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C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary
P.O. Box - 3, Dorathota Village,
Bheemunipatnam Post,
Vishakapatnam – 531163,
Andhra Pradesh, South India.
Tel. 08933-200182; E-mail: editor.jcotrts@gmail.com
www.christforindia.org

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JOURNAL OF C.O.T.R. THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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EDITORIAL

This is our second edition of the first volume. I thank God for making it all possible. This is the result of a tremendous team effort, including both the faculty and student contributions. COTR Theological Seminary is committed to preach, teach and write for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

This edition is being published as part of the festivities of commemorating the 30th anniversary celebrations of the COTR College of Ministries, established in the year 1982, by our visionary Late Apostle Rev. Dr. P. J. Titus. This edition is dedicated to the Titus family and faithful prayer partners spread across the globe striving for the gospel of Christ. In today's world of opportunism and vacillation, the Titus family stands as touchstone for consistency and endurance. What is the evidence? We are celebrating the thirty years of service to our Lord and our country. It is proud to be part of such a long standing institution which is making its own mark in the world of theological education in India. Dr. Titus had envisioned his own brand of theological education which he called- training "anointed and informed servants of God". Dr. Titus' motto was "think big". And today, we realize that by thinking big, we can stay longer and serve longer.

As we share this joy with all of you through this edition, we have here a collection of articles focusing through the spectrum of current theological and biblical concerns. In these times of compromise and accommodation, we bring to you the art of remaining distinct for the Lord through logical reasoning and through acquiring adequate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

Interpretation of history and its implications to Christian faith is the emerging theme that underlies most of the articles. Today, the cry of the modern inquiry of history is to abandon all or any faith in God and his acts in history. Theological education is becoming atheistic and antisupernaturalistic. Bible is no more the revelation of God, yet it is researched to earn degrees. Bible is no more the inspired word of God, yet it is taught and preached to earn the daily bread. Such utilitarian attitude towards the Bible is lamentable.

Inspiration of the scripture is the first victim of the process of the modern biblical inquiry. It is jettisoned being labeled as illogical. For some only the

original manuscripts are the ones inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the later copies and translations are not inspired. Anything miraculous is no longer palatable to the modern historian. Every event is considered as part of the continuous chain of cause and effect. Miracles in the Bible are necessarily counted external to the chain of cause and effect. Consequently, God, his word and his actions are counted out of all process of history, thereby, creating a version of history which is free from God and his love for humanity, which they unhesitatingly call it as the actual history. This edition comes as a blow of the hammer on such a naturalistic approach to the Bible. We need a complete reorientation in our approach to history recorded in the Bible. Faith must become the precondition to any inquiry of the Scriptures. Acknowledging the Spirit as the indispensable interlocutor between the Scripture and the inquirer is paramount. We believe inspiration of scriptures is a doctrine that need not be fully understood in order to be believed. Inspiration of the scripture is the backbone of all other matters of faith. Since, all matters of faith gain credence from the scripture; the authority of the scripture is embedded in its inspiration. In the realm of faith, every statement of faith rises or falls with the doctrine of inspiration. If Bible is not inspired by God, then, no other teaching or doctrine that stems from the Bible is authorized by God. Today, if it is naïve to believe in the inspiration of the Bible. Then, let us all be naïve for Christ!

CH. Vijaya Kumar
February, 2012

Women as Agents of Transformation

Dr. W. S. Annie

Introduction

Change and transformation is an ongoing process. Change happens in a constructive as well as destructive form, for human life. Then, how do Christians as co-workers with God participate in this work of transformation? This paper tries to probe into these issues. This paper is divided into three parts. The first section deals with the "agent" as an actor who brings about change, and it also takes a look at few factors that deny agency to women. The second section deals with cultural action in society and the third section deals with the 'female reflexive self' that works for transformation.

1. Who is an Agent?

The term agent refers to the human actor as an individual or group in directing or effectively intervening in the course of history. Without an articulated subject capable of acting, no action or resistance is possible. People are both subjects (agents) and objects (historical beings) in a society.

The agent should act, should have the power to be creative. Agents are not mere repeaters of some external impulse. History contains law and order, institutions and traditions, authority and the weights of facts. But it also contains revolutions, the overthrow of one sort of order and its replacement by another; it contains the making of things new, breaks with tradition and sets up different frames of reference implying different forms of behavior. When the subjected become conscious of their oppression, come together, organize their forces, throw over the taboos that held them in subjection, unmask the standards by which they were stigmatized, prophetically denounce those who keep them in chains, the subjected regain their agency. They become agents of transformation. An agent can be a charismatic leader who sustains enthusiasm and rekindles dormant powers in every one[1] . This paper is dealing specifically on women, and a few factors that deny agency to women are noted down. There are many factors that deny agency to women, but just a few following factors are discussed below.

[1] Leonordo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Kent: Burns and Oates, 1988), 208.

1.1 Factors that deny Agency to women

Language is normally understood as a medium of communication or expression. As a medium of communication it is thought to be neutral and unbiased. But in a broader sense language is more than that. Language can be understood as a social institution and a symbolic horizon, which plays a major part in the process of socialization, and also it is an important component of ideological structures or to say it is an ideological construct. Even though it is arbitrary and conventional, the predominant social ideology, that is, patriarchal bias is reflected in language. From a social linguistic perspective it can be said that all the social notions, bias, beliefs, considerations are reflected in language. Since, patriarchy played a vital role in its formulation of language, language has often been silent about women as agents and contributors. Women's identities are thereby, negatively constituted.

In another sense it can be said that language is a paradigm (world view) of the world, that is, the world is clothed in language. This language incapacitates the agency and creativity of women. Since, it is gendered to give an upper hand to male and social processes related to them, female is given insignificance in social process. So a problematization of language is very important to construct a new conscience, which acknowledges and activates the agency of women. Firstly, colonial discourse on third world women is dealt with.

1.1.1 Colonial discourse[2] on third world women

Western trained feminist and their writings often portray Third World women as victims. These feminists base their analysis and their authority to intervene on their "claims to know" the shared and gendered oppression of women. In so doing, they misrepresent the varied interests of "different women by homogenizing the experience and conditions of Western women across time and culture".[3] The monolithic and singular portrayal of Third World women as victims of modernization, of an undifferentiated patriarchy, and of male domination produce reductive understandings of Third World women's multiple realities.

The colonizers were never able to look at the 'Third World Women' as agents, labourers, economic contributors, but were only able to visualize

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[2] Colonial discourse here is not equivalent to the whole of western framework of thought. Within western framework of thought and literature there has been a huge number of writings that are anti-colonial. Colonial discourse, in general explore the ways that representations and modes of perception are used as fundamental weapons of colonial power to keep colonized peoples subservient to colonial rule. The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration.

[3] A. M. Goetz, "Feminist Approach to Women in Development", in *Gender and International Relations*, edited by R. Grant and K. New Land (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 143.

them as victims, *zennana* (women in cloister kept within the four walls) women, sex objects[4] and so on.

Many books that were written during the last century depict, women as victims. But no longer women can be just considered as victims, but as agents who can transform their condition. Amartya Sen writes,

> "No longer the passive recipients of welfare enhancing help, women are seen, by men as well as women, as active agents of change: the dynamic promoters of social transformations that can alter the lives of both women and men".[5]

Gabriele Dietrich writes, "If the victim refuses to be a victim, the power at the top of the hierarchy gets destabilized".[6] Women have already begun to refuse to play the victim. They are agents of transformation in their own right. Secondly, the 'myth of development' is dealt with.

1.1.2 The myth of 'Development': Colonialization of the Third World minds

The question of 'development' is an epistemological[7] question. Who determines, what is development? The third world for itself or the first world for the third world or the third world for the first world. The third world needs to claim that its way of life is good for it and not the western way of life.

Theologically the idea of 'development' has to be challenged. John Mohan Razu has questioned the concept of "development". According to him 'development' is against the 'Kingdom of God" envisaged in the Bible.[8] Vadhana Shiva calls the concept of 'development' as nothing other than maldevelopment. Gabriele Dietrich also questions this idea of development. Gabriele Dietrich laments over the adverse aspects of modern development and its technology by the government and international forces on the poor slum dwelling women, fisher women, vendors, etc. She critiques the whole Western development concept. She complains that economic growth has happened at the cost of the people's right to work and to control the resources.

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[4] Geeta Chowdhey, "Engendering Development? WID", in *Women and Place: Feminism, Post Modernism, Development*, edited by Marianne H. Marchand and Jane L.Parpart (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 27-28.

[5] Amartya Sen, *Development As Freedom* (Delhi: Oxford, 2000), 189.

[6] Gabriele Dietrich, *A New Thing on Earth: Hopes and Fears Facing Feminist Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2001), 239.

[7] Epistemology is concerned with ways of knowing 'and by this we mean the study of assumptions about how to know the social and apprehend its meaning.

[8] I. John Mohan Razu, *Trans National Corporations as Agents of Dehumanization in Asia: An Ethical Critique of Development* (Delhi: CISRS/ISPCK, 1999), 160.

In the present secular societies 'economic, material development' is the vision towards which all modern societies thrive hard. This idea of 'development' is based on the assumptions; firstly, of 'unlimited' natural resources and secondly, economic prosperity for all. It is very clear that natural resources are limited and only the rich can have control over it. Millions starve and die due to lack of resources. We are eyewitnesses to the wars fought for natural resources like oil, water, land, etc. The first assumption is false. This naturally leads to the falsification of the second assumption.

This development myth is the steering force of the government machinery in many nations of the world. This is how the colonial masters still have a grip over the colonized mind that works to sustain the interests of the colonizers. The master's tool will not destroy the master's house. This development can thrive only by the centralization of power in the hands of the minority and the marginalization of the majority; poor, women, sick, tribals, dalits, children. Women are just objects of development in this project rather than subjects of transformation.

1.1.3 Patriarchy

In India, the shift to an agricultural economy and the second urbanisation (800 BC-600 BC) was marked by the emergence of caste and class divisions. The *brahmana* was a force to reckon with and patrilineal succession was fairly well established within the larger context of a defined family structure distinct from the earlier structure. It is at this point that a sharp distinction has to be made between the subsistence labor caste and the non-subsistence labor caste. The *Sudras* and the out caste people were the laboring caste. The obsession of caste purity (his offspring, his family, himself, and his means of acquiring merit) by the higher caste men, forced their women into the household. The women of the high caste where curbed severely. Legitimacy in terms of succession explains the references to women of the King's family and the landholding groups, and the need to maintain caste purity. The high caste patriarch held his wife in strict control to rear him a male heir and he held the *Sudras* and the low caste, both male and female for their labor.

It may be argued that the success of any system lies in the subtle working of its ideology and in that sense the labor concept was the masterstroke of Hindu-Aryan genius. It was one of the most successful ideologies or myth[9] constructed by any patriarchal system, one in which the low castes themselves

[9] The Hindu myth of creation says that, Brahma the Creator God created the Brahmins from his head and they had to perform all the religious duties. The *Kshathriyas* were created from the shoulder and they had to rule the country as warriors. The *Vyshiyas* are the traders. The *Sudras* were the farmers who had to work on the land.

supplied their free labor. The actual mechanisms and institutions of control over dalits' labor and their subordination was thus completely invisibilized and with it *varnashramadharma* was firmly established as an ideology since it was 'naturalised'.[10]

Patriarchy could thus be established firmly as an actuality and not merely as an ideology. The archaic state was clearly both a class state and a patriarchal state. In the case of India there has been a close connection between caste, class, and the state that together functioned as the structural framework of institutions within which gender relations were organized. In caste communities' women had very clear-cut gender prescriptions. By keeping up to such patriarchal, caste regulations woman naturally perpetuated the evil system, instead of transforming it.

1.1.4 Post-modern tendency

Postmodernism is a philosophical system that covers many varieties of thought under its umbrella. Postmodern thinkers[11] questioned the Enlightenment concept of rationality, namely, that human beings are responsible subjects guided by reason, and that they are also subjects of their history. They do not accept that there is a material or 'essential' reality of the world, a 'real' history that is not just a linguistic construct or narrative. There is no given reality, which can be understood. Reality is time-bound, context-bound and space-bound discourses have constructed. There cannot be a universal grand theory valid for all people, for all culture and for all times. [12]

For post modernism everything is only appearance and all are of the same value. Everything is questionable. If everything is arbitrary and questionable, there is nothing of more value that it has to be struggled for. One of the most negative results of this postmodern feminism (*in its extreme, negative sense*) is that on the basis of this ideology struggles for women's liberation - or for the liberation of any other oppressed groups or class - becomes virtually impossible. They not only depoliticize women but also destroy the basis for international solidarity among women and among men. This tendency depoliticizes women's movements as well as other people's movements. The non-committal attitude of postmodernism inhibits a person from becoming an agent. Thus, women also refuse to become articulated, committed agents.

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[10] Uma Chakravarti, "Conceptualising Brahmanical Patriarchy in Early India: Gender, Caste, Class and State," *Economic and Political Weekly* (April 3, 1993) 10.

[11] Tervor Noble, *Social Theories and Social Change* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 140.

[12] Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, *The Subsistence Perspective: Beyond The Globalised Economy* (London and New York: Zed Books, 1999), 195.

1.1.5 Ambiguous Theology

"Ambiguity" means 'having two meanings'. Having two meanings can be contradictory to each other. In Christian theology there are many such ambiguous thoughts. This on the whole leaves people confused or few adhering to the first view and the other to the second view nearly splitting the camp. Below I would like to give two examples of ambiguous theologies; the first one concerning capitalism and the second regarding women's childbirth.

Protestant ethics ironically twists the reality of the Christian gospel. On the one hand, Christianity condemns the principle of capitalism that provides motivation for the accumulation of capital. On the other it underpins the pursuit of wealth by Christians through capitalism, claiming such wealth as the outcome of God's blessing. Christianity, caught in these ambivalent values, has been rather quite about the vice of capitalism. This marriage between Christianity and capitalism is strange and absurd. The demonic capitalistic economic order enforces people to worship profit. Borrowing Niebuhr's terms, the system makes 'moral' people 'immoral'.[13]

Above, five factors that deny agency to women were dealt with. Firstly, the image of victim to women – internalized by women themselves; Secondly, the idea of development that has colonized the 'Third World' mind sees women as objects of development rather than as subjects of development; Thirdly, patriarchy entangled with caste system; Fourthly, post modern tendency that depoliticizes women's movement; and Fifthly, ambiguous theology that confuse people by teaching contradictory things fail to build self-confidence in women. The confusing ideologies, theologies do not help women to conceive of themselves as co-workers with God and work as agents of transformation. Further, they also do not allow women to become articulated agents, who can articulate, build perspectives and action plans for transformation. The above ideas embedded in the culture need a cultural action for the transformation of society. Below cultural action and its manifold aspects are dealt with.

2. Cultural Action in Society

Indian social reality is fast changing; changing for the worse. The hopes of a social transformation, not bridled by external constraints, which the national liberation movement had raised, seem to be dwindling everyday. Territorial Imperialism is dead, but the empire is forming before our eyes. The name of the 'empire' is globalization, which seeks to subjugate the world for the

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[13] Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 49-50.

interest of transnational capital. The 'virtues' of the new 'empire' and the paradigm of development, form the hegemonic public discourse in India today. The message of the empire is the market, transmitted through the cultural network, of which the implicit purpose is the creation of a modern, capitalist taste and the making of an uncritical mind. It promises to usher in modernity and affluence, but actually promotes social obscurantism and cultural backwardness.

Culture, being embedded in all human engagements, is a domain in which social power is both exercised and contested. It is also the means for the articulation of dominance and resistance. Given the materiality of culture, culture is not epiphenomena, but has an all-embracing character. The scope of cultural action therefore extends to the entire social experience.

Cultural action is an intervention in daily life, directed to the transformation of social consciousness. It is not a cultural performance or spectacle based on various art forms. Instead, it is a continuous social activity capable of activating the "cultural" in everyday life. It is a form of intervention directed towards the radicalization of the society. The purpose of cultural action, therefore, is to foreground the human agency. It is 'unsettling the existing equilibrium' in order to create conditions of life free from domination. Any attempt at social engineering is, therefore, a multi-pronged effort - cultural, ideological and political - which should aim initially to change the nature of the hegemonic public discourse. Cultural action is at the centre of this effort.

The main purpose of cultural action is to radicalize the society. Towards that end, the preliminary step is to de-ideologize the society from the influence of globalization which happens to work as a disadvantage for the poor women[14]. A powerful and influential public discourse in favor of globalization is current in Indian society. Global forces and the Indian state sponsor it. The impact of globalization on the Indian economy has been debilitating,[15] yet it has created an artificial sense of affluence through a market, which does not reflect the needs of a majority of the population.

In a country like India with a fairly large section of society deprived even of basic necessities of life, consumerism[16] forced upon it is self-contradictory. For it arouses expectations, aspirations and possibilities, which many realize,

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[14] Women in Free Trade Zones, tourism, marriage market, subsistence economy, and informal sector suffer more than before.

[15] Commercialization of education, health service, slashing of subsidies in Public Distribution System has affected poor, especially women, drastically.

[16] Most of the advertisements are focused on women, who are considered to be mindless consumers.

are beyond their reach. Thus deepens their sense of frustration and deprivation. This contradiction enables the local communities to identify the necessary space for initiating counter cultural action. Sebastian Kappen also warns us,

"With the progressive disintegration of traditional culture, the existential problems of human beings are likely to be more and more accentuated. The creation of a new society is not possible without creating anew the minds and hearts of people."[17]

"And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind…" Romans 12: 2

Biblically, people who belong to God's new age should live in a way suitable to the new age. Paul also used the word here translated 'transformed' in 2 Corinthians 3:18, to describe how believers are changed into the likeness of Christ. Christian believers are already being changed. The mind that God has renewed can recognize and discover God's will. This process goes on throughout our lives and is part of the excitement of following Jesus Christ[18] .

Those who inhabit the society are not only rights-bearing, judicial beings, but are also spiritually integral beings and unless the society is animated and enriched by their *sadhana* of self-transformation and the *tapasya* of unconditional ethical obligation of the self to the other and society, it can not perform its creative and critical functions. It shall cease to be a reflective space where the logic of money and power of society is shown its proper place and is given a transformative direction. Neera Chandhoke urges us to realize the revolutionary aspirations of the civil society.

Society is called to be creative and critical in a democracy in the age of globalization. Though globalization has seriously affected women, still they stand to challenge the dominant trend of globalization by being creative and critical in their own way. In other words it can be said that their very presence and survival against all odds proves them to be challengers of globalization.

The predominant cultural discourse in globalization is the 'development discourse'. Development discourse is based on material prosperity through industrialization, liberalization, privatization and marketization. It is very clear that industrialization, liberalization, privatization and marketization have not ushered in its promises for all the people. It has in fact created a hand full of winners and pushed many into destitution. This calls for a discourse that would do justice to all in the society.

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[17] Sebastian Kappen, *Jesus and Freedom* (New York: Orbis Books, 1977), 49-50.
[18] Roger Bowen, *A Guide to Romans* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1975), 157n.

The purpose of theology is, therefore, to influence and change the character of the public discourse in the society. It cannot be achieved through rejection, resistance and opposition alone. All the three are necessary, but not sufficient. What is required is the creation of a counter culture through constructive undertakings, which would alter the existing public discourse generated by globalization, consumerism, communalism and patriarchy. This can be achieved only through the revitalization of indigenous cultural, religious resources, remolding them to face the contemporary challenges, at the same time without being obscurantist and revivalist. The formation of local communities with the ability to intimately intervene in the cultural, religious life of the people is the necessary beginning for the creation of a counter culture.

Now we will turn to the role of women in transformation. I am using Michel Foucault's concept of "Techniques of Self". Techniques of self is the way an individual conducts himself or herself. The individual learns these 'techniques of self' in the process of socialization.

3. Towards a Reflexive Female 'Self'

The French philosopher Michel Foucault [19] writes in his book '*Discipline and Punish*' about the policing process.[20] His later works revealed to him the degree to which technologies of self-management complemented in furthering the imperatives of the policing process. In his contribution 'Technologies of the self', all of his attention focused on the way in which the individual participates in the policing process by monitoring his/her own behavior.

'Self' constitutes the whole of a person. Women monitor their own 'self', which helps to maintain the *status quo* of domination. For a better understanding of the techniques and its underlying ideological notion the 'techniques of self' of the Christian church and women are briefly sketched below.

Exomologeusis (dramatic expression of a sinner), *exagoresis* (verbalizing

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[19] In this paper the concept of 'technologies' proposed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault is used, to study the experience of women. He talks about four technologies, but the last of the four 'technologies of self' is more relevant to this theological study. Technologies: Foucault speaks of four major types of these 'technologies', each a matrix of practical reason: technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; technologies of the self, which permit individual to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity ,wisdom, perfection, or immortality.

[20] Technologies of domination employed by public authority in its efforts to manage the mind.

thoughts, obeying the master and renouncing will and self), monastic pursuit for the 'purity of heart', puritan technique to expose sinfulness and receive mercy, severely curb worldly delight, were the techniques of self during the medieval period.[21] Modernity created a divided self which experience autonomy as well as alienation. Post modernism has created a indecisive self, entailing a complacent pluralism and non-committal fragmentation. Women are ingrained with the idea of 'self-denial, self-sacrifice, implicit obedience to the superiors, Methodist discipline all such Christian techniques of the 'self' which has helped the dominant *status quo* to survive. The casteist, communitarian 'Self' opposes any change. Women are not taught to decide anything for themselves. The western notions of 'autonomy', freedom from social norms, personal decision, will are much far away from the poor Indian women.

Women experience a split personality, as said by Chung, the Korean women's theologian. This experience of numbing is the experience of victims. It is due to the conflict between the traditional 'techniques of self' and the modern 'technique of self'.

Oppression makes the oppressed experience separation of self. The oppressed woman experiences a most severe split within herself. The sense of who she wants to be as a human being and her reality of who she is in capitalist/patriarchal society are radically different and opposite, and this situation produces shame, guilt, and self-hate. Continuous, prolonged shame, guilt, and self-hate then lead Asian women to the pseudo-safety of non-feeling. Numbing oneself for survival is the most tragic stage for the oppressed because the individual loses the power to resist. Through the process of numbing, individuals become separated from themselves, each other, and the God of Life. Asian women call this numbing the separation sin. Even though this Separation is caused by oppression of capitalist/patriarchal society, Asian women do not think they are sin-free. Asian women accept their full responsibility for perpetuating oppression by merely obeying the oppressor and failing to trust themselves and the other women.[22]

The main stream church's 'Christian discipline' has helped capitalism and neo-liberalism to grow. In India casteism was accepted by and large by many Christians. These structures of society are accepted as God given. The church needs a different prophetic 'technique of self', which will question

[21] Luther H.Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H.Hutton, eds., *Technologies of The Self: A Seminar With Michel Foucault* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1988), 139.
[22] Chung Hyun Kyung, *Struggle to be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1991), 41-42.

the non-biblical values and structures of the society. Christian 'technique of self' should be life affirming and work for the transformation of society. Christian "technique of self' may be molded by Christian values and a theology which may thrive for alternative life affirming structures. The transformed 'self' should take into account the communitarian aspects of society where human beings-earth-flora-fauna and human activities are seen in close interdependence. The autonomy of 'self' does not mean the atomistic, selfish 'self'. But here the 'self' has to always retain a consciousness of being in an inter-woven relationship of all the earth, universe.

The term *re-flectere* means 'to bend back'. Reflexivity is a term derived from *re-flectere*. Subjects or agents are said to be reflexive insofar as they are 'concept-bearing animals' that possess the capacity to 'turn back upon' and monitor their own actions. Reflexivity is to think of ones own actions and the way a person's self is constituted. This helps a person to situate him/herself in their specific context and examine the different factors, which contributes for the molding of their 'self'. This examining can help the person to reconstitute their 'self' and bring about transformation.

For instance, the *Shanar* women of South India were not allowed to wear their upper cloth in around eighteenth and nineteenth century. But they fought consistently for nearly half a century (A.D. 1822 –1865). Finally the government allowed them to wear there upper cloth in A.D.,1865 Travancore, Legislation.[23] After one and a half or two centuries when we look at the women of this area, their condition is reduced to that of a commodity in the marriage market. As soon as a girl child is born, people calculate in lakhs (amount depends on the economic status of the family) the amount of money the parents will have to spend on the girl for her marriage. The question raises, why the community in which women fought for their rights at a point of time, have allowed themselves to be commodities in the marriage market today?

A convincing answer happens to be found in what author Subramaniam writes in his book on Tamil Nadu History. He opines that,

Besides the Christian missionary activities, the government also opened since 1857 many schools and colleges for men and women and in the latter half of the nineteenth century there were many women graduates. These educated ladies played, a vital role. They became 'good wives', faithful mothers and patterns of female excellence. A pattern of education was adopted which

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[23] J. W. Gladstone, *Protestant Christianity and People's Movements in Kerala 1850 –1936* (Trivandrum: Kerala United Theological Seminary, 1984), 81-91.

was turned to produce these results. Cooking, sewing and cleanliness were part of the curriculum. They were trained in the habit of tidiness in person and household arrangements ability to cook and serve, and keep accounts; habit of cheerfulness springing from a sense of gratitude to God for all His mercies. This educational system wanted women to be loyal to the family more than pursuing their individual interests.

