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MISSES REATHA AND LEATHA MORRIS
Headquarters: 1306 Wabash St. Wichita, Kansas

We have traveled over a large part of the United States telling the story of Jesus and "the old rugged cross." We are playing on our instruments and singing the songs of the Highest, "Good will toward all men;" and praying for the sick that they might be healed according to James 5: 14 and laying on hands, Mark 16:17.

We were converted in early life, when but small children, and a few years later received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, Acts 2:4; and then we were annointed for this great work eleven years ago.

The Asbury Journal

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The Asbury Journal publishes scholarly essays and book reviews written from a Wesleyan perspective. The Journal's authors and audience reflect the global reality of the Christian church, the holistic nature of Wesleyan thought, and the importance of both theory and practice in addressing the current issues of the day. Authors include Wesleyan scholars, scholars of Wesleyanism/Methodism, and scholars writing on issues of theological and theological education importance.

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From the Editor

My general reaction to conflict is to run away! I am just not very good at confrontation. So, I was a bit surprised as I read through the articles for this issue of *The Asbury Journal* to see that conflict was at the heart of all of these articles. This past year has certainly been a year filled with political, social, and cultural conflict of all types. Events like the January 6th U.S. Capitol riots and the growth of the Black Lives Matter Movement of 2020, will remain key markers of history for our current time period. The growing escalation of the culture wars within our society, not to mention the news of the coup in Myanmar, and the conflict engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic safety protocols and all of the political arguing that has caused in global politics has continued to bombard us on the evening news and in our social media feeds. But what can we learn from the Bible and the Church? How do we as Christians engage, defuse, or disengage from conflict?

Rabbi David J. Zucker starts this issue off with a look at one of the earliest conflicts in scripture, that between Sarah and Hagar over the issue of providing a son for Abraham. Engaging in the cultural and scriptural dynamics of the issue of surrogacy in Genesis, Rabbi Zucker explores feminist theological responses to the concept of surrogacy in the light of biblical evidence. He brings his own unique insights from the Jewish tradition and his academic research into the matriarchs of Judaism to this topic, which not only explores conflict within Abraham's family unit, but theological conflict in today's reading of scripture.

W. Creighton Marlowe, a long-term contributor to *The Asbury Journal* (and one of our most downloaded authors) from his European cultural context opens up the political conflicts of our time and history itself through a profound and thoughtful examination of Ecclesiastes. Truly "there is nothing new under the sun," and his sage advice for moderation and a God-centered style of living is sure wisdom for all of the people of God struggling with the issue of conflict in political leadership all over the world.

Greg S. Whyte helps us delve into the issue of inter-religious conflict by exploring the religious context of Japan and Korea during the Colonial Era. Missionaries did not enter an empty field in East Asia, but rather entered an environment in which Shintoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism were all vying for political influence and cultural dominance in the region. One of the perplexing questions arising out of East Asian missions is why Christian mission was successful in Korea, but not in Japan. The religious context, as Whyte proposes, might be one of the reasons to help explain this situation.

I also enter the discussion with an article I have been working on for some time, which reflects not only on gender conflicts within the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), but also has subtexts involving racial conflict within the United States. Reatha and Leatha Morris were twin evangelists for COGIC, one of the largest African-American denominations with a history in the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition. Women were allowed to plant churches, but not to preach or lead churches, and the story of Reatha and Leatha Morris reflect this conflict, but also some of the key church planting lessons we might learn from their work. While the wider racial conflict is not directly addressed, it was certainly present and active during the time of their ministry in the early 20th century.

John Lomperis concludes this issue with an exploration of the current conflict within the United Methodist Church. Using a well-known study of the divisions within the church a number of years back, Lomperis revisits the study and suggests where the current fault lines in the denomination lay. It is impossible to know how the future of this conflict will develop, but understanding the main streams of division within the denomination may provide helpful insight for moving beyond the conflict in the future of the United Methodist Church.

Finally, in the *From the Archives* essay, I return to the issue of racial division and conflict within the United States. But this time it emerges from a single book in the archive's collections, a book of African-American poetry published by H.C. Morrison's Pentecostal Publishing Company in 1919. This slim volume is easy to miss, but it raises all kinds of interesting questions about the connections between a white holiness publisher and an African-American pastor of the C.M.E. The poetry itself places a unique perspective on political and culture events of the Jim Crow Era by giving us a view from the perspective of an African-American religious leader who

would go on to become more engaged in the struggle for racial equality. It provides so much unexplored room for thought, that the topic will be continued in a future issue of the *Journal* as well.

Conflict is a part of life, and while we might like to run away from it, that is not always possible, and sometimes confronting it is more in line with God's desire for the Kingdom of God. I am left reflecting on Paul's writing in 2 Corinthians 7:5-6, "For even when we came to Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts on the outside, fears inside. But God, who comforts the discouraged, comforted us by the arrival of Titus." Conflict emerges from both outside ourselves, but also comes from within. We might be left uncertain, confused, and dazed by the events around us, but be encouraged by knowing that God is in control and will provide us comfort when it is needed. God will help us make sense out of and successfully navigate the conflict in our lives.

Robert Danielson Ph.D.

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David J. Zucker

In/Voluntary Surrogacy in Genesis

Abstract:

This article re-examines the issue of surrogacy in Genesis. It proposes some different factors, and questions some previous conclusions raised by other scholars, and especially examining feminist scholars approaches to the issue in the cases of Hagar/Abraham (and Sarah), and Bilhah-Zilpah/Jacob (and Rachel, Leah)**.** The author examines these cases in the light of scriptural evidence and the original Hebrew to seek to understand the nature of the relationship of these complex characters. How much say did the surrogates have with regard to the relationship? What was their status within the situation of the text, and how should we reflect on their situation from our modern context?

Keywords: Bilhah, Zilpah, Jacob, Hagar, Abraham, Surrogacy

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"The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there."[1]

Introduction

The contemporary notion of surrogacy, of nominating a woman to carry a child to term who then gives up the child to the sperm donor/father has antecedents in the Bible. The most commonly cited example is that of Hagar (Gen. 16). Yet the contexts, the applications and the implications of biblical surrogacy were very different from the present day. When considering examples from the Bible, it is important to remember that the scriptures reflect the views of that time and culture, assumptions which were widely shared in that era. As the "black feminist and womanist"[2] scholar Wilda C. Gafney notes, "The biblical text is fundamentally androcentric and regularly (though not exclusively) patriarchal."[3] Therefore the narratives usually reflect events from the male perspective. Further, throughout "the biblical text, a son is regarded as a special blessing … So important are sons that barren women sometimes resort to having children by their handmaids,"[4] notes Ilona N. Rashkow, referring to Sarah and Rachel in Genesis 16 and 30, respectively. This article offers some different ways to consider the examples of surrogacy in Genesis involving the characters of Hagar/Abraham (and Sarah), and Bilhah-Zilpah/Jacob (and Rachel, Leah).

In/Voluntary Surrogacy
Hagar/Abraham (and Sarah), and Bilhah-Zilpah/Jacob (and Rachel, Leah)

The most commonly cited example for a biblical precedent for surrogacy is Hagar in Genesis 16. "The first mention of surrogacy can be found in 'The Book of Genesis' in the story of Sarah and Abraham. Sarah and Abraham were married but could not conceive a child of their own, so Sarah turned to her servant Hagar to be the mother of Abraham's child. This is a case of traditional surrogacy, where the surrogate uses her own egg in the child she's carrying for intended parents."[5] Scholars have long understood that the description of what takes place initially in Genesis 16, Sarah designating Hagar as a surrogate womb, has precedent in the law codes from the ancient Near East. "The custom of an infertile wife providing her husband with a concubine in order to bear children is well documented in the ancient Near East. The laws of Lipit-Ishtar (early 19th cent. B.C.E.) … An Old Assyrian marriage contract (19th cent. B.C.E) …the laws of Hammurabi."[6] Susan Niditch notes that "surrogate motherhood …

[was] eminently possible in a world in which slavery was practiced and persons' sexual services could be donated by their masters or mistresses. Surrogate motherhood allowed a barren woman to regularize her status in a world in which children were a woman's status and in which childlessness was regarded as a virtual sign of divine disfavor."[7] Yet there is more to the matter. As Robert Alter wryly and wisely notes, as is clear in the Genesis narrative, it is not all that simple. "Living with the human consequences of the institution could be quite another matter, as the writer [of Genesis 16] shrewdly understands."[8]

In terms of their interaction in Genesis 16, and then in Genesis 21 as well, Sharon Pace Johnson explains that the "narrator does not make unnuanced judgments about the behavior of the women in this narrative. The choice of words and the actions of the characters themselves indicate that their motives are complex . . . the narrator is sensitive to Sarai's frustration, yet the poignancy of Hagar's plight is recognized as well."[9] More specifically in relation to the Sarah-Hagar interaction from "a feminist perspective, the call for the expulsion of Hagar [in Genesis 21] raises troubling questions. The story portrays the oppression of one woman by another."[10]

When it comes to Sarah and Hagar, at certain points each behaved badly toward the other, and thus brought grief upon herself as well. Amy-Jill Levine explains that "Hagar is a complex character: not simply victim and not simply heroine. The same diversity of interpretation, of course, holds for Sarah."[11] Abraham and Sarah (at that point named Abram and Sarai, their names are changed in Genesis 17) are childless. The noun describing Sarah is *'aqarah* (Gen. 11:30). This word often is mistranslated as "barren."[12] Sarah is not barren. Several years on she will give birth as attested in Genesis 21. In the meantime, having been married for many years, Sarah says to Abraham, "'Consort with my maid [*shifḥah*]; perhaps I shall have a son through her.' And Abram heeded Sarai's request. So Sarai, Abram's wife [*eishet Avram*], took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian … and gave her to her husband Abram as a concubine [*l'ishah*]. He cohabitated with Hagar and she conceived" (Gen. 16:2-4). This is the translation of the New Jewish Publication Society (NJPS). The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and several other translations renders a crucial word in verse three slightly differently. In the NRSV translation the words read that Sarah "gave her [Hagar the Egyptian] to her husband Abram as a wife." Wife or concubine? Biblical Hebrew has a word for concubine, *pilegesh,* which is used in Genesis several times (for example Gen. 22:24; 25:6; 36:12), and

in other biblical books as well.[13] In Genesis 25:1 following the death of Sarah (Gen. 23:1), Abraham takes another wife (*ishah*) named Qeturah. He eventually has several children by her. Nonetheless, when he distributes his wealth most goes to Isaac, although he gives gifts to his other children, born to him by – and here the word is – his concubines (*pilegesh*), presumably including Qeturah. Nahum N. Sarna addresses the *ishah/pilegesh* issue. He concludes that the "interchange of terminology shows that in the course of time the distinction in social status between the two often tended to be effaced."[14] Still, Hagar is never termed a *pilegesh*/concubine.

Once again, when Sarai says to Abram that he should consort with Hagar, the Hebrew word in verse three is *ishah*. Depending on how one understands Hagar's status, she is either a "concubine" or a "wife," but in this context, even as a wife, she would be a "secondary wife" with lesser status. We see this borne out in verses five and six (and then again in Gen. 21:10) when Sarah and Abraham both refer to Hagar as a "servant" (in Gen. 16 as a *shifhah*, and in Gen. 21, using the parallel word for female servant, *amah*).[15] Savina J. Teubal notes that "Hagar's sexual services are controlled by her mistress" and that "Hagar is seemingly not in control of her own destiny."[16] So whatever her legal relationship to Abraham is, secondary wife or concubine, she still is Sarah's property, something which is clearly stated in Genesis 16 when Abram says to Sarai, "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right" (v. 6). What is clear is that Hagar (as well as Bilhah, Rachel's female servant, and Zilpah, Leah's female servant) acts at the will of her mistress.

Many scholars presume that none of these women are asked for their consent to have sex with the husbands of their mistresses, to provide surrogate wombs. Their role is to produce a male child, Hagar with Abraham, and then laterally for Bilhah and Zilpah, with Jacob. In her classic work, *Texts of Terror: Literary Readings of Biblical Narratives* (1984), Phyllis Trible describes Hagar as "one of the first females in scripture to experience use, abuse, and rejection." She goes on to describe Sarai and Hagar in stark contrast: "Sarai the Hebrew is married, rich, and free; she is also old and barren. Hagar the Egyptian is single, poor, and bonded; she is also young and fertile. Power belongs to Sarai, the subject of action; powerlessness marks Hagar, the object."[17] Delores S. Williams, in another classic work, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (1993), takes a similar stance. She points to the fact that Hagar is an Egyptian, and therefore an African. She then draws parallels with "the

history of many African-American women" who have inherited a "slave woman's story." Williams explains, that "for Hagar, motherhood will be a coerced experience involving the violation of her body over which she, as a slave, has no control."[18] In the 21st century, Wil Gafney (2017) in a similar vein writes that Genesis "makes it clear that Hagar has no say over her body being given to Abram or her child being given to Sarai. Hagar is on the underside of all the power curves in operation at that time … she is female, foreign, enslaved. She has one source of power: she is fertile; but she lacks autonomy over her own fertility."[19]

In these approaches, that of Trible, Williams and that of Gafney, and likewise others who see Hagar as a victim, the authors choose to present Hagar as someone who is poor and helpless, to be exploited at the whims of her owners. A similar notion is expressed in an article titled, "Gender, Class, and Androcentric Compliance in the Rapes of Enslaved Women in the Hebrew Bible." The article posits that since these women were not asked to give their consent to become pregnant, they were in effect, raped. Suzanne Scholz writes, yet, "even if Sarah's decision is reminiscent of an ancient Near Eastern custom, the practice must still be translated to current sensibilities. When the perspective of the enslaved woman is considered, this form of surrogacy comes close to — what we today call — rape. A woman, in fact an enslaved woman, is forced to sexual intercourse since she never consents to sex with Abraham."[20] Yet that view/perspective has been challenged as incorrect, or at least too harsh. Sandie Gravett points out in an article titled "Reading 'Rape' in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language" that "many scholars consider this terminology problematic because no Hebrew verb or phrase precisely corresponds to contemporary understandings of rape."[21] Her article "surveys a selection of narratives, images, and laws that describe *forcible, non-consensual sexual intercourse*" (emphasis mine). Gravett explains clearly that although "Hebrew lacks a legal or technical term for rape, biblical writers nonetheless make the necessary accommodations by impressing a wide range of words and phrases to describe violent, non-consensual sex."[22] Gravett's examples come from three narratives, Genesis 34 (Dinah/Shechem), Judges 19 (the Levite's concubine at Gibeah of Benjamin/the townspeople, and 2 Samuel 13 (Tamar/Amnon). In all of these cases the *piel* form of the verb *'anah* [*'ayin-nun-hey*] is used to depict sexual violation. These examples appear in very different circumstances from the Hagar-Bilhah/Zilpah situations, and it is instructive that neither this verb nor this

verb form is used in either the narrative with Abraham consorting with Hagar, or with the Bilhah-Zilpah narratives with Jacob's consorting with those women. At the conclusion of Gravett's article, she notes that the word rape *is* applicable in certain cases (including in addition to the narratives of Dinah, the unnamed concubine, and Tamar) such examples as the violation of women depicted in Lamentations 5:11. In those cases there was "the sense of physical violation, the feelings of shame and being outcast, the loss of self and place in the culture."[23]

In the contemporary world, since the feminist movement of the latter period of the 20th century, it is particularly problematic to address these biblical passages. This difficulty is heightened in the 21st century since the advent of the Me Too [#metoo] movement in 2006, the social pressure group against sexual assault and sexual violence, a campaign that urges females who have survived sexual violence or assault to speak out about their experiences. Scholz's comments that "the practice must still be translated to current sensibilities. When the perspective of the enslaved woman is considered, this form of surrogacy comes close to — what we today call — rape" is generally reflective of one set of feminist thought.

Additional perspectives

Yet, there are additional perspectives, as Gravett points out. Others, such as Sharon Pace Jeansonne note that in terms of Jacob's secondary wives, there "is no indication that Bilhah or Zilpah protested or confronted Rachel or Leah. Indeed, the stories are related without conflict, and the maidservants stay with their mistresses indefinitely."[24] In like manner there is no indication that Hagar protested this arrangement. On the other hand, given the dynamics of the power differential between these women in those situations, these maids/servants could not have protested safely, without serious consequences. Hence this may well have been a case of involuntary surrogacy.

Further, in terms of the open conflict between Sarah and Hagar, it only takes place after Hagar conceives Abraham's child (vv. 4-5). Once she becomes pregnant, the relationships between Hagar and Sarah, as well with as her/their husband take on a new dimension. When Hagar "saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress" (Gen 16:4).[25] Was this foolish pride on Hagar's part? Did Abraham encourage this behavior or suggest to Hagar that she would displace Sarah? How Hagar expresses her feelings toward Sarah is unknown. Did Hagar verbalize

those thoughts, and if she did, to whom? Did Sarah just intuit them? The biblical text provides no answers. In the Bible, Sarah and Hagar never communicate directly.

Although Hagar is described variously as a maid, an *amah* or a *shifhah,* contrary to what Trible and others suggest, she need not be a low station slave, "single, poor, and bonded." *Hagar is in a less prestigious role than Sarah, but this does necessarily mean that she is simply an illiterate, unintelligent, uncultured, or untrained low-status woman like, for example a scullery maid or a mere peasant*. Years later at the time of the early monarchy, when in 1 Samuel 25 the wealthy woman, Nabal of Maon's wife Abigail speaks to David, she shrewdly and subtly refers to herself as a maid in reference to the future king. Abigail uses both words, *amah* (25:24, [twice], 28, 31, 41, and also uses the synonym *shifhah* in v. 27. She means by this that she is relatively powerless before him, not that she is his personal lower class domestic employee. In biblical times, in "practically any social situation, all parties were expected to affirm where they stood, societally speaking … Encounters between individuals from different groups began with a habitual statement of social position, with the inferior … party showing deference … by referring … to oneself as 'your servant' or the like."[26]

Sarah has proposed Hagar to be the official surrogate who will provide Abraham with an appropriate heir reflecting his position as a wealthy man. Sarah makes an informed choice. As a wealthy woman, she has numerous servants. I would propose that Sarah chooses Hagar because Hagar is in herself a woman of stature, she comes from a proper and privileged family, reared in a physically healthier environment than that of a mere servant. She is indentured because of the probable impoverished circumstances of her family of origin's straightened circumstances. She has been forced to enter servitude.[27] While this is conjecture and there is no clear "proof" for this suggestion, I suggest that the ancients certainly knew something about the whole matter of animal husbandry and the reproduction of species. Later in Genesis, when in Haran, Jacob will enrich his sheep and goat herds by seeing to it that the sturdier animals mate amongst themselves (Gen. 30:41-42).[28] I posit that the same notions were applied to human reproduction. Quality generally reproduces quality. Indeed, later in Genesis 16 Hagar is recognized as a strong, resourceful, and powerful woman in her own right. She will be favored by God. Hagar will meet an angel of YHWH who will inform her that she is to be the matriarch of a large clan

(v. 10). This is the Bible's first angelic announcement, it is made both to a woman, and to someone not of the Abrahamic clan. About two decades later, while Hagar will be sent away from the Abrahamic encampment,[29] it is clear that Abraham is upset about this. Yet God tells Abraham that he should listen to Sarah's words, and then God promises Abraham that he will protect Ishmael. A few verses on God reassures Hagar that she and her son will be well. (Gen. 21:12-13; see 25:12-18). Then in Genesis 21:18 Hagar is informed by an angel that her son Ishmael will become a great nation.

As noted earlier, Bilhah and Zilpah "stay with their mistresses indefinitely" and continue to hold their place of honor as mothers of four of the eventual twelve tribes of Israel, the birth-mothers of respectively Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. In terms of Bilhah and Zilpah, whose experiences are related in Genesis 29 and 30, we know even less about what took place. Each woman initially is the servant (*shifḥah*) of Laban, and then he gave Zilpah to Leah, and Bilhah to Rachel, each as a maid (*shifḥah*) (Gen. 29:24; 29). Since the same words (servant/*shifḥah*) are utilized, it indicates that Zilpah and Bilhah were indentured servants, not concubines for Laban. Rachel, unable to conceive, gives her servant Bilhah to Jacob to serve as Rachel's surrogate, "Consort with her, [Rachel says to Jacob] … that through her I too may have children" (Gen. 30:3). When, initially Leah appears unable to conceive more children, she gives Zilpah to Jacob, using similar language (v. 9). Since these sons will be official heirs of Jacob, indeed they become the eponymous tribal leaders, it stands to reason (albeit conjecture) that their maternal ancestry come from a privileged, though now impoverished family. Both Bilhah and Zilpah are referred to as Jacob's *ishah*, which I would propose is as his secondary wife. There is no more mention of children, therefore one might presume that Jacob stopped consorting with them, but that is speculation. In like manner, following the birth of Ishmael, there is no indication that Abraham and Hagar continued to consort. Did these women end up in effect as grass widows? The matter is somewhat complicated because in later biblical legislation, if a wife even if she is also a servant, is denied food, clothing, or sexual gratification, it is grounds for divorce, and if she is a former servant, she goes free without payment (see Exod. 21:10-11)[30] but those matters are beyond the purview of our discussion. The point at hand is that the female servant can be lent to the husband as a surrogate womb, and that the servant does not appear to have a choice or a voice about this. Further, the offspring is legally considered the child of the mistress as much as that of her husband, not the

child of the servant/surrogate womb. Yet, and this is a very crucial point, the child is not necessarily separated from its birth mother as is the case in contemporary surrogacy. The birth-mother is there, alongside the progeny's "heir-mother" helping to raise the child. In Genesis 21 it is clear that Hagar and Ishmael are very much in contact; they have a shared destiny. Later in Genesis, Bilhah and Zilpah are very much part of the Jacob household (Gen. 35:22; 37:2; 46:18, 25). Meanwhile the servant continues to be both indentured and technically a secondary wife.

In the case of Sarah-Hagar-Ishmael-Abraham (Gen. 21:9-13), Sarah did demand that Abraham send away both Hagar and her son, Ishmael (yet see endnote 29). It is also correct that "Hagar has long fascinated feminist interpreters who celebrate her resilience in the face of the Egyptian slave's economic and sexual subordination within the household of Abraham and Sarah … [as well as] the competition for social status between Sarah and Hagar."[31] Yet those matters do not change the fact that it would appear that for many years, prior to the birth of Isaac, that Hagar as Ishmael's birth-mother works in tandem with Sarah as Ishmael's "heir-mother." It was in their mutual interest to do so.[32]

That the secondary wives continue to be a real presence in the lives of their sons is strongly inferred when seventeen year old Joseph is reprimanded by his father Jacob. Joseph explains that his father and mother will bow down to him (Gen. 37:9-10). Rachel died many years earlier (Gen. 35:18-19). Sarna indicates that the word "mother" here refers to Bilhah who raised him.[33]

Conclusion

Creating heirs is a serious matter. Romantic love, sexual attraction, least of all lasciviousness or lust does not necessarily come into this equation. Some writers may suggest that for Abraham/Hagar and Jacob/Bilhah-Zilpah, that these men were only too happy to take these, presumably younger, more attractive women, as bed partners. With the exception of Leah who is described as having *weak eyes* (NJPS), lovely eyes (NRSV) and Rachel who is shapely and beautiful (NJPS), graceful and beautiful (NRSV) (Gen. 29:17), there are no descriptions of the women involved. Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah could have been very unattractive physically, with less than stellar personal traits. That does not matter, nor are Abraham and Jacob asked if they are happy about these arrangements. What is of concern is producing a proper male heir or heirs. Were these women revulsed by the thought that they had

to cohabit with their mistress' husband? How did Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah weigh up the cost/benefit ratio in being a surrogate mother, and then at least officially, ceding their children – at least legally – to another woman? As Jeansonne remarks, certainly in terms of Jacob's secondary wives, there "is no indication that Bilhah or Zilpah protested or confronted Rachel or Leah. Indeed, the stories are related without conflict." Yet, as noted earlier, these slaves/maids/secondary wives really were not in a position to protest. These women lived within a certain wider cultural context which was both androcentric and patriarchal. There were laws and customs that offered them some protections (as mentioned see Exodus 21:7-11), but they were subject to the norms of those times. Earlier reference is made to Gravett's comment that in the biblical cases of rape, namely Dinah, the unnamed concubine, Tamar and many women in Lamentations, that there was "the sense of physical violation, the feelings of shame and being outcast, the loss of self and place in the culture." Hagar, Bilhah and Zilpah may well have felt a sense of physical violation and shame, but they certainly were not outcasts, nor was there a loss of self and place in the culture. Indeed, they may well have been involved in the rearing of their sons. Still, they may have ended up being in effect, grass widows, though there is no way one can ascertain that assumption.

The limited examples of surrogacy in Genesis center on Hagar, Bilhah and Zilpah. Was their participation voluntary or involuntary is impossible to know. Likewise, there is no way to know if they considered the cost/benefit ratio an acceptable compromise since it did improve their standing within the household. When initially proposed by Sarah to serve as a surrogate womb in Genesis 16, Hagar voices no objections. Likewise, both Bilhah and Zilpah are silent when their respective mistresses Rachel and Leah offer those women as surrogates. Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah certainly are forced to give up their agency in these matters, but they become honored members of the household. Providing the heir for their master elevated the status of these women because they then became promoted to become secondary wives and no doubt were accorded additional privileges. That the Bible does not record their personal reluctance to take on this role does not mean that they were not upset. They may have felt a sense of personal violation, degradation, and shame. Yet, it is clear that they were not separated from their sons, indeed the opposite appears to be the case.

End Notes

[1] L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*. (New York: New York Review of Books, 2002 [1953]), 17.

[2] W. C. Gafney. *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2017), 72. "Womanism," Gafney explains, "is often simply defined as black feminism" (2, n. 1). Elsewhere she writes that most "simply, womanism is black women's feminism. It distinguishes itself from the dominant-culture feminism, which is all too often distorted by racism and classism and marginalizes womanism, womanists, and women of color" (6).

[3] Gafney, 83.

[4] I. N. Rashkow, *The Phallacy of Genesis: A Feminist-Psychoanalytic Approach*. (Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 66.

[5] Surrogate.com [n.d.] https://surrogate.com/about-surrogacy/surrogacy-101/history-of-surrogacy/; See L. Ben-Nun. *Surrogate Motherhood: Sarah and Hagar*. (Israel: B. N. Publishing House, 2014)https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Liubov_Ben-Noun_nun/publication/281823435_SURROGATE_MOTHERHOOD_Hagar_and_Sarah/links/55f9923308aeafc8ac264baa.pdf. For a different view see E. Landau. "What does 'I will be built from/through her' in Genesis 16:2 and 30:3 mean" *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, 48:1 (2020), 50-52). (40-56).

[6] N. M. Sarna. *The JPS Torah Commentary—Genesis*. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 119, n. 2. See also E. A. Speiser. *Genesis*. AB. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 120-21; V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin. 2006. *Old Testament Parallels. 3rd Ed.* (New York: Paulist, 2006), 49, 110.

[7] S. Niditch. "Genesis." *The Women's Bible Commentary, 3rd rev, ed*. C. A. Newsom, S. H. Ringe, and J. E. Lapsley, eds. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 34-35. Hackett writes of Hagar's "most vulnerable position possible: female, slave, and foreign." J. A. Hackett. "Rehabilitating Hagar: Fragments of an Epic Pattern." *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, P. L. Day, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 25.

[8] R. Alter. *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 67.

[9] S. P. Jeansonne, *The Women of Genesis* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 20-21.

[10] T. C. Eskenazi, A. L. Weiss, ed., *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, (New York: URJ Press and Women of Reform Judaism, 2008), 98. The Torah text itself "remembers" Sarah's words when, hundreds of years later the Israelites are "banished/expelled" from Egypt. The same verb used in Genesis 21:10 [גָּרֵשׁ] "Throw this slave girl and her son out",

appears in Exodus 12:39 [כִּי-גֹרְשׁוּ]. ". . . they had been driven out of Egypt."

[11] A-J. Levine, "Settling at Beer-lehai-roi," *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.* Y. Y. Haddad and J. L. Esposito, Eds. (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, 2001), 19.

