilization was 'Dravidian' or 'Aryan' is highly contentious and is often muddied by ethno-centric biases. Until the mysterious Indus script is finally decoded, it will be impossible to determine if or how it is related to any known South Asian languages and people groups.

The Indus Civilization and the 'Middle Asian Interaction Sphere'
The timeline attributed to Abraham and Sarah by the biblical writers appears to correspond with the later period of the 'Harappan Phase' of the Indus Valley Civilization, from 2600 to 2000 BCE. It was a network of over 1,500 sophisticated urban settlements of varying size, and extended over 1,000,000 square kilometres, an area twice the size of ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia.[44] Most of these settlements were built along the plains of the river Indus and the now dried-up Ghaggar-Hakra river (which was probably the Saraswati River mentioned in Vedic texts). The main urban centres were Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Ganeriwala (in modern Pakistan) and Dholavira, Kaligangan, Rakhigarhi, Rupar and the port-city Lothal (in modern India).

Contrary to a long-held belief that these cities were tightly controlled populations with restrictions on movement and social mobility, recent chemical analysis of human teeth from Harappan burials have indicated that many residents had moved into the cities from outside.[45] This is not surprising because much

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[43] Levitt, "The Ancient Mesopotamian Place Name 'Meluḫḫa'": 148.

[44] Himanshu Prabha Ray, *The Archaeology of Seafaring in Ancient South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91.

[45] J. Mark Kenoyer, T. Douglas Price and James Burton, "A New Approach to Tracking Connections between the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia: Initial Results of Strontium Isotope Analyses from

of the raw materials used in the crafting of jewellery exported to Mesopotamia were also sourced from a wide network of locations. As historian Himanshu Prabha Ray describes,

> Wide-ranging contacts of the Harappan civilisation are known extending from places like Altyn Depe in central Asia to the Dashli complex in northern Afghanistan, as well as with contemporary Chalcolithic cultures in Gujarat and Neolithic sites in peninsular India. Various raw materials were involved in the internal trade and commerce, such as copper, which was found in abundance in Baluchistan and the Khetri belt of Rajasthan. Gold is available in the Indus River, Kashmir and other places, while silver comes from the southern Khetri belt and Kashmir. Stone such as chert used for blades is found in the Rohri Hills of northern Sindh, while a soft grey stone or 'steatite' is widely available in Baluchistan and Rajasthan. The sources of semi-precious stones are diverse. Chalcedony comes from Gujarat, Deccan and Baluchistan, while the sources of lapis lazuli is limited to the Chagai Hills of Baluchistan and Badakshan in Afghanistan. Also included in the network is marine shell and fish from the coast and timber from the Himalayas.[46]

Looking at the 'big picture' of the Indus Valley Civilization's far-flung connections to sites of both production and consumption, Possehl proposed that the 2000s BC was "a time of new, unique economic and political configurations in a part of the world that can be called "Middle Asia": the regions between the Indus and the Mediterranean bounded on the north by Bactria and Central Asia and on the south by the Arabian Gulf." Possehl called this the "Middle Asian Interaction Sphere" as demonstrated by the

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Harappa and Ur," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 40, no. 5 (May 2013): 2286–2297.

[46] Ray, *The Archaeology of Seafaring in South Asia*, 96; based on Gregory L. Possehl, "The Indus civilization," *Man and Environment* 19, nos. 1-2 (1994): 107.

"shared artifacts, including objects of trade and exchange as well as artificial styles and design motifs."[47]
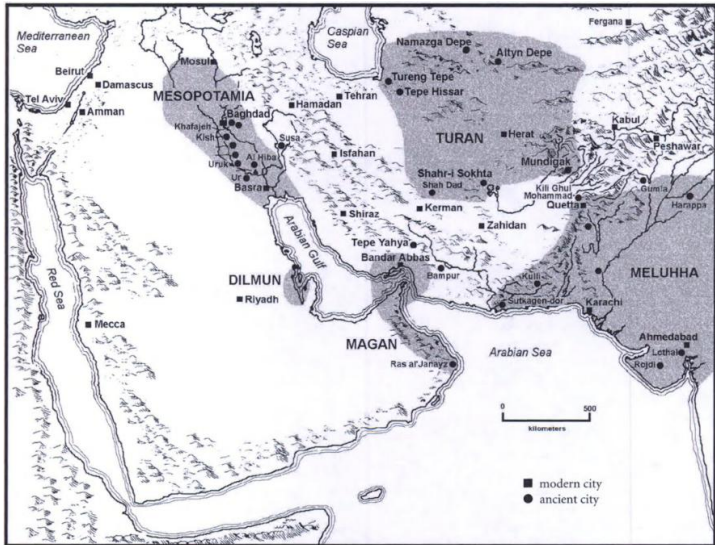

Figure 2: 'Middle Asian Interaction Sphere' after Gregory L. Possehl.[48]

Decline and transitions

From the end of the 2000s BC until the mid-1200s BC, Mesopotamian records are silent about Meluḥḥa, indicating that direct trade relations between the two regions had ceased. Stephan Levitt observes,

> Mention of Meluḥḥa in Mesopotamian material does not occur again till an inscription from the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244–1208 BC) in which the name appears to be used in a traditional formulaic title of little meaning. It then does not occur in the historical texts for 500 years, when it reappears in the annals of Sargon II (721–705 BC), in an

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[47] Gregory L. Possehl, *The Indus Civilization: A Contemporary Perspective* (Oxford: AltaMira Press, 2002), 215.

[48] Possehl, *The Indus Civilization*, 215.

inscription of Sennacherib (704–681 BC), and in later materials. From these materials, it appears that Magan is being associated with Egypt, and Meluḫḫa with Sudan and Ethiopia. The latter usage seems to date at least from the time of letters written by Rib-Addi, regent of Egypt at Gubla (Byblos), to Amenophis III (1411–1375 BC) and to Amenophis IV (1375–1358 BC).[49]

From around 1900 BC the Indus Valley Civilization began to decline. The archaeological record shows that this decline was gradual, caused by the weakening of political and economic links between the widespread urban centres and environmental factors such as the drying up of rivers that were vital for their sustainability. They were not suddenly destroyed by the invasion of Indo-Aryan-speaking peoples as commonly misbelieved. In reality, as Ray explains,

> The previously integrated regions of the Harappan civilisation now broke up into three major localised cultures, namely the Punjab phase, the Jhukar phase and the Rangpur phase. Until 1300 BC, new technologies and new agricultural practices developed in these three regions that led to the emergence of a new social order in the Indus valley; east into the Ganga-Yamuna doab; and into peninsular India (Kenoyer 1998: 174).[50]

The patterns of maritime trade between South Asia and Mesopotamia also transitioned into new phases. The intermediary ports along the Persian Gulf which appear to have been settled and operated by Indus communities gradually passed on to local Dilmunite and Maganite hands

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[49] Levitt, "The Ancient Mesopotamian Place Name 'Meluḫḫa'": 136.

[50] Ray, *The Archaeology of Seafaring in South Asia*, 99. The reference is to Kenoyer, *Ancient Cities of the Indus Civilization* (Karachi: American Institute of Pakistan Studies, 1998).

under the succeeding Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian and Arab empires.

Conclusion: the human geography of 'salvation history'
During its 'Mature Phase' (between 2600 – 1900 BC) the Indus Valley Civilization became the earliest integrated system of urban communities in South Asia. Although much remains to be understood about their worldview and spirituality, the abundance of inscriptional and artifactual evidence of their long-distance trade and cultural contact with Mesopotamia firmly locates the people of the Indus Valley within the frame of the 'world of the Bible.' Possehl named this contact zone the 'middle Asian interaction sphere.' Historians believe that during its long and gradual decline (from about 1900 – 1300 BC), some beliefs and practices of the old Indus peoples were preserved by increasingly localized communities, who in turn transmitted them to newer emerging cultures, thereby forming the earliest layers of many South Asian languages, belief systems and rudimentary technologies.[51]

Learning about this ancient connection between the cradle of South Asian civilizations and the birthplace of God's universal salvation history would, I imagine, hold some historical interest for South Asian Christians who trace their spiritual heritage to Abraham (Gal 3:9, 29). For that reason, reading the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) with the awareness of its wider historical context ought also to prompt some theological reflection.

