

JOURNAL OF THE
COLOMBO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Volume XI

2015

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CTS Publishing
Colombo Theological Seminary
Sri Lanka

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First published by Colombo Theological Seminary
189 Dutugemunu Street, Kohuwela, Sri Lanka

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Printed in Sri Lanka.

ISSN 2386-186x

CONTENTS

Contributors	iv
Editorial	v
The Roots and Character of Jewish Apocalypticism <i>Ivor Poobalan</i>	7
The Baddegama Mission of the Church Missionary Society (1819 – 1872) <i>Napoleon Pathmanathan</i>	43
What Does the Bible Say about Disability? <i>Arulampalam Stephen</i>	55
Interfaith Marriage and Decline of Christianity in the Cluster of Churches in the Rambukkana area <i>G P V Somaratna</i>	61
The Educational Cycle <i>Vinodh Gunasekera</i>	91
A Guide to Articles in Volumes 1-9 of the JCTS	115

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EDITORIAL

Theology affects all of our activities, including our thoughts, ambitions, and the way we conduct our life. It is our belief that a Christian cannot rely on one's own efforts, skills, personal connections, or beliefs without an awareness of God. Theology is our attempt to understand who God is and what He continues to do in our midst. Our attention in this publication relates mainly to subjects applicable to Sri Lanka.

We have five short articles in this years' publication from five contributors. This year we included an article from a member of the faculty of the Theological College of Lanka in addition to the papers from the faculty of the Colombo Theological Seminary.

The papers cover a wide variety of subjects. Ivor Poobalan's 'the Roots and Character of Jewish Apocalypticism' deals with a subject relevant to New Testament studies. Napoleon Pathmanathan's paper entitled 'The Baddegama Mission of the Church Missionary Society (1819 – 1872)' offers an account of the history of the formative years of CMS work in Sri Lanka. Arulampalam Stephen's paper 'What Does the Bible Say about disability?' deals in short with a valuable theological subject relating to the biblical theology of disability. G P V Somaratna's 'Interfaith Marriage and Decline of Christianity in the Cluster of Churches in the Rambukkana area' is a musicological analysis of Christianity in a certain community in Sri Lanka. Vinodh Gunasekera's paper on 'The Educational Cycle' is an analysis of the subject taking examples from the context of Sri Lanka.

G P V Somaratna

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The CTS Journal (ISSN 0270-6474) is the official journal of the Colombo Theological Seminary, 189 Dutugemunu Street, Kohuwela, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka 10350. It is published one volume a year.

THE ROOTS AND CHARACTER OF JEWISH APOCALYPTICISM

IVOR POOBALAN

Apocalypses and Apocalypticism

‘Apocalyptic’ is easily one of the most slippery theological terms. On the one hand it is employed quite liberally in modern scholarly discourse,¹ but on the other, scholars have found little agreement on its nuances, historical background, and definition.² John

¹ R. Barry Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul*, JSNT Sup.127 (England: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 249 – 250, makes this point more forceful with a tongue-in-cheek comment at the end: “Indeed, bidding well to be considered this century’s most valuable bequest to biblical criticism is the interpretative concept of ‘apocalyptic’. Introductions, monographs, collections, colloquia, conference groups, articles galore, and casual references innumerable testify to the interpretative energies expended. (Rumours persist of ‘Apocalyptic: The Musical’.)”

² See Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 4 – 5: “Scholars have spilled a lot of ink trying to define the terms that head this chapter”; Leon Morris, *Apocalyptic* (USA: Eerdmans, 1972), 21: “While most are agreed that the term is valuable, because there is such a thing as apocalyptic, there is no consensus as to exactly what the term denotes. There is no agreed list of apocalyptic books and it is not easy to define what we mean by apocalyptic literature”; Matlock, *Unveiling*, 278: “Circularities and confusions multiply. In particular, the highly self preservative predilection for ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ and the near-ubiquitous confusion between the literature and such an abstraction have been

Collins speaks of, “a prejudice against the apocalyptic literature which is deeply ingrained in biblical scholarship,” and explains how such an attitude persisted from the nineteenth century and consequently rendered the study of apocalypticism to a state of gross neglect.³ In the interim, confusion with regard to the connotation of the word grew.⁴

The designation ‘apocalyptic’ originates from the Book of Revelation, which begins with the words, Ἀποκαλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός. The earlier Jewish writings within the ‘genre’ did not have such a self-designation. The noun a*pokaluyi” may mean “uncovering” or “revelation,” and it is the former connotation that became so apt as a broad categorization of this literary phenomenon, because a common characteristic of this literature, both Jewish and Christian, is the claim to “uncover” a secret or mystery that had been kept hidden, either

much in evidence. Suspicions of Christian origins and biblical-theological agendas have been raised. The myriad times ‘apocalyptic’ falls lightly from the lips of New Testament scholars provokes scant suspicion of the many facets of defining this favoured term. Attention to such has a way of making hopes of simple, uncontroversial, and transparent talk of ‘apocalyptic’ recedes into an apocalyptic mist.”

³ J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), 1 – 2: “The great authorities of the nineteenth century, Julius Wellhausen and Emille Schürer, slighted its value, considering it to be a product of “Late Judaism” which was greatly inferior to the prophets, and this attitude is still widespread today.”

⁴ Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 5: “Another issue in defining apocalypticism is that it has assumed many different forms and has played a variety of functions. It was once common to include all sorts of phenomena under the term “apocalyptic,” including literary genres, social movements, religious ideas, and eschatological expectations. Daniel and Revelation have always been influential in such definitions, but each scholar decided what other texts and phenomena to use. This produced imprecise usage. Eventually, many grew uncomfortable with the vagueness of it all and tried to sharpen the definitions.”

for an extremely long period of time, or from the 'ordinary' public.⁵

More recently it has been proposed that one has to abandon the use of 'apocalyptic' as a noun, and speak instead of "apocalypses" and "apocalypticism".⁶ Of these, the former refers to what – over the past two centuries – has come to be recognized as a *literary genre*; one which incorporates both ancient Jewish and Christian writings. The significance of this body of literature for biblical studies has primarily arisen from the fact that it corresponds so closely with whole books in the Bible (Daniel and Revelation) as it also does with other discrete biblical passages that share similar traits.⁷ Clarity on the matter received a great advance through the Society of Biblical Literature Genres Project in 1979, which published a definition of "apocalypse" after careful analysis of all the available texts classified as 'apocalyptic':

A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages

⁵ Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 20: "Literature bearing this name may thus be expected to be largely taken up with revealing what has been hidden."

⁶ So Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 4f; although 'apocalyptic' is also thought to generate a third distinctive category, "Apocalyptic Eschatology;" see, Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 2; James C. Vanderkam and W. Adler ed., *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 5: ". . . the word 'apocalyptic' actually comprehended three distinct, but overlapping, categories: apocalypse as a literary form, apocalyptic eschatology as a theological perspective, and apocalypticism as the ideology of a socio-religious movement."

⁷ Murphy recognizes such texts in the Hebrew Bible as "Proto-Apocalyptic biblical texts"; see, *Apocalypticism*, 27 – 66.

eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.⁸

The extant corpus of apocalyptic literature, dating to the period up to the end of the first century AD, is now quite extensive. Alongside Daniel, the oldest text is thought to be 1 Enoch (a composite work of five parts). In 1964 D. S. Russell identified seventeen Jewish apocalypses, and in addition recognized several (approximately twenty) apocalyptic texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁹ James Charlesworth lists approximately fourteen Jewish apocalyptic texts that may be dated no later than the first century AD.¹⁰ The most important Christian apocalypses during the comparable period are the *Book of Revelation* and *The Shepherd of Hermas*.¹¹

Walter Schmithals, however, critically evaluates the extant literature and concludes that only eight writings in the period under consideration may be counted as genuine Jewish apocalyptic works. These are: *Daniel*, *Sybilline Oracles*, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, *Slavonic Enoch*, *Assumption of Moses*, *4 Ezra*, *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, and *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*.¹² He asserts:

All in all hardly any explicitly apocalyptic literature can be cited other than what has already been listed. Other works

⁸ Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 4 – 5.

⁹ See Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 22 – 23.

¹⁰ These include: *Ethiopian Apocalypse of Enoch*, *Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch*, *Sybilline Oracles*, *Treatise of Shem*, *Apocryphon of Ezekiel*, *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, *Fourth Book of Ezra*, *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Apocalypse of Adam*, *Apocalypse of Elijah*, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Testament of Job*, *Testament of Moses*, *Testament of Solomon*; James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol. I (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1983), vi – vii.

¹¹ Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 22.

¹² See, Walter Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 188 – 212.

that have often been cited as apocalyptic literature may indeed have the form of a revelational writing or may show themselves to have been influenced by apocalyptic conceptions, but they do not give expression to a genuinely apocalyptic understanding of existence.¹³

As for the literature of the DSS, Schmithals argues that while one may detect “the influence of the apocalyptic thought-world, which of course was always virulent throughout Judaism, to make itself evident,” a careful reading of their literature may at best show that the Qumran community was not an ‘apocalyptic sect’ but one which “inclined toward apocalyptic conceptions”¹⁴:

Of course, one must immediately add that eschatology was not the main concern of the pious ones of Qumran and that in the Dead Sea documents the anticipation of salvation was thought of in terms both overtly nationalistic and intrahistorical. Even the messianic conceptions are not apocalyptic, and the expectation of the resurrection of the dead is at most intimated. The final judgment and the time of salvation are never described, and one cannot fail to recognize the motifs of an eschatology that pertains entirely to the present.¹⁵

¹³ Schmithals, *Apocalyptic*, 200.

¹⁴ Schmithals, *Apocalyptic*, 204 – 205.

¹⁵ Schmithals, *Apocalyptic*, 204; for more-recent discussion of the ‘apocalypticism’ of the DSS (perhaps less dismissive and even contra Schmithals) see, J.J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997); F. García Martínez, “Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Bernard J. McGinn ed. *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003). The latter writes: “. . . there can be no doubt that the Qumran community was an “apocalyptic” community. The writings that most probably can be considered a product of the Qumran community and which better represent its thought show clear indication that the authors believed that their own lives and the life of the community were part of the ongoing struggle between good and evil, that God had revealed to

'Apocalypticism,' on the other hand, refers to the "worldview contained in the apocalypses," which, though discernible as a distinctive ideology within the ancient world, is not however so easily apprehended. The difficulty may be seen by the contrasting opinions of Philipp Vielhauer and Klaus Koch on what may be asserted to be the "basic components" of an apocalyptic worldview.¹⁶ Vielhauer lists the following characteristics: 1) The doctrine of the two ages; 2) Pessimism and otherworldly hope; 3) Universalism and Individualism; 4) Determinism and the imminent expectation of the kingdom of God.¹⁷

Collins summarizes Koch's "eight clusters of motifs" as follows:

- (1) Urgent expectation of the end of earthly conditions in the immediate future;
- (2) the end as a cosmic catastrophe;
- (3) periodization and determinism;
- (4) activity of angels and demons;
- (5) new salvation, paradisaic in character;
- (6) manifestation of the kingdom of God;
- (7) a mediator with royal functions;
- (8) the catchword "glory".¹⁸

Beker prefers Koch's "more comprehensive picture" because "it is more precise and more critical," but by utilizing both proposals deduces just three ideas that are fundamental to apocalypticism: "(1) historical dualism; (2) universal cosmic expectation; and (3) the imminent end of the world."¹⁹

them the approaching end of the struggle, that they were preparing themselves for an active participation in the final climax, and even that they were already living somehow in the final phase" (p.89).

¹⁶ See J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 135 – 136.

¹⁷ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 135.

¹⁸ Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 12.

¹⁹ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 136.

Writing several years after both Vielhauer and Koch, Murphy helpfully provides the most comprehensive list of “Elements of an Apocalyptic Worldview”:²⁰

Elements of an Apocalyptic Worldview
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An unseen world affects or even determines this.• The unseen world is accessible only through revelation.• After death, humans are judged and rewarded or punished.• There is often a future world that entails a renewal of the present one or its replacement with a better one.• God’s sovereignty is at issue. Humans and/or angels have rebelled against God’s rule, but divine rule will soon be reasserted. Resistance to the coming of God’s rule is common. God sometimes accomplishes the reestablishment of divine rule alone, sometimes with angelic aid, and sometimes with human aid. God’ sovereignty is contrary to earth’s empires, especially those that oppress Israel or Christians.• Dualism pervades apocalypses – humanity is divided into the righteous and the unrighteous; time is divided into the present world and the one to come; cosmic powers are seen to be either for or against God.• There is dissatisfaction with the present world.• The coming of the eschaton is often accompanied by cosmic disturbances, as well as by social upheaval.• The coming of a messiah is not present in every apocalypse but is not uncommon.• The apocalyptic worldview is deterministic. At least on the macro level, things happen according to God’s plans, regardless of human action. Individuals and groups can affect their own fate by aligning with or against God.• The apocalyptic worldview has a developed angelology and demonology.• Apocalyptic language is used to communicate the apocalyptic worldview.

²⁰ Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 14 (for complete discussion see, pp. 8 – 13).

The Historical and Sociological Roots of Apocalypticism

Having established that apocalyptic writings were a peculiar form of literature that flourished within a Jewish milieu between 200 BC and AD 100, we are now constrained to ask how such a genre emerged; what were the particular historical and sociological roots of this novel phenomenon that would later become naturalized within Christianity?

First it is pertinent to point out that full-blown apocalypses did not emerge until two to three centuries into the post-exilic period. So while proto-apocalyptic elements are discernible throughout much of the Hebrew canon,²¹ the earliest apocalyptic works – such as *1 Enoch*²² – emerged during the Hellenistic period (332 BC onwards). What then were the sociological factors of this period that may have called forth this innovative literature?

The first scholar to attempt to locate apocalyptic within the stream of biblical studies was A. Hilgenfeld, who in his 1857 publication, “declared for the first time that apocalyptic was the point of intersection for the two parts of the Bible.”²³ What was

²¹ For a comprehensive survey of “proto-apocalyptic” biblical texts, see, Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 27 – 66.

²² Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) argues that *The Book of Watchers* in *1 Enoch* is the oldest apocalypse we have: “It seemed clear to me that there existed an ancient current of thought that was reflected in the first apocalypses. There was at least one work, certainly written before 200 BCE, the *Book of Watchers*, whose thought was clearly distinct from the rest of the Jewish literature of its time”(p.18); “Let us return to the *Book of the Watchers* which remains the only source before 200 BCE useful for understanding apocalyptic thought”(p.92); “For the *Book of the Watchers* I have proposed a date between the fifth century and Qoheleth. Between these two extremes I am inclined towards the earlier time”(p.93 n.17).

²³ Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (Illinois: Alec Allenson Inc, 1970), 36 (referring to A.Hilgenfeld, *Die jüdische Apokalypik in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 1857).

even more striking was the unique positioning Hilgenfeld wished to give to apocalyptic: “Only apocalyptic conveys the historical connection of Christianity with the prophetic predictions of the Old Testament.”²⁴

German scholarship following Hilgenfeld, though, did not look too kindly at the connection the latter wished to draw between the prophets and later Judaism, including apocalyptic. B. Duhm was representative:

The seed which prophecy sowed fell on no good ground. It bore a double fruit, possessing something of the nature and spirit of prophecy, but owing still more to the ground itself: the *Law* and the *eschatological hope*, the law growing out of the demands made by the prophets, eschatology out of their threats and promises. With the assistance of external history, these two turned their people into the strangest people in the world.²⁵

This dual tendency of post-exilic prophecy gave rise to two distinct and somewhat conflicting movements. Some scholars posited the emergence of the “champions of theocracy” movement (an anti-eschatological tendency supported by the priestly aristocracy, and which viewed the prophetic tradition as passé) versus the apocalyptic movement (those that held the prophetic tradition in high regard, but were also open to Iranian influence).²⁶

Apocalyptic in the Prophetic Tradition

The most explicit assertion of the origin of apocalyptic in the Hebrew prophets came in 1975 with the publication of Paul

²⁴ Koch, *Rediscovery*, 36.

²⁵ B. Duhm, *Israels Propheten*, 1922, 460, cited in Koch, *Rediscovery*, 37.

²⁶ See Koch, *Rediscovery*, 39 – 40.

Hanson's, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*,²⁷ which Richard Bauckham (2008) called, "the most important recent investigation of the origins of apocalyptic in Old Testament prophecy."²⁸ Hanson was reacting to the prevailing scholarly tendency to credit 'Persian thought' as the critical source of Jewish apocalyptic.²⁹ This consensus had been reached by a methodology of contrasting "pre-exilic prophecy" with "late apocalyptic" and arriving at features regarding eschatology, future-hope, and judgment, that "seemingly have nothing in common." Thereafter, since the "new" phenomenon (apocalyptic) needed explanation, influences outside of the Hebrew prophets had to be found:

The most common outside source to which the origins of apocalyptic are traced is Persian dualism, especially as it was mediated by later Hellenistic influences. The reason for this deduction is clear: Since apocalyptic is regarded as a new phenomenon rising in the third to second century B.C., one turns to look for a third-to-second century influence to account for its dualism, determinism, etc.³⁰

Hanson argues that contrary to this prevailing view, apocalyptic was a phenomenon that was firmly rooted in the prophetic traditions of the Hebrew Scriptures. He identifies "apocalyptic eschatology" as a golden strand that runs, "at the heart of many of the so-called apocalyptic works," and argues that this is by no means a sudden development; on the contrary, apocalyptic

²⁷ Paul Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

²⁸ Richard Bauckham, *The Jewish World Around the New Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 40.

²⁹ Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 29: "For much of the twentieth century Jewish apocalypticism was widely assumed to have been heavily influenced by Persian thought."

³⁰ Hanson, *Dawn*, 5 – 6; he argues further: "The apocalyptic literature of the second century and after is the result of a long development reaching back to pre-exilic times and beyond, and not the new baby of second-century foreign parents."

eschatology, “follows the pattern of unbroken development from pre-exilic and exilic prophecy. Outside influences (e.g., Persian dualism and Hellenism) upon this apocalyptic eschatology appear to be late, coming only after its essential character was fully developed.”³¹

The schema that Hanson presented proposed that the apocalyptic tradition developed through four historical stages (beginning from the early post-exilic period, i.e. late sixth and early fifth centuries): Proto-Apocalyptic, Early-Apocalyptic, Mid-Apocalyptic, and Late-Apocalyptic. He assigns biblical exemplars for each of the stages. Thus: Second Isaiah – because it points in the direction of apocalyptic – is termed “Proto Apocalyptic”; Third Isaiah, Zechariah 9 – 13, and Isaiah 24 – 27 is assigned to “Early Apocalyptic”; Zechariah 14 is “Mid Apocalyptic”; and Daniel is “Late Apocalyptic.” Since he placed Zechariah 14 in the mid-fifth century and Daniel in the mid-second century, Hanson was faced with a “chronological gulf,” but this posed no insuperable challenge to his thesis, because he “considers apocalyptic eschatology to have already developed in all essentials *before* this gulf.”³²

Despite the salutary corrective Hanson offered, there were still features of full-blown apocalyptic that could not simply be traced back to the Hebrew prophets. Most apocalyptic writings are pseudonymous (The Revelation of John is an exception), unlike the prophets. They engage in extensive surveys of history in the form of *vaticinia ex eventu* (prophecy after the fact), display a high interest in angels, assume a dualistic (temporal and spatial) worldview, and present distinct speculations on death, post-mortem rewards and punishments, and heaven and hell.³³

³¹ Hanson, *Dawn*, 7 – 8.