[12] Sarna, *Genesis*, 87, n. 30.

[13] F. Brown, S. R. Driver, C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [BDB] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 811. Von Rad also translates the word in verse three as "wife," G. von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary, Rev. Ed.,* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972). Alter translates the word as *wife*, "the same word that identifies Sarai at the beginning of the verse. The terminological equation of the two women is surely intended, and sets up an ironic background for Sarai's abuse of Hagar," Alter, 68.

[14] Sarna, *Genesis*, 208, n. 4.

[15] BDB suggests that *shifḥah* and *amah* are parallel words

[16] S. J. Teubal. *Hagar the Egyptian: the Lost Traditions of the Matriarchs*. (San Francisco: Harper-SanFrancisco, 1990), 50. Teubal also points out that while J and E use these terms differently, in time in a number of instances *shifḥah* and *amah* seem to be used interchangeably. Her examples include Abigail, the Wise Woman of Tekoa, and Ruth. Teubal, 57.

[17] P. Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary Readings of Biblical Narratives,* (Philadelphia; Fortress, 1984), 9, 10.

[18] D. S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2103 [1993]), 15. Williams consistently portrays Hagar as a near-helpless victim, with Abraham and Sarah as her oppressors. She ignores the fact that Hagar successfully returns to the Abrahamic encampment in Genesis 16, without any indication of punishment for having run away. She bypasses mention of the fact that in Genesis 17 God promises Abraham that Ishmael will become a great nation (vs. 20). Despite verses like Genesis 21:11-13 which addresses Abraham's concerns for Ishmael and God's reassurance to Abraham, Williams writes of Hagar's "brutal treatment by Sarai and Abram's complicity in this brutality" (24).

[19] Gafney, 41.

[20] S. Scholz. "Gender, Class, and Androcentric Compliance in the Rapes of Enslaved Women in the Hebrew Bible," *lectio difficilior*. (2004), 6. http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/04_1/Scholz_Enslaved.pdf

[21] S. Gravett. "Reading 'Rape' in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament,* 28.3, (2004), 279. [279-299].

[22] Gravett, 280.

[23] Gravett, 298.

[24] Jeansonne, 20.

[25] There is the adage in the book of Proverbs: "Under three things the earth trembles . . . [one is] a maid when she succeeds her mistress" (Prov 30:21, 23). Alternatively, "The earth shudders at three things . . . [one is] a slave-girl who supplants her mistress" NJPS/*TANAKH*.

[26] D. E. S. Stein, "Dictionary of Gender in the Torah" (item "Social Order"). *The Contemporary Torah: A Gender-Sensitive Adaption of the JPS Translation*. D. E. S. Stein, Revising Editor. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006), 411.

[27] Writing of the book of Esther, M. V. Fox explains that "Queens come from the noble Persian families, not from ethnic minorities … Vashti … was presumably a queen of proper ancestry and clearly in a high position at court." Quoted in *The JPS Bible Commentary – Esther*. Commentary by A. Berlin. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001), xvii. The same inference can be made about Hagar: to provide a proper heir for a rich man, she would come from a family of quality. Centuries later, in rabbinic writings, the sages suggest that Hagar is none other than the daughter of Pharaoh, she is royalty (*Genesis Rabbah* 45.1; *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 26).

[28] "Jacob is actually practicing sound principles of animal breeding." Alter, 165.

[29] For a different, more positive interpretation of Hagar leaving the Abrahamic encampment see D. J. Zucker, "The Mysterious Disappearance of Sarah." *Judaism*. 55.3-4 (2006): 29-39.

[30] N. M. Sarna. *The JPS Torah Commentary—Exodus*. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 121, nn. 10, 11.

[31] C. J. Sharp. "Character, Conflict, and Covenant in Israel's Origin Traditions." *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*. G. A. Yee, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018), 50. See P. Trible (above) and E. James. "Sarah, Hagar, and Their Interpreters." *The Women's Bible Commentary*, 3rd Rev. Ed. C. A. Newsom, S. H. Ringe, and J. E. Lapsley, eds. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012). See comments by Trible, Williams, and Gafney, above.

[32] See discussion in Teubel, 77.

[33] Sarna, *Genesis*, 257, n. 10. The midrash collection *Genesis Rabbah* (84.11) as well as the medieval commentators Rashi and Ibn Ezra specifically refer to the idea that Bilhah raised Joseph, hence she is the mother to which Joseph implies in his dream and to the mother to which Jacob refers (see their comments on Gen. 37:10). *The Commentators' Bible:*

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W. Creighton Marlowe

Trump Was Trumped Long Ago: or, the Legacy of Leadership in the Book of Ecclesiastes

Abstract:

Around the globe at any moment in history we witness a world in which numerous nations simultaneously struggle with the person or party in power. Often, we hear senior citizens long for a return to "the good old days." But biblical anthropology reminds us that everyone by nature is sinful (willingly disobedient to God's laws); and Qoheleth corrects those who long for a past golden age, because such thinking is not realistic. There never has been a government under which people were not oppressed, even the Hebrew theocracy of the Old Testament. Over the centuries, whether in the East or West, Southern or Northern hemisphere, leaders of countries or companies often have been disappointing. Those over whose reign we currently fret, at their worst, have nothing on many past pretenders to bring prosperity. The Hebrew Bible testifies to this sad reality and to its reasons.

Keywords: Leadership, Ecclesiastes, Qoholeth, Solomon, wisdom

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Introduction

The quest for quality leadership is universal and nothing new—from Nimrod to Nero to Nixon, from Popes to Pol Pot to Putin, from Moses to Mao to Merkel. Presently, leadership crises are erupting seemingly around the world—most notably in South America, the Middle East, and Africa, not to mention the USA. Katy Barnato of CNBC recently asked, "Is the World Suffering from a Leadership Crisis?"[1] Polls show that 78-90% of the population see corruption as a major problem in places with large populations, like China, Brazil, and India.[2] The five political crises that most threaten the global economy were named in 2014 as (1) Iraq and Syria, (2) China vs. Japan, (3) the rise of the European far right, (4) Russia vs. Ukraine, and (5) Washington, DC's ineptitude.[3] Around the globe at any moment in history we witness a world in which numerous nations simultaneously struggle with the person or party in power. Often, we hear senior citizens long for a return to "the good old days." But biblical anthropology reminds us that everyone by nature is sinful (willingly disobedient to God's laws); and Qoheleth corrects those who long for a past golden age, because such thinking is not realistic: "Do not ask, "Where have all the good times gone?" Wisdom knows better than to ask such a thing" (Eccl 7:10; *The Voice Bible*).[4] There never has been a government under which people were not oppressed, even the Hebrew theocracy of the Old Testament (OT hereafter). Over the centuries, whether in the East or West, Southern or Northern hemisphere, leaders of countries or companies often have been disappointing. Those over whose reign we currently fret, at their worst, have nothing on many past pretenders to bring prosperity. The Hebrew Bible testifies to this sad reality and to its reasons.

The Book of Ecclesiastes (also known as Qoheleth after its namesake) is thought by many to have been composed by, or at least is about, King Solomon. After all, the author claims to be a son of David and king in Jerusalem (Eccl 1:1, 12). Only David and Solomon were Hebrew kings in Jerusalem. Solomon was gifted with immense wisdom:

> [29]God gave Solomon wisdom and discernment: his mind was as expansive as the sands of the beach; [30]his wisdom was far beyond that of the *wise* men of the East and of Egypt. [31]He was the wisest of any other man. *He was even wiser* than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, and Calcol and Darda (Mahol's sons). [Remember these, they will be on the test] Solomon was immensely famous in all the nearby countries. [32]He also wrote 3,000 proverbs

> and composed 1,005 songs. [And you wonder why he lacked the time to govern properly?] [33]He reflected upon trees, from Lebanon's cedars to the hyssop that blankets the walls. He reflected upon animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. [34]People came from every corner of the earth—sent by kings who were fascinated by Solomon's wise reputation—to listen to Solomon's wisdom. (1 Kings 4:29-34)

But the speaker in Ecclesiastes is stressed out over how much he cannot understand or improve the world in which he lives. He declares everything *hebel*, that is empty and enigmatic (Eccl 1:2). He says he looked into every issue, but everything was too burdensome, an empty pursuit, and broken beyond repair (Eccl 1:13–15). Why was a king unable to make effective changes? We know how democratic leaders are compromised by popular opinion and their political opponents; but if Qoheleth is king, why is it that all he can do is wring his hands in despair? He claims to have more wisdom than any previous "ruler" over Jerusalem. Some say this means the writer cannot be Solomon because there was only one (Hebrew) king before him in Jerusalem. However, the Hebrew text (forget the biased translations) does not use the word king or ruler. It merely says those who were "over Jerusalem" previously. This could include the Jebusite as well as Hebrew leaders. Regardless, the real problem is how Solomon is so impotent with all his wisdom to find any solutions, or use his power as king to make changes. He actually concludes that wisdom or knowledge is negative. The more you have the more you have pain and are sorry (Eccl 1:18). Just think about how every US president enters office healthy and leaves broken down. Truly wise people seem to avoid such jobs; but then it's where we need them most. Their absence of course leaves the job open to those less wise and knowledgeable. This phenomenon did not begin with US history. It has ancient roots. Salvation has no human source.

Lessons about Life, Learning, and Labor[5]

Despair and Disobedience

As often happens, Qoheleth decided following the rules was not working, so why not try being unruly: "I said to myself, 'Let me dabble and test you in pleasure and see if there is any good *in that*'" (Eccl 2:1a). Solomon certainly had the time and treasure to test out all life's options. He even admitted, "What is left for those who come after the king to do? They can only repeat what he has already done" (Eccl 2:12b). He records that

he engaged in more activities, good and bad, than any commoner would have the resources to do: entertainment, excessive wine, building projects, gardens, vineyards, irrigation projects, servants, herds, treasures of precious metals, hired workers, musicians—every desire he had (Eccl 2:2-10). And we know from elsewhere in the OT he bragged about 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kgs 11:3; although this may be the kind of embellishment over victories for which kings of the ancient world are famous). He loved so many foreign women he was led into idolatry (1 Kgs 11:1–5). He sinned much more than his father David (1 Kgs 11:6). But in all this, he found no lasting value (2:11). He concluded, however, that on balance wisdom is still more valuable than foolishness, because at least an informed person operates in the light of knowledge while the fool lives in the darkness of ignorance (2:12–14a).

In another place, he gives what seems to be odd advice from the Bible:

> [16]*So my advice?* Do not act overly righteous, and do not *think yourself* wiser than others. Why *go and* ruin yourself? [17]But do not be too wicked or foolish either. Why die before it's your time? [18]Grasp both sides of things and keep the two in balance; for anyone who fears God won't give in to the extremes. (Eccl 7:16–18)

Qoheleth's point seems to be to realize that you cannot be so good that you earn God's blessings. Do not become so frustrated over the fact that good people often have bad experiences that you turn to rebellion as a response. Although goodness cannot guarantee a lack of problems, perplexities, and pain, purposeful wickedness has a high probability of leading to destruction. So (he is not saying be righteous and wicked in balance) the answer is to avoid any extreme lifestyle. Do not use law keeping or law breaking as ways hopefully to make life work in terms of health and wealth. Fear God but do not be a fanatic. Obedience to God's and man's laws is wise but cannot stop injustice or injury. Disobedience may be without consequences at times but is dangerous in the long run.

Despair and Death

On the heels of this hope, he then realized that even if he lives wisely, he will still die just like those who live wickedly and forsake wisdom (2:14b–16). For all it is worth, knowledge cannot empower us to cheat death. It will come to all, great or small, sooner or later. So why be wise,

why be righteous? Qoheleth confesses at this point he hated his life and his labor! (2:17–18). Mel Brooks famously said, "It's good to be the king," but Qoheleth seems not to agree, even with his many concubines and wives—maybe because of them—and his great wealth and wisdom. Even if this book was written long after Solomon, Solomon is the one to whom the text is applied and upon whose life the lessons are based.

The Defeat of Despair

Qoheleth probably means "a collector" (in this case of wisdom). Remember Solomon is credited with thousands of proverbs, created or collected. At the end of this book Qoheleth explains that he "searched for just the right words *to bring hope and encouragement,* and he wrote honestly about truth *and the realities of life*" (12:10). Reflecting on how hard work cannot guarantee success (2:19–23), he decided: "There is nothing better than for people to eat and drink and to see the good in their hard work. These *beautiful gifts,* I realized, too, come from God's hand" (2:24). The antidote to anguish is appreciation. In spite of all life's puzzles, problems, and perplexities, some satisfaction may be found in life's everyday activities like mealtimes as well as manual and mental labors. Something good can be found and focused upon in the midst of the difficulties and even disasters of life. Find enjoyment in meals with family and friends, today, while you can, not waiting for some theoretical thrill to come. The very opposite of the hedonist, Qoheleth speaks not of finding life's meaning in food and fun but merely accept simple pleasures as God's gifts and means for delight in the midst of all that can cause despair. He urges people to see God and something good in life's everyday affairs rather than waiting on extraordinary excitement that might never come. Life is short. Find a way to enjoy each day. He says if anyone could find meaning in material things, he could. But he could not do it, meaning all those with less opportunities need not try. He has already proven they will fail (2:25). Wisdom and knowledge and joy will come to those who seek to please God (2:26a). God allows (which we cannot fathom) all extremes of delight and disaster to color life (3:1–8). But we are accountable for our actions (3:15). We, like Eve, want an eternal perspective (to have our eyes opened and understand good and bad—an idiom for "everything"), but we remain human to our frustration (3:10–11). So, there is "nothing better for us than to be joyful and to do good throughout our lives; to eat and drink and see the good in all of our hard work is a gift from God" (3:12–13).

Lessons about Leaders

In several places in the rest of this book, Qoheleth deals with leadership issues. At the end of chapter three he observes "that in place of justice, wickedness prevails. In place of righteousness, wrongdoing succeeds" (3:16). You would think a king could make heads roll and fix this. Trump did (by saying "You're fired!"). But the point is that long ago we find incompetent and/or immoral people in important jobs. Justices of the peace brought neither. Religious leaders were irreligious. Why? They will be judged by God, so we cannot conclude bad leaders were put there by God's will (3:17). God wants us to learn from this, that no matter how elevated a position someone has, he or she is still a human, who will die just like an animal and decay in the ground (3:18–20). No leader is divine even if amazing. But the norm is that leaders are disappointing. Power corrupts. So, they have to be subject to the same standards as everyone. They have no divine rights; they are not above God's or man's laws. Whenever proper safeguards have been lacking, stupid and dangerous people have entered and remained in power to the detriment of their constituencies. In a democracy people who feel oppressed by elites can elect an idiot just out of spite. It's happened before.

Origin of Oppressions

Chapter four begins with the author saying he looked around and witnessed a lot of oppression in the world (4:1ai). Again, how is it that the king can only look and bemoan the situation? Anyway, he saw oppressed people in tears with no one to help them (4:1aii–b). Their abuse was so bad Qoheleth decided it better to be dead than in this living death (4:2). Better yet, is never to have been born and to have to experience this suffering (4:3). It doesn't get much worse than this. Perhaps this king was talking about conditions in lands over which he had no control. Although in the OT God often judges his people as worse than the idolatrous nations. Regardless, he then realizes that all this pursuit of power is fueled by envy: "All the work and skills people develop come from their desire to be better than their neighbors" (4:4a). To this there are two extreme responses, which are frequent: (1) be a fool and run away from the rat race and refuse to work, but then be poor and waste your life, or (2) be another kind of fool, a workaholic, who forsakes happiness and health for material success (4:5–6). The latter often become leaders, but only because the façade of work and wealth is misinterpreted as wisdom.

Later he says we should not be surprised that oppression of the weak by the strong takes place, because everyone is part of a hierarchical system (5:8a). Each person is on some rung of the ladder of success and is simultaneously stepping on someone below them to get higher while being stepped on by the person above them. (5:8b). It's dog eat dog and every man for himself. Even in so-called Christian countries. A country does best when its leaders are not spoiled elites who know nothing of an honest day's work (5:9). Those who love wealth never have enough (5:10). Hard working people with few possessions fall to sleep easily; but those whose lives are built on the pursuit of wealth, stay awake worrying about their possessions (5:11–12). It is true, as some may reply, many rich people probably sleep well. I am sure many do because they are those who have attained such wealth and power they have little or nothing to worry about—unless it is their eternal fate.

Woe is pronounced on a land whose leaders are not sophisticated and party when they should work; who live to drink and eat rather than drink and eat to live (Eccl 10:16–17). Beware of incompetent leaders: a house with a lazy owner will leak (10:18). Beware of immature leaders, who are preoccupied with sensual and monetary concerns (10:19). Beware of paranoid leaders, even pastors, who will send out spies and imprison you for even the rumor that you disagree with them (10:20).

Old or Young?

Leadership lapses lead to debates over whether it is best to have older, experienced leaders (who might be out of date) or younger exciting, fresh leaders (who might be naïve). Qoheleth tells a story about an old, foolish king who rejected advice, so a young opponent from a poor background rose up to take his place (with the promise of reform and making the country great again; 4:13–15). Initially he was loved by all, who surrendered all authority to him. (4:16a). But he apparently abused his authority (power corrupts), and was no longer popular (4:16b). This is the way of leadership and those being led. People are fickle and a leader lasts only as long as he pleases them. Only a fool believes his power and popularity will last (4:16c).

In Ecclesiastes 9:13-18, the author tells how once a small city was besieged by a powerful king. A poor but wise man was able to save the city. Still he was not remembered. Although wisdom seems better than mere might, this wisdom was despised. But wisdom is usually found in

quiet words, and foolishness in shouting. Wisdom is stronger than war weapons (the pen is mightier than the sword), but it only takes one sinful and stupid person to destroy everything good and peaceful that has been accomplished.

Oaths and Broken Promises

Qoheleth warns his readers to be sure to keep their promises, especially those made to God. Better not to take any oath than make one and break it (5:1–5). He then perhaps gives the best advice ever given to politicians:

> [6]Do not let your mouth lead you to sin, and do not claim before the temple messenger that your vow was a mistake. Why should God be angry at the sound of your voice and destroy everything you've worked hard to achieve? [7]Daydreaming and excessive talking are pointless *and fleeting things to do, like trying to catch hold of a breath*. (Eccl 5:6–7).

Opposite Realities

Another aspect of life and leadership is that wealth is not a necessary evidence of wisdom or a good work ethic. Success or failure can be due to dumb luck. The fastest runner will not necessarily win the gold medal, and the strongest army does not always win the battle; and a skillful and smart person may be poor, because all are subject to time and chance or misfortune (9:11). No one knows the future. He who is successful today may be suddenly a failure and lose all, not due to his own fault but due to the crimes of others and unexpected events, like a fish is caught in a net without warning (9:12). The only guarantee is death (even more than taxes). So

> [7]*here is what you should do:* go and enjoy your meals, drink your wine and love *every minute of* it because God is already pleased with what you do. [8]Dress your best, and don't forget a splash of scented fragrance. [9]Enjoy life with the woman you love. Cherish every moment of the fleeting life which God has given you under the sun. For this is your lot in life, *your great reward* for all of your hard work under the sun. [10]Whatever you find to do, do it well because where you are going—the grave—there will be no working or thinking or knowing or wisdom. (Eccl 9:7–10)

Finally, everyone will do well to follow the final advice of Ecclesiastes:

> 13And, when all is said and done, here is the last word: worship in reverence the one True God, and keep His commands, for this is *what God expects* of every person. 14For God will judge every action—including everything done in secret—whether it be good or evil. (Eccl 12:13–14)

Conclusion: Attitudes and Actions

Beliefs influence behavior. To borrow an expression from Francis Schaeffer: in light of this, how should we then live? Perhaps something important to keep in mind is that when Israel asked for a human king, to be like the nations around them (1 Sam 8:5–22), this was not God's ideal. A long history of commendable as well as corrupt and cruel kings was already a historical reality. Samuel listed the liabilities of having a king, which many subsequent societies also ignored; and ironically used other OT passages to justify their monarchies. Regardless of the governing styles politically or institutionally, past or present, leaders were and are necessary components, and what scripture helps us understand is that incompetent and/or immoral leaders are at times unavoidable and inevitable. Our current global realities are nothing new when it comes to European, Asian, African, or American leaders. Post-Eden and pre-Eternity, good and bad emperors and executives have, do, and will exist; although one person's strongman is another's bully, and one person's mild or moderate leader is another's milquetoast. Both will come and go, and Qoheleth's advice is not to overreact with doomsday predictions or depression, but to be wise and avoid extreme solutions. Pray for your leaders, and be a good citizen to the limit of conscience and God's commands. Your current leadership crisis, wherever you are, likely pales in comparison with many past political, professional, and even ecclesiastical, predicaments. Resort neither to flight nor a fight, but articulate and advance a measured, level-headed, and balanced biblical answer.

End Notes

[1] http://www.cnbc.com/2016/01/23/is-the-world-suffering-from-a-leadership-crisis.html (accessed 07 Sept 2016, 15:51).

[2] http://reports.weforum.org/outlook-global-agenda-2015/top-10-trends-of-2015/3-lack-of-leadership/ (accessed 07 Sept 2016, 15:45).

[3]http://www.salon.com/2014/06/18/5_political_crises_that_threaten_the_global_economy_ partner/#topOfPage2 (accessed 07 Sept 2016, 15:39).

[4] Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are taken from *The Voice Bible: Step into the Story of Scripture*, Ecclesia Bible Society (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012).

[5] This essay is based on the author's many years of studying and teaching Ecclesiastes, so the content is not drawn directly from other than the primary source of the Hebrew Qoheleth; however, significant publications that have influenced my interpretations and translations are: Christian D. Ginsburg, *Coheleth, Commonly Called the Book of Ecclesiastes: Translated from the Original Hebrew, with a Commentary, Historical and Critical* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861); Richard G. Moulton, *Ecclesiastes and the Wisdom of Solomon*, The Modern Reader's Bible (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902); H. L. Ginsberg, "The Structure and Contents of the Book of Koheleth," In *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient near East,* ed. M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas, 2nd reprint. Vetus Testamentum Supplement III (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 138-; H. Carl Shank, "Qoheleth's World and Life View as Seen in His Recurring Phrases," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 37:1 (Fall 1974): 57-73; Graham S. Ogden, "Qoheleth's Use of the 'Nothing is Better' Form," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1978): 339-50; R. E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature. Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther,* The Forms of the Old Testament Literature XIII (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1981); M. A. Eaton, *Ecclesiastes,* The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 16 (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983); M. V. Fox, "The Meaning of *Hebel* for Qohelet," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105 (1986): 409-27; J. L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1988); T. Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament 16 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998); N. Lohfink, *Qoheleth*, Continental Commentaries (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Michael V. Fox, *Ecclesiastes: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation,* The JPS Bible Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004); Peter Enns, *Ecclesiastes*, The Two Horizons OT Commentary series (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011).

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Greg S. Whyte

A Comparative Analysis of the Major Religions in Japan and Korea During the Colonial Period

Abstract:

To understand why the Christian gospel has success amid one culture, while seeming to fail in similar, neighboring cultures, one must look to additional factors than those often cited by missionary sources. Some of these factors would include the socio -political and religious context of each of those cultures in question, in addition to the prior encounters with Christianity and the reactions to the gospel by the receiving cultures. To illustrate this need, this paper analyzes the contexts of Japan and Korea during the period of Japanese expansion and wartime (1894 – 1945), and looks specifically at what was happening in the other major religions present at the time (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintoism), which would include their responses to the Christian missionary presence.

Keywords: Colonial Japan, Korea, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Christian mission

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Introduction

When considering the means used by the Holy Spirit in whether or not an individual, or an entire people group, accept the gospel and make it their own, missiologists often make it their focus to seek explanations that could explain why, historically, one embraces Christ, while another – presented with the same message, and sometimes even having similarities in methods used and situations experienced – rejects Christ. In the case of people groups, these same circumstances and prevailing worldview considerations also impact the shape of that Christianity that develops in the local context, as it becomes embraced and indigenized.

This essay will look specifically at two nations – Japan and Korea – to compare their relative responses to the Christian gospel. These two nations, despite the similarities and connections with one another as fellow East Asian nations, have had radically different reactions to Christianity – Japan predominantly rejecting its claims, and Korea – especially in the South – embracing Christianity and eventually becoming a major player in Christian missions.

While there are significant factors that developed later on historically, in addition to cultural and theological factors that must also be considered, this paper will specifically analyze this question through the lens of the other major religions that surrounded the churches during the period of Japanese expansion and wartime (1894 – 1945), at which time the general trajectory of Christianity in both countries seemed to diverge and move in opposite directions.

Prior to this period, there were several parallel similarities between the two countries regarding their general response to Christianity. Roman Catholic missionaries had been active on Japan's shores in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in Korea, during the eighteenth century. Both nations would initially welcome this new faith with curiosity toward its differences, and yet both would later become scandalized by Catholic Christianity and close their borders to foreigners as a result, expelling all missionaries and persecuting the native Christians, thus causing the fledgling church in each nation to go underground.[1] Both nations later had their borders forcibly opened through gunboat diplomacy in the latter half of the nineteenth century, followed soon after by the arrival of Protestant missionaries and the return of Roman Catholicism. Also, both had an initial period where conversion to the new faith was officially forbidden, which was later removed. Finally, both had been experiencing a period of rapid

church growth immediately preceding this period in question. Yet, beginning in the 1890's, things would change. While Christianity would continue to experience rapid growth in Korea, it would become marginalized in Japan. Why did this change occur?

One possible explanation is to explore what was happening among Christianity's major opponents (namely, Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism) during this time period, specifically at their response to the presence and activity of Christianity. For this, I will address each religion in turn, discussing the context of each, as well as how it responded to Christianity, in hope that this could contribute to the discussion on why Christianity seemed to blossom in Korean soil, but wither in Japan.

Buddhism

At the beginning of this period, Buddhism in both Korea and Japan was in a weak and demoralized state. In Japan's case, while it enjoyed a prominent role under the previous government, it was in a state of disfavor with the new Meiji government. In addition to this, it found itself divided into numerous competing sects. In Korea, Buddhism had been marginalized since the fourteenth century. However, this would change in the later nineteenth century, as Buddhists from both Japan and Korea, like other nations across the Buddhist Asian world, would seek to reform their religion.

Global Buddhist Reinvention

On the global level in the nineteenth century, Buddhism was seeking to reinvent itself as an historically and scientifically based religion, in response to the aggressive mission efforts of Christians in many of the Buddhist territories. Thus, there was a desire by Buddhists throughout Asia to prevent themselves from losing too much ground to its very aggressively evangelistic competitor.[2] The specific developments centred on establishing Siddhartha Gautama, also known as Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, as the centre of Buddhism. This became a focal point in Buddhist discourse in response to a similar emphasis being proclaimed by Christian missionaries when discussing the historicity of Jesus.[3]

According to Hwansoo Kim, the efforts to revive Buddhism on a global level were "spearheaded by a range of actors from the West and the East, including Western Orientalists, Buddhist sympathizers, and Asian Buddhist reformers."[4] Of these, the two with the greatest impact

were Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), one of the founders of the Theosophist Society and the first Western convert to Buddhism, and Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933), a lay Buddhist reformer from Sri Lanka.[5] Because of increasing travel and communication between the different Buddhist regions throughout Asia at this time, as well as the sympathetic attitudes of Orientalists and Buddha sympathizers in the West, local practices and responses to Western colonialism and Christianity began to affect other regions, which would also result in adaptations in the self-consciousness of Buddhism itself.[6]

As part of these reclamation efforts, Dharmapala and others, Olcott included, visited Japan, Korea, and other locations within the Asian Buddhist world to unite Buddhists under the banner of the historical Buddha, with the ultimate goal being the expulsion of Christian missionaries from their collective territories.[7] The Buddha's birthday celebration was one campaign that successfully helped to generate the rise of Buddhism as a revived global religion. According to Hwansoo Kim, Japan would become particularly dedicated to promoting this festival. [8]

Buddhism in Japan

Not only would Japanese Buddhism become passionately devoted to the celebration of Buddha's Birthday (called *Hana Matsuri* in Japan); they would also send individual travellers to other parts of Asia, as explorers, missionaries, and even a delegation to the World Parliament of Religions conference in 1893, and repurpose a document written by a Christian into an apologetic argument about the West's fascination with Buddhism (and, with it, the loss of Western interest in Christianity).