However, modernity for men brought a new conception of the world of its material resources, ethical standards and political possibilities, but to women it brought slowly but potently a new conception of themselves. If men reassessed themselves as citizens in a new India, women revalued themselves as human beings in a new social order. [24]

Women were taught, to be committed only to their families and never aspire to do anything of their own interest. They were not encouraged to think in the wider interest of the society and nation. Though at a particular point of time these women waged a war for their right to wear upper cloth, the transformatory force was not sustained because women were not taught to think for themselves and decide for themselves. Their consciousness of their "self" and their transformatory role was made dormant.

Third world women are more prone to believe that they have to continue with the traditions and values (oppressive or empowering), which are handed over to them. India is in transition. Nearly sixty percent of its population lives in villages. Modernism and post modernism has not reached the remote villages. Indians are by and large communitarians and family biased, slowly changing under the impact of mass media. The changing scenario naturally forms a 'self' different from the traditional self. The techniques of self like *exomologeusis* and *exagoresis* has to be replaced with a reflexive self. The technique of 'verbalization' (from 18th century till now) is being reinserted in a different context by the so-called human sciences in order to use them without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively, a new self. To use these techniques is a decisive break. As long as agents act on the basis of subjectivity that is the unmediated internalization of objectivity, they cannot but remain the 'apparent subjects of actions which have the structure as subjects'. On the contrary, the more aware they become of the social within them by reflexively mastering their categories of thought and action, the less likely they are to be actuated by the externality which inhabits them.

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[24] P. Subramanian, *Social History of The Tamils: 1707 - 1947* (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 1996), 87-88.

A person is continually being redesigned in an ongoing discourse generated by the imperatives of the policing process. Repetition reinforces the paradox of the human condition; human beings create forms, which ironically imprison our creativity. This pattern of creation and constraint is ceaselessly repeated. Human beings continually reshape the past creation to conform to the present creative needs. The forms that they create along the way continually reconstitute human nature. The responsibility to create meanings and values anew is a perpetual task but nonetheless the foundation of all human endeavors. It is through such creativity that our power is revealed, and it is in our capacity to use it well in that our destiny lies.

Reflexivity opens up the possibility of overcoming the opposition between the nihilistic relativism of postmodern 'deconstruction' and the scientific absolutism of modernism. Reflexivity can help the women to reflect on the social structures, ideas and values that keep them bonded and exploited. It is their responsibility to form a reflective society. The business of an agent and a theologian is to denaturalize and to defatalize the social world, that is, to destroy the myths that cloak the exercise of power and the perpetuation of domination. The theological presupposition of prophetic witness and critical participation is that there is nothing given (natural inferior status of women, fate) and God's world has to be transformed into a better place for all to have an abundant life. There are many instances in the biblical record, where women raised to work for social transformation and transformation of their own condition. Few instances where women have transformed their condition by transgression, subversion and critical reasoning are dealt with respectively.

Woman with a flow of blood (Lk. 8:40, 42b-48) transforms her condition by *transgression.* The taboo against women during pregnancy and menstruation was common among many nations in pre-Christian centuries. It was legislated for in the Hebrew code in Leviticus and carried through into Christian times, and it lasted over very many centuries. Not only were women considered to be "impure" during these periods, but in danger of communicating their impurity to others. This factor, more than any other, has been the cause of the ostracizing of woman kind – impeding them from participating in social, political and religious meetings. But in the story we learn that Jesus, instead of condemning the women for touching him when she was impure, Jesus goes on to appreciate her for her faith in Him. Further, He also heals her. This is strikingly in contrast to the Jewish culture. Thus, Jesus affirms that women, who are created by God, are pure. The women in the story took the initiative for change that was affirmed by Jesus.

Secondly, here women transform their condition by *subversion*. Exodus 1: 15 – 22 talks about the Pharaoh's power, which is anti–life. The king asks the midwives Puah and Shiphrah to side with him and be a part of his adventure in killing life; the Israelite male children. The deep fear of the outcast (Hebrews) has evoked a policy of systematic murder of precisely the babies who might be the most productive workers in the state system. The new policy is indeed irrational, suggesting that fear, rage and love produced a deep insanity in imperial policy.[25] The women do not obey the Pharaoh. They exercised their life enhancing power to disobey the Pharaoh. They are more interested in saving the life of the children risking their life. May be if they obeyed the Pharaoh they should have got the favor of the Pharaoh. Instead they preferred God's favor. Therefore they were blessed with families.

Thirdly, the accepted social norm of those days was 'Every man under his vine and under his fig tree' (I Kings 4:25). Thus the prophet Micah says, 'They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of Yahweh of hosts has spoken' (Micah 4;4). Zelophehad had five daughters and no sons. His daughters would not receive any portion of land in the Promised Land. The courageous five women go to the Tent of Meeting and are brought before Moses. They make known before God and amazingly, the daughters are granted their demand (Numbers 27:1-11). [26]

Moses transfers the inheritance of Zelophehad to his daughters, so that they are able to take possession of the land. Three theological foundations undergird the divine ruling. Firstly, God owns the land (Lev. 25:23). Secondly, divine ownership means that the status of Israel is that of a tenant of the land. No humans have an inherent right to any portion of the land, because all receive land as a divine gift. Thirdly, the social implication of this divine gift is that each Israelite's right to a portion of land is inalienable. No parcel of land can be permanently sold or taken away from its clan of origin.[27] This means that every citizen should be left undisturbed to enjoy his/her rights in the society. Encroachment on others' rights naturally disturbs the community harmony and tampers one's commitment in severe terms, irrespective of the status of the person concerned. During the Old Testament times anything, which spoiled the community harmony or reduced people to paupers was prohibited. Zelophehad's daughters' critical reasoning helped them to have

[25] Walter Brueggemann, "Exodus", *New Interpreters Bible*, vol.1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 696.
[26] Laivet Mami, "Claiming My Inheritance," *In God's Image*, 19/2 (June 2000) 40.
[27] Thomas B. Dozeman, "Leviticus", *New Interpreters Bible*, vol.1, 217-218.

their father's land that would sustain them. The above, biblical examples are of women who brought transformation and they are good enough examples for women to imitate today.

Conclusion

Women as agents are co-workers with God who are endowed with the Spirit of transformation in them. There are many factors embedded in the culture that deny agency to women. Cultural action is a necessary step to be taken by all men and women from all walks of life. Civil society should be radicalized for the transformation of social consciousness. It should be challenged to perform its creative and critical functions. Women, who are traditionally taught to deny and be subjugated, should be empowered to critically reflect and participate in the transformation of society. Women as agents should reflexively participate as co-workers with God, who destroy the myth of domination or anything that negates and destroys life and transform this world into a better place for all to live.

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Historical Criticism *versus* Narrative Criticism

CH. Vijaya Kumar
Faculty, COTRTS

Introduction

The conflict of "historical criticism versus narrative criticism" can also be termed as, old versus new, traditional versus modern, history versus story, window versus portrait or picture, and on and on. This juxtaposition of opposite terms is sufficient to illustrate the intensity and complexity of the issue at hand. Subsequently, the conflict between these two schools of biblical criticism became so intense that Peter W. Macky in 1986, declared that, "we are at the end of an era of biblical studies. We are moving from historical era to the literary era in biblical studies."[1] And more recently, in 2000, John Barton too had acknowledged this shift in his words, "There is much talk of a 'paradigm shift' away from historical methods and towards 'text-immanent' interpretation which is not concerned with the historical context and meaning of texts; it is widely felt that historical criticism is now itself of largely historical (or academic) interest."[2] By 2005, James L. Ressiguie had stated that "narrative criticism is more privileged over historical method."[3]

Though both historical and narrative criticism belong to the same fold of higher criticism, historical criticism is a bicenturian antiquarian traditional scientific method of biblical criticism, whereas narrative criticism is more recent modern literary method. The problem for the current biblical scholarship is whether to terminate or do away with a two hundred year old method in the wake of a recent newfound method, which eventually would mean to nullify two hundred years of scientific findings or whether to find a point of reconciliation and retain both.

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[1] Peter W. Macky, "The Coming Revolution: The New Literary Approach to New Testament Interpretation," in Donald K. Mckim (ed), *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics: Major Trends in Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1986), 263.

[2] John Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," in John Barton (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9.

[3] James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 38.

Since, neither the antiquity nor the novelty of a method is evidence for or against the legitimacy of that method. It remains to be investigated whether if there is a possibility of coexistence of both the methods. And if so then it makes them complementary, making possible a cross-disciplinary transfer of techniques, knowledge and findings, consequently, enriching each other. Thinking in these lines, this paper intends to seek some major scholarly opinions, and critically evaluate the major presuppositions and the methodological features of both of these schools of biblical criticism, while eliminating the anti-biblical presuppositions and neutralizing some of the anti-theistic presuppositions through sufficient reasoning while reinforcing the necessary ones. The aim is to evaluate whether these two schools are two exclusive or two complementary methods. The main issue that concerns this paper is to test the truth of alleged 'shift' from historical to narrative and to investigate whether narrative criticism is a 'paradigm' in the full sense of that word.

1. Historical Criticism

1.1 Definition

Historical Criticism is defined by I. Howard Marshall, as "the study of any narrative which purports to convey historical information in order to determine what actually happened and is described or alluded to in the passage in question."[4]

The "history" implied in historical criticism is of two varieties. One: The history "in" the New Testament text and; Two: The history "of" the New Testament text. The history of the New Testament text has to do with how the text came into being, as well as with its transmission and interpretation in Christian history. The history in the New Testament text has to do with the history implicit within the New Testament text itself. Therefore, the New Testament interpreter has to take the bits of historical reference within the text, add to them the data available from other contemporary sources, and then attempt to reconstruct a history as a background to facilitate better understanding of the text itself.

Paul's confrontation with Peter in Galatians 2:11-14 is a good example. If this took place after the Jerusalem council meeting in Acts 15, then Peter's hypocrisy is unpardonable and Paul's condemnation is very much understandable. But if it has happened much before the Jerusalem council then Peter's actions are easier to understand and Paul's harsh words less

[4] I. Howard Marshall, "Historical Criticism," in I. Howard Marshall (ed), *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1977), 126.

comprehensible. The chronological conclusions drawn here by historical investigation impact the interpretation of the passage.

1.2 Origin and Development of Historical Criticism

Arising as a distinct exegetical method in the early 19th century, historical-criticism presupposes the view that Christianity is a history-based religion. Lorin L. Cranford recognizes that, the evolution of historical criticism in the last two hundred years has taken different turns, some of which have been destructive, but biblical scholars of all theological persuasions today use some form of this method to interpret scripture.[5]

The foundations of modern biblical criticism were laid in the Renaissance with the recovery of knowledge of Greek and the editing and printing of ancient sources.[6] In many ways, the nineteenth century is considered as revolutionary one, because there was an unprecedented expansion in missions, but ironically, at the same time it was also the same period when the skeptical repudiation of Christianity among intellectuals was at its peak. Advances in human science increased confidence in the scientific method than in the Holy Scriptures, which in turn resulted in producing a revolutionary and more scientific method for studying history. The nineteenth century was also the time of the birth of developmentalism. It was the idea that evolving historical progress underlies everything. This idea of the world gained more credence through the rise of the dialectical philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel, and the evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) through the publishing of the Origin of Species in 1859 and the Descent of Man in 1871. The impact of these changes on biblical studies is immeasurable. Scholars of German universities began to approach the Bible through so-called objective, scientific means. Thus was born the approach known as the historical-critical method, an interpretive method guided by several crucial philosophical presuppositions.?? It inherited the rationalistic assumption from its seventeenth-century intellectual ancestors, that the use of human reason, free of theological limitations, is the best tool with which to study the Bible. Therefore, scholars treated the Bible as they would any other literature, not as God's special revelation to humanity.[7] This assumption about the Scriptures has its root in their assumptions about the "history". The Bible is a historical

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[5] Lorin L. Cranford, "Modern New Testament Interpretation," in Bruce Corley, Steve W. Lemke, and Grant I. Lovejoy (eds), *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture*, 2nd edn. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 2002), 149-150.

[6] David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996, c1992), 1:726.

[7] William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, Robert L. Hubbard and Kermit Allen Ecklebarger, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas, Tex.: Word Pub., 1993), 52.

book and contains approximately 4000-10,000 years of history. So, any interpretation has to take note of the history present in the Bible and the history of the Bible.

This directly leads us to the evaluation of the assumptions proposed by the historians concerning history, both of the Bible and in the Bible.

1.3 Critical Evaluation of the Basic Presuppositions

Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) is considered to be the one who formalized historical critical method by furnishing three vital presuppositions in his essay on "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" published in 1900.[8] The assumptions posited by Troeltsch are the principle of criticism, analogy and correlation, each stating a point about history.[9] Since, any interpretation of the biblical text definitely has to take note of the history in and of the Bible; making a historical approach to the Bible inevitable. Such emphasis on history by Troeltsch is noteworthy. But, Troeltsch seems to opine otherwise, because he considered historical-critical method and Christianity mutually exclusive. Troeltsch states "[O]f special significance is the fact that the findings and presuppositions of the historical method have given body blow to traditional Christianity. For the churches it radically called into question Christianity's claim to absolute authority."[10] These words of Troeltsch inform us of a shift in understanding of Christianity from being a supernatural, absolute and unique way to a natural, relative and evolutionary religion. And the shift in biblical studies was from viewing the Bible as a supernatural divine revelation to a natural witness of the evolution of Christianity. Such a naturalistic view of both Christianity and Bible has now been sufficiently critiqued and deplored by many scholars. And many consider this as the primary reason for biblical scholars to move away from historical to narrative criticism of the Bible. Surprisingly, Troeltsch himself states "the real problem for theology was not that biblical critics emerged from their libraries with results disturbing to believers but that the historical-critical method itself was based on assumptions quite irreconcilable with traditional belief."[11] Troeltsch goes on to note that "once the historical method is applied to Biblical Science and church history

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[8] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religions*, trans. David Reid (London: SCM Press, 1972); tans. of *Dei Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religiongeschichte,* 3rd edn (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1929), 8.

[9] C. Stephen Evans, *The Historical Christ & The Jesus of Faith: The Incarnational Narrative as History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 185.

[10] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 8.

[11] Ernst Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Shrifte*, vol. II (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1913), 729-753. cited in Van Austin Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 4-5.

it is a leaven that alters everything and, finally, bursts apart the entire structure of theological methods employed until the present."[12]

Despite the caution of Troeltsch, ironically, biblical scholars have continued to employ historical critical method during the whole of last century in biblical studies and arrived at many conclusions, which to a large extent become questionable in the light of Troeltsch's own remarks. Or in other words, according to Troeltsch's own reasoning, since the presuppositions of historical method are irreconcilable to Christianity, yet Christian scholars have continued to use the historical method to interpret the text of the Bible, then which presuppositions did they employ. For if, despite the caution of Troeltsch, they used the same presuppositions which are irreconcilable to Christianity, did they not become unchristian or did they not arrive at unchristian conclusions. By and large that seems to be the case, but, if not then which other presuppositions did the others employ. If they were truly so irreconcilable, then how come the biblical scholars have applied the method to biblical studies for so long, and remain Christian. To fully assess the intensity of Troeltsch's presuppositions and the continued employment of the historical method by Christian scholars a careful attention to the three presuppositions of criticism, analogy and correlation is necessary.

1.3.1 The Principle of Criticism

The principle of criticism is the "methodological doubt." According to Troeltsch, though the aim is to approach all data with empathetic understanding, it is imperative to place all traditions under scrutiny, since, he says, it must be presupposed that in the realm of history only judgments of probabilities are possible and that the independence and autonomy of the historian is indispensable.[13] When this principle is applied to biblical studies, it is to be inherently suspicious of the historical accuracy of any narrative of the Bible, until any corroborative evidence is found to believe.[14] It is to not only suspect the accuracy of the historical records of the Bible but also a claim that both the history of and in the text cannot be known accurately.

As a result of the principle of criticism, skepticism becomes a precondition to any inquiry of the biblical text. This naturally lead to the formulation of the criteria of authenticity. It is the acceptance of possibility that events were not in fact as they were described in the text. As the historian regards the

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[12] Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Shrifte*, vol. II, 730. cited in Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer*, 5.
[13] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 9.
[14] Darrell L. Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michiga: Baker Academic, 2002), 159.

Bible as a merely human composition, he approaches the text assuming not only the possibility but the probability that the text has erred in places.

The best example of the application of the criteria of authenticity is in Gospel studies. There seems to be more consensus on the uncertainty about the life of Jesus than anything else among the historians. The historicists have employed a number of 'criteria of authenticity' to the Sayings of Jesus in the Gospels. The chief criteria employed are the 'criterion of dissimilarity' or 'criterion of discontinuity'. According to this criterion, if a saying of Jesus displays the ideology of the primitive church, it must be presumed to owe its origin to that source, not to Jesus. And if it is such that any Jew of the period could have said it, then it must be presumed to be a piece of popular teaching put into the mouth of Jesus. But if it shows neither of these characteristics the presumption is that it is a genuine saying of Jesus. Therefore, a saying must be such that no one else, Jew or Christian in the first century could have said it, before it is accepted as the teaching of Jesus.[15]

Such methodological doubt, Marshall asserts, is "thoroughly unrealistic." Because, the historian "would soon realize [the unrealistic nature of the methodological doubt] if he attempted to apply it to all the ordinary statements made to him by other people in the course of everyday life."[16] Since, what does not apply to the events of everyday life in the present does not apply to the events of the past, at least this is what is meant by Troeltsch in his principal of analogy, to be discussed later.

However, in regard to this Darrel L. Bock has a different opinion. Bock does not totally reject the idea of methodological doubt. But, also does not accept it as explained by Troeltsch. He reinterprets the element of 'doubt of history' as the 'doubt of self-understanding of history'. He reasons, we should not begin the historical study with 'doubt', rather with acceptance of 'ignorance' or 'agnosticism'. Bock argues that, we do not know nor can we claim to know history exhaustively, because of limitations of knowledge and sources. So Bock concludes that "it is a self-critical dimension of our own work".[17] Therefore, unlike Troeltsch, Bock says that it is not all history that is to be doubted rather we should doubt our own self-understanding of history. Bock's argumentation postulates two categories: the historian's self; and the history itself. Here, Bock saves history from the full brunt of the principal of criticism by surrendering the historian's self to it, whereby the historian comes under interrogation and not the history.

[15] Evans, *The Historical Christ*, 327.
[16] Marshall, "Historical Criticism," 134.
[17] Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 159.

Now, this is quiet opposite to Troeltsch's demand for historian's autonomy. Such demand puts the historian on a higher pedestal. The historian is skilled expert who governs the process of inquiry and passes judgments, whereas Bock's proposition of historian doubting his own self makes the historian sound incompetent, whereas the issue at hand is history in and of the Bible and not the historian's self. The doubt of self only reveals the fact of the historian's incapacity to know history, which is more a matter of competency or incompetency of the historian in interpreting the data available. No one individual of any time, or no one generation of any time could claim to know history exhaustively, because there is always a limitation of knowledge and sources. Knowing history of and in the Bible is not just one individual's life time exercise it is the collective responsibility of the historians of all times in general, because history is always in the making. To every generation history is always new.

Bock may have liberated the Bible from the hands of the skeptical historian, only by substituting it with his own self. But, how does doubting one's own self and not history help the historian in his inquiry. Instead of doubting the self-understanding of history, which is not so helpful, it is better to come to scripture with faith. St. Hilary of Poitiers wrote around AD 350:

> Thus all unbelief is foolishness, for it takes such wisdom as its own finite perception can attain, and measuring infinity by that petty scale, concludes that what it cannot understand must be impossible. Unbelief is the result of incapacity engaged in argument. Men are sure that an event never happened, because they have made up their minds that it could not happen.[18]

Following the thought of St. Hilary, does it mean then if either because of the incapacity of the historian or the absence of the sources, it must be concluded that a said event did not happen. If the same reasoning is applied to some of the common events such as birth and death of certain individuals in history for which if there are no sources, could it be presumed that such events never occurred or can never be known.

The case for faith in a scientific inquiry such as historical criticism of the Scripture can be laid to rest through the words of Thomas F. Torrance:

> In the first place, the reorientation that has been taking place in the foundation of scientific knowledge, which we have traced from Clerk Maxwell through Einstein to Polanyi, demands that we must recognize belief or intuitive apprehension once more as the source of knowledge

[18] Hilary, *De Trinitate*, vol. III. (T & T Clark: Edinburgh, 1898), 24. cited in Douglas F. Kelly, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1 (Mentor; Christian Focus Publications: Scotland, Great Britain, 2008), 19.

> from which our acts of discovery take their rise, for it is in belief that we are in direct contact with reality,…[19]

To this Marshall adds, "it is surely one thing to interrogate a text minutely in order to discover all that it really says or implies; it is quite another to disbelieve every statement that it makes until it can be proved to be true."[20] For instance, he says, if there is a narrative which claims or seems to be historical from a writer whose general content is known to be reliable, it is more reasonable to accept it as reliable until satisfactory evidence is produced against it. Hence for Marshall, "[I]n the absence of contrary evidence belief is reasonable."[21]

Therefore, the principle of criticism which sets the precondition of methodological doubt can be turned on its head and be very much employed with belief. The English meaning of the term "criticism" is "a serious examination and judgment of something." It is derived from the Greek verb *krino* which means: to judge, or to pass judgment on; to condemn; to decide, to determine; to consider, to regard, to think; to prefer. The noun form is *krites* (judge) and the adjective is *kritikos* (able to judge). Decision making is inherent to the act of criticism. A careful consideration of the data and determining the truth from false is the chief aim of criticism. A critic is a judge who is in search of truth. He hears both sides of the case and determines the truth. And when a historical critic arrives at truth, Douglas F. Kelly says, such truth necessarily produces faith. He notes:

> Truth causes faith; that is to say, objective reality always has priority over subjective response. Faith is caused by truth… faith is the only appropriate response to truth.[22]
>
> Kelly quotes Thomas F. Torrance:
>
> Faith is the orientation of the reason toward God' self-revelation, the rational response of man to the word of God … a fully rational acknowledgement of a real Word given to us by God from beyond us.[23]
>
> Put another way, faith is an utterly scientific (that is, appropriate) response to the reality of the God who speaks in His word.[24]

This leads us to the next assumption of the principle of analogy proposed by Troeltsch.

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[19] Douglas F. Kelly, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1. (Scotland, Great Britain: Mentor Imprint, 2008), 18.
[20] Marshall, "Historical Criticism," 134.
[21] Marshall, "Historical Criticism," 134.
[22] Kelly, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1. 17.
[23] Kelly, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1. 18.
[24] Kelly, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1. 18.

1.3.2 Principle of Analogy

It is an assumption of uniformity. Troeltsch argues that "[T]he sense of probability regarding historical events depends upon the capacity of the historical critic to discern analogy between what happens before his eyes or within him and the events of the past."[25] According to Troeltsch "Analogy enables the historian to interpret the unknown of the past by the known of the present."[26] He says, the principle of analogy provides an opportunity to discern a qualified similarity in the face of dissimilarities in history.[27] That is, Troeltsch required that the past resemble the present. Stephen Evans observes that such an assumption stems from the idea that the same kinds of causal laws and natural processes operative today were operative in the past. If miracles are not occurring today then they didn't occur in the past.[28] Though this presupposition deals a body blow to Christianity as stated earlier by Troeltsch, Bock finds value in such an assumption. According to him, analogy is what makes criticism possible.[29] But how does Bock reckon with the fact of the elimination of the supernatural from the biblical history. The principle of analogy requires one to deny the miracles of today. If so, then it only requires one to prove the occurrence of one miracle to demonstrate that miracle were possible in the past. How can one possibly ascertain that miracles are not occurring today? V. Philips Long bemoans that this principle leads to an "atheological, nonmetaphysical reconstruction" of biblical history.[30] It is one thing for Troeltsch to strip his contemporary understanding of history of all its dogma; it is another thing to strip history of all its events, whether they are natural or supernatural.

If Troeltsch is honest in his investigation of the history then why does he not take history as it presents itself. Taking history as it is would be more objective, because taking such an approach would readily grant Troeltsch's wish of the historian's autonomy and independence. But, why construct a presupposition which alters the history before even the investigation is begun. Desupernaturalization of history alters the history. The originality of history is compromised before any investigation of history. Such altered history curtails history depriving the historian of the significant data. An investigation which discredits any data of its credibility prior to investigation is not only

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[25] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 9.
[26] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 9.
[27] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 9.
[28] Evans, *The Historical Christ*, 187.
[29] Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 159.
[30] V. Philips Long, *The Art of Biblical History*. vol.5 of *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 130.

subjective and biased, it also yields faulty results. Or is it that Troeltsch is asking for autonomy only to be free to be subjective? Since, it has been sufficiently established among the contemporary biblical scholars that a presuppositionless investigation is impossible.