³² See Bauckham, *Jewish World*, 40.

³³ See Bauckham, *Jewish World*, 43 – 44; Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 23 – 25.

Nevertheless Bauckham nuances the link between the prophets and the apocalyptists by viewing the latter as “interpreters” of the former.³⁴ He avers that despite the many other features of apocalyptic, the interpretation of the Hebrew prophets, “was the dominant aspect of the major tradition of eschatological apocalypses. In this tradition the transcendent eschatology of post-exilic prophecy was taken up and further developed in a conscious process of reinterpreting the prophets for the apocalyptists’ own age.”³⁵

Apocalyptic in the Wisdom Tradition

The scholar, who outright rejected the theory of apocalyptic origins in the Hebrew prophets, was Gerhard Von Rad, following his 1960 *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, in which he began to look at the roots of apocalyptic. Noticing the compatibility of the apocalyptic literature to biblical *Wisdom* – in terms of the material they cover, the questions raised, and the argumentation – von Rad argued that the theory of prophetic origin is “completely out of the question.” For him apocalyptic is a derivative of *Wisdom* for the additional reason that the authors identify themselves as *sopherim*, “writers”, just as the scribes of ‘wisdom’ did. Another compelling similarity is their phenomenal interest in encyclopaedic knowledge.³⁶

Koch argues that while von Rad makes a major contribution to the discourse, yet his basic thesis suffers from the fact that the apocalyptists show, “a burning interest in eschatology”; a matter that did not so much as detain the wisdom writers.³⁷ Murphy elaborates:

Despite these similarities, apocalyptic and sapiential wisdom are very different. The former is based on revelation, while

³⁴ Bauckham, *Jewish World*, 54: “The apocalyptists understood themselves not as prophets but as inspired interpreters of prophecy.”

³⁵ Bauckham, *Jewish World*, 54.

³⁶ See Koch, *Rediscovery*, 42 – 44; Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 20.

³⁷ Koch, *Rediscovery*, 45.

the latter comes from human reason and is empirical. Their interests are often quite different as well, although this distinction is not absolute. While apocalypticism focuses on eschatology and cosmological knowledge, wisdom more frequently concerns itself with the everyday life of an ordinary person or of a member of the upper class.³⁸

The subject of ‘wisdom’ was developed in a different direction by the proposal that the roots of apocalyptic were to be found “not from proverbial wisdom but from *mantic* wisdom.” The latter refers to a tradition that was prevalent in the ancient Near East, whereby the ‘wise’ men claimed to divine the future through a variety of means, including, dream-interpretation, omens and stars. Bauckham suggests that although mantic wise men are not explicitly found in the Bible, the two prominent Bible characters who served in a foreign royal court – Joseph and Daniel – are both known for their success over their contemporaries, in Egypt and Babylon respectively, with regard to the “mantic arts”!³⁹ However Bauckham makes clear that with its “growing concern with eschatology” apocalyptic distinguishes itself from mere mantic wisdom:

Apocalyptic, like mantic wisdom, is the revelation of the secrets of the *future*, but in its concern with the *eschatological* future apocalyptic moves beyond the scope at least of *Babylonian* mantic wisdom.⁴⁰

Apocalyptic in the Earliest Apocalypses

With little argument we recognize two extant works that may be classified as the earliest apocalypses: Daniel and 1 Enoch.⁴¹

³⁸ Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 20.

³⁹ Bauckham, *Jewish World*, 44 – 45: “Daniel is the representative of the God of Israel among the magicians and astrologers of the Babylonian court, but he represents him *in the practice of mantic wisdom*” (45).

⁴⁰ Bauckham, *Jewish World*, 46.

⁴¹ Significant portions of their material is reasonably dated well before the Maccabean Revolt; see, Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and*

Collins makes the pertinent point that if we are to trace the origins of apocalypticism, we must give adequate attention to what the earliest complete apocalyptic works reveal:

Postexilic prophecy undoubtedly supplied some of the codes and raw materials utilized by the later apocalypses. However, if we wish to examine the matrix in which the configuration of the genre emerged, we must begin with the earliest actual apocalypses, rather than with their partial antecedents.⁴²

Although there is no certainty about the place of composition of either of these works, scholars have long recognized the “prominence of Babylonian lore” in major sections of composite 1 Enoch, and similarly the *sitz im Leben* of Daniel is also coincidentally, Babylonian. This raises the interesting possibility that apocalyptic may have gained some of its distinctive features from an original eastern-Diaspora setting, thus buttressing the arguments of earlier scholars that the phenomenon owes itself somewhat to Babylon and Persia.

We have already mentioned Babylonian “mantic wisdom” as a possible background. Another feature of apocalyptic is *vaticinia ex eventu*, whereby a legendary or ancient figure (the pseudonymous author) is attributed with having ‘prophesied’ an event that is part of the reader’s present experience (“prophecy after the fact”). This technique bears striking resemblance to the genre of Akkadian prophecies:

An Akkadian prophecy is a prose composition consisting in the main of a number of ‘predictions’ of past events. It then

Its History (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 92 and 93, n.17; Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 25 – 26; also Bauckham, *Jewish World*, 46, speaks of: “The probability of a developing Daniel tradition, which has its roots as far back as the exile in Jewish debate with and participation in mantic wisdom, developed in the Eastern diaspora, and finally produced Daniel apocalypses on Palestinian soil in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.”

⁴² Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 25.

concludes either with a 'prediction' of phenomena in the writer's day or with a genuine attempt to forecast future events. The author, in other words, uses *vaticinia ex eventu* to establish his credibility and then proceeds to his real purpose.⁴³

Another possible Babylonian contribution to the dramatic and visual apocalyptic manner of revelation is the "tradition of Akkadian dream visions" whereby a seer has a vision in the night and is transported by a chaperone to the netherworld (or the heavenlies) and is given an unprecedented revelation. This tradition has several echoes within the apocalyptic genre, especially where they emphasise on dreams and heavenly ascents.⁴⁴

Murphy argues that yet another element that the ancient Near East passed on to Jewish apocalyptic is the narrative of the *combat myth*: "It depicts a battle between the gods. At stake is the sovereignty of specific gods as well as the integrity of creation. The combat myth contains much that is central to apocalypticism."⁴⁵ He summarizes the basic plot as follows:

A force (often depicted as a monster) threatens cosmic and political order, instilling fear and confusion in the assembly of the gods; the assembly or its president, unable to find a commander among the older gods, turns to a younger god to battle the hostile force; he successfully defeats the monster, creates the world (including human beings) or

⁴³ Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 27, citing A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1975), 6; also see Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 17 – 18: "The main difference between ancient Near Eastern *vaticinia ex eventu* and apocalyptic reviews of history is that the apocalypses place such predictions in a cosmic context including cosmic threat, combat, and divine sovereignty."

⁴⁴ Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 27 – 28.

⁴⁵ Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 15.

simply restores the pre-threat order, builds a palace, or receives acclamation of kingship from the other gods.⁴⁶

What if any were the distinctively Persian elements that found a home in Jewish apocalyptic literature? In the history of apocalyptic studies the influence of Persia has been recognized well above Babylon because of the pronounced parallels between Zoroastrian religion and the categories found in apocalyptic, including: “dualism, periodization of history, heaven and hell, post-mortem rewards and punishments, resurrection, angels and demons, the clash of superhuman forces of good and evil, eschatological battles with attendant suffering, and ascent of the soul.”⁴⁷

In the light of this background it would be foolhardy to deny the confluence of ideas, both external and internal to Jewish religion, which shaped the emergence of apocalypticism. Nevertheless, what did emerge is without parallel in the ancient world; apocalyptic is a peculiarly *Jewish* – and later Christian – phenomenon:

⁴⁶ Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 16; With reference to ancient Near Eastern mythic literature, F.M. Cross has argued that Canaanite influences on apocalyptic were stronger than Babylonian:

“With the recovery of the Canaanite mythic and epic poetry, certain judgments about the character of apocalyptic syncretism must be modified. It has become vividly clear that the primary source of mythic material informing Jewish apocalyptic was *old* Canaanite mythic lore. This, of course, is not to dispense with all resort to Iranian, Mesopotamian, or Greek borrowings in describing the evolution of apocalyptic. It does mean, however, that many apocalyptic traditions go back through earliest Israel to Canaanite sources so that more continuities with the old biblical community must be recognized rather than fewer” (cited in Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 32).

⁴⁷ Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 15; also see, Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 29

– 33.

Apocalyptic is a stubbornly Jewish and Christian development. This type of literature flourished (the word is not too strong) in a Jewish environment, but we see nothing comparable in any other environment known to us. . . It is hard to see this literature as derived from a source which does not know it. Granted that there have been borrowings from many sources, the main idea is surely Jewish.⁴⁸

How did Apocalyptic Function?

Morris's historical assessment that apocalyptic is a peculiarly Judeo-Christian phenomenon then begs the question about its rationale and how it functioned during its relatively extensive period of vitality.

We have clearly established that while there may have been a "proto apocalyptic" tradition in the early post-exilic period, full-blown apocalypses only emerged as Judaism moved into its late-Persian and early-Hellenistic periods. Consequently, the accelerated development of apocalyptic thought in this milieu must have had something to do with the social mood that prevailed in that context. In contrast to the pre-exilic and exilic prophets who saw a this-worldly 'future' for Israel following the catastrophic divine judgment of exile to Babylon, the post-exilic generation grew gradually disillusioned by the apparent failure of the prophetic promise of a restored Israel, sovereign and ascendant. What they found instead was a perpetually subjugated Israel that had little control over her destiny; a realization that was shockingly brought home by the rise of Alexander and his Hellenization project that rapidly overcame existing cultures from Macedonia to North India, and painfully transformed the cities of Judah into thoroughgoing pagan polities.

The shock of a protracted 'exile' (now a mood even within the geographic boundaries of the Promised Land) pushed Judaism to

⁴⁸ Morris, *Apocalyptic*, 31 – 32.

a critical examination of its self-understanding, especially calling for a review of the message of the prophets. It is thought that this reflective stance gave birth to two predominant strands that would run parallel to each other, and define Judaism, over the next few centuries; at least as far as the end of the first century AD. We may argue that by their respective messages, both groups can be classified as only *interpreters of the prophets*; not claiming the authority to present novel revelations, but claiming to refocus the prophetic message in nuanced ways and characteristic language. One tradition to emerge discerned the prophets' role as *prosecutors of the covenant* – including their strident indictment on Israel and Judah for failing to observe Torah – and in response developed the strongest commitment to Torah-study and Torah-observance. This group would transform to the later Hasidim, and eventually lead the way towards Rabbinic Judaism. The other group of interpreters saw the prophetic interest in eschatology, and redirected their attention to how this vision of the future was to be upheld. They conceded that the traditional expectation of a historical future for Israel could no longer be maintained in the face of rapidly-declining prospects of a geopolitical Jewish kingdom. Consequently they understood eschatology in radically new ways; as cosmic in scope and temporally trans-historical. So together with the claim to esoteric experiences, and by the powerful use of vivid symbolism, the apocalyptic tradition 'dawned' on the landscape of a despondent Judaism, offering renewed vigour and hope to its continuing relevance in the world.

It was P. Vielhauer who proposed that apocalyptic emerged as "conventicle literature"; the writings of groups that saw themselves as marginal and powerless against the status quo, and hence sequestered themselves in order to pursue their thought and praxis more privately. Collins argues that this may hold true only in some instances, such as in the case of the Qumran sectarians, and thus finds this an "unwarranted generalization."⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 38.

The more helpful aspect of Vielhauer's thesis is that "apocalyptic is written out of actual distress,"⁵⁰ because the single unifying factor of the very diverse samples of extant apocalypses is that they emerge against the backdrop of a disordered world, at least from the perspective of their Jewish authors. Agreeing with the idea of "groups in crisis" Collins suggests the following examples:

The crises were of various kinds. For the authors of the Book of the Watchers, it was a *cultural crisis*, when the world was changed by Hellenism; for the author of 4 Ezra it was a *crisis of theodicy*, the apparent failure of divine justice in the light of the destruction of Jerusalem (italics added).⁵¹

To this we might add: the apocalyptic writings of the Qumran sectarians for whom it was a *religious crisis*, whereby they perceived the entire hierarchical establishment of the Jerusalem-cult to have capitulated to worldliness and become apostate; and the Christian Apocalypse of John that emerged from the *crisis of persecution* as the Roman state became radically hostile to expressions of the Christian faith. How then did apocalyptic come to the aid of groups in these kinds of crises?

David Hellholm has argued that apocalyptic, "[was] intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority,"⁵² and this is entirely plausible because the underlying message of apocalyptic held out the vision of a hopeful ending; with the reestablishment of justice, punishment of the wicked, and rewards for the righteous:

The essential ingredients of this worldview were a reliance on supernatural revelation, over and above received tradition and human reasoning; a sense that human affairs are determined to a great degree by supernatural agents;

⁵⁰ Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 38.

⁵¹ J. J. Collins, "From Prophecy to Apocalypticism," in J. J. Collins (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* Volume I (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1998), 158.

⁵² See Collins, *Apocalyptic*, 41 – 42.

and the belief that human life is subject to divine judgment, culminating in reward or punishment after death.⁵³

As for apocalyptic's characteristically unusual imagery, visions of the heavenly realm, and fantastic claims about cosmic geography, S. J. Clifford proposes that once the genre is read and understood against the backdrop of the "combat myths" of the ancient Near East (which he cogently argues to be the "early antecedents to apocalyptic"), one realizes that the imagery and the themes of apocalyptic is neither "bizarre nor obscurantist as some claim" because such narratives were a customary form of discourse about worldview.⁵⁴ In other words combat myths provided apocalyptic with the "codes and raw materials" by which to communicate ideas about history and eschatology, with little difference to the concerns that occupy social discourse today. He explains the function of the genre:

Retelling one basic narrative in slightly different versions enabled ancients to reflect upon the governance of the world and explain the course of history, especially the history of their own nation. . . . To do philosophy, theology, and political theory, modern thinkers employ the genre of the discursive essay rather than the narrative of the combat myth. Despite the differences, one should not forget that ancients and moderns share an interest in ultimate causes and both are intent on explaining the cosmos, the nature of evil and the validity and the functions of basic institutions. Apocalyptic literature at bottom is not bizarre and opaque, but is rather a narrative way of reflecting upon theology, philosophy, and history, and of inculcating a way of life.⁵⁵

⁵³ Collins, "From Prophecy," 157.

⁵⁴ Clifford, "The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth," in Collins (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, 34.

⁵⁵ Clifford, "Roots," 34.

Apocalyptic and the New Testament

In a manner of speaking, we have come full-circle to be deliberating on apocalyptic and the New Testament, because it was the *Apocalypse of John* that bequeathed the name to this field, and, together with the Old Testament Book of Daniel, piqued the interest of scholars in pursuing the study of this particular genre in antiquity.⁵⁶ The question that confronts us, however, is whether the genre and worldview of apocalyptic remains confined to the Book of Revelation within the New Testament corpus, or do they present themselves in the other writings?

That early-Christianity gave an inordinate importance to apocalyptic is now without dispute.⁵⁷ In comparison, although the Qumran scrolls included fragmentary apocalyptic material, the proportion of such material in that Jewish collection is negligible in comparison to the numbers of Jewish apocalypses preserved by the Christian groups.⁵⁸ In fact with the emerging dominance of Rabbinic Judaism, following the huge disappointment of the Fall of Jerusalem, and the later Bar Kochba Revolt, Jewish apocalypses fell out of vogue in their birth communities, and they survived purely because of their preservation in the Christian churches.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Gerbern S. Oegema, *Apocalyptic Interpretation of the Bible* (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2012), 1: “. . . the academic study of apocalypticism found its origin in the investigations of the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of John and reached its culmination in the concise overviews of Friedrich Lücke, Eduard Reuss, and Adolf Hilgenfeld.”

⁵⁷ See James C. Vanderkam and William Adler (ed.), *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) 26: “Some of the Jewish apocalypses did in fact receive ‘canonical’ recognition. 4 Ezra (also known as 2 Esdras) is included in most modern editions of the Vulgate. Canon lists of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church include 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra.”

⁵⁸ Vanderkam, *Jewish Apocalyptic*, 1.

⁵⁹ Vanderkam, *Jewish Apocalyptic*, 1: “Like much Jewish literature of the second temple period, the apocalypses owe their survival almost entirely to early Christianity. . . Theorizing about the

Although C. C. Torrey's highly speculative proposal – that following AD 70 the Jewish leaders' passionate devotion to Torah and Tradition caused them to, "to destroy as undesirable all the Semitic originals of the 'outside books', including the apocalyptic writings, and so effect the sudden and complete abandonment by the Jews of their popular literature" – cannot be substantiated in history⁶⁰, it is quite clear that following the disastrous experience of the Jewish War, and the rise of Rabbinic Judaism, the fortunes of apocalyptic within its original Jewish milieu suffered an irreversible downturn:

In the earlier days of the nation's struggle for survival, when nationalism was a power to be reckoned with, apocalyptic found a natural setting and perfect conditions for growth; the message that the kingdom of God was at hand had an urgency and relevance for all who heard it. In the world of rabbinic Judaism, however, this sense of urgency had passed and the fires of nationalism had for the most part been damped down. The emphasis was now on the Law of God contained in sacred Scripture, on the 'tradition of the elders' and on the life of obedience to the revealed will of God in the light of these sacred writings. Indeed, the very fanaticism of the apocalyptists would in itself be a warning to the rabbis of the dangers inherent in such teachings.⁶¹

What then was the reason for the inordinate adoption and adaptation of Jewish apocalyptic within the Christian communities of the ancient Mediterranean? Did this interest suddenly originate among the early followers of Jesus simply because the Christian movement felt some affinity with the apocalyptic tradition, as those equally rejected by the rabbinic

social setting and function of the Jewish apocalypses must at some point acknowledge the fact that the context in which these apocalypses survive is a Christian one."

⁶⁰ See D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 30.

⁶¹ Russell, *Method and Message*, 31 – 32.

establishment? Or was Jewish apocalyptic a serendipitous 'discovery' by the early church because its, "messianic and eschatological teachings were eminently suitable for the purpose of Christian propaganda"?⁶² Or, does Christianity's close associations with apocalyptic go all the way back to Jesus?