Prior to the renovations in Buddhism happening during this modernization process, the Japanese Buddha's Birthday celebration had occurred inside Buddhist temples, similar to other locations in Asia. The celebration was also generally held according to the older lunar calendar. However, after the renovation, with the encouragement of Olcott and Dharmapala, the festivals began to be held in public streets, university campuses, and private institutes, and the lunar calendar was replaced by the solar Gregorian calendar. Initially, it was run by Buddhist youth groups, with no official backing from the various Buddhist sects. This changed in 1916, however, when the Japanese Buddhists finally united for the celebration.[9] By 1926, *Hana Matsuri* was embraced by the Japanese government as one

of the symbols indicating Japan as the ideal leader of Asia and a prominent player in the political and religious arena of the world.[10]

An additional resource that the Japanese Buddhists used to re-establish themselves within their society was *The Gospel of Buddha,* a publication by a German-American Christian author, Paul Carus. Carus' original intent with this work was to propagate his version of Christianity as being the fulfillment of Buddhism's aspirations, with Jesus being the Maitreya – the final great teacher to fulfil the teachings of Buddhism. Carus described Buddhism as a predecessor to Christianity, as well as a prominent contender for the souls of the world, which should be learned from as a highly philosophical and scientific faith.[11] He had, in fact, been highly impressed by the presentation of Eastern Buddhism by the Japanese delegates at the World Parliament of Religions conference a few years before publishing his work. According to Judith Snodgrass, "the Buddhism they presented… was a rationalized, secular, trans-sectarian, lay-oriented Buddhism consciously packaged to emphasize its compatibility with science and philosophy… and the life-affirming and humanitarian aspects of Buddhism."[12] In his work, Carus presented his views of the natural evolution of religion (a popular view of the time), with Buddhism naturally giving way to Christianity, its fulfilment.

However, this was not how it was interpreted nor used by the Japanese Buddhists. Instead, they used it as an apologetic tool to point toward how Westerners (who were viewed by Japanese as being predominantly Christian) were developing a deep interest in Buddhism (thus, losing faith in Christianity), and that Buddhism of the East could pose a threat to Christian (Western) religious hegemony. In other words, it was used to convince those Japanese who had been drawn toward Christianity because of the technological superiority of the West to reconsider their previous decisions to embrace that new faith, and as part of an argument that Japan could be recognized as an equal to the West in science, technology and intellect, but needed to remain strong as a decidedly Eastern culture against Western spiritual dominance.[13] In other words, despite Carus's original intent for the *Gospel of Buddha*, it was used in Japan, as elsewhere, as an ingredient in the reformulation and rebranding of Buddhism as a modern, scientific, and philosophically sophisticated religion.

Part of the reason for this desire for Buddhism to reinvent itself in Japan was that with the collapse of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the restoration of imperial rule in the new Meiji government, Buddhism as a

faith found itself both deeply divided and radically out of favor. According to Richard Jaffe, "although the Tokugawa regime had regarded the Buddhist clergy as a crucial aide in the maintenance of religious and social order, nativists, Shintoists, and many members of the new Meiji regime demonized them as un-Japanese, parasitic, and corrupt."[14] It was also viewed by the Meiji government as being a "feudal and superstitious religion antithetical to modernization and Westernization."[15] As such, the Meiji government sought to eliminate Japanese Buddhism altogether. It was out of this context that Japanese Buddhism now began to look outside of itself – especially since commercial shipping with other nations were opening Japan up to the world – to reimagine a Buddhism that would once again thrive in a rapidly changing Japan.[16] Among many of these travellers from Japan to the rest of Asia, the plight of several of these other nations, especially those under the heels of Western imperialists, caused a realization that unless they learned to successfully compete with the so-called Christian world, they would suffer the same fate of servility to the arrogance and brutality of Western rulers.[17]

Buddhism in Korea

Like its Japanese counterpart, Buddhism in Korea was in need of a re-invention of itself. During the Joseon period (1392-1910), it had found itself relegated to isolated mountain monasteries, and was prevented access from the principle avenues of power.[18] Additionally, the tradition of Buddhism within Korea itself was divided between complete detachment from the everyday lives of the people, with an "elitist, clergy-centred institutional tradition" on the one hand, and "diffused, 'shamanistic' religious practices" of lay Buddhists on the other.[19] To a degree, the anti-Buddhist sentiments during the Joseon period could be partly to blame for this situation. However, it should also be noted that the impediments that the Buddhist reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sought to address were actually inherent, structurally, within Buddhism itself – particularly of the Son school, which was the most prominent in Korea at this time.[20] As a system, Son Buddhism focusses on meditative practices and the denial of the physical world for the sake of the spiritual, not on the public teaching of doctrine. It was this world-denial and nihilism that resulted in some of Neo-Confucianism's deepest criticisms of that religion, which then led to its earlier marginalization.[21]

The Buddha's Birthday celebration in Korea first developed during the Koryo period. They were originally state-sponsored events with the intention of national unity and communal prayers for the royal family. The event included a lantern festival, celebrated by lighting lanterns and reading Buddhist sutras. Despite the anti-Buddhist policies of the Joseon period, the festival survived, though stripped of its Buddhist meanings. It became more like a State holiday, where families would gather at the festival, light lanterns and entertain themselves in the commercial districts.[22] However, from the later nineteenth century, similar to their Japanese counterparts, Korean Buddhist monks began to study in other parts of Asia, especially China and Japan, and several of these reformers emphasized the centrality of the historical Buddha, which included a resuscitation of the Buddha's Birthday celebration.[23] According to Hwansoo Kim, Korea's native version of this holiday was already undergoing modernization before Japanese Buddhists began introducing their own version to the peninsula.[24]

Into this situation, during the period of Japanese expansion, various Japanese Buddhist sects sent missionaries to proselytize, each competing with one another for a piece of the Korean Buddhist pie. The relationship between Japanese and Korean Buddhists during this time of Japanese expansionism was anything but one of trust or confidence between the two sides. To the Koreans, Japanese Buddhists were likened to Christian missionary colonialists "who invaded non-Western countries with the objective of furthering their sectarian and nation's imperial ambitions."[25] Japanese Buddhists, for their part, viewed their Korean counterparts as "pre-modern, moribund, backward and antisocial," and in serious need of guidance from their more "modern, vibrant, reformed and socially engaged" version of Buddhism that was developing in Japan.[26] However, it was not necessarily as clear-cut as a relationship of rivalry or patronizing.

If anything, the relationships between Korean and Japanese Buddhists was more passive – with Japanese Buddhists acting, for the most part, more like colonialists, with little interest in promoting the Buddhism of their neighboring nation. Koreans, for their part, were embittered because of the foreign rule, and did not wish to associate with foreign invaders.[27] Additionally, with the introduction of the Temple Ordinance in 1911, the Japanese government effectively put an end to the sectarian competition among Japanese Buddhists over Korean Buddhist territory by bringing the administration of Korean Buddhism directly under the supervision of the colonial government.[28]

However, there were some exceptions to the policy of disengagement. According to Hwansoo Kim, there were some on both sides who desired to work closer together toward mutual understanding and benefit.[29] The Japanese, for their part, assisted Korean monasteries in establishing schools, creating a central office for the monitoring of Korean Buddhism, aiding Korean Buddhism in re-establishing itself into the center of Korean politics, and protecting them from exploitation. Meanwhile, Korean Buddhists were encouraged by their situations and by zealous Japanese Buddhist missionaries (who were themselves inspired by their nation's imperial powers and their opposition to the threat posed by Christianity) to join the Japanese sects that protected them.[30] In other words, the relationship between Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism during this period was highly dynamic and nuanced.

Another proof that the relationship between the Buddhist camps was not completely antagonistic would be the March 1 Movement. Unlike Korean Christians and the *Ch'ondogyo* (The Heavenly Way Religion), who were vocal supporters of Korean independence, only two among the leaders of the March 1 Independence Movement were Buddhists.[31] What could be seen, by contrast, is a relationship of protection and control by the Japanese authorities toward Korean Buddhism, which allowed them greater freedom and public visibility than under the previous dynasty.[32] This increased visibility, protection from the Japanese government (as Buddhism was recognized as a legitimate religion – alongside Christianity and Shintoism), and its renewed image as an indigenous/ Eastern religion (as opposed to Christianity, which was still seen as relatively foreign) made it possible for Korean Buddhism to expand its influence.[33]

Shintoism

During the later Meiji Restoration in Japan and subsequent period of expansionism, Shintoism, was also in the process of transforming itself. This was due, to some degree, by the anxiety felt in Japan about the growing influence of Christianity and its accompanying Western colonial powers, and the desire to remain strong as a nation against Western dominance. For this paper, I will be specifically analyzing the particular form of Shintoism that was emerging: State Shintoism, its status as a "non-religious" nationalistic religion of the Japanese Empire, and the enforcement of its shrine worship upon the Christian churches in Korea.

State Shintoism in Japan

In one form or another, Shintoism had existed in Japan since ancient times. However, as a religion, it lacked a unifying ideology. Throughout much of its known history, it has existed in syncretism with other, more dominant, faiths – Buddhism during the medieval period, and, from the seventeenth century, Neo-Confucianism. Similar to its relationship with Buddhism, Shintoism altered Neo-Confucianism as it joined itself to its ethical ideology. In addition to this, as Japan expanded its territory, it would combine these elements with a totalitarian governmental policy and dreams of unifying the peoples of Eastern Asia, in direct opposition and competition with the Western Allied Powers, something referred to by scholars as Pan-Asianism.[34] This Imperial Confucianism (*Kodo Jugaku*) would be the dominant form of State Shinto religion until the fall of the Japanese Empire in 1945.[35] According to Wonsuk Chang, "In the wake of Perry's expedition to Japan… Japan transformed itself along the Western model of the aggressive nation state" and "defined itself as a paradox, part of a larger community of oppressed Asian nations standing against Western hegemony, while also being the most Westernized, civilized country among the Asian nations."[36]

To accomplish this dream of a Pan-Asian empire, the Japanese state sought to unite various elements of Japanese culture, including the semi-autonomous system of Shrine Shintoism, into a newly structured state religion.[37] Specifically, it was these three contents of Shrine Shintoism that the State sought to capitalize on: the myth of the eternal reign of the imperial family, the central importance of the *kami* (Divine spirits/ gods), particularly Amaterasu, the sun goddess thought to be the divine ancestor of the emperor, and Japan's superiority over other nations.[38] In fact, the Shintoism of the early 20th Century assumed a world dominated by Japan, and that other lands, including China, (which was previously viewed as the primary center of civilization in the East Asian milieu) would pay tribute to Japan.[39]

Between 1868 and 1945, Shintoism increasingly became influenced and controlled by the state, as the Japanese government sought to utilize the beliefs already inherent in Shintoism, in addition to the worship at Shinto's shrines, as one of the principle driving forces behind galvanizing the loyalty of the Japanese populace to the Japanese imperial ambitions.[40] Wilbur Fridell also mentions certain other elements that existed outside of traditional Shinto discourse that were central elements to the State Shinto

apparatus (such as national holidays, the national Meiji Constitution, and the Imperial Rescript on Education).[41] In other words, the religion known as Shinto (shrine Shinto) was only one of several elements that were being used by the Japanese government to accomplish this development of the Imperial Shinto system.[42]

With this all being said, it was not simply a top-down campaign propagated by a power-hungry government. On the contrary, the people of Japan in that period seemed to actively embrace this initiative.[43] According to Shimazono Susumu, "people at all levels of society can be viewed as active participants in State Shinto, supporting and rallying around it."[44] As he continues, however, he points out that the institutional State Shinto, aligned with the militarist, totalitarian ideologues of the Imperial State, and the Shrine Shinto of the common people, which represents the religious side of Shinto, were not always in complete agreement.[45] Additionally, while the State did have some forms of control and oversight over the shrine system during this period (under a different arm of the government than "religions," such as Christianity and Buddhism), the shrines under the government during that period remained relatively weak, both economically and politically.[46] What we can get from this is that the religion of Shintoism and the Shintoism of the State, while related to one another, were not equivalent.

However, because the religious worldview known as Shinto was one aspect of the picture that was being formed by the Japanese government in the development of State Shinto, seeking to define Shintoism as a religion is a murky undertaking at best – especially since the self-identification of Shintoism at that time in question (and also, in some ways, even today) was one more of nationalistic patriotism and expressions of Japanese culture, much like the rituals and holidays that citizens of another country would perform at certain specified occasions.[47] It was this "non-religious" nationalistic patriotism that would cause problems in Japan's colonies, including Korea, particularly for the nascent Christian church.

The Shinto Shrine Controversy in Korea

Although it may be true that Christianity was officially protected as a legal religion during the Colonial period, the reality of the relationship between the Japanese Shinto state and the Christian church was somewhat convoluted and opaque. For instance, only native Korean Christians were prominent in the March 1 Independence movement (while the Western missionaries actually discouraged this political activity). However, these

same missionaries, although uninvolved in the movement itself, drew global attention and criticism from their worldwide sources toward the atrocities committed by the Japanese in its aftermath.[48] Also, because Christianity was already deeply entrenched in Korea by the time Japan officially annexed Korea in 1910, the missionaries were able to attain certain concessions to further expand their presence through education, healthcare, and social work in the peninsula, especially in the major city centers.[49] For the most part, Western Christian missionaries hoped to maintain good relationships with the Japanese by expressing support for colonial rule – which is part of the reason for why, despite Korean Christians' prominence in the Independence Movement, the missionaries were, for the most part, silent until the aftermath.[50] This, alongside other controversial incidents, should illustrate the convoluted history of missionary Christianity in Korea during this period.

This opaque understanding would only become more pronounced in the later years of the Colonial period, and these two forces (Christianity and State Shinto) would come into direct confrontation with one another. The Manchurian Incident, a battle pretexting Japan's invasion of Northeastern China, produced the need in the Japanese government's minds for increasing the intensity of the "Japanization" of Korea. Japan needed the material and human resources present in Korea, in addition to the strategic position of the peninsula in their expansionist thrust. For this, they needed to guarantee the loyalty of their Korean subjects.[51] They sought to do this by urging the Korean population, at any cost, to offer worship and reverence at the Shinto shrines. Prior to 1932, these rites were completely optional; however, beginning in 1932, all school personnel – principals, teachers, and students – were now required to attend and participate in ceremonies at Shinto shrines and pay special homage and reverence toward the Japanese emperor.[52]

Because education was one of the primary ministries of Christian missionaries in Korea, this would become problematic. In fact, one could argue that this was *the* issue among Christians in Korea at the time, and one of the primary reasons for the later factionalization of the church. On the one hand, it was required by the government, who had been insisting since 1900 that the shrine worship "was not a religious act, but a political expression of patriotism,"[53] and the American missionaries wished to remain on friendly terms with the Japanese, so that they could continue operating in the peninsula. At the same time, it was also viewed by several Christians

as being a form of religious observance and, thus, idolatry, especially given the difference between the monotheism declared in Christianity and the polytheism inherent in Shintoism. Naturally, this would cause division in the ranks among the Christian denominations – with the Catholics and Methodists, for the most part, cooperating (thus, being allowed to keep their schools operational), while the Presbyterians were divided between a minority who also participated and a majority that refused to cooperate (and closed their schools).[54] The other Protestant denominations represented in Korea, whose numbers were not as significant as those mentioned, generally went one way or the other.

At least part of the reason for this divide that seemingly split across denominational lines could be attributed to church governance structures of the denominations in question. For the Catholics, because the Pope declared it acceptable, the church followed his lead.[55] Likewise, because the Methodists also possessed an episcopal governance structure, the denomination generally went in the direction decided by the bishops, despite any misgivings of individuals within the denomination.[56] Among the Presbyterians, on the other hand, who participated in a more egalitarian, consular form of church government, determined by regions, this gave more independence to each regional body, which allowed for more voices of dissent to be heard.[57] Additionally, while the Presbyterians were generally more exclusivist in their approach to other religions, the Methodists and Catholics were usually more inclusivist and sympathetic.[58]

Confucianism

During the Joseon Dynasty in what is today Korea, Neo-Confucianism enjoyed both popularity and prestige. In fact, it was the dominant ideology of the time, and the Korean Confucian Scholarly class (the *Yangban*) took great pride in their loyalty to Neo-Confucian doctrines and social ethics. The government examination system had become so perfected that, unlike in the Chinese system, the adoption of Neo-Confucianism and everything accompanying it served to preserve the stability of the Korean society.[59] In fact, it was even believed by some that Joseon was the only remaining true heir of the Confucian tradition that it had inherited from China.[60] However, this changed drastically when Japan annexed Korea in 1910. Almost overnight, Confucianism was deprived of its previous monopolizing position in the official courts of the land and had

lost considerable societal power.[61] While its influence on Korean society didn't die out completely (as it continued to live on in the rural centers, and Korean cultural mores, language, and even Korean Christianity, have all retained certain aspects of Confucianism), its official powers as an institution were essentially stripped away. However, the seeds for this dissolution were present before that final point.

Consider, for example, the perspective taken by the Japanese toward Confucianism itself, despite the fact that State Shinto used Confucian ethics as part of its ideological makeup during this time. To the Japanese mind, which at this point was focussed on expansion and advancement to compete effectively with Western powers, pure Confucianism and its focus on the past and contradictory emphases and influences were seen as central to the problem of what Japan perceived as backwardness in its peninsular neighbor.[62] In fact, there was even a sense of Japanese superiority because of the relative peace enjoyed by her people, politically, especially when comparing itself to that of China, the epicenter of Confucianism. This comparison is especially stark when the central Shinto belief of the unbroken lineage of their emperors is considered, when compared to the changing dynasties of both Korea and China (who were both nations that based their political philosophy on Confucianism).[63]

As Wonsuk Chang would point out, even among intellectuals in Korea at the time, Confucianism was already beginning to be seen in a less than ideal light. It was viewed as "a shackling ideology of backwardness, oppression, hierarchism, laziness, and hypocrisy, and thereby incompatible with modern values such as individualism, tolerance and freedom."[64] It was increasingly seen as being powerless and useless.

Additionally, this perception would only be exasperated if one were to reflect upon the events surrounding the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), when Japan defeated the Chinese forces in a series of battles for the control of the peninsula, as well as the series of failed rebellions and coups by those of the more conservative Confucian factions.[65] When coupling this with the introduction of Christianity and Western culture at around the same time, this would result in a perfect storm against the Confucian ideology. Each of these factors, when combined with the loss of Confucianism's state prominence and the impact of modernism on Korean society, has resulted in Confucianism becoming marginalized, with very few Koreans after that point claiming any religious allegiance toward it.[66]

However, while Confucianism as a specific movement or "religion" may have become marginalized in both countries, its values continue to live on in the South Korean and Japanese cultures of today.

Changes Brought by Christianity

The introduction of Protestant Christianity into both Japan and Korea in the latter half of the nineteenth century brought considerable change to both contexts. Quite significant was the alteration to the religious environment, especially as each of the religions covered above were forced to deal not only with a new contender to the religious scene, accompanying the technologically and militarily superior Western powers, but also a new way to think about religion itself. To a lesser degree, we could see this change already happening with the earlier introduction of Catholicism[67] It was actually the introduction of Christianity, with its emphasis on denominationalism and religious exclusivism that would result in an alteration in this understanding of religion.

A Changed Perspective on Religion

The traditional belief structure of the East Asian world did not think of religions in the way that we would in the Western world. In fact, the idea of "religion" as a distinct preference and experience of an individual was foreign to Eastern Asia until the advent of Christianity arriving at its shores. In fact, it would not have been unheard of for a person to believe in and practice Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintoism (Japan)/ Shamanism (Korea) within the same day and not feel the contradiction. Every "religion" had its distinct role to play in the society in both Korea and Japan. In other words, at least as far as Japan and Korea of that time period were concerned, this particular concept of "religion" was a product of modern Western civilization.[68] Curiously, we can see this even in new religions that developed as blends of Catholicism and local religious beliefs during the period of persecution in each country: the *Kakure Kirishitan* in Japan and the *Ch'ondogyo* in Korea.

One of the surprises that the Christian missionaries found in Japan was that the *Kakure Kirishitan*, the underground church, had survived, despite the persecution, changed through centuries of isolation, and was now re-emerging.[69] Some of these "hidden Christians" would later join either Catholic or Protestant churches; however, approximately 35,000 of them would refuse to join either church, and instead chose to keep their

own traditions alive.[70] Currently, there are very few of these individuals left. The majority of these live in poor farming and fishing villages around Kyushu and its offshore islands.[71] Of particular interest to this paper are the reasons why those underground Christians chose to remain separate.

The *Kakure Kirishitan* beliefs are a unique blend of Christianity with Japanese folk Shinto and Buddhism.[72] That they would blend the Catholic traditions with the indigenous ones is understandable. The official church leadership was expelled relatively early on, and without access to doctrinal resources and fearful of persecution, these Christians needed to hide their faith by changing their symbolism and hiding their beliefs in the cultural forms of their surrounding culture.[73] As for why they choose to remain separate today, much of this has to do with honoring the tradition of the past and the veneration of their ancestors, who willingly suffered as Christians during the period of persecution. Additionally, as Kristian Pella points out, they are more a Japanese Shinto-Buddhist tradition that has incorporated Christian symbols than a completely Christian sect – and thus an entity that would differ in teaching and appearance from other Christian denominations, including those that would later attempt to create a fully indigenous form of Christianity in Japan.[74]

Similar to the *Kakure Kirishitan* of Japan, the *Ch'ondogyo* (the Heavenly Way) sect of Korea (also known as *Tonghak*, or Eastern Learning) also developed as a blending of Catholic ideas with the native Confucian, Buddhist, and Shamanist notions. Ch'oe Che-u (1824-1864), the illegitimate son of an aristocrat, developed this faith in response to the corruption of the government, incorporating the Christian concepts of equality, the Kingdom of Heaven and the personality of God into a reformed Confucian-based sect.[75] It would be a splinter from this group that would incite a general rebellion in Korea in 1894 that triggered the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), which, in turn, would begin the process of Japanese colonization of the peninsula.[76]

This blending with the indigenous tradition is not unique in either Japanese nor Korean histories. In Japan, Buddhism, which was introduced through Korea in the mid sixth century CE, and Confucianism, which also entered Japan through Korea in the third century, were both able to reconcile themselves to the native Japanese Shintoism by adopting specific roles within Japanese society.[77] The Japanese Emperor Shotoku (574-621) reportedly related the three religions as being the root (Shinto), the trunk (Confucianism) and the branches (Buddhism) of the tree representing

Japanese culture, seeking to bring peace to his divided nation. Likewise, Korea had a similar tradition, but where Confucianism and Buddhism co-existed until the thirteenth century, when Neo-Confucianism became the dominant worldview, and other religions – Buddhism included – were molded to fit the needs and dictates of the Confucian royalty.[78]

This is one element of the general attitude toward religion historically within East Asia, particularly both in Japan and Korea – that different religions do not need to be mutually exclusive from one another.[79] In fact, one might even say that the folk religion practiced in both Korea and Japan was a blend of Confucian ethics, Buddhist reflection, and local ideologies (whether Shintoism in Japan or Shamanism in Korea).

Conclusion

As I have argued in this paper, the introduction of Protestant Christianity, accompanied by the technologically and militarily superior Western empires, to the East Asian region brought considerable change. In addition to dealing with a new way of understanding religion, there was also the specific threat felt by each of these religions by Christianity itself – a religion that, to their eyes at least, was an aggressively competitive newcomer to the religious scene. In many ways, this is where we can begin to see a difference in the relative response between the dominant religions in both nations that would also determine a difference in the response between Japan and Korea toward Christianity itself. As I have shown above, both Buddhism and Shintoism seemed to expand and revitalize themselves in this period, yet Confucianism seemed to wither into the background.

Regarding Buddhism, its revival in both contexts was, in many ways, part of a global movement, and while it did expand its influence in both Japan and Korea, it was expanding from a place of weakness in both contexts, and so was not able to fully expel Christianity. This perceived failure would prove to be a point of frustration for various Buddhist leaders – most notably in the difference in social engagement and zeal for outside proselytizing (active evangelism of nonbelievers) among their missionaries.[80] Nevertheless, although not becoming primarily dominant in either of the two contexts, Buddhism would grow in influence as it sought to re-invent itself and become truly competitive in light of the threat that it perceived from Christianity.

However, it is in the difference between Shintoism in Japan and Confucianism in Korea where one can see at least one clue as to the

difference in responses toward Christianity. Between 1873 and the early 1890's, Christianity in Japan became highly popular and influential, with prominent members of the samurai and scholarly classes declaring it the fulfilment of the Japanese *bushido* honor codes and beneficial for Japan to embrace collectively.[81] In the midst of this time of great popularity, Christian missionaries expressed great optimism about the future of Christianity in Japan. However, in the mid 1890's, this would change considerably. Part of this change may have been due to the Buddhist revival, but what would become apparent, especially as Japan began to extend their territory, was that Shintoism, in transforming itself and joining itself to the identity of the Japanese culture and empire, was beginning to reassert itself as the official and dominant faith, and Christianity, which had come to symbolize Western global hegemony, and yet was becoming seen by these same Japanese intellectuals as being rejected in the West as well, was pushed to the side and rejected by the majority of Japanese as utterly foreign, anti-patriotic, and inferior.

Meanwhile, when looking at the Korean scene, the situation developed completely differently. The aggressor was not perceived as the Christian West, but Shinto Japan. When the political power was stripped from the Neo-Confucian scholar class upon Japan's annexation, Confucianism seemed to melt away under Japanese criticism. However, why was there not a similar resurgence of the native religion in Korea, like there had been in Japan? After all, there were other religions to choose from – most notably the *Chon'dogyo*, which had become highly popular among the common classes. At least part of this was the Japanese policy toward religion in its colonies. Unlike Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, and Christianity, *Chon'dogyo* and other native religions of Korea were simply not recognized as legitimate religions, and so became illegal during the Colonial period. In addition, the Koreans believed that the United States (the nation most closely associated with Christian missionaries in the minds of Koreans) lacked colonial intentions toward Korea.[82] Thus, to belong to a religion that promised a chance to keep their national identity (which was not compromised by collusion with the Japanese Imperialists), and which promised progressive change from a decaying and corrupt system of the past, Christianity became an obvious choice for many.[83] We can see this during the Great Revival of 1907, in addition to the March 19 Independence Movement, as well as the rapid growth of numbers during the entire Colonial period – growing from one percent of the total population in 1910

(which had already shown significant growth and popularity prior to this), to just under four percent in 1945, following liberation from Japan.[84]

In other words, these religious movements show us at least one clue as to the difference between these two nations in their response to Christianity. In Japan, the combination of Buddhist revival and the rise of State Shinto as the official faith of nationalistic loyalty would marginalize Christianity as foreign and unpatriotic. In Korea, meanwhile, even with the dominance of Shintoism as the religion of the occupying Japanese Empire, and even with the increased popularity and prominence of Buddhism in this period, many Koreans would ultimately see Christianity as the best alternative that would allow them to keep their national identity as a people.

End Notes

[1] For both nations, one of the reasons for this changed reaction was the Rites Controversy, where the Catholic Church deemed the ancestral funeral rites important to both Shintoism and Confucianism to be idolatry and not to be practiced by Christians. Another reason in both countries was the suspicion of sedition by native Christians and imperial takeover by foreign powers represented by the missionaries. In Japan's case, it was the feuding of Portuguese Jesuit and Spanish Franciscan missionaries, in addition to their powerful fleets that made the Japanese government feel threatened, in addition to a rebellion by Catholic peasants in Shimabara. In the case of Korea, it was a certain "silk letter" that was intercepted, requesting military aid from Catholic missionaries in Beijing for the interests of the fledgling church.

[2] Richard M. Jaffe. "Seeking Sakyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism", *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 30:1, 66; Hwansoo Kim, "A Buddhist Christmas: The Buddha's Birthday Festival in Colonial Korea (1928-1945), *Journal of Korean Religions*, Vol. 2:2 (Oct 2011), 51.