Moreover, William J. Abraham contends that actually the principle of analogy does not necessitate a dismissal of the miraculous.[31] According to Abraham, though elimination of the miraculous poses a major problem to biblical studies, he says, the methodological problem with the principle of analogy is the use of present as the standard to understand the past. He doubts the possibility of first studying the present exhaustively, which needs extensive traveling and consulting in order to understand the present, after which an understanding of the past will be undertaken. But, the very attempt to understand the present would be futile, for by the time the historian attains such knowledge of the present it would have become past already.[32] Therefore, the historian first needs to define what is present or how much of past time can be considered as present. Abraham further argues that, even to understand what happens in the present the historian critically judges it based on his knowledge of the past.[33] Then, the whole principle of analogy is reversed, i.e. the past now becomes the key to understand the present. Now, can the same be said of the present on the basis of the past? That is, if unusual things or miracles did not happen in the past does it mean that they will not happen in the present? Then, for instance, the historian has to explain the unusual events like "the climbing of Mount Everest and the first human landing on the moon."[34] Evans accuses, that Troeltsch against the majority opinion of religious believers, simply assumes without any argument that miracles do not occur today. Moreover, Evans observes that Troeltsch's principle reveals a sociological truth that people without experience of miracles or a belief in a God who can perform miracles find it hard to believe in miracles. Therefore, similar to Abraham, Evans too reverses the hypothesis in saying "if miracles occur today then they occurred in the past." [35]

A presupposition apart from being objective must also be sensitive to truth factor integral to all scientific endeavors. This is important in the light of Troeltsch's observation that "[A] basic feature of history is singularity, the individuality, the nonrecurrence of events."[36] If it is true that history is singular

[31] William J. Abraham, *Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), cited in Long, *The Art of Biblical History*, 130.
[32] Abraham, *Divine Revelation*, 130.
[33] Abraham, *Divine Revelation*, 130.
[34] Abraham, *Divine Revelation*, 130.
[35] Evans, *The Historical Christ*, 199.
[36] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 9.

or one, then presuppositions about history must necessarily be singular or one. If history is indeed singular, there are no different types of history. Such as, a history full of ordinary or natural events and another history full of extraordinary or supernatural. Since there are no two or more types of history then there also cannot be two or more types of presuppositions about history. History is simply a continuum of events, and those events could be natural or supernatural.

Troeltsch complained that the popular understanding of history during his time, i.e. during the early 19th century was conformed to national, ecclesiastical and theological thought.[37] That means Troeltsch's real problem was the contemporary interpretations of history. He wanted to create a pure account of history based on cause and effect. The major shift in scientific inquiry of the past during the Elightenment and Rennaisance was to move away from the hegemonic control of the Church on science. As a result, any Ecclesiastical or biblical view of history was considered superstitious unconforming to the natural laws. The only alternative sought was to create a pure account of history for the first time from a scientist's point of view than from an ecclesiastical-biblical point of view. This required to free the interpretation of history from all of its dogmatic affiliations and metaphysical prejudgments. This resulted in a massive deconstruction of all that would sound dogmatic or metaphysical. The assumption that took hold of such interpretation was that history cannot be accurately known and that only the present is the criteria to understand the past.

Though it would be naïve to claim the possibility of comprehensive understanding of history, it would definitely be naïve to claim incomprehensibility of history. And since history is never about the ordinary but about the significant, and since the significant is always conserved in the past, that which is conserved in the past is passed on to the future generations to be celebrated, it is very much possible and not just probable to know with certainty what the people of the past wanted their future generations to know. What the people of the past intended us to know and celebrate can be known. Therefore, knowledge of the history is possible and not just probable, if only it is known as it is. And a preliminary observation shows that the people of the past believed in a God who was in control of history. The God of the Bible is the God who controls time and events (Dan.2:21). The same God has commanded the people to record the events in history for the future reference by coming generations. That is the history in the Bible which is preserved and passed on by God from the past to the

[37] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 46.

present. The history presented in the Bible is what exactly God intends us to know today. What is Bible? Bible is the inspired record of the necessary history written and preserved under the superintendence of God. It is God's communication to the present generation concerning the past generations. As the historian moves back in time from present into the past of the Bible, he will find that the Bible and the history in the Bible was always moving from the past into the present of the historian challenging a response. Kelly says,

> Scripture shows that when God speaks, there is a response. In the account of creation, for instance, 'And God said, Let there be light, and there was light' (Gen. 1:3). The physical elements have no choice but to respond, whereas with persons created in God's image, proper response involves mind, will and affections, traditionally summed up in the concept of 'assent.'[38]
>
> Paul teaches that at the centre of the salvation experience, 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Rom. 10:17). Heart-assent to God's word is the essence of salvation: 'That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved' (Rom. 10:9)…Christ Himself and then His apostles demonstrate faith to involve at its deepest level whole-hearted assent to the Word, will and glory of God.[39]

Therefore, the principle of analogy similar to the principle of doubt is self-destructive to the historical critical method. This paradox intrinsic to such assumptions can be resolved by taking history as it presents itself instead of asking for a tailored history devoid of all of its significant events. And if only the present is the standard of understanding the past then nothing seems to stop one to begin his inquiry with a firm belief in the possibility of the miracles, since, only a believer experiences both God and his acts in the present, and since God's acts are by default supernatural, it can be said that the present of the believer is so replete with enough miracles per day that through the principle of analogy he is now capable enough to very well understand history of and in the Bible which is replete with miracles.

1.3.3 The Principle of Correlation

This is an assumption of causality. Troeltsch states that "[A]ll historical happening is knit together in a permanent correlation… Anyone event is related to all others. Therefore the historical and the relative are identical."[40]

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[38] Kelly, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1. 36.
[39] Kelly, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1. 37.
[40] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 9.

According to Troeltsch, the principle of correlation provides a method of leveling all historical phenomena. He says, the goal of the principle of analogy and correlation is to bring all history into a common arena.[41] According to Evans, the principle of correlation stems from the idea that all history is a chain of causes and effects. All events are interdependent and interrelated in intimate reciprocity. Correlation requires that all historical events must be understood in the context of its natural antecedents and consequences.[42] Basing of this assumptions, Long notes how Troeltsch demands that, any record of events that expresses or implies divine agency must be disregarded as history.[43]

There is nothing wrong in understanding history as chain of causes and effects. But, how does divine involvement disturb or destroy this chain, because of which, Troeltsch wants to exclude divine involvement from out of history. Abraham sees no reason to abandon the idea of divine intervention in history to maintain the chain of causes and effects.[44] Evans argues that "if events must be understood in relation to the actual causal forces and effects that surround them, then it seems plausible enough… for God is one of the causal powers who is actively at work in all of creation."[45]

Troeltsch insists that events do not simply happen unprompted they are caused by the choices and actions of personal agents or natural forces.[46] To this Abraham points out, that if one's pool of presuppositions includes a belief in a personal God, then divine intervention is an acceptable component of historical explanation. And, that such a belief, he says, does not abandon the principal of correlation but widens it.[47] In addition to Abraham's argument, Norman L. Geisler asserts, "if there is a God who can act (viz., a theistic God), then acts of God (i.e. miracles) are automatically possible."[48]

All this leads to the conclusion that it is all a matter of belief or unbelief by choice. God was a dispensable category for the Enlightenment movement. Belief in God was felt no longer required to explain the world and man. God and Bible were the first victims of this movement. Therefore, this was a premeditated conscious choice of the historians to do away with God and Bible as necessary conditioners of their scientific endeavors.

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[41] Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity*, 9.
[42] Evans, *The Historical Christ*, 187.
[43] Long, *The Art of Biblical History*, 131.
[44] Abraham, *Divine Revelation*, 132.
[45] Evans, *The Historical Christ*, 199.
[46] Long, *The Art of Biblical History*, 131.
[47] Abraham, *Divine Revelation*, 132.
[48] Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Secundrabad: OM Books, 1999), 282.

Since, the above discussed presuppositions of criticism, analogy and correlation are assumptions by choice and not absolutes; they can be redefined and adapted for theistic purposes to understand God and his Word to be rightly related to God. All three principles of Troeltsch are reversible. The principle of methodological 'doubt' must be reversed to 'belief'. The principle of analogy and correlation must be reversed to peculiarity and distinctness of events in history. Yes, history is singular. There is only one kind of history. The real history is the history as it stands. Not altered according to the presuppositional fantasies of Troeltsch. Raw history is a continuum of natural and supernatural events. Actual history cannot be uniform. The events in history might be similar and yet distinct by their unique nature. Any investigation of history must begin with presuppositions which preserve the originality of history and not alter it.

It could be now concluded that there is a lot of truth in Troeltsch's statement that his "assumptions are quite irreconcilable with traditional belief." But the matter of fact is that Troeltsch seems to have manufactured his presuppositions in a manner excluding the supernatural, miraculous and divine involvement, whereas his principles can be redefined with theistic assumptions allowing for the possibility of miracles. It is clear that historical critical method is not so helplessly bound by these antimiraculous and antitheological presuppositions.[49] Troeltsch's major intention was to eliminate the divine, divine agency and acts from the records of history. His unwillingness to accept the existence, presence and intervention of God in history is an antitheistic approach to history in and of the Bible. But in the process, Troeltsch is automatically violating the rule of objectivity inherent to any investigation. Troeltsch is a free being. He is free to be atheistic but when it comes to investigating history (in the Bible) he must suspend his unbelief and accept that God is or was acting in the history. Troeltsch is creating a history which suits more of his personal convictions than see and understand history for what it is. Therefore, undertaking historical inquiry of the biblical history is possible with firm belief in the miracles and divine involvement.

1.4 Critical Evaluation of the Methodological Features

Despite its antimiraculous and antitheological presuppositions, historical critical method continues to enjoy the acceptance of many NT scholars.[50] This

[49] Long, *The Art of Biblical History*, 123.

[50] See John Barton. "Historical-Critical Approaches," in John Barton (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 9-11. I. Howard Marshall. "Historical Criticism," in I. Howard Marshall (ed), *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1977. 126-138. Max Turner. "Historical Criticism and Theological Hermeneutics of the New Testament." in Joel B. Green and Max Turner (eds.), *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies & Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000. 44-70.

shows that historical criticism need not be totally shunned. Because the scholars have learnt to neutralize the method of its antitheoligcal suppositions and have come up with a legitimate model of historical criticism which can accommodate God and his acts. Barton has proposed four methodological features central to historical critical method.[51]

1.4.1 Genetic Questions

Historical criticism is interested in Genetic Questions about the biblical texts, such as, when? and why? and by whom? the NT books were written. What was their intended readership? What were the stages by which they came into being?[52] These are legitimate questions and have brought to light great many truths. For instance, in the NT studies, the Synoptic Problem is a real problem. A comparison of the order of same events in Matthew and Mark shows that there is a problem of harmony. In Matthew the healing of the leper (8:1-4) precedes the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and of the crowds in the evening (8:14-17). But, in Mark the order is reversed (1:40-45, 29-34). Historical criticism has attempted various legitimate solutions for such dissimilarities.[53] Above all, this whole problem has brought to light the theology of each Gospel and the distinct way they present the portrait of Jesus. The investigation of the genesis of biblical texts intensifies the human element involved in the authorship of the Bible.

But, the peril of such an investigation is that it can be an end in itself. Barton says, often in the light of various sources, the finished product seems to loose its importance and interest. And that after having addressed all the questions the scholars see little or nothing else to do.[54] Therefore, inspite of its benefits, the genetic questions can easily lead the historian away from the text and if at all he returns to the text, he finds a broken text. So, genetic investigation is important but the historian should use these findings to understand the value, meaning and significance of the text to the present. And especially, this investigation can greatly contribute to the understanding and broadening of the doctrine of inspiration of scriptures.

1.4.2 Original Meaning

It is to understand what the text meant to its first readers. And what the original author meant. For instance, the word 'dunamis' or 'agape' are found to have meant differently than of today. The attempt to find the original

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[51] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 9-11. and Marshall, "Historical Criticism," 126-138.
[52] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 9-11.
[53] See Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem:An Introduction* (Nottingham: IVP, 1988).
[54] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 9.

meaning helps us understand the text accurately. But, Walter Kaiser observes that historical criticism has always stopped after finding what the text meant in a distant time, place and culture. And the task of finding out the significance of the original meaning is left to theologians and pastors.[55] Therefore, even this feature has the tendency to become an end in itself. That is, the investigation can be declared complete without ever applying those findings for the benefit of the Church. But, it can be corrected by going the extra mile of application of the results to the contemporary problems and issues facing the Church today.

1.4.3 Historical Reconstructions

Historical criticism uses the text as a window to the past. It inquires what actually happened as opposed to what the writers of Gospels and Acts believed had happened. The prominent exercise has been the quest for historical Jesus.[56] Brown explains how each quest for historical Jesus has done nothing but eliminate other quests and schools of thought but has failed in its aim of constructing the life of historical Jesus. And how each resulting image of Jesus resembled the image of the person engaged in the quest than that of actual Jesus.[57] Nevertheless, gains are also many. The distinction made between Christ of faith and the Jesus of history has highlighted the importance of the real human Jesus and his humanity for Christian faith. It has shown how important the reality of his existence is. As a result the study of first-century Greco-Roman world has helped us understand the history and theology of that period. Apart from the quest for historical Jesus, Schultz laments how disastrously historical criticism has failed the promise of reconstructing the history of Israel and of the early Christianity.[58] But, again the benefits of such failed attempts are also many. It has enhanced the understanding of socio-political setting of Jerusalem and Palestine at the time of Jesus. It has helped us understand the NT in terms of helping us know who Caesar, Herod, Pilate, Pharisees, Sadducees, etc. were. Historical reconstruction is the major strength and at the same time the major weakness of historical criticism. For again it can be an end in itself. The historian can be lost forever in the world he sees through the window of the text and may

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[55] Walter C. Kaiser and Moisés Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 32.

[56] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 11.

[57] C. Brown, "Quest of Historical Jesus," in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (eds), *Dictionary of Later New Testament and its Development: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Leicester: IVP), 341.

[58] Schultz, "Higher Criticism," in Walter A. Elwell (ed), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd edn. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001), 55

loose sight of the text itself. But, the task of reconstruction is vital to Christian faith. For Ernst Käsemann warned that any disinterest in the earthly Jesus will lapse into docetism.[59]

1.4.4 Distinctive Scholarship

Historical criticism is meant to be value-neutral or disinterested. It attempts to approach the text without prejudice. The question is not "what it meant for me," rather "what it meant."[60] The historian becomes a neutral observer by invalidating or suspending his faith-commitment in order to get to the truth. This attitude is called as "functional atheism."[61] This is a promising feature of historical critical method. But, achievability of such an objectivity seems to be improbable. Silva argues that "total objectivity" does not exists. And if it exists it would be of little use, because it would simply be involved in a bare repetition of the text.[62] Graham Stanton recognizes that a wholly presuppostionless and detached interpretation of the text is not possible on part of the interpreter. But, he says, historical critical method makes possible such an unprejudiced and dispassionate interpretation and yet warns that there is no guarantee.[63] Because finally dispensing off of the presupposition is a subjective issue. Therefore, historical critical method can be employed to achieve neutrality but is subject to interpreter's commitment to objectivity. Or as both Silva and Stanton affirm the impossibility of objectivity, one need not abandon one's presuppositions rather approach the text with them and allow the text to clarify and validate them. In this way one can refine one's presuppositions and also broaden them.

1.5 A Case for Historical Criticism

Historical criticism, Barton says, is not an endangered species.[64] To defend his point, he argues that the 'historical' element is not the defining characteristic of biblical criticism, but the 'critical' element of asking the right and free questions about the meaning of the texts that keeps the historical critical method alive.[65] It is true that asking right questions is the whole endeavor of criticism, but Barton has to recognize that it is the preoccupation with "behind the text issues" that has raised objections to it. Though the

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[59] C. Brown, "Quest of Historical Jesus,"336.
[60] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 11-12.
[61] Macky, "The Coming Revolution," 265.
[62] Kaiser and Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 244.
[63] Graham N. Stanton,"Presuppositions in New Testament Criticism," in I. Howard Marshall (ed), *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michigan:Eerdmans, 1977), 60-71.
[64] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 19.
[65] Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," 19.

background study is vital to interpretation of the text it should not become an end in itself. For Marshall, historical criticism is legitimate and necessary. It is legitimate because intellectual honesty demands to test the validity of one's presuppositions. And it is necessary to throw light on the nature of truth to be ascribed to the NT.[66] Marshall's call for honesty is welcome. But, what criteria he will use to test the accuracy and the amount of truth of NT narratives remains a question. Max Turner a leading proponent of authorial intent rightly recognizes that "the absolute rule of historical criticism may be over," but in clear words affirms that "we have found no reason to believe that questions of authorial discourse meaning and its closely related "background" issue are dead."[67] He, similar to Barton, feels that historical criticism is not dead but alive.

After seeing so many benefits and its inevitability for proper interpretation of historical narratives of the bible, we see no reason to believe that the alleged 'paradigm shift' in the sense of displacement or replacement is possible even in the far future. In fact we see that the survival or continuation of historical criticism is not dependent on arrival of new methods rather on its own presuppositions. It's suppositions about history, miracles, supernatural, divine involvement and inspiration of the scriptures seems to determine its future. Therefore, if historical criticism continues to hold on to self-destructive presuppositions, or in other words if it is continued to be used by the critics holding antimiraculous and antitheological presuppositions, it will loose its dominance in the critical study of the Bible. The threat to historical criticism is not from outside but from within. The rise of new literary methods, especially, the Narrative Criticism, popularly thought as a replacement for historical criticism, does not pose any existential threat to historical criticism.

However, Peter Macky in his 1986 article "The Coming Revolution: The New Literary Approach to New Testament Interpretation", notes that "we are at the end of an era of biblical studies. We are moving from historical era to the literary era in biblical studies."[68] What is "literary era"? Literary era is the beginning of a new kind of literary approach to biblical criticism soon began to be seen as an alternative to historical criticism. "Literary criticism" has come to mean many things now. In its early stages, literary criticism, focused upon the analysis of authorship, date, place of writing, original audience, linguistic style, sources, tradition and redaction, integrity,

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[66] Marshall, "Historical Criticism," 126, 130, 131.

[67] Max Turner, "Historical Criticism and Theological Hermeneutics of the New Testament," in Joel B. Green and Max Turner (eds.), *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies & Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), 69.

[68] Macky, "The Coming Revolution", 263.

and purpose, but in the present they are usually treated under historical criticism.[69] Because the history of literary criticism correlates closely with the three dimensions of hermeneutical analysis, namely: the author, the text, and the reader, which is equally true of the historical criticism.[70] Then, what is the uniqueness of literary critical approach to the Bible?

According to William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, "[W]hat critics who are calling for a shift in biblical studies usually mean by literary criticism today is largely ahistorical in nature—methods that require an examination only of the final form of the text."[71] Traditionally literary criticism's attempt was to determine the author's original intent, but the approach in the first half of the twentieth century of "formalism" or "new criticism" , the initial subsets of literary criticism more generally focused on a coherent interpretation of the text in its entirety apart from any historical background information. This approach came as a reaction to the historical criticism's obsession with "author's intention" which the historian believed to be embedded in the history "behind the text". Therefore, the literary critics sought to avoid committing what they called the "intentional fallacy." They reasoned that since readers usually do not have access to the mental states or intentions of authors, because of the time and space gap between the original author and the contemporary readers. In addition to that, they also observed that the written, historical information that does exist about the circumstances of the composition of a document may not be adequate to enable the contemporary reader to discern authorial intention. And that the search for author's intention might be futile since authors may write something other than what they mean to say or there may be additional dimensions of the meanings of their texts than those they recognized initially.??[72] This gradual departure from historical matters in the process of criticism and instead focusing in the text issues led to the rise of interest in narrative criticism, an ahistorical approach to biblical studies.

Since, narrative criticism by now is largely considered as a legitimate alternative to the historical criticism, it requires a thorough investigations of its origin and development, presuppositions and methodological features.

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[69] Literary criticism has evolved into many subsets. Such as genre criticism, which analyzes the literary classification of an entire biblical book, and that portion of form criticism that describes the form or subgenre of a given part of a biblical book. Under genre criticism the growing tendency to classify the nature of the rhetoric of the writer called as rhetorical criticism.?? The other three major areas of literary criticism are: narrative criticism, reader-response criticism, and deconstruction. See William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas, Tex.: Word Pub., 1993), 64.

[70] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 64.

[71] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 64.

[72] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 64.

2. Narrative Criticism

2.1 Definition

In very simple words, James L. Ressiguie says, "Narrative Criticism focuses on how biblical literature works as literature."[73] According to Mark Allan Powell, "Narrative Criticism focuses on stories in the biblical literature and attempts to read these stories with insights drawn from the secular field of modern literary criticism."[74]

2.2 Origin and Development of Narrative Criticism

Narrative criticism is a branch of modern literary criticism. The movement in literary criticism of focusing on texts independent of their authors resulted in the rise of two subdisciplines, namely: narrative criticism and structuralism.[75] It is the former that concerns this paper. Narrative criticism focused on a close reading of what became known as the surface structure of a text elements such as: plot, theme, motifs, characterization; or, in poetry, meter, rhyme, parallelism, and so on.[76]

Narrative criticism studies the Bible as literature. Studying the Bible as literature focuses on the questions one would generally ask of Shakespeare or Cicero. While looking into the biblical narratives, this approach analyzes style, figures of speech, symbolism, foreshadowing, repetition, speed of time in narrative, point of view, and the like. It focuses more on an appreciation of the aesthetic value of the work than on its theological or moral value. Even if theological themes are studied too, one still approaches the work only from the point of view of a sympathetic outside observer, not as the devotee of a particular religion.[77]

It is the rise and continuation of narrative criticism as a subset of the literary fold and its dominion over historical criticism and it being termed by some as

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[73] Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 18.

[74] Mark Allan Powell, "Narrative Criticism," in Joel B. Green (ed), *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 239.

[75] Structuralism analyzed the so-called "deep structures" of a text, namely: consistent elements perceptible beneath the surface of the narrative, related to, for example, how a "sender" attempts to communicate an "object" to a "receiver" by means of a "subject," who may be aided to a "helper" and/or hindered by an "opponent." Or, it might analyze how narratives, especially in religious myths, try to mediate between and resolve the conflict generated by pairs of opposites. In biblical studies, this method generated an intense flurry of specialized studies in the 1970s and 1980s, but the highly esoteric terminology and the sense that few exegetical insights resulted anything with structuralism. Instead, attention has turned to two kinds of "poststructuralism"—reader-response criticism and deconstructionism—which focus on the role of the reader in the interpretive process.

[76] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 64.

[77] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 64.

a rightful replacement for historical criticism is what requires a thorough investigation of the presuppositions and methodological features of narrative criticism, argues Nigel Ajay Kumar.[78]

2.3 Critical Evaluation of Basic Presuppositions

Nigel Ajay Kumar in his dissertation submitted to South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies has identified three main presuppositions that guide the narrative critical analysis of a biblical text. They are: literary character of the Bible; text centered study; and narrative as an authentic medium for bearing history.[79]

2.3.1 Literary character of the Bible

Bible is a literary work. This assumption necessitates a literary methodology.[80] Grant L. Osborne states that "the major premise of narrative criticism is that biblical narrative is "art" or "poetry."[81] But, T.S. Eliot warned that, "when Bible is discussed as 'literature' then its 'literary' influence is at an end."[82] C.S. Lewis too initially criticized those who devalued the Bible as literature. For, he feared that Bible might be equated with secular literature. Later, Lewis recognized that "after all Bible is a literature" and "cannot be read except as literature."[83] The assumption that bible is a literary work is undeniable. But, Osborne's premise of Bible as art or poetry are questionable. Because of the kind of connotations art and poetry have in most of the societies. Silva points out that when someone composes a poem or produces a painting, which are purely artistic products, the creator is inviting us to interpret that work in a variety of ways.[84] In contrast to an art work, Bible communicates an intelligible message that requires a response. Therefore, we need to be careful in treating Bible as an artistic product which may reduce it to pure art. This kind of view can drift into saying Bible is a fiction. Or may be that's why, Osborne has no problem "in taking a "fictive" approach to the biblical narrative."[85] Though he justifies himself that there is nothing inherently antihistorical in fictive approach. And that it is to simply recognize

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[78] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 64.

[79] Nigel Ajay Kumar, "Narrative Approach for an Indian Reading: An Evaluation," (MA BS. Thesis, SAIACS, Bangalore, 2000).

[80] Kumar, "Narrative Approach," 29-30.

[81] Grant L. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Illionois: IVP, 1991), 153.

[82] David Jasper, "Literary Readings of the Bible," in John Barton (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 21.

[83] Kumar, "Narrative Approach," 29-30.

[84] Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 247.