An Apocalyptic Jesus?

Albert Schweitzer, in the twentieth century, was the first to assert unambiguously that Jesus was an "apocalyptic preacher," and that "Jesus' conduct in its entirety was ruled by an eschatological scenario."⁶³ Schweitzer coined the famous phrase, *konsequente Eschatologie*, "thoroughgoing eschatology" and boldly offered his readers only two options: either to find in the gospels an apocalyptic Jesus or concede that the gospels offer no credible representation of a historical Jesus:

Schweitzer indeed went on to contend that we must choose between two alternatives, between thoroughgoing eschatology and thoroughgoing scepticism. By this he meant that either Jesus lived in the same imaginative world as those responsible for the old Jewish apocalypses, or the Gospels are so unreliable that we know next to nothing about him.⁶⁴

⁶² Russell, *Method and Message*, 32.

⁶³ Dale Allison, "The Eschatology of Jesus," in Collins, (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, 268; see also, Scott M. Lewis, *What Are They Saying About New Testament Apocalyptic?* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 8 – 10.

⁶⁴ Allison, "Eschatology," 268; see also Richard E. Sturm, "Defining the Word 'Apocalyptic': A Problem in Biblical Criticism," in Joel Marcus and Marion Soards (ed.), *Apocalyptic and the New Testament*, JSNTSup 24 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 27: "[Schweitzer] forcefully articulates that eschatology must be 'consistent' and thoroughgoing, or it is not eschatology at all: 'Jesus . . . must have thought either eschatologically or uneschatologically, but not both together'.

Schweitzer's positioning of Jesus quickly became mainstream, and scholars such as R. Bultmann, J. Jeremias and E. P. Sanders have each built on that original foundation, although each provided his unique reading of its implications.⁶⁵ Bultmann for instance presses the idea that Jesus expected an imminent, unprecedented in-breaking of God's rule:

Jesus' message is connected with the hope . . . primarily documented by the *apocalyptic* literature, a hope which awaits salvation not from a miraculous change in historical (i.e. political and social) conditions, but from a cosmic catastrophe which will do away with all conditions of the present world as it is.⁶⁶

E. P. Sanders on the other hand, while subscribing to the centrality of eschatology in the ministry and message of Jesus, yet argues that the eschatological hope, rather than involving a Bultmannian "cosmic catastrophe," was firmly tied to the re-ordering of *this* world; the expectation of a *Jewish* restoration: "he sees "Jewish eschatology" and "restoration of Israel" as virtually synonymous":⁶⁷

The restoration was to be a new order created by God and would include the reconstitution of the twelve tribes of Israel, a new temple, the inclusion of the Gentiles, sinners, and social outcasts. This restoration eschatology is the connecting link between the intentions of Jesus, his death, and the rise of the movement named after him. The disciples continued to expect the occurrence of this restoration.⁶⁸

Although Schweitzer's thesis has been extensively criticized in recent years, it has commended itself by the rather

⁶⁵ See Allison, "Eschatology," 268 – 269.

⁶⁶ Allison, "Eschatology," 268.

⁶⁷ See, Lewis, *What They Are Saying about New Testament Apocalyptic*, 25.

⁶⁸ Lewis, *What They Are Saying*, 25.

comprehensive support it gains from the evidence within the Gospel records and their implied backgrounds. Allison has collated and enumerates no less than seven arguments in favour of an 'apocalyptic' or 'eschatological' Jesus over and against a 'noneschatological' one.⁶⁹

1. The eschatology common to the apocalyptic writings was well known in the Judaism within which Jesus was nurtured. In addition to the canonical apocalyptic texts such as Daniel, Isaiah 24 – 27, and Zechariah, books such as 1 Enoch and the Sybilline Oracles were widely known texts.
2. An apocalyptic worldview was not only found within Judaism; early Christian communities were more deeply attracted by what it offered in consonance with the terms of their new faith. 1 Cor. 10:11 shows that first generation Christians believed that "the ends of the ages have come," which begs the question where such a way of thinking arose from. The Synoptic gospels show how closely Jesus was associated with John the Baptist whose message rings with apocalyptic themes of an imminent in-breaking of Messiah's reign, beginning with eschatological judgment by fire.
3. Statements in the Synoptic gospels indicate an expectation that Jesus and his followers were living at the temporal borders of the coming Kingdom of God (Mark 9:1; 10:23; 13:30; Luke 12:35 – 38; Matt. 25:1 – 13). Jesus constantly speaks about the Kingdom of God in the Synoptics.
4. In the established Jewish scheme of things the Kingdom of God was always associated with imminence and eschatology (Luke 2:25).
5. A common apocalyptic conviction was that it was in the 'last days' that God would "finally defeat Satan and the forces of evil." In the ministry of Jesus we come across

⁶⁹ See Allison, "Eschatology," 275 – 280.

the language about the present and immediate defeat of Satan; both in terms of Jesus' ministry of exorcism, as well as through his explicit teachings about Satan's "fall" by means of Christ's ministry (Luke 10:18; 11:20; Mark 3:27).

6. Although Christianity had a strong and distinctive moral focus, its followers seemed to lack any great urgency to change political and social realities; they almost seem to be resigned to allow systemic injustice and disorderliness of the Roman empire run its course without confrontation.⁷⁰ This is not unlike the apocalyptists who practised a deep-seated pessimism about the world as is, and therefore concentrated their expectations on the miraculous intervention of God at the close of history.
7. The earliest literary witnesses (the New Testament books) associate eschatological motifs with the death and resurrection of Jesus such as: the occurrence of a "darkness that covered the land," a "strong earthquake," and dead people coming to life (Matt. 27:51 – 53).

Allison drives home his insistence that the Christian interest in apocalyptic ultimately derives from the stance of Jesus, by identifying (from within the widely-accepted stream of authentic

⁷⁰ See also, Christopher Rowland, "Apocalyptic, God and the world. Appearance and reality: Earliest Christianity's debt to the Jewish apocalyptic tradition," in John Barclay and John Sweet (ed.) *Early Christian Thought in Its Jewish Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 238: "Second Temple Judaism had an ambivalent relationship with culture. Even when its adherents found themselves in positions of influence, there remained a reserve towards contemporary political arrangements which, however widespread assimilation may have been, prevented Jews from being readily assimilated into the Roman imperium . . . For both Judaism and Christianity a means of enunciating that reserve and the culture of resistance that was at times required was facilitated by apocalypticism."

Jesus-sayings) the ‘expectations’ and ‘self-conception’ of Jesus; these in turn so readily blend into the larger canvas of Jewish apocalypticism. With regard to “Jesus’ Expectations”, Allison identifies *eschatological judgment, the resurrection of the dead, the restoration of Israel, and eschatological tribulation*, as constituting prevalent themes. These notions correspond unambiguously with the predominant expectations of Jewish apocalyptic.⁷¹ As for “Jesus’ Self-Conception”: his presentation of himself as the “anointed prophet” (Matt. 21:11, 46; Mark 6:15; 8:27-28; Luke 6:20-23; 7:39, 13:33; 24:19) and his self-designation as the “Son of Man” (Matt. 10:23; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 12:40; 18:8), again reinforce the claim that Jesus understood his ministry and message in apocalyptic terms:⁷²

The popularity of apocalyptic eschatology in Jesus’ day, Jesus’s close relationship to John the Baptist . . . the selection of a symbolic body of twelve men, the eschatological expectations of so many in the early church, the primitive proclamation of Jesus’ resurrection, and Jesus’ execution as “king of the Jews,” a would-be deliverer, all cohere with the view that Jesus’ words were from the beginning linked with a strong eschatological expectation.⁷³

Finally we may consider stock-motifs of apocalyptic that are prominent in the teachings of the Gospels and the wider New Testament. Russell teases out several standard “ideas and beliefs made popular by the apocalyptic books,” which, it will be readily

⁷¹ See Allison, “Eschatology”, 280 – 289.

⁷² Allison, “Eschatology,” 290 – 293.

⁷³ Allison, “Eschatology,” 293; the argument is further buttressed by recognizing that the only plausible connection between the *apocalyptic* prophet, John the Baptist, and the clearly *apocalyptic* Christian communities that came about following the death of Jesus (as reflected for example in 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians), is the historical person of Jesus; on this see, Lewis, *What Are They Saying*, 31 – 36.

apparent, are equally at home in the literature of the New Testament:

They express belief in such things as the heavenly bliss of the righteous, the resurrection of the dead, the heavenly banquet, the coming judgment, the fires of Gehenna, the angelic destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of the New Jerusalem, the advent of the Messiah, the travails of the messianic age, wonders and portents heralding the last days.⁷⁴

Paul as an Apocalyptic Thinker

Chronologically, the letters of Paul predate the writings of the rest of the NT documents, and hence any evidence of apocalyptic thinking within his writings cannot be attributed to literary borrowing from the Gospels and their presentations of Jesus' teachings. Paul is clearly an apocalyptic thinker in his own right, although he neither wrote an apocalypse, nor provided a systematic explanation of his apocalyptic beliefs.⁷⁵ What we have are Paul's letters, occasional writings, from which, scholars are increasingly convinced, emerges sufficient evidence to portray Paul as one steeped in the apocalyptic worldview of first century Judaism:

⁷⁴ Russell, *Method and Message*, 30; to these Allison, "Eschatology," 293 – 299, adds: the emphasis on *revelation*, the repeated metaphor of *harvesting*, the *periodization of history*, the sharper language of *dualism*, the Qumran-like insistence on *ethics*, and the demonstration of divine power for *healing*, in the message and ministry of Jesus, as concluding evidence for an apocalyptic Jesus: "If the nonapocalyptic Jesus were the historical Jesus, it is peculiar that so much in the tradition, even so much that is regarded as authentic by those who offer us such a Jesus, can be so easily related to apocalyptic eschatology" (299).

⁷⁵ Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 308: "Paul's letters are occasional: they address specific occasions in the churches. None presents his theology systematically. To gain an overview of Paul's thought, one must piece together a picture that transcends what he offers in any one of his letters."

The text that we call 2 Corinthians is a case in point. Whatever our definition of the weasel word “apocalyptic,” this letter is replete with it, engaging in language, imagery, and ideas that are normally associated with both apocalyptic thought and form. “Revelation” and “veiling,” “transformation,” “light and darkness,” and “death and resurrection,” run throughout as constant themes, counterpointed by specific references to “mystery,” “the Day of the Lord,” “the (satanic) god of this world,” and “the judgment of God.”⁷⁶

How did Paul gain this apocalyptic worldview?⁷⁷ In the light of our discussion thus far, it is not difficult to imagine that Paul’s Pharisaic upbringing (the form that predated the strict discontinuity between rabbinic Judaism and apocalypticism following the Jewish War) is what provided him with the categories of Jewish apocalyptic thought.⁷⁸ Although there are no written sources from Pharisaic sources to corroborate the theory that apocalypticism was natural to them, the author of Luke provides a telling clue that such a worldview distinguished Pharisees from the Sadducees in the first century: “The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but

⁷⁶ Edith M. Humphreys, “Ambivalent Apocalypse: Apocalyptic Rhetoric and Intertextuality in 2 Corinthians,” in Duane F. Watson ed. *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 113.

⁷⁷ It must be noted that not everyone agrees that Paul is an apocalyptic thinker; see, Lewis, *What Are They Saying*, 38: “There is some disagreement, however, as to the extent that apocalyptic theology and outlook affects Paul’s entire theology. Some would still prefer to say that Paul uses apocalyptic language at times, but is not apocalyptic in his worldview.”

⁷⁸ See J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 143 – 144.

the Pharisees acknowledge all three” (Acts 23:8).⁷⁹ As we have seen, these three were stock-motifs of Jewish apocalypticism.

Although this worldview appears to undergird the whole of the Pauline corpus, there are three texts that specifically feature some classic elements of apocalyptic: 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1 – 12;⁸⁰ and 1 Corinthians 15:20 – 28, 50 – 56. First, they are each prompted by the thought of the *Parousia* in the light of the resurrection of Jesus; the latter was a typical theme of apocalyptic discourse. Second, the texts utilize multiple themes from “apocalyptic” such as, the cry of command, archangel, trumpet, dead in Christ rising first, clouds, the notion of first-fruit (or harvesting), and the coming of the lawless one.

Again it was Albert Schweitzer who most definitively situated Paul within ancient apocalyptic. Rejecting “Justification by Faith” as the putative centre of Paul’s thought (the dominant view since the Reformation), he “momentously claimed that Paul lived “in the conceptions of the dogmatic world-view” of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology.”⁸¹ In Christian thought traditionally,

⁷⁹ See Murphy, *Apocalypticism*, 309; also Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 144: “Because Paul had probably been an apocalyptic Pharisaic “missionary” before his conversion, if we can trust Acts 9:1-2, the apocalyptic structure of his thought remains the constant in his Pharisaic and Christian life.”

⁸⁰ Wayne Meeks, “Social Functions of Apocalyptic Language in Pauline Christianity,” in David Hellholm ed., *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 689, sees 2 Thessalonians as “the most obviously “apocalyptic” document among the Pauline letters,” but like most scholars is unable to give it much weight in assessing Paul’s apocalypticism, “because the still unresolved question of its authenticity would unduly complicate our discussion.”

⁸¹ M. C. de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” in Bernard J. McGinn, John Collins, and Stephen Stein, *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum International, 2003), 167.

eschatology has had to do with the doctrines such as “heaven, hell, judgment and life after death,”⁸² from the perspective of the individual, but *apocalyptic* eschatology is more nuanced:

Apocalyptic eschatology however concerns visible, objective, and public events that are cosmic in scope and implication, for example, the general resurrection of the dead and the last judgment. Apocalyptic eschatology is fundamentally concerned with God’s active and visible rectification (putting right) of the created world (the “cosmos”), which has somehow gone astray and become alienated from God.⁸³

Schweitzer was convinced that Paul was trained in the eschatological views reflected in the late-first century apocalypses of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, suggesting some common tradition between them. These latter works are “preoccupied with the *eschaton*, and both make extensive use of the same set of literary genres such as prayer, speech, and the symbolic dream vision that is interpreted by an angelic interpreter.”⁸⁴

Although the trend of New Testament scholarship shifted in the direction of Schweitzer’s argument for the apocalyptic framework of Paul’s thought,⁸⁵ not all were convinced that apocalyptic constituted the “core.”⁸⁶ R. Bultmann, for instance, argued that,

⁸² de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic,” 169.

⁸³ de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic,” 170.

⁸⁴ On the strong similarity between 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra, see Matthias Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism in Late First Century Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 148ff.

⁸⁵ So de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic,” 168: “Ever since Schweitzer, students of Paul who have tended to label Paul’s eschatology (and even his whole theology) as “apocalyptic” have done so largely because, following Schweitzer’s lead, they have discerned conceptual affinities between Paul’s eschatological ideas and first-century Jewish eschatological expectations.”

⁸⁶ See J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 16 – 18.

“the core of the kerygma must be, *freed from its obsolete husk, the mythological-apocalyptic world view of Paul.*”⁸⁷ Beker, however, vehemently objects to such a marginalization of apocalyptic in Paul: “what is husk to Bultmann belongs in our construal to the core of Paul’s gospel,” and argues instead:

It is my contention that Paul locates the coherent centre of the gospel in the apocalyptic interpretation of the Christ-event. Paul’s thought is misinterpreted when this central affirmation of his is distorted, ignored, or collapsed into the Christ-event itself.⁸⁸

Of course it is quite evident that Paul does not simply superimpose Jewish apocalyptic categories onto his thoughts as a Christian; the former rather, are radically modified in the light of Paul’s understanding of the Christ-event. Expressions of this modification are: his reticence with regard to using traditional apocalyptic terminology (such as “powers,” “rulers,” “lordships,” “thrones”); and, his jettisoning of common apocalyptic preoccupations (such as “apocalyptic timetables, descriptions of the architecture of heaven, or accounts of angels and demons”).⁸⁹ How then does Paul’s Jewish apocalyptic worldview impact his thought, as evidenced in his epistles?

Martinus de Boer asserts, contra Schweitzer, that Jewish apocalypticism was not a monochrome affair; at least two broad strands of apocalyptic ‘patterns’ or ‘tracks’ may be discerned in the extant apocalyptic literature: 1) a *cosmological apocalyptic eschatology* – on the basis that the created world has come under domination by evil, angelic powers (the Watchers of 1 Enoch?) from the time of Noah, and this has usurped God’s authority and sovereignty. God’s own people have apostatized, but because of the preservation of a righteous remnant, God will at some future time invade the world, wage a cosmic war, and bring about a new

⁸⁷ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 18 (emphasis added).

⁸⁸ Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 18.

⁸⁹ See Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 145.

age in which divine sovereignty is unambiguously asserted. In this schema, humanity is powerless to contribute a whit to its own deliverance; only God has the power to overthrow the diabolical powers; and 2) a *forensic or juridical apocalyptic eschatology* – this schema downplays the role of evil, cosmological forces; instead placing an emphasis on human free will in the face of the human option of submitting to or rejecting the will of God. Sin is essentially the rejection of God’s will, and in response to this ‘danger’ God has provided the “law” which remedies sin and determines the individual’s destiny following an eschatological judgment.⁹⁰

De Boer’s argument is that Paul utilized *both* tracks when he wrote his epistles. So within the letter to the Romans, one may discern that in, “1.1 – 5.11, the elements of forensic apocalyptic eschatology clearly dominate;” whereas in 6.1 – 8.38 “the elements of cosmological apocalyptic eschatology are clearly prominent.”⁹¹ This is to say that in the former, Paul emphasizes the categories of law, sin, human culpability, and divine judgment. De Boer suggests that Romans 2:5 – 8 is a “nearly pure specimen of Jewish forensic apocalyptic eschatology,” with its discussion of the “Two Ways.”⁹² Nevertheless contrary to typical Jewish apocalyptic eschatology as found in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, Paul argues that although the Law sets the standard expected of humans, the prospects are hopeless; all humanity is dominated by the power of sin. At this point Paul crosses over to the other available category of apocalypticism – the track of cosmological apocalyptic eschatology – to assert that deliverance from the human predicament is only possible because of God’s triumphant invasion, in Christ, of a universe that had been dominated by sin.

⁹⁰ See de Boer, “Paul and Apocalyptic,” 175 – 181; _____, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology,” in Joel Marcus and Marion Soards ed., *Apocalyptic and the New Testament (Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn)*, JSNTSup 24 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 169 – 190.

⁹¹ de Boer, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic,” 182ff.

⁹² See de Boer, “Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic,” 183.

Faith is not, as some may mistakenly assume, another 'work' like Torah-observance, it is rather, "a matter of being initially passive and grateful beneficiaries of God's gracious, liberating power revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."⁹³ This is why in the latter section of Romans 1 – 8, Paul speaks of sin as personified evil against which the unregenerate person is powerless (Romans 6:12 – 7:25), and of the divine salvific invasion of human history with its cosmic repercussions (Romans 8).