Firstly, our expanding archaeological knowledge that communication between Meluḫḫa and Mesopotamia continued down to the period when the biblical narratives place the lives of Abraham and Sarah makes more vivid the historical realities within which they were called to be instruments of God's blessing. Secondly, however, the situation would have been quite

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[51] Possehl, *The Indus Civilization*, 250.

different for Abram and Sarai themselves. Growing up in the metropolis of Ur, they would very likely have encountered the foreigners who visited or even resided in the city of their youth. When God declared that through them "all the families of the earth will be blessed," their rudimentary Mesopotamian geography would have enabled them to visualize the Meluḫḫan traders and immigrants from the exotic "black land" across the "Lower Sea" among those far-flung "families of the earth."

Secondly, in the ancient world, holding on to ethno-religious distinctives would have been extremely difficult for immigrant artisan communities. Their economic dependency would commonly necessitate affiliation with the city's deity cult as a precondition for civic inclusion. The immigrant Meluḫḫans in Mesopotamia made considerable adaptations to their cultural and religious affiliations simply to survive and integrate into the socio-economic life of the city-states in which they were allowed to settle. Having examined the available evidence Vidale believes that by 2000 BC the Meluḫḫans had completely integrated into the social and economic structures of their adopted urban polities. "The acculturation process involved collaboration with local religious institutions, worship of foreign divinities, production of ornaments with foreign religious symbols…" If Abraham and Sarah observed these dynamics in their native Mesopotamia, they would have expected to encounter similar pressures if they (and their immediate descendants) chose to seek civic inclusion in any of the Canaanite city-states and Egyptian settlements while awaiting the promised territorial nationhood of their own.

Thirdly, the fact that so many of the world's contemporary civilizations were unknown to the biblical writers does not diminish God's promise to Abraham and Sarah. Richard Bauckham states that while the "natural referent" for the global extension of God's promise is the 'Table of Nations' descended from Noah, "Genesis 10's omission not only of India but also of Persians, so important for the latest part of the Old Testament

story, shows that it is a historically particular view of the extent of the world, even though its particularity corresponds to that of most of the Old Testament."[52] He then goes on to show how the seventy named nations of Genesis 10 constitute a "representative geography" symbolic of all nations on earth.[53] Israel's geographic knowledge would expand eastward over time, and as Bauckham states, "Most dramatically, the narrative of the book of Esther takes place in the Persian imperial capital, Susa, located in Elam on the far eastern limit of the world of Genesis 10." And, of course, "Esther is the only biblical book to refer to India or anywhere so far to the east."[54]

In subsequent articles, I hope to investigate reliable sources for evidence of South Asian contact, typically in the form of commodities or ideas, during later periods of Israel's history as attested in the Bible.

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[52] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 56-57.

[53] Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 58-81.

[54] Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 57.

NEGOTIATION AND COACHING:
A SRI LANKAN CASE STUDY

Mano Emmanuel

Abstract: This article develops a case study in a fictional Christian organization to show how certain negotiation techniques can assist Christians facing inter-personal conflict in a Sri Lankan context. The article analyses the case study to identify certain cultural ways of reacting to conflict which are unhelpful. It then proceeds to suggest certain negotiation techniques which might best suit an honour-shame oriented culture such as we have in Sri Lanka. These techniques include empathetic listening, identifying emotions, offering a bridge and protecting identity. This article suggests that all these could facilitate reconciliation and preserve relationships in this context. Learning such techniques would make reconciliation easier, and could produce a more healthy organizational culture in the workplace.

Key words: honour-shame oriented culture, empathetic listening, reconciliation, negotiation, Christian organizational culture.

Introduction

Many fine Christian organizations consist of teams which simply cannot reach the goals they set with such faith and hope. Sometimes the failure is due to a lack of skill or direction but often it is because of internal conflicts, big and small. Many Christians assume that because they share the same faith, they will all have the same values, styles of working and methods of communication. They are thus often surprised when conflict

arises and are unprepared for resolving it. Every culture will have its own particular characteristics which provoke conflict and affect the way people generally deal with conflict. Add to that peoples' different gifts, roles, perceptions of reality and, of course, their fallenness, and we have the recipe for numerous destructive conflicts. However, it does not have to be so. Given some understanding of conflict and a determination to put in the time and effort to manage it well, we can produce stronger relationships and more effective teams. We can analyse the situation facing us and employ some of the techniques and tools that conflict resolution and negotiation theorists have proposed for establishing a good working relationship. And then the Bible has its own teachings to equip any believer to deal with conflict in a God honouring way, preserving relationships and protecting their own Christian witness.

This paper takes one hypothetical case within a Christian organization and looks for a way forward for the main protagonists. It proposes tools for conflict resolution that are particularly appropriate for the Sri Lankan honour-shame oriented culture. It seeks to offer hope for those who may be faced with similar situations, who are looking for some assistance with negotiating their way through the minefield of conflict.

Case Study
A Christian organization is working in relief and development. Gifted managers head up the different projects. The organization has recently suffered the loss of a major donor. The Directors decide that the organization must be leaner and more strategic in its mission. Board meetings also reveal that systems have been rather lax with some managers receiving resources without applying properly and not handing in accounts and budgets on time.

The Directors including the CEO and Finance Officer call a meeting of the entire staff of a hundred employees, to explain the new regulations. The CEO, Shanaka, explains the financial

situation the organization was in and the results of the board deliberations. The Finance Officer introduces new systems for applying for funds, budgeting and reporting. Certain projects which offered free services to some poorer communities were being amended to include a nominal charge. It was explained that this would help people value what they were receiving and not waste resources given to them.

Several project managers were deeply upset by this. Arun stood up to say "This is outrageous. Those families depend on us. Would we do the same thing if our friends or families were involved? It is all right for you people to sit in your air-conditioned offices and make these decisions. We are the ones who care about the people. You should get busy raising funds, not taking the easy way out."

Arun is one of those who rarely hands in his paperwork on time but he is very effective at his job and well- liked by the communities he serves.

The CEO who is chairing the meeting says that this is an unfair statement since the finance team has been working hard for months trying to find ways to bridge the deficit. He also raises the issue of the importance of budgeting and being accountable.

Arun says "All you people care about is money and paperwork. This is God's work and I am working for him, not you." He threatens to leave if his work is not appreciated. Arun's team all begin to tell him to stay and many comments are made about the great successes he has had.

Dinuk, a more recent recruit says this is a time to pull together, not fight. He says accountability is important. Jothy, a close friend of Arun's stands up and says "People are talking about this organization and saying how little impact we are making these days. It was not like this when we managers had more power to make decisions and act on them quickly. Now

everything is covered in red tape." He goes on to ask Dinuk why he has been so slow to construct the wells he was in charge of. "Some people are jealous of those who manage to get things done" he says as he sits down. Dinuk does not answer.

The CEO calls the meeting to order and says that the Directors will take the discussion into account and get back to the managers.

After the meeting, Arun is heard saying loudly that he could easily raise the funds for his own project and that his team would not be told what to do. Many who said nothing in the meeting rally around Arun telling him that they were glad he spoke up. He and Jothy invite a large group of people to a barbeque at Arun's house. Another group who have been silent gather around Dinuk and commiserate with him. They say something should be done about Arun whose behaviour does not reflect well on the organization.

What should the CEO do next?

Understanding the context

The hypothetical case above is unfortunately played out with modifications in many churches and Christian organizations in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan society being a honour-shame oriented culture, displays certain characteristics which affect conflict and its resolution. For one, it is hierarchical. Thus, a public challenge issued to the CEO would generally be considered a grave insult. It would be quite in order for Arun to be reprimanded, fired, or effectively side-lined by having someone promoted over him or by losing certain benefits or privileges. Honour-shame oriented people are also relational and thus an organizational culture meant to be professional seems impersonal and even unspiritual. A memo requesting a budget might thus be ignored by Arun who feels he is doing a good job and that this cannot possibly refer to him, causing frustration and delay for the Accounts Department.