[85] Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 153.

the presence of the "story" genre in the biblical history. It is not to deny the presence of fiction in the Bible. Since, John Goldingay observes that there is fiction available in the Bible, in the form of parables.[86] But it is one thing to say Bible contains fiction and the other thing to say Bible is fiction.

Goldingay makes an interesting observation on the genre of history and fiction. He says that both history and fiction share the same genre of story format.[87] May be this is why Osbrone has no objection taking a fictive approach to the Bible. It might be true that a fictive approach is not antihistorical, but Meir Sternberg expresses his fears that it may tend to become anti-inspirational approach.[88] Sternberg in his book points out how, for Kenneth Gros Louis, a literary critic, "the major obstacle to studying Bible as literature consists in the tradition that it is divinely inspired."[89] Sternberg says most of the literary critics face the dilemma of, whether to treat the bible as an inspired record of history or as an imaginary fictional literature. This dilemma resembles the choice posed by historical method between the biblical testimony of the past and the 'real' history as critically reconstructed by the historian.[90] But, Kumar seems to resolve this dilemma by arguing for a special and specific genre of the Bible. He says, "There is no parallel to the multimix of the Bible."[91] Therefore, it can be concluded that Bible is a genre in itself. It is literature because it has a story. This view of specific genre for Bible can, while still treating Bible as literature, can guard us against reducing Bible to pure art, poetry or fiction.

2.3.2 Text-centered study

It is the text and not the author and reader that controls the meaning of the text. Unlike historical method, which struggles to determine author's intention, narrative criticism asserts a tempered reading of the text allowing for grounding in the text outside of oneself. It is critical and theological move towards a more text-centered approach.[92] This assumption is shared by historical method too. But the fundamental difference is, against the fragmentary view of the text, Ressiguie says, narrative criticism views "the text as a whole."[93] It views the final form of the text as a self-sufficient

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[86] John Goldingay, *Models for Scripture* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994), 71.
[87] Goldingay, *Models for Scripture*, 61.
[88] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Boomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 33.
[89] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 33.
[90] Long, *The Art of Biblical History*, 130.
[91] Kumar, "Narrative Approach," 30.
[92] Kumar, "Narrative Approach," 33.
[93] Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 38.

unit, as a unified narrative. Now focusing on the final form of the text brings lot of value and respect to the text, which historical method lacks. It was too busy with the composition history that it never came back and studied the text as a whole. Rather it went on dissecting the text by ascribing each bit to a certain source. But, narrative criticism treats the text as it is now and focuses on the minute details of the story presented in the narrative. Because of such study, the characters of the story get due attention. The significance and application to the present, which lacked in historical method, is perfected in narrative criticism. But Silva expresses concern over such a text-centered approach. He says such a view proclaims autonomy of the text and cuts it off from the original authorial intention and downplays the extraliterary references implied in the text.[94] This may not be fully true for later we will find that narrative criticism gives more room for historical concerns. But narrative criticism's divorce from authorial intention is an alarming issue. Turner says, authorial intention is of fundamental relevance.[95] For Silva, author does matters and his intention is the true intention which must be taken into notice for any interpretation to take place.[96] Therefore, text-centeredness can be a useful approach with the corrective of "going wherever the text leads." But, the problem is less with final form of the text and more with text as a unified whole. In the light of apparent aporias or structural inconsistencies, how can the narrative method hold on to wholeness or unity of the text? For instance, how will narrative criticism resolve the break in the story at John 14:31 and John 18:1? In 14:31, Jesus says, "Arise let us go from here," but 15:1 begins with "I am the true vine." It is only in 18:1 we see that Jesus and disciples perform the action stated in 14:31 by crossing over the brook of Kidron and enter a garden. Therefore, for a narratologist the chapters 15, 16, & 17 remain incomprehensible unless a form or redaction critic comes along and tells him that they might possibly be editorial insertions. That's why Ressiguie says that he does not want to deny the validity nor the helpfulness of form and redaction criticism.[97] Therefore, the text-centeredness of narrative criticism is its strength but has few weaknesses too. If it can accept that it alone can't resolve certain text related issues and that it needs the assistance of historical findings then it can be a useful tool in the interpretation.

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[94] Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 239.
[95] Turner, "Historical Criticism," 60.
[96] Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 237.
[97] Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 39.

2.3.3 Narrative is an authentic medium for bearing history

It is the assumption that primary genre for history is narrative.[98] Goldingay too recognizes that "witnessing tradition appears in Scripture as narrative or story."[99] And he also points that story relates to history and also to fiction. That's why Kumar says, the study of narrative leads to the question of truthfulness of the narrative. Now this was the question raised by historians too. For which, Goldingay says history writing is making sense of facts and turning them into a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. As a result biblical narrative is simultaneously historical and a narrative and not just an archive or chronicle. He says biblical narratives are more than collection of data; they are the fruit of the imagination. The plots and configurations of history-writing are the same as those of literature. Because of this similarity of rules and norms of history-writing and fiction-writing, Sternberg wants to make a clear distinction between history as "re-creative discourse of what really happened," and fiction as "creative discourse of the sphere of the imagined or invented."[100] Osborne too agrees that history is present in the bible in a "story" format. But, affirms that a historical basis of these stories is crucial.[101] And though there is an element of 'imagination and creativity' involved in narratives, Silva says they do not endanger inspiration and infallibility, rather, he says, they intensify the inspiration of scriptures.[102] Therefore, the assumption that narrative is an authentic medium for history has some truth in it and it need not cast any doubt in the truthfulness of the biblical narratives. Therefore, all the three assumptions have both strengths and weakness, but with few correction and cautions they can be employed with right presuppositions which can yield great spiritual gains for the Church.

2.4 Critical Evaluation of the Methodological Features

Powell in his essay proposes the following three basic features of narrative critical method-namely; implied author, implied reader and normative process of reading.[103]

2.4.1 Implied Author

Narrative criticism seeks to interpret texts based on the implied author's perspective than the original author's. Osborne explains that the original author is not present but has created his image in the text.[104] This stress on

[98] Kumar, "Narrative Approach," 42.
[99] Goldingay, *Models for Scripture*, 61.
[100] Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 24.
[101] Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 153.
[102] Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 240.
[103] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 239-244.
[104] Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 155.

the implied author, says Osborne, forces the critic to look at the seams and editorial remarks of the text as important indicators of meaning. For instance, one of the finds of such a reading has been that John 3:16-21 are not Jesus' words rather John's words. Such finds have enhanced the understanding of the narrative functions of such texts. But this whole idea of implied author seems to be designed to steer us away from the original author, because undeniably, the implied author is the original author. M. C. de Boer points that implied author presupposes that we as the readers to be in thorough knowledge of the communal history and composition history.[105] Acquiring such knowledge automatically will lead us to the original author himself. Therefore, the discovery of the image of implied author can be a great set of internal evidences for authorship of biblical books. And especially the study of anonymous and multiple authored books become easy. But, such a focus on the implied author portrayed in the text need not keep us divorced from the original author. The mere absence of the author does not authorize us to neglect him. Turner says, though the author may be distant to the reader, but it is the author who has selected, shaped, and interpreted the story. It is he who has provided the plot, characters, and narrative insights. It is he who has also published his account with an intention that we read and respond to it, as implied in Luke 1:1-4 and John 20:30-31.[106] Therefore, the concept of implied author can be still employed without ever divorcing him from the original author.

2.4.2 Implied Reader

Osborne explains that every book has a group of readers in mind. These original readers are no longer available to the real or present reader. So the text yields only an "implied reader."[107] This necessitates that the present reader read the text in the standpoint of the implied readers. Just like de Boer, S.S. Bartchy observes that such a reading presupposes the present reader to know all that the implied author required the implied readers to know and forget everything that text does not assume such a reader would know. Bartchy opines that such a reading is unattainable.[108] But, Powell says that, reading the text from the standpoint of implied readers reduces the critic's subjectivity and increases the objectivity of understanding. Well, Powell may be genuine in his striving for objectivity but, the truth in Bartchy's

[105] M. C. De Boer, "Narrative Criticism, Historical Criticism, and the Gospel of John," *JSNT* 47 (1992) 47.
[106] Turner, "Historical Criticism," 62.
[107] Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 162.
[108] S.S. Bartchy, "Narrative Criticism," in Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (eds), *Dictionary of Later New Testament and its Development* (Leicester: IVP, Date), 789.

statement of unattainability of such reading cannot be ignored. Because, Osborne reasons that every book has a group of readers in its mind. And these readers are the original readers which the narrative critics want to call them implied readers just because they are not present here. For instance, Turner in line with Bartchy says, that, "the text of Philemon is simply the tip of the iceberg of Paul's discourse meaning."[109] Because, he says, the discourse meaning is not totally dependent on the text. It is also dependent on the pool of presuppositions shared by both the author and the readers, which necessitates background studies. Therefore, implied readership, though seemingly unattainable, is an important component to attain objectivity, similar to "distinctive scholarship" of historical criticism. But, it as observed by Bartchy and Turner that it presupposes the knowledge of the pools of presuppositions of both the author and the reader which requires historical grounding.

2.4.3 Ideal Reading

For Osborne, the basic method to study biblical narrative is to 'READ' them. He calls it 'close reading', a reading which notices the plot, characters, point of view, dialogue, narrative time and setting of the story.[110] Powell calls it "normative process of reading," reading completely and sequentially, which involves an "implicit contract."[111] This implicit contract encourages the reader to accept the dynamics of the story. For instance, if the story features a talking animal, then the reader temporarily suspends his disbelief and accepts whatever the story contains. This kind of reading pays attention to minute details of the text. Therefore, just as methodological doubt and functional atheism are employed to attain objectivity in historical method, narrative method employs implied readership and ideal reading to do the same. But, one thing is clear that apart from ideal reading, the features of implied author and implied reader make the narrative method dependent on historical method. So, the question of whether narrative critical method is really a "paradigm" that would replace historical criticism finds its answer here. For a method to be a paradigm should be self-sufficient, but for historical and background studies narrative method completely depends on the finds of historical method, which shows that narrative criticism is not or cannot be a "paradigm" in the full sense of that word.

2.5 A Case against Narrative Criticism

Powell a forceful proponent of Narrative Criticism accepts that there is validity in various objections raised against narrative criticism and says that

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[109] Turner, "Historical Criticism," 49.
[110] Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 154.
[111] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," .

it is relatively new discipline and that it is still being tested in the "crucibles of scholarship."[112] Osborne too a protagonist of narrative criticism does not hesitate to enlist various weaknesses of narrative criticism, major being the "dehistoricizing tendency."[113] For the sake of text-centeredness, there is a tendency that narratologists may downplay the historical references in the text and totally avoid the historical background of that text. But, this convention has been broken by Alan Culpepper, who in his narratological study of Gospel of John, goes outside the text of John to understand its effects on the intended historical readers. And also compromises the wholeness of the text in finding that John ch.21 is a later addition to the body of the text.[114] Ressiguie, another narratologist, too accepts the usefulness of the knowledge of first-century Palestinian cultural, social, linguistic and historical to understand the NT text, but says all this knowledge should be gleaned from within the text.[115] But, how can such a reconstruction of history be obtained from within the text? And such reconstruction may not be any better than Troeltsch's reconstructed history devoid of the divine. For instance, it is apparent that the identity of Samaritan woman and why they don't mingle with Jews cannot be obtained from within the text of John's Gospel. The narrative criticism's divorce from the original author and readers and its inability to explain the aporias shows that narrative criticism cannot stand on its own. It has to depend on findings of historical criticism. Therefore, narrative criticism is in a sense inferior to historical criticism.

Conclusion

After an in depth study of the major presuppositions and the methodological features of both historical and narrative criticism the conflict proves to be real but the alleged shift noted by Macky and Barton seems to be impossible even in the far future. As a result of this study the following insights are gained:

There needs to be maintained a clear distinction between the method and its presuppositions. The findings of a methodological inquiry have direct relation to the presuppositions it is employed with. The philosophical or theological assumptions to a large extent predetermine the end results of a research. The method is just a tool, neutral in its standing. It is the employment of the tool with certain presuppositions that supplies the tool of its intents and aims. However, it is commonly agreed upon the need for objectivity in any methodological research. Some have contended that objectivity in research

[112] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 252.
[113] Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 164.
[114] De Boer, "Narrative Criticism, 41, 44.
[115] Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 39.

is undertaking a presuppositionless research. For long, it has been established that such a dispassionate presuppositionless research is both theoretically and practically impossible. Does this mean that objectivity is to be done away with because presuppositions are inescapable? I think not. Dewey M. Beegle is honest enough in saying that "…in spite of our desire to be perfectly objective, each of us brings (often unconsciously) some presuppositions to the task of interpretation. But this need not be a significant defect since careful attention to method can reduce the lack of objectivity to a minimum."[116] In addition to this, in his introduction to *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, Craig S. Keener has an interesting proposition. He opines, "[S]tudying various views better equips us to read Revelation more objectively on its own terms."[117]

The study notes the following essential differences and similarities between the Historical and Narrative critical methods.

Differences	
Historical Criticism	**Narrative Criticism**
Traditional	Modern
Archaic	Novel
Then and There.	Here and Now.
Back to the Past.	Back to the Text.
Focused on the History	Focused on the Story
Historical Approach	A/Antihistorical / Literary Approach.
Extra-Textual Approach	Intra-Textual Approach.
Concerned with "behind the text issues"	Concerned with "in the text issues"
Concerned with Original Author.	Implied Author.
Concerned with Original Readers.	Implied Readers.
Concerned with Original Meaning.	Implied Meaning.
Original Readership determines	Implied Readership determines
the meaning of the text.	the meaning of the Text.
Interrogation of the Text is the goal.	Hearing the Text is the goal.
Text as a Window to the Past.	Text is the Portrait/Picture.
Fragmentary Reading of the Text.	Holistic Reading of the Text.
Concerned with Credibility	Concerned with Aesthetics
and Accuracy of the Text.	and Unity of the Text.
Disintegrates the Text into isolated units.	Integrates Text into a United Whole.
Text is the end product of a process of development.	Text is the finished literary product.
Demands for Autonomy of the Critic.	Demands for Autonomy of the Text.

[116] Dewey M. Beegle, *Scripture, Tradition and Infallibility* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1973), 15-16.

[117] Carig S. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2000), 26.

Similarities
Both are Text-centered approaches.
They let the text govern their exegesis.
Belong to the fold of Higher Criticism.
Share secular origins.
Depend on the basic 'communication model' of author—text—reader.
Dependent on linguistics and literary constructs of the Scriptures.
Both need the knowledge of historical background (of the text or the story).

Further, that we cannot accept and employ both the historical and narrative methods as they are. They need to be neutralized by dispensing their anti-miraculous, anti-theological, anti-inspirational and a/antihistorical presuppositions. Their methodological features need to be demarcated. Historical criticism tends to dwell behind the text, it has to be modified to bring it back to focus on the text and its significance to the present. Narrative criticism tends to restrict itself to the text ignoring the historical value of the text. It has to be forced to take the help of historical method to gain historical knowledge. Now when it comes to the choice between historical criticism and narrative criticism, NT scholars are of various opinions. Marshall claims the all-sufficiency of historical criticism and says that historical criticism "must be practiced in order to throw light on the nature of truth which is ascribed to the NT."[118] Mark Powell on the other hand claims the all-sufficiency of narrative criticism in saying that, "narrative criticism is able to attend to what many people think should be one dimension of the total theological task of scriptural exegesis."[119] Ressiguie goes beyond Powell in saying that "narrative criticism is more privileged over historical method."[120] But Culpepper, of the narrative fold, invites for a dialogue, and takes a moderate stand by saying that "historical and literary approaches need not be mutually exclusive."[121] Turner of the historical field rightly accepts the fact that "the absolute rule of historical criticism may be over," and welcomes the various literary-critical methods, which, he says, will provide insight into "in the text issues."[122]

On these lines of Turner, De Boer argues for incorporation of narrative-critical exercises into historical-critical method.[123] De Boer identifies ideas

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[119] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 254.
[120] Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 38.
[121] De Boer, "Narrative Criticism, 47.
[122] Turner, "Historical Criticism," 68, 69.
[123] De Boer, "Narrative Criticism, 35-48.

common to both methods. (1) That, they both respect the text and allow it to function critically over against all prejudices of the critics. In other words, they let the text guide their exegesis. In this way they try to achieve objectivity in their exegesis. (2) They are text-centered approaches. They believe that the text sets the parameters on interpretation. But, it has been earlier argued that their text-centeredness has some differences. "Behind the text" focus of historical and "in the text" focus of narrative method. (3) They operate by the same 'communication model' of author > text > reader. But, again there is a difference here that historical method focuses on original authors and readers, whereas narrative method focuses on implied author and reader.

Therefore, De Boer forcefully argues that by using the narrative-critical method one can fully understand the "world of the story" and from there one can move to a reconstruction of the "world of the evangelist" and the "world of the intended readers."[124] A major corrective De Boer offers to narrative method is to correct the presupposition of unity or coherence of a text in the light of apparent aporias.[125] At last quite opposite to Ressiguie's opinion of superiority of narrative criticism, De Boer though appreciates and accepts narrative criticism, subordinates it to historical criticism.[126]

In the light of the above detailed discussion, it can be opinioned that historical criticism needs a corrective to focus on "in the text issues" and explore its significance to the present. Narrative criticism needs the corrective of taking note of "behind the text issues" to interpret "in the text issues." Finally, it can be said that if at all historical criticism needs to be replaced, narrative criticism is not the right replacement, because narrative criticism cannot stand alone. A mutual interdependence can be brokered between the two. De Boer says an incorporation of techniques can take place.[127] At last it can be said that both the methods are not mutually exclusive but can coexist as complementary tools of interpretation illuminating the Body of Christ.

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[124] De Boer, "Narrative Criticism, 40.
[125] De Boer, "Narrative Criticism, 48.
[126] De Boer, "Narrative Criticism, 48.
[127] De Boer, "Narrative Criticism, 48.

Caste System in Indian Church

P. Inaho
Faculty, COTRTS

Introduction

The castes are as old as the history of Hindus in India. Caste system is the product of Hinduism.[1] There are a number of castes and sub-castes in India. Some are measured as high and others low. According to Hindu religion, Brahmins are high caste, and considered as gods, whereas the Shudras considered as low caste.[2] Caste system is practiced in Hindu religion only, but later it came to be practiced even in the Church in India, where Christ is the head. It is said that, in Christ all are equal and the Church has to teach the world about the need of unity. The unity of the Spirit can exist only in the church of Christ. Today we find caste system in Indian Church and there is division among the Christians and it has become a major issue. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the origin and practice of caste system in the Indian Church.

The first part of this paper deals with the practice of caste system in Indian society. The second part deals with Coming of Christianity in India and Caste System in Indian Church. The third part deals with the present problem of caste system in Indian Church. The fourth part deals with the concept of Division in Christ.

1. The Practice of Caste System in Indian Society

1.1 Origin of Caste System

It is very hard to spot out the exact time when caste system was formed in India, because there has been different views/opinions about the origin of the caste system in India. It is not certain whether there is a mention of the caste-system in the Vedas, it is a disputed subject, but most of the scholars argue that Rig-Veda mentions of the castes, because it is written in the *Manu-Sanu-Samriti*.[3] It is also said that in *Purusasukta* hymn mentions the existence of four castes, by saying that Brahman was his mouth and both his arms were the Ksatriya, his thighs the Vaishya, from his feet the

[1] B.B. Chawdhry, *Modern India and Contemporary World* (Delhi: Shree Mahavir Book Depot, ny), 16.
[2] Aleyamma Zachariah, *Modern Religious And Secular Movements in India* (Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 1992), 12.
[3] Chawdhry, *Modern India and Contemporary World*, 16.

Sudra was produced. On this basis orthodox people believe that the fourfold division of Indian society exists from the earliest times, but according to some scholars this hymn was composed at a later time and hence, does not stand for the state of the Rigvedic period.[4]

1.2 The Classification of Caste System

There are four major castes in India, viz. (1) Brahmin (2) Kshastriya, (3)Vaishya and (4) Sudra. According to the sociological estimate there are about three thousand sub-castes in India. Those who do not come under this caste stratification are measured to be outside of caste system and they were counted as out-castes. Various names have been given to this out caste groups during the modern period, Viz. Depressed class, Scheduled caste, Harijans, Adi-Dravidar, Dalit, etc.[5]

The first three classes are cut off from the fourth, they wear the sacred thread as an indication of superior status.[6] Because the Saints of the ancient India wanted to create the Indian society on eternal values sustainable in all times. There emerged four categories and the categories were made on the type of work a man chose according to his interest. For which there were various castes among the members of a family. In the beginning the caste-system, was linked with the vocation of a man,[7] but during the period of the Mauriyas, Magasthanese it was observed as the birth determined, and inter-caste marriage were prohibited and also untouchablilty began. The eighteenth century witnessed the height of the regimentation of the caste- system, by this time, these four castes broke into hundreds of sub-castes which prided into superiority and looked down upon others. This further harmed the Hindu society.[8]

1.3 Horrible Effect of the Caste-System

The most horrible effect of caste-system was untouchability, which is a black spot on the fair- face of the Hindu culture.[9] Brahmins were the high caste and considered as gods, while the Shudras, low castes were denied the right of learning or even listening to the Vedas. Besides the low caste there were large numbers of out caste who were considered as untouchables. High caste considered that they would be defiled if the shadows of the

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[4] James Massey, *Dalits in India, Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians* (Delhi: Manohar Publication & Distribution, 1995), 87.
[5] Chawdhry, *Modern India and Contemporary World*, 16.
[6] R. Pierce Beaver, *The World's Religions* (Malaysia: Lion publishing, 1982), 175-176.
[7] Chawdhry, *Modern India and Contemporary World*, 16.
[8] Chawdhry, *Modern India and Contemporary World*, 17.
[9] Chawdhry, *Modern India and Contemporary World*, 17.

untouchables fell on them. There was neither inter-dining nor inter-marriage between the high caste and the low castes.[10] Low caste was treated worse than animals. For this reason low caste and outcaste were attracted towards other faiths.

2. Coming of Christianity in India and Caste System in Indian Church

2.1 St Thomas -First Missionary to India

According to the tradition of Malabar community, first Christianity was brought by St Thomas one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ in 52 A.D. It is said that St. Thomas, after visiting Socotra (an island in the Arabian Sea of the North-East coast of Africa),[11] arrived in Muzuri (Cranganore (Kodangalloor) now in the Trissure district of Kerala, and he preached the gospel to the Jewish community. It is believed that he used Hebrew language and then to natives. It is said that Thomas had received the divine gift for language, for which, he could easily communicate the gospel to the Malayalees in their own language.[12] He founded seven churches in India. They are (1) Malianka ra (2) Palayar (3) Parur (4) Gokamangalam (5) Niranam (6) Chayal and (7) Quilon. He might have been more interested in converting high caste people, C. B. Firth mentions four Brahmin families called Sankaarapuri, Pakalomattam, Kali, and Kaliankal, and crossed over to the east coast and to travel eastwards from there to Malacca and to China. Again he returned to Mylapore, now part of the city of Madras. Here his preaching aroused the hostility of Brahmin, who raised a riot against him, during which he was speared to dead. It is believed that his martyrdom was about 72 A.D.[13]

2.2 Syrian Christians and Caste System

According to the Syrian Christians tradition, Syrians are descendants of the upper caste of Hindus who were converted by Apostle Thomas.[14] A group of Syrians know as *Knanya* Christians or Southerners maintain that they have directly descended from Syrian merchant who settled in Kerala in the fourth century under the leadership of Thomas of Cana. These Christians measured themselves to be unpolluted blood. They had their own social and cultural customs and practices which were more similar to the high caste Hindu culture, although it was not a 'pure' Hindu caste culture. It is said

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[10] Zachariah, *Modern Religious And Secular Movements in India*, 12.

[11] C.B Firth, *An Introduction To Indian Church History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003), 2-4.

[12] Ezra Sargunam "Christian Contribution To National Building" *Christian Contribution To Indian Languages, Literature and Culture: A Brief Overview* (Chennai: Mission Educational Books, 2006), 186-187.

[13] C.B Firth, *An Introduction To Indian Church History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003), 2-4.