Applying this same argument to Galatians, de Boer sees how Paul combats the "circumcising, Law-observant Teachers," who were in fact 'apocalyptists' in terms of 'forensic apocalyptic eschatology;' those who viewed the advent of Christ as an impulse to accentuate their religious beliefs rather than to submit to a new Lord. Paul's answer to their insistence on Law and human freedom, is to speak the language of cosmic warfare and a divine invasion of the human situation (Galatians 3:23 – 26; 4:1 – 11). And so:

"Paul circumscribes the forensic apocalyptic eschatology of the Galatian Teachers with a cosmological apocalyptic of his own . . . by the end of the epistle the forensic apocalyptic eschatology of the Teachers has been decisively overtaken and neutralized by Paul's cosmological apocalyptic eschatology."⁹⁴

We may conclude then, that while Paul was in every sense an apocalyptic thinker, he did not uncritically perpetuate classic apocalyptic thought. His encounter with Jesus Christ, call to apostleship, and the experience of the divine revelation of the Gospel of the crucified-and-resurrected Jesus, radically impacted and modified his apocalyptic eschatology. No longer could he subscribe to a view that projected all the aspirations of Jewish apocalyptic to an eschatological future, nor maintain a classic, pessimistic view of history as apocalypticism espoused, since the

⁹³ de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic," 184.

⁹⁴ de Boer, "Paul and Jewish Apocalyptic," 185.

concrete historical fact of the Christ-event, and his apostolic commission, implied that God had redemptively invaded history and expected his people to participate in the ensuing messianic programme. In this way New Testament apocalyptic has elements of both continuity and discontinuity with classical apocalyptic:

One may speak of the “apocalypticism” of the New Testament only with extreme caution accepting the fact of certain literary and theological points of contact between earliest Christianity and Jewish apocalypticism, but on the other hand honouring the fundamental differences between [them] as seen from a historical, sociological, and theological perspective. Over and against a Jewish apocalyptic expectation of a coming Messiah the early church announced a Messiah who had already appeared. Over against a Jewish apocalyptic message of world loss, the early church reaffirmed the meaningfulness of world involvement.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Wayne Rollins, “The New Testament and Apocalyptic,” *NTS* 17 (1971), 476.

THE BADDEGAMA MISSION OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY (1819 – 1872)

NAPOLEON PATHMANATHAN

INTRODUCTION

In 1816, two persons from Jaffna and Colombo respectively, John Bartholomeusz and a Maha Mudaliyar Adrian de Abrew Rajapakse, wrote to Sir Alexander Johnston the 3rd Chief Justice of Ceylon, to consider bringing missionaries to Ceylon for planting churches among the natives. Hence, Sir Alexander Johnston conveys this request to the secretary of missions of the Church Missionary Society in his letter dated July 3rd 1816 (CMS Proceedings 1818, 530-535). The missionaries of CMS focused mostly on Africa until 1817 and didn't take much interest in Ceylon since the environment of Ceylon was hostile to missionaries. Especially the British East India Company of the British Monarch was obstructing missionary work as they presumed the missionary work will distract their administrative and commercial enterprises. The shortage of missionaries in the existing mission fields was also a cause and had a severe impact on mission until the CMS sent the first four missionaries in 1817 to Ceylon (Stock, 1899, p. 216).

However, after Sir Alexander Johnston was appointed the 3rd Chief Justice of Ceylon in 1811, and also an Advocate-Fiscal, he introduced a range of administrative reforms and liberal ideas so that the administrative pattern of the British Ceylon drastically changed. In 1817, on 15th of December, Bishop Ryder of

Gloucester ordained four men to be sent to Ceylon as missionaries, namely Rev. Samuel Lambrick, Rev. Benjamin Ward, Rev. Robert Mayor, and Rev. Joseph Knight, with Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Mayor, who arrived in Galle on 29th June 1818 by the vessel “Vittoria” from London (Proceedings: 1817-1818, p xi, 123). The four missionaries ended up in four places –Jaffna (North), Kotte (West), Kandy (Central) and Baddegama (South). The CMS work was demographically described as follows: *“The CMS Ceylon Mission has two branches, carried on in two languages for the benefit of two races, the Sinhalese and the Tamils. In Colombo and in the hill country of Kandy, the two missions work side by side; but Cotta, Baddegama, and Kurunegala are Sinhalese stations and the Jaffna peninsula is purely Tamil”* (CMS Proceedings, 1881 - 1882, p. 154).

On 5th July 1818, Rev. Robert Mayor and Mrs. Mayor reached Galle after visiting Colombo. Rev. Robert Mayor began his work with a few Tamil speaking Muslims, native Sinhalese and a Buddhist monk by teaching them English. However, in October he moved into Baddegama, a village surrounded by jungle on the bank of the Gindra (Gin Ganga), 30 miles away from Galle, and established a mission station and schools to educate the children (CMS Proceedings 1819, 190-191).

People

According to the Governor’s report of 1802 the Christian population of Galle District was 57,192 and of these the village of Baddegama had 1,644 with a population of 6000 persons (CMS Proceedings 1821, 188). According to Rev. Robert Mayor many of these people in the area were nominal Christians still adhering to their previous religion and occult practices, who had not renounced their superstitions such as devil worship (CMS Proceedings 1820, 190). Rev. Mayor also says, “Lying and deceiving is their extreme propensity” (CMS Proceedings 1822, 186) and character, and “they will lie everyone to his neighbour; neither is there any truth in them” (CMS Proceedings 1823, 173). The cause for the nominal Christianity was that during the Dutch

period all native religions were prohibited and people sought baptism and marriage from the church for land inheritance which produced numerous nominal Christians in the country (Pathmanathan 2011, 278).

The Annual report of 1821 says that the life of the people is more controlled by the shaman to a certain extent than by their priests because of their trust in offerings, amulets, charms and enchantments to protect them from diseases and evil spirits. Their religious objects are twofold, deliverance from evil spirits and temporal prosperity, which are contrary to the Buddhist belief system. The God Kattaragama (a Hindu deity – Lord Muruga or Skanda) is their chief deity who prospers and protects them from all evil when an offering is paid after every harvest of the rice field (CMS Proceedings 1821, 191-192).

Before the missionaries arrived people sought the help of the shaman to heal their diseases and performed the “devil dance” to cast away the spirits causing sickness, because no medical facilities were available in the district. However, the situation was changed by Rev. Robert Mayor who had knowledge of physic and surgery and who says, “people bring their sick regularly to be healed and the “Devil dance” has fallen into almost entire disuse” (CMS Proceedings 1822, 186). However, some people who sought fast recovery depended on superstitions and the devil dance for their healing (CMS Proceedings 1824, 171). Mayor had patients coming from distances of 100 miles for medical treatment (CMS Proceedings 1824, 172). The chief priest of Kandy who was blind visited Rev. Mayor for his eye operation, successfully recovered his sight and spent ten months in the village. However, after the missionary’s arrival Buddhist priests started rival schools teaching the children in the temple (CMS Proceedings 1825, 158).

Sri Lanka had two models of Christianity before the British Protestant missionaries arrived. In 1505 Portuguese missionaries arrived with their counterparts who had political and commercial agendas where they introduced their Christian religion which had

a resemblance to the indigenous religions such as Hinduism and folk Buddhism. When the indigenous religions were banned, the natives followed the Portuguese religion without any hindrance, since the Portuguese religion culturally resembled their religions.

The Dutch Reformed Christianity introduced by the Dutch East India Company hadn't a missionary agenda. Their motive was to keep the religions under their control for administrative purposes. The Dutch banned the Portuguese religion too for political reasons where they had religious conflicts with them in Europe and the same one religion model was introduced in Ceylon too.

The Church Building

The foundation stone of the church was laid on 14th February, 1821, and a considerable number of village people took part in the occasion. Sunday services were held in the school room until the construction work of the church was finished (CMS Proceedings 1822, 178). The building work of the new church was begun with the financial and material support of many; the village Headmen, Mudaliyars, natives, and European Christians contributed towards the cause, including public grants and private subscriptions with supply of timber duty free (CMS Proceedings 1821, 187).

While building a church Rev Robert Mayor had the congregation gathered in his house. The result in the station was overwhelming, as the hall in his house was inconvenient for a large crowd. Mayor faced caste segregation when accommodating people in one place, as people refused to sit together. The village Headmen of higher caste demanded separate seats for their families (CMS Proceedings 1821, 187). Mayor was struggling to resolve this issue since all of them were newcomers and this problem was rooted deeply in the society.

The church was a structure 84 x 43 feet, built on a carved bed rock blasted with 700lbs of gun powder, and sufficient to contain

a large congregation of 400 people (CMS Proceedings 1823, 174). It was opened on the 11th of March 1824 and the first sermon in English was preached by the Archdeacon Dr. Twisleton in the morning, and Rev. Samuel Lambrick preached in Sinhala in the evening before a large congregation from all parts of the district; “nearly the whole of the European inhabitants of Galle attended”. Sir Richard Ottley, the fifth Chief Justice of Ceylon, presented the communion plate for its service (CMS Proceedings 1825, 153-154). The church was consecrated by Bishop Heber of Madras on 25th September 1825 (CMS Proceedings 1826).

Mission and the Missionaries

Missionaries never sought comfort in the mission field as three missionary families lived in separate rooms in one house with six rooms along with the boarding students, boys and girls (CMS Proceedings 1823, 176). They also went through several hardships. Rev. Greenwood drowned and died in the river the day before he was transferred to Kotte (CMS Proceeding 1851, 189). Rev. George Parsons died while in the mission field (CMS Proceedings 1867, 128). Rev Mayor and Rev. Ward left the Island due to their declining state of health and Rev. Trimmell took over the responsibility of the station (CMS Proceedings 1829, 110). The work was rapidly growing after the death of Rev. Abraham Gunasekara who died in June 1864 after a sickness. Sometimes they were offered better positions such as colonial chaplaincy but refused to take such positions. The Galle chaplaincy was vacant after the colonial chaplain Rev. J. M. S. Glenie was removed to Colombo as senior colonial chaplain and principal of schools. However, Rev. Mayor and Rev. Ward refused to take over that duty as they were called to serve in the mission field, therefore they offered their voluntary support until a chaplain was appointed (CMS Proceedings 1821, 189). Mr. Benjamin Ward, stationed in Calpenty (Kalpitya), was sent to Nallur due to his deteriorating health, but the climate in Jaffna was unsuitable for his condition and he was transferred to Baddegama to assist Rev. Robert Mayor where help was needed for the expanding

education work. Mr. Ward's condition improved after he was placed in Baddegama (CMS Proceedings 1821, 183, 186).

Baddegama was a hard ground and had only 150 members in the church after 30 years of ministry, out of 18,000 living in that village (CMS Proceeding 1851, 188). House meetings were held and neighbours were invited to listen to the preaching (CMS Proceedings 1823, 174). In some places meetings were held underneath trees, with mats laid on the ground (CMS Proceedings 1824, 169). The knowledge of the scripture improved and the attendance was encouraging (CMS Proceedings 1821, 190). According to the report of 1845, the congregation was between 170 and 200 members (CMS Proceedings 1845, 91). However baptisms were minimal since missionaries were cautious to baptize people unless they were truly following Christ.

The first native priest to this station was Rev. Abraham Gunasekara who preached his first sermon on 5th April 1840 from the Gospel of Mark 16:15-16 on the salvation of God (CMS Proceedings 1841, 92). After his arrival the Sinhalese congregation grew and there were three weekly services attended by 480 adherents (CMS Proceedings 1843, 79). After his death five native catechists ministered under Rev. George Parson and the congregation was 272 members with 120 communicants. From Baddegama as a headquarters several churches were founded with the help of the native catechists along the southern coastal areas such as Bentota, Balapitiya Modera, and Dodanduwa.

The European missionaries were sometimes not effectively contributing to the growth of the mission. If we look at the work of Rev. Abraham Gunasekara it was very successful and grew rapidly. The strategies and the models used by Rev. Abraham were successful and yielded useful fruits. The local pastors were ideal for the mission since they were very close to the natives and their culture. However, the missionaries were reluctant to give the leadership to the locals for some unknown reasons. These

grievances were addressed to the Bishop of Victoria when he was leaving Calcutta for China, spending a few days in Baddegama (CMS Proceedings 1856, 147). Hence, Rev. Gunasekara was appointed in charge of the station and after two years of labour the local contribution increased and the congregation was stable and strengthened (CMS Proceedings 1858, 170). The attendance increased from 86 to 156 (CMS Proceedings 1859, 159).

The first native committee to manage the church affairs was established in 1867 (CMS Proceedings 1868, 158). Hence, the church was self sufficient to support its three catechists (CMS Proceedings 1869, 167) (CMS Proceedings 1870, 197). When Rev. Parson was in-charge of the mission he insisted on three principles for the existence of the Baddegama mission, namely self support, self government, and self extension (CMS Proceedings 1863, 172).

Missionaries refused to baptize children if the parents were not regular attendees, because the country was full of baptized persons (CMS Proceedings 1822, 178) who were not practicing Christians and who still adhered to their occult practices. Strict discipline was practiced in the church as follows, introduced by the native committee (CMS Proceedings 1870, 196):

1. Church membership was cancelled if the member had not attended for three months without proper reason.
2. All members should attend the communicants meeting to be admitted to the Lord's Table unless there is a sufficient reason.
3. Collecting tills were distributed and collected to support the poor regularly
4. Members who married non-Christians were not recognised as church members.

Baddegama was the headquarters of the Southern pastorate and once a year members of Bentota, Balapitiya, Ambalangoda, and Mapalagama met for Bible study, prayer and edification. When

they met in September 1870 there was a revival and outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Baddegama when an American preacher, Mr. Taylor, preached. Many were converted with tears. This was a remarkable moment in the district. The spiritual condition, contribution, and membership increased rapidly after the native members and catechists took over the church. The spiritual revival too contributed towards growth in all aspects. Rev. John Allock, the residing missionary, says, "As in the Churches of Corinth and Galatia, there have been some instances of immorality and apostasy; but on the whole the native church is in a very prosperous state, both in spiritual and secular things" (CMS Proceedings 1871, 186-187).

People already had religious experience with the Portuguese and Dutch. The first two models gave people the impression that Christianity was brought by the invaders to oppress them politically and spiritually. Hence, when the British colonial government declared religious freedom, people returned to their former religions. Thus, people didn't give much attention to Christian preaching where the new model of preaching the gospel didn't yield much fruit.

Baddegama Debate

The opposition by Buddhists started slowly. Initially they adopted Christian missionary methods to govern the village people, performing baptisms and marriages, collecting subscriptions, punishment for offences such as immorality, disaffection to Buddhism, embracing Christianity, etc. (CMS Proceedings 1861, 158). The Buddhist priests also started village councils and rival schools to educate their children (CMS Proceedings 1862, 179). Missionaries, catechists, and students of the training schools performed public preaching in various places and the attendance was commendable. In several occasions preachers were assaulted. On one occasion a trainee was struck on his face after returning from a preaching assignment. On another occasion a catechist was struck on the back by an unknown person who escaped in the dark (CMS Proceedings 1866, 157).

According to Rev. George Parson's report of 12th February 1865 there was a controversy with Buddhist priests of the area. A conversation between a training school student and a Buddhist priest resulted in a challenge to have a formal discussion on 21st November 1864 and there were 100 Christians and 500 Buddhists with their head. The whole day was spent to arrange an agenda to have a discussion on a future day, and finally 8th February was fixed for the discussion. This controversy lasted from 8th to 13th except on Sunday, from one o'clock to six o'clock. There were 150 Christians including Wesleyans and 1000 Buddhists with fifty priests. The Buddhists brought Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera, the great controversialist, from Colombo, and the Christians brought Father David de Silva of the Wesleyan Mission, who was well versed in the Pali language. It was arranged to read five papers by each party with a number of charges and questions for the opposite party to respond. Hence, the papers were presented and the debate reached its peak with heated arguments. The village headman, fearing that the peace between the two factions would be breached, officially informed the government to stop the debate. Therefore, two government officials appeared personally and ended the public debate (CMS Proceedings 1865, 165).

The Schools

Rev. Robert Mayor says the women in area were not literate, and were treated with contempt and with less respect than servants by their husbands, who would not allow their daughters to go to school. They stood behind their husband while they were eating and were excluded from social intercourse (CMS Proceedings 1820, 191). According to Trimnell, "a needle had never been seen here before the missionaries came fourteen years ago" (CMS Proceedings 1834, 53). Mrs. Mayor established a school for girls and this school is called "Christ Church Girl's College, Baddegama" today. Rev. Mayor founded five boys' schools including "Christ Church Boys' College Baddegama," (CMS Proceedings 1821, 188). The first school room was built by Rev.

Robert Mayor in 1820, capable of accommodating 250 persons (CMS Proceedings 1821, 187).

According to Mrs. Mayor, the dress of the school girls was a long cloth and blouse. They were taught to sew neatly. To keep the attendance regular the girls were bribed with clothing. When there was rice harvest women and girls were employed and the attendance dropped significantly (CMS Proceedings 1821, 190). In many cases children were sent to work in the rice field due to poverty, hence the education of the children was neglected. Also there were prejudices regarding Christian education where parents refused to send their children to a missionary school (CMS Proceedings 1822, 180). Also, when giving free cloths twice a year was stopped and a minimal fee was introduced to schools, the numbers of students fell from 80 to 30 (CMS Proceedings 1849, 151).

There were also caste prejudices in the society which affected the work of the missionaries. When low caste girls attended schools wearing white blouses, the high caste girls refused to come because it was the privilege of high caste girls only, so the caste prejudices prevented some of the girls from attending school (CMS Proceedings 1823, 176) According to the Bishop of Madras who visited Baddegama, the standard of schools was higher than in Indian schools (CMS Proceedings 1840, 80). Rev. Parson reports that the mission had produced 113 scholars of whom 6 were clergymen, 19 catechists, 13 school masters, and others were in respectable positions as clerks, proctors or notaries (CMS Proceedings 1863, 172).

CONCLUSION

Although Baddegama was a hard ground, the missionaries ploughed with all their strength and efforts to prepare the ground. More than Buddhism, nominal Christianity was a greater challenge to the missionaries. In the beginning missionaries were struggling to introduce their model of Evangelical Christianity

through preaching and teaching since people already had experience with other models of Christianity such as Roman Catholicism and Dutch Reformed Christianity. Therefore the people weren't prepared to receive the new model introduced by the English missionaries. The people in the South never valued the missionary education when compared with the North as they identified Christianity and missionary education with British colonialism. For people in the South everything brought from Britain was invasion. Therefore, they vehemently resisted the missionary work, their religion and education. They also had prejudices against female education since women were held in contempt in the society. Therefore female education was a threatening force brought by missionaries where most of the men were illiterate. However, the work of the missionaries was moving forward even with opposition, and yielded fruits with much difficulty. People who were converted to Christianity and received education from mission schools were elevated in the society and were much respected due to their positions as civil servants. The Baddegama mission was a remarkable mission in the South since the schools started by missionaries still bear fruits although Christianity was abandoned by the people in the South.