Ken Sande provides a model entitled "The Slippery Slope" (see diagram below) which identifies different responses to conflict, with "attack" responses on one side and "escape" responses at the other extreme.[1] In between these extremes lie more helpful responses such as negotiation and discussion, which Sande describes as "peace-making responses." Sri Lankans tend to react to conflict at both ends of the slippery slope (attack, or escape) rather than the middle and we see both in this case. Those on the fringe of the conflict join factions and congratulate or commiserate but do not make use of the opportunity to mediate, challenge wrong attitudes or speak up in the meeting (except for Dinuk). When Dinuk does speak up, he is verbally attacked by Jothy. Neither the Chair, nor any of the leaders, tries to maintain order by checking Jothy. In a honour-shame oriented culture, harmony is important. This harmony, which gives the appearance of peace, can be achieved in two ways-by backing down, but also by silencing dissent. Here we see Arun attacks and in contrast the CEO and Dinuk back down.

Figure 1: 'The Slippery Slope' © Ken Sande and Relational Wisdom 360. Used by permission

Shanaka can react in one of two ways to maintain harmony and retain the respect of the employees. He can fire Arun or act as if nothing has happened. From a Christian perspective, firing Arun

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[1] Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 22ff.

should not be the default option. Shanaka ought to consider the needs of the organization and Arun's own future. Arun's work has benefitted the organization and he feels strongly about its mission to the poor. Also, in spite of his failings, Arun is a brother in Christ to whom grace should be extended and an effort made to help him become the man he could be. In pragmatic terms, Shanaka should seek a relationship in which the organization gets the benefit of Arun's talents, and where Shanaka can relate to Arun without always having to feel negative emotions about their differences. Fisher and Brown call that a "robust" relationship which can weather differences of opinion and leave both men feeling at peace.[2] But Arun's behaviour cannot be ignored. He needs to be helped. In this painstaking and time consuming endeavour, God will be honoured. Arun's contribution to the organization will not be diminished but refined as he grows to greater Christian maturity. If Shanaka does not act wisely, Arun will remain but the organization will always be divided.

Shanaka needs to guard himself from allowing a very natural desire to be respected and followed becoming the idol of his heart. Sande explains how an unmet desire, even a legitimate one, such as a desire for respect, can become an idol. We know a desire has become an idol when it controls our thoughts and actions.[3] The desire (I would like) becomes a demand (I must have) that has to be met.[4] Once an idol gains control, there is nothing we will not do to please it. We judge the people who have thwarted our desire, we devise ways to punish them.[5] How will Shanaka deal with his desire for respect? He can try to buy Arun's co-operation by capitulating, and be a people pleaser. This "giving in," as William Ury calls it, could gain him a reputation for

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[2] Roger Fisher and Scott Brown, *Getting Together: Building Relationships as We Negotiate* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 9.
[3] Sande, 102-104.
[4] Sande, 103.
[5] Sande, 108-109.

weakness and make Arun push even harder to get his way.[6] Or he can demand respect by making an example out of Arun so no one else crosses him. This would be "striking back" which rarely accomplishes what one really wants to achieve. It will also most likely damage the relationship even further.[7] As the leader, Shanaka has the opportunity to demonstrate to the organization that conflict is to be expected, not to be feared and is an opportunity to glorify God and serve others.[8] He has the opportunity to 'set the tone" rather than settle for "reactive reciprocity" which would make him sink to Arun's level.[9]

Go to the balcony – Taking time to reflect

With all this in mind, Shanaka's decision to take a break is a good one. Ury calls this 'going to the balcony,' a metaphor for taking some time to achieve a more objective view of the situation.[10] Rather than reacting to Arun as if to a personal attack, Shanaka can first decide what he wants to achieve with Arun. During this time, he will benefit from re-thinking Arun's role in the conflict. Are there assumptions he is making about Arun that might be mistaken? Is he seeing Arun as the enemy, or a threat rather than a potential co-worker? Could the organization have contributed to Arun's frustration by excessive bureaucracy? Were communications to the managers ambiguous or open to misunderstanding? Were leaders unavailable to hear what the Managers felt? What Shanaka is doing here is role-reversal.[11] He could also ask someone he trusts, perhaps another Board member or Dinuk, to share their insights into the problem. He

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[6] William Ury, *Getting Past No* (London: Century Business, 1992), 12.

[7] Ury, 12.

[8] Sande, 31-36.

[9] Fisher and Brown, 35.

[10] Ury, 17ff.

[11] Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen, *Difficult Conversations* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 76.

should then encourage them to be honest with him and not feel they must agree with everything he says.

Having listened carefully to Arun, Shanaka can try to imagine what Arun is thinking and feeling. Arun may be feeling that his work has not been appreciated. He might also feel that as a senior employee, and a Manager, that he should have been consulted before the decisions were made by the board. Maybe he feels he had something of value to contribute and was not allowed to do so.

Although Shanaka is probably hurt and angry and feels like the innocent victim, it will be helpful for him to spend some time examining his own heart and actions before God. In Sri Lankan culture, leadership and its attendant power is something to be used for one's own advantage. Jesus warns his disciples that it should not be so among them (Mt 20:25-26). The Bible also warns against pride, with the admonition that God opposes those who are proud (Jas 4:6, 1 Pet 5:5). In humility Shanaka needs to take the log out of his own eye before he addresses Arun's shortcomings (Mt 7:3-5). If we do as Stone et al. suggest,[12] and assess 'contribution' instead of 'blame', then Shanaka too has contributed to this situation. There are improvements he can make in his leadership. For instance, he has tried to avoid conflict by allowing small problems to go unchecked. He has also failed to communicate with his people adequately. In taking big decisions about the future of the organization, he has not considered how the Board's decisions might be interpreted by employees who see their work as a vocation and God's calling. Even now, fear of what people think could rule his decisions.

Having examined his own heart, Shanaka can then move to try and analyse Arun's heart. Arun is more relational than task oriented. He is late with paperwork but is popular because he shows his concern for people enjoys offering hospitality (as in the

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[12] Stone et al., 59-64.

barbeque) and has a strong following. Arun is proud of his achievements and possibly expects to be honoured by his boss. Instead Arun may feel that Shanaka has let him down by treating him like just another employee, not consulting him on major changes in the organization and implicitly criticizing his methods. His response to Shanaka's "disrespect" is to be rude to Shanaka, a tactic which employs the 'eye for an eye' principle.[13] Revenge restores the honour that has been taken away by Shanaka's indirect shaming. Arun's words are also divisive, wreaking havoc with organizational morale.

Arun's outburst shows that he has a problem controlling his emotions. Fisher and Brown warn against allowing our emotions to govern us because that can cloud our judgment.[14] Even a positive emotion like loyalty can be destructive.[15] We see this in the way Jothy leaps to Arun's defence but sows further discord.

It is possible that Arun is also envious of the position Shanaka holds. Envy is very common in Sri Lankan culture. Sri Lankan people, like other honour-shame oriented people, tend to be competitive because they perceive resources as limited. This leads to a "fixed pie" view in which the only scenario in conflict is a "win-lose" scenario.

Arun spiritualizes his reaction by saying "I am working for God, not you." Gifted believers sometimes find it hard to submit to leaders who they consider inexperienced, or in some way unworthy of the role. This unwillingness to submit to rules, deadlines, and so on is masked by appealing to a seemingly greater cause. There seems to be an element of pride to be dealt with.

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[13] Fisher and Brown, 33.
[14] Fisher and Brown, 44.
[15] Fisher and Brown, 45.

Arun's style of conflict management is attack. He accuses Shanaka of not caring for people; of enjoying an easy life while others work hard, and by saying he can raise his own funds implies that the organization has been ineffective or negligent in fund-raising. He is launching an attack on Shanaka both by levelling accusations against him and by threatening to leave.[16] Shanaka needs to prayerfully plan his next meeting with Arun and use the most effective negotiation tools he can identify.

What tools would best help Shanaka work through his differences with Arun?