[14] V.V.Thomas, *Dalit Pentecostalism Spirituality of the Empowered poor* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2008), 136-137.

that, like Hindu high caste, Syrian also, if they touched any low- caste person they immediately took bath and cleansed themselves.[15] According to M. Stephen, the St. Thomas and the followers of Thomas of Cana who came to India in 345 A.D claimed a superiority of race and language, which prevented them relating to the society and to share the gospel in India cup.[16]

2.3 Roman Catholic Mission

2.3.1 Coming of the Portuguese

The coming of the Portuguese in India was through Vasco da Gama, who came to India and landed near Calicut on 17th May 1498.[17] Directed by an Arab pilot Vasco da Gama reached India. Therefore, Vasco da Gama sailed back to Portugal in the following year. Later, there were new voyages to India every year, trading stations were established along the West cost, and the Portuguese influence steadily grew. Later their ship passed on further than India to Ceylon, Malacca, Indonesia and the Far East, and Portuguese stations were established through South-east Asia. In 1510, Goa was captured by Portuguese from the Sultan of Bijapur, and Malacca, and Goa was made the centre of administration, and became the capital of all Portuguese settlement in Asia.[18] In submission to the power of the Pope, the Portuguese colonizers got busy in missionizing their territories in India by various ways. Affonso de Albuquerque the second governor of Portuguese encouraged mixed marriage. He asked his men both merchants and military personnel to marry Indian women. This was to build up a body of Christian faithful to Portugal.[19]

2.3.2 Caste System and Untouchable in Portuguese Period

It is said that when the Portuguese arrived in Kerala, they found that the Syrian Christians were wealthy community and were well integrated in Hindu society and they enjoyed high caste status accorded to them by the *rajahs* of the state. Soon the Portuguese started a campaign to bring the Syrians under their control and under the control of the Roman Church. The Synod of Diamper convened by Archbishop Alexis De Menezes of Goa removed many of the Syrian beliefs and practices which according to Portuguese were associated with the Nestorian heresy of the Persian Church or with the heathen practices of Hinduism which the Syrians had assimilated into their life. But Menezes permitted Syrians to continue their practice of

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[15] Thomas, *Dalit Pentecostalism Spirituality of the Empowered poor*, 99-101.
[16] M. Stephen, *A New Mission Agenda Dialogue, Diakonia and Discipling* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2007), 120.
[17] Arthur Jeyakumar, *History of Christianity in India. Selected Themes* (Madurai, Author, 2007), 19.
[18] C.B Firth, *An Introduction To Indian Church History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003), 49-50.
[19] Jeyakumar, *History of Christianity in India. Selected Themes*, 20.

untouchability with the low caste since this was necessary to carry on their social relationship with the upper caste. In order to safeguard their commercial interest, Portuguese allowed the practice of untouchability.[20]

2.3.3 St. Francis Xavier (Jesuit Missionary)

It is said that the King John III of Portugal was always concerned for the progress of the Faith in his rapidly increasing dominions, so, he appealed to the Pope to send missionaries to India. The first and the newly formed Society of Jesus were asked to go to India. So St. Xavier was chosen to be sent to India. Xavier belonged to a noble family of Navarre, a little kingdom near the Pyrenees and related to the royal families of Navarre. Xavier was one of six young men who with Ignatius vowed together into a brotherhood, and they pledged themselves to live in celibacy and poverty.[21]

St. Francis Xavier left his job and came to India as a missionary; he landed at Goa on 6th May 1542 with a recommended letter from King James of Portugal and also a letter from Pope by giving authority over all Churches.[22] He was lovingly received by the Goa Christians with great honour, in a *palanquin* (a wooden carriage for royal escort hauled by men on their shoulders) and decorations, but they found the saint in rag clothes and bare footed. People were surprised because, he liked to go first to the hospital and not in the *palanquin*.[23] He visited the sick people in the hospital and the prisoners in the goals and gathering together children and others in one church for elementary Christian teaching. He would go out into the streets ringing a bell and calling out, and tell people to send their sons and daughters, and slaves of both sexes to the holy teaching for the love of God. He taught songs to the children, this went on for several months.

By the efforts of the Roman Catholic mission Christianity was introduced first in Tirunelveli district. The first converts were the poor and the oppressed classes of the fisherman of the sea coast. The mission was established by Michael, the Bishop of Goa. Christianization in many parts of Tirunelveli was first carried out by Frances Xavier. Within a few years, Xavier could convert between fifteen to twenty thousand from among the oppressed class, particularly the *Mukkuvas*, a sub class of the *Parav*a community. It is also said that Frances Xavier's activities not only gave a new religious identity and new sense of community to *Paravas*, but also confirmed their corporate

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[20] Thomas, *Dalit Pentecostalism Spirituality of the Empowered poor*, 136-137.
[21] Thomas, *Dalit Pentecostalism Spirituality of the Empowered poor*, 55-56.
[22] Vlam, Grace A. H. *The Portrait of Francis Xavier in Kobe. Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 42 Bd., H. 1, 48-60.
[23] Rao, R.P.. *Portuguese Rule in Goa: 1510—1961* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1963) 43.

status as a group in alliance with the Portuguese royal crown and in opposition to their traditional leaders and oppressors.[24] It is believed that Xavier baptized 700,000 people belonging to different caste groups, but majority of his converts were from *Pariah* (outcaste) people. Xavier went to other places and died on 2nd December 1552.[25]

2.3.4 Robert de Nobile (Jesuit Missionary)

Robert de Nobile a young Jesuit missionary of the noble family of Rome in Italy came to India on 20th May, 1605 as a Roman Catholic missionary during the Portuguese period.[26] His mission method was indigenous and highly original, and he is greatly to be commended for his study of Sanskrit and Tamil.[27] When Nobile arrived in Madurai, he found that majority of the converts were from the low castes. During his time Portuguese were called as *pharangis*, as they ate beef, drank liquor, seldom bathed and mingled with lower caste people. For that reason, Robert de Nobile rejected the pattern of Francis Xavier, whose warm heart had expanded towards the poor and the oppressed, and declared himself as high caste, in order to gain converts from the upper castes. It was said that he told to the people, that he was not *pharangi*, but a royal person from Rome. He declared himself as "new Brahman". He acknowledged strictly vegetarian food, and following all the Hindus religious customs. He adopted the life of an Indian. He changed the black Cassock into a *Kavi* robe. He became a *guru* in Indian sense. He moved to a drastic step of foregoing meat, fish, egg, alcohol and other western meals, he switched on to pure vegetarian meal.[28] He accepted caste and practiced untouchability. For which, many upper caste Hindus became Christians. Robert de Nobile also introduced separate missionary priests for upper caste Christians and low caste Christians, calling them Brahman *Sanyasis* and *Pandara swamis* respectively. Nobile could convert high caste people but brought division between high caste and low caste in the Church. High caste Christians and low caste Christians could not worship together in the Church. During his time, it was good for converting high caste people by adopting the indigenous method, but it opened the way for unfortunate future Christian Churches in India.[29] Thereafter, caste system became a standard practice in Indian Church, which today has become the main problem.

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[24] Samuel Jayakumar, *Dalit Consciousness and Christian Conversion* (Chennai: Mission Educational Books,2004) 93.

[25] Massey, *Dalits in India, Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians*, 87.

[26] Ignatius Puthiadam S.I. *Fr De Nobili A Trendsetter life, work and Spirituality* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2007), 6.

[27] J.C Houpert, *A South Indian Mission* (Madurai Catholic Mission, 1937), 48.

[28] Roger E. Hedlund, *Christianity is Indian The Emergence of an Indigenous* Community ((Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), 109.

[29] James Massey, *Dalits in India, Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians* (Delhi:Manohar Publication & Distribution, 1995), 87-88.

2.4 First Protestant Mission in India

2.4.1 Tranquebar Mission

It is said that at the later part of the seventeenth century there was marked increase in missionary commitment in England. In 1698 the SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) was founded, in 1701 another Anglican Society was formed to assist the missionary work initiated by the SPCK. The SPCK had the official backing of the Church of England and was incorporated to the Royal Charter. It was concerned with providing chaplains to the British colonies abroad and with evangelizing the non-Christian people of the world. At that time King Frederic IV of Denmark also thought of sending chaplains to the Danish settlement of Tranquebar.[30]

The Danish East India Company settled at two places in India: Tranquebar (Tarangambadi) in 1620 and Serampore 1676. The primary purpose of Danish Company was trade, Danish were Lutherans but they too did not venture into propagation of their faith, because they were interested in commerce.[31]

King Frederic sent two young Germans who were spiritual products of a revival movement called pietism to India as missionaries. They arrived at Tranquebar in 1706 with royal patronage. Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plauetsau began their ministry in teaching the native children at least for two hours a day, and some children were baptized and put in an orphanage and therefore a Portuguese and Tamil school was started. And the children were also taught German. Ziegenbalg opened a school in Tranquebar, for half-natives or mixed race children in the year 1707. During the very short period of Ziegenbalg's ministry, a mere thirteen years, he contributed a great deal to the Tamil church. He translated all of New Testament and the Old Testament up to the book of Ruth and other literature for worship. He introduced a Tamil typeset and printed the New Testament and other literature for worship. The first printing press and the first paper factory were established by him in India.

2.4.2 Caste System in New Jerusalem Church

It is said, that Ziegenbalg had found the Europeans at Zion Church who did not like to have fellowship and worship with Indians in the same room. Indian Christians also had many ill feelings against the European Christians in Tranquebar. Ziegenbalg carefully investigated this problem, and found the following reasons from Indians, that European Christians were alcoholic

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[30] Samuel Jayakumar, *Dalit Consciousness and Christian Conversion* (Madras: Mission Education Books, 2004), 99.

[31] Jayakumar, *History of Christianity in India: Selected Themes*, 23.

and gluttons. They engaged in prostitution and broke off marriages. They danced and gambled. They cursed and swear. They led a sinful life, yet they claimed that they would attain salvation, in spite of their evil and sinful life, Indian Christians told him that they also had a hope to be saved through their calm and orderly life, even though their religion may be wrong. They thought that European Christians were most foolish and most uneducated people on Earth who do not think about life after death. Indian Christians also thought that the preachers in the Zion Church taught Europeans to become alcoholics, glutton, gamblers, adulterers, and evil doers.

Ziegenbalg came to know the problems, and some of the Indian Christians told him that if they could worship in separate church buildings, they would become Lutherans. As a result, Ziegenbalg tried to organize a Lutheran congregation just outside the main gate of the colony. Weekly market were held there on Sunday, many Tamils might come to Church and hear God's word. During the weekdays, the same building could be used as a school. On May 12, 1707 five slaves came to Lutheran Baptist Church, because they did not like to worship with their masters in the Zion Church. They were belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. Now they needed a new place for worship. Therefore Ziegenbalg laid the foundation stone for a new church building that was twenty feet wide and fifty feet long. And in 1718, New Jerusalem Church was dedicated by Ziegenbalg and Plauetsau. Slowly, other Indians joined the Lutheran congregation. Most of the Lutherans were former Roman Catholic Christian.[32] Ziegenbalg and Plauetsau were not very eager to challenge the caste system.

2.4.3 Against Caste System in the Church

It is said that the practice of caste distinction became a major source of tension in the New Jerusalem Church. During the time of Ziegenbalg and Henry some Roman Catholic converted to Protestant and those people brought their caste distinction, but Ziegenbalg did not take firm decision to eradicate caste distinctions from among his converts. After the death of Ziegenbalg, Benjamin Schultze, a German Lutheran became the immediate successor of Ziegenbalg the first Protestant Missionary. Schulze did not like the policy of observing caste distinction in the church and mission. Therefore, Schuze tried to stop the practice of caste system in the church, but could not stop

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[32] Daniel Jeyaraj, *Bartholomaous Ziegenbalg: the Father of Modern Protestant Mission An Indian Assessment* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2006), 146-149.

because of opposition. As a result Danish-Halle Mission had withdrawn Schulze.[33] After he left Tranquebar Mission, Walter and Prissier, arrived in 1725, made peace by frankly restoring the old practice.[34]

2.4.4 C. F. Schwartz Made Lower Caste Converts to Wear Clean Cloth

Christian Frederick Schwartz was Danish-Halle missionary who came to India and worked in the Tranquebar from 1760 to 1762. Later he was adopted by the SPCK to be their missionary in their English Mission. He was with the SPCK from 1762 to1798, as a military chaplain and also as a missionary in Thiruchirapalli (1762-1776), and Thanjavur (Tanjore) (1776-1798); He acknowledged the difficulty in eradicating the observance of caste distinction among the Indian Christians. He made lower caste converts to wear clean cloths so that they could be respected by the higher caste.

2.5 Serampore Mission

2.5.1 Arrival of William Carey and Work in Indigo Factory

William Carey, British missionary who was born in Northhamptonshire, England, on 17th August 1761,[35] landed in Calcutta on 11, November 1793, accompanied by a colleague named Thomas.[36] But Carey was not allowed to stay in British territories of India.[37] In 1794 after the death of young English merchant in boat accident, he was offered the manager of an indigo factory at Mudnabatti. His appointment would qualify him for five years license or work permit making his presence in British India legal.[38]

2.5.2 Mission Activities of Serampore

William Carey, William Ward and Joshua Marshman joined together in October 1790 and started Serampore mission. It began with the setting up of printing press and boarding school, preaching and also distributing leaflets in Sarampore and the surrounding villages. Five and half years of evangelistic work in Mudnabatti had no converts, but at Serampore there was one in the very first year, when Krishna Pal was baptized in the Hoogly River in the presence of the governor and many people gathered there. Later his wife and sister-in-law and neighboring family also were baptized. This little group

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[33] Jeyaraj, *Bartholomaous Ziegenbalg*, 60-61.

[34] Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 138.

[35] B.K Kuiper, *The Church In History* (Michigan: The National Union of Christian Schools, 1951), 391.

[36] Massey, *Dalits in India, Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians*, 91.

[37] Ashish K. Mondal, William Carey and Calcutta, Indian History Review Vo. XXIV/1 (June, 1991), 1-3.

[38] Ashish K. Masseey & June Hedlund. "William and the making of modern India" *Church History Review* XXVII/1 (June 1993), 9.

of other converts from different caste were added one by one, some from Serampore, others from other places. The method that Serampore mission used was vernacular preaching and the circulation of the tracts and the Bible which they translated into over 30 Indian languages; and established school and college as part of evangelization.

2.5.3 Non permission of Caste System in the Church

Serampore missionaries were so much keen to challenge the caste system. Serampore missionaries discovered that caste is not merely a social distinction but a religious practice; therefore, they did not allow caste system in the Church.[39] For which, Brahman Krishna Prasad at first communion received the cup after the Krishna Pal, a Shudra, had drunk from it. Later Prasad married Krishna Pal's daughter.[40]

3. The Problem of Caste System in Indian Church

3.1 Definition of the word Dalit

According to Dalit Liberation theologians the word '*dalit*' is derived from a Semitic word *dal*, meaning crack, split, open, scatter, stretch out, to be dissected, broken, torn, destroyed and trodden down. This way the term '*dalit*' came to be used to refer to people who are poor, weak, helpless and oppressed. Today the word '*dalit*' has been used to identify those communities which have been economically, socially and politically oppressed.[41]

3.2 Status of Dalit in the Church of India

The history of the conversion movement in India reveals that one of the main reasons for the low caste people (Dalit) embracing Christianity was to flee from the caste oppression in their previous religion (Hindu). It is said that the condition of the low caste people was even worse than animals. Therefore they were attracted towards Christianity.[42] They expected to get a better social position through conversion. But when they joined the church they found caste oppression in the church too, and they were not fairly treated when it came to sharing opportunities and privileges.[43] Still caste division is prevailing in Indian Church.

It is said that through the work of the Anglican CMS missionaries and the LMS missionary's large number of Dalits embraced Christianity. In order to escape from the stigma of caste system imposed on the Dalit for centuries.

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[39] Zachariah, *Modern Religious And Secular Movements in India* .277.

[40] M.S.Sangma, "Advent of the Pioneer Christian Mission in North India" *Indian Church History Review* XXVIII/1 (June 1994), 7.

[41] Jayakumar, *Dalit Consciousness and Christian Conversion*, 4.

[42] Chawdhry, *Modern India and Contemporary World*, 18.

[43] Thomas, *Dalit Pentecostalism Spirituality of the Empowered poor*, 136.

But unfortunately same stigma followed them into the Church. It is said that, the Syrian Christians felt that they belong to a superior caste, and unfriendly to the Dalits. Syrian Christians were unwilling to acknowledge the Dalit as social equals within the Church and did not accept Dalit Christians to fellowship with them. It also said that some Syrian Christians even left the Anglican Church, because of more *Pulayas* were joining the Anglican Church. Syrian Christians did not consider the low caste converters as their Christian brethren and equal to their status, they did not want to worship and share meals with the *Pulayas* converts.[44]

It is said that the Dalit Christian problem was openly witnessed by both Roman Catholic and Protestant Church leaders, during the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, (CBCI) which was held in December 1991. In this meeting the following observation was made.

Though Catholics of the lower castes and tribes form 60 percent of the Church membership they had no place in decision-making. Schedule castes are treated as low caste not only by high caste Hindus but by high caste Christian too. In rural areas they cannot own or rent house, however, well-placed they may be separate places are marked out for them in the parish Churches and burial grounds. Inter-caste marriages are frowned upon and caste tag are still appended to the Christian names of the high caste people. Casteism is rampant among the clergy and the religious. Though Dalit Christians make up 65 percent of the 10 million Christians in South, less then 4 percent of the parishes are entrusted to Dalit priests. There are no Dalits among 13 Catholic bishops of Tamilnadu or among the Vicars - general and rectors of seminaries and directors of social assistance centers.[45]

The Dalit Christians are discriminated by high caste Christians. Caste 'system in the Church is the main issue in the Church in India today. There is separate burial ground for Dalit Christians, Dalit separate service in many Churches in India.[46]

4. No Division in Christ

In Christ there is no division, if there is no division in Christ, how and why division in the Church where Christ is the head? In John 4:1-26, we find Jesus Christ breaking down the division. There was division between Jewish and Samaritans, but Jesus broke down this division while traveling from

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[44] Thomas, *Dalit Pentecostalism Spirituality of the Empowered poor,*141-142.

[45] Massey, *Dalits in India, Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians,* 82.

[46] Massey, *Dalits in India, Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians,* 82.

Judea to Galilee. Samaria was between Judea and Galilee, so while crossing it, Jesus stopped near a plot of land that Jacob, Abraham's grandson, had given to his son Joseph (Genesis 33:19: 48:22), as he was tired. While he was sitting at the edge of the well a Samaritan woman came to the well. Jesus asked her to give Him a drink, but Samaritan women said to Him you are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink? Jesus request to the Samaritan woman for a drink was unusual for two reasons. It said that the first reason was, a Jewish man especially a teacher, never talk alone with any woman. Second reason was the woman was a Samaritan. At that time the Jewish and the Samaritan hated each other.[47] Because, Samaritans were conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. brought many foreigners into Samaria to settle there. Because of which they became a mixed race after the destruction,[48] and the Samaritans had intermarried with the foreign settlers and had began to worship their gods (2 Kings 17:22-33) thus the Samaritans became half Jewish. Although by Jesus' time they had began again to worship the true God, they were not allowed to worship at the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Therefore, they had built their own Temple on the top of a near by mountain in Samaria (Jn. 4:20), but the Jewish had later burned it down. Thus there was great hostility between the two nations. This is why John says in 4:9 Jews did not associate with Samaritans. Jesus did not want to talk about the differences between Jews and Samaritans. He wanted to tell the woman about the gift of God that is the gift of new life that He could give her which Jesus called living water.[49] Therefore, in Jesus there is no division; Jesus wants unity among the people not division.

Conclusion

Christ is our peace. Christ makes peace between man and God, and also between man and man. He has broken down the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility- the division, prejudice, and enmity-between Jew and Gentile, between high caste and low caste, between rich and poor, between different races and between different nations. The Jews considered themselves to be superior to Gentiles and did not even associate with Gentiles because in their sight the Gentiles were unclean. Thus they were not permitted to enter the inner part of the Jewish temple. Christ destroyed that barrier.

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[47] Thomas Hale, *The Applied New Testament Commentary* (Secunderabad: OM Books, 2004), 374-315.

[48] Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The New Combined Bible Dictionary and Concordance* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 2005), 368.

[49] Hale, *The Applied New Testament Commentary*, 374-315.

The Bible tells us that all human beings are created by God as equal and they are made in the image of God. All Communities whether big or small unique in its own way and therefore, no one has the right to dominate and suppress the other. All are equal in the Body of Christ. Therefore, any kinds of discrimination on the basis of caste breaks the concept of universal brotherhood and equality.

The Church should strive hard for harmony between the communities. The Church has to teach the world about the need of unity. The unity of the Spirit can exist only in the church of Christ.

It is understood that caste system is the product of Hinduism. Christianity opposes any kind of discrimination on the basis of race or sex. The Christian concept of equality is found in Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male or female”. Therefore, all are equal in Christ, all are members of one body, whose head is Christ.

Therefore, the practice of caste system in the Church should be eradicated, because the nature of caste and its association destroys the first principle of Christianity. Caste makes distinction among creatures what God has made one. It attaches impurity where God does not make one class of men clean and another class unclean in direct opposition to the word of God. According to Paul we are called to one hope when we were called- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and father of all, who is over all through all and in all. According to the Bible all human beings are equal and the believers are one in the body of Christ. Now we are called out by God from our forefathers’ faiths (religions), so we should not bring any practice of our forefathers’ faiths (religions) in the Church, which destroy the principle of Christianity.

Historical Jesus *versus* Dogmatic Christ

CH. Vijaya Kumar
Faculty, COTRTS

Introduction

The problem of "historical Jesus *versus* dogmatic Christ" is the essence of the "quest for historical Jesus" movement. It is a move away from the "Christ of Faith" who is seen as a later construction of the dogma of the Church to the "Jesus of History" who lived and died in the first century Galilee and Judea. It is a movement for Jesus (of history) against Christ (of the dogma of the church). This movement also exposes the tension inherent to the name "Jesus Christ" and the categories of "history" and "dogma." This tension has not just been the concern of the historicists or the questers alone, but is also the concern of the faith of the Christians in general.

The provocative title of this paper carries within it many implications. The conflict is clearly of dual nature. It juxtaposes not only "history" with "faith" but also "Jesus" with "Christ", as though one has a choice. It is this element of choice integral to this debate that concerns this paper. In the context of the "debate," even if hypothetically posited, one who wins eliminates the other. If this contest should be understood free of its predicates, the rivalry boils down to "Jesus" *versus* "Christ." If Jesus wins, history wins and Christ and dogma loose. If Christ wins, dogma wins and Jesus and history loose. This is the reason; this self-evident paradox has unsettled many minds and their faiths for centuries now.

Such a tension begs many questions: Does it mean that the name "Jesus Christ" carries within it a sense of option? Is Jesus dispensable or Christ? Is it not true that Jesus is Christ, then why choose between them? What if the debate eliminates one, and if one is compelled to choose, whom shall one choose? The winner or the looser? Jesus or Christ? Is it not enough to believe in the historical Jesus and to ignore the Christ of faith? Or since the historical Jesus is inaccessible, why not settle with the Christ of faith? Is it enough for a Christian to believe in any one of them? Or is it must for a Christian to assert that Jesus is Christ? What implications do the results of this debate or the choice one makes has to his/her faith-life? Or, is it really an "*or*" situation, or there is a possibility of "*either.*" That is, is it "Jesus

Christ," or "Jesus *or* Christ" situation? How relevant is history or dogma to a Christian's faith? Can a Christian jettison faith for dogma or dogma for faith?

The title "historical Jesus versus dogmatic Christ" is in fact derived from the 1865 work of David Friedrich Strauss (1808-74) *Der Christus des Glaubens und der Jesus der Geschichte* (*The Christ of Belief and the Jesus of History*). In his book, Strauss led an attack on Schleiermacher's attempt to combine the 'historical Jesus' with the 'Christ' of dogma.[1] He declared that "the ideal of the *dogmatic Christ* on the one hand and the *historical Jesus* of Nazareth on the other are separated forever."[2] This observation of Strauss has intrigued many of his contemporaries and later scholars. And it is this statement of Strauss that will continue to concern me even beyond the publication of this paper.

When Strauss was rejecting the dogmatic Christ while going in favor of historical Jesus, by the very virtue of his argumentation he was not really favoring a "historical" Jesus, rather a "dogmatic" Jesus, because to be dogmatic is to argue, and any conclusion arrived after a logical argument is "dogmatic." In effect, Strauss was expelling "Christology" in favor of "Jesussology." What D. M. Baillie says is very relevant here. He asserts that any question or problem related to "Jesus of history" is a Christological issue. The very quest for an historical Jesus is a dogmatic issue. In fact he argues that the present situation in Christology is one which could not have emerged before the "Jesus of history" movement.[3] Whereas, historically, the "historical Jesus" movement, from its very inception separated "the historical Jesus" and "the Christ of faith, as though "historical Jesus" was not a Christological or dogmatic issue.

This paper intends to first understand the circumstances surrounding the origin and development of this debate and by analyzing the underlying philosophical presuppositions and methodologies, in order to arrive at a definitive solution.

1. History of the Historical Jesus *versus* Dogmatic Christ Debate

The first "moment" of development of historical Jesus *versus* dogmatic

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[1] F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1558.

[2] D. F. Strauss, *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History: A Critique of Schleiermacher's "Life of Jesus,"* Lives of Jesus Series (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). Cited in James D. G. Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2005), 17.

[3] D. M. Baillie, *God was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 9.

Christ debate may be regarded as the shift of the center of gravity in theology with the coming of the Protestant Reformation during the early 16th Century. The reformers shifted the focus from the doctrine of God ("theology" in the narrow sense) to the doctrine of Christ ("Christology").[4] However, there are evidences that the historical-dogmatic dilemma of "Jesus *versus* Christ" predates Protestant Reformation.