[3] Jaffe, 69.

[4] Jaffe, 67; Hwansoo Kim, "A Buddhist Christmas", 52.

[5] Hwansoo Kim, "A Buddhist Christmas", 52.

[6] Jaffe, 68.

[7] Jaffe, 67; Hwansoo Kim, "A Buddhist Christmas", 53.

[8] Hwansoo Kim, "A Buddhist Christmas", 54.

[9] Ibid, 56-57.

[10] Ibid, 59.

[11] Judith Snodgrass, "'Buddha no Fukuin': The Deployment of Paul Carus's 'Gospel of Buddha' in Meiji Japan" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 25:3/4 (1998), 321-322.

[12] Ibid, 325.

[13] Ibid, 326.

[14] Jaffe, 70.

[15] Hwansoo Kim, "A Buddhist Christmas", 54.

[16] Jaffe, 70.

[17] Ibid, 74. This was felt not only by the Buddhists but by other Japanese as well, which was one of the primary reasons behind the aggressive expansion efforts of their empire during the 20th Century.

[18] Daniel M. Davies, "The Impact of Christianity upon Korea, 1884-1910: Six Key American and Korean Figures", *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 36:4 (Autumn 1994), 797.

[19] Hur Nam-lin. "Han Yong'un (1879 – 1944) and the Buddhist Reform in Colonial Korea" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 37:1 (2010), 77.

[20] Ibid, 78.

[21] A. Charles Muller, "Philosophical Aspects of the Goryeo-Joseon Confucian-Buddhist Confrontation: Focusing on the Works of Jeong Dojeon (Sambong) and Hamheo Deuktong (Gihwa)" *Korean Religions in Relation: Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity*, edited by Anselm K. Min. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016, 53-85), 57.

[22] Hwansoo Kim, "A Buddhist Christmas", 60.

[23] Ibid, 61-62.

[24] Ibid, 64.

[25] Hwansoo Kim, "The Adventures of a Japanese Monk in Colonial Korea: Soma Shoei's Zen Training with Korean Masters" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 36:1 (2009), 127.

[26] Ibid, 128. Cf. Vladimir Tikhonov, "One Religion, Different Readings: (Mis) interpretations of Korean Buddhism in Colonial Korea, Late 1920's – Early 1930s" *Journal of Korean Religions*, Vol. 1:1/2 (2010), 170, 172-173.

[27] Hwansoo Kim, "The Adventures of a Japanese Monk in Colonial Korea", 130; Tikhonov, 134.

[28] Hwansoo Kim, "The Adventures of a Japanese Monk in Colonial Korea", 131.

[29] Ibid, 129.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Tikhonov, 165.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid, 166-167. This protected status is agreed upon by most sources utilized in this paper. However, Sung-Gun Kim, while agreeing that Buddhism was protected, insists that Christianity was not, and was instead lumped in with the "illegitimate religions" because of its nationalistic orientation and messianism (Sung-Gun Kim, "The Shinto Shrine Issue in Korean Christianity under Japanese Colonialism" *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 39:3 (1997), 505).

[34] Pan-Asianism is the desire for the East Asian nations to be united under a single banner, as opposed to divided nations, for the sake of countering the expansionism of the Western powers (European and American). Cf. Wonsuk Chang, "Euro-Japanese Universalism, Korean Confucianism, and Aesthetic Communities", *Confucianisms for a Changing World Cultural Order*, edited by Roger T. Ames and Peter D. Hershock. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 2017), 223.

[35] Wonsuk Chang, 225.

[36] Wonsuk Chang, 223.

[37] Hong-Kyu Park and Nam-Lin Hur, "Choson-Centrism and Japan-Centrism in the Eighteenth Century: Han Won-chin vs. Motoori Norinaga", *Asian Philosophy*, Vol. 26:1 (2016), 83.

[38] Wilbur M. Fridell, "A Fresh Look at State Shinto" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 44:3 (Sept 1976), 548; Park and Hur, 84.

[39] Park and Hur, 92.

[40] Fridell, 548.

[41] Ibid, 553.

[42] For a more in-depth treatment of the relationship between Shrine Shinto, State Shinto, and other elements that made up the State Shinto umbrella, cf. Fridell, 552 ff.

[43] Shimazono Susumu, "Religion and Secularism in Overseas Shinto Shrines: A Case Study on Hilo Daijingu, 1898-1941" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 46:1 (2019), 94.

[44] Ibid, 96.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid, 97. Taehoon Kim also discusses the differences between "religions" and the place of the State Shinto apparatus, though he does go on to discuss in the following pages that this distinction was not always clear or emphasized in the actual practice of religious observance. (Taehoon Kim, "The place of 'Religion' in Colonial Korea around 1910: The Imperial History of 'Religion'" *Journal of Korean Religions*, Vol. 2:2 (2011), 32-33).

[47] Sung-Gun Kim, 508.

[48] Michael Kim, "The Politics of Officially Recognizing Religions and the Expansion of Urban 'Social Work' in Colonial Korea", *Journal of Korean Religions*, Vol. 7:2 (Oct 2016), 70.

[49] Ibid, 70-71.

[50] Ibid, 74.

[51] Sung Gun Kim, 503.

[52] Ibid, 504.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid. Sung Gun Kim mentions that the Presbyterians were against the practice, though the splintering of the Presbyterian church over this issue after the surrender of the Japanese Empire in 1945 indicates that this is not entirely accurate to declare that the division was simply along denominational lines, nor that every missionary in each denomination necessarily agreed with the stance of their given denomination.

[55] Sung-Gun Kim, 511.

[56] Ibid, 515-516.

[57] Ibid, 518.

[58] Ibid, 509-510. For a more in-depth treatment of the literature from the time, which would indicate a correlation with Kim's argument, cf. Sung-Deuk Oak, "A Genealogy of Protestant Theologies of Religions in Korea, 1876-1910: Protestantism as a Religion of Civilization and Fulfillment", *Korean Religions in Relation: Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity*, edited by Anselm K. Min. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016, 155-187.

[59] James Palais, "Confucianism and the Aristocratic / Bureaucratic Balance in Korea" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 44:2 (1984), 430.

[60] Park and Hur, 80.

[61] Yi Myonggu and William A. Douglas, "Korean Confucianism Today" *Pacific Affairs*, Vol 40:1/2, (Spring-Summer 1967), 44.

[62] Wonsuk Chang, 222. For examples of Confucian contradictions (present not only during the Joseon period, but seemingly endemic to the philosophy itself), cf. Palais, 432-435.

[63] Park and Hur, 83. However, that being said, according to Palais (427), Korea was also enjoying a period of relative peace and stability for much of the Joseon Dynasty, which he suggests is the reason why this Neo-Confucian state dynasty was able to be as long-lasting and stable as it was.

[64] Wonsuk Chang, 223-224.

[65] Taehoon Kim, 38.

[66] Yi & Douglas, 48.

[67] We can see this clearly by analyzing the testimonies of early Catholic martyrs in Korea. These individuals declared loyalty to the State in every area except for a request for the freedom of belief and religious practice, free of state interference. In the East Asian milieu, this was a radical demand, and it was likely also one of the factors for the official banning of Christianity. Cf. Don Baker, "Catholic God and Confucian Morality: A Look at the Theology and Ethics of Korea's First Catholics", *Korean Religions in Relation: Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity*, edited by Anselm K. Min. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 94.

[68] Taehoon Kim, 26.

[69] Michael Hoffman, "Japan's 'Hidden Christians'", *The Japan Times*, Dec. 23, 2007. URL: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2007/12/23/general/japans-hidden-christians/#.WRuwjusrLIU, accessed Aug 9, 2020.

[70] Ann M. Harrington. "The Kakure Kirishitan and their place in Japan's Religious Tradition" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 7:4 (Dec. 1980), 318-336, 318; Christal Whelan, "Religion Concealed: The Kakure Kirishitan on Narushima", *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 47:3 (Autumn 1992), 369-387, 369; FRANCE 24 English, "Meeting the Descendants of Japan's 'Hidden Christians'", YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqhOSHKGln4, Nov. 26, 2019. Viewed April 14, 2020.

[71] Harrington, 319; Kristian Pella, "Kakure Kirishitan: The End of a Tradition?" *Swedish Missiological Themes*, Vol.100:4 (2012), 391-420, 392.

[72] Harrington, 319; Pella, 393-394, 398; Whelan, 382.

[73] FRANCE 24 English; Harrington, 329; Pella, 395-396.

[74] Pella, 398-399, 411. For examples of these later groups that attempted to indigenize Christianity to Japanese culture, the most well-

known one would be the Mukyokai (Nonchurch) Movement developed by Uchimura Kanzo in the later Meiji Period. For a more comprehensive list of these groups, cf. Mark Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 1998).

[75] Davies, 801.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Harrington, 330. Confucianism became the background values of the culture itself (which prizes harmony and filial piety above all else), including even the language; Buddhism would become the religion of the afterlife, so would become specifically in charge of funerary rites.

[78] Jongmyung Kim, "Interactions between Buddhism and Confucianism in Medieval Korea", *Korean Religions in Relation: Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity*, edited by Anselm K. Min. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 20.

[79] Baker, 91; Harrington, 329.

[80] Jaffe, 66, 79; Hwansoo Kim, "The Adventures of a Japanese Monk in Colonial Korea", 153, 154.

[81] Samuel Lee, *The Japanese & Christianity: Why is Christianity Not Widely Believed in Japan*. (Amsterdam: Foundation University Press, 2014), 24-25; James M. Philips, "Today's Legacy from Yesterday's Leaders" *The Response of the Church in Changing Japan*, ed. Charles H. Germany. (New York: Friendship Press, 1967), 16, 21-22.

[82] Davies, 806.

[83] Grayson, 169.

[84] Ibid.

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Women Church Planters in the Early Work of The Church of God in Christ: The Case of the Singing Twins, Reatha and Leatha Morris

Abstract:

While church planting is often seen as a recent topic, it has been in existence as long as the church itself. One interesting historical example of church planting is revealed in the methods practiced by the women of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), the largest African-American Pentecostal denomination in the United States. In the early days of the denomination, Mother Lizzie Robinson was put in charge of the ministry done by women. While she did not approve of women preaching and leading churches, she did approve and commission women evangelists who would "dig out" churches and then turn them over to male leaders from the denominational headquarters. Reatha and Leatha Morris, twins from Oklahoma, are presented here as a historical case study of how this method worked. The church planting methodology is also examined in light of current church planting theory. As apostolic harvest church planters, Mothers Reatha Morris Herndon and Leatha Morris Chapman Tucker illustrate the power of church planters being freed from the work of pastoring and discipling (even if this was not their choice). Together they are credited with planting some 75 churches in many of the major metropolitan areas of the United States. The women church planters of COGIC are arguably the single most important reason for the size and success of this denomination today.

Keywords: Church of God in Christ (COGIC), church planting, women, Reatha Morris Herndon, Leatha Morris Chapman Tucker

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Introduction

In the history of Pentecostalism in the United States, few churches compare with the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), the largest Pentecostal denomination and fourth largest denomination in the United States.[1] Primarily African-American, COGIC has a fascinating history rooted in its origins in the Holiness Movement as well as Pentecostalism. Part of this story is the amazing accounts of how churches were planted by women in a denomination that did not allow for the ordination of women. In order to highlight this work, this article will focus on the unique ministry of twins, Reatha and Leatha Morris and their role in building COGIC as they became mothers of the church. It will also consider the methodological implications and lessons we can learn for modern church planting.

COGIC and the Role of Women

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) traces its founding back to two men, Charles Harrison Mason (1864-1961) and Charles Price Jones (1865-1947). Both men were from Baptist backgrounds who went to Arkansas Baptist College. Both men experienced sanctification, Mason after reading the autobiography of Amanda Smith, an African-American evangelist from the Wesleyan Holiness tradition, and Jones after a personal experience while in prayer. In the late 1890's Mason and Jones were the major preachers of holiness in black Baptist churches in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Mason and Jones were expelled from the National Baptist Convention in 1899 for their support of Wesleyan perfectionism. The churches that followed Mason and Jones took on the name of the Church of God in Christ.

In 1906 Mason and Jones heard reports from a friend of theirs, William J. Seymour about the out-breaking of revival in Los Angeles at Azusa Street. Mason went to investigate, and on March 19, 1907 experienced Pentecostal spirit baptism. Jones, however, did not accept that speaking in tongues was the only initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This led to a convocation in August of 1907 where the church split almost in half after three days and nights of debate. Mason would lead the Church of God in Christ, while Jones would lead the Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.[2]

Born into slavery on April 5, 1860, Elizabeth (Lizzie) Isabelle Smith grew up with her mother and siblings working. By 1892, she was a mother on her second marriage in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Sometime in the next ten years, she became involved with the work of Joanna Patterson Moore, a

white American Baptist missionary who devoted her life to working with African-Americans in the South. Despite being a Baptist, Moore had also experienced sanctification at a Methodist camp-meeting, and she wrote about it in her materials, such as *Hope* magazine, which was aimed to promote Bible study to African-American women, while also teaching literacy and home schooling. As African-American women began to read this material, they formed Bible Bands to study the Bible together. By 1906 Lizzie was active selling subscriptions to *Hope* magazine, distributing Bibles, and organizing Bible Bands. By 1909, Joanna Moore[3] convinced the American Baptist missionary society to sponsor Lizzie Woods (as she was now known) for two years education at a Baptist training academy.[4] After her studies, Lizzie stayed on as a matron teaching at the academy in Dermott, Arkansas, where she also experienced sanctification.

In 1911, Charles Mason came to Dermott, Arkansas to lead a revival, and Lizzie Woods experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In line with the concerns of the day, she was forced to leave her position at the Baptist academy. Woods then went with Elder R. E. Hart on some evangelistic meetings, where she made a clear distinction between her role as a "teacher" and not as a "preacher," since she did not believe in women preaching. Mason then had Lizzie Woods come to Memphis to continue her "teaching" at his church.[5] In the convocation in Memphis at the end of 1911, Mason named Lizzie Woods, the General Overseer of the Women's Work, in essence the "bishop" of women in COGIC. Her first move was to unite the separate Prayer Bands and Bible Bands into "Prayer and Bible Bands." Lizzie then set out to find women to train for the ministry of the church. In her early years in COGIC she would marry her third husband, and thereafter be known as Lizzie Robinson, one of the first mothers of COGIC.[6]

By 1916, Robinson had appointed state overseers and the first 32 young women "missionaries" were named in the 1916 convocation of the church. One vital role for these young women was the planting of churches. This activity was known as "digging out" a church or "teaching." As Butler (2007a: 51) notes,

> Church mothers' and missionaries' task was to draw in new members and 'dig out' a church for a male to pastor. When the tent meeting or street preaching had produced a number of converts, church mothers like [Lucinda] Bostick sent a letter back to Memphis that a pastor was

> needed, often suggesting the name of a man whom they were familiar with.

These women of COGIC had the hard work of street preaching or holding revival meetings; only to turn over newly started congregations to male pastors from headquarters. In addition, these women usually raised their own funds and supported themselves in this work. This practice can be illustrated by examining one interesting case of this practice in the lives of twins, Reatha and Leatha Morris.

Beginnings of The Singing Twins

Reatha and Leatha Morris[7] were the youngest daughters of Rev. John Henry Morris and his wife Sarah. Born a slave in the region around Memphis, Tennessee, John Henry Morris left the South and took his family to Oklahoma Territory for the land rush for free government land.[8] Reatha and Leatha were born on October 11, 1900 in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, near the town of Enid. They were the youngest children out of twelve, six boys and six girls. Rev. Morris was a pastor in the National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A., Inc.[9]

According to her own account, Reatha was converted about 1913, two years after her twin sister Leatha. From her account, her conversion sounds more Pentecostal than Baptist, but the major event in their spiritual lives would occur on Saturday, June 26, 1915. One of her elder brothers, Thomas Morris, had come home sick from Kansas City. The family had gathered around him to pray. One older sister had already passed away, but the other children joined their parents, a sister-in-law, Eleanor, a niece, Ella, and a neighbor, Mary Slaten, and gathered around the sick bed. The twins' sister Lula began to pray and soon began praying in tongues. Before long all 16 of the people in the house were praying in tongues and had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. As Reatha recounted to Doris Sims (2014: 52-53),

> They tells me we were hoopin, hollerin, shouting, going on and the whole neighborhood got on fire. They said someone called the fire department 'cause they said, "There's a ball of fire about the size of a washtub right over their house."
>
> They said they thought the house was on fire. They thought the house was on fire! The fire department came and they said they found out that there was nothing

but the Holy Ghost that had fallen there and the whole house was on fire. It was on Holy Ghost fire.

Believed to be a Photo of Sarah Morris, the Mother of Reatha and Leatha Morris

Rev. John Henry Morris, after this experience, felt pushed out of the Baptist church and founded a church called the Church of God in Christ in Enid, Oklahoma in 1915. Rev. Morris died about 1917, and this church would merge with the Memphis-based Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in 1921 and would then split in 1925 to become the Free Church of God in Christ under Elder J. H. Morris.[10] The Free Church of God in Christ would have around 874 members in 19 congregations by 1935.[11] About this time, it would merge with the Full Gospel Pentecostal Missionary Association under John Henry's son, Bishop Ernest F. Morris in Seattle, Washington.[12]

About the time of her father's death in 1917, Reatha recounts receiving a powerful gift of the Spirit to interpret scripture, which would be invaluable for her future work in evangelism. At this time, she started a tent revival with her brother (possibly Ernest) in Wichita, Kansas and joined O.T. Jones, Sr. in a revival in New Water, Oklahoma.[13] In 1919, Reatha and Leatha Morris would travel to Memphis, Tennessee for the first convocation of the fledgling denomination. Here they would meet founding Bishop Charles H. Mason and Mother Lizzie Robinson, who would give the twins a letter of recommendation to help build COGIC churches.[14] Reatha and Leatha Morris would then become known as "the Twins" in their evangelistic work for COGIC, while most of their brothers remained connected with their father's church.[15] Reatha would recall Bishop Mason praying over her with his hands on her head, and she added, "If I had been a man it would've be said that he ordained me."[16]

The earliest women evangelists in COGIC were licensed in 1917 and included 26 names of women, many of whom would go on to serve higher positions within COGIC. It is interesting that this list also includes a set of twins, Mary and Martha Renfro, who also formed an evangelistic team known as "the Twins."[17]

An early publicity piece for the ministry of Reatha and Leatha Morris

The Singing Twins

According to Reatha's personal account, around 1918, she and Leatha joined one of their brothers (most likely Ernest) in a revival in Wichita. Reatha (Sims 2014:67) noted,

> The last thing we did in getting this church going was, we put up a tent. My brother put up a big tent, right there in Wichita, Kansas. When we put up this tent that was the first time in my life I'd ever seen anything like that.
>
> I don't know how he learned to do it, but he did. He was way yonder older than us. In that tent many people got saved and was blessed of God. At that time, we were about 18 years old when we put that tent up but many people were saved and blessed in that tent. Now, in that tent was where I brought my first message.

By April 23, 1922, Reatha and Leatha Morris were concluding another revival meeting in Wichita, Kansas.[18] An announcement in the *Wichita Daily Eagle* of November 17, 1922 records, "The Twin Sisters, Reatha and Leatha Morris, evangelists, with the assistance of Rev. E. F. Morris, Pueblo, will conduct a revival meeting for 10 days at the Holiness church 151 North Mosley Avenue, beginning tonight. On Sundays, the meetings will occupy the entire day."[19] By this time, Reatha and Leatha were working with COGIC, but apparently still did revival work with their brother in their hometown of Wichita as well. Reatha recounted to Sims (2014:73) that she and her sister did not work often with her brothers in their separate church, but chose to work with COGIC because they had more outreach and places they could go to do ministry.

By 1923, Reatha and Leatha were assisting Elder Thompson with a revival in South Minneapolis. A report From August 14, 1926 indicates that the twins were heading back to Buffalo from Pittsburgh with their brother, who is, "a great healer."[20] But for the most part very few accounts of their travels and evangelistic activity can be found. Their work was not simply evangelistic in nature, although that was clearly where the twins gifting was the strongest. Reatha explained their early work this way,

> We helped to preach out these churches. When we first started, we didn't go among these churches expecting to give no message- that wasn't it.
>
> The people would call it preaching- we were not that. What we did was work around the altar. We'd get

people around the altar- 15 or 20- sometime on a long bench, called a Mourner's Bench.

We'd put them people on that Mourner's Bench and then we'd get over those people, casting out devils, praying for them and blessing them. Every once in a while, somebody would jump up and just shout for joy that had got completely delivered. We would let them help us pray for the others. That's how we got started. Sometimes in the meeting there would be 15 or 20 people who would get saved. Most of them would be filled with the Holy Ghost. (Sims 2014: 88-90)

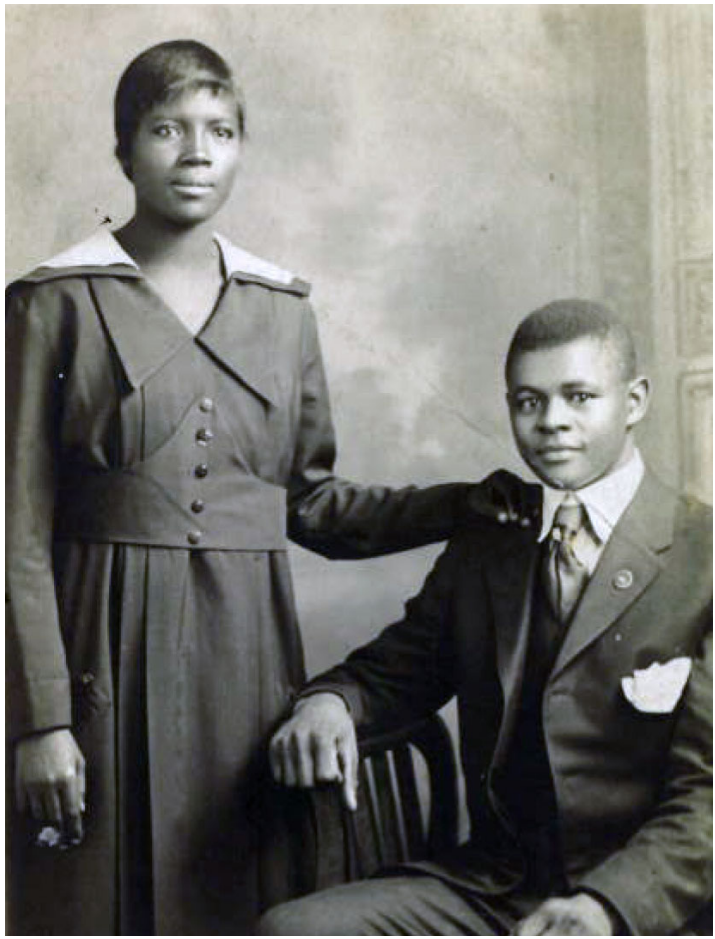

Photo of Reatha Morris with an Unidentified Man (possibly one of her Brothers) circa 1920

With Reatha playing the guitar and Leatha with a tambourine or her mandolin, the twins would walk along the street, sometimes with red bandanas around their necks and gather a crowd. They would move this crowd into a tent, often set up in front of a small storefront that had been rented. After gathering a large enough group of believers as a result of their evangelistic preaching, they would contact COGIC headquarters and a male pastor would be sent out to take over and develop the church. Reatha recalled planting churches in San Francisco, St. Paul, Buffalo, New York City, St. Louis, and other places from Miami to Seattle and Los Angeles to Washington D.C. In total, Reatha and Leatha are credited with planting 75 COGIC churches around the United States.

In one of her most successful revivals, which Reatha conducted by herself, she set up a tent in Chicago and held a tent revival for 30 days.[21] Over 300 people were saved and as the weather was getting colder, she moved the revival into an old Jewish synagogue that had been purchased in town. Various male leaders in Chicago reported Reatha to the bishop for pastoring a church. Reatha's response to Bishop Roberts was, "I don't call it a church. I call it the evangelistic meeting and I'm still carrying on a meeting, and souls are being saved. People getting saved, all kinds of people." The Bishop, due to others demanding he stop the meeting, took the matter to the COGIC headquarters in Memphis, but they did not act on the matter. According to Reatha's account, "Bishop Roberts told me to go on with the work. He said he was over the work his own self and if anybody caused any kind of confusion, to send them to him. That was one of the greatest accomplishments I ever had in my ministry."

Reatha (Sims 2014: 112-113) also recalled when she and Leatha were called by the founder, Bishop Mason, to hold a revival in his church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He called for them specifically and when people accused her of preaching, Reatha responded, "We are doing what the mule did. God touched the mule and had him to speak in a human voice to the prophet. God used the mule to bring the prophet to repentance. God is using me and my sister to bring sinners back to God, and you can call it what you want to call it."

Reatha and Leatha Morris circa late 1920's

Church Planting Methodology

While we are used to thinking of church planting as a modern topic, it is clearly something that has been going on throughout the life of the Church. Looking at the work of COGIC in the early twentieth century, we can actually see a lot of models that are currently in vogue. For Reatha and Leatha Morris, as well as Mother Lizzie Robinson, church planting was clearly missional. COGIC developed what is now popularly referred to as a church-planting network, sharing resources under a denominational structure. Current works, like Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird's *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (2010) could be used to describe the work of the early women church planters of COGIC.

In fact, the work of COGIC clearly fits the model Stetzer defines as "The Apostolic Harvest Church Planter," with some modifications.[22] Stetzer defines this model, writing,

> The apostolic harvest church planter is the most familiar model in the New Testament. Paul would go to an established urban center, teach and preach at the marketplace and/or synagogue, engage the intellectuals and elite, start worship, appoint elders-pastors, and then supervise the new elder/pastor via letter and occasional visits… (T)he apostolic harvest church planter goes to an area, plants a church, calls out and trains a new planter,… and then leaves to plant another church (possibly with some core members from the previous church plant). (Stetzer 2006:54)

Stetzer goes on to point out that this model was used by Paul and Barnabas and early Circuit Riders in Church history.

Clearly Reatha and Leatha Morris and the other early women church planters of COGIC had to modify this model a bit. In a denomination that did not allow them to be pastors, they did not have the authority to appoint or supervise elders in the local churches, or train a new planter, although there are some indications that the women may have been able to suggest certain men be appointed to the churches they planted. In addition, given the African-American context, and especially the audience that Pentecostals typically appealed to, most likely the women of COGIC did not engage the "intellectuals and elite," but rather the working class, urban populations of African-Americans in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly those that were a part of the Great Migration of African-Americans out of the South.[23] Likewise, these women church planters did not maintain

contact with their church plants in terms of letters, although possibly some contact continued through occasional revivals held on return visits.

Whether intentional or not, the early success of COGIC church planting efforts can be linked to the separation of the evangelist from the church leader, as well as a good system for tying the work of the evangelists to early involvement with the denomination. The women church planters of COGIC were essentially evangelists who were freed up to focus solely on evangelism and winning people to Christ. Once they had formed the core of a new church, since they were not permitted to be recognized pastors, a male pastor was called in from the denominational center to take over the work. In this way, the evangelist was then allowed to continue with their own ministry without spending extra time and effort in building or discipling the congregation itself. Mother Lizzie Robinson is to be credited for developing a way for women to be involved in ministry at a time when women were most often excluded.

Mother Reatha Morris Herndon and her sister, Mother Leatha Morris Chapman Tucker are credited for planting around 75 churches during their lifetimes. Such a number would have been impossible if they were required to stay and lead the churches they planted. Such a methodology clearly is supported in scripture, by passages such as 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4:11-13, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." COGIC following its conservative roots in the rural Baptist tradition did not allow women to lead as pastors, but through the recognition of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Mason allowed Mother Robinson to carve out an important role for women. COGIC was able to maximize the use of all of their leaders by creating clear roles in which both men and women could be involved in ministry.

While it is regrettable that women such as Mothers Reatha Herndon and Leatha Chapman Tucker were not permitted to exercise their gifts in terms of pastoral ministry simply because they were women in a denominational setting that did not allow for this role, they were permitted to serve as evangelists. They, along with many other women evangelists were commissioned to "dig out" churches, to lay the groundwork for others to continue building the church. I do not think COGIC could have

developed as quickly as it did, or to its current size, without developing this type of methodology for church planting.