Identifying tools for negotiation
Negotiation theorists have developed an array of tools that might help Shanaka have a successful conversation with Arun. Three that I've found especially helpful are empathetic listening, learning to handle emotions and protecting identity. These answer some of the needs of honour-shame oriented people, as I will explain below.

Empathetic listening:
Having thought through what lies beneath the surface in the exchange that has occurred, Shanaka would do well to practice empathetic listening to see if what he thinks is actually so. Empathetic listening is listening with the intention of understanding the other, trying to identify with their interests and needs. Fisher and Brown give us some important practical tools for listening, an art that we rarely give time to.[17] These include asking clarifying questions, acknowledging what is said, maintaining frequent eye contact, taking notes, choosing a suitable environment and affirming Arun where he can. A person who is heard and understood feels respected and also a sense of worth. But empathetic listening is about more than technique. It

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[16] Ury, 23.
[17] Fisher and Brown, 96-97.

is about genuinely wanting to hear, or as Stone et al. say, "authenticity."[18] It involves curiosity and an openness to learn.[19]

Since honour-shame oriented people are often indirect communicators, this tool is particularly apt. Indirect communicators often assign motives and meanings to speech and actions which are subjective. For example, they say "He said such and such but I know he meant …." Arun may be wrong but as Ury says, "Ultimately, however, conflict lies not in objective reality, but in peoples' heads." He goes on to say, "Whatever you say, you should expect the other side will almost always hear something different."[20] And, as Stone et al state, in every conversation there is what is heard and there is what lies beneath the words: feelings, thoughts, and intentions.[21] Intentions are difficult to fathom. We often assume we know another person's intentions but we usually do not.[22] People are complex and act with mixed intentions. In fact, they may even act with good intentions and still hurt us.[23] Arun is assuming things about Shanaka which are not necessarily true. This is what Fisher and Brown call "partisan perception."[24] So, it is quite likely that Shanaka too has made some incorrect assumptions. An added benefit to listening to Arun is that it will give Arun a greater reason to listen to Shanaka.

Learn to handle emotions

Shanaka has also identified that Arun does not handle his feelings well. The ability to balance reason with emotion is one characteristic of a healthy working relationship.[25] Because of the

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[18] Stone et al., 168.

[19] Fisher and Brown, 65ff.

[20] Ury, 33.

[21] Stone et al, 4-6.

[22] Stone et al., 46.

[23] Stone et al., 11.

[24] Fisher and Brown, 33ff.

[25] Fisher and Brown, 9-10.

avoidance style of conflict resolution common in Sri Lankan culture, most people are not trained to engage one another in conflict. This leads to people speaking without too much thought of the effect their words might have on others. Exaggerated accusations ("All you care about is money"), vague generalizations ("people are talking about…"), threats ("I will leave") all demonstrate that feelings are erupting without thought. In general, Sri Lankans are not very introspective. They rarely analyse their feelings and do not easily share feelings, preferring actions to speak for them. This is especially so with men. So, learning to recognize one's emotions and handle them appropriately will be another important tool in the next meeting. Sande offers a simple acrostic, READ, to help people remember ways to deal with emotions: Recognize your emotions; Evaluate their source; Anticipate the consequences of following them; and Direct them on a constructive course.[26] This is something Shanaka can apply to himself as well as share with Arun.

Protecting identity

Stone et al point out that in every difficult conversation, there is an issue of identity.[27] How does what the other person say affect who you are? In Sri Lankan culture, any criticism of a way person does things is taken as an attack on a person's identity. Both Arun and Shanaka will feel that their identity is being threatened. Arun might feel that the decisions that have been made translate into "you are no good as a Manager". The request for invoices and budgets translates into "we cannot trust you". His relational style of working is being questioned. Shanaka can hear Arun's response as an attack on his identity as a leader, but also as a person. "You do not care for the poor" is the same as "You are a hypocrite." Although in many ways Asian people can handle ambiguity and paradox well, in conflict there are usually no grey areas. One is either for or against us; either good or bad. The way we react to

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[26] "RW Acrostics in Action," accessed 15 November 2016, http://rw360.org/rw-acrostics.

[27] Stone et al., 109-128.

an attack on our identity can also be what Stone et al call the "all-or-nothing syndrome." We either deny everything being said or take it on board lock, stock and barrel.[28] In this conflict, both parties need to know and be secure in their core identity. That will include accepting that everyone makes mistakes, that we are complex and never "always" good, bad, lazy, proud etc. Shanaka will need to remember the fragility of Arun's view of himself as he resolves this conflict. The Bible deals with the various ways we choose to bolster our identity- money, status, gender, race, and relativizes them all in the face of the deepest identity we have in Christ (Gal 3:28; Phil 3:8).

Applying the tools

Empathetic listening
After Shanaka has clarified in his mind what happened and what he wants to achieve, he should call a meeting with Arun. The objective should be to get Arun alongside Shanaka, looking at the problem the organization faces together, rather than seeing one another as the problem. Shanaka can start by appreciating all that Arun has done, perhaps sharing the positive comments clients have shared about his performance in the field. He can then move to ask Arun to explain the reasons for his unhappiness and practice empathetic listening. As Ury says, you do not have to agree to understand.[29] Shanaka's body language must show he is listening intently. Where possible, Shanaka should agree with Arun's statements. He can show through verbal prompts that he is genuinely interested and wanting to understand. Open-ended questions like "why do think that?", "can you give me an example?" help to clarify. Shanaka can ask Arun to explain what he loves about his job, and what his dreams are for the ministry. This will help identify Arun's interests. A person's interests, in terms of negotiation, are those concerns, needs fears or desires

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[28] Stone et al., 114.
[29] Ury, 25.

that lie behind the position they take up.[30] If we look behind what Arun says he wants, for instance, we will discover what his interests are, what it is he wants to see happen. It is quite likely they will find that they have some common interests, for example, transforming lives through their ministry, making a lasting impact on poor communities and building a reputation for trustworthiness. During the conversation with Arun, Shanaka should be as positive as he can be. For example, he could use phrases like "When you say …. you have a point."[31] There will be time later to point out where Shanaka's viewpoint differs, or where there are weaknesses in Arun's argument.[32]

A difficult aspect of listening is hearing criticism levelled at us. If Shanaka really wants to listen, he will also invite Arun to say how he perceives Shanaka, or the Board have contributed to this situation. This is unusual in a hierarchical society like Sri Lanka. But as a Christian leader modelling the attitude of servanthood and humility, Shanaka will need to listen and even accept responsibility if what Arun says is true. By doing this he also models to Arun how to do likewise. Shanaka can also share what his own dreams are for the organization and ask for Arun's help to help the organization move forward.

Learn to handle emotions

Since Shanaka cannot be sure how Arun will react, he should be prepared to make every effort not to lose control of his own emotions. Ury suggests that we benefit from knowing our 'hot buttons.'[33] Shanaka will need to identify what particularly arouses strong emotions in him so he can guard against reacting immoderately. This does not mean that emotions should be

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[30] Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating an Agreement without Giving In* (London: Random House Business Books, 1991), 42.
[31] Ury, 36.
[32] Ury, 35-36.
[33] Ury, 26.

eliminated from the negotiations or future conversations. Arun needs to be challenged to "disconnect the automatic link between emotion and action."[34]

As mentioned above, emotions are normal and part of what it means to be human. Unexpressed emotions can burst (or leak) into a conversation because they are uppermost in our mind. They can also prevent us from hearing what the other person is saying because they dominate our thoughts. Unexpressed emotions finally leave us feeling bad about ourselves because we did not have the courage to verbalize them (Stone et al 1999, 87-90). Ury states that emotions must be made explicit and reasons explained.[35]

Having said that, not all feelings are appropriate to nurture. For example, scripture warns us that while anger is not a sin, it can easily lead to sin (Eph 4:26). Jealousy and pride are condemned (1 Cor 3:3, Gal 6:4, Jas 4:6). Arun needs to 'negotiate with' his feelings.[36] That is, try and understand as far as possible, what their source is and what should be done with them. What assumptions, presuppositions and personal history makes him feel this way? This process helps Arun "walk around the sculpture of (his) feelings and observe it from different angles."[37] It will lead him to confront attitudes of the heart that need to change.