The first century graffito[5] of Alexamenos dating from AD 85 discovered at the Palatine[6] in Rome shows a youth standing before a cross on which hangs a figure with the head of an ass, with the subscription in Greek saying: "Alexamenos worships his God."[7] Even the first century world, faced with the alternative that *either* Jesus of Nazareth was out of his mind that he actually was an ass, *or* indeed that he was the one he claimed to be.[8] Similar to that first century graffito, Stephen Davis for our times while analyzing the self-understanding of Jesus, states that any person who attempts to understand the person of Jesus is faced with a trilemma. He says, "For the kind of claims he made, Jesus was either *mad*, *bad*, or *God*."[9] Then, we can say that even the first and second century Christians were to a large extent aware of such a *di* or *tri*lemma.

The rise of Ebionitism and Docetism in the second century is evidence in itself. If Ebionites regarded Jesus as an ordinary human being,[10] as much of the modern questers found Jesus to be, then, Docetism taught that Christ merely appeared to be a man, in fact he was divine being.[11] There was also a variety of second century groups, collectively known as Gnostic sects, in which the historical Jesus was a dispensable figure.[12] D. M. Baillie observes that the quest of historical Jesus of the 18th century effectively ended the second century Docetic and Gnostic ideas of Christ, consequently today, he says, full humanity of our Lord is being taken more seriously than ever before by the scholars.[13] But, later we shall find that the quest itself seems to be more ebionitcally oriented in presenting Jesus as an ordinary human being devoid of all or any divinity.

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[4] Charles Dickinson, "A Passus in Christology," *Encounter*, 170.

[5] A rude decoration inscribed on rocks or walls

[6] Palatine is the most important of the Seven Hills of Rome; supposedly the location of the first settlement and the site of many imperial palaces.

[7] Hans Schwarz, *Christology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), 207.

[8] Schwarz, *Christology*, 207-208.

[9] Stephen T. Davis, "Was Jesus Mad, Bad, or God?" in Stephen T. Davis, D Kendall, and G. O' Collins (eds), *The Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 221.

[10] Alister E. Mcgrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 24.

[11] Raymond Moloney, *Problems in Theology: The Knowledge of Christ* (London: Continuum, 1999), 41-42.

[12] I. Howard Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1977), 74.

[13] Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, 11.

However, our concern in this paper is not early docetism and ebionitism but the modern and more recent "quest of historical Jesus" movement which had its seminal roots in the posthumously published works of Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768), an English Deist, who marked the beginning of preoccupation with the life of Jesus from a purely historical-critical perspective.[14] This historical search for Jesus was termed as "*the quest of the historical Jesus*" named after the title of Albert Schweitzer's 1906 book, *The Quest of Historical Jesus*.[15]

According to James D. G. Dunn, Reimarus' writings triggered a movement which had far reaching consequences in the quest for historical Jesus. While presenting his assessment of the quest in his 2005 book *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed*, says that as a result of Reimarus' works the following became the rallying cry of the questers: "Back from the religion *about* Jesus to the religion *of* Jesus! Back from the gospel *about* Jesus to the gospel *of* Jesus himself! The task was to liberate the real Jesus, the historical Jesus, from the chains and obscurations of later faith."[16]

Reimarus and his contemporaries were very much influenced by philosophical presuppositions that were current at that time. Reimarus was motivated by deistic philosphy.

The quest for historical Jesus begun by Reimarus was based on the *three questions*. *First:* What had been the nature of Jewish messianic expectations? Were Jews expecting anything like a spiritual savior? Was the Son of Man a messianic figure? Reimarus put eschatology, and Jesus' understanding of 'End Times', firmly on the agenda.[17] Thereafter, speculation about whether Jesus expected an imminent return, about whether his mission was political or spiritual, about the nature of his understanding of God's kingdom, Bennett says, remains bread-and-butter material of the historical Jesus studies of the later questers.[18]

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[14] Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 2-3.

[15] The first German edition of this book appeared in 1906 under the title *Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, which in English read literally as 'From Reimarus to Wrede: A History of Research upon the Life of Jesus', but was poetically rendered as *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, London, 1910. See James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 26. And also, see Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 5, n.9.

[16] James D. G. Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2005), 18.

[17] Clinton Bennett, *In Search of Jesus: Insider and Outsider Images* (London: Continuum, 2001), 99.

[18] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 99.

Bennett observes that this first question of Reimarus was not only foundational, but also decisive and divisive factor for more than a century. Those who argued in favor of continuity between what Jesus believed about himself and what the early Church believed tended to argue against Reimarus for a timeless, spiritual mission. But, those who stressed discontinuity argued that Jesus had expected a sudden, cataclysmic consummation.[19] This way, the self-understanding of Jesus became crucial for the quest of historical Jesus.

Second: Did Jesus intend to found a new religion, and what was the relationship between his movement and contemporary Judaism?[20] Reimarus set out a method by which he went on to separate completely what the apostles said about Jesus from what Jesus himself taught during his life time, and concluded that Jesus was a prophetic and apocalyptic preacher who wanted to renew Judaism.[21] So for Reimarus, Christianity, by detaching itself from Judaism, was a new creation of the apostles.[22]

Third: It was a theological question of whether faith in Christ is dependent on or independent of whatever historical research tells us about the life of the man Jesus. This question was tackled by Reimarus' posthumous publisher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81), who in his own writing argued that religious truths were essentially innate, validated by their own authenticity, so are inherently not dependent.[23]

Apart from the foregoing matters, Reimarus also pioneered in denying the resurrection in proposing the theory of deception to explain the resurrection story as disciples stealing the body of Jesus.[24] Bennett points out that the first casualties of the quest were all and any types of miracle stories in the Gospels, but that this phenomenon pre-dated Reimarus. The impact of the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-76), who argued that miracles are contrary to the law of probability, i.e., probability rests on what may be called the majority vote of our past experience, but past experience is against miracles, therefore, miracles are the most improbable of all events.[25] Following this, John Toland (1670-1722), a deist, was the first scholar to suggest that the supernatural in the Gospels was a borrowing from paganism, while true Christianity was not at all mysterious.[26] Thomas Chubb (1679-1747),

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[19] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 99.
[20] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 99.
[21] Schwarz, *Christology*, 10.
[22] Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 3.
[23] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 99-100.
[24] Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 3.
[25] C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (Glasgow, Great Britain: William Collins Sons & Co., 1947), 105.
[26] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 91.

another deist, was the first to term the supernatural events in the New Testament as the disciples' alterations of the original gospel of Jesus.[27]

Such discrediting of the supernatural had direct connections with the rise of deism in the backdrop of 14th century Enlightenment, 16th century Reformation and the 18th century Renaissance. Because as never before, it was during this period for the first time, Christians began to dare question the canonical dogma of Jesus and began to subtract from the gospel whatever was difficult to accept, and for the first time, Bennett says, "the Jesus who had lived and the Christ of Christian faith began to look like two different people."[28]

The birth of 'deism' during the 14th century Enlightenment is the most significant event. The primary weapon of the deists against the dogma of the church and the supernatural was the historical critical method. The quest of historical Jesus is considered the illicit child of deism and historical critical method of biblical criticism. During this period deism was proposed as a "rational" alternative to traditional Christian faith in God. Deism was largely a movement among English thinkers. It was a form of belief in God which affirmed God's personal being and God's creation of this world and its intelligible order, but denied that God otherwise guides it or intervenes in it.[29] The father of English Deism was Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648). In his *On Truth* (1624), he outlined what was later called natural religion. He criticized traditional Christianity's appeal to special revelation: All religious truth such as the Trinity and deity of Christ, were treated with skepticism.[30]

Then came the 16th century Reformations that though were initially promising but eventually had failed to answer all the questions and resolve all the problems of the church. Instead, they created newer and more problems. The Protestant Reformation inaugurated an intellectual crisis within the realm of biblical studies. Christian Reformation introduced the trend of questioning the authority and faith of the church and began to cry for individual and intellectual autonomy.

This led to the birth of Christian deism in the mid-sixteenth century out of a sense of dissatisfaction with traditional form of Christianity. The Christian deists sought to understand the Christian religion in terms of the

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[27] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 92.

[28] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 90.

[29] Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane, *The New Dictionary of Theology*, "A Michael Glazier Book", (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 275.

[30] Trevor A. Hart, *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* (Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 2000), 152.

omnicompetence of human reason and skepticism. All this took place against the backdrop of developments in science most closely linked with Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), which saw the world as governed by inviolable laws. The new science understood the universe to be like a clockwork machine, *created by God but not necessarily requiring his continued involvement*. This often led those influenced by Deism to *accept God's transcendence but deny his immanence*.[31]

By the 18th century Renaissance, deism's definitive statement was penned by the Oxford scholar Matthew Tindal (1655–1733), considered himself a 'Christian deist'. His book *the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1730) became known as 'the Bible of Deism', in which he contended that the purpose of the gospel is not to redeem the sinner but to free mankind of all superstitious religion by demonstrating that the universal natural law is the foundation and content of all true religion.[32]

According to Trevor A. Hart, the deists of this period played a vital part in the birth of two essential projects in biblical studies. One: employment of *historical criticism* as the default method of biblical criticism, which in effect rejected belief in any intervention of the divine into history,[33] and rejected all miracles of the Scriptures. Two: the initiation of the *quests for the historical Jesus*.[34]

Schweitzer's book *The Quest of Historical Jesus* in 1906 caused two events. *One*, the title of the book became the name of the quest which had begun more than a century ago in 1778. *Two*, the book ended the century 'old quest'. The book itself is a skilled survey of the origins of the quest, and tracing and evaluation of the findings of various quests and questers. In the course of his investigation of the quests he makes a remarkable statement. He says, "The historical investigation of the life of Jesus did not take its rise from a purely historical interest; it turned to the Jesus of history as an ally in the struggle against the tyranny of dogma."[35] A half century later, James M. Robinson makes a similar observation on the first quest. He says, the quest was initiated by the enlightenment in its effort to escape the limitations of dogma, and thereby gain access to the whole reality of the past. The quest of the historical Jesus was originally the quest after 'the Jesus of Nazareth

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[31] Hart, *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, 152.

[32] Hart, *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, 152.

[33] For more on the methodology of historical criticism read my article "Historical Criticism versus Narrative Criticism," in this same edition of Journal of COTR Theological Seminary vol. 1.2, February 2012, pp.19-48.

[34] Hart, *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, 152.

[35] Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (New York: Macmillan, 1906, 1968), 4.

who actually lived in first-century Palestine', unrestricted by the doctrinal presentations of him in the Bible, the creed and the Church.[36] So, the 'orthodox Christology' was posited against 'Jesus of Enlightenment', and was acclaimed that just as orthodox Christology was reached through faith and doctrine, it was assumed that 'real Jesus of Nazareth' could be found by means of the newly-discovered historiography promising to narrate the past 'as it actually was'.[37]

In the pre-quest era, that is, before Reimarus, Clinton Bennett asserts that, the orthodox Christology, inclusive of Roman and Protestantism, held that "[T]he Jesus who had lived, and the Christ of their faith, were one and the same."[38] The idea of inspiration vouched the gospel texts away from and beyond critical scholarship. And when certain aspects of dogma on Jesus could not be found explicitly in Gospels, the Church claimed inspiration of the Holy Spirit, canonizing the dogmatic Christ.[39] And as miracles were commonly associated with various saints, who too were canonized, the miracles of the NT were taken for granted.[40] But, this did not take long to change.

Many Christian scholars during the Enlightenment, Reformation and Renaissance who concluded that the Gospels could not be accepted as reliable, authentic, historical accounts of Jesus concluded that Christianity was false, and ceased to call themselves Christians.[41] This way, the quest turned out to be more of an anti-dogmatic, anti-Church and anti-God in its inception and nature, and less historical in concern. The dogmatic Christ posited by the church was not palatable to the mind of the Christian scholars whose hearts were saturated with deistic philosophy. However, all this ended by Schweitzer's book and the quest came to a halt for a short period of time.

The time after Schweitzer's work was followed up by a hiatus, a period of "No Quest," which coincided with the work of Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) from 1923-1953, a German Existentialist,[42] who in total contrast to the agenda of the first quest for historical Jesus movement, denied and severed all or

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[36] James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 27-28.
[37] Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 28.
[38] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 81.
[39] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 81.
[40] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 90.
[41] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 90-91.
[42] Bultmann's existential teachings had its roots in Martin Heidegger's (1889-1976) philosophy. Heidegger, though existentialism pre-dates him, he is considered the best-known existentialist thinker. Existentialism is derived from German *Existenzphilosophie*. It is defined as an attempt to philosophize from the standpoint of the actor, rather than, as in classical rationalistic philosophy, from that of the detached spectator. It is not a fixed body of philosophical doctrines, rather, it is an approach. An approach to life, which cannot be taught but can only be experienced.

any historical connections of Christian faith to history through his existential approach to the Gospels. He taught that history and historical element is irrelevant to faith.[43] Such ahistorical teachings of Bultmann resulted in the rise of docetic view of Christ.

If the 'old quest' had begun in 1778 by Reimarus and ended by Schweitzer in 1906, after a gap of half a century, in the year 1953, the 'new quest' was born. Ernst Kasemann (1906-98) in 1953, a former pupil of Bultmann, delivered a lecture to a group of Bultmann's students, which was later published as *Essays on New Testament Themes* in 1964[44] resulted in the birth of the "new quest" of historical Jesus. The lecture also became a major divisive line between the old quest and the new quest, and rejuvenated the new interest in the quest of historical Jesus. The core issue Kasemann addressed in his lecture was the theological problem that if the identity between the earthly Jesus and the exalted Christ is broken by radical historical skepticism, as Bultmann had insisted, then, he said, we are left with a Christ that is docetic and mythic.[45]

Later in 1959, John M. Robinson published the book with the name *New Quest*, which gave the "Second Quest" the name "New Quest."[46] The first quest was conditioned largely by Reimarus' presuppositions, whereas the

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Existentialism is a revolt against rationalism, for rationalism had always stressed on reason alone, and has always failed to progress beyond the obvious, and has lacked engagement with people and has ignored their needs. It is a revolt against external authority, ready-made world views, authoritarian and conventional moral values and codes of conduct. Man has been dumped into the world whether he likes it or not. He has to make his own way in it, creating his own values and determining his existence as he goes along. It is this which distinguishes man from things and animals. But if he refuses, he elapses into the kind of existence that things and animals have, instead of living an authentic human existence. Hence, Choice is the center of human existence. This approach stresses the existential moment in hermeneutics and preaching, in which humanity is summoned to respond to the call of God to live an authentic life. But, it is said to paint an accurate picture of life without God, by emphasizing human experience. The "Death of God" theology is said to have its origins in existentialism. Due to the emphasis on human experience there is a loss of objectivity and its theology tends to be more deistic or atheistic and anthropocentric. The current modern culture is allowed to operate as a standard to judge the biblical and theological matters. For the existentialists, Jesus is just a perfect example of authentic existence, who made a better choice. Bultmann's demythologizing program uses Heideggerian existentialism in interpreting the gospel of the death and resurrection as a challenge to men to choose between authentic (like humans) and inauthentic existence (like things or animals). See Colin Brown, "Existentialism," in J.D. Douglas (gen. ed), *The New Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1978), 365. And also E.D. Cook, "Existentialism," in Ferguson and Wright (eds), *New Dictionary of Theology*, 243-244.

[43] Hal Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus and the Evolution of Consciousness* (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL, 2000), 23.

[44] Ernst Kasemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM Press, 1964), 15-47.

[45] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 24.

[46] Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 28.

New Quest's agenda was to reestablish historical links between Jesus of Nazareth and Christ, in order to avoid docetism and the reduction of Christianity to myth. The motivation for this task was theological and not historical.[47] To a large extent, the New Quest was anti-Bultmann. Kasemann's presuppositions laid the guidelines for the second quest. Kasemann taught that gospels did preserve authentic historical material about Jesus, and that it could be recovered.[48] To this end, he proposed the criterion of dissimilarity to determine the authenticity of the distinctive material about Jesus in the gospels. By this criterion, he said, statements attributed to Jesus in the gospels that can be shown not to derive from either a Jewish or an early Christian context are considered to be authentic Jesus material. Just as the anti-miraculous historical principle of analogy guided the first quest, the criterion of dissimilarity was the basis to use the historical method to establish bed-rock Jesus tradition.[49] The second questers made much use of form, redaction, and tradition criticism, and they did so by requiring the burden of proof to fall on the need to show authenticity.[50]

The new quest was less concerned with history more occupied with the theological concern.[51] The primary concern was to fend off Christian identity from Judaism and early Christian and gnostic heresies, for which they preferred orthodox sources.[52] If Schweitzer ended the first quest, then Ben Witherington seems to have ended the second quest when he says: "As the towering influence of Bultmann and the enthusiasm for existentialism began to wane, so did the enthusiasm for the Second Quest, leaving the movement dead in the water by the early 1970s."[53] Marcus J. Borg wrote, as cited by Schwarz, "A third quest of historical Jesus is underway, replacing the old quest of the nineteenth century and the short-lived 'new quest' of the late 1950's and early 1960's."[54]

But, some believe that the second quest continues in continuity with the current flurry of Life of Jesus research that began in the 1980s and remains

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[47] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 24-25.
[48] Kasemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, 22.
[49] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 23-24.
[50] Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 146.
[51] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 24.
[52] Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 10.
[53] Ben Witherington, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Illinois: IVP, 1995), 11.
[54] Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge, Pasadena: Trinity, 1994), ix. Cited in Schwarz, *Christology*, 60-61.

active today.[55] Bennett opines that the Third Quest has already arrived and is running alongside the Second Quest."[56] The only way according to W. Barnes Tatum is to distinguish the Second Quest's "apologetic theological concern" from the Third Quest's "theological neutrality."[57] But even this does not help much, since, Norman Tom Wright, who coined the term "third quest," who at the same time apologetically defends Christian beliefs, could be mistaken for a "second quester."[58] However, the primary concern that seems to differentiate the third quest from second quest is the third quest's re-focusing on the Jewish background of Jesus' life and ministry.

In the third quest, the early proponent of Jewish concerns was Joachim Jeremias (1900-1979), who argued for evidence of authenticity in Jesus' teaching by considering the Aramaic backdrop of Jesus' teaching.[59] This Jewish concern and tendency to see far more historicity in the Gospels than the previous quests is the major feature of the third quest.[60] To classify the questers of the third quest Bennett introduces two categories of "insider" (subjective defender) and "outsider" (objective researcher), and classifies Jesus Seminar and scholars such as, E. P. Sanders as "outsiders," and Norman Tom Wright and I. Howard Marshall as "insider-like" scholars having sensitivity towards Christian convictions and defenders of traditional Jesus.[61]

Wright and Marshall argued that Jesus was conscious of his messiahship, sonship and that Jesus had foreknowledge of his own future. They reject the view that Jesus as Son of God only gained ontological significance "from the resurrection onwards" and argue that the resurrection served to confirm Jesus' "existing position and status." They believe in the historicity of the resurrection and all the miracles. And that Jesus died to atone for human sin.[62] Investigation of the messianic self-understanding of Jesus became the primary concern of most of the third questers.

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[55] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 25.

[56] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 136.

[57] W. Barnes Tatum, *In Quest of Jesus* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 238. cited in Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 136.

[58] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 136. and also see in Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 25.

[59] Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 147.

[60] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 25. and also in Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 147.

[61] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 136.

[62] These views of Marshall and Wright are reflected in their following books. I. Howard Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1977). N. T. Wright, *Who was Jesus?* (London: SPCK, 1992).

Charlesworth in his quest focuses on what Jesus "said", and ends up in seeking to discern what Jesus really "intended to communicate". He deduces the self-understanding of Jesus as that Jesus saw himself as a prophet in line with OT prophets and that he thought of himself as God's son.[63] Many other questers began to determine the understanding of Jesus, and the self-understanding of Jesus through insights drawn from cultural and social anthropology, medical anthropology, and sociology.[64]

John Dominic Crossan, honestly admits that the historical Jesus here on earth is a scholarly reconstruction. He asserts that a noncommitted, objective, dispassionate historical study like 19th century research attempted is impossible to achieve. He predicts that scholars will always confront us with divergent historical Jesuses. He says all this, while Crossan is constructing his own version of Jesus by way of reconstructing the original text of the NT. He seems to go too far in discovering a Jesus who is a Jewish cynic peasant with an alternative social vision.[65]

Bock presents a list of 21st century contemporary contributors of the third quest. Those who argue for a messianic Jesus include Peter Stuhlmacher, James D. G. Dunn, Marinus de Jonge, and Markus Bockmuehl. And also, Craig E. Evans (treating issues tied to the last week of Jesus' life and the Jewish roots of his message.), Martin Hengel (concentrating on early Christology, discipleship teaching, and the use of Psalm 110), Robert Webb (on John the Baptist), E. Earle Ellis (on the stability and form of early traditions), Scot McKnight (on Jesus' appeal to issues associated with Israel as a nation), Craig Blomberg (on the reliability of the Gospels), Ben Witherington III (on early Christology and the teaching of Jesus), Robert Stein (on the key titles of Jesus), Brent Kinman (on the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem), and Darrell Bock himself (on Jewish examination of Jesus), and Grant Osborne (on resurrection traditions).[66]

In summary, the first quest was deistic and anti-dogmatic, and historical in concern. The second quest was anti-Bultmannian and anti-mythic, and theological in concern. The third quest was in its entirety anti-first and anti-second quest and intended to revisit the first century Jewish setting and approach it with belief in God and miracles, with an exception of the Jesus Seminar, who grant less credence to the authority of the Gospels.

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[63] Schwarz, *Christology*, 66.
[64] Bennett, *In Search of Jesus*, 140. and also in Schwarz, *Christology*, 66.
[65] Schwarz, *Christology*, 68-69.
[66] Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 146.

Towards the end of the second quest and rise of the third quest, the interesting development in the quest for historical Jesus was the rise of interest in the life of Jesus. In two ways the life of Jesus is being approached in the third quest. *One*, the understanding of the life of Jesus from a general understanding of the first century Jewish life setting in Galilee and Judea. This required a renewed focus both on the Gospels and the other first century literature. *Two*, the self-understanding of Jesus. Though the first questers did acknowledge the value of unearthing the self-understanding of Jesus, but since they were skeptical of all and any supernatural in the words of Jesus they chose to be deaf to the self-expressions of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. But, the third questers' faith based approach has yielded more ear and credence to the self-expressions of Jesus in the Gospels. Their aim is to know what Jesus knew about himself. Did he know that he was the messiah? Or did he know that he was the Christ. Or was it that his followers later appended this title to him after his demise. The third quest began to consider that determining the self-understanding of Jesus is the key to the debate of "historical Jesus versus dogmatic Christ". The Gospels became the major source of the self-understanding of Jesus. This also resulted in revisiting the authenticity and the authority of the Gospels. Later we will see how important this is for our concern in this paper.

2. Historical Jesus versus Dogmatic Christ

According to Robinson, the term "historical" in the phrase "historical Jesus" is used with the sense of "things in the past which have been established by objective scholarship," which when prefixed to "Jesus" means "What can be known of Jesus of Nazareth by means of the scientific methods of the historian."[67] Then, the phrase "historical Jesus" is not so much related to the "Jesus of Nazareth" as it is related to the modern historical-critical research. So, the "historical Jesus" is not the man who walked the tracks and hills of Galilee, rather he is what we know *about* that Jesus, what we can reconstruct of that Jesus by historical research.[68] The "historical Jesus" is the Jesus constructed by historical research.[69] That is, the historical Jesus is the historian's Jesus, as against the dogmatician's Jesus.

But, Dunn notifies that the historicists have always used the phrase "historical Jesus" to refer to the man behind the Gospels, the real Jesus, the actual Jesus.[70] To this Robinson says that in the 19th century, the two meanings of the "historical Jesus": that is, "Jesus of Nazareth as he actually was" coincided

[67] Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 26.
[68] Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus*, 28.
[69] Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 26.
[70] Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus*, 29.

with "the reconstruction of his biography by means of objective historical method."[71] That is, whatever picture of Jesus the historicist's retrieved from his study of the past was considered the actual Jesus. The 'reconstructed Jesus' was the 'actual Jesus'. The question that concerns this paper is not the "reconstructed Jesus" of historicists, but whether the actual or real Jesus who walked the hills of Galilee is relevant for our faith today or is he dispensable. Can we trade the dogmatic Christ for the historical Jesus?