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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DISABILITY?

ARULAMPALAM STEPHEN

INTRODUCTION

The Bible adds to this by appearing to give mixed messages when it comes to disability. Like other minority groups, disabled people are not given great attention in the Bible. Weiss Block argues that the way the disability passages are often interpreted in the Bible actually contributes to the oppression of people with impairments in the church.¹ Although there is an argument for the exclusion and stigmatisation of people with disabilities in the Bible, there are also plenty of examples for the acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities as will be briefly highlighted here.

The Understanding of the Old Testament

Scripture such as Leviticus 21:16-23 has often been used as justification for excluding disabled people from taking a leadership role in the Church. In Hebrew times, people with disabilities were heavily stigmatised and excluded from society; priests were no exception to the rule. To serve at the altar a priest was expected to be bodily whole and without blemish, much like the animals presented for sacrifice. Bodily perfection was an external symbol of God's holiness and the holiness of the temple sanctuary. Any bodily defect rendered the person imperfect and therefore unfit to perform priestly duties.

¹ Weiss Block, *Copious*, p. 101

Priests were appointed by virtue of birth; those born into the tribe who had impairments presented a difficulty. However, although the priests with physical disabilities were excluded from worship at the altar they were not excluded from performing duties entirely. Priests with impairments were permitted to eat the food presented for offering like the other priests, but were not permitted to approach the altar.²

This passage implies that people with disabilities lack perfection and wholeness. It is therefore easy to understand how the attitude of disallowing priests with impairments from presiding at the altar due to ritual impurity has been historically carried over in the exclusion of people with disabilities from leading worship or presiding as a minister in the Church. However, Leviticus is not entirely negative about disability, referring specifically to visual and hearing impairments; 19:14 prohibits anyone from ridiculing or causing harm to people with disabilities. This shows a certain amount of inclusivity towards people with impairments although it could also be perceived as pity.

Jesus and Disability

Jesus' message in the gospels was one of inclusion. On a number of occasions, Jesus interacted with, healed and restored people with disabilities. The gospel of Mark gives several accounts of interaction between Jesus and people with impairments. As in ancient society, people with disabilities during Jesus' time, were stigmatised and excluded from society. This was true in the case of the man with leprosy.³ According to Mosaic Law, anyone with a skin disease was deemed unclean and therefore disallowed from coming into contact with anyone else. On being relieved of the illness, the person with the skin disease must present

² Leviticus 21:22

³ Mark 1:40-44

themselves to the priest, who would prescribe the appropriate rituals before pronouncing the person clean.⁴

Yet Jesus not only healed the man of leprosy, but also touched him thereby rendering himself unclean. This was unheard of since it was forbidden in Jewish law to touch someone who was unclean. Jesus, in healing the man who could only be made clean by a priest, tackled the root of the problem thereby demonstrating his power and authority. In this act Jesus broke the stigma attached to skin disease and identified himself with the man, thus demonstrating true inclusion.

In the following chapter, Mark recounts a further healing story. In this narrative a paralysed man was presented to Jesus for healing. Due to large crowds around Jesus, the man had to be lowered through the roof of the building Jesus was in.⁵ As a result, the passage can be understood both positively and negatively. Firstly, in relating to the paralysed man, Jesus saw beyond his physical disability and dealt with the man's spiritual condition before addressing his bodily one. This indicates that Jesus addresses the needs of the whole person and not just the physical condition. It was only when the Pharisees showed shock that Jesus had taken it upon himself to forgive sins that Jesus demonstrated his power by healing the man. There was no expectation that the man needed to be healed of his physical condition other than as an illustration of Jesus capabilities.

It was commonly believed that disability was a consequence of sin in either the life of a person or their parent's lives. Mark links the concepts of healing and forgiveness in this story, thus reinforcing society's assumptions. The idea that disability is a result of sin has been passed down throughout Christian history and is still a commonly held belief amongst some sections of the Church today. This has been particularly damaging for Christians

⁴ Leviticus 13 & 14

⁵ Mark 2:1-12

with disabilities that have felt guilt, shame and uncleanness because of their impairment.

Despite this, in John 9:3, Jesus makes it clear that disability and sin are not linked. The disciples, on encountering a man born blind, immediately linked the man's impairment to sin in either his or his parent's lives. Jesus answered by categorically stating that sin was not the cause of the man's disability. Jesus then healed the man without offering forgiveness as he did with many of his healings. This passage suggests that disability and sin are not linked which is contrary to society's understanding at that time.

Paul and Disability

Whilst disability in the gospels can be understood both positively and negatively, Paul, in the epistles, is largely positive. For Paul, physical weakness was not a symbol of exclusion, stigmatisation or second class citizenship. In fact, God specifically chooses people who are physically weak to shame the able-bodied strong.⁶ It is highly speculated whether Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was a disability.⁷ Although the precise nature of the "thorn" cannot be determined it is clear that Paul experienced this irritation as a disability and a "functional limitation"⁸ in his ministry.

Disability Theology

The Bible has often been used to suppress people with disabilities and to disallow them from taking positions of leadership within the Church. However, if encouraged could people with disabilities reinterpret the Bible from a disabled perspective and teach the church something new about its mission and ministry?

⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:27

⁷ 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁸ Martin Albl, 'For Whenever I am Weak Then I am Strong', in Avalos, Melcher, & Schipper eds., *This Abled Body*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), p. 157

Perhaps, one of the most important insights from disability theology has been that of the disabled Christ. On the cross Christ embodied physical pain, disablement and impairment in the *imago Dei*. In Christ, God became disabled on the cross and thus is able to identify with impairment. This turns the tables on the image of God as strong and powerful; God is strongest when broken, impaired and immobilised. In this view disability no longer represents stigma, exclusion and weakness. Since the creator God became disabled, this implies strength in weakness and power in vulnerability whilst dispelling the connection between sin and impairment.

Further to this, after his resurrection Christ continued to bear the scars of the cross upon his body.⁹ In showing his scarred hands, feet and side to the disciples, Christ once again shattered the stigma of disability. For in his resurrection Christ was restored from death whilst retaining the marks of impairment. This suggests that wholeness and healing does not necessarily mean being bodily restored or that disability will be eradicated. Instead Christ's scars suggest that people with impairments are just as whole and restored as anyone else made in God's image. In the disabled Christ we have a picture of God that bears witness to our own weak and vulnerable bodies.

Unless we address these issues people with disabilities will never feel fully welcome and included in our churches. Theology has been, until recently, done from an almost entirely able-bodied perspective. It is time that disabled people's perspective is heard and we allow scripture to be interpreted through the lens of disability. This means we must allow Christians with disabilities to take positions of leadership in our churches, to encourage participation in worship and allow the message of the disabled Christ to be heard from our pulpits.

⁹ Luke 24:36-39

Some Practical Recommendations

To answer this question I will return to the issues of the pews and raised platform in the studied church. Firstly, the congregation must accept that the pews potentially exclude people from sitting amongst the body of believers. This could potentially make a person feel excluded both from the church members and also from the body of Christ. Once acknowledged, some practical steps can be taken to minimise the effect.

The above recommendations take effort and hard work on the parts of both the person leading and also the congregation, but in undertaking these, God's grace will be evident and the congregation may receive unexpected blessings. This requires a shift in thinking from an individualistic view of worship that wonders, "What am I getting out of this?" to an inclusive and God-focussed view of worship as benefitting the whole community and being primarily for God. A shift such as this can only be attained by developing a theology of access and inclusivity.

CONCLUSION

In this article it has been argued that hospitality and inclusion to all people is a gospel imperative. It is the commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves.¹⁰ Christians must therefore work at both their practice and theology in order to become a full inclusive community. This will require hard work, sacrifice, humility and graciousness from the congregation but will result in an environment that displays God's love and grace to all. Developing the theology of the Church is a journey which the congregation must embark on together, it may take them into unexpected territory but will be of benefit to all in the long term as they learn to love one another despite their differences.

¹⁰ Mark 12:31

INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA

G P V SOMARATNA

ABSTRACT

This paper is a result of an empirical research undertaken in the cluster of Protestant churches in the Rambukkana area¹ where a Christian community lives that has a history of over a century. Research was focused on the problems that the existing Christian community face in order to remain as Christians today. Several issues that need attention have been identified. As the total research finding would need a larger document to deal with all the issues, we have selected one issue to analyze in the light of challenges for the Christians in Rambukkana. These issues may be relevant to all the Christians in Sri Lanka. However, there are issues which are especially pertinent to this particular community. An attempt has been made to analyze the issue of Interfaith marriage as it affects the wellbeing of Christians living in the area.

¹ The word Rambukkana is used in this paper to encompass the places of all the Christian communities of this particular social group with caste connotations. It covers the Christian villages in Kandy, Kurunegala, Ratnapura and Kegalle districts.

Introduction

Marriage is a fundamental reality in human society. It is common to all societies, irrespective of ethnic, religious or socio-cultural backgrounds. Marriage in religious terms is a total union of two people in body, mind, heart and spirit. Today the society accepts on principle that any person has the right to get married to the individual of their choice without consideration of caste, creed, ethnicity or other social differences.

Interfaith marriage is also known as mixed marriage. It is a marriage between partners professing two different religions. Such a union typically implies a marriage in which both partners remain adherent to their distinct religions. In the recent past the majority of Christians in the Rambukkana area have entered into Interfaith marriages. One may find couples with a heritage of two or three generations of such marriages in their family history. Interfaith marriages in this area are predominantly those marriages between people from Christian and Buddhist backgrounds. It may also include marriages between two persons from different denominations within the same religion like Catholics and Protestants.

One of the important underlying assumptions for encouraging marriage between people from similar faith backgrounds is the idea that persons sharing similar characteristics such as beliefs, values, norms, social status will adjust more easily to one another. It is clear that socio-cultural factors of same faith marriage promote harmony. Whereas marriage between people from different religious backgrounds increases the chances of dissension and discontent. Sociological and social-psychological research on love and partner selection are generally consistent with this proposition (Ortega, Whitt, and Williams 1988). There is a consistent pattern where persons in intra-doctrinal marriages have a higher level of compatibility than those in doctrinally different backgrounds.

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

Most sociologists and theologians are of the view that Interfaith marriages weaken the people's commitment to religion. Furthermore, those who form such unions cause their children to be inadequately socialized in to the faith of their parents (Peterson 1986). It is also noted that such marriages have a secularizing effect on the family. A recent Pew survey on the twenty-first century generation shows that adults between the ages of 18 to 29 are less likely than previous generations to affiliate with a religious group and tend to pray less often than their elders. Nevertheless, their beliefs about the certainty of God's existence and life after death are not so different from their parents' and grandparents'.

Area

Christianity in the Rambukkana area belongs to the mainline traditional Christian denominations. It has churches with affiliation to the Anglican Church, Salvation Army, Baptist Church, Ceylon Pentecostal Mission, Apostolic Church, and the Assemblies of God. In addition there are a number of prominent Catholic churches in the same locality. Among Christians the Anglicans (1850) were the first to begin work in the region. Next to start work was the Baptist Church (1860). Thereafter the Salvationists arrived (1885). All of them are mainline Protestant Churches. The Roman Catholics began work in 1927 and spread fast into many villages in the area.

The Ceylon Pentecostal Mission (1952) and Apostolic Church (1963) came there after the national independence in 1948. There are two Assemblies of God churches of very recent origin with growing numbers.

Those who embraced Christianity since the nineteenth century have benefitted much from Christianity in general and Christian schools in particular. There were a large percentage of school teachers and Christian workers from the area. In addition there were many from these Christian communities who held very high

professional posts and places in the academia of the country. By the time of independence of the country the Christians had experienced 'redemption and lift' (MavGavran 1970, 210). In fact there were some marriages with 'higher' castes thus lifting them up socially as well. Assemblies of God in Rambukkana and Mawathagama are of recent origin therefore they did not benefit from the association of Christianity with colonial times. But the other churches have a heritage of Christian education in almost all Christian families.

The nationalization of government-assisted Christian denominational schools in 1961 affected the quality of Christianity in Sri Lanka. This affected the Christian community in Rambukkana in a bigger way.

Decline of Christianity

The decline of the Protestant Christian faith since the end of the Second World War is worldwide. The Rambukkana churches are no exception. It is stated that people are busier, more mobile, and there is less social stigma about not attending church. The mainline Protestant Church in Sri Lanka began to lose members after the nationalization of the Christian denominational schools in 1961. With very few exceptions, the decline has continued to this date. The loss of members has steadily continued. By the year 2000 these denominations had lost between one-fifth and one-third of the membership they claimed in 1961. Many theories have been advanced to explain why these old denominations have fallen on hard times.

Caste

Caste is one of the most important factors with regard to marriage in Sri Lanka. The significant social factor in the area is the domination of the community by one caste. They belong to a social group known as Batgama². It is a caste that is traditionally

²They are also known as Padu. This word is shunned by the people of this group.

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

confined to the areas of the Kandian Kingdom which lasted till 1815. Therefore they did not experience the effects of colonial administration and the Christian religion until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. They were marginalized from the mainstream of Kandyan Sinhala Buddhist society; therefore a significant number of them embraced Christianity since the second half of the nineteenth century as an attempt to overcome the rigours of the Kandyan social order.

Conversion to Christianity provided much easier access to good education and government jobs. The education and financial upliftment has enabled them to rise over the inherited difficulties and ascend socially in the Sri Lankan society. Nevertheless, their conversion to Christianity did not help them adequately to escape the caste prejudices which has had a strongly ingrained presence in the Sinhala society.

The Christians in this area are confined to the one caste except the rare occurrence of other caste members getting linked with them in marriage. According to the traditional view an upper caste woman marrying a lower caste man was despised. However, a lower caste woman marrying an upper caste man was tolerated. These differences in marriage customs have undergone changes as social mobility is continuously taking place among various castes. In addition reformed gender roles have contributed to the gradual disregard of caste in marriages. The caste stigma tends to remain when the community is confined to their traditional area of residence. However, one can see these prejudices declining when people are scattered among the other social groups and intermingle with them. The fact that Batgama remains in the lower ranks of the caste system has been a hindrance to many in connection with marriage.

Caste barriers amongst Christians

There are many incidents in which some so-called 'high caste' members did not consider members of this community for

marriage alliances. In the past Baptist youth groups in Beligodapitiya of Rambukkana met with the members of the same Christian denomination in Matale and Kandy. These meetings took place with each church hosting the others on a monthly basis. Yet matrimonial connections have been rare because of the caste prejudices. The same reason has been applicable to the Anglicans as well. Anglicans in the Kandy area are most of Goyigama or Batgama origins. The gap of the position of caste hierarchy is very big even to consider a love marriage in the traditional society. The Salvation Army has a large number of churches in this area and they are the only Salvationists in the Kandyan territory. The other Salvationists are found in the low country area, but are of different castes.

For example, some girls and boys start love affairs while in the university or in an institution where the youth have opportunities to meet. When the youth meet in these institutions they are equals. They share the same Christian faith and come from similar collegiate institutions of good repute. Their social backgrounds also fall into the professional class. In spite of all these similarities caste barrier has caused some such affairs to collapse due to parental disapproval. The so-called 'higher castes' have had an inclination to oppose such ventures. According to the university chaplain, some Christians from the Rambukkana area are reluctant to be identified as Christian because of this stigma.

One should not be surprised to see this kind of views entertained by Christian ministers as well. In fact when Rev. Fr. Andrew Kumara's (1934–2012) name was suggested in May 1984 for the post of Bishop of Kurunegala there were Anglican clerics of the same diocese who opposed him on account of his caste, despite his illustrious career as an Anglican priest. Andrew Kumara was from the Talampitiya Anglican parish. Even the Christian clerics do not seem to have overcome these prejudices since there are occasional caste-based slurs insulting them in verbal confrontations

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

The people who belong to this community have better physical appearance, education and Protestant ethics which have been instilled in them. These qualities have kept them outstanding in the Sri Lankan society. They continue to invest in education and aspire to advance in the modern society, more so than others in the Sinhala society.

It is noticeable that the Protestant Christian church has not been successful in eliminating these social ill effects within the Christian community while the country at large is gradually moving away from these prejudices. Factors such as the capitalist economy, urbanization and education have helped the people to progress socially and to lead a life on a par with the higher levels of the society.

Religious significance

For many persons in Sri Lanka, whether Christian or otherwise, faith profoundly influences both personal and family life. Marriage and family are sacred and central to the Christian religion. The Christian belief is that marriage is much more than a union between man and woman. It is also a spiritual act suited to help one know God more fully and intimately. Same faith marriage shifts the focus from marital enrichment to spiritual enrichment in ways that can help one to love the mate more. Whether it is pleasant or difficult, one's marriage can become a doorway to a closer relationship with God. A family unit would be able to produce a meaningful religious life more successfully when both husband and wife share the same religion. The family can go together to church.

Religion and marriage are two important issues in an individual's life. Both affect life in many ways such as how one thinks and acts. It may even change one's own identity. Any marriage may have positive or negative results. However, marriages that share the same faith will generally have positive results. Marriages that share different faiths would usually obtain negative results.

Correlation studies have shown that the most successful and essential element to have a strong marriage relationship is the similarities in beliefs and values.

Researchers have noticed that a marriage with the same religion tends to be stronger than that of a marriage with a different religion. Having different religions within the marriage may bring different point of views and conflicts involving their differences. If couples take their faith seriously, then it is possible that a barrier may be created between them since their differences will affect them sooner or later, provoking arguments between them and having a negative impact on their offspring.

Buddhism

Mixed marriages in the Rambukkana area are mostly between Christians and Buddhists. Christians are a minority and scattered in several villages separated from each other in the neighbourhood of Rambukkana. They are united with the Buddhist community in caste affiliations and are traditionally dependent on farming for livelihood.

The Buddhism that is found in Rambukkana today is not the Buddhism that the first Christians of the nineteenth century had to deal with. During the period of the last kings of Kandy the people of non-Goyigama castes were prohibited from entering the Buddhist religious order. The new Buddhist religious orders founded in the low country in the nineteenth century belonged to a group of non-Goyigama castes, the Salagama, Karawa and Durawa castes. Those new Buddhist orders also did not accept anyone other than their own particular caste for ordination. Therefore during the period that the people of Rambukkana were originally accepting Christianity, let alone ordination, they were not allowed even to enter Buddhist temples in the neighbouring villages for worship. This forced many people of Rambukkana area to accept Christianity like the dalits in India, mostly for social emancipation.