Shanaka can encourage Arun to try and unpack his emotions and name them. This corresponds to what Sande describes in his acrostic as 'Read your emotions.' Quite often one or two emotions might seem to surface but when analysed, they are more complex than at we thought.[38] Sande's advice secondly to evaluate their source will help Arun to look deeper to the

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[34] Ury, 28-9.
[35] Ury, 30-32.
[36] Stone et al., 100.
[37] Stone et al., 101.
[38] Stone et al., 94ff.

causes of these emotions. Here he might find that he is fearful of losing control over his projects, that he finds his security in being popular with his colleagues or those he serves among the poor. Some of these discoveries are not easy to accept and Arun may not want to admit to them, but it will give him something to work on.

Shanaka should go through the same process for himself. He might feel anger at Arun's behaviour but also frustration that he cannot get on with the job, inadequate because the funding has fallen, let down by his managers, lonely because he has no one to share his burden, envious of Arun's popularity and so on. From his actions and decisions at the meeting it seems that he is better at handling his emotions than Arun, but also that he might have a tendency to bottle up emotions and feel that they do not belong in the working environment.

Arun on the other hand, is quick to verbalize his feelings but makes judgments about Shanaka based on his own emotions. In his disappointment, frustration, hurt pride or guilt at not keeping to regulations, Arun judges Shanaka by saying things like "You should be raising more funds," "would you do this to your family" and so on. Shanaka can guess at some of his feelings.

Shanaka should explain to Arun why his behaviour is not appropriate in a meeting and what the repercussions can be in the organization. Sande's third guideline to anticipate the consequences of following his emotions could help Arun realize that he can pause to predict the impact of his words and actions on others. Stone et al suggest using "I" language to express how one is feeling. This keeps the conversation about a person's feelings which are real and personal. This way of expressing emotion is not judgmental, nor does it try to force a solution to the situation.[39] Using "I" language Shanaka can say "I feel hurt that you think I do not care for the poor" or "I feel that you do

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[39] Stone et al., 105.

not value what I do." Rather than "You hurt me" or "You're trying to destroy my credibility" or "Here's what you should do to keep from hurting me." Shanaka must also allow Arun to air his feelings, to let off steam without reacting to what he says.[40] Finally, Shanaka could discuss with Arun how he could direct these emotions in a more positive way.

Protecting identity

Affirming Arun's contribution to the organization affirms Arun. So, Shanaka could talk about how Arun is right that people depend on the organization, and ask how the organization could minimize the impact on the poor communities. By doing this Shanaka acknowledges Arun's gifts and his commitment to the poor. It also allows him to share with Arun the problem the whole organization faces.[41] This respect has a healing effect on Arun's perceived loss of face, or diminished identity. Shanaka could deflect Arun's attack by asking his advice. Shanaka could also choose to reframe Arun's attacks so that they become an attack on the problem. For example Shanaka might say, "We both want the organization to flourish, so what can we do to be more united?" Shanaka could ask if Arun needs more explanations about the financial situation. Once that is clear, he could ask Arun what fundraising ideas he might have that could help the organization to move forward and achieve its goals.

Shanaka can remind Arun that they both need to find their primary identity in Christ. Other identities will come and go. There will come a time when Shanaka will have to relinquish the role of CEO, and Arun will have to let go of his role. If we find our identity in our jobs and ministries, we are defensive, may stoop to unethical or unchristian methods of clinging to them, and suffer anxiety and depression if stripped of them. We will be competitive, driven to succeed and ready to alienate or even exploit others. Gordon MacDonald makes the comparison

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[40] Ury, 33.
[41] Ury, 67.

between called people and driven people.[42] Called people understand that they are only stewards of the ministry God calls them into. Shanaka can point Arun to the example of Jesus, who, being secure in his identity was willing to lay aside his glory; all that he was entitled to, in order to serve those who were his followers (Phil 2:1-11). This is demonstrated in his willingness to wash the feet of his disciples and most truly exemplified by the incarnation that led to the cross. If, as Arun says, he is working for God, he will desire to glorify God in his behaviour and attitude.

Reclaiming His Role as Leader
Shanaka could stop at this point but it would be best if he could spend some extra time to explain how this working relationship should play out with their different roles in the organization. In this step, Shanaka can model how a leader does not have to be defensive about his own weaknesses. Recognizing that as believers we have a responsibility towards our brothers' and sisters' spiritual growth, Shanaka can try to persuade Arun to see that there are changes he has to make in order to ensure this kind of conflict does not accompany Arun wherever he goes. Although potentially the hardest conversation to have, its purpose is to help Arun become more like the person God has called him to be. Shanaka will need to be sensitive to Arun's sense of honour-shame but be confident that God's Word and Spirit can carry out delicate surgery on a contrite heart, paradoxically leaving it more whole when sin is cut out.

Share responsibility
Shanaka could model what he wants to see in Arun by acknowledging his contribution to the problem early on so as to move the conversation from assigning blame to accepting each person's contribution.[43] For example, Shanaka has not (as far as we know) spoken to Arun about his tardiness in budgeting and

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[42] Gordon MacDonald, *Ordering Your Private World* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 57-72.

[43] Stone et al., 79-80.

paperwork previously. Ideally this should have come up at an appraisal or more informal meeting. Stone et al call it a "hard-to-spot" contribution to conflict.[44] Shanaka has also probably under-communicated with his managers to date.

Offer a bridge

In an honour-shame oriented culture like Sri Lanka, people in conflict, if backed into a corner will react badly. If they are asked "whose fault is this?" they will tend to lie or evade the question because it is leaving them no avenues to avoid shame. In this case, demanding a public apology from Arun will destroy any chance of restoration of relationship. Arun will be shamed publicly and will most probably leave, possibly taking others with him. He could be asked to organize the meeting which will give him opportunities to speak to various departments and show that he has changed his attitude. Shanaka could ask Arun to share ideas for fundraising at the next meeting of the organization. This will allow him to show his support for Shanaka without having to publicly apologize. Shanaka could also ask Arun to chair a meeting that explained the importance of budgeting and financial accountability. Ideally someone like Jothy or Dinuk ought to gently help Arun see that an apology is an honourable action which would help the organization as well as honour God. Shanaka might find himself invited to Arun's next barbeque, as a token of Arun's repentance!

Gently restore

At some point in the conversation, towards the end, if it has not been initiated by Arun, Shanaka will have to deal with the deeper issue that gave rise to Arun's verbal attack on him at the meeting. It is not unusual for Christian organizations to select their staff for their giftedness and overlook deep character issues. But if Shanaka cares about Arun as a brother in Christ, he needs to address Arun's heart (Gal 6:1). Arun needs to be challenged about his work ethic (keeping to organizational rules, cooperation,

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[44] Stone et al., 71.

loyalty), his lack of control over his words (accusations and threats), and his contribution to disharmony in the organization (Jothy's role, announcement of the barbeque, driving a wedge between managers and board). Shanaka will need to explain to Arun what he expects Arun to do differently and not assume that Arun knows. Shanaka can also explain to Arun that a legitimate desire, such as for respect, or for being allowed to share in decision making can become an idol of the heart. Once something becomes an idol, if it is withheld or thwarted, we then move in to judge and punish the one who has thwarted us. Arun judges Shanaka and then punishes him (Jas 4:1ff).

In terms of Arun's speech, Shanaka needs to explain firstly, that self control is a virtue expected of a Christian (Titus 2:2, 2 Pet 1:5-9). Emotions are normal but not all of them are healthy. They must be filtered through scripture and expressed appropriately. Secondly the Bible has a lot to say about choosing your words wisely, and using them to build others up, not tear down (Eph 4:29ff). Shanaka needs to show Arun that there is a better way to act, even when angry, hurt or frustrated (Eph 4:26). Arun, as a Christian should consider the interests of others, like Shanaka, as well as his own (Phil 2:3). If, as Arun says, he is working for God, then everything he does should glorify God (1 Cor 10:31, Col 3:17). In doing this Shanaka must guard his own heart so that his words are gentle, and the truth he expresses is clothed in love (Eph 4:15).