Just as "historical Jesus" has two referents, one the real Jesus of history and the other is the reconstructed Jesus of the historian, similarly, in the language of the questers, "dogmatic Christ" too refers to two different Christs. *One*, the Christ of the eighteen centuries of dogma of the 18th century Church, the "confessional Christ." *Two*, Christ figure as presented in the canonical and extracanonical Gospels, the "Christ of faith" of the early Christians.[72] The dogmas such as incarnation, preexistence, and virgin birth have their partial origins in the NT. And the dogmas such as hypostatic union, monothelitism, monophysitism, filiation and procession, and ontological second person of the Trinity are deemed products of later Church periods.[73]

Dunn says, the term "Christ" was so attached to the name Jesus within about twenty years of his death that it functioned more or less as a personal name: Jesus Christ.[74] A. E. Harvey states that the 18th and 19th century questers happened to discover that the gospels are not records of what in fact took place, rather, the product of the early Christians' own theological reflections.[75] So, they concluded the title Christ was ascribed to Jesus by the later Christians. R. T. France says, this view began in the late 18th century Enlightenment period. The supernatural element in the gospel stories were discredited of any truth and the Gospels were being treated as 'myth' rather than history.[76] Subsequently, the miracles and angelic appearances were considered not as history but as imaginary stories which grew up around the figure of Jesus.[77]

Therefore, primary task in interpreting the Gospels was especially in terms of determining or sorting out what is *historical* and what is *theological* (dogmatic) in them, by employing the historical-critical approaches, which Thor Hall opines was a "naïve attempt to get rid of theology and mythology and penetrate to the bare facts – the biographical truth about Jesus, cleansed of all doctrinal superstructures."[78]

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[71] Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 28.
[72] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 198.
[73] Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1937), 83-123.
[74] James D. G. Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), 197-199.
[75] A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 1.
[76] R.T. France, *The Evidence for Jesus* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986), 94.
[77] France, *The Evidence for Jesus*, 94.
[78] Hall, *The Evolution of Christology*, 34.

Christ was seen as the exaggerating factor of the human Jesus. The term "Christ" was from thereafter to be seen by historians as an embodiment of all and every element of supernatural qualities including divinity. In other words, if the element of Christ was peeled off the life of Jesus, the historicists hoped that they would retrieve Jesus as he actually was.

However, Paul Tillich argues that the name "Jesus Christ" must be interpreted in the light of the Caesarea Philippi story in Mark 8. Tillich points out that 'Jesus Christ' is not an individual name, consisting of a first and a second name, but that it is the combination of an individual name, the name of a certain man who lived in Nazareth between the years 1 and 30, with the title "the Christ," which means the "anointed one." Therefore, Tillich argues that the name Jesus Christ must be understood as "Jesus who is called the Christ," or "Jesus the Christ."[79] And even Hal Childs opines that the separation of Jesus and Christ is impossible, for they are ontological unity.[80]

It is now apparent that "historical Jesus" according to the "historical Jesus movement" was not the Jesus of the Gospels, but an ordinary man who lived in Galilee and died in Judea. To reach that "ordinary Jesus" the historians have denied everything that they thought was a hindrance to their quest which included not just the dogma of the 18th century Church, but also the dogma of the 1st century Church. Aversion to the 18th century dogma is understandable, but the historians' antipathy towards 18 centuries of dogma is definitely a error because it amounts to say that the church for 18 centuries had built its faith in lies. And the ultimate fallacy they commit is accusing the New Testament itself as the dogma of the early church and the quest takes a painful turn when they begin to peel off the Gospels from the face of the first century church labeling them as early church's dogmatic productions.

The questers then began to look for data in the extra-Gospel sources and treated them with more credence than the biblical data. Their skepticism towards the Gospels resulted in arriving at a Jesus who was nothing like the Jesus of the New Testament. Dunn points out that to recover the historical Jesus was not simply a matter of stripping away the faith of creeds and later dogma. It was already the faith of the first Christians that needed to be stripped away.[81] This poses a major challenge to the authenticity of the Gospels. The question is are they dogmatic or historic?

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[79] Paul Tillich, "The Reality of the Christ," in Harvey K. McArthur (ed), *In Search of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribener Sons, 1969), 220.
[80] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus,* 221.
[81] Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus,* 18.

3. The Problem of Sources = Gospels

It would not be an overstatement to say that the conflict of "historical Jesus versus dogmatic Christ" has its roots in the Gospels. Gospels are a witness to this conflict. Gospels present this as a national issue, and for Israel every national issue was basically a theological issue. The Gospels become the platform where both versions of our debate are played out. The conflict of 'history versus dogma' and the 'Jesus versus Christ' are integrally connected to the Gospels. Gospels are the ancient church's Greek literatures that contain the history of the life of Jesus. Simultaneously, the Gospels are also the literary records which present Jesus as Christ. This way they are both history of the life Jesus and they are also the dogma of the Church.

Whereas, Rudolf Bultmann argued that it is not possible to know the historical Jesus because it is not possible to find reliable historical evidence about him. So, in his Theology of the New Testament, Bultmann does not discuss the teaching of Jesus as a part of NT theology but as a presupposition of it. For, Bultmann what 'saves' us is the 'preaching' found in the NT. Bultmann held such a view because, he argued that the truth of the message as found in the Gospels cannot be dependent on historical proof.[82] The reasons for Bultmann's such attitude towards Gospels was that Gospels were written after Jesus' death and resurrection, they were mostly products of the early Christian faith, ascribing extraordinary miracles and resurrection story to Jesus. Guenther Bornkamm qualifies this allegation by arguing that "Although the Gospels do not speak of the history of Jesus in the way of reproducing the course of his career in all its happenings and stages, in its inner and outer development, nevertheless they do speak of history as occurrence and event."[83]

Bornkamm's affirmation that Gospels do speak of history is further qualified by David Aune. Aune points out that the view that *kerygma* (dogma) and history are mutually exclusive categories is wrong on two counts. *Kerygma* and history properly understood are overlapping conceptions and it is illegitimate to allow theological assumptions to determine the results of literary criticism.[84] If so, history and krygma or dogma are overlapping conceptions, that is they are inseparably connected and so divorcing one amounts to divorcing the other. Then, by their very nature Gospels are both history and dogma, and since history and dogma are not two mutually exclusive categories. Gospels are both historical and dogmatic.

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[82] Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus*, 76.

[83] Guenther Bornkamm, "Faith and History in the Gospels," in Harvey K. McArthur (ed), *In Search of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribener Sons, 1969), 220.

[84] David E. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 64-65.

However, in contrast to Bornkamm's assertion that Gospels speak of history as occurrence and event, for the ancient Greeks understood history was a mere arena in which transcendent values were exemplified in exceptional individuals and states that could serve as models for the present and future. Such a view of history, Aune says, is essentially "anti-historical", because it valued persons as types and paradigms rather than as historical individuals. Yet, according to Aune, the Gospels are historical-biographical subtypes of the Greco-Roman biographies focusing on proclamation. He asserts that it is wrong to say Gospels have no interest in history and cannot be "biographical", because biographies by default were intrinsically concerned with history.[85]

In connection with Gospels as biographies, Richard Burridge further argues with certainty that Gospels were patterned after ancient *Bios*. He further points out that the major purpose and function of Bios was in a context of didactic or philosophical polemic and conflict. The first instance of amalgamation of *history and encomium* (a formal expression of praise) was the debate about Socrates.[86] This amalgamation of *history* and *encomium* can be read for our purposes as the amalgamation of *history* and *dogma*. This is similar to what Aune's argument that *history* and *kerygma* are overlapping conceptions.

But, Graham N. Stanton argues for the uniqueness of the genre of the Gospels. He says that to the readers familiar with the OT or with later Jewish writings, or with Greco-Roman writings of the period, the gospels would recall either some of the elements of a biography, or of a theological treatise, or perhaps even of a tragedy. But that the gospels do not fit easily and naturally into any of these categories.[87] There might be many reasons for this, but one thing that can be gleaned from Stanton's argument is that this uniqueness of the Gospel might in itself have posed a unique interpretative challenge to Reimarus and the following questers. Since they are unique, they amalgamation of history and dogma in them too might be unique.

Nevertheless, the point is that it would be totally absurd to consider Gospels as totally devoid of historical material. The gospels are records of the history and dogma (*kerygma* or *encomium*) of the early Church. But the problem is who decides how much and which part of the Gospels are historical and which ones are theological reflections. Since the real conflict that we are concerned with is Jesus *versus* Christ. The question is: Are the (supernatural) material which reflect Jesus as Christ purely theological or dogmatic and so

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[85] Aune, *The New Testament*, 64-65.

[86] Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Greco-Roman Biography*, 2nd. edn (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004), 76.

[87] Graham N. Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 20.

later concoctions? Because, the way the material is integrally connected to the historical elements that separating would destroy the literary unity. Edward Schillebeeckx says, the solution to the above problem depends on the continuity or discontinuity of 'Jesus is Christ' from the Gospels to the Epistles, in terms of how Jesus understood himself, and how the apostles understood him after resurrection.[88]

4. The Problem of the Self-Understanding of Jesus

According to Craig Evans, "the most problematical aspect of the historical Jesus has to do with his self-understanding."[89] That is, did Jesus think of himself as Israel's Messiah? Or was it the post-resurrection creation of the disciples? Schillebeeckx argues that "without already existing models it was out of the question for a triumphalist, Jewish messiah concept to be shaped within a few years by the Christians into a suffering Messiah."[90]

This is true since, hope for ultimate salvation of Israel was almost universal in ancient Judaism, although it took many different forms.[91] The Jewish messianic expectations are rooted in the promise of a son to David who would secure his kingdom and throne for ever (2 Sam.7:12-13, 16). This promise was picked up and echoed in the confidence that God would raise up a shoot from the stump of Jesse (Isa.11:1-2), a royal 'branch' (Jer.23:5, 33:15), a Davidic 'prince' (Ezek.34:24, 37:25). This hope was voiced even in the post-exilic period (Hag.2:23; Zech.3:8, 6:12), but thereafter it faded, presumably with the disappearance of the Davidic line.[92]

However, the hope of a royal messiah revived with the reemergence and failure of the kingship during the Hasmonean period, as reflected in Psalms of Solomon 17:21: "See, Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David, to rule over Israel, your servant, in the time which you chose, O! God..."; and in 18:5: "May God purify Israel for the day of mercy in blessing, for the appointed day when He raises up his Messiah."[93]

The messianic conceptions of certain circles produced the picture of a Messiah who is predominantly this-worldly, national and political, whereas the views of other circles produced the picture of a predominantly transcendental, eternal and universal Messiah. These two complexes of ideas were in part

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[88] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 71.
[89] Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (Boston: Brill Academic, 1995), 438.
[90] Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 514.
[91] Markus Bockmuehl, *This Jesus: Martyr, Lord, Messiah* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 42.
[92] James D.G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making: Jesus Remembered*, vol.1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 619.
[93] Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, vol.1, 619.

represented by different names: "Messiah" and "Son of Man". In some writings these two conceptions were clearly distinguished, in others they were brought together, yet nowhere they were completely fused. Together they formed part of that complex eschatology which is the background of the inter-testamental literature and also of the NT faith.[94] Therefore, they represent in their development two separate strands of eschatological expectation and indicate two distinct emphases of "messianic hope."[95] In course of time, there emerged a Messianic figure both eternal and transcendental, and also historical and human, in an eschatology, both historical and also supra-historical and absolute.[96]

In Synoptics, Jesus used Son of man for himself, but discouraged the use of messiah. This suggests that at least in those Jewish circles represented by disciples, there was at that time no obvious association between them, the Son of man whatever they may have understood by it, was something altogether different. When Jesus interpreted his messiahship in terms of 'son of man' he was bringing together two conceptions hitherto unequated in the thought of popular Judaism.[97]

However, the title "Christ" is used over four hundred and fifty times in the NT, but within the Gospels it was used only seven times as a self-designation by Jesus himself. And the title "Son of Man" is found once in rest of the NT, but sixty-nine times in the Synoptics as a self-designation of Jesus. Based on this, Schwarz argues that "Christ" was the favorite title of the later Christian church to describe the person and work of Jesus, whereas, Jesus did not use it much for himself. And about the "son of man," Schwarz argues that it is difficult to substantiate that the early church created this title and conferred it upon Jesus. Because, for the early church to undertake such a project, the NT authors would have had to use great care to see that this title appeared virtually exclusively in the Gospels and then only in sayings of Jesus, and totally absent in the epistles; and the Church would also have to be careful not to use this "favorite title" of Jesus in their own designation of him, that it would have to put a title into the mouth of Jesus that later came into disuse, which is very unlikely.[98]

Therefore, it is more possible that Jesus was using the title "son of man" as a messianic self-designation as against the popular Jewish expectations.

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[94] D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 308.
[95] Russell, *The Method and Message*, 331-332.
[96] Russell, *The Method and Message*, 332.
[97] Russell, *The Method and Message*, 334.
[98] Schwarz, *Christology*, 228.

Because, the first century Jews seem to have the idea of messiah as the "prophet-like-Moses," for this idea was kingly as it was prophetic. In Rabbinic tradition Moses was compared with the Messiah. Moses was thought to have come into existence prior to the creation of the universe. And later, there were even comparisons made between Moses and David.[99] Moreover, in the 1st and 2nd century AD several persons evidently claimed some form of messianic status. Some were royal, with David as the model, others prophetic, usually with Moses as the model.[100]

However, the "messianic idea," or "Christology" was preexistent not only to the disciples but also to Jesus himself. Therefore, the messianic interactions in the Gospels are not concoctions of the disciples. Because of the nature of the mission and message of Jesus, the Jewish leaders and people, with new surge in messianic hope were already in search for a messiah, and so, it is not surprising that they approach Jesus with messianic questions. But, still this does not solve the issue of whether Jesus knew that he was a messiah, and especially in the light of Markan "messianic secret."

William Wrede argues that the "messianic secret" is the literary creation of Mark to cover up the fact that Jesus was not considered as the messiah in his life time. So, he concludes that Messiahship of Jesus, as we find it in the Gospels, is a product of Early Christian theology correcting history according to its own conceptions.[101] Bockmuehl argues that the original reason for Jesus' hesitancy may well have to do with his reluctance to endorse the strongly political, violent Messianism of a growing Jewish resistance movement, with whom Jesus radically disagreed about the manner in which the Kingdom of God would come about.[102] Contra Wrede, Dunn finds a publicity motif in Mark. He says, in Mark, the command to silence is not always found (5:1-20, 7:24-30, 9:14-29). In fact, in Mark 5:19-20, the healed demoniac is told to go and proclaim what the Lord has done for him.[103]

Dunn's assertion of publicity motif in Mark can be sufficiently attested from within the text of Mark. Jesus is presented as a well known public figure always thronged by crowds. The direction of the itinerancy of Jesus in Mark is from secrecy/privacy to popularity/publicity. The direction of the journeys of the crowd is from walking out of the cities, towns and villages towards

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[99] Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 59-60.
[100] Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 58.
[101] Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 337-338.
[102] Bockmuehl, *This Jesus*, 52.
[103] James D. G. Dunn, "The Messianic Secret in Mark," *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970), 99.

Jesus to the sea shores, deserts and mountains. Mark always is careful in mentioning that, apart from stationary encounters whenever Jesus is on the move the crowds soon identify him and surround him in a circular fashion, leaving no room to him.

Soon after the baptism in Jordan, after the initial ministry in Galilean shores, at the healing of Peter's mother-in-law in Capernaum, Jesus is thronged by multitudes of sick and possessed and Peter and others expect him to stay there with them. The next morning when Peter goes in search of Jesus, who had gone for prayer earlier that morning, Peters finds Jesus and says to him, "Everyone is looking for You" (Mark 1:37). Jesus responds with a programmatic statement which becomes the plot for the rest of the story in the gospel. He says "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." (Mark 1:38). Thereafter each chapter records how Jesus is travelling the hills and valleys of Palestine wherever he went constricted by multitudes from all directions both on land and sea shores (Mark 1:32-34; 2:1-2; 3:7-9; 3:20; 4:1; 4:35-36; 5:21-22; 6:1-2; 6:14; 6:31; 6:56; 7:24; 8:1-2; 9:14; 10:13, 17; 11:7-11; 12:12-14, 18, 28; 14:1-2; 15:1; 16:12-14). Time and again the impossibility of the maintenance of secrecy is stated by Mark in the parenthetical material (6:41; 7:24; 8:29-30; 9:2; 9:12; 15:2; cf.1:24; 1:43; 3:12; 5:7; 5:43; 9:30). Therefore, contra Wrede, there definitely is a publicity motif in the gospel of Mark, as stated by Dunn.

The term "Christ" (*Messiah*) is found seven times (1:1; 8:29; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21; 14:61; 15:32). Out of these two are significant within the plot of Mark, and both times it is his opponents who use the word "Christ" for Jesus whereas Jesus uses the phrase "Son of Man" for himself and on both the occasions he is reprimanded. One is the Peter's confession in 8:29-32; the other is the Trial of Jesus before the High Priest in 14:61-62. Peter rebukes Jesus for speaking about his death and resurrection. The High Priest rebukes Jesus for both accepting that he is the Christ and for speaking about exaltation after resurrection and the second coming.

Therefore, Jesus' self-understanding from within the text of Mark is evidently demonstrating that people of Jesus' time were aware of a "Christ", they had a "Christology" current and ingrained in their national mind. For at the time of trial of Jesus the primary accusation that is brought is that Jesus is "He Himself is Christ, a King" (Luke 23: 2; Matt. 27:11). The use of Christ and King in the same breath of accusation indicates that being Christ was being the King. That is why in the gospel Mark, if the High Priest interrogate Jesus of his "messiahship" (14:61), then Pilate is found investigating the "kingship" of Jesus (15:2). And later both the ideas are combined in a ridicule

by the chief priests and the soldiers in Mark 15:32: "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Therefore, Jesus' followers and his opponents both believed and questioned respectively of the messiahship of Jesus. And this messiahship was equivalent to kingship, whereas Jesus perceived his messiahship by using the title "Son of Man" for himself in his self-expressions. When he saw that Peter and rest of the disciples had realized the fact that the historical Jesus is their much hoped for dogmatic Christ, Jesus specifically warned them not to tell anyone about him.

The title "Son of man" is found fourteen times in the gospel of Mark (2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62; 15:39). Out of these, in eleven occasions the "Son of Man" is used in the context of death, resurrection, glorification and the second coming. This means that Jesus' opponents used the term "Christ", instead of using that title for him; Jesus chose to use the title "Son of Man" whenever he referred to himself as the messiah. The title "Christ" for his opponents conveyed a political king, but the title "son of man" for Jesus conveyed the betrayal, death, resurrection and glory. Christ and the Son of Man then must be taken as synonymous, at least that is what Marks intends in 1:1, when he says "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." It is now clear that there are two different Christologies at clash within Mark, two different concepts of Christ. In all we can conclude with all certainty that Jesus was very well aware that he was the "Christ", except he wanted the disciples to announce it only after the resurrection.

However, this still does not solve the problem of Jesus *versus* Christ, because, for Jews, Christ need not perform miracles or raise from the dead on the third day. Miracle-working was not a qualification of the Messiah. Bar Kochba, of the intertestamental period, was considered for nearly three years as Messiah without having accomplished a single miracle.[104] But, in the Gospels, miracles form an essential part of the ministry of Jesus. And, according to the self-understanding of Jesus being the messiah was to accomplish the mother of all miracles, the resurrection. The possibility of Christ performing miracles is as important as Jesus being Christ. If the miracles are denied to Christ, then messiahship of Jesus is denied, Jesus is no more Christ. This leads us to the question of miracles and their relationship to Jesus being Christ.

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[104] Schwarz, *Christology*, 211.

5. The Problem of Miracles

The reason why Jesus of history cannot be Christ, according to the questers, is because of the miraculous description of Christ in the Gospels and by the Church. The historicists' denial of the miracles was due to the presuppositional constraint set by the historical critical method upon the historian that historical phenomenon had to be explained in terms of material causes and effects, and not in terms of divine supernatural interventions.[105] So, Jesus too was to be understood in the light of history explained rationally, into which Christ was not fitting.

The rise of "historical-critical method" of studying the Scriptures pre-dated the work of the late 19th century German historian, Ernst Troeltsch, by more than a century, but it is he who gave the method its most objective criteria. For the study of the miracles he proposes the principle of analogy, which in essence meant, that the historian has no right to accept as historical fact the account of a past event for which he has no analogy in the present.[106] That is, without analogies from the present, Troeltsch said, we cannot understand the past. To this Wolfhart Pannenberg replies that it is not the lack of analogy that suggests something is unhistorical but only the presence of an analogy to something already known to be unhistorical.[107]

In simple words, Dunn says, if the historian really desires to be objective, it would be fair on his part to accept history as it is. If history or historical texts claim supernatural events, then, Dunn says it is more objective to disprove them than deny them *a priori*.[108] In more rational words, Norman Geisler says, as the scientific laws are based on regular and repeatable, scientists as scientists have no right to insist that every irregular and non-repeatable event is also a natural event.[109] Since, the origins of the universe and the origins of life are today considered as singular and unrepeatable events, the antisupernaturalistic attitude of science has collapsed.[110] Geisler states, "belief in miracles does not destroy the integrity of scientific methodology, only its sovereignty. It says in effect that science does not have sovereign claim to explain all events as natural, but only those that are regular, repeatable, and/or predictable."[111] However, according to Geisler, as cited by Craig

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[105] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 22.

[106] Ernst Troeltsch, "Historiography," in James Hastings (ed) *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol.6 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 718.

[107] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol.1 (London: SCM, 1970), 48-49.

[108] Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*, vol.1, 13, 19, 29-34, 68-70.

[109] Norman L. Geisler, *Miracles and the Modern Mind: A Defense of Biblical Miracles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1982), 58.

[110] Norman L. Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 441.

[111] Geisler, *Miracles and the Modern Mind*, 58.

Blomberg, miracles follow logically if theism is true, for it presupposes that some kind of omnipotent personal agent exists, but not if deism or athiesm is.[112]

On the other hand, C.S. Lewis argues that history by itself cannot prove or disprove miracles, since historical inquiry is dependent on human senses and human experiences, and that since senses are not infallible, and since human experience depends on the kind of philosophy we bring to experience. That is, if it is believed that miracles are impossible then no amount of historical evidence will convince us, but if believed that they are possible then the question is how probable they are. If they are possible but immensely improbable, then only mathematically demonstrative evidence will convince us, and since history never provides that degree of evidence for any event, history can never convince us that a miracle occurred. If, on the other hand, miracles are not intrinsically improbable, then the existing evidence will be sufficient to convince us that quite a number of miracles have occurred. The results of our historical enquiries thus depends on the philosophical views which we have been holding before we even began to look at the evidence. The philosophical questions must therefore come first.[113]

Therefore, Troeltsch's principle of analogy, is also a self-refuting principle that assumes the truth of a nonmiraculous worldview in order to prove that one cannot justify a miraculous worldview.[114] Later, Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) himself stated that "the real problem for theology was not that biblical critics emerged from their libraries with results disturbing to believers but that the historical-critical method itself was based on assumptions quite irreconcilable with traditional belief."[115]

Now that miracles seem logically possible, and that Christ is possibly the messiah, and yet the messianic officer, from a Jewish point of view, does not necessarily be a miracle worker and even be God. Therefore, being Christ was not being God. The concept of Christ and God were two different categories for the Jews, or else why would they inquire (Mk.14:61) or accuse (Lk. 23:2) Jesus of being Christ. Then, still the point that Jesus is Christ and claimed to be in some sense to be equal with God, and later the early Christians worshipping Jesus as God need to be reckoned with.

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[112] Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Illinois: IVP, 1987), 75.
[113] C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (Glasgow, Great Britain: William Collins Sons & Co., 1947), 7-8.
[114] R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas, *In Defence of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History* (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1997), 97.
[115] Ernst Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Shrifte*, vol. II (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1913), 729-753. cited in Van Austin Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 4-5.

6. Divine-Messiahship of Jesus

N.T. Wright states that 'Messiah' or 'Christ' does not mean 'the/a divine one'. And that it is very misleading to use the words as shorthand for the divine nature or being of Jesus. Wright says, it is comparatively easy to argue that Jesus believed he was the Messiah, but that it is much harder to argue that he thought he was in some sense identified with Israel's God.[116]

Instead of psychoanalyzing Jesus to identify his self-understanding, Wright says, it is better to understand Jesus' self-understanding in terms of "vocational self-understanding," i.e., what Jesus' mission was, and how did he understand his mission. To analyze Jesus' mission, Wright proposes the twin Temple-Torah themes as the key to Jesus' 'self'.[117] According to Wright, Israel expected Yahweh to return in person and dwell among them. For Jews, temple was the meeting place of God and world. And in Jesus' ministry the in breaking of the kingdom of God, and his ministry being focused on the Temple: Jesus acting as a one-man Temple-substitute by offering forgiveness of sins (Mk.2:10), restoration into fellowship with God, and by healing, Wright says, Jesus was leading a counter-Temple movement, which is reflected in his final trial, of accusation that Jesus threatened the Temple of imminent destruction.[118] It is in this the roots of incarnation lie, says Wright, fulfilling the long-held Jewish beliefs about what God would one day do in person – dwell/tabernacle among them.[119]

According to Wright, Torah was already represented an incarnational symbol within Judaism, and by constant usage of "but I say to you," and "Amen" Jesus was not just presenting himself as new Moses or new Torah, but as new Torah-*giver*.[120] Therefore, Wright concludes "that Jesus believed himself called to do and be things which, in the traditions to which he fell heir, only Israel's God, YHWH, was to do and be."[121]

Wright's interpretation of Jesus as temple-torah is well attested in the Gospel of John. The temple=body language in John 2:19-21 in relation to the death and resurrection of Jesus, further qualifies the mediatorial role of the title Son of Man, whose flesh/body, April D. Deconick argues, is the temple/tent of Yahweh (1:14) among us, that linked heaven and earth, and in whose

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[116] N.T. Wright, "Jesus' Self-Understanding," in Stephen T. Davis, D Kendall, and G. O' Collins (eds), *The Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 52.
[117] Wright, "Jesus' Self-Understanding," 53-54.
[118] Wright, "Jesus' Self-Understanding," 56-57.
[119] Wright, "Jesus' Self-Understanding," 56.
[120] Wright, "Jesus' Self-Understanding," 58.
[121] Wright, "Jesus' Self-Understanding," 59.

flesh/body the glory of God dwelt (1:14), seeing whom was to see the Father (14:9).[122] This new locale meant that by making a pilgrimage to Jesus the Son of Man, was to journey to the real Temple, which replaced the corrupt Temple in Jerusalem (2:13-22).