Such an historical example should cause us to ponder the value in expecting current church planters to both evangelize and lead their own church plants. We may be missing the valuable lessons both St. Paul and the Morris Twins gave us. By considering the giftedness of people involved in church planting, the church might be more successful to develop a team-based approach, where evangelists prepare a core congregation and then call in people more gifted as pastors to lead and teachers to disciple. This may call for some type of ecclesiastical structure similar to traditional denominations (or more modern church planting networks) to allow for such an organized team to function well, but it builds on the giftedness of people in the church, instead of expecting a single church planter to perform all of the functions of an evangelist, pastor, and teacher, when they may not be gifted in all of these areas. As Stetzer (2006: 60-61) comments on the Apostolic Harvester Model,

> The apostolic planter can be most effective when not pastoring a local church (although the planter might be on staff at a local church). Instead, the apostolic harvest planter's main focus is on reproducing congregations. This is seen today when church planters work as denominational church-starter strategists or catalytic church planters, bivocational or lay church starters, or itinerant apostolic church planters.

Reatha Morris, a "teaching" evangelist for COGIC

Conclusion

Both Reatha and Leatha Morris would have unfortunate marriages, even in the context of their successful ministries. They married just one month apart. Leatha married Columbus Chapman, a preacher and healer in 1927. They built a large COGIC church in Detroit, but the couple separated in 1936 over Chapman's involvement with other women. Leatha did not have any children, but remarried in 1965 to Jaddie T. Tucker in Los Angeles. Reatha married a pastor, Thomas Commodore Herndon in 1927, and the couple had a daughter, Reatha Lee Herndon, in 1928 while Herndon was a pastor in Chicago Heights. The family moved to Los Angeles in 1929 to continue evangelistic work, and a son, Robert Morris Herndon, was born in 1930. The couple separated due to Herndon's increased problems with alcohol. In 1933, Reatha's 3year-old son died of meningitis while she was away conducting a revival with Leatha. Thomas Herndon passed away in 1935 from a cerebral hemorrhage.

Mother Leatha Morris Chapman Tucker would end up as a leader and organizer of the Department of Women in COGIC until her death on December 10, 1976. Mother Dr. Reatha D. Morris Herndon would be appointed President of the National Women's Evangelist Board in COGIC in 1951 and become the Elect Lady of the Department of Evangelism. Her only daughter would die from breast cancer about 1973. In January 2001 after serving fifty years, Mother Reatha Herndon was made the Emeritus Elect Lady of the Department of Evangelism. She would pass on March 31, 2005 at the age of 104 years of age.[24] Truly she was one of the great evangelists of COGIC's history.

It is fascinating that in a denomination such as COGIC, which does not permit the ordination of women, that women still played a major strategic role in the planting of churches. Women were clearly enabled to do evangelism and to preach in revivals, however, once a large enough group was formed, a male counterpart was called in to lead the new church plant. Following Mother Lizzie Robinson's lead, a careful distinction was made between "teaching" and "preaching" which empowered women like Reatha and Leatha Morris to enter acceptable forms of ministry. Much of the present-day success of COGIC was really built by these women, and others like them, who worked at "digging out" new churches.

While such an approach clearly hindered women from pastoring, it did free up women with gifts of evangelism to plant churches without remaining to develop those churches more fully. This division of labor was

clearly a successful method of ministry for COGIC and should raise critical questions for how we approach church planting in our modern context, especially how we might utilize all members of the church regardless of how they might be marginalized in terms of leadership.

End Notes

[1] This article is dedicated to my dear friend, Sister Patricia Jenkins, who was a fellow student with me at Asbury Theological Seminary and a faithful member of COGIC. She had served as a missionary to Liberia and introduced me to the history and tradition of the strong women leaders of COGIC, even when women were unable to be ordained pastors. She, for one, followed in their footsteps.

[2] For a more detailed analysis of the growth and development of COGIC, cf. Bishop Ithiel C. Clemmons work, *Bishop C.H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ* (1996), Pneuma Life Publishing (Bakersfield, CA).

[3] Moore would also become friends with and encourage Charles Jones in his own experience of sanctification. Cf. Anthea D. Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (2007a) page 27. But it is also essentially important that we take the beliefs of African-American women seriously as well, and not just make it an extension of white mission influence. Of special value here is the work of Anthea D. Butler, especially a chapter she wrote entitled "Unrespectable Saints: Women of the Church of God in Christ" from *The Religious History of American Women: Reimagining the Past* edited by Catherine A. Brekus (2007b) (Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press).

[4] Church (1996) Notes that other women have played an important training role in the history of COGIC, especially Dr. Arenia Mallory, president of Saints Academy and founder of Saints Junior College. Cf. Gilkes (1985), Goodson (2017), and Bragg (2018) for more about the role of women in the COGIC tradition.

[5] For more on Mother Lizzie Robinson's distinctions between "teaching" and "preaching" as well as more information on the role of women in early Pentecostalism in general, cf. Lisa P. Stephenson's article, "Prophesying Women and Ruling Men: Women's Religious Authority in North American Pentecostalism" in *Religions* 2 (2011): 410-426. DOI: 10.3390/rel2030410.

[6] To read more about Mother Lizzie Robinson and her life, cf. Anthea D. Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (2007a), (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press).

[7] The spelling of these names varies throughout the records, so I will consistently use the spellings used later in life. Reatha, for examples

appears as: Retha, Rether, and even Wreatha in various records and Leatha appears as Lither in at least one record. The 1900 census lists them as Cora and Dora, which are possibly middle names.

[8] Census records indicate that Sarah Morris was born in Mississippi, and while John Henry Morris lists his birth as being in Tennessee, he lists his father as being from Missouri and his mother from South Carolina. In the 1900 census, John Henry Morris is listed as 51 years old and Sarah Morris as 48 at the time of the birth of the twins.

[9] The 1900 census lists ten children: Eugene (21 years old), John (19 years old), Tennie (17 years old), Lizzie (15 years old), Thomas (13 years old), Lulu (11 years old), and Ernest (9 years old) are all listed as being born in Tennessee. Clarence (4 years old) and the twins, then called Cora and Dora (1 year old) being born in Oklahoma. This puts the move from Tennessee at around 1891-1896. The 1900 census lists John Henry Morris as a farmer, but the 1910 census lists him as a preacher.

[10] Most likely this was another son of Rev. Morris, but I have found no information verifying this. He did have a son named John according to the 1900 census and Sims (2014).

[11] Most of these congregations were in Kansas and Colorado. These statistics come from the Association of Religion Data Archives, retrieved online at" http://www.thearda.com/Denoms/D_1002.asp on January 16, 2020.

[12] Bishop Morris had moved to Colorado in 1919 and married Olive B. Morris in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1924 before moving to Seattle in 1928 and founding God's Pentecostal Temple in Seattle. He would be president of the Full Gospel Pentecostal Missionary Association from 1934-1968. More can be found on the history page of God's Pentecostal Temple at: http://godspentecostaltemple.org/History.htm retrieved on January 16, 2020.

[13] Ozro Thurston Jones, Sr. (March 26, 1891-Sept. 23, 1972) was the second senior bishop of COGIC from 1962-1968, who had an evangelistic outreach in North Arkansas and the surrounding areas at this time.

[14] Cf. Sims 2014: 71-72.

[15] In the 1920 census, Reatha and Leatha are living in Wichita, Kansas with their mother and brother Clarence, who at that time was a janitor in an ice cream parlor. Reatha and Leatha are both listed in that census as "Holiness Evangelists."

[16] Sims 2014: 88.

[17] Cf. *This is The Church of Christ* by Bobby Bean (2001), Atlanta, GA: Underground Epics Publishing, pp. 133-134.

[18] *Wichita Daily Eagle*, Wichita, Kansas, Sunday, April 23, 1922, page 8.

[19] *Wichita Daily Eagle*, Wichita, Kansas, Friday, November 17, 1922, page 2.

[20] *Pittsburgh Courier*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Saturday, August 14, 1926, page 11.

[21] Reported in Sims 2014: 108-111.

[22] Cf. Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group) 2006: 53-61.

[23] For more on the role of COGIC in ministry during the Great Migration cf. Anthea Butler's chapter in Schweiger and Matthews (2004) *Religion in the American South: Protestants and Others in History and Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press).

[24] Mother Reatha Herndon remained active in church work despite blindness and old age.

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John Lomperis

The Seven Churches of United Methodism, Revisited

Abstract:

The United Methodist Church is on the verge of what is expected to be a primarily two-way schism. But the denomination is already rather divided between seven main sub-churches: the global regions of Africa, Europe, and the Philippines, and the four main ideological factions within the United States (American traditionalists, the genuine Methodist middle, institutionalist liberals, and liberationist progressives). Each of these sub-churches has important internal divisions, but also distinct characteristics setting them apart. Recognizing the particular features of each is crucial for understanding how the coming schism will impact and is being prepared for by different United Methodists.

Keywords: United Methodist Church, General Conference, Protocol on Grace and Reconciliation through Separation, global church, mainline Protestantism

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In 1985, the late sociologist Robert L. Wilson and now-Bishop William Willimon, then both of Duke Divinity School, published "The Seven Churches of Methodism."

Their monograph boldly argued that the United Methodist Church in America had developed seven distinct geographically based sub-cultures, to the point "that the United Methodist Church is not one church, but seven" (1985:2):

- The Yankee Church
- The Industrial Northeastern Church
- The Church South
- The Midwest Church
- The Southwest Church
- The Frontier Church
- The Western Church

The differences between these seven "churches" in the UMC were at times so stark that Wilson and Willimon wrote that, in the immediate context of hopes for growth, "[t]he contrast in expectations between some congregations in Texas and in New England are so great that it is hard to believe they are in the same denomination" (1985:14).

There are obviously limitations in making generalizations about such broad groups of people. Nevertheless, it was a valuable, widely cited study. Much of it remains helpful for understanding trends that have continued across the subsequent three-and-a-half decades.

With the January 2020 announcement of the "Protocol on Grace and Reconciliation through Separation" proposal (hereafter, "the Protocol") and now widely expressed support for it, the UMC is on the verge of a widely anticipated formal schism, which many expect to primarily result in two main denominations emerging, one more theologically conservative and one more theologically liberal. However, even before such a split is formalized, I contend that the denomination is already very divided, into more than two key factions. In this paper, I show that while the number of sub-churches is still seven, the most consequential lines of division have become very different from those highlighted in 1985. As in Wilson and Willimon's study, there are extreme differences in the sizes of these "churches" and important diversities and sub-divisions within each. This paper will identify the particular characteristics of these seven main factions within the denomination facing imminent schism. It is crucial to understand the distinct realities of the UMC's seven "churches" today in

order to comprehend different ways in which the coming separation will ultimately impact and is being approached by different United Methodists.

Geographic differences remain important, especially outside of the United States. While each "central conference region"—as the UMC's governing *Book of Discipline* calls the central conferences of Africa, Europe, and the Philippines (¶1311.6, Cf. ¶1704.2)—includes major ideological and other divisions, addressed below, United Methodists in these three sub-churches have largely stayed relatively more unified across at least their *theological* differences. And the realities of international cultural, political, and economic variations are such that two United Methodists in Germany of different theological perspectives are likely to share many commonalities that they do not share with too many Filipino or Congolese members.

For the United States, whose divisions have primarily driven us to this point of impending "grace through separation," it now makes more sense to identify the four sub-churches that have distinguished themselves along theological rather than regional lines: traditionalists, the genuine "Methodist middle," institutionalist liberals, and liberationist progressives. Today, congregations in different parts of America who share an affiliation with either the progressive, LGBTQ-affirming Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) or the evangelical Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA) are likely to feel a greater sense of spiritual connection with each other than either is with any nearby United Methodist congregation perceived to be "on the other side."

While I readily admit my place among American theological traditionalists, I have sought to be fair and accurate in this analysis.

Before individually discussing each of the seven "churches," I will outline some major, big-picture trends influencing all of them.

Two of the most powerful factors that have long shaped the UMC are decades of unabated U.S. membership decline and the dominance of the denomination-wide bureaucracy—the Council of Bishops, general agencies, and U.S. seminaries—by people whose effective theologies and ecclesiologies reflect American liberal Protestantism.

The first factor has greatly hurt morale within American United Methodism, to the point that decline is often accepted as normal. Although regional differences remain, the downward trend has spread across the country. As a result, the pessimism which Wilson and Willimon observed in certain U.S. regions has now become more dominant throughout American United Methodism, while the optimism they observed in

other regions has become confined to smaller sub-regions, exceptional congregations, and a few visionary leaders. In 2017, Willimon recalled how after his retirement as an active bishop, a church consultant evaluated a Southeastern congregation, and concluded that none of its Duke-trained pastoral staff had the skill sets to grow the church, adding "Worse, every one of those clergy has a theology for why that's OK!" (2017). Since 1984, *all* five U.S. Jurisdictions have shrunk significantly, with the Northeastern Jurisdiction losing over one-third of its clergy and laity, and the North Central and Western Jurisdictions each losing over 40 percent (GCFA 1984; Commission 2018).

Liberal dominance of the denominational hierarchy has remained secure overall, despite some exceptions. In 1985, Wilson and Willimon observed that Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary had "been a leader in Christian social action" and "became deeply involved in the radicalism" of the 1960s, resulting in "a credibility gap between the school and its traditional constituency who felt that emphasis was not being placed on training persons to serve as pastors" (1985:13). Today, a similar, widespread credibility gap exists related to the left-of-center social action causes and "prophetic" models of ministry often promoted at the denomination's American seminaries, not just Garrett.

While these factors are based in the United States, they have global ripple effects when dwindling American congregations have less money to spare for missions, American denominational officials arranging partnerships supporting central-conference ministries have their biases, and elite central-conference leaders come to America for seminary.

These factors have helped fuel one of the most dramatic changes since 1985: the shift of membership (and to a more limited extent, power) from America to elsewhere. Less than seven percent of delegates to the General Conference held the year before Wilson and Willimon's study came from outside the United States, which helps explain their exclusive focus on America (*Journal* 1984:24-85). That same year, the data available reported less than half a million central-conference United Methodists, accounting for less than five percent of the global total of 9.7 million (GCFA 1984). By 2019, the United Methodist News Service reported that U.S. representation at the next General Conference will be down to 55.9 percent, that with less than 6.7 million reported members, Americans' "majority status in The United Methodist Church is coming to an end," and, that due to incomplete records and lag times, we may have already passed that tipping

point (Hahn 2019). Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for most of the growth in central-conference delegates, skyrocketing from a token 22 delegates in 1984 to 278 now (nearly one-third of the total), although all three central conference regions now send significantly more delegates (GCFA 1984; Commission 2018).

These shifts have sparked tensions. Non-Americans have become increasingly vocal in seeking a greater say in denominational leadership and resource allocation, and in protesting being treated as children or pawns. Yet besides General Conference, the membership shifts have not been reflected in much of the denominational bureaucracy. For example, for the denomination's global social-justice agency, the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), less than four percent of its board of directors are from Africa, fewer than those from the U.S. Western Jurisdiction, despite the former being home to roughly half of all United Methodists and including several times more people than the latter (GBCS n.d.). Liberal Americans frustrated with most central-conference delegates' theological conservatism have sometimes responded by scrutinizing various American subsidies for United Methodism overseas.

Wilson and Willimon predicted growing conflict over how Southern Americans would want a greater say in denominational expenditures, while, for the Northern Americans who then disproportionately dominated the general-agency structure, "Those who became accustomed to making such decisions will not relinquish their power willingly" (1985:20). Now that General Conference votes have shifted overseas, those Americans who were long accustomed to running the denomination have resisted sharing, let alone relinquishing, their power. It is no coincidence that many institutionalist liberal Americans (Church #3) abandoned previous opposition to schism only after the 2019 General Conference showed they were no longer as dominant as they had thought.

In the following pages, I will outline the distinctive features and boundaries of each of the UMC's seven main sub-churches today. Importantly, for each of these "churches," the constituency is far broader than those who strongly support or feel represented by their faction's identifiable leaders.

Church #1: American Traditionalists

Since the release of the Traditional Plan eventually approved by the 2019 General Conference (to maintain and ensure enforcement of

previously enacted bans on "self-avowed practicing homosexual" clergy and "ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions"), "traditionalist" has become a widely accepted label for those whose theology has been called orthodox, conservative, and/or evangelical.

The Good News caucus emerged in 1967 to provide leadership for this sub-church, long after Harold Paul Sloan's "essentialist" movement ended. In later years, Good News was joined by such newer caucuses as the Institute on Religion and Democracy and its UM*Action* program, Lifewatch, the Confessing Movement, and the WCA.

In late 1987, in a key milestone in the emergence of the Confessing Movement, several traditionalist United Methodist clergy developed the Houston Declaration. That manifesto defended "three crucial truths which are essential to the life, witness and scriptural integrity of the church":

- "the primacy of scripture" as what the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church calls "the true rule and guide for faith and practice";
- Traditional Trinitarian doctrine, along with "deplor[ing]" the practice of "abandoning the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit or adopting inadequate substitutes"; and
- Maintaining biblical disapproval of homosexual practice, including by treating this behavior as unacceptable for clergy, while also "repudiate[ing] all irrational fear of and contempt for homosexual persons" ("Houston Declaration" 1987).

The second issue has faded as a prominent controversy. But the first and third remain valuable summaries for what unites this faction. Most American traditionalists want others to understand that they love members of the LGBTQ community and do not see their own sexuality stance as a *primary* value, but rather as *derivative* of more central commitments like scriptural authority.

This group has long included exceptions to American United Methodist pessimism about future growth possibilities. Pastors of many of the largest American United Methodist congregations are firmly in this camp. For the last several years, Dr. Len Wilson has examined American United Methodist congregations with average worship attendances of at least 1,000 and developed annual lists of the top 25 with the fastest growth in attendance. Analyses of his lists have found a consistent pattern of a

strong majority having theologically conservative senior pastors (Moran 2019).

This group has most acutely felt the aforementioned "credibility gap" between church and seminary. While not an official UMC school, Asbury Theological Seminary, with its commitments to evangelical Wesleyanism and biblical inerrancy, has been an attractive alternative for many traditionalist American seminarians, and has in recent years trained many more United Methodist pastors than several of the denomination's own official, heavily subsidized seminaries. Its graduates are consistently over-represented among the senior pastors of the fastest-growing large congregations (Moran 2019). United Theological Seminary has in recent years embraced Nicene orthodoxy and charismatic renewal, making it rather exceptional among the UMC's official American seminaries.

This faction shares with other American sub-churches some anxiety over the decline of culturally encouraged church attendance. But while Churches #3 and 4 below respond by urging the UMC to follow the leftward trajectory of other "mainline" Protestant denominations on sexuality morality and other matters, those in this "church" have instead sometimes looked enviously at the greater numerical successes and perceived faithfulness in more evangelical, non-mainline American churches.

In early 2019, United Methodist Communications (UMCom) released a national survey of American United Methodist laity, finding a plurality of 44 percent describing their theology as "Conservative-Traditional," compared to the 28, 20, and eight percent who instead chose, respectively, "Moderate-Centrist," "Progressive-Liberal," and "Unsure." Chuck Niedringhaus, UMCom's research director, warned against "add[ing] the moderates and progressives and say[ing] that's where the church is," because "[t]heologically, many (moderates) are more traditional" (Hodges 2019).

While the value of such undefined, self-chosen labels is limited, the survey found key beliefs that set apart "conservative-traditional" respondents. Most believe that "the only way to salvation is through a relationship with Jesus" (86 percent), "believe in a literal hell" (82 percent), and want the UMC's *primary* focus to be "saving souls for Jesus Christ" rather than "advocating for social justice to transform this world" (88 percent), while both progressive-liberals and moderate-centrists were much more divided on these questions (UMCom 2019).

Yet this "church" is not nearly as monolithic as sometimes imagined. Rev. Dr. William Abraham wisely observed over two decades ago, "The conservative wing of the church is itself a fragile coalition, including those who lean in a catholic direction, those who are card-carrying charismatics, those inclined in an Anabaptist direction, and those who are really pragmatists at heart but for the moment lean to conservatism out of convenience and traditional piety" (1988). Today, the unity of this coalition may be somewhat less fragile, in part due to shared negative experiences with unfriendly denominational officials and growing societal hostility. And yet intra-traditionalist divisions remain, on the points listed by Abraham as well as on such matters as ecclesiology and a number of social concerns beyond sexual morality. It is worth emphasizing that this "church" includes much greater diversity of opinions on American politics than many outsiders assume.

Church #2: The Genuine Methodist Middle of America

This is perhaps the least understood "church." After all, it is the only one with no organized caucus or clear, representative leadership. This group has become rather unrepresented among key denominational movers and shakers, as a result of the generally more polarized culture within the UMC and how elections of delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences have been increasingly dominated by "slate voting" (the practice of annual conference members, depending on their preferences, voting only for candidates on lists disseminated by conservative or liberal caucuses).

But there are many American United Methodists whose theological views are truly somewhere in the middle of the denomination's divides. They feel uncomfortable with the packaged-deal stances of the caucuses of the other U.S. sub-churches.

The details of what puts individuals in this sub-church vary widely. Some Methodist middlers may sometimes strongly agree with conservative caucuses and with liberal caucuses at other times, all on issues important to them. Sometimes it is a matter of taking a position of genuine compromise on key issues. One delegate once expressed to me support for the UMC becoming more permissive on homosexuality, but also talked of feeling "not yet ready" to go as far as changing the church's definition of marriage.

Some in the other American "churches" may deem such middling stances as unsettled or inconsistent. But that does not erase the fact that

the views of significant numbers of United Methodists do not fit neatly into any of the other factions. Even if being in this "church" often seems to be a transitional phase before people make up their minds to "join" one of the other factions, such personal evolutions can stretch over years.

At the local level, particularly among laity, the majority of members have not paid too close attention to General Conferences, caucuses, or others beyond their local congregation. The denomination's growing polarization may make such aloofness more difficult. But the majority of American congregations also include mixes of perspectives, with members previously not feeling too much pressure to "pick a side."

When annual conferences and congregations eventually choose to align with either a more liberal or a more traditionalist denomination, it will be especially difficult for this group.

It is also important to understand that this group is very different, and significantly less liberal, than the caucuses and leaders now prominently embracing the "centrist" label.

Church #3: Institutionalist Liberals

This American sub-church is defined by (1) a strong desire to liberalize church standards on sexual morality, (2) key theological shifts needed to support this stance, and (3) loyalty to the institutional trappings of the United Methodist Church as we have known it—the name branding, hierarchies of leadership, and complex structure from our long history of "organizing to beat the devil."

In their own self-understanding, members of this "church" resonate with all of the new UMC Next caucus's "Four Commitments":

- Claiming continuity with the Wesleyan tradition, including familiar United Methodist language referencing the four sides of what others have called the Wesleyan quadrilateral and combining "personal piety and social holiness";
- Affirming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities as part of a larger framework of "resist[ing] evil, injustice and oppression" and including people of all races, classes, abilities, etc.;
- Not only rejecting the 2019 Traditional Plan, but also "resist[ing] its implementation"; and
- Eliminating in church law teaching and standards expressing disapproval of homosexual practice (UMC Next n.d.).

The first commitment's unelaborated use of the "social holiness" buzz phrase, along with the second commitment, appear indicative of how members of this "church," like much UMC discourse in recent history, has understood such values largely in terms of the left-of-center political activism associated with organizations like the Methodist Federation for Social Action. The repeated mentions of LGBTQ liberation, along with careful observation of other statements from this sub-church's leaders, indicate that they see stopping the harm they view as inflicted on LGBTQ persons as *central* to their theological understanding of the church's mission, in contrast to how American traditionalists tend to see sexuality standards as *derivative* of more foundational values. The second commitment's language about staying in the UMC and fighting traditional standards from within importantly sets this group apart from both Church #4's willingness to abandon the UMC to start a purely progressive denomination and from those in the Church #2 whose own sexuality views are more liberal but do not think it is worth fighting a pitched battle after General Conference has made its decision.

Leadership is provided by the majority of American bishops, denominational agency officials, leaders from older liberal-caucus circles, and all of the newer caucuses describing themselves as "centrist." Sometimes those touting the "centrist" label and their close partners calling themselves progressive have been characterized as different factions. But it now seems more accurate to understand both as "institutionalist liberals." The self-described "centrist" caucuses, and some of their key leaders, can be seen as relative newcomers now strengthening and assuming some leadership of a liberal movement with a longer history. Several of these newcomers are pastors of large congregations (some with impressive growth records) and/or were formerly known as more traditionalist in their theology before shifting. Some have track records of supporting key efforts to reduce or reform much of the denominational bureaucracy, at times even allying with American traditionalists in promoting greater representation for regions with more members.

Given the confusion it has caused, it is probably best to retire use of the word "centrist." On the key dividing controversy over homosexuality, every major caucus and leader touting this label has been adamantly one-sided in pushing for liberalizing church standards as a central priority. Furthermore, easily the most prominent "centrist" leader is megachurch pastor Adam Hamilton. He has publicly agreed that "[t]he real issue for the

church is not homosexuality, but the Bible" and framed his liberal position on homosexuality as undergirded by viewing different parts of scripture as divided into three buckets: those "that express God's heart, character and timeless will," those that expressed God's will only for a limited time, and those "that never reflected God's heart and will" (Hamilton 2014). This "centrist" view of scripture is not terribly distinguishable from those expressed within older liberal-caucus circles.

A brief historical review is warranted. The term "centrist" was not widely used in denominational discourse until after an organization called the "United Methodist Centrist Movement" was launched in West Ohio in late 2014. That caucus initially named several concerns, but received more attention in 2015 as it moved towards its apparent main goal of electing fewer traditionalist General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates. Evangelicals in the conference observed that this caucus eventually included as key figures some who had previously been known as unambiguously liberal, but then seemed to find the "centrist" label to be more marketable. In 2017, leaders from this organization, Hamilton, and others launched a nationwide "centrist" caucus called Uniting Methodists, primarily focused on promoting liberalized church standards on homosexuality. At that time, I carefully examined every founding leadership team member of this newer organization for stances taken on other prominent controversies (abortion, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the denomination's social witness more generally, the propriety of clergy violating the *Discipline*, and core doctrine on matters like Christology). On each issue, I found some leaders with records of strongly advocating a liberal stance, others who reputedly had more conservative views but who had declined to help conservative efforts at recent points of great denominational conflict over the issue, and not much else (Lomperis 2017). Since then, I have observed that this basic analysis remains true of every caucus and most leaders touting the "centrist" label. Tellingly, in the mediation team that developed the Protocol, the two initially selected to represent "the centrists" and the two initially selected to represent supposedly distinct "progressives" were all members of the Convening Team of Hamilton's UMC Next caucus, including the current and a former CEO of RMN, with a common legislative agenda (Reconciliation… Team, "FAQ'S" 2020; UMC Next n.d.).

Leaders and activists of both this "church" and Church #1 have often defined themselves in opposition to each other. They sometimes emphasize that they are "not *that* kind of United Methodist." American

traditionalists have often understood their place as in large part defined by rejecting what they see as the theological unorthodoxy, idolatrous loyalty to the denominational bureaucracy, and, to a lesser extent, social liberalism of institutionalist liberals. Institutionalist liberals have often understood their place in large part as rising above what they see as the narrow theological "fundamentalism," destructive and disloyal undermining of key denominational leadership structures, and retrograde opposition to social justice among American traditionalists. Leaders of each have often claimed that the denomination could become much more effective if only the other faction would stop holding us back.

But just as William Abraham observed internal differences among American traditionalists being held in check by the greater struggle within the UMC, similar observations could be made about this sub-church. They have done a remarkable job in recent years of maintaining a united front against the traditionalists. But will such unity hold after the separation? Time will tell.