Conclusion
Churches and Christian organizations often make the mistake of assuming that crises can be dealt with as they arise. Honour-shame oriented people tend to be non-crisis oriented. Thus, they tend not to plan long term strategies. One of the most helpful initiatives leaders can take in order to cultivate a healthy organizational culture is to prepare their people to handle conflict well. As we have discussed, believers ought to protect and nurture relationships and cultivate a culture of peace, *shalom.* This does not happen by avoiding disagreements or covering over

sinful attitudes and actions. Neither does it happen by stifling disagreement. Instead, by speaking truth with genuine concern for one another, they can help one another grow in Christ-likeness. Three skills are particularly useful in this culture. Firstly, Christians should learn to communicate clearly to avoid misunderstanding and false assumptions. This involves being able to listen to one another with an authentic desire to hear another's story. This involves putting aside one's own preconceptions and prejudices and seeking to understand anther's point of view. Secondly, believers need to recognize that emotions always play a part in our interactions. This means they must neither supress those emotions nor let them erupt uncontrollably. Instead they must identify their trigger points, express their emotions in ways that do not destroy others and recognize that some emotions have deep roots that need dealing with. Thirdly, believers need to understand how one's job or ministry is not their core identity. A valid criticism can be taken on board without diminishing who they are. Mature believers should be encouraged to find security in who they are in Christ. This identity is not threatened by the success of another, nor is it diminished when we realise we have failed in something we attempted. A culture of peace can then emerge, fragrant with grace and truth, forgiveness and discipline, a space which will allow each person space to grow to maturity in Christ and contribute to a healthy ministry.

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER
THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION:
IS THERE ANYTHING LEFT TO DO?

EDWARD NAUMANN

Abstract: Too often in recent years has the commemoration of the Reformation become focused on reading history through social or political theories, or on interpreting history for the sake of supporting various modern-day social agendas, with disregard for the ardent desires and beliefs of the reformers themselves. Drawing inspiration from John 8, this paper invites the reader to a spiritual contemplation of the Reformation as but one episode in an ongoing theological conflict between those who profess the historic biblical faith and those who challenge it for the sake of conforming to changing climates of public opinion. After setting forth examples of such conflict from the Reformation era, this paper asks the question whether the spiritual heritage of the Reformation still endures today, or whether the search and defense of scriptural truth has been all but abandoned.

Keywords: Protestant Reformation, spiritual warfare, theological conflict.

Introduction
The causes and effects of the Reformation may be understood in a secular or spiritual manner. In this paper, I shall be drawing attention to the latter. For many Lutheran Churches worldwide, the Gospel reading for the Feast of the Reformation comes from

John 8:31ff, where Jesus says, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (ESV throught). In response, they answered, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" There is a clear contrast here between Jesus and his audience. The Lord talks about knowing the truth, while his interlocutors seem to know precious little of the truth, particularly about Israelite national history and their slavery to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and indeed their present-day subjugation to the Romans. Perhaps Jesus did not correct the man who said, "We have never been enslaved to anyone," because a moment of awkward silence was sufficient for the irony to set in, so that no verbal correction was necessary.

Out of kindness, Jesus overlooks the historical error, and focuses instead on addressing the spiritual problem at hand, the claim of being descendents of Abraham, which was also implicitly a spiritual claim, of being among the favoured, chosen people of God, who lived in a way that was pleasing to God, and who kept God's law, in contrast to the lawlessness of the Gentiles. Jesus' response makes clear that those who do the work of the devil are more accurately to be identified as children of the devil, regardless of their carnal lineage. As the argument unfolds, Jesus' interlocutors insist, "Abraham is our Father," and "We have one Father – even God" (Jn 8:39), to which Jesus' response is profound, and I can think of no better words with which we could occupy ourselves as we celebrate the Reformation:

> If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe

> me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. (Jn 8:42-47)

At the end of the conversation, they picked up stones to kill Jesus, quite effectively proving his point that the inclination to violence follows close upon the heels of the love of falsehood. But I chose to read this passage today, because the truth uttered by our Saviour is at the very centre of the topic of discussion on Reformation. Scholarly analysis of the origins, spread, and impact of the Reformation is too often a mere rehearsal of 'facts', with little consideration of the far more important spiritual concern, which Jesus demands that we address; for according to Jesus' words, there is an ongoing conflict between truth and falsehood, in which the sons of God are opposed to the sons of the devil. This perspective is a far cry from the popular narrative (often supported by ecclesial institutions), according to which we are supposed to believe that religious disagreement and conflict is both avoidable and unnecessary. Indeed, academic culture in general is inclined to reject the notion that truth can be known, and asserts instead that any perspective may be considered acceptable, as long as it is defensible. We are encouraged to believe that because there is some (but not all) truth in all religions, the formal and material principles of all religions are essentially compatible; and that every devout or religious path is a path towards God. The claim to the knowledge of absolute truth cannot be asserted, the only exception being the absolute truth that no one may claim to have absolute truth. Accordingly, Jesus is to be deemed a good teacher, but his teachings no better than (and not even necessarily opposed to) those of Buddha or Mohammed.

Jesus' words, however, offer an entirely different narrative of religious diversity. According to Jesus, those who propagate falsehood are sons of the devil, who is the 'father of

lies', and they follow him also in violence, who 'was a murderer from the beginning.' For Christians who follow Jesus' teaching, therefore, the violence of religious conflict that we observe worldwide is a confirmation of this truth: that those who follow falsehood—whether or not such falsehood comes under the umbrella of any 'religion', or theistic or atheistic 'philosophy'— also perpetrate violence. Such violence may be perpetrated against any people, but is especially directed against the Truth. It comes as no surprise that the age of the Reformation, in which the Truth was being sought after, obscured, or opposed from different quarters, was also an age of conflict, which resulted in war and bloodshed. Christ, the seed of the woman, is at enmity with the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15).[1] Although Christ has won the victory through his death and resurrection, still he allows the conflict to continue, until the day appointed by God the Father, for his return to judge the living and the dead. He allows the sons of God to teach and preach Truth, even through intense trials and persecutions, in patience drawing others to repentance and salvation.

Jesus' question still demands an answer, when he asks, "If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?" For if we are to accept Jesus' premise of the existence of absolute truth, then this premise may be extended to the application of Christian theology and biblical interpretation. If Scripture claims, for example, that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, then it is absolutely true to assert that Scripture makes this claim, and false to deny it; and the claim of Scripture is likewise is either true or false; it cannot be both. We may profitably consider the origins of the Reformation, therefore, not through the lens of philosophical, sociological or political theories, but in view of the struggle at an individual level, in the personal conscience, to find and believe the truth in opposition to the propagation of falsehood and

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[1] Note also how John the Baptist and Jesus describe the Pharisees as "a brood of vipers" (Mt 3:7; 12:34; 23:33) in reference to this enduring cosmic conflict.

violent oppression. When we have considered some examples from the Reformation Era, we may be in a better position to answer Jesus' question for our own context: "If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?" For these words contain another universal truth: wherever the truth is spoken, there it is not always believed.

The leading cause of rejection of the truth, in short, is sin. In the early sixteenth century, Johann Tetzel's sale of indulgences manifested an intentional corruption of Catholic doctrine, but Tetzel himself was by no means entirely to blame.[2] Pope Leo X and Albrecht von Brandenburg had agreed to split the proceeds from the sale of indulgences; Albrecht, out of worldly ambition, to repay a substantial debt that he had incurred in purchasing his bishopric; and the Pope, out of avarice, to pay for the construction and adornment of St. Peter's Basilica. Under these circumstances, no one could reasonably claim that the theological debate was entirely conducted on an even platform, by any honest and sincere defence of Catholic doctrine. Where sin rules in the minds and hearts of men who are enslaved to their own sin (in this case avarice and ambition), such men cannot hear the truth. It is as Jesus said, "Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God" (Jn 8:47).[3]

We may observe this blinding effect of sin today, as the same enslaving motives continue to instigate impressive efforts

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[2] The 'indulgences' were alleged to furnish forgiveness for the temporal punishment of the sins of the living and the dead, in exchange for money. Apparently Luther himself wrote to Tetzel, conceding that he was not entirely to blame. Luther's letter does not survive, but scholars suppose an extract to be genuine, as preserved in a contemporary writing by Jerome Emser, *Auf des Stieres zu Wittenberg wiettende Replica*.