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

This situation changed with the establishment of the Ramanna Nikaya which was established in 1864. The condemning attitude of Buddhist high castes has been overcome by the establishment of temples belonging to the Ramannanikaya. This nikaya is not restricted to any caste. Therefore there are so-called high castes and low castes enjoying equal treatment (BE VII, 508). In the very early stages of this nikaya the monks walked from village to village and house to house to impart religious knowledge to the people. Gradually Buddhist temples of this nikaya began to be opened in the villages where non Goyigama social groups lived. This fulfilled the people's desire for Buddhist worship. Siyamalangamuwe Gunaratana Thera, who became the head of Ramannanikaya, is a person from this community. This shows the expansion of Buddhism in this area. Thus one of the basic reasons which attracted the people of this community to Christianity was gradually being eliminated.

There is no difference between Buddhist sects in Sri Lanka as far as doctrine is concerned. They follow the same disciplinary code and the same scripture (BE VII,507). Unlike the monks of the Siyam Nikaya the Ramanna monks wear robes covering both shoulders. The Ramanna Nikaya is among the main factors that averted the disappearance of Buddhism among the people of Kandyan non-Goyigama castes. When the Bauddhaloka Pirivena was opened in 1914 at Kurunegala the monks of this community also could avail themselves for formal priestly education.

The next step to strengthen Buddhism took place in 1961 with the takeover of the Christian denominational schools by the government. With this the influence that Christians commanded in the area disappeared. Before that the education in the area was mostly in the hands of Anglican, Salvationist, Baptist and Catholic management. Therefore Christianity could impact the life of the people in a positive way.

A further blow occurred in the 1970s when the Department of Education made religion a compulsory subject for school children; even the Christian children were forced to study Buddhism in many schools due to lack of facility for teaching Christianity. From that generation onwards the Christians in the area were in a seriously disadvantaged position.

Since the independence of Sri Lanka Buddhism has gained power and prestige which was denied to it in the colonial era. In this process Christianity began to lose most of the privileges it enjoyed in the colonial era. Gradually Christianity became a beleaguered minority. The prestige it enjoyed in Rambukkana villages in the past gradually began to dwindle.

When the threat of the schools takeover was in the offing the Protestant Christian leaders had no plan for the future of the church. Unlike the Roman Catholics the Protestant leaders handed over their schools without any safeguard mechanism for the education of the next generation of Christian children. The Church as a whole did not have a vision for the future. The present generation has continued to suffer as a result.

All Religions lead to salvation

The Liberal theology which engulfed the Protestant Church in Sri Lanka after the Second World War also affected the predicament of Christians in the Rambukkana area. The dwindling of the numbers of Christians in this area may be attributed to the attitude of some prominent clerics. Many of them had been trained in a pluralist theological attitude at the Theological College of Lanka in Pilimatalawa. Some ministers who came to these villages to minister to the people had the view that belief in Buddhism or Christianity would not make much of a difference spiritually. On that premise the Anglican leadership at

Meetanwala³ have celebrated *wesak dalasala* with the funds raised by the Christian congregation.

Some Protestant ministers have even graced the foundation laying ceremonies of Buddhist temples in their parishes in the guise of religious co-existence. Religious pluralism values co-existence in society, rather than the uniqueness of Christianity. There is an acknowledgement that at least some spiritual truths and true values exist in Buddhism. There are Christian leaders who hold the view that there can be truth and salvific value in other faith traditions. Such thinking has hindered the attempt to identify the causes for the decline of the numbers in their own flock and take remedial action.

The belief among the congregations is that the priests do not seem to take the parish work seriously. Some priests are absentee parish priests. Due to the lack of clerical personnel some congregations are looked after by a priest who lives far away in another parish. In this background it is no wonder that the congregations lament the deficiency of pastoral visits. In this atmosphere many preachers have permitted Interfaith marriages. Some Christian leaders have allowed their sons and daughters to enter in to matrimonial relationships with non-Christians when those partners are in upper social classes.

Interfaith Marriage

Religious mixed marriage is a gauge of changing social structures and norms. It reflects interaction in a pluralist society. The extent to which Interfaith marriage occurs indicates the breadth and depth of social changes taking place in Sri Lanka. Researchers have discovered that members of religious minorities are increasingly likely to marry out of their religious traditions. This is magnified because of the unavailability of same-faith prospective partners. There is also socio-psychological pressure toward

³ No such reciprocity is found in the Buddhist temple.

becoming a part of the majority community. On this account Interfaith marriages are very common among the Christians in this cluster of Protestant churches.

The possibility is that those who live in areas with low numbers of individuals who share their religious faith would identify less strongly with their religious faith and are more likely to intermarry. This inclination is found more in isolated Christian villages such as Ratmeewala, Jakaduwa (Anglican), Deevala (Salvation Army) and Beligodapitiya (Baptist). They are separated from fellow Christians by a considerable distance.

The growth of Interfaith marriage can be due to several other factors. The disappearance of rigid rules against Interfaith marriage and reduction of the control over the church on the youth is another contributory factor. The increased presence of women in the labour force has offered opportunities for contact with non-Christians for women of marriageable age. Another factor is that the modern woman who earns an income has become empowered to take decisions. Many of those who have entered into Interfaith marriages have stated that they would have preferred a Christian partner but it was not possible to find one. Couples with Interfaith backgrounds are less likely to discuss religion with their partners prior to marriage. In addition, young people get married older than ever before, allowing them to drift away from family traditions, including religious ones.

The tension is aggravated by the fact that the proportion of Protestants in Rambukkana has fallen between 1961 and 2015, partly because of internal migration for employment. The Protestant birth rate is lower than Buddhists. But the major cause of the decline in Protestant population has been Interfaith marriages.

Love Marriage

In the recent past there has been a process of secularization taking place in the country, enabling people of different faiths to

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

come together. Love marriage is a term used in Sri Lanka to describe a marriage which deviates from an arranged marriage, which was considered the norm in the past. In such a marriage the sole decision is made by the couple without consulting their parents. The uniqueness of these marriages is that they break caste, community and religious boundaries. In the past arranged marriages were preferred over love marriages, to solidify family ties and create new ties. Love marriage began to be popular in urban areas in the 1950s and spread to rural areas in the next decades.

Christians being the most educated lot in the villages of Rambukkana, love marriages gradually gained acceptance. It was also seen as the imposition of the younger generation's will over the parental wishes. The greater freedom and toleration in the Sri Lankan society also has contributed to the acceptance of love marriages.

Marriage is a fundamental right over which the Church has no authority. The Church can guide it and warn about the problems in premarital counselling sessions. However, if a Buddhist and Christian are in love, they have the right to marry. In a pluralistic society like Sri Lanka the Church cannot control it. There is no obligation of either party to seek permission of the Church to marry.

Inter-caste marriage

Inter-caste marriage is related to exogamy, where marriage takes place outside of a social group. Such marriages are mostly caused by love. It has been increasing in the Rambukkana area more than in most other parts of Sri Lanka especially because of the egalitarian education in Christian schools. Unlike in the past, two people from different social groups have more opportunities to meet and contemplate marriage in Sri Lanka today. Very often such a marriage would likely to be an inter-caste marriage. As there is no legal prohibition on inter-ethnic marriage in Sri Lanka

the youth can look for partners in any social group. Although inter-caste marriage in respect of this community can be regarded as social upliftment they are often Interfaith marriages as well. Inter-caste marriages between Christians on the other hand are a healthy sign for the Christian Church.

In the case of proposed marriage, parents or guardians looked for partners of the same religion. The caste factor is secondary for Christians. Yet limitation of eligible partners have made parents settle for suitable person even from among Buddhists. Therefore many couples have been brought together due to the paucity of suitable Christian partners.

Inter-church marriages

There is an advantage in the Rambukkana area as there are various Christian denominations in which to seek marriage partners. Inter-denominational marriages have taken place as a result. Such inter-church couples provide an opportunity for ecumenical understanding rather than posing a threat to traditional values. They may even provide a foundation for future reconciliation among Christian denominations. While they prevent the possibilities of Christians marrying Buddhists, they may even present a groundwork for more ecumenical reconciliation among Protestant Christian denominations.

Buddhist-Christian Marriage

The greatest threat to the Church has come from Buddhist-Christian marriages. The majority of Interfaith marriages take place with Buddhists of the same caste and even of other castes. The Christian community is a minute fraction of the number of Buddhists in this social group which is the traditional base for marriage partners. In addition Buddhists of other caste groups are the great majority in work places and other places of social interaction. Hence the scope for Christian-Buddhist marriages is arising steeply. Therefore the fear is that Christianity in the Rambukkana area would be swallowed up by Buddhism. Interfaith marriage with them is one step in that direction.

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

There are great differences between Christianity and Buddhism. Buddhism does not have a sacramental view of marriage. It is a secular institution which regulates the biological and emotional needs of people. Marriage is a social, rather than a religious undertaking for the Buddhist. Buddhism is an atheistic religion while Christianity is theistic. Buddhist belief is determined by the concept of karma and considers one's destiny as one's own karma, while the Christian would look at life in terms of God's will and grace. Most Buddhist religious leaders are of the view that intermarriage does not compromise the religious identity of the Buddhist partner, whereas it is a compromise for the Christian.

Some Christians in Beligodapitiya stated that the immediate causes for the decline in numbers is the loss of prestige of Christianity in the Sri Lankan society. In the past when a non-Christian woman married a Christian there was a tendency for her to accept baptism and become a member of a Church. Today this practice has ceased because the Buddhists who come as partners of Christians are very confident about the philosophical validity of their faith. They are proud of Buddhism and look down on Christianity as unscientific.

Buddhist view of Interfaith marriage

In respect of Interfaith marriages the advice of Buddhist experts is that "without getting into the why and the wherefore of ethics, if ethical behaviour is put into practice that would be of great practical value" (Lily 1978, 65). It is also stated that "Humanism would be the best frame of reference for the socialization of children in a mixed marriage." Their view is that discussions on the rationality of religions and existence of God should be avoided in an inter-religious marriage. If each spouse is mature enough to feel their need and sensitivity as subservient to those of the other, such marriages would prove to be a great success despite all other difficulties. It is contrary to Christian belief because Christian faith is a relationship with Christ rather than a

name of a religion. This is where Buddhists and secularists misunderstand Christianity.

Problems

Interfaith marriages are subject to internal and external challenges. The primary internal challenge may derive from differing notions of the nature of marriage itself. Father Aloysius Pieris is of the view that "Unless a dialogue is initiated regarding the differences and classification sought by Buddhists and Christians responsible for the formation of religious conscience, tensions in marital relationships of mixed couples are bound to be perpetuated." (Dialogue 1978, 98).

Some problems that couples with different faiths have to deal with include varied religious practices, religious beliefs and laws, family issues, making decisions involving their children, and many more. Central difficulties experienced by Interfaith couples arise from the initial ones involved in planning and implementing the wedding ceremony itself. The issue of *poruwa* ceremony or church wedding normally has emerged as a result.

Other problems rotate around issues involving children, other life-passage rituals, family holiday observances, and dealing with extended family. The traditional Buddhist ways of greeting would collide with the Christian concepts of greeting.

Buddhists would normally resort to the popular Buddhism in times of crisis. They resort to consulting astrologers, offering *pujas* to gods, planetary deities and demons. This kind of practice of cultural upbringing of the spouses would have a tendency to create practical problems in an Interfaith marriage. Conflicts have taken place when a Christian husband does not see anything wrong in the slaughter a bird or a pig for food. Such practices would cause irritation and displeasure in Interfaith marriages. However, the conflicts which may occur in Buddhist-Christian marriages are not solely religious. "Buddhist-Christian mixed marriages, in most instance, have been a bitter and unnerving

experience for the partners rather than a mutually enriching experience that they potentially could be" (Dialogue 1978, 108).

Counselling

It is clear that a couple with two different religious worldviews would encounter difficulties. Many young people who contemplate marrying outside their faith do not realize the problems and difficulties that difference of religion could give rise to. The present day young generation is more individualistic and less traditionally religious than their parents. In our interviews with Protestant pastors and leaders as well as laity it was indicated that there is no counselling programme for such couples before marriage. The Salvation Army, however, offers premarital counselling if a request is made. They have couple Sundays and youth Sundays as well as family Sundays, which are used to make the member aware of norms and formations of a Christian family.

The church has no mechanism to avert any irreversible or serious obstacle to a marital union before it happens. It is the duty of the church to identify these difficulties and warn the couples. However, the Salvation Army has at times offered guidance to the youth even in the case of Interfaith marriages. Some pastors say that they have made some attempts to enlighten Buddhist partners in Christian values. This is rare and sporadic. There is no concerted attempt to win the Buddhist partners to the Christian faith. All churches in the area are helpless as there are not enough suitable marriage partners within the Christian community.

There is no such training for couples contemplating Interfaith marriage. Some churches have counselling for premarital couples. However, these are conducted by poorly qualified people on the subject. They are not regularised arrangements.

If the partners are not willing to focus on the same faith, then tolerance of different values and faiths, commitment, and responsibility is essential in any interfaith marriage; otherwise, it is really difficult to pursue such a relationship because dealing with different points of views and beliefs is a big step in a married couple's life. Disputes would arise regarding sums spent on religious activities. The difference of religion can prejudice a deep union, which would be the hallmark of an ideal marriage. It is said that Interfaith marriage is "an obstacle to the complete spiritual union of the spouses."

There are several ways that the inter-religious marriages deal with the issue of salvation. If the person is serious about his views on salvation it would become the most serious question of his life. If the person feels that his is the only way to salvation he would be obliged to follow it and to offer it to the members of his family. Another view is that the spouse has the inalienable right to enjoy the liberty of conscience. Therefore, one has the right to adhere to the religion which one prefers and that is to be respected within his family. All these can bring about tension in marriage relationships.

The church has ignored the fact that religions in an Interfaith marriage are unbalanced. When a person is in an Interfaith relationship, that person may need to ask himself or herself if he or she is willing to take the risk in dealing with any arguments that are brought from religious beliefs. If the person is willing to take this risk, he or she should take time to learn more about the partner's religion better. By this, the person can tell how much this person values his or her faith, and at the same time they can start finding any similarities between the two different backgrounds. Silence on these issues by the church is detrimental to the Christians in the area.

Theoretical Solutions

Interfaith marital relations take place despite the difficulties that may be caused by their different religious values. They would try

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

hard to make the relationship work. The church has the duty to smooth their family life, keeping Christian norms intact. A person might want to learn more about their partner's religion before making a decision involving the relationship. Even if the faiths are different, one may be able to find certain common religious beliefs or practices that can help as a common ground in support of the relationship. When both give each other the freedom to express their faith in their own way and mutually participate in one another's practices or church services, the couple will be willing to compromise in this interfaith relationship.

Still, any form of compromise might be dangerous and intolerable even if one mutually participates in the other's religion. Most people have difficulties understanding the difference between believing and tolerating religious views. When the partners refuse to compromise in their relationship, then it means that they are not willing to deal with the conflicting issues. This also means that they also do not want to give up their religious beliefs and practices. Some people may think that in a marriage, religious issues will be shared or will be influenced or even discarded from their life. After marriage when issues crop up the partner may feel trapped in a different religious ritual and that they are giving up their freedom of worship or being disloyal to their own religion. If the church is not aware of these issues the church will not only lose its members but also add to their misery. In the contemporary society it seems that it is the Christian party that is losing because they are compelled to give up their faith due to lack of Christian fellowship. Buddhists can go to any temple for worship. The Christians on the other hand are divided on denominational lines, thus making it hard for a Christian to find a place for worship. This is more true for a person who has to relocate to a predominantly Buddhist society after marriage.

Arrival of a Child

Most conflicts in inter-religious marriages will surface after the children are born. Studies show that interfaith couples do not

often argue about religious points, such as whether Jesus was God or the Buddha was omniscient. Their disagreements are almost always over family traditions in child-raising. There are situations where a couple with different religions have a child that has not developed his or her religious identity, but when that moment comes, a conflict might be created concerning the child's religious background. This phenomenon is very common in mixed marriages today. The children are involved in two different religions and the parents are the ones in charge of discussing and arguing about the child's religious identity. A Christian spouse may require baptism of children and require them to attend church every Sunday, while the Buddhist may wish take them to Buddhist rituals. Couples should decide in which religion their children are to be brought up (Dialogue 1978, 111). The end result is that in several Interfaith families children have no inclination to attend any religious worship (Rev. Vitanage 4.7.2015).

In a time of rapid social change, children may hold values which are different from the values of their parents; yet parental values would still predict children's values in spite of an overall shift. The strongest disagreements in Interfaith marriages are on religious preference. The mother's faith wins out two times as often as that of the father. Researchers have found that parent-child agreement on religion on the average can take place before they are seventeen years old. Later it becomes more difficult. Invariably it is Buddhism that they choose because of the forceful teaching of Buddhism in schools that they attend and their social contacts.

It is also clear that when it comes to dealing with religious holidays or other traditions, the parent whose faith gets left behind finds it difficult to adapt. Children of interfaith marriages in these villages grow up neutral. It is believed that they could select their religion when they grow to adulthood.

Upbringing

Several studies have documented an association between Christian religion and children's wellbeing. It is found that family religious involvement promotes stronger ties among family members. It has a positive impact on the quality of their relationship. Christian religious participation has also been associated with better educational outcomes. The religiously more observant Christian parents who encourage their children to attend worship services are also supportive of activities that are conducive to success in the secular arena as well.

Religious training that is received from parents and from religious institutions has a positive effect on the Christian children in Rambukkana. Therefore, children have been more prone to remain within the parents' faith. Most children's church affiliations would normally be built up in a context determined and favoured by their parents (Iannaconet 1990, 330). Which belief the children will accept and which faith they prefer would be decided by the guidance they receive from their parents. The fact that many leaders of the Anglican Church and Salvation Army have come from this community indicate the parental religious guidance has paid dividends. In addition there are several pastors of evangelical churches whose upbringing in childhood was in these villages.

Christian family

The famous counsel is that "the family that prays together, stays together." It's not just an adage coming from preachers keen on filling pews. There is sociological research to back it up. Interfaith marriage affect the wellbeing of the Christian family. Christian faith brings about a way of life with Christ as the leader of the family. The day to day flow of the family life is guided by their pivotal faith in Christ. Hence outward practices that bring out of their faith such as family prayers, blessing children when they set out to school, grace before meals become normal. Turning to prayer in times of joy and sorrow and at all special occasions in

the family develops further. It is the first place where children are initiated to private devotion. This makes way for personal encounter with Christ their redeemer at a later stage. The Church lays the responsibility for all this at the baptism of a child.

There is a saying that “If it was not for the women, there would be no church.” Women form the backbone of most religious organizations in Sri Lanka. They remain members of the church, they worship, participate, teach Sunday school, are on the usher’s board, give their tithes, form community outreaches, and undergird the entire operation of the church (Frederick 2003, 4). When the mother is a Buddhist all these hopes are at risk.