Church #4: Liberationist Progressives

The self-described "liberationist" faction in America is sometimes given disproportionate attention. It merits listing as its own sub-church primarily due to speculations of some of its members forming a third denomination. This possibility is explicitly provided for in the Protocol. Until recently, leadership for this faction had been mainly provided by the UM-Forward caucus, whose own plan (submitted before the Protocol proposal was unveiled) would dissolve the UMC into four new denominations: one for themselves, one for self-described progressives who UM-Forward finds insufficiently progressive, one for moderates, and one for traditionalists. They summarize their own potential denomination's identity as "grounded in Gospel-centered, anti-colonial, and intersectional justice that intentionally empowers PoC+Q+T [people of color + queer + trans] people" (UM-Forward n.d.).

Activists in this sub-church have made clear that even limited, temporary toleration for clergy who decline to conduct same-sex weddings is unacceptable. They have sometimes decried as a betrayal institutionalist liberals' push for the One Church Plan (OCP), which would have liberalized church standards on homosexuality, with some protections to allow conferences, congregations, and clergy to continue with a traditionalist approach. (It is worth noting that traditionalist leaders critiqued these

protections as insufficient, unsustainable facades, and that leading OCP proponents abandoned support for even such limited protections after the plan's defeat at the 2019 General Conference.) Some in this "church" have accused institutionalist liberals of prioritizing loyalty to and the desire to maintain control of the denominational establishment over LGBTQ liberation.

A May 2019 UM-Forward gathering produced a lengthy, multi-part "Loved and Liberated" manifesto outlining their vision for the denomination they want. Some noteworthy highlights include commitments to:

- "reject gradualism and incrementalism" and accept "no concession of any kind" to opponents of LGBTQ liberation;
- prioritize "the fullness of the Gospel and liberative change" over "denominational preservation";
- "create an expression of Methodism that is Christ-full and centers PoC+Q+T voices and their lived experiences";
- "actively resist white supremacy, heterosexism, sexism, patriarchy, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, colonialism, classism, and establishmentism";
- "dismantle[e] hierarchical structures"; and
- have doctrinal standards that better "embody a theology of liberation" ("Loved and Liberated" 2019).

With UM-Forward's repeated allusions to a range of left-wing social causes, seen as intertwined parts of an "intersectional" whole, this "church" is probably the most politically monolithic.

It includes some General Conference delegates and prominent activists. But it lacks the resources, prominent leadership, and naturally aligned institutions of the first and third sub-churches. A review of the 100 largest-membership congregations in American United Methodism found only one, The Gathering in St. Louis, formally affiliated with RMN (GCFA 2018; RMN n.d.).

Another problem for this "church" is that many of the grassroots members whose values best fit into this group are among the biggest "flight risks," who may scatter away before any acceptably liberal Methodist denomination is truly organized. A 2020 poll of clergy, lay leaders, and voting lay members of the Indiana Annual Conference, the largest in the North Central Jurisdiction, found 43.7 percent taking a liberal position on "human sexuality," and 27.9 percent saying they are not likely to remain in the denomination if its position does not change (Lomperis 2020). While

the latter figure indicates a potentially wider constituency for this faction, it remains unclear how many will ever connect to UM-Forward or related organizations.

A March 2020 UM-Forward conference was officially dedicated to "Trailblazing the Liberation Methodist Church" but also was divided between those eager to start a new denomination and those still hoping to bring the greater UMC around to their vision (Hodges 2020). In late 2020, this divide became formalized with two new associations emerging from the UM-Forward caucus. The new "Liberation Project" is clearly devoted to trying to win over a larger portion of the denomination to its liberationist progressive values, in marked contrast to seeking to split off and start a new liberationist denomination (Hahn, "Group" 2020). The Liberation Methodist Connexion or "LMX," on the other hand, describes itself as a new "grassroots denomination of former, current, and non-Methodist faith leaders working on the unfolding of the kin-dom of God" [*sic*], in which they "intentionally invite the full participation of all who are living out their God-given identities and expressions" in diversities such as "gender expressions and sexual identity," "religious or non-religious backgrounds," "heritage/nationality/citizenship/immigration status," "monogamous and non-monogamous," and "use of drugs," among other things (2020).

Despite this official dichotomy, it is unclear if the latter wing of liberationist progressives will actually draw any significant numbers out into a new denomination. I have not seen confirmation of a single congregation, minister, or layperson actually joining the LMX, let alone the 100 congregations that the Protocol sets as the minimum size for any departing faction to form its own denomination and have such rights as keeping its church properties (Reconciliation…Team, "Protocol Legislation" 2020). The organizers of this supposed "denomination" have pointedly refused to say how many members or local churches they have, conveniently telling the United Methodist News Service that "they do not want to equate worth with volume," and have even hedged their bets by talking about continuing to work with like-minded United Methodists and "not asking people to choose between" the UMC or the LMX (Hahn, "New" 2020). But the UMC's church law clearly forbids simultaneous membership in another denomination, so that "[u]pon joining another denomination, membership in The United Methodist Church is terminated," which further limits the LMX's potential to realize its professed goals (UMC Judicial Council 1993).

Furthermore, there are several more principled reasons that could doom this faction's ability to launch and maintain their own denomination. If the Protocol passes and liberationists *finally* found themselves in an increasingly liberal denomination that allowed same-sex unions and saw numerous traditionalists part ways, the very goals for which they have sought so hard for decades, how many would really take the trouble to leave to start over? How sustainable will it be for the LMX's leaders to continue explicitly declaring that they have no doctrinal litmus tests while at the same time being rather doctrinaire about certain core values they see as non-negotiable social-justice causes? Given how this faction is disproportionately led by LGBTQ activists and focused on LGBTQ concerns, is the realistic ceiling of the LMX's potential to become a niche denomination primarily focused on an LGBTQ constituency? How would it craft an identity clear enough to justify a separate existence from other liberal denominations?

But then again, if the next General Conference fails to liberalize sexuality standards or enact a separation agreement, then we could see some current institutionalist liberals get frustrated enough to prepare to leave to form their own denomination, thus having more in common with the liberationists, rather than continuing to stay and fight. Especially in the Western Jurisdiction, the aftermath of the 2019 General Conference saw early signs of some now in the institutionalist liberal camp preparing to leave, with a more liberationist progressive mindset, before the announcement of the Protocol proposal.

Church #5: Sub-Saharan Africa

African United Methodism dates back to freed American slaves settling in Liberia in the early 1800s (UMCom, "History…Africa," n.d.). Now this region has over 6.2 million members—a nearly 20-fold increase from 1984—spread across 31 nations and three central conferences (GCFA 2017).

Making generalizations about such a large group can be dangerous. Yet several broad outlines can be observed. United Methodists are a major part of the religious landscape in parts of Africa, like Sierra Leone, where they have been the largest Protestant denomination (Snider 2016). This sub-church tends to fervently cherish its United Methodist identity and the cross-and-flame logo, in contrast to how some American congregations minimize denominational branding.

This region is severely under-represented in denominational leadership. Yet it is the only one of the seven "churches" with strong, consistent growth in this era. This has helped fuel optimistic expectations for the church. In recent years, African leaders have become increasingly vocal in seeking to set the denomination's direction on sexuality, funding priorities, and other issues, with much leadership provided by the Africa Initiative, a newer caucus of African General Conference delegates.

African United Methodists are overwhelmingly theologically traditionalist, with a high view of scripture, strong commitment to evangelism, and near-unanimity in disapproving of homosexual practice (often in much stronger terms than American traditionalists use). One institutionalist liberal caucus admitted that "almost no" African delegates voted for proposals to liberalize sexuality standards in 2019 (Holland 2019).

But American traditionalists should avoid taking an ultimately dehumanizing, idealized view of African United Methodists. Such "romantic racism" has an ignoble history. And disapproval of homosexuality is a cultural default in most of Africa. In the majority of African nations with a UMC presence, homosexual intercourse is outlawed in some way (Mendos 2019:47-50, 139). Not all who accept their culture's disapproval of homosexuality are necessarily strong in upholding more contextually counter-cultural or personally costly aspects of biblical morality. Similar things could be said, to varying degrees, about United Methodists in some other central-conference regions.

There are also some exceptions, which should be neither ignored nor exaggerated. A few African General Conference delegates have supported liberalizing proposals on homosexuality. U.S.-based denominational officials have sometimes helped prop up unrepresentative African leaders who are more amenable to liberal Western theology. Furthermore, as the denomination approaches schism, one prominent African leader has reported that "some influential African bishops, who are in support or sympathetic to this progressive sexual ethic," are seeking to bring African United Methodism into the denomination that will allow same-sex unions, at least in the United States (Matonga 2020). Sometimes this appears to be driven less by principled support for gay rights than by an institutionalist mindset of wanting to preserve connections with the denomination's branding and connectional structures, and judging that this is worth remaining yoked with an American church with liberalized sexuality policies, as long as those policies are not imposed in Africa.

United Methodists here face vastly different social contexts, internally and compared to other regions. African members have had the most experience with interfaith relationships and conflict. Many have lived through violent civil unrest. The infrastructure insufficiencies and government corruption in some places can be difficult for Americans to appreciate. Tribalism is often a powerful feature in social life, and sometimes has been tied to painful, dramatic divisions in the contexts of bishop elections and annual conference attempts to maintain a cohesive identity.

Poverty is a major challenge. In 2019, the gross national income per capita for Sub-Saharan African nations with a major UMC presence ranged from oil-rich Angola at the highest with $3,050 to Burundi at a mere $280 (ranking last among 192 nations). For comparison, America's 2019 gross national per capita income was $65,760 (World Bank 2020).

Such disparities have fostered extreme and likely unsustainable levels of dependency on American subsidies. One striking example was the late Bishop John Yambasu of Sierra Leone estimating in 2017 that 95 percent of the salaries of his conference's full-time pastors and evangelists came from abroad, primarily from United Methodists in Germany and central Pennsylvania (Jusu 2017).

For decisions about denominational standards and affiliations, several African leaders have strongly declared the determination of themselves and most other African United Methodists to never sacrifice their traditionalist doctrinal values for the sake of American dollars. Yet some other African leaders appear to be influenced by perceptions (for which others have challenged the data) that the more liberal denomination would have more money available to continue subsidizing Africa.

Another key characteristic is that African United Methodists are generally accustomed to "big man" models of leadership, and the culture is often more "rule of man" rather than "rule of law." Thus, African conferences tend to see more power and effective decision-making concentrated in the episcopal office, with fewer checks and balances, than Americans of any perspective would accept from their bishops. Relatedly, while central conferences have a limited right to produce substantially adapted versions of the *Book of Discipline* for use in their own contexts, this right does not appear to have been exercised as widely and recently in Africa as in Europe. Some of this can be attributed to prohibitive costs. But it also may reflect a lack of felt need to publish permanent laws which could tie leaders'

hands, when leaders are accustomed to simply deciding what is best, with a broader range of discretion than in Western cultures.

Church #6: The Philippines

The Philippines Central Conference is much smaller, with three active bishops and slightly more than 200,000 members (GCFA 2017). While this is nearly a tripling in size since 1984, more recently membership has faced stagnation (Commission 2018; GCFA 1984). It faces some similar economic challenges as Sub-Saharan Africa, albeit to a lesser degree. The overwhelming majority of the nation is Roman Catholic. Within the Protestant minority, United Methodist congregations often struggle to retain their younger people and do not reach the sizes of some of what are called "the born-again churches" in their communities.

Yet much of this sub-church is rather mission-minded. In recent years, Filipino United Methodists have planted congregations among overseas Filipino worker (OFW) communities in other nations, including the Islamic Middle East. One key leader of these efforts likes to emphasize that they have done all of this "without asking for or receiving one dime of American money."

The denomination's presence here began in 1899, right after the Spanish-American War. Desire to not feel dominated by the United States (the islands' former colonial rulers) have fueled periodic movements for autonomy. But the majority keeps remaining United Methodist (UMCom, "History…Asia," n.d.; Oconer and Asedillo 2011:269-277). In 2011, a contested allegation against Bishop Lito Tangonan escalated to the point of the bishop leaving to start his own denomination, with fights over church properties spilling into lawsuits and even physical violence (Scott 2019). By 2013, Bishop Tangonan had gotten over 200 congregations to join his Ang Iglesia ng Metodista sa Pilipinas (AIMP) denomination (McLoughlin 2015:116). This was a significant defection, as the central conference reported having just under 1,500 that year (GCFA 2013, n.d.). However, some congregations later returned to the UMC.

Having already experienced multiple schisms since 1909 (UMCom, "History…Asia," n.d.; Oconer and Asedillo 2011:275-277, 280), even within such recent memory, makes talk of schism particularly loaded for Filipinos. One denominational official has suggested that whatever its immediate causes, the AIMP defection may have had the effects of "siphoning off those pastors and churches that were most pro-autonomy

and anti-UMC," dampening of pro-autonomy sentiments among those who remained, and making Filipinos leerier of any additional schism (Scott 2019).

Theologically, a strong super-majority of Filipino United Methodists are traditionalist. This sub-church includes an active charismatic renewal movement. However, in contrast to Africa, there is a sizable and sometimes vocal theologically liberal minority. One major source of liberal influence, on more foundational doctrinal matters than sexuality, is Union Theological Seminary not far from Manila. Furthermore, the bishops are in a different place than the majority of their people. Only Bishop Pedro Torio, based in the northern city of Baguio, has consistently defended a theologically traditionalist approach.

This central conference has a unique system of electing all three of its bishops to renewable four-year terms. This has sometimes, though not in all cases, encouraged a mindset that a district superintendents' job includes building their bishop's political machine to help his always-approaching re-election. I have been told that one main reason why Filipinos have not exercised their right to make adaptations to the *Discipline* is all the time at quadrennial central conference meetings that is sucked up by the three bishop elections.

While the Philippines is allotted 52 delegates to the next General Conference, Filipinos have generally not been as assertive as Africans or Europeans in seeking to shape General Conference. The hundreds of petitions submitted to the next General Conference by the regular deadline included only four from Filipino groups or individuals, less than the number submitted from people in the Norway Conference, with only three percent as many members, (Commission 2018; *DCA* 2020: Section 1, pages 158, 163, 221, 222, 247, 325, 339, 371; Section 2, page 816). Of the over one thousand petitions submitted to the last regular General Conference, the record does not show one submitted from the Philippines (*DCA* 2016). Furthermore, there is a widespread culture here of electing new delegates to each General Conference. But the most effective delegates from elsewhere are usually "veterans" who have served at several, thus building nuanced understanding of the processes and connections with fellow delegates over the years. Consequently, Filipino United Methodists do not have as deep a bench of experienced, influential leaders who are widely recognized beyond the Philippines.

Church #7: The Central Conferences of Europe

Continental European Methodist history stretches back to close to the beginning of Methodism, as migrants of various European nationalities traveled to and from the New World. For leadership allotments, UMC polity sometimes treats this region as a single constituency. Leaders from all four of its episcopal areas have participated in cooperative efforts.

But the *Discipline's* references to "the central conferences in Europe" are not completely accurate. The Central and Southern Europe Central Conference stretches into Algeria and Tunisia in North Africa. The Moscow-based Eurasia Episcopal Area (one of two episcopal areas within the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference) stretches across Asian Russia into the central Asian former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

And yet despite this long history now reaching across 30 nations, today this region only counts slightly over 50,000 members, a number which has been trending downward. With the fall of Communism, what is now the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference expanded into Russia. But in recent years, none of its conferences has seen consistent growth. The other two European central conferences have each lost over one-third of their people since 1984 (Commission 2018; GCFA 1984; GCFA 2009; GCFA 2013; GCFA 2017).

There are major differences in scale. Over half of members here are in the Germany Central Conference. Each of the five annual conferences of the Eurasia Episcopal Area has less than five hundred church members (GCFA 2017). But their challenges of vast geography and government persecution merit sympathy.

In 1985, Wilson and Willimon noted how United Methodism "can feel very much like an isolated, minority movement" in much of the U.S. Western Jurisdiction. The same can be said about this sub-church, ministering on rocky soil with generally abysmal church attendance rates. This has helped United Methodists here to value their identity as connected to a larger, global denomination.

Internal divisions have often been generalized in terms of the Western nations having greater wealth as well as theological liberalism, and the Eastern nations often facing serious government repression and financial dependencies. This is largely true.

But it is not that simple. In much of Europe, being any kind of serious, church-going Christian is already so counter-cultural that it can

foster deeper levels of commitment. So, the faith of some (though certainly not all) United Methodists in very socially liberal Western European nations can be rather theologically orthodox. At the same time, some theological traditionalists in Western Europe judge such things as Americans supporting Donald Trump or the National Rifle Association about as harshly as heterodox doctrinal statements from liberal caucuses.

In contrast to Africa, each of the European central conferences has a very accessibly documented, recent history of exercising its right to make regional adaptations of the *Discipline*, with varying degrees of significance. Notably, after the 2019 General Conference adopted the Traditional Plan, the Germany Central Conference's executive committee unanimously endorsed a statement decrying this legislation as "not acceptable" and declaring that their central conference "will therefore not follow the chosen way of controlling people in their disposition and imposing stricter penalties" (Ruof 2019). While such defiance might have been legally challenged if not for the coming split, this reflects the dominant liberalism among German United Methodists, to which there are some exceptions.

This region, particularly in wealthier Western nations, does not have quite the same dependency issues as other central conferences. In some countries, the UMC even enjoys government subsidies, along with other religious bodies. In 2019, the annual conferences of all four European episcopal areas contributed much more than their assigned apportionments to support the Episcopal Fund (the global pool from which all bishops are funded), and members in Germany and Central and Southern Europe did what no other United Methodists outside America did: contribute more than enough to cover their own respective bishop's salaries (GCFA 2019:4; *DCA* 2020: Section 1, page 438). United Methodists in richer parts of this region have subsidized poorer areas in the region, and also supported missions in other parts of the world.

While civil law in much of Western Europe affirms same-sex unions (Mendos 2019:144-146, 153-155), I am told that in at least the non-German central conferences, Europeans have not had the same experience as Americans of liberal clergy publicly defying the denomination's bans on same-sex weddings. Thus, while many of the same theological divides in America are present in Europe, United Methodists here have not gone through the same level of polarizing controversies, mutual feelings of betrayal, and alienation of affections that have been so key in laying the

foundations for schism in America. This may make the coming schism all the more difficult here when a time comes for "choosing sides."

Concluding Considerations

A long-lasting theological civil war in the UMC has finally reached a breaking point, so that some form of large-scale separation is now inevitable. But while the main formal separation may be binary, some major divisions are not. This paper has demonstrated how the denomination is already divided into seven distinct major factions, each with important differences from the others. Each is approaching and will be impacted by the coming separation differently. And given the complexities of internally diverse annual conferences having to pick one side, we can expect that both of the two main denominations emerging from the split will include members from at least several of the constituencies outlined above. The success or failure of any denomination emerging from the split will likely hinge on its leaders' willingness and ability to understand such internal differences in nuanced ways, clearly establish their denomination's basis and boundaries for unity, and make, in the concluding words of Wilson and Willimon (1985:21), "its various parts organized to witness and to minister most effectively."

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From the Archives: The Poetry of Sterling M. Means- The Pentecostal Publishing Company Collection

Sometimes exploring an archive collection will uncover a mystery.[1] This happened recently as I was working with one of our archives book collections. The Pentecostal Publishing Company was founded about 1888 by Henry Clay Morrison, and merged with L. L. Pickett's Pickett Publishing Company (at the same time Pickett's *Way of Faith* holiness periodical merged with Morrison's publishing efforts to ultimately become the *Pentecostal Herald*). The Pentecostal Publishing company remained active until 1942. During its time in operation, the Pentecostal Publishing Company published over 500 books primarily focusing on the Holiness Movement and the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Asbury Theological Seminary was given the rights to the publishing company material in H.C. Morrison's will (H.C. Morrison was also the founder and first president of Asbury Theological Seminary). I became involved in a search to find materials published by the Pentecostal Publishing Company which we did not own in our collection in the archives. I found a copy of a rather obscure book called *The Black Devils and Other Poems* (1919) by Sterling M. Means. It was not unusual for Morrison to publish volumes of poetry, which he did occasionally, but this case stuck out. Sterling M. Means was listed as an African-American poet, and to my knowledge this was the only book published by Morrison written by an African-American in a catalogue of books that is heavily dominated by white male holiness preachers.

It still remains a mystery to me how H.C. Morrison was connected to Sterling M. Means and how he came to publish this book. It is possible that Means, the pastor of a C.M.E. church in Lexington, Kentucky at the time, met Morrison in the area, perhaps at a camp meeting or some similar function. It is also possible that Means paid to self-publish through the Pentecostal Publishing Company (which would not be completely impossible- there are also church cookbooks published by the Pentecostal Publishing Company- possibly for fundraising purposes). This time period was in the middle of

the Jim Crow Era in the South, and publishing opportunities for African-Americans were few. The only contemporary African-American poet who was known to have made a living off of his poetry at this time was Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906).[2] As with many African-American poets of the time, Dunbar mostly published in newspapers. But Dunbar was also friends with Orville and Wilbur Wright, who were classmates, and they directed him to the United Brethren Publishing House where he subsidized his first book in 1893. Dunbar worked as an elevator operator and made his money back by selling copies of his book to those who used the elevator. Perhaps the situation was similar for Sterling Means. Means did publish a poem in honor of Dunbar and wrote in a style similar to Dunbar's often making use of dialect, which was popular at the time.

Little is known about Sterling Meade Means. He appears to have been born December 3, 1882 in Alabama to Elias Means and Vicey Meade, who were possibly born into slavery in South Carolina. His poetry shows clear references to a classical education, but nothing is known about his education. By the time his first book appears, he is a minister in the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (which became the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in the 1950s) (C.M.E.). An article in the *Western Index* of Topeka, Kansas about the Georgia Conference of the C.M.E. dated December 12, 1913, makes a short note about Rev. Sterling Means which reads, "Means is a poet, author and preacher. In all these qualities he is the peer of any Negro of his race. He has captured the white South, won a scholarship in Chicago University from the University of Georgia (white)." While the University of Chicago was one of the few institutions of higher education open to African Americans (between 1870 and 1945 they graduated 45 African-American Ph.Ds.) and it was adjacent to a large African-American community, the archivist at the University could find no record of Sterling Means graduating from the institution. It was noted however, that the University only maintains lists of graduates, not those who attended classes, but never graduated. It is possible that Sterling Means took classes here, but did not graduate. Likewise, the archivist at the University of Georgia could find no reference to a scholarship given to an African-American around 1913, although he suggested a trustee and philanthropist, George Foster Peabody gave a great deal of support to African-American institutions, and might possibly have sponsored someone like Rev. Means. The University of Georgia was not integrated until the late 1960s.

Rev. Means married Effie J. Mitchell on December 7, 1911 in Tishomingo County, Mississippi and would have at least three children according to the 1920 census: Sterling, Jr. (born about 1913), John (born about 1914) and Allora (born about 1918). His two sons were born in Georgia, probably while he was serving as pastor of Holsey Temple C.M.E. in Rome, Georgia, which he refers to in his first book of poetry, *The Deserted Cabin and Other Poems* (1915, A.B. Caldwell, Publisher, Atlanta, GA). A.B. Caldwell appears to be a Georgia publishing company that focused on the African-American community and did publish some other books of poetry at the time. In a note to his poem "Ode to the Statue to the Women of the Confederacy," he reprints a newspaper article from *The Rome (Ga.) Tribune-Herald* which originally printed his poem:

An Unusual Production

> An unusual type of Negro has recently arrived in Rome and taken up his work as pastor of Holsey Temple, C. M. E. Church. This is the little church at Broad and Ross streets, and the Negro is Sterling Means, a well-educated man, not large in stature and not bold in appearance, quite different from the average Negro preacher type of fiction, and often of fact, that is large, well-fed, and clothed in a lengthy broadcloth coat.
>
> White people who have heard Means preach say he is a natural orator, such as his race sometimes produces, and that when he gets to 'going good' he can almost outpreach anything in these parts, with a wealth of fervid simile and apt illustration. Be that as it may. Means is a poet of no small ability, as Romans can judge for themselves. He had written an ode to the statue erected to the honor of the Women of the Confederacy, which is far above the average of the poetry that usually finds its way to a newspaper office. The production is unusually creditable.

By the time of his daughter's birth and the 1920 census, Rev. Means and his family were living in Lexington, Kentucky, where he was the pastor of Philips Chapel C.M.E.

Shortly before coming to Lexington, it appears that Rev. Means and his family spent a brief time in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he is referred to as the pastor of St. Philips C.M.E. in some newspapers from January of 1918. Rev. Means followed up his first book of poetry with a second volume, *The German Warlord and the British Lion* (1918, Pauley Co., Indianapolis, IN). Pauley Company seems to be a small publisher primarily aimed at publishing material related to the Indiana Historical Society at the time. This volume is almost exclusively focused on poems related to World War I, and is in large part an epic poem covering the entire history of the war. Rev. Means registered for the draft for World War I on September 12, 1918, but there is no evidence that he served in the war, and this date is so close to the end of the war that it is doubtful that he would have seen active duty. His poetry however, does show a clear desire to honor African-Americans who served in various wars in the history of the United States.

In 1919, Rev. Means published his third book of poetry, *The Black Devils and Other Poems* (1919, Pentecostal Publishing Company, Louisville, KY). During the fighting in the Argonne Forest in 1918, the 370th Infantry (an African-American unit) distinguished itself in the battles of Lorraine and Oise-Aisne. They were such determined and fierce fighters that the Germans called them *Schwarze Teufel* or "Black Devils" and the name was adopted by the 370th Infantry. This is from where the title for Rev. Mean's book is taken. Rev. Means' experiences in life seem to have taken him in a different direction away from poetry after his third publication. In 1925, he published a book *Africa and the World's Peace* (1925, Kanawha Valley Pub. Co., Charleston, WV), which appears to be a rather scarce publication from a publisher that mostly published West Virginian historical material. On July 2, 1928, Rev. Means married Amy Dunbar in Trumbell, Ohio, and his marriage license lists his occupation as a publisher. By the 1930 census, he is listed as living with his wife Amy and three step children: Paul, Jr. (born about 1923), Helen J. (born about 1925) and Silas A. (born about 1927). He is listed as having a previous marriage, but no references can be found to Effie or any of the other children. By 1930 he is living with his new family in Erie, Ohio.

Rev. Means became very influenced by the work of Marcus Garvey and his Back-to-Africa movement, which is somewhat evident in his fourth book.[3] In a publication for Rev. Means' founding of the Ethiopian Crusaders League and Afro-American Zionist Movement, published around 1940, he lays out his platform for the organization, which includes, "To

change the name Negro to Ethiopian. 'Negro' is a slave name given the race by Spaniards for the lack of understanding" and "To establish a National Home for the Race in Liberia and other suitable sections of Africa similar to the Jewish State in Palestine." These parts of the platform accompany more common ideas of revising the education system, fostering better race relations, and appealing for equal opportunities for employment. By the 1940 census, Amy Means and the children are listed as living in Toledo, Ohio, but she has listed her status as "widow," which does not appear to confirm what we know about Rev. Sterling Means.

In 1945, Rev. Sterling M. Means publishes his final known work, *Ethiopia and the Missing Link in African History*, which seems to be self-published, but can be found in numerous reprints today. In this work, he seeks to correct misunderstandings about African history and culture and deal with racist attitudes about the "primitive" nature of African Americans. After 1945, I have been unable to locate any other traces or date of death for Rev. Means or his first wife and their children. Amy Means, his second wife, died May 6, 1974 in Toledo and is followed shortly by the youngest son, Silas a veteran of World War II who dies September 21, 1974.

For the most part, scholars have overlooked the works of Sterling M. Means. Part of this is likely due to how his style was understood. In *Negro Poets and their Poems* (1923, Associated Publishers, Inc. Washington D.C.), an early anthology edited by Robert T. Kerlin, Means' poetry is included, but under the category of "Dialect Verse," where two of his poems "The Old Plantation Grave" and "The Old Deserted Cabin" are compared, one in standard English and the other in dialect. Since poetry in dialect has tended to make people uncomfortable, his categorization in this area may have led to his obscurity. The categorization is not really just however, as much of his verse is not in dialect at all. One of the few writers to seriously mention Means' verse within its context is Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. in an article on African-American poetry from 1877-1915.[4]

Modern views of the dialect poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar are now questioning the easy dismissal of verse in dialect.[5] This was a popular form of poetry at the time, being adopted by white authors as well. As with Dunbar, Means uses dialect in several important ways. He uses the lyrical style to communicate sentimental ideas. He also uses dialect to communicate humor within the African-American community. One powerful descriptive poem in dialect is "Honey Chile, I Saw 'Um Pass," which describes the patriotic feeling of the African community in Indianapolis as it witnessed

a parade of over 1,200 African-American soldiers heading off for World War I.