[3] Similarly see Jn 18:37, 'Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.'

to obscure the voice of God and destroy the truth, by propaganda campaigns of false information and slander, by manipulation of the secular authorities, and by any other means necessary, just as in Luther's day. Those who sin willfully, against their conscience or with a seared conscience, are incapable of searching sincerely for truth; and indeed, unable to understand spiritual things at all, as St. Paul teaches, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14).

The obstacle of the sin of pride may also be observed during the Reformation era. Johann Eck may have been initially sincere in his desire to defend Catholic doctrine against what he perceived to be a dangerous heresy. After failing to gain a clear victory in debate against both Karlstad and Luther in Leipzig (in June and July of 1519), however, Eck's hurt pride and anger made him incapable of sincere search for the truth, as evidenced by his actions.[4] He travelled extensively to persuade universities and secular rulers to condemn and proscribe Luther's writings (though largely without success); he visited Pope Leo X in Rome, returning to Germany with the bull, 'Exsurge Domine,' which condemned a number of Luther's statements as heretical; he published prolifically against Luther, propagating many demonstrably false allegations; and by as early as 1523 had cooperated with the Papacy to establish a seat for Inquisition at Ingolstadt against Lutheran teaching. Finally he secured for himself the privilege of leading the contingency of pontifical theologians at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, at which time it was clear that he wanted Emperor Charles V to crush the evangelical cause by military

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[4] There are many books that include the details of this event, but the classic recommended entry-level book for reference is Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (NY: Abington-Cokesbury Press, 1950).

force, if necessary.[5] If only Eck had been willing to set aside his pride, history might have told a different story. Today we observe that pride is everywhere commended in many churches, where specific behaviours that were previously and universally condemned as sinful and shameful are being openly promoted and affirmed.

Andreas Karlstadt was initially no less opposed to Luther's teachings. Luther challenged him, however, to read more for himself, particularly regarding the Catholic Church's traditional opposition to all forms of Pelagianism, in the works of Saint Augustine of Hippo. Instead of pridefully doubling down on his position like Eck, Karlstadt took the path of humility, and by reading Augustine's writings closely, he came to change his opinion and defended Luther against Eck's accusations of heresy. Unfortunately, Karlstad's story does not end there. Caught up in the 'Spirit of the Reformation', during the time Luther was secluded in Wartburg Castle, Karlstadt implemented drastic and radical changes to the spiritual life of the congregation in Wittenberg, including the removal of images from the sanctuary in 1522, precipitating Luther's return and the reversal of many of the changes he had made. In the following year, Karlstad went to Orlamünde, where his teachings departed still further from traditional Catholic (that is, Lutheran) doctrine. Ironically—in light of the illumination he at first received from Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings—he came to reject infant baptism, he denied the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, and continued his campaign of iconoclasm, not only against art, but against music too.

The example of Karlstadt demonstrates the insufficiency of following an isolated personal quest for truth. Scripture indeed

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[5] A narrative of the events at the Diet of Augsburg is well documented in F. Arunte, *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* (St Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

should serve as the source and norm of doctrine and practice, but not as the private possession for the unique interpretation of any individual; it belongs to the whole Church. Karlstadt for his part may well have been conscious of the need for guidance and correction from others, and believed that he had fulfilled this obligation, when he found approval for his doctrines in other like-minded men, such as Ulrich Zwingli and Jean Calvin. The Church, however, consists not only of the living (or 'militant') Church, but also the 'sleeping' (or 'triumphant') Church—the company of saints who rest from their earthly labours, awaiting the day of resurrection—whose faith and confession should carry great weight with the living Church's self-identity. This is a principle to which modern day churches seem most reluctant to give their assent, and prefer to preside as judges over past theologians and *doctores ecclesiae*, instead of learning at their feet.

In the broader picture, Martin Luther and Karlstadt were quite closely aligned in their teachings, despite some significant differences. Luther, however, in the shadow of the Augustinian cloister, trod a path that was far more spiritual from the outset. The counsel that Luther received from his mentor Staupitz, together with the sincerity and intensity of the fear and love of God, which flow from every page of the writings of Saint Augustine, left a lasting impression on the young Luther, which would inform his theological predilections for the rest of his life. The sincerity and purity of Luther's faith was also manifestly tested and proven in the crucible of his opposition. Ironically, the more he was threatened and bullied by those who opposed his teaching, the more evident it was to onlookers that he was prepared to sacrifice everything, even life itself, to defend and teach the truth, and the more his steadfast confession of faith inspired others to imitate his example. Much more could be said about Luther, but let us consider instead those who followed him in subscribing to the biblical teaching that he unearthed.

At the very heart of the Lutheran Reformation—and far more important than Luther or his 95 Theses—is the Augsburg Confession, presented not by Luther, but by the noblemen and rulers who had been convinced from Scripture that his teaching was worthy of defence at all costs. Indeed, it was not Luther who wrote the Augsurg Confession, but Philipp Melanchthon, who had been likewise convinced of the truth of Luther's evangelical teaching. The Augsburg Confession, as the chief confession of the Lutheran Reformation, serves well to dispel the common misconception that Luther and his supporters wanted to separate themselves from the Catholic Church to establish their own protestant denomination. The Preface states the intent of the confession: 'so that we can live in unity and concord in the one Christian Church.'[6] Such desire for unity and peace is a good thing—as long as this good desire does not obstruct the search for Truth—and it accords with Jesus' description of his own desire for peace among his disciples and his church.[7] Indeed, Scripture commends peace and unity in many places, and condemns gratuitous argumentation and division among brothers. Yet Jesus also knew that his teaching would cause great division, separating those who believe in him from all others.[8] We may approve and commend the noble desire for peace, therefore, even while condemning any forced or feigned false peace, which would come at the expense of sincerity and truth.

Philipp Melanchthon was an outspoken proponent of the Lutheran Reformation, who adhered to the evangelical Lutheran doctrine steadfastly for many years, without compromise. During the Adiaphoristic controversy, however, after the defeat of the Smalcald League in 1547, Melanchthon—now serving as the

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[6] Augsburg Confession, Preface. The Preface likewise shows that this desire for unity was also rooted in the need for political and military unity, against the threat of Turkish invasion.

[7] See Jesus' 'high-priestly prayer' in Jn 17.

[8] See Mt 10:34-39, and the eschatological discourses.

leader of the Lutheran Reformation in Augsburg—granted certain practical concessions to the Romanist overlords, which caused division among Lutherans, some of whom perceived his concessions as a failure to uphold the evangelical doctrine, for the sake of political peace and unity.[9] Furthermore his subtle modifications to the Augsburg Confession itself, especially regarding the doctrine on the Lord's Supper, offered concessions to more radical reformed groups, which were based not on true unity, but on an ambiguity of language that could be interpreted in different ways by people who believed differently. Certainly Melanchthon was under immense pressure to make the concessions he did; and the same can be said for today. We would be blind not to see that similar pressures abound, to sacrifice the truth upon the altar of political or ecumenical unity.

These examples from the Reformation serve as a sobering reminder of how the search for Truth can be hampered by sin, pride, human weakness, or even misguided good intentions. Positively, however, the origins or roots of the Reformation are best understood in the same spiritual terms, as grounded in the fertile soil of individual desiring, searching, and discovery of the Truth. Modern historians face the dilemma of whether they will recognize or even attempt to identify the spiritual realities underlying the drastic political and social changes and conflicts of the Reformation era and the centuries that followed. While many choose to remember the Reformation in secular terms, Jesus requires us to see it as but a middle episode in the ongoing spiritual struggle between Truth and falsehood; between the city of God and the city of the devil. What was the Reformation? It was but one season of a war that has been raging from the very first days of creation until now; between the body of Christ, and the rulers, authorities, cosmic

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[9] See Arunte, *Historical Introductions*. A well documented narrative of the 'gnesio-Lutheran' opposition to the 'Phillipists' is provided in Oliver K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of the Luther's Reform* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran Press, 2011).

powers over this present darkness, and spiritual forces of evil (cf. Eph 6:12). Christians today who adopt this biblical perspective will be in a better position to question the status quo, as Luther did, and not to accept from others, but to determine for themselves whether they have the Truth, or a portion of it, and if they have heard it, to ask whether they have also believed it, and why.