Mixed marriages erode the Christian family concept. In the Rambukkana area for example, there are many families where the Buddha statue and the picture of Christ are positioned in the same place where the couple light lamps. There is hardly any Christian family life in such households. Very often the church attendance of children of such families is erratic.

In the Rambukkana area, even among Christian families where both parents are Christian, though some aspects like blessing children and family prayers remain, grace before meals has disappeared completely. In fact, there is a correlation between not having family meals together and not saying grace. Absence of family meals together has a propensity to erode family ties as the children grow up.

With Interfaith marriage on the increase, the Buddhist parent in the family turns to the astrologers and other forms of popular Buddhist practices in times of adversity and sickness rather than Christ-centred prayers. The Buddhist may honour Christ, but he is one among thirty three thousand gods. Almost all members in mixed marriages have horoscopes. They often seek the benefit of *bodhi puja* and use talismans and yet attend churches on Sundays. They offer vows to Kataragama, and also receive prayers from the pastor. When they feel that their prayer is answered

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

they often have attributed it to the gods of popular Buddhism. This is the shallowness of the Christian faith in mixed marriages.

In the operation of all these practices and beliefs the Christian family has received a severe battering. The family unit has ceased to be the bulwark of the faithful and link to transfer the faith to the next generation. This phenomenon is true of all the Protestant denominations of the area.

Sunday School

Today the Christian churches in this area lack a systematic programme of action for Sunday schools. In Rambukkana area many churches either have no properly conducted Sunday schools or they are haphazardly conducted. However, if one asked the question all churches would say that they have Sunday schools. The question is about the quality and its ability to attract children to Sunday school. Where there are Sunday schools in operation the teachers are ill trained. Most churches conducted their Sunday school within the main sanctuary as they do not have a separate place for Sunday school. The space and time is restricted. Sunday school material is scanty and is placed in insecure places. Many of those places however, had church-run preschools and a meeting hall.

It is well known that values as well as beliefs are passed along to the younger generation in their Sunday school. Sunday school literature complements this. The children who had Sunday school experience display well-mannered behaviour in a world where power, sex, success and violence are appreciated. Many Christian leaders in this area say that as children they learnt that earthly goals are best achieved by obeying heavenly precepts rather than keeping up with the demands of the peers. It is where they found the foundation for their Christian faith.

Attendance in Sunday school classes is now scanty. Most Anglican churches are lax about the conduct of Sunday schools

for children. The mixed marriages contribute to this because mothers of Buddhist background are not interested in church Sunday schools. It is the mother who normally sends the children to church. Even in a well-organized Sunday school, conducted in a special facility, like that of Beligodapitiya Baptist church, attendance is unsatisfactory because of the apathy of the parents of mixed marriage.

Adult Sunday school or adult fellowship groups are unknown to all churches in this area. It is a place where adults deeply concerned about Christian faith will gather to share life together. They study the scripture together in an atmosphere of a cordial gathering. Poor attendance in Sunday school classes for children and the absence of such classes for adults would reflect the lethargy of their leaders.

The Buddhist Dahamapasala and the Christian Sunday school are different. The former teaches Buddhism as it is taught in schools. Christian Sunday school is different. It has no material value. The Buddhist temple offers material benefit. Dahampasala has connection with school education. The school syllabus and the *dahamapasala* are the same. The Buddhist Sunday school has a graded system of conducting classes. The evaluation is conducted nationally so that every child would learn the same subject content in any part of the Island. They also train teachers at the higher level of the curriculum.

The curriculum adopted in the Christian Sunday school system in this area is pitiable in comparison with their Buddhist counterparts. Apparently there are more than one Sunday school curricula in operation in this cluster of churches. However, the NCC programme takes precedence over the others. Even though the school children do not get a Christian education in their day-schools the church has not come out with a proper programme to compensate for it.

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

The Christians lack a concerted attempt to formalize and unify the Sunday school curriculum. The leadership of the Protestant Christian Church has to take the concept of Sunday school more seriously because of the value it has in building the faith and moral values of the next generation.

Christians have to be careful in taking Buddhist Sunday schools as examples because the principles behind Christian Sunday school are different. The Sunday school is not merely for teaching but also for Christian fellowship.

Youth Programmes

The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Therefore, the church needs to give priority to youth ministry if they have any vision for the next generation. There is an expression that 'the church is always one generation away from extinction.' It is self-evident that churches in the Rambukkana area ought to take seriously their commitment regarding ministry to teenagers. The churches that take care of their teenagers today, and value them, have their reward not only now but also in the future.

Any effective youth programmes are lacking in these churches. The reason given is that the youth are not interested in church programmes as they are interested in activities outside. Some parents said that their children attend tuition classes on Sundays, therefore are unavailable to take part in any Christian activity. Others have said that the teenagers have no interest in the things of God, they only think about movie stars, mobile phones, the latest musical sensation and their clothing. In all these one may notice that the children of Interfaith marriages are indolent about Christian activities.

Added to this the apathy of the minister has had a cumulative effect on this predicament. The leaders of churches also have their excuses for not conducting any youth activity. Their view is that non-Christians also would take part in such programmes, and

behave in an untoward manner within the church compound. No solution has been contemplated and church leaders have taken the path of least resistance by avoiding youth activities. A few ministers in this area said that they understand that this is an area which needs attention. However, their tendency is to find reasons to avoid youth work, whereas the many positive reasons why they should have it are not taken into account.

The youth programmes are the best avenue for the Christian youth to meet in an area surrounded by non-Christians. It is found in police reports that religiously brought up Christian twelfth graders are less likely than their non-Christian counterparts to smoke cigarettes and less likely to start smoking pot at early ages. They are also less likely to drink alcohol. Religiously brought up Christian high school seniors have shown less likelihood to have ever tried any kind of drug, including hard drugs, than their non-Christian peers. Some teachers at Meetanwala stated that the Christians tend to be better-behaved at school. These teachers informed us that religious Christian youth have more of a tendency to volunteer in their community and to participate in student activities in school than their non-religious peers. It has been found that the youth who attend Christian youth programmes are less vulnerable to sexual misbehaviour. Christian youth in organized groups like YFC are associated with fewer violent incidents among youth, such as being disrespectful to teachers and getting into fights.

There is, however, a serious absence of youth programmes on a regular basis in this area. The Salvation Army is on the other hand involved in regular youth gatherings in their camp sites at Rambukkana, Kalutara and Hikkaduwa. Their results in socializing Christian youth have been commendable.

There is a great number of school dropouts after O/L and A/L examinations. In this predominantly agrarian society there seems to be no safety net for these young people till they find direction to their life and employment. They are extremely vulnerable

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

because their time is not gainfully utilized. Young adults born in Interfaith marriages are more vulnerable. They are less interested in Christian youth programmes as the parental backing often is lacking. Many Anglican churches in Rambukkana do not seem to have understood that youth are the leaders of tomorrow. If they realize that, they should make sure to create an environment which welcomes youth, and encourage them to participate in church activities.

Since the church is unable to come up with youth programmes it is relevant that outside Christian para-church organizations step in. YFC is active in many urban areas of Sri Lanka. They do not seem to have any programmes in this area where there is a large number of rural Christians. There is no YMCA in the area. The one at Rambukkana has terminated its activities. When the Church was powerful they were there. But when the Christian community is weak they have withdrawn from the scene. An inter-school Christian fellowship would enhance the chance of Christian children getting to know their Christian counterparts in the area.

The Salvation Army conducts youth programmes on a regular basis in their camp sites. Even there the Camp has become a picnic. They have a follow up programme with a random sample. Even that depends on the minister in charge. When there is a minister who shows disregard for that, the work becomes meaningless.

Protestant ministers have not taken the trouble to find some ways and means to create an atmosphere to compensate for the opportunities they have lost as a result of the loss of Christian schools. Occasional gatherings organized by the Bible quiz are inadequate to meet this demand.

Shepherding role of the parish priest

The church leaders in the country have to take serious note of the internal decay of the churches in the Rambukkana area. This is where the shepherding of the parish priest can be of great benefit. The duty of the shepherd is to go after the lost. They also have neglected the injunction of Christ, "Feed my sheep", by neglecting their flock. By continuous befriending of Interfaith families which are vulnerable to be lost to the church the parish priest could make a difference.

The churches in Rambukkana have given inadequate attention to the problems that mixed marriages may cause to the couple. The church seems to have ignored the spiritual welfare of the Christian partner. The couples are left to fend for themselves without any pastoral support, as many ministers are absent or not available for the parishioners to consult. The church has not considered it worthwhile to see the problem from both parties involved in the mixed marriage. Even electronic contacts are made difficult when the clerics immobilize their electronic equipment.

The family visits to these mixed couples could sometimes be awkward, yet they are the people who are most in need of the counsel of the priest. The Christian priest is at an advantage because their counterpart in Buddhism, who is the bhikkhu, does not do house visits. The minister's intervention can alleviate this weakness that has set in to the Christian family unit.

This deficiency is more prominent today because it is only the priest who is in a position to guide the flock. The tradition of raising lay leaders, such as schoolmasters and catechists, to share in the shepherding ministry has fallen to the background because of the theological gap between the laity and the priest. Priests have had a liberal orientation whereas the congregation aspires to a faith centred ministry. It seems that the priest is forgetting his role as the shepherd of the flock.

*INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE CLUSTER
OF CHURCHES IN THE RAMBUKKANA AREA*

Parents have blamed the Protestant priests for not coming to schools to inspect the Christian activities whereas the Roman Catholic Fathers were regularly attending to the welfare of the Catholic children in schools.

Arguments

Some Christian ministers have argued that more Interfaith marriage is good for civic life. Such unions bring extended families from diverse backgrounds into close contact. There is nothing like marriage between different groups to make society more integrated and more tolerant. Though the Interfaith marriage may be good for the society, the effects on the families themselves can be tragic. According to calculations based on the American Religious Identification Survey in 2001, people who had been in mixed-religion marriages were three times more likely to be divorced or separated than those who were in same-religion marriages. More recent research concludes that even differing degrees of religious belief and observance can cause trouble. They have also found that there is higher rate of divorce when the couples' religiosity differs drastically.

There is some evidence that having the same religion as a spouse matters greatly for family stability. However, Interfaith families are no longer outcasts in their communities. Yet a religiously tolerant society does not make a happy marriage make. As Lehrer points out, a strong or even moderate religious faith will influence many activities that husband and wife perform jointly. Religion is not just church on Sunday but also ideas about raising children, how to spend time and money, friendships and professional networks.

CONCLUSION

Some Christians leave the church when they are angry with the pastor. This shows that they do not have an intimate relationship with Christ. Their loyalties are with the Church. The organization

of church may try to keep them within their denominational fold. However, if they are with Christ they can remain in the faith even within an interfaith marriage context.

The Christians in the Rambukkana area have realised that rituals of other activities of the church is hardly different from those of the Buddhist temple because of its routine nature. Today the Buddhist monks do most of the work traditionally done by Christian parish priests, thereby reducing the validity of the Christian priest. The difference of the Christian life should be that it is a Christ-centred one where fellowship and worship are intertwined.

Since the relational aspect of Christianity is downplayed by the liberal theology of the church establishment, the Christian community of the Rambukkana area themselves feels that there is no future for Christianity in their home land. They feel that the Church would have a slow death and they would not be able to offer anything Christian to the next generation. The church leaders have neglected the wellbeing of the Christian family, children and youth. The statement of the former Archbishop of Canterbury of the Church of England, Lord Carey, on November 18, 2013 that the Church of England is "one generation away from extinction", is relevant the churches in the Rambukkana area as well, He laid the blame at the feet of Church leaders who he said should be 'ashamed' of their failure to bring youngsters into their services. Our research in the Rambukkana cluster of Protestant churches shows that the leaders of the Protestant Christian Church in Sri Lanka cannot afford to ignore this warning.

THE EDUCATIONAL CYCLE

VINODH GUNASEKERA

Let all things be done properly and in order – 1 Cor. 14:40

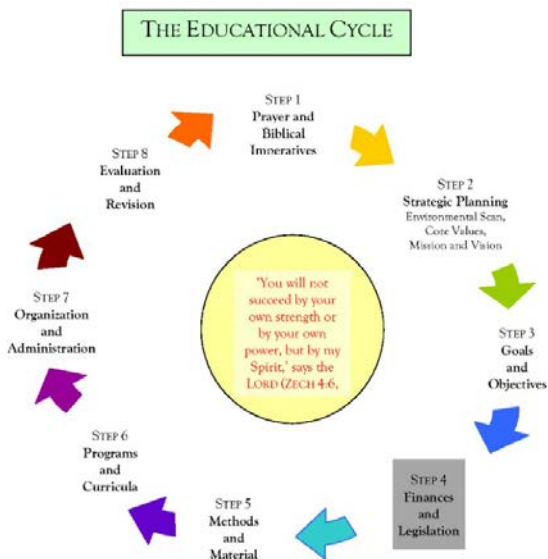
The Educational Cycle is a methodology for structuring and sustaining educational ministries in an ordered biblical way. When organizing ministries such as small groups, Sunday school classes, evangelistic outreach ministries, leadership training, men's and women's ministries, discipleship ministries, and theological training, churches often don't have a well-designed, biblically based method for structuring such ministries. Some church and para-church ministries fail not because the ministry itself is not viable but because the ministry was not well planned and thought through. Sometimes what is thought to be a need turns out not to be a need when the ministry is begun when planning is not done. At other times, things go well when the ministry is begun, but as the requirements begin to sink in, the organizers realize that more resources should have been planned for continued success. The Educational Cycle, described below, is a useful method to in planning any Christian ministry, particularly educational ministries, in a biblical, prayerful, systematic way.¹

¹ The educational cycle is taught as part of the Educational Process course at the Dallas Theological Seminary. Some comments have been adapted from: Lin McLaughlin, "Educational Process of the Church," unpublished class notes for CE101 (Dallas Theological Seminary, fall 2004).

The Educational Cycle is composed of the following steps:

1. Prayer and Biblical Imperatives
2. Strategic Planning
3. Goals and Objectives
4. Methods and Material
5. Programs and Curricula
6. Organization and Administration
7. Evaluation and Revision

The last step of the Educational Cycle, which is Evaluation and Revision, leads back to Biblical Imperatives and Strategic Planning (the first two steps of the cycle), and the entire cycle is repeated so that the educational process would be honed to its potential best, in time. Sunday school programs, men's and women's ministries, adult Bible studies, leadership training programs, small groups, evangelistic teaching ministries, and discipleship programs are some examples of ministries that can benefit by being organized according to the Ed Cycle.



Step 1: Prayer and Biblical Imperatives

Biblical Imperatives

The first step of the Ed Cycle is the selection of four to seven Biblical Imperatives. A biblical imperative is a command or statement of the Bible that the ministry will be governed by. Biblical Imperatives seek to answer the question, “What does God want this organization to do?” A biblical imperative is a command or guide to show you how to minister God’s way.² The most essential component of a well-designed ministry is its biblical veracity. Christians have begun many organizations without first finding out what the Bible has to say about the type of ministry they were starting. Such organizations are often run according to the subjective thoughts and ideas of those who lead them. Though good might come out of such efforts, ultimately every ministry will be evaluated according to God’s principles and criteria for His church. Therefore it is best that a person begins by asking what God’s criteria are for the work that he or she wants to do for Him. God’s plans and principles are outlined in God’s Word. Therefore, the identification of Biblical Imperatives, forms the basis of the Ed Cycle.

For instance, if one wants to start a theological education program, the following seven Scripture passages can help form the Biblical Imperatives for the theological educational program:

1. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom” (Col 3:16)
2. “Command and teach these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity” (1 Tim 4:11-12)
3. “And the things you have heard in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim 2:1-2)

² McLaughlin, “Educational Process of the Church.”

4. "You must teach what is in accordance with sound doctrine" (Tit 2:1)
5. "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go onto maturity" (Heb 6:1)
6. "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" (Jas 3:1)
7. "Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov 9:9-10)

A prayerful search for Biblical Imperatives will get a ministry oriented in the direction that God has already provided in His Word. The other steps of the Ed Cycle, the mission, vision, objectives, curricula, methods and material will be governed by the Biblical Imperatives that are selected.

Praying Well

Every ministry has an ethos (or a character). The ethos is how something makes one feel and behave. Emphasis on prayer will bring about a God-ward ethos. Ministry should not be thought of as managing an organization. God is creating a supernatural organism, and believers are moving along as He guides. In some ministries, prayer is just something that is added at the last minute. In other instances, it is simply a small part of a program. In the Ed Cycle prayer is taken seriously. Those who design a program according to the Ed Cycle are encouraged at the beginning (step 1) to plan how prayer will be integrated into the various aspects of the ministry. Integration of prayer into the organization must be specific and cover the breadth of the program design. Some questions about prayer that the Ed Cycle asks the designer of the ministry are, "What areas are targeted for concerted prayer?" "When and how will these prayers be presented to God?" "What amounts of time will be spent in

prayer?” Church ministries will never be His, until believers get serious about prayer.³

A recent Christian song begins with “We are taller when we bow.”⁴ It might be added, “We are never as strong as we are on our knees.” Ministries constructed and conducted with knees on the ground will find fruition in an ethos of dependence upon the Lord and of rejoicing in the strength granted by the Almighty as seen in the prayers of men like John Baillie who prays, “My heart an alter Lord, and Thy love the flame”⁵ and “I steady my step when I recall, that though I slip, You do not fall.”⁶

Prayer in the Old Testament derives its meaning from the conviction that Yahweh's covenant with His people will not fail; He has pledged His word and He is an unchanging God. Prayer is not an attempt to persuade or propitiate an unwilling God who is to be prevailed upon by the intensity of man's prayers, or simply by the requisite offerings. Prayer is a turning to God in the confidence that those who come in repentance and faith, will receive the things that they ask. There is confidence because God has given His word, and because of what He has done in fulfillment of His word in the past.⁷

This step in the Educational Cycle seeks to answer questions such as, how will you prayerfully proceed with your new ministry? For instance what kind of emphasis will you place on prayer? What type(s) of prayer effort(s) might you organize or commit to for the ministry you are heading up?

³ Ibid., 57.

⁴ Mark Tedder, Jamie Harvill & John Hartley, *We are Taller When We Bow - Let Us be Broken* (Thankyou Music & Paths of Peace Music, 2006).

⁵ John Baillie, *Diary of Private Prayer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 89

⁶ Ibid., 69

⁷ Francis Foulkes, “The Art of God,” http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/acts_of_god_foulkes.pdf (accessed on February 20, 2010).