Honey Chile, I Saw 'Um Pass
(From *The Black Devils* 1919)

(Written in honor of the Colored Draftees of Indianapolis, who have gone to the Colors.)

Did you see our boys a-leavin',
Ez de bans begin ter play;
An' such a-stepin' to de music,
Ez dey did on yesterday.

You had to shuv yo' way to see 'um,
Ez dey marched on to de train,
An' Old Glory she wuz wavin',
Wid de sound of music strain.

Did you hear de noise an' shoutin',
Ez dey wuz markin' step by step,
Tho untrained in soldier drillin',
But wuz flirtin' time wid hep,

Dey stop de cars and blocked de traffic,
An' de crowds wuz in a mass,
How did dey look? I can't describe it,
But Honey Chile, I saw 'um pass.

An' de folks wuz all a-wavin',
An' little banners filled de air,
Sad "Good byes" and "God be with you,"
While you 'er fightin' "over there."

Dey forgot discriminations,
Dey forgot dat dey wuz black,
Fur de fires of patriotism,
Burns in white an' black alike.

Dey will do the deeds of Wagner,
An' repeat Fort Pillow too,
Where de fathers fought for Freedom,
In de days of Sixty Two.

But it hab anuther title,
It iz now Democracy,
Which will mean a higher Freedom,
When dey fight beyond de sea.

When dey reach de plains of Flanders,
Dey will face de Germans gas,
An' Brur Kaiser he will tell you,
Honey Chile, I saw 'um pass.

According to *The Indianapolis Star* of August 21, 1918, on August 20th, 1,258 African-American draftees marched through the streets of the city. It notes,

> Yesterday evening, the city's downtown streets were filled with cheering, shouting, and singing as 1,258 African American men, escorted by a platoon of mounted police and patriotic black organizations waving flags and banners, marched enthusiastically to Tomlinson Hall to hear "Godspeed" and blessings from family and friends as they prepared to depart for Camp Dodge, Iowa and their long expected opportunity to help America win the war. The hall was packed to overflowing with the draftees seated on the main floor. Gov. Goodrich gave a short speech, and then Mayor Jewett addressed the crowd saying, "Not a single colored man who has fought in our wars and bled for the Stars and Stripes has ever returned in defeat or disgrace. The record of bravery of the American negro would astound the world."

However, it is also important to note how Means inserts several references in the seventh stanza. The first is a reference to the Battle of Fort Wagner which was fought on Morris Island near Charleston, South Carolina on July 18, 1863 when the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, the first all-black regiment of African-Americans recruited in the North charged the fort. A total of 116 men were lost from the regiment as well as Colonel

Robert Shaw, their white commanding officer, but Sergeant William Harvey Carney became the first African-American to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for taking up the flag and continuing toward the walls.

A second important reference is made to Fort Pillow, about 40 miles north of Memphis, Tennessee, a captured Confederate fort that was being used by Northern troops, many African-Americans. When the 500-600 Union troops were attacked by General Nathan Bedford Forrest (later the first grand wizard of the KKK) and around 2,000 Confederate troops on April 12, 1864, the fort was soon taken over. Instead of taking the African-American soldiers as prisoners of war, the Confederate troops massacred between 277 and 295 black soldiers. "Remember Fort Pillow" would become a rallying cry for African American troops from the Union.

While Sterling Means tended to write descriptive poetry and focused on African-American soldiers, he was not opposed to speaking out against racial injustice. Perhaps one of his strongest pieces is "The Ghosts of East St. Louis." As soldiers returned from World War I and some urban areas of African-American communities began to prosper, it was met with growing anger and rage from white citizens. This led to riots in some areas, including East St. Louis, where between May and July 1917, white citizens destroyed African-American property and killed people at will. As many as 250 African-Americans were killed in these riots. About 6,000 were left homeless, and by today's standards almost eight million dollars in property damage was sustained. The police chief instructed his officers not to shoot any white citizens and thus they left the rioters alone to do their damage. Means questions the very nature of democracy, especially in the light of African-American soldiers fighting for the U.S. in France while their families received no protection at home.

The Ghosts of East St. Louis
(From *The Black Devils* 1919)

Last night as I lay slumbering upon my little couch,
I was questioned, "why Democracy" had failed our cause to vouch.
The old Tom Cat was quiet and had ceased to chase the mouse;
And a sad majestic silence prevailed throughout the house.
The winds were blowing mournfully,
The skies were black with cloud;
And nothing broke the stillness save a dog was barking loud.

As I was somewhat nodding and dozing in a trance,
Dreaming of our soldiers somewhere on the fronts in France.
A host of spirits came to me and one gave me a gentle touch,
That aroused me in my slumbers and disturbed me very much.
The souls of the defenseless, whose lives had been robbed;
For they were the helpless victims of the East St. Louis Mob.
There were innocent little children, mothers, and men giant mould.
They were common rustic toilers whose hearts were pure as gold.
And they told their solemn mission for they had one common plea,
"Will you ask my Country to explain Democracy?"

Why, I said that I will tell you or will try the best I can,
That true Democracy is the Freedom and equal rights of every man.
Then they were more persistent than they really were before.
"Please tell us why they mobbed us, we would certainly like to know?"
"And the murderers go unpunished and little is done or said,
When we were simply toiling to earn our children's bread."
Then I commence a-weeping as they told their Tale of woe,
To think when we are mistreated that we had nowhere to go.
All sudden in appearance, came a Man of ungainly mould,
"Father Abraham Lincoln with the Flag with rippling fold.
He gave fond consolation to the spirits and to me.
He said: "I am the Father and Martyr of true, Democracy;
I set the ripple upon the wave and it shall break beyond the sea."

Rev. Means ends with an optimistic note, with Lincoln providing the hope for future equality, when democracy would finally be completed in the fronts of World War I. The reader of Means work is left feeling that the fighting of African-American soldiers in World War I will somehow bring a truer type of equality. But Means gradually loses confidence in this position over time, as he grows closer and closer to Garveyism as the only possible solution in his own mind.

Sterling Means was a master at observation and description. The following poem, "The Slacker" does not sound like a poem from 1919. It sounds more like the work of Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904-1991), otherwise known as Dr. Seuss, but it was written well before his writings. It describes a character Rev. Means saw on a street corner in Indianapolis. He doesn't seem to do anything and he seems impossible to describe, but he is a regular

fixture on the corner of one particular street. He is a part of the African-American community, but a part that is often overlooked or ignored. Means was part of the Great Migration, as African-Americans left the rural South and relocated to urban areas in the North and West. When I read this poem, I feel as if I am watching one of these people- relocated from the South, but now rootless and without purpose. For me, this poem makes the Great Migration take focus in one verbal picture. He even brings this picture to the mind as he refers to Brother Josh as one who "reminds you of someone you have seen in the Southland years ago" but now relocated to an urban setting in the Midwest, without a sense of real purpose.

*The Slacker**
(From *The Black Devils* 1919)

We have a slacker in our town,
He is always on his beat;
You will often find him somewhere round,
The corner of West North Street.
I have never seen him in a store,
Nor in a Barber shop,
I have never seen him in a row,
Nor running from a cop.
I have never seen him in a Church,
Nor at the Y.M.C.A.
I have never heard him sing a song,
I have never heard him pray.
If you wish to know Brur Josh,
He has a bread box for his seat,
He sits beside the Market store,
The corner of West North Street.

I have never seen him in a Park,
I could not say he shirks,
I have never seen him on a Job,
I donna where he works.
I have never seen him take a dram,
I could not say he drinks,
I have never heard him talk enough,

To find out what he thinks.
His height is far from being tall,
He is not so very low,
He reminds you of someone you have seen,
In the Southland years ago.
His color is not a sooty black,
He is far from being brown,
And then he is not what you might call,
The blackest man in town.
Should Gabriel blow the Trumpet now,
He would find a lots in France;
He would find some at the picture show,
He would find some at a dance,
But if he then would find Brur Josh,
To summon to the Judgment Seat,
He would take the Indiana or River-Side Car,
And stop at West North Street.

*A scene in Indianapolis suggested the Poem.

In a final example of Sterling Means' poetry, I want to go back to his first book in a very reflective work about U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt. I don't know if this poem is tied to an actual photo, but I can imagine the poet seeing an image of the adventurous American president, famous for his imperialistic and colonial ambitions, pictured near an ancient Egyptian sculpture of the Pharaoh Ramses. In this poem, Means compares the leader of the United States with the greatest pharaoh of ancient Egypt. This pharaoh, who in Means' time was considered to have had armies of slaves building great monuments and pyramids. In the fourth stanza he lays the blame of Egypt's collapse on unjust practices in dealing with weaker "races." Then in the final stanza he sends a stark warning to the United States and its president as he labels President Roosevelt as "the Ramses of the present." Clearly, here he is making a call for justice for African-Americans, as well as a warning that the prosperity and success of the United States as a nation was intricately tied to its enacting justice in dealing with those recently released from slavery. It is also important to note that Means was an African-American poet in the middle of the Jim

Crow Era, located at the time of this poem in the deep South in Georgia. The atrocities of lynching and violence against African-Americans was a well-known occurrence. The context makes the reading of this poem even more powerful than it might otherwise be.

Roosevelt at the Temple of Rameses
(From *The Deserted Cabin* 1915)

There he stands in contemplation,
At the Temple of Rameses,
'Mid the ruins of civilization,
In the land beyond the seas —
Egypt in her faded glory,
Once a land of towering pride,
Where her dusky monarchs slumber,
And their mighty kingdoms died.

He beholds the ruined relics
Of the glories now long past,
And the wrecks of human greatness,
With their evening shadows cast;
Where they sleep beneath the pyramid,
In their hoary rock-hewn tombs,
And beside the ancient rivers.
In the buried catacombs.

Egypt's Scepter has departed,
And her throne is in the dust;
And a sad majestic silence,
Teaches thee that others must;
'Tis the fate of all the ages,
When a kingdom is unjust
In dealing with the weaker races,
It shall crumble in the dust.

It is now the strenuous "Teddy,"
The American Prince of State,
Reads old Egypt's faded glory,

And beholds her awful fate;
The Rameses of the present
Views Rameses of the past.
And the wrecks of human greatness,
With their evening shadows cast.

The poems of Rev. Sterling M. Means open a fascinating window of African-American views of the United States in the period of Jim Crow. But even from this early poem, we can see a fascination with Africa and the civilization it produced. The fascination becomes more obvious as one reads through Means' later works, especially as he sees a political state in Africa as a real answer to the African-American plight in the harsh racism of the United States. His early optimism in a country in which justice would prevail if only patriotic African-American soldiers could show their worth through their bravery and courage to their white counterparts is replaced by a pessimism in the post-World War I realities he experiences.

I am bit surprised that Sterling M. Means has not been identified before in a significant way. There is no dissertation comparing his works to Paul Laurence Dunbar, although I think it would be fascinating reading. His work is passed over in favor of a few more well-known names, and this is perhaps a result of the obscurity of the few early opportunities he had to print his work in very minor presses, such as the Pentecostal Publishing Company. Now might be a good time to see him get the credit he deserves as well as some good recognition as the voice of the African-American soldier in the era of World War I. First Fruits Press, an open access publishing branch of Asbury Theological Seminary has now published *The Black Devils and Other Poems* for free online, and hope it will get more attention there. It can be read in its entirety at: https://place.asburyseminary.edu/firstfruitsheritagematerial/198/

The archives of the B.L. Fisher library are open to researchers and works to promote research in the history of Methodism and the Wesleyan-Holiness movement. Images, such as these, provide one vital way to bring history to life. Preservation of such material is often time consuming and costly, but are essential to helping fulfill Asbury Theological Seminary's mission. If you are interested in donating items of historic significance to the archives of the B.L. Fisher Library, or in donating funds to help purchase or process significant collections, please contact the archivist at archives@asburyseminary.edu.

End Notes

[1] All images used courtesy of the Archives of the B.L Fisher Library of Asbury Theological Seminary who own all copyrights to these digital images, unless otherwise noted. Please contact them directly if interested in obtaining permission to reuse these images.

[2] Cf. with https://poets.org/poet/paul-laurence-dunbar for more information and poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar.

[3] For a discussion of how Ethiopia was viewed politically in some African-American circles in this time, see William R. Scott "Black Nationalism and the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict 1934-1936." *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 63, no. 2 (April, 1978): 118-134).

[4] Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. "The South in Afro-American Poetry, 1877-1915." *CLA Journal* (College Language Association), vol. 31, no. 1 (September 1987): 12-30. Bruce also notes how Means takes a poem from starting with a white view of things and then moves the poem, so that by the end an African-American perspective become dominant.

[5] See Michael Cohen "Paul Laurence Dunbar and the Genres of Dialect." *African American Reviews*, vol. 41, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 247-257.

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Book Reviews

An Exploration of Christian Theology, 2nd Edition
Don Thorsen
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic
2020, 448 pp., paper, $39.99
ISBN: 978-1-5409-6174-7

Reviewed by Benjamin P. Snoek

Among the ever-widening sea of introductory systematic theology texts is Don Thorsen's *An Exploration of Christian Theology,* which has become one of the more prominent books in evangelical circles. Now in its second edition, Thorsen has updated his text and included two new chapters on apologetics (ch. 5) and the fate of the unevangelized (ch. 29). The *Exploration* follows a typical systematic structure, roughly patterned after the logic of the Apostles' Creed. It treats prolegomena, God, creation, humanity, sin, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, and the future. Each chapter follows an overall predictable arrangement: an opening illustration from scripture, a historical survey of the doctrine's development, and a sweep of contemporary perspectives on the doctrine (with special attention given to evangelical views). This reviewer finds it notable that Thorsen opens each chapter with a scripture reference—a strategic move that grounds his doctrinal exposition in the biblical text.

In his writing, Thorsen expresses a warmly evangelical yet decidedly Wesleyan perspective. While he teaches at a Wesleyan-Holiness institution, Thorsen also engages in ecumenical work, a labor that is clearly reflected in his generous treatment of Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, Holiness, and Charismatic perspectives. He dedicates more attention to Wesleyan and Pentecostal views, to be sure, especially in his discussion of sanctification and charismatic gifts. Thorsen openly and unapologetically advocates for an egalitarian inclusion of women in ministry (329), for instance. Furthermore, he is obviously writing with John Wesley in the

fore of his mind; at one point, he unnecessarily injects Wesley's opinion into a discussion of Reformation-era soteriologies (247). While remaining cognizant of his American Wesleyan bias, Thorsen seeks to "explore the full Christian tradition by providing an ecumenical sketch of its beliefs, values, and practices as they developed in history," an approach that "does not seek church unity so much as it seeks a unity of understanding and appreciation for the varieties of church traditions" (10).

Thorsen's *Exploration* has many laudable strengths. Each chapter is very short and digestible, ideal for introductory students who may be overwhelmed with foreign theological vocabulary. Whereas many systematic theologies are cool and didactic, Thorsen writes with a friendly and conversational tone, using plain yet profound language. Thorsen's precedent writings advocate for the Wesleyan Quadrilateral as the sources for theology; however, he does not openly state his proclivity in this book. Nonetheless, the structure of his chapters is clearly influenced by this method, with an opening introduction from scripture, a description of historical developments of the doctrine (tradition), a conclusion that appeals to reason, and a set of reflection questions that appeal to experience.

Another strength is found in the design and layout of the book itself. Although some may find its size to be unusual and clunky, its design is actually a strategic way of accommodating two-column text throughout. Other comparable systematic theologies look more like monographs than introductory textbooks. For instance, Daniel Migliore's *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Eerdmans) uses roughly the same dimensions but uses one-column text and no pull quotes or call-out boxes. Beth Felker Jones' *Practicing Christian Doctrine* (Baker Academic) is smaller than Thorsen's book but feels more cluttered with its many call-out boxes on a small page. With prominent (but not distracting) pull quotes and helpful headers that organize key points, and generous space for reading, the layout of Thorsen's *Exploration* makes it easy to quickly identify information.

Given the panoply of introductory systematic theologies, why choose this book? It is this reviewer's opinion that Thorsen's text has a place for many venues of theological education. Thorsen's *Exploration,* in particular, is a suitable text for undergraduate theology courses and perhaps an introductory seminary course. Even a church adult education class would benefit from this resource. The short chapters are appealing for students who are unfamiliar with theological language or are not majoring in theology. The back matter contains dense indices and a handy glossary

of key theological terms—useful reference material for any student. Some systematics lean toward praxis (Felker Jones), while others lean toward theory (Migliore). Thorsen, however, attempts to find a *via media* and does so with relative success, given the sizeable weight of this task. The reflection questions at the close of each chapter help bridge doctrine and practice and could be used as reading journal assignments in a classroom setting.

To be sure, there are some who *shouldn't* adopt this book. Those aiming for deeper theological study, or who already have basic theological education, may be disappointed by this book, finding it insufficient for their needs. Moreover, those who are seeking a distinctly evangelical introduction to theology may be distracted by the ecumenical flurry of Thorsen's attention. A more fitting resource might be Daniel Treier's *Introducing Evangelical Theology* (Baker Academic), released in the same catalog year as this book. Treier's book may be similar in content but finds its structure in a Trinitarian frame. Although both are writing within the evangelical tradition, Thorsen may have a more generous eye for his intended audience, while Treier is advancing decidedly evangelical theologies.

In short, Don Thorsen has gifted students with a revamped *Exploration of Christian Theology*, continuing the legacy of an already strong text. As far as introductory systematic theologies go, this book is a viable contender for any classroom. Students will enjoy Thorsen's perspicuity, readability, and practicality. Moreover, instructors will find that this book is comparable in content to "competitive" texts but is presented, both logically and physically, in a much more appealing manner. For these reasons, *An Exploration of Christian Theology* merits inclusion in the course booklist or, at the very least, in the course bibliography.

Honor, Shame and the Gospel: Reframing Our Message and Ministry
Edited by Christopher Flanders and Werner Mischke
Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing
2020, 252 pp., paper, $17.99
ISBN: 978-1-64508-280-4

Reviewed by Bud Simon

Honor, Shame and the Gospel: Reframing Our Message and Ministry is a compendium of essays presented at the 2017 Honor-Shame

Wheaton conference. The theme of the book addresses the intersection of honor-shame (HS) with gospel, mission, praxis, and theology. The book provides an admirable addition to the dialogue on HS through fifteen essays, each of which is a standalone article, and enriches the conversation. The compendium offers a diversity of contributions written by different authors on a range of topics. The editors provide reflection questions at the end of each chapter which points the reader to deeper engagement with the topic.

A list of ten statements concerning honor-shame clarifies assumptions which provide structure to further the conversation and is found in the introduction of the book (xxi-xxiv). These statements highlight established assumptions as a framework to catalyze fruitful conversation and are worth mentioning here: HS is a foundational cultural dynamic, there is no culturally neutral gospel, humanity longs for honor as part of God's design, HS is both ancient and contemporary, Shame can be honorable (healthy), HS is one among several cultural values as well as interwoven into all cultural values, the Bible speaks of many facets of HS, toxic shame is a global epidemic, the gospel is fundamentally honorific, and HS reveals a hermeneutic for scripture as well as relevance for culture.

The book is divided into two sections - general and mission contexts. The section on general context primarily addresses honor-shame in theology and biblical studies while mission context focuses on culture and ministry. Each essay makes a distinctive addition to the honor-shame discussion and three of these essays are highlighted.

Chapter one (by Steven C. Hawthorne) discusses the metanarrative of God's glory in scripture and God's plan of honor for humanity. Honor flows from humanity to God as well as from God to humanity. The invitation from God is to share in his glory with Christ and fulfills the innate longing for honor found in every human. The theme of honor runs from Genesis to Revelation and demonstrates how HS plays a role in all cultural value systems. This chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book.

Chapter seven (Steve Tracy) discusses the transformative power of the cross to remove the shame of abuse. This is a pivotal perspective because it appropriates the grace of the cross not only for the sins committed by the recipient, but also for the shame of sins committed against that person. The cross provides an encounter in which shamed people share in the honor of Christ, just as he did not suffer because of his own wrongs. This chapter appropriates HS positively against the stigma victims often suffer, especially victims of rape and sexual abuse, by using concrete experiences from the

Congo. Understanding how Christ honors those who are victims brings healing. The chapter also invites the church to be a safe and healing place for those who have been victimized by others.

Chapter eight (Lynn Thigpen) delves into orality, illiteracy, poverty and HS. Too often those who have low or no literacy are treated as inferior in their culture and, sometimes, by those who minister to them. The church needs to transform this shame by providing an open, welcoming place where the poor and illiterate can find community and connection. When the church creates such a space it removes the shame placed by others on these vulnerable populations. Presenting the gospel through orality communicates honor through kindness and allows the church to become the light of Christ to the marginalized.

Each chapter holds a meaningful message for the church and those who minister. The rich insights in this book are highly recommended for academics and practioners because it elucidates honor-shame as a lens for understanding scripture and doing ministry. The perspective of honor-shame through multiple lenses allows readers to realize the extent to which these values impact their world.

The Psalms as Christian Praise: A Historical Commentary
Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston
Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans
2019, 354 pp., paper, $35.98
ISBN: 978-0802877024

Reviewed by Wesley D. Custer

The Psalms have been prayed, sung, preached, and studied for millennia and we still find ways to plumb the depths of this ancient Hebrew poetry. The Psalms can be examined as Christian worship generally, and lament and/or praise more specifically. Waltke and Houston engage psalms of praise in their latest work on the Psalms engaging the text critically and contextually within Christian practice throughout history focusing on Christian praise.

Waltke and Houston take the Psalms as the hymnbook of Jesus and an integral part of the worshipping core of the Christian Church. Conceptually, the goal is to examine a selection of psalms exegetically and

also examine the church's use and application of these same psalms through the lens of historical figures of the church up through the 19th century. Waltke writes the section of exegesis and Houston writes the section on the church's response or use of the same psalm. The dialectic of these two approaches engages the whole life of God's people throughout history and gives the reader several perspectives through which to address the present-day situation of God's people.

Waltke and Houston have both distinguished careers in their respective fields and are now emeritus faculty at Regent College, Vancouver. Waltke is also a distinguished professor emeritus at Knox Theological Seminary, Fort Lauderdale.

The commentary covers Psalms 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 103, 104, with chapter 1 introducing their concept and approach to the commentary. Waltke and Houston do not consider these only psalms of praise but they are chosen as exemplars for study from the perspective of praise by God's people. Their overall scholarship is well founded and the dialectic between quality exegesis and historical interpretation is uniquely beautiful.

The exegesis is accepting of traditional views of authorship and does not engage some of the late authorship theories of the Psalter. However, these discussions are mentioned in footnotes so as not to dominate the commentary. The historical interpreters are generally presented uncritically but fairly, meaning that the presentation of historical uses or expositions of a particular psalm is not engaged from an evaluative perspective to determine the quality of the witness. Rather, the source/historical figure's writing is chosen because their use and interpretation of the psalm is worth noting and considering.

It seems as though it is two books placed into the same binding. That is to say, while the authors write transitions between the critical exegesis and the voices from church history there is no space given to interaction between the two. It is left to the reader to fulfil work of the dialectic and provide their own synthesis.

I would recommend this volume to anyone interpreting the Psalms for scholarship, preaching, or group Bible study. It is accessible to the seminary student and the clergy. It will widen the perspective of the reader and challenge them to dig deep as they seek to move between critical exegesis and historical interpretation toward modern or localized application of the Psalms.

Hebrew for Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving Biblical Hebrew

Adam J. Howell, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic
2020, 240 pp., paper, $22.99
ISBN: 9781540961464

Reviewed by Nicholas J. Campbell

Adam Howell is assistant professor of Old Testament interpretation at Boyce College and Benjamin Merkle is professor of New Testament and Greek at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Robert Plummer is the Collin and Evelyn Aikman Professor of Biblical Studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The authors designed *Hebrew for Life* to help current and former Hebrew students to continue or reignite their study of the language. Howell has also revised *Greek for Life* by Merkle and Plummer. He applied the principles of language development to Hebrew and added a chapter on Aramaic (x). Each chapter typically begins with a personal story to introduce the material and ends with reflection questions and a short linguistic insight provided by a Hebrew scholar.

Much of the information is basic to language learning, or perhaps memory retention, in general but the detail of the chapters increases as one moves through the book. One of the most insightful sections presents ways of reading the text (which unfortunately is in the Wisdom of Resources chapter not the Read, Read, Read chapter). Some of the options discussed are: slow grammatical reading, slow exploratory reading, and slow contemplative reading (146-47). The second option is especially significant because it encourages Hebrew learners to explore wildly while reading. Instead of considering lexical rabbit trails and wild goose chases through online grammatical resources as wasting time, the authors argue that this type of reading can occasionally be fruitful and perhaps even lead to important insights. Most teachers advocate grammatical reading and, occasionally, contemplative reading in Hebrew but rarely do they consider reading the Hebrew Bible and following whatever information peaks the readers interest in their online resources as beneficial. Affirming this as a legitimate, though definitely not the only, way to read is greatly encouraging to students who feel they must block out all distractions and maintain serious focus every time the Hebrew Bible is opened.

The second point of value is the scholarly discussion at the end of each chapter. Though these are sometimes unrelated to the chapter to which they are appended, the insights they provide are worth the price of the book. Two particularly noteworthy excurses are Dominick Hernández's discussion of Job's repentance (*ma'as* in Job 42:6) and Peter Gentry's discussion of asyndeton in Genesis 6:1-4. These bring academic grammatical discussions into biblical interpretation questions and show the value of biblical languages.

Hebrew for Life is primarily directed at seminary students and those in ministry. The ministerial focus is shown by Howell's frequent urging to study Hebrew because Christians are called to faithfully study scripture and his discussions of the benefits of using the original languages in sermon preparation (19). Though many of the insights could be found in numerous books on language learning and memory retention, the practical application of these insights through Hebrew reading plans, an annotated Hebrew resource list, and the academic excurses makes this book a valuable resource. A current or former Hebrew student would benefit from this text even if only to use the reading plan suggestions (96-103).

A History of Christian Conversion
David W. Kling
New York, NY: Oxford University Press
2020, 852 pp., hardcover, $150.00
ISBN: 978-0195320923

Reviewed by Zachariah S. Motts

"God breaketh not all men's hearts alike" - Richard Baxter (quoted on 283).

There have been many books that study the phenomena of religious conversion from various angles. One that immediately comes to mind is, of course, the psychological approach of William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. One could also quickly point to sociological studies by Émile Durkheim or Peter Berger. What, though, does a *history* bring to the task of understanding religious conversion?

David Kling's *History of Christian Conversion* is definitely a work of history. For those who have taken a church history course or are well-

read in the history of Christianity, much of the ground covered and many of the people encountered will be very familiar. Kling ambitiously attempts to lead the reader on a tour of conversion through much of Christian history. Although the book's major divisions are divided by region and loosely by chronology (Rome, Europe, the Americas, China, India, Africa), the order and flow of the narrative means that the first 400+ pages follow the typical arc of Western Christianity with glances toward Orthodox churches. Writing a comprehensive and completely fair history is impossible (and Kling openly acknowledges the limitations of his history, xii), but this structure that places China, India, and the entire continent of Africa within a little over 200 pages at the end of the book was a concern. One is led to question whether these parts of Christian history are properly integrated into the narrative or whether they have been added on as an afterthought. While there probably could have been more integration and representation outside of the Western narrative, in Kling's defense, the sections on China, India, and Africa do not come across as an afterthought. In fact, because the people and stories encountered in those sections do not usually get much time in the traditional Western church history texts, there is much that is fresh and insightful.