From this spiritual perspective, what influence of the Reformation can we observe today? Demographics and statistics could be used to show an enduring triumph of the Reformation. The established Lutheran churches in Germany, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Finland, together with the established Church of England and Church of Scotland, together with their offshoots, including Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, Evangelical and Free Churches, together with the fruits of their overseas missionary activities, have resulted in a worldwide Christian population that exceeds the worldwide membership of the Roman Catholic denomination. Such 'facts', however, fail to take in the spiritual landscape, or assess the survival of the centrally disputed doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ.

In Sweden, for example, where we might boast that about 70% of the population maintains their membership of the Lutheran church. Upon closer inspection, it is clear that Christianity is actually in precipitous decline.[10] The vast majority of couples live together before marriage; most have their first child before they get married, then only a third of marriages are performed in the Church; only 29% of the population would even describe themselves as religious, and only 8% attend church on any regular basis. Perhaps this 8% might be of some comfort, but we must also question how many, of those who go to Church,

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[10] The following statistics are garnered from the official website of Sweden, sweden.se.

would believe the truth even if they heard it. When in 2009 the Church and State jointly approved and legalized gay marriage, half of the bishops wrote a letter of objection, but this would seem to indicate that the other half acquiesced and agreed with the agenda set forth. We might well ask, 'Are there any Bible-believing pastors left in Sweden at all?' Certainly there must be a few, but in recent years, pastors who practiced traditional, confessional Lutheranism have found themselves defrocked, while at the same time, such candidates have been refused ordination for holding to confessional beliefs.[11]

The story of the collapse and almost complete apostasy of the Lutheran Church of Sweden is not unique. A similar narrative exists for the other great Lutheran churches of Europe—including the State church of Germany—where confessional groups have been forced to establish independent church bodies in order to maintain their allegiance to the spiritual principles of the Reformation.[12] In the mainline churches that once dominated Europe and defined most of Christendom, Bible-believing, conscientious believers today are made to feel unwelcome, and are marginalized, due to the unacceptability of their biblical faith.

The European ecclesial superpowers, despite their spectacular collective opposition to God's Word, are still determined to dominate the global Christian narrative, as if their historic role as the parents of worldwide Christianity (together

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[11] Failure to accept the practice of women's ordination in particular results in exclusion from consideration for ordination in Sweden. Pastors Arne Olsson, Lars Artman and Göran Beijer were defrocked for their traditionalism. The Rt. Rev. Väisänen of Finland was likewise defrocked for Confessionalism.

[12] Noteworthy is the recent establishment of the Swedish Missionsprovinsen, the Finnish Suomen evankelisluterilainen lähetyshiippakunta. For reasons of confessional subscription to the authority of Scripture, other independent Lutheran churches were established much earlier.

with their economic weight) entitles them to status of perpetual privilege, and they expect the world to follow them. Ironically, despite the guilt that they heap upon themselves for their complicity in the acts of imperial tyranny of former years, today they continue to try to dictate the agenda in 'developing' nations such as Sri Lanka.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), is a good example of ongoing European dictatorship. Earlier this year a representative of LWF from Norway spoke at a Reformation conference at the University of Kelaniya, at which I was also privileged to speak.[13] Professor Patrick Ratnayake gave a memorable introduction, with the hopeful assertion that there could be nothing more important for our discussion than the topic of religious conflict, after which the LWF representative went on to promote the most pressing item on the European agenda, namely, climate change.[14] The intensity of the global pressure imposed by LWF is reflected in the most recent Report of the General Secretary, under the heading, 'The Commitment Toward Women's Ordination Is Not up for Negotiation', where Martin Junge dismisses conscientious and scripture-based opposition to the ordination of women, writing,

> Crusades, conquista, slavery, apartheid, and other practices
> of exclusion and oppression were also substantiated with
> such few biblical texts, which both brought unspeakable

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[13] The 2nd International Conference on Christian Studies, hosted by The Department of Western Classical Culture and Christian Culture and the National Council of Churches of Sri Lanka, at the University of Kelaniya, 2017. My own paper was entitled, "The Honest Lutheran Claim to the Catholic Tradition of *Sola Scriptura*."

[14] This was also the keynote speech, entitled, 'The Socio Political Background of the Reformation and its Relevance for Today', by Einar Tjelle, the Assistant General Secretary, Council of International Relations, Church of Norway.

suffering to millions of people and stood so much against everything that the Gospel of Christ is all about.[15]

In other words, the traditionalism that was at first permitted to coexist alongside progressivism, and was subsequently tolerated for a time, now needs to be stamped out. The General Secretary's words bear clearly coercive implications for many LWF member churches (particularly in Africa and Asia) that do not approve the practice and theological justification for women's ordination, yet rely on LWF funding for a variety of needs, from scholarships to humanitarian aid, particularly in poverty stricken areas: accept women's ordination, or be ejected from LWF.[16]

The social agenda of the Lutheran World Federation is reflected in other mainline churches, such as the Church of England, in which the Gospel of Jesus Christ—concerning the redemption of mankind through the forgiveness of sins—is in small part tolerated, but for the most part replaced with a social gospel—a mixture of liberation theology and community activism. The historical confessions may remain, but their enduring relevance is widely questioned or denied, and Christian doctrine is replaced with allegedly more relevant social concerns. Not surprisingly, in view of the fact that in Europe less than a quarter of those baptized still go to church, and of those only two thirds believe in God 'as described in the Bible', the voice of Scripture is being obscured and drowned out; those who are interested in confessing scriptural truth are marginalized, silenced, and ridiculed by the vocal majority—both clergy and laity—who do

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[15]https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2018/documents/council_2018_-_report_of_the_general_secretary.pdf Accessed July 3, 2018.

[16] Junge's mention of apartheid in particular implies ejection from LWF, as this action was taken against two white churches in South Africa, at the LWF Assembly held in Budapest, 1984.

not believe in many of the most fundamental tenets of the Christian faith.[17]

Whatever our views on the various social issues being debated today, we can all agree that unity of Christian doctrine does not have any high priority on the agenda of the mainline protestant churches. Churches and clergy are more likely to be reprimanded for their rejection of women's ordination or gay marriage than for expressing doubt or denial of the virgin birth or the resurrection, seemingly on the presumption that whether such teachings are true is of relatively little consequence.

What is left of the search for truth? What remains of the impact of the Reformation? Where is that faithful confession to be found, which stands firm in the face of opposition and persecution, and declares to the world, "Unless you can convince me from Scripture that I am wrong … here I stand, I can do no other"? In Sri Lanka we are faced with a dilemma: will we continue to bow to the wishes of the ecclesial dictatorships of Europe and North America, or will we prove ourselves capable of standing on our own two feet, and making own search for the truth? Are we able to declare, in all honesty and integrity, that we believe and practice what we have been convinced of by Scripture, assisted by sound reason, and with an informed consciousness of Christian history and heritage? Or will we be content simply to regurgitate the same stale, sceptical aphorisms of the faithless men and women who, for whatever sinful or misguided motives, have exchanged the apostolic kerygma for agnosticism and unbelief, yet whose positions of authority and influence still require us to conform without question or criticism to their rejection of truth?

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[17] Pew Research Centre, "Being Christian in Europe," a survey conducted in April-August 2017, of 24,599 randomly selected adults in 15 countries.

Jesus challenges us to ask ourselves some difficult questions when he says 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'. Will we reply that we never been slaves to anyone? Are we free now? Do we know the truth? Are we truly Jesus' disciples? Do we abide in his word? These questions we must ask with sincerity, not blinded by the sins of worldly ambition, or avarice, or the desire to please men, or the misguided desire for a feigned peace; but guided and illumined by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God.

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