Step 2: Strategic Planning

This second step of the Ed Cycle moves Biblical Imperatives from the conceptual stage to the planning stage. Strategic Planning draws upon the two preceding steps to focus on the future. This step defines what one wants the future to be like and what the organization's role could be in creating that future. The Strategic Plan consists of four components:

1. The Environmental Scan
2. Core Values
3. Vision Statement
4. Mission Statement

The Environmental Scan

The first component of the Strategic Plan is the Environmental Scan. This involves a scan of the general environment and culture to assess need. Both the environment of the church and the general environment outside the church should be scanned. The general environment can be divided into local, regional, national and global Environmental Scans.⁸ The Environmental Scan should attempt to answer some or all of the questions below:

1. What percentage of the population targeted by the ministry actually live in the area that ministry will be based out of? What demographics of the area will help the ministry? Population demographics are often available on city and government websites for the location that is under consideration.
2. What relevant literature is available for those who will take part in the ministry that is to be designed? Will material needed for the ministry have to be specially ordered? If so what costs will be incurred?

⁸ McLaughlin, "Educational Processes."

3. What technological implements will be needed? Are they available at the location that the ministry will operate from? If not, are there internet kiosks or technology service providers that might be able to provide the technology required?
4. How will the cultural context of the society impact the ministry? Is the culture monolithic or diverse? If the culture is diverse, what additional factors should the ministry take into account?
5. What is the legislative and political and climate of the society? Will these affect the ministry positively or negatively?
6. What are the felt-needs of the target population? Are those being addressed by the ministry? If not, how can the felt-needs of the population be taken into account by the ministry that is being designed?

Once the Environmental Scan is completed, one might come to the conclusion that the ministry needs to be setup differently from the original conception. For instance, if a theological educational program is to be setup but the people in the area are mostly non-Christian, then it might be better to begin with an evangelistic outreach. If a youth program is to be started and the area that the ministry will operate in has little or no youth, then the Environmental Scan might show that it would be better that an adult ministry be started instead of a youth program.

A SWOT analysis can be beneficial to the Environmental Scan.⁹ The acronym SWOT is a business term. SWOT stands for Strengths

⁹ SWOT Analysis is a widely used method for organizational planning. The online Business Dictionary at www.businessdictionary.com defines SWOT analysis as a “situation analysis in which internal strengths and weaknesses of an organization and external opportunities and threats faced by it are closely examined to chart a strategy. See <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/SWOT-analysis.html> (accessed on March 10, 2010).

(S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O), and Threats (T). A SWOT analysis of the environment of the envisaged ministry could be very useful for the design of the ministry itself. The Strengths (S) of the ministry are the resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for developing a strong ministry. Strengths might include such things as human resources and facilities. Weaknesses (W) are the lack of certain strengths that might be required for the ministry envisioned. The lack of finances or influence can be considered weaknesses. The Environmental Scan can also reveal certain Opportunities (O) that could be beneficial to the ministry that is to be formulated. Some environments contain open doors to certain kinds of ministries. Threats (T) can include the economic, social and political challenges that might be a problem for the ministry over time. Threats can be both internal and external to the work being designed.

A helpful example of a SWOT analysis for a children's ministry is given in the website of the Western Canadian District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance at www.cmawdo.org:

SWOT ANALYSIS

Example: A church considering its ministry to children could produce the following SWOT analysis:

Strengths: We have around 40 children between 4 and 11 coming to Junior Church each week. We have a strong team of experienced, well trained Junior Church leaders who are committed to their ministry with children. Our building is modern and flexible - we have a number of rooms to accommodate Junior Church. Children enjoy coming to church, and find their groups stimulating and rewarding. So much so they sometimes bring their friends.

Weaknesses: We currently lack modern music resources within the church (guitar/drums). Only around two-thirds of children leaving Junior Church at 11, stay in the church until the age of 13. We currently don't integrate the children into

church worship well - they leave during the first song, and don't return until the coffee time at the end.

Opportunities: Children have brought their friends along to Junior Church - this could be encouraged with special weeks focused on newcomers. Opportunity to link some of the teaching with current themes amongst children eg: latest Disney release, bands, etc. We could make new contacts through participating in a local football or netball league.

Threats: Some parents don't come to church, and give it a low priority for their children to attend. Children's leaders have busy working lives and a number are under pressure at work.¹⁰

The website www.quickmba.com provides a way of designing strategies based on a SWOT analysis.¹¹ This matrix given below, provides a way to devise strategies that take advantage of strengths and opportunities while working to overcome weaknesses and threats:

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	SO Strategies Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities	WO Strategies Overcome weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities

¹⁰ From the website of the Western Canadian District of the Christian of the Christian and Missionary Alliance which contains a helpful document describing SWOT analysis and this example at <http://www.cmawdo.org/admin/files/packages/SWOT%20ANALYSIS%20TOOL.pdf> (accessed on Mar 10, 2010).

¹¹ From the www.quickmba.com website, at <http://www.quickmba.com/strategy/swot/> (accessed in February 2010).

Threats	ST Strategies Use strengths to avoid threats	WT Strategies Minimize weaknesses and avoid threats
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Figure 9. The SWOT Matrix.¹²

WT strategies (minimizing weakness and avoiding threats) can be enhanced by doing a PEST analysis. The acronym PEST stands for Political (P), Economic (E), Socio-cultural (S) and Technological (T) factors of the environment that the organization will operate in. A helpful description of the PEST analysis is provided in a website named www.marketingteacher.com:

Political Factors: the political arena has a huge influence upon the regulation of [organizations] ... You must consider issues such as:

1. How stable is the political environment?
2. Will government policy influence laws that regulate or tax your [organization]
3. Does the government have a [policy or] view on culture and religion?

Socio-cultural Factors: The social and cultural influences on [organizations] vary from country to country. It is very important that such factors are considered. Factors include:

1. What is the dominant religion?
2. What are attitudes to foreign [ministries]?
3. Does language impact [ministries]?
4. How much time do [people] have for leisure?
5. What are the roles of men and women within society?
6. How long are the population living? Is the older generation [considered valuable]?
7. Do the population have strong/weak opinion about [religious] issues?

¹² *ibid.*

Economic Factors: [Ministries] needs to consider the state of a trading economy in the short and long terms. This is especially true when planning for international [ministries]. You need to look at:

1. Interest rates
2. The level of inflation Employment level per capita
3. Long-term prospects for the economy GDP per capita, and so on

Technological Factors: Technology is vital for [reaching the younger generation] and is a major driver of globalization. Consider the following:

1. Does technology allow for [services to be provided] more cheaply and to a better standard of quality?
2. Do available technologies offer consumers more innovative products and services [through the use of the internet and devices such as mobile phones and laptops]?
3. How is distribution [of services] changed by new technologies e.g. books via the internet... etc.
4. Does technology offer [organizations] new ways to communicate with consumers e.g. Digital Marketing, Social Media Advertising, Customer Relations Management (CRM) etc.?¹³

While analyses such as the above are useful tools for planning, it is important that a biblical perspective be maintained. Biblical perspective can sometimes dictate seeing things in opposite ways from the way the rest of the world sees things. The Scriptures are replete with commands to give up one's rights, to be good to

¹³ From the website www.marketingteacher.com, at, http://marketingteacher.com/Lessons/lesson_PEST.htm (accessed in February 2010). I have modified commercial language to fit Christian ministries. Changes are indicated in square brackets [].

those who persecute her, and to learn to trust God over what might be apparent in the world.

Core Values

The Core Values of an organization are the constant, passionate core beliefs that drive its ministry. Protestant denominations are divided along core values which usually formulated by the interpretation of the Scriptures.¹⁴ It is important to identify these values so that the subsequent steps could be structured according to those values. Both the values of those who are organizing the ministry as well as the core values of the ministry itself should be considered here. Once these Core Values have been identified, the formulation of the ministry can be done in a way that will not cause dissention and division later on.¹⁵

The Mission Statement

The Mission Statement is a broad, brief biblical statement of what the organization is supposed to be doing. If one doesn't know what her mission is she will not know what she should be accomplishing. The purpose and goals of the organization should be encapsulated in the Mission Statement. When the mission of the organization is clearly understood, people at all levels are able to contribute to a common purpose and goal.

The Vision Statement

The Vision Statement is a clear challenging picture of the future of the ministry as it can and must be.¹⁶ If the Vision Statement is constructed in a memorable way, it would be easier to keep in mind and heart. One of the students of the writer at the Colombo Theological Seminary used a flower metaphor in Sinhalese in his

¹⁴ McLaughlin, "Educational Processes."

¹⁵ Aubrey Malphurs' book, *Values Driven Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), discusses the importance of core values and how core values can be discovered and developed in practical ways. This book will be a great resource for this part of the Ed Cycle.

¹⁶ Mc Laughlin, "Educational Process."

vision statement for a children’s ministry. The writer remembers his student’s vision statement clearly because of the memorable metaphoric, poetic language that was used.

Step 3: Goals and Objectives

Goals

A Goal is an achievable biblical target that provides direction to the ministry. Goals must be based upon the Biblical Imperatives of the organization. For example, a goal for a theological education program with the Biblical Imperatives that were given above could be: “The theological educational program will seek the integration of Scriptures and obedience to God in the lives of those who teach.” This goal is based on Colossians 1:16 and 1 Timothy 4:11-12. Another goal could say: “The organization will select reliable people and foster the teaching for the purpose of teaching.” This goal is based on Proverbs 9:10 and 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

Objectives

Objectives are the steps that are needed to accomplish goals. An objective should be both measurable and achievable. An objective should also be specific and realistic even though the objective might require one to stretch oneself to attain it.¹⁷ Objectives that might be formed to reach the goals given above for the development of a theological education program could be as follows: “CCC (name of organization) will have selected an instructor who knows the Scriptures well and puts his faith into practice by March 1st of this year” A second objective might say, “CCC will provide admission to 20 students who are interested in teaching by July 31st of this year. Objectives should be easy to measure and accomplish and generally have a timeline associated with it. Objectives should be formulated around major activities and cater to the desired outcome. The objectives formulated in

¹⁷ The acronym ARMS can be used to remember the four characteristics of good objectives – Achievable, Realistic, Measurable and Specific.

support of goals should cover all the envisaged service outcome to form a logical coverage of all the key ideas in the goal. Each goal that is formulated around the Biblical Imperatives can have five or six objectives associated with it.

Step 4: Finance and Legislation

Often the financial aspects of ministries are neglected until something needs to be purchased in a hurry. At that point the funds may not be available or insufficient causing difficulty in the work of ministry. Therefore a budget should be designed at least for the first year of operation of the ministry. The sources of funding for the ministry needs to be outlined. Expenses should include items such as capital expenses, running (operational) expenses, curricula and material costs, publicity costs etc.

Another aspect of ministry that is often not considered is legislation. Both internal values of the church and government legislation needs to be taken into account. For instance if one is designing a children's ministry it is important to find out whether there are child protective legislation that the church needs to be aware of. If a camping ministry is being formulated, there may be documentation that parents need to sign before children can be accepted into the program.

Step 4: Programs and Curricula

This step requires the development of or the search for program and curricular material for ministry. The Program has to do with how the ministry will operate. What frequency will the ministry operate at? When will there be special events? How would prayer be incorporated into the ministry as defined by the second step in the Educational Cycle? What sorts of programs should occur to accomplish the Mission and Vision that was designed for the ministry? These are some questions that the programming step seeks to answer. It is a good idea to develop one year's programming calendar for the ministry so that the activities that are envisioned can be mapped and all who are concerned can be

on the same page about what will be happening during the course of the year.

Existing curricula should be examined first since it would be a waste of time and resources to re-design curricula that already exist. If it is determined that the curriculum needed for this particular ministry does not exist, a new curriculum should be designed at this stage of the Ed Cycle. The curricula should be evaluated in the light of the objectives and goals for the ministry. The question, "What material or focus will best enable the organization to accomplish its goals?" should form the basis of the development of curricula.

Step 5: Organization and Administration

An organization chart is defined in this step of the Educational Cycle. The current administrative structure of the church or body that the educational ministry will work under, as well as anticipated organizational needs should be included in this organizational chart. This step also includes the identification, selection, and recruitment of leaders and workers to staff the ministry. Will final authority in the ministry be based on a governing board, a congregation or an individual? How many leaders and assistant leaders will be needed? How many workers will be needed and how will that work be categorized? Who will the leaders be accountable to? Who will the assistant leaders and worker be accountable to? Who are the stakeholders of the ministry and how do they fit in the organizational chart? These are some of the questions that need to be answered in this fourth step of the Ed Cycle.

Step 6: Methods and Material

This step requires the selection of methods and material needed for the accomplishment of the proposed ministry. Part of this step may have already been accomplished in the fourth step of the cycle when Programs and Curricula were defined. Some of the questions that this step seeks to answer are: What methods have not been accounted for, if any, that are needed for the

accomplishment of this ministry? What materials will be needed in order for this ministry to operate? For example, in a theological training program, methods might include classroom training, online education, and the management of extension programs. Material needed for a theological training program might include training manuals, writing implements such as pens and pencils, library facilities and computers. Often ministries do not take into account needs such as transport, utilities, and technological resources until some event is at hand. When the need is at hand, it might be difficult to find resources in a short period of time. Some ministries have failed because of the lack of needed material at a crucial time. Therefore it is important that Methods and Material required for a ministry be identified early.

Step 7: Evaluation and Revision

Evaluation

If the first and second steps of the Educational Cycle seek to answer the question “What does God want the organization to do?” This seventh step seeks to answer the follow-up question, “Has the organization done what God wants it to do?” Evaluation is a planned time of constructive celebration and reflection on what has been accomplished and what needs to change for the future. Evaluation should be done during the course of, and at the completion of a ministry cycle. Evaluation seeks to answer the following questions: What has the organization done well? What has not been done as well as would have been liked? What needs to be done differently in the future? It is important to remember that evaluation is necessary for growth. Things that are not evaluated on a regular basis tend to deteriorate and die. Evaluation taken on as part of the normal course of things is the best way to maintain the vitality and effectiveness of any ministry.

Revision

Evaluation naturally leads to revision. Revision should not be looked at negatively. Revision keeps focus on the biblical basis, mission and vision of the ministry. If the ministry is not headed

toward the purpose for which it was formed, then the factors that are inhibiting such movement should be revised. Revision can also be done creatively. For instance workers who are not functioning well in one position can be moved to a position that might fit his or her gifts and talents better. Methods and Material that are not yielding fruit for the ministry should be changed for better Methods and Material. Curricula may need to be revised based on recent developments.

As time passes and culture changes, the ministry is obliged to evaluate the status of the world in which the church ministers, anticipate an appropriate course of revision, and develop new plans to engage the culture. This should be done in a way that informs society and promotes the church as the instrument of the Lord to effectively address the issue of the day. The ministry and the church must discuss revision at pre-defined intervals so that capabilities of the program might be consistent with the needs of the church. Since culture is fluid and changing, dialog will naturally result in adjustments in the areas of curricula, skills development, and mid and long-range planning.

Empowerment

Zechariah 4:6 tells us, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit declares the Lord of hosts”. As discussed earlier, the divine Teacher and Architect of all that will last and will be truly successful is the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus said, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). To be witnesses to Christ, the Holy Spirit must empower work. The power of the Holy Spirit is the sine qua non of designing a successful educational ministry using the Educational Cycle.

Even Bible based ministries can be designed with reliance and dependence on human strength alone. Learning to trust the Spirit of God might mean that one goes ahead with a ministry that might be risky in human terms. Those who manage and implement Christian educational ministries should be chosen for their spiritual acumen more than their intellectual or physical abilities. Henry

Nouwen talks metaphorically about trusting God as “Entering the New Country” in his book, *The Inner Voice of Love*:

You have an idea of what the new country looks like. Still, you are very much at home, although not truly at peace, in the old country. You know the ways of the old country, its joys and pains, its happy and sad moments. You have spent most of your days there... It has become part of your very bones. Now you have come to realize that you must leave it and enter the new country, where your Beloved dwells. You know that what helped and guided you in the old country no longer works, but what else do you have to go by? You are being asked to trust that you will find what you need in the new country. That requires the death of what has become so precious to you: influence, success, yes, even affection and praise.

Trust is so hard since you have nothing to fall back on. Still, trust is what is essential. The new country is where you are called to go, and the only way to go there is naked and vulnerable. It seems that you keep crossing and re-crossing the border. For a while you experience a real joy in the new country. But then you feel afraid and start longing again for all you left behind, so you go back to the old country. To your dismay, you discover that the old country has lost its charm. Risk a few more steps into the new country, trusting that each time you enter it, you will feel more comfortable and be able to stay longer.¹⁸

The ministries that are started in Jesus’ name must bear the marks of His character and kingdom on earth. God’s kingdom in this world is only found in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who is working to save us from the dominion of the kingdom of darkness that has temporary control of the people of the world. Ministries

¹⁸ Henry J. M. Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love, A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom*, (New York: Doubleday, a Division of Random House, 1996), 21-22.

that identify with what the Holy Spirit is doing in the world will be the only ministries that are truly Christian.

Consider the following passage from I Corinthians 2:9-16:

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truth in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment: “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Just as men’s thoughts are known only by their spirits within them, God’s mind is only known by God’s Holy Spirit. By an incredible grant by God the Father, the Spirit of God has been given to men through the work of Jesus Christ the Son. Therefore an individual can have the mind of Christ by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit within that person. The words that Paul wrote were spiritual truths taught by the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, he can understand those spiritual truths as well. “Spirit-taught men alone can comprehend spiritual truths.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Robert Jamieson and A. R. Fausset et al., *Critical and Explanatory Commentary* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 1 Co 2:13.

Those who are not regenerate cannot understand spiritual things. “Like a deaf critic of Bach or a blind critic of Raphael is the unregenerate critic of God’s Word.”²⁰ “[The] natural man [is] literally, ‘a man of animal soul.’ As contrasted with the *spiritual* man, he is governed by the animal soul, which overbears his *spirit*, which latter is without the Spirit of God (Jude 1:19). So the *animal* (*English Version*, “natural”) body, or body led by the lower animal nature (including both the mere human fallen *reason* and *heart*), is contrasted with the Spirit-quickened body (1 Corinthians 15:44–46). The *carnal* man (the man led by bodily appetites, and also by a self-exalting spirit, estranged from the divine life).”²¹

Therefore, even as one considers Educational Cycle methods such as Strategic Planning, setting Goals and Objectives, Programming, and Organization and Administration, which are methods practiced the world over, one must not be empowered by the ways of the world. One should instead be empowered by the Spirit of God. This is the reason why Biblical Imperatives and Prayer form the basis and focal point of the Ed Cycle. Every aspect of the Ed Cycle must ask what Biblical Imperative it fulfills. Without the Word of God permeating through the Ed Cycle it has no power to accomplish anything of eternal consequence. Fallen reason and fallen intellect can only produce fallen, temporary results. But Spirit-quickened reason and intellect can produce results that will have impact that will last forever. A church’s ability to structure and sustain ministries depends first and last on the empowering of the Holy Spirit of God.

²⁰ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:510.

²¹ Jamieson and Fausset, *Critical and Explanatory Commentary*, 1 Co 2:14.

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