Throughout, Kling brings the conversion experiences of individuals and groups to the fore and spends time exploring the context of these conversions. This is done especially through studying written conversion narratives, but also through other sources like hymns and associated artifacts. Kling is a careful and critical historian, noting the strengths of these accounts and the places where skepticism is warranted. This placing of people into their context and sketching the contours of what conversion meant in that context is what *A History of Christian Conversion* brings to the larger conversation surrounding religious conversion. Richard Baxter's quote above speaks to the idea that he did not believe Christians should expect conversion to follow an orderly, predictable pattern even within his own time period. Kling shows that the meaning, patterns, reasons, and forms of Christian conversion have shifted from era to era, location to location, and culture to culture. While some may think that their experience of conversion is basically the same as other Christians through history, Kling draws out the reality that, while there are continuities, careful study shows that the conversion experience has changed as it has moved through cultures and time periods. To use Charles Taylor's vocabulary, the social imaginaries of these groups and the history-bound nature of

human beings has meant that the understanding of conversion, which has been taken as such an important and obvious concept in Christianity, has varied quite widely through history. Kling especially adds careful detail to the phenomenon of mass conversion, which can be easily overlooked or disregarded by those from modern, highly individualistic paradigms of conversion.

In the end, *A History of Christian Conversion* succeeds as a history and digs into the specific contexts which shaped the conversion experience of individuals and groups. The writing is consistently clear and eminently readable, with content suitable for a seminary student but accessible for the church history novice.

The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels

D. Brandon Crowe
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic
2017, xviii +264 pp., paper, $32.00
ISBN 978-0801096266

Reviewed by Joseph Kiluda

Brandon D. Crowe is associate professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Glenside, Pennsylvania. He is the author of numerous books and serves as the book review editor for *Westminster Theological Journal*.

In *The Last Adam*, Crowe mounts a exegetical and biblical theological case that the Gospels present Christ as a "representative figure," especially "the last Adam" (16). As such, the obedience of Jesus outside the passion narrative is vicarious and carries a saving character. After the introductory chapter, Crowe develops his work in six substantive chapters. In chapter 2, Crowe argues that the four canonical Gospels present Jesus not only as the new Israel, but also as the Last Adam. Luke's genealogy represents Jesus' sonship as expressly Adamic in character, while Matthew's genealogy presents Jesus' ministry as covenantal and in the context of Genesis' creation account. The title "Son of Man" also presents Jesus as the Last Adam.

In chapter 3, Crowe argues that the title Son of Man does more than denote Jesus filial obedience to God. That title carries in its background not only Israel but also Adam. Jesus is the obedient son that Adam and Israel failed to be. This obedience is brought to the fore early in Jesus' ministry, particularly in the baptism and temptation accounts. Chapter 4 takes up passages in the Gospels in which Jesus is said to bring scripture to fulfillment. Particular attention falls upon Matthew 3:15, in which Jesus declares his intention to fulfill all righteousness. Chapter 5 argues that the fourth Gospel presents Jesus' lifelong, filial obedience necessary for salvation. It is John's passion narrative, in particular, that offers suggestive indications that this obedience is that of the Last Adam. Chapter 6 concentrates on the motif of the Kingdom in the Gospels. The authority of Jesus to implement the kingdom of righteousness, Crowe claims, is often portrayed in Adamic terms.

In his book, Crowe attempts to highlight how the Gospel narratives themselves, in parallel with the other New Testament writings, uniquely show Jesus as the Last Adam and that it is his obedient life that reverses the disobedience of the First Adam and secures salvation for God's people. Crowe begins building his argument by drawing the reader's attention to the idea that Adamic Christology is not simply an idea found in Pauline theology or a feature in other New Testament letters, but that Jesus is clearly portrayed as the perfect and obedient Adam throughout the Gospels as well. In the New Testament, an Adamic Christological framework is evident in Pauline passages such as Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-58. These key texts show that even from an early date, Christ-followers have interpreted the salvific nature of Jesus' life, ministry, and death in a way that highlights the Adam-Jesus connection.

Crowe's central argument is that the Gospel narratives of Jesus' life and ministry actually mean something and serve a more significant purpose than simply to be extended introductions of the passion narratives. Jesus' active obedience is demonstrated in every part of his life from his dedication at the temple, to his baptism and temptation in the wilderness, to his ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing.

His passive obedience is wrapped up in his suffering and death. Through submission to the will of God, Jesus passively attains salvation for his people. According to Crowe, this passive type of obedience completely satisfies the righteous requirement of the Messiah, and so there is no need to argue for or concern ourselves with the active obedience, which is the

righteous life, lived out in the flesh by Jesus prior to his passion. Crowe contends that Jesus' life demonstrates both aspects of obedience and does so perfectly, in such a way that in his passive and active obedience humanity receives salvation vicariously through both Christ's life and his death. The Gospel narratives show Jesus connecting his actions in ministry with what he reveals as necessary for salvation to occur.

The creation narratives shows Adam as created sinless, in the image of and as a son of God, and crowned with authority and dominion over God's creation. In giving into temptation, Adam forfeits his relationship, status, and calling. It is his disobedience that must be attuned for because it is his disobedience that leads to death, not just for Adam, but for all humankind. Jesus, in his incarnate state, serves as a representative for all people. Humanity is condemned because of the disobedience of Adam, but salvation is wrought through the radical obedience of Jesus in every aspect of his life.

In the Gospels, "Son of Man" is Jesus' favorite self-designation, and this title, not only connects Jesus to prophecies in Ezekiel and Daniel, but in his application as *the* Son of Man, Jesus connects himself to the very first man, Adam. Again, Crowe seeks to show that Jesus becomes the perfectly obedient representation of humanity in order to reverse the disobedience of Adam and secure salvation. Jesus proves himself faithful to the task of Messiah and provides a pattern, indeed a substitution for his people, in a way that points to his full-fledged obedience. As the Messiah works on the earth through his ministry in the flesh, Crowe postulates that he is the reconstituted Adam - born sinless and thus able to forgive sins, overcoming temptation and thus providing a pattern for humankind to follow, and calling his disciples to "rest" in him from the toil and hardships of the world.

Crowe's other contribution to his argument comes in his discussion of how Jesus is portrayed in the Gospel of John. Crowe believes that a Johannine Christology begins with Jesus being "sent" by the Father. This idea points to two realities: 1) the divinity of Jesus is established from the very beginning of John's Gospel, and 2) if Jesus is "sent" then there must be a purpose for his life and mission. Jesus fulfills his purpose through completing the work that the Father sent him to accomplish. Crowe highlights three specific chapters in John (John 4, 5, and 17) where Jesus explicitly states that his mission is to complete the work the Father has given

him. Again, the obedience of Jesus makes a relationship with the Father a reality, for the life of Jesus and for all humanity.

For me, this is a fascinating book. Crowe sets out to show that the Gospels do indeed portray Jesus as *The Last Adam* - the perfectly obedient Son of God that secures salvation for humanity in his incarnation, life, ministry, death, and resurrection. *The Last Adam* is a fine scholarly work and Crowe writes with deep passion and a strong knowledge surrounding this issue. However, the book comes across as more of an extended bibliography and a repository for all works that may allude to this Adam-Christ connection. Crowe does one thing extremely well, and that is to clearly state his objectives for each chapter, deliver on that promise, and then wrap up the chapter with a nice conclusion.

Indeed the author demonstrates to his readers the purpose of his book which is in twofold: 1) to show in the Gospel narratives that Jesus is a representative figure and stands as *The Last Adam* for Israel and humanity, and 2) that the life of Jesus cannot be divorced from his death because the redemptive work of Jesus, as portrayed in the Gospels, shows that it is Jesus' full obedience, in life and in death, that reverses and overcomes the disobedience of Adam. For the preacher, this book will certainly aid one in seeing Jesus' vicarious and salvific obedience in a multitude of Gospel pericopes. Crowe imported a reformed theme in theology into his book hence doing eisegesis rather than exegesis, thus convincing us that Jesus fulfilled the covenant of works and that his active and passive obedience before his death is a significant part of the fulfillment of scripture.

The Genealogical Adam & Eve: The Surprising Science of Universal Ancestry

S. Joshua Swamidass
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press
2019, 265 pp., hardcover, $27.00
ISBN: 978-0-8308-5263-5

Reviewed by Logan Patriquin

Recent data from population genetics has obfuscated traditional accounts of human origins tied to a historical Adam and Eve in the recent past. In the face of the current theological trend to mythologize the early

Genesis narrative, Dr. Swamidass swims upstream to present an alternative view in which "…Adam and Eve, ancestors of us all, could have been *de novo* created less than ten thousand years ago" (201). His *Genealogical Hypothesis* reclaims theological space by moving out of the realm of genetics proper and towards a genealogical framework for understanding human ancestry. This move, he hopes, will recover a traditional account of human origins that is neither anachronistic nor reductionistic. Without denying evolutionary biology, his model purports to, "…[rebind] many splintered [ecclesial] traditions together" (155).

The Genealogical Adam and Eve consists of five parts though the reader will likely only perceive two. The opening section lays out the science behind his claim that genealogical ancestry trumps genetic ancestry. In fact, he imagines it is perfectly plausible to believe that Adam and Eve are our genealogical ancestors even though they are now "genetic ghosts" (69 & 84). Page after page of graphs and charts begin to numb the senses as he unfolds his admittedly 'nonintuitive' argument that computational models show a likely universal *genealogical* ancestor to all *textual* humans as recent as six thousand years ago—let's call this premise X (46-47 & 64). His convoluted presentation does manage to advance his point that contemporary science does not challenge that Adam and Eve could (he would say *must*) be "'ancestors of everyone to the ends of the earth from at least AD 1 onward" (64).

The second half of the text couples premise X with a theological claim, Y, that Adam and Eve were *de novo* created in the recent past. Swamidass always carefully posits premise Y in the subjunctive mood but the theological hoops he jumps through to affirm Y suggest anything but a shaky presupposition. How does one account for biological humans produced through evolutionary means that are outside the garden? A philosophical twist does the trick. Our author suggests that people outside of the garden are *biological* though not *textual* humans. As such, "historical theology and Scripture itself has been largely *silent* [author emphasis] about them" (134). In his model, biological humans are "coextensive" with textual humans until such a point that the genealogical ancestors of the *de novo* Adam and Eve have subsumed the whole. This must have taken place, of course, by AD 1 so that Christ may be a second Adam to all, not simply some.

Theological questions abound due to the coupling of X and Y. For instance, what provokes God to break his time-honored evolutionary

means of producing human beings, however one defines them? If there are people outside the garden before, concurrent with, and after the miraculous *de novo* creation, and subsequent Fall, of Adam and Eve then how does one understand the origin of sin? How would one define sin proper with eons of pain, suffering, and death in advance of this Augustinian conception of the Fall?

Swamidass does not dodge such questions, most of them anyway. Chapters proceed in increasingly speculative fashion as he constructs an account of special creation, a Fall event, and then wades into the theological quagmire that is Original Sin. Adam and Eve's special creation is defended vocationally. Though not biologically distinct, the author argues, "They had a special purpose, one that require them to be created entirely sinless, with a clean slate" (205). One is right here to inquire, a clean slate from what exactly?

When Adam and Eve fall, physical and moral corruption, as well as an imputation of debt, are unleased. According to Swamidass: physical corruption spreads *instantly,* moral corruption spreads *contagiously*, and imputed guilt spreads via *genealogical descent* (189-190). Such are the three legs that also support his understanding of Original Sin. In the end, Swamidass opts for one major theme to weave the whole narrative together—Exile. God substitutes exile for execution in the Fall story as well as in many other places throughout scripture. Consequently, all of us inherit the mercy of exile that we cannot repay. This is his map to the theological affirmation of universal human sinfulness and the universal need of a savior, one who can end our exile (197-198).

The Genealogical Adam and Eve achieves its aim of carving out space for theological dialogue. His presentation affirms, "The traditional account [a literalist reading of Genesis 2 and 3] was not false. It was part of this larger narrative [one preceded by Genesis 1 and continuing in us today]" (201). Readers will enjoy the sketched out theological framework and ought to appreciate the scientific rescue job that rediscovers the *potential* for a historical Adam and Eve without forsaking evolutionary science. All that being said, in the same way that science can't disprove a *de novo* Adam and Eve, it says nothing to affirm it either. Sure, a genealogical ancestor of humans within the last six-to-fifteen thousand years is probable, if not mathematically certain. That truth does not necessarily entail that Adam and Eve of the scriptures. Christian theology would do better with a model for understanding origins, the Fall, and Original Sin that works

within a non-historical Adam and Eve framework as well as within the broader spectrum of literal/literalist renditions of early Genesis.

Teaching Across Cultures: Contextualizing Education for Global Mission
James E. Plueddemann
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press
2018, 168 pp., paper, $20.00
ISBN: 978-0-8308-5221-5

Reviewed by Matthew Haugen

James E. Plueddemann in *Teaching Across Cultures* develops a framework on how to teach nearly anything to anyone, anywhere by utilizing sociology, theology, and education theory. *Teaching Across Cultures* is organized into twelve chapters in which Plueddemann develops his paradigm of a pilgrim rail-fence approach to teaching. Each chapter ends with a story from or about a teacher from the global south exemplifying the chapter's content in the form of a story.

Chapter 1 begins the conversation of education theory by discussing metaphors of teaching from Edward T. Hall (i.e., production, growth, travel) and Plueddemann's pilgrim metaphor of teaching, which is a nuanced approach to Hall's metaphors. Chapter 2 introduces one of Plueddemann's unique contributions: the rail-fence paradigm. The fence posts represent the work of teachers to facilitate the connection between the rails, which are theory and practice. Chapter 3 addresses the deficiencies of twenty-first century education (i.e., to overemphasize content at the expense of context). He advocates for teachers to become students of students in order to mitigate this tendency.

Chapter 4 addresses the complexity of differences of human beings. This section included topics such as glocality, personality differences, and combating stereotypes, but each of these topics deserved more attention given the nature of the subject and that he is a developmentalist. Chapters 5 and 6 address the complexity of teaching a high-context learner versus a low-context learner. Each type of learner has varying tolerances toward ambiguity as well as differences in power distance between teachers and students.

Chapter 7 defines the aim of teaching as the promotion of holistic growth: wisdom, physical, social, and spiritual, in which the first three form and inform the last. Chapters 8 and 9 describe possible educational objectives (i.e., behavioral, problem-solving, and expressive) based on one's teaching and learner context.

Plueddemann claims in chapters 10 through 12 that the pilgrim metaphor best harmonizes Hall's teaching metaphors as well as high- and low-context cultural contexts. The pilgrim metaphor integrates the cultural context, teaching method, and perceived goal.

One of the strengths of *Teaching Across Cultures* is Plueddemann's critique of online education. Online education has made education more accessible and affordable; however, it is not positioned well to *form* people. Formational opportunities on online mediums are available insofar as they do not supplant local and embodied practices and community (cf. Meadows, Philip. "Mission and Discipleship in a Digital Culture." In *Mission Studies*. 29 (2012). 163-182).

One of the weaknesses of *Teaching Across Cultures* is that Plueddemann does not spend enough time explaining *how* teachers might facilitate bridge-building between content and context. For instance, how might teachers become students of students? How might this endeavor of becoming a student of students function differently based on the medium of communication? How might places of education collaborate with local places of formation (e.g., churches) to facilitate the holistic growth of students? However, *Teaching Across Cultures* contributes to the fields of education and discipleship studies, and as such I recommend this book to those in higher education, missionaries, and pastors.

Peace Love Yoga: The Politics of Global Spirituality
Andrea R. Jain
New York, NY: Oxford University Press
2020, 224 pp., paper, $24.95
ISBN: 978-0-1908-8863-3

Reviewed by Zachariah S. Motts

For fans of well-researched dissections of cultural phenomena where all of the pieces are laid out with scholarly precision and care,

Peace Love Yoga: The Politics of Global Spirituality is a worthwhile read. From the beginning, Andrea Jain is open about the angle from which she is approaching what she calls a "neoliberal spirituality." Hers is a feminist-socialist stance, which provides a framework for looking at manifestations of yoga and popular spirituality throughout this work. Owning that stance and giving the reader a chance to understand yoga from that perspective is part of the strength and draw of Jain's writing. One does not have to be a practitioner of yoga or particularly identify as a feminist or socialist to gain from the rich descriptions and sharply argued content of *Peace Love Yoga*.

One of Jain's major concerns in this book is the question of whether popular practitioners of yoga, those who buy the merchandise, are vocal about a certain package of issues (like environmentalism), and would describe themselves as "spiritual," are more likely to be involved in movements for structural societal change. What she finds is that those who are participants in this sort of spirituality might spend large amounts of money buying items which claim to be environmentally friendly or yoga products that support one of their favorite issues, but these actions are individualistic and largely "gestural." This consumerism that focuses on the individual being disciplined, doing their part by "buying green," but does not push for larger collective action is what Jain means when she labels this as neoliberal spirituality. It does not escape the system around it in a way that can meaningfully challenge that system. In that way, she sees it as a conservative, not revolutionary, practice.

Another main theme is the way that power is used by teachers and promoters of yoga. While many in the West would see International Yoga Day as a positive celebration and an act of cultural respect, Jain points out the ways that Yoga Day in India was actually exclusionary. There, Narendra Modi's promotion of yoga as part of the Indian identity was not welcomed by many in the minority Muslim population who do not practice yoga. They claim that Yoga Day is another symbol of a Hindu nationalism which marginalizes minority groups. This is the use of power to mold national identity, but Jain also looks at the famous gurus who are the celebrities and founders of yoga brands and styles. Here she points to uses of power by teachers in the world of yoga to commit acts of sexual harassment and assault. A key example is the life of Bikram Choudhury, founder of Bikram Yoga, which is laid out as a disturbing litany of control, accusations of sexual harassment and rape, extreme devotion from followers, and various abuses of power which were allowed to build over time. While, of course,

not every yoga studio is such a poisonous environment, Jain asks the reader to look hard at the systems which have allowed these men to be revered and praised while they continued patterns of abusive behavior.

These are, of course, very serious topics covered in an incisively critical way. That is not to suggest, however, that *Peace Love Yoga* is at all a drudgery to read. The writing flows nimbly back and forth between real-world examples and analytical insight, which keeps the reader engaged. There are some points where chapters cover content that overlaps with other chapters because this book does collect material from Jain's previous articles on yoga, but these repetitions support the structure of the chapters and were not wholly unwelcome. *Peace Love Yoga* provides an insightful perspective on contemporary yoga and is a worthy contribution to understanding religious practice in the world today, particularly the practice of those who claim to be "spiritual, but not religious."

Christian Martyrdom: A Brief History with Reflections for Today
Edward L. Smither
Eugene, OR: Cascade Books
2020, xvii + 79 pp., paper, $16.00
ISBN: 978-1725253810

Reviewed by W. Brian Shelton

The subject of martyrdom remains recognizably significant in the formation of the early church and intermittently throughout church history. It continues to receive attention in scholarship, the popular mind, and the contemporary landscape of the church. In this work, the history and theology of martyrdom provides a backdrop to understand current martyrdom events.

Ed Smither is Professor of Intercultural Studies and History of Global Christianity at Columbia International University. The institution is recognized for its missions enterprise as Smither is known among missiologists, represented by his works *Christian Mission: A Concise Global History* (2019) and *Mission in the Early Church* (2014). In this work, mission finds application in the meaning and motive of martyrdom.

For works like this, stories are an indispensable necessity and the opening story captures an important prototype for this study. In 2007, two Turkish pastors and a German missionary welcomed five seekers to a bible study. Once the meeting had begun, the visitors revealed their radical Islamic values, tied up and tortured the Christian leaders, and executed them on broadcast video. The extensive legal process was not accompanied by a retaliatory spirit as the pastors' wives publicly declared their forgiveness of the murderers. Story provides a narrative quality that personalizes the martyrdom events throughout this work, from early to modern Christianity.

Martyrdom history is woven together with martyrdom theology to shape the identity of the church in all generations. Smither ingeniously adopts the "suffering servant" metaphor for centering this theology. "Christians are motivated to suffer and even welcome martyrdom because of their love for Christ—because they worship a Suffering Servant" (9). This ideal unfolds to recognize the biblical expectations of suffering with examples of historical Christian suffering across eras. The central part of the book reveals how we witness, prophesy, and worship through martyrdom. The root of "martyr" as "witness" is expected, evidenced by early church legal transcripts where defendants simply professed, "I am a Christian" (31-33). Theological expansion comes when the martyrs are recognized as prophets who not only stand against an inimical society, but they also "rebuked the church to return to the gospel and to pursue justice as a visible reflection of God's kingdom" (56). Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, and Oscar Romero are twentieth century examples. A theology of worship also offers a refreshing perspective to Christian martyrdom ideology, seen in the Waodoni Mission with Jim Elliot in Ecuador and the Lord's Table food relief in Somalia, where worship of God surrounded the ministry and response of Christians to their martyrs. Smither insists, "Worship is the beginning and end of Christian mission" (67).

Reflection on martyrdom here is directed along a global context. First, the majority world must teach American and European Christians about their suffering: "Their testimony ought to convict the western church, which is often enamored with comfort, affluence, and a desire for political power" (69). Second, accepting persecution does not mean that the church no longer champions social justice. This instruction is crucial for individuals who advocate social legitimacy—our faith perpetuates even when justice does not prevail. Thirdly, an informed reflection on martyrdom helps the church develop a competence for suffering. Finally, "this reflection on

martyrdom should teach us that martyrdom is more of an attitude than an act" (70). Brother Yun becomes a model for Smither, as this Chinese house church pastor extensively wrote and sang worship songs during his numerous imprisonments. The application of historical martyrs offers specific and valuable application for the contemporary church and society.

Historical content initially seems displaced when non-martyrs such as Athanasius, Anthony, Basil, Augustine, and Brother Yun provide instruction and models for suffering rather than martyrdom. This reveals the difficulty of separating persecution from martyrdom, twin experiences cut from the same theological cloth. Smither frequently blends non-martyr suffering stories among the martyr stories, explaining that martyrdom is one terminus to "a wide spectrum of persecution" (xiv). Important early church figures and texts do not populate the historical overview section, because they inhabit other chapters to illustrate the theological understanding of martyrdom. For example, only Tertullian and Polycarp receive attention in the Roman persecution section; the reader will have to search to find Perpetua and Felicitas, Justin, and Blandina in other chapters.

The only legitimate surprise of this work is its general omission. While the subtitle "a brief history" lives up to its approach, the occasions of recognized martyrs in Christian history is limited. Franciscans and Moravians solely represent the medieval period. Latimer, Ridley, and Anabaptists combine for two pages from the Reformation period. If one looks for a thorough history of martyrdom, this feels like a sample set of stories from which the contemporary church can learn. The Huguenots, the martyrs of Córdoba and Amorium, and the Jesuits in imperial Japan are unnamed. The contemporary martyrs find better representation with stories cited from Turkey, Afghanistan, Egypt, and China. Here, the details of names, dates, and places provide credible data of illustration for the contemporary church. The omission is redeemed by the quality of examples present. For example, Coptic Christians sing songs about the martyred each week, modelling how reflection on suffering can live on in the consciousness of a Christian community.

Smither's goal is to provide a basic overview of martyrdom episodes and theology. For an undergraduate class with martyrdom on the periphery, this short work is a good adoption. Historical fact and theological justification are solid in this work, evidencing the reality of martyrdom without the myth of martyrdom proffered in contemporary scholarship. For non-scholars who want to an introduction to martyrological history, this

work will be ideal. For all of us who are appalled by majority world martyrs before we return to comfortable and safe lives, this book is a meaningful reminder that our Christian faith should be one ready to be characterized by a pathos of suffering.

The Asbury Journal 76/1: 145-152

Books Received

The following books were received by the editor's office since the last issue of *The Asbury Journal*. The editor is seeking people interested in writing book reviews on these or other relevant books for publication in future issues of *The Asbury Journal*. Please contact the editor (Robert.danielson@asburyseminary.edu) if you are interested in reviewing a particular title. Reviews will be assigned on a first come basis.

Anatolios, Khaled
2020 *Deification Through the Cross: An Eastern Christian Theology of Salvation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7798-7. Price: $50.00.

Andrews, Lewis M.
2020 *Living Spiritually in the Material World*. New York, NY: Fidelis Books. ISBN: 978-1-64293-390-1. Price: $26.00.

Baker, Jonny and Cathy Ross
2020 *Imagining Mission with John V. Taylor*. London, UK: SCM Press. ISBN: 978-0-334-05950-9. Price: $19.99.

Barclay, John M. G.
2020 *Paul and the Power of Grace*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7461-0. Price: $22.00.

Bauckham, Richard
2020 *Who is God? Key Moments of Biblical Revelation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-1-5409-6190-7. Price: $21.99.

Bird, Michael F.
2020 *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-09397-8. Price: $59.99.

Black, David Alan and Benjamin L. Merkle, eds.
2020 *Linguistics and New Testament Greek: Key Issues in the Current Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-1-5409-6106-8. Price: $29.99.

Boccaccini, Gabriele
2020 *Paul's Three Paths to Salvation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-3921-3. Price: $30.00.

Breimaier, Thomas
2020 *Tethered to the Cross: The Life and Preaching of C.H. Spurgeon*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5330-4. Price: $35.00.

Buckwell, Brenda K.
2020 *Spiritual Direction and the Metamorphosis of Church*. Nashville, TN: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3580-0. Price: $18.99.

Campbell, Constantine R.
2020 *Paul and the Hope of Glory: An Exegetical and Theological Study*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-52120-4. Price: $34.99.

Campbell, Constantine R. and Jonathan T. Pennington
2020 *Reading the New Testament as Christian Scripture: A Literary, Canonical, and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9792-8. Price: $54.99.

Carroll R., M. Daniel
2020 *The Book of Amos*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-2538-4. Price: $52.00.

Cleaver, Emanuel III
2021 *What is the Bible and Who is it For?: A book for Beginners, Skeptics, and Seekers*. Nashville, TN: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3593-0. Price: $19.99.

Cohick, Lynn H.
2020 *The Letter to the Ephesians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6842-8. Price: $55.00.

Cotherman, Charles E.
2020 *To Think Christianly: A History of L'Abri, Regent College, and the Christian Study Center Movement*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5282-6. Price: $35.00.

Creach, Jerome F. D.
2020 *Discovering Psalms: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Discovering Biblical Texts. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7806-9. Price: $22.00.

Crisp, Oliver D.
2020 *Approaching the Atonement: The Reconciling Work of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5197-3. Price: $22.00.

Curtice, Kaitlin
2020 *Native: Identity, Belonging, and Rediscovering God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press. ISBN: 978-1-58743-431-0. Price: $17.99.

Dreff, Ashley Boggan
2020 *Nevertheless: American Methodists and Women's Rights*. Nashville, TN: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. ISBN: 978-1-9459-3577-0. Price: $16.99.

Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays
2020 *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. Fourth Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-10917-4. Price: $49.99.

Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays, eds.
2020 *The Baker Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. ISBN: 978-0-8010-1837-4. Price: $49.99.

Farhadian, Charles E.
2020 *Christianity: A Brief Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-1-5409-6022-1. Price: $19.99.

Flett, John G. and Henning Wrogemann
2020 *Questions of Context: Reading a Century of German Mission Theology*. Missiological Engagements. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5108-9. Price: $40.00.

Garrard, Virginia
2020 *New Faces of God in Latin America: Emerging Forms of Vernacular Christianity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-1975-2927-0. Price: $99.00.

Goldingay, John
2021 *The Theology of Jeremiah: The Book, The Man, The Message*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5527-8. Price: $22.00.

Green, Gene L., Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo
2020 *Majority World Theology: Christian Doctrine in a Global Context*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-3180-7. Price: $65.00.

Greggs, Tom
2020 *The Breadth of Salvation: Rediscovering the Fulness of God's Saving Work*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-1-5409-6195-2. Price: $21.99.

Grudem, Wayne
2020 *Systemic Theology: An Introduction of Biblical Doctrine*. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. ISBN: 978-0-310-51797-9. Price: $59.99.

Gurtner, Daniel M.
2020 *Introducing the Pseudepigrapha of Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4987-3. Price: $49.99.

Harink, Douglas
2020 *Resurrecting justice: Reading Romans for the Life of the World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5276-5. Price: $26.00.

Harmon, Matthew S.
2020 *Rebels and Exiles: A Biblical Theology of Sin and Restoration*. Essential Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5541-4. Price: $22.00.

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