This theme of temple-torah principle not only demonstrates that Jesus is God, but also surpasses in being the messiah of the kind he is. This is certainly the reason that Jesus refused to identify himself with the political Christology current in his time, because Jesus was aware that his was of a divine Christology expressed in Son of Man Christology.

7. Necessary Presuppositions

Luke Timothy Johnson bemoans at the majority of historicists' false assumption that the nature of "history" and the "historical" is unproblematic, rather he asserts that it is deeply problematical.[123] Dunn contends that the earlier quests have failed because they started from the wrong place, from the wrong assumptions, and viewed the relevant data from the wrong perspective.[124]

According to Dunn is, an inescapable starting point for any quest for Jesus should be the historical fact that Jesus made a lasting impact on his disciples.[125] No one with any sense of history can dispute that Jesus existed and that he was active in some sort of mission in Galilee, probably in the late 20s or early 30s of the first century, prior to his execution in Jerusalem "under Pontius Pilate."[126]

This mission of Jesus had an impact on many, more particularly on disciples, who responded to Jesus through "faith commitment." So, Jesus made a faith-creating impact, and it is from that initial disciple-making impact that all else follows, more particularly the Jesus tradition and the Gospels, which were expression of their faith in Jesus, that he is "the Christ."[127] Then, the very initial proclamations about Jesus were "dogmatic" in the sense that they were "confessions," and were "Christ-ological," if not "theological" in the sense that the confession involved that the Jesus is indeed the Christ. The historical Jesus is the dogmatic Christ. Christ of faith is the Jesus of history.

It is imperative for any quest of historical Jesus accepting the preexistence of Christology both prior to the disciples and to the life of Jesus. The whole

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[122] April D. Deconick, *Voices of the Mystics: Early Christian Discourse in the Gospels of John and Thomas and Other Ancient Christian Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 120-121.
[123] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996),
[124] Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus*, 15.
[125] Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus*, 22.
[126] Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus*, 22.
[127] Dunn, *A New Perspective on Jesus*, 23-26.

of national hope of Israel was summed up in the concept of the coming of the 'Messiah'. Messianism predates Jesus. The nation was in search of the messiah/Christ. The delegates from Jerusalem went to John the Baptist to find out who he is, whether he is the Christ (Jn. 1:19, 25). Therefore, the accusation that the Church of the 18th century or the 1st century dogmatized Jesus into Christ falls right on its face, because it was Jesus himself who required his followers to express faith that he is the Christ.

Conclusion

It is dogmatic Christ of faith whom we meet in the NT and not just the Jesus of history.[128] For, faith in Jesus was to confess that he is Christ. The question of who Jesus is cannot be separated from the question of salvation.[129] Jesus' particular mode of death – crucifixion, and his message and activity must also be bound up with his place in salvation history. Christology must be anchored in the message and life of Jesus, without which he cannot be recreated in the image of specific culture or ideology.[130] Then, quest to articulate who Jesus is must acknowledge the complexity of the very sources on which we draw to answer the question about Jesus.[131]

It is clear that none of the gospels provides a biography of Jesus or a verbatim record of his teaching. Each has a different portrait of Jesus, which is already an interpretation of his significance for particular Christians in particular places.[132] One of the most remarkable thing about the Synoptic Gospels is the honesty and realism with which they present the story of the beginnings of faith. Though removed twenty to sixty years from the time of Jesus, they were absolutely subject to author's/apostles' or early Christians' discretion, yet the central figure is Jesus of Nazareth.[133] Their objectivity is evident from the way they portray the opposition. The considerably credible groups, who could have had better knowledge of the Torah, are portrayed as the one who reject Jesus. Rather, poor and uneducated relatively gullible group is portrayed as the acceptors of Jesus' mission.

The content of the NT is both historical and theological. We need no longer take everything as historical, the way it was done in pre-critical times; nor do we have to sort the material, as the 19th century liberalism did, into separate

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[128] France, *The Evidence for Jesus*, 104.
[129] Reginald H. Fuller and Pheme Perkins, *Who is This Christ: Gospel Christology and Contemporary Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 17.
[130] Fuller and Pheme Perkins, *Who is This Christ*, 18.
[131] Fuller and Pheme Perkins, *Who is This Christ*, 14-15.
[132] Fuller and Pheme Perkins, *Who is This Christ*, 14-15.
[133] Thor Hall, *The Evolution of Christology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), 33.

batches, keeping only that which is unmistakably historical and dismissing that which is obviously mythological. History and theology are inseparable, both are involved in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Both contribute to making the NT the kind of book it is.[134] The story of early development of faith as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, is clearly both theologically and historically motivated. The Gospel writers not only wanted to make the theological statement that the faith has its center in the confession that Jesus is the Christ; they wanted also to make clear what the historical-factual process was through which this faith emerged. The theological statement makes clear that the Christian faith centers on the conviction that Jesus is the Christ, and the historical statement explains the dynamics of that faith commitment, how it came about. So, Synoptic Gospels help us understand both the content and the dynamics of early Christian faith.[135] "Christian faith," then, "is the affirmation of and adherence to a particular person who said and did particular things in a particular time and place in human history."[136]

It appears, then, that we cannot do without the historical Jesus if we are to believe in the Christ of faith. The Christ of faith is related to Jesus of history. The experience of the risen Lord has its historical root in the fact of Jesus. And this Christ of faith is God himself, making ontological Christology indispensable. There is a temptation to ignore the religion of the Gospels and to concentrate on the Epistles. Some are fixated on one part of the canon and deliberately ignore the rest of the canon. For some dogma is attractive, and history is aversive; for others history is original, and dogma is artificial. It is this paradoxical appeal the name "Jesus Christ" has to a Christian.

To such, Paul Tillich offers a cogent corrective in his following words;

> "Therefore, name Jesus Christ must be understood as "Jesus who is called the Christ," or Jesus who is Christ," or "Jesus as the Christ," or "Jesus the Christ." The context determines which of these interpretive phrases should be used; but one of them should be used in order to keep the original meaning of the name "Jesus Christ" alive, not only in theological thought but also in ecclesiastical practice. Christian preaching and teaching must continually re-emphasize the paradox which is often drowned in the liturgical and homiletic use of "Jesus Christ" as a proper name. "Jesus Christ" means – originally, essentially, and permanently— "Jesus who is the Christ."[137]

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[134] Hall, *The Evolution of Christology*, 34-35.
[135] Hall, *The Evolution of Christology*, 35.
[136] Jacob Neusner, "Who Needs "the Historical Jesus"? *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 4 (1994) 113.
[137] Tillich, "The Reality of the Christ," 220.

The obedience to the great commission can be achieved only through expressing our unskeptical faith that Jesus is Christ. This was the gospel of the early church. Acts 2:36 reads: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that *God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ*." And Acts 5:42 reads "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that *Jesus is the Christ*."

Monks, Friars and Monasteries - Mission in the West and the Comparable Patterns of the Ashrams in the East

Hainingchang Newme
M.Th. I, 2011-12, COTRTS

Introduction

The Great Commission is the mandate given to the Universal Church and it uses numerous methods to fulfill it. Monasticism in the West and Ashrams in India has been seen as two instruments to accomplish the mandate. This article discusses the history of these two movements within the history of Christianity and seeks to find the relevance for the contemporary context of India. It was presented to the M. Th. class taught by Rev. Dr. Dasan Jeyaraj for the subject "History of Missions".

Monasticism began and flourished in the deserts of Egypt in the fourth century and spread throughout the remainder of the known world. Men and women from all backgrounds embraced lives of asceticism and prayer and established a new spirituality and model of Christian living. Religious minded people believed it to be one of the most effective ways to obtain holiness. Ashram in India has similarities with monasticism of the West.

1. Meaning and Beginning of Monasticism

The word 'monastic' derived from the Greek word '*monos*' means 'alone.' Monasticism was an institution of ancient and medieval origin; established to regulate the ascetical and social conditions of the religious life. It literally means the act of 'dwelling alone,' or a person living in seclusion from the world.[1] It is a state of life in retirement from the world, adopted for motives of religion growing out of a principle seated in the love of solitude.[2] According to Hrangkhuma, "Monasticism was a movement of asceticism advocating a life of asceticism and contemplation, away from society."[3]

Egypt was the motherland of Christian monasticism and it sprang into existence at the beginning of the fourth century. The founders of monasticism

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[1] K. M. George, *Development of Christianity through the Centuries-Tradition and Discovery* (Tiruvalla: Christava Sahitya Samithi, 2005), 118.
[2] George, *Development of Christianity*, 119.
[3] F. Hrangkhuma, *An Introduction to Church History*, (Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 2005), 93.

were ordinary Egyptians untouched by Greek ideas. People were dissatisfied with life in the villages and towns and moved as hermits, perhaps due to persecution, slavery or a corrupt society[4] and the increasing of paganism and worldliness in the church.[5] Some Christians fled from the populous parts of Egypt to the surrounding deserts and remained there some time due to Decian persecution[6] of the third century.[7] Some of them settled there permanently to lead a holy life and they became the forerunners of the hermits.[8] Another reason may be due to rise of the Constantine church – state establishment, the life of a Christian professional offered considerable potential for worldly preferment.[9]

St. Anthony (270-356) went into the wilderness and organized a kind of monastic life for his disciples and he is considered as the father of monasticism.[10] Pachomius (290-346) contributed a lot for the smooth functioning of the monks. He introduced a community, rule and order.[11] Thus, beginning from Egypt the movement spread to Syria, to Asia Minor, and eventually throughout Western Europe.[12] The movement took three different forms:

1. Hermit (Living alone away from the society. It is an anglicized Latin word originating from the Greek *eemites* which means "of the desert")
2. Anchorite (Living in a group but concerned about one's own salvation. It is derived from the Greek term meaning 'to withdraw')
3. Cenobite (Living together in a community, derived from the Greek word meaning 'living in common with others')

2. The Difference between Monks and Friars

The Greek word for monk is *Monachos* which means "the one who lives alone,"[13] and the Sanskrit word for monk is '*muni*', one who keeps *mauna* (silence).[14] Monks live a life separated from others devoted to prayer or meditation. In the Western Christian tradition, while the monastic orders are also called *eremitical* (from Gr. *eemites* through Latin *eremita,* "of the desert"), the term *hermit*[15] is usually restricted to a person who lives

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[4] George, *Development of Christianity*, 120.
[5] Hrangkhuma, *An Introduction to Church History*, 90.
[6] Under the emperor Decius (250-251) many persecutions arose against the name of Christ.
[7] Jeans Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (London SPCK, 1974), 87-89.
[8] George, *Development of Christianity*, 121.
[9] Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive moments in the History of Christianity* (Michigan: Baker Books1999), 89.
[10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_monasticism_before_451. (19/12/2011.8.00. pm.)
[11] John Foster, *The first Advance Church History AD.29-500* (Delhi: Delhi 1972), 149.
[12] Brucel Shelley, *Church History in plain Language* (Dallas: word Publishing,1982), 134.
[13] Foster, *The first Advance Church History AD.29-500*, 146.
[14] Ignatius Puthiadam. *A Short History of Religious Life: From the Desert of Egypt to the Oasis of the Second Vatican Council* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, n.y.), 1.

completely separated from everyone else, while a monk lives with other monks. The Carthusians[16] grade this distinction by a rigid limitation of the contact its members have even with each other; most other orders live their daily cycle of work, prayer and study in community, guided by their adaptation or interpretation of the Rule[17] of St. Benedict of Nursia (480–547).

The term "*Friar*" stems from the Latin word *frater* through the French *frere* (brother), who belong to a mendicant order.[18] Historically, the monastic orders[19] supported themselves with farming, livestock-raising and other forms of manual labor, which entailed the communal possession of land and buildings. By contrast, the mendicant orders owned little beyond their residences and the bare minimum of possessions necessary to carry out their missions, subsiding on contributions from the community. Nowadays, both types of orders may run hospitals, outreach centers, schools and other public services, so this distinction between the two isn't always clear in practice. Both monks and friars live in community and chant the Divine Office in choir; they both take the traditional solemn vows of *poverty, chastity and obedience*.[20] Some orders may take an additional vow according to their missions. While a life of prayer and contemplation is the monk's *raison d'être*,[21] the friar lives to serve the larger community through charitable works. Moreover, while most monks are tied to a specific monastery for life, friars may be transferred from one convent to another according to the needs of the order. While some monks and friars are ordained, their primary function is prayer and celebration of the liturgy, not administration of the sacraments.[22] Just for this reason, not all monks and friars are called to Holy Orders.[23] Many people use the terms monk and friar interchangeably.

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[15] A hermit is a person who lives, to some degree, in seclusion from society. In Christianity, the term was originally applied to a Christian.

[16] The Carthusian Order, also called the Order of St. Bruno, is a Roman Catholic religious order of enclosed monastics. The order was founded by Saint Bruno of Cologne in 1084.

[17] The Rule of Saint Benedict (Regula Benedicti) is a book of precepts written by St. Benedict of Nursia for monks living communally under the authority of an abbot, written in the sixth century.

[18] The mendicant orders are religious orders which depend directly on the charity of the people for their livelihood.

[19] Order for the eremitic life is an early form of monastic living that preceded the monastic life in the cenobium. The Rule of St Benedict (ch. 1) lists hermits among four kinds of monks. In addition to hermits that are members of religious orders, modern Catholic Church law (canon 603) recognizes also consecrated hermits under the direction of their diocesan bishop as members of the Consecrated Life.

[20] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_monasticism. (19/12/2011.8.00 pm)

[21] *Raison d'être* is a French phrase meaning "reason for existence."

[22] http://tonylayne.blogspot.com/2010/09/whats-difference-between-monk-and-friar.html.(19/12/2011.8.00 pm.)

[23] The term Holy Orders is used by many Christian churches to refer to ordination or to those individuals ordained for a special role or ministry.

3. The Principles and Practices of Monasticism

The main purpose of the Christian monastic practice is to mould fallen human nature into likeness of the nature of Christ.[24] Therefore, to achieve this goal, various practices are introduced to help one purify his/her heart and enable him/her to obey the will of God. Some of the practices and principles are as follows:

3.1 The Practice of Monastic Life

3.1.1 Prayer

A monk devotes considerable part of his/her time in prayer consisting of meditation or recitation of the Psalter. Prayer is meant to achieve mental strength to resist the temptations of the evil,[25] to destroy evil desire and prevent sloth by an ever varying cycle of devotions.[26]

3.1.2 Works

The manual labor consists mainly in the weaving of mats or the cultivation of soil[27] and regular physical work including at least the household tasks necessary for daily living.[28] Work was done with the deliberate aim of serving the community.[29]

3.1.3 Fasting

Fasting was one of the important essences in the monastic life, the monks undergo rigorous period of fasting.[30] Fasting has a great significance in the ascetic life; it gives strength to resist the worldly temptation and it enables to pray with contrite heart.[31]

3.1.4 Silence

Silence was one of the practices strictly enforced in monastic life. Silence is inner peace and through quietness it causes to remove the passion. Monks have lives alone in a secluded place and away from all temporal and worldly occupations and concerns. A monk lives in silence, prayer and asceticism.[32] Silence is considered one of the best medicines to avoid the troubles.

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[24] George, *Development of Christianity*, 122.

[25] Vandana Mataji, "Christian Ashram," in *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* Vol.No.65 (March 2001): 268-269.

[26] W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippin- cott, 1966), 207

[27] George, *Development of Christianity*, 123.

[28] Sara Grant, "The Synod on Consecrated life and the Ashram Tradition," in *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* Vol. No. LVII (July 1994): 401.

[29] W.H.C. Frend, *The Early Church*, 207

[30] Standford E. Murrell, *A Glorious Institution*, 99.

[31] George, *Development of Christianity*, 123.

[32] Ignatius Puthiadam, *A Short History of Religious Life: From the Desert of Egypt to the Oasis of the Second Vatican Council* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, ny), 1.

3.2 The Principles of Monastic Life.

Poverty, chastity, humility and obedience are considered as an essence and unique to monastic life. The monks take the words of the Gospel[33] literally and they abandon all that they have and they practice charity in the form of complete celibacy. According to George "Humility is the garment of God and so who cloths him in garment of humanity, clothes Christ."[34] The monks who joined the monastery had to pursue a life of holiness by self-denial. They are supposed to live in poor lodgings, dressed uncomfortably, ate scanty food, slept little, and scourged themselves for penance and lives of voluntary celibacy.[35]

4. The Two Kinds of Monasticism

The two kinds are Eastern and Western Monasticism. While the Eastern was, on whole, an individual affair, Western was essentially communal and carefully structured. Secondly, Eastern was dependent on the state and Western was far more independent of government interference.[36]

4.1 The Eastern Monasticism

The Egyptian desert was the first home of Christian monasticism. There were large groups of monks in Egypt during the reign of Diocletian (284-305) and Constantine (306-337). Each monk lived in his own hut, but was united by a bond of submission to some older and more experienced hermit. As Antony led monasticism in Egypt, Hilarion[37] (330 - 375) led the West. There were monks in East Syria, Armenia, Pontus and Cappadocia in the middle of the fourth century.[38] The Eastern monasteries accepted the rule of St. Basil[39] although celibacy traditionally became an ideal in the East. From the time of Constantine, monasteries grew up all over the Empire; there were many in Constantinople. Eastern churches had fully developed monasticism according to St. Basil's idea.[40]

St. Basil was born in a distinguished and wealthy Christian family in Caesarea in Cappadocia about 330 and became a life-long friend of Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389 or 390).[41] After practising as a rhetorician, he was

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[33] Matt. 19:21, Mk. 10:17-31; Lk.12:13-21, 16:19-31; 1 Corin.7:31.

[34] George, *Development of Christianity*, 123.

[35] Hrangkhuma, *An Introduction to Church History*, 93.

[36] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis, 1991), 289.

[37] Hilarion was an anchorite who spent most of his life in the desert according to the example of Anthony the Great.

[38] George, *Development of Christianity*, 125.

[39] St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea. St. Basil was born in Caesarea, Asia Minor, and received his education in Constantinople and Athens.

[40] George, *Development of Christianity*, 125-126.

[41] Tim Dowley, ed., *Eermans' Handbook to the History of Christianity* (England: Lion Publishing, 1977), 166.

baptized, and then made a tour to Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia to obtain first-hand knowledge of the ascetic movement. So impressed was he that he adopted that way of life. In 356 he started a monastic community in Pontus.[42] In 364, at the request of Eusebius of Caesarea he was made priest.[43] He devoted himself to social schemes for the poor and to the struggle against Arianism.[44] Also he produced a rule for his monasticism, based upon a programme of works, prayer and reading. The works include works of charity.[45] He died on 1 January 379.[46] Basil not only believed, as did Pachomius, that the community was better; he regarded the solitary monk as mistaken.[47] His new monastery was at the heart of the complex of hospitals and hostels he founded in concern for the sick and needy. His writings on the monastic life have had enormous influence in Eastern Christianity.[48]

4.2 The Western Monasticism

Monasticism in the West was introduced from about 340[49] / 360.[50] There were different influences that came in to establish monastic life in the west. Some affirm that western monasticism arose without any outside influence, but others point out that it was influenced by the East through the life of Antony.[51] According to Ignatius, St. Athanasius (296-298) accompanied by two Egyptian monks Ammon and Isidore who were disciples of St. Antony visited Rome. The first exponent of monasticism in Gaul seems to be St. Martin (316- 397), who founded a monastery at Liguge near Poitiers (360). John Cassian (360-431) took up the ideas of monasticism and transported it to Gaul. He was able to set up monastery for men and another one for women in Marseilles. It is commonly accepted that Celtic monasticism was purely an indigenous growth and had no connection with Gallic or Egyptian monasticism. The first Celtic monasteries were merely settlements where the Christians lived together as a clan, priest and laity, men, women, and children alike.[52]

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[42] Murrell, *A Glorious Institution*, 52.
[43] J. G. Davies, *The Early Christian Church* (London: The Trinity Press, 1965), 166.
[44] Tony Lane, *The Lion Book of Christian Thought* (Tiruvalla: Surartha Bhavan, 1999), 26.
[45] Hrangkhuma, *An Introduction to Church History*, 94.
[46] Henry Chadwick, the early church (New Zealand: Henry Chadwick,1984), 149
[47] Foster, *The first Advance Church History AD.29-500*, 151.
[48] Dowley, ed., *Erdmann's Handbook to the history of Christianity*, 166.
[49] According to K. M. George, *Development of Christianity*, 55.
[50] This is according to Ignatius Puthiadam, in his book *A Short History of Religious Life*, 55.
[51] St. Anthony, called the Father of Monasticism, was born about A.D. 251 in Fayum, Egypt, and spent much of his adult life as a desert hermit (eremite). Knowledge of St. Anthony comes from a life of St. Anthony attributed to Athanasius. Puthiadam. *A Short History of Religious Life*, 55.
[52] George, *Development of Christianity*, 131.

St Benedict (480-550), the father of the western monk[53] was born at Nursia in central Italy. As a boy he was disgusted by the low moral standards and therefore withdrew from the world in about 500 AD.[54] He became a hermit, after spending three years in the cave and moved to Mount Casino, 1700 feet above the road from Rome to Naples, where he built a monastery.[55] It is believed that it was Benedict who legislated details of monastic life in a way that had never been done before both in the East and West. He drew up a monastic rule that became the standard of discipline for Roman Catholic monks and gave a firm foundation in Western Europe. At Mount Casino Benedict wrote a book *Little Rule of Beginners.*[56] He became the abbot of monks in Monte Casino and died around 550 or perhaps 560.[57] The Rule of St. Benedict was, however, much more down to earth, and in the course of time virtually replaced the stricter rule of the Celtic monk. He put a greater emphasis on the Christian life as being in the service of magnifying God's name.[58] The new development was very important because firstly it took away the last vestige of personal freedom, and secondly it secured in each monastery that continuity of theory and practice, which is necessary for the family. The 13th century saw the growth of the movement and as such a woman's branch was also formed. But decline in the movement set in the 14th century due to various factors like disputes, and growth in material property.[59]

4.2.1 Mode of living in monastery

In the beginning of Monasticism the monks were not encouraged to live together but later the rule introduced by Benedict reshaped the monastic way of life. The Rule of St. Benedict (RB) has a real significance[60] according to the Rule it required the members to live together in monasteries. The monks had to take three vows - stability (living in the monasteries), conversion of manners (the rooting out of vices and the planting of virtues) and obedience to the Rule (which involved chastity, worship, frugality and labor). Each monastery was self governing under the abbot. For centuries this system was the only form of monasticism in the Western Europe.[61] They worked and supported themselves and gave away their surplus product. Eating should

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[53] Tim Dowley, *The Christians An Illustrated History* (Michigan: Kregel Publication, 2007), 62.
[54] Dowley, ed., *Eermans' Handbook to the history of Christianity*, 57.
[55] Puthiadam, *A Short History of the Religious life*, 74.
[56] This rule geared to the needs of ordinary men, and prescribed warm cloths, adequate sleep and interpretation of the rule that would allow a spiritual friary to hold property in trust and administer funds on its behalf.
[57] Puthiadam, *A Short History of the Religious life*, 74.
[58] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 233.
[59] George, *Development of Christianity*, 131.
[60] Puthiadam, *A Short History of the Religious life*, 75.
[61] George, *Development of Christianity*, 133.

not be a penance; Rules say that at each meal there should be at least two cooked dished. The one who cannot take from one dish should be able to take from the other.[62] The main meal of the day took place around noon, often taken at a refectory table, and consisted of the most simple and bland foods i.e. poached fish, boiled oats. Anything tastier, which appeared on occasion, was criticized. While they ate, scripture would be read from a pulpit above them. Since no other words were allowed to be spoken, monks developed communicative gestures. Abbots and notable guests were honored with a seat at the high table, while everyone else sat perpendicular to that in the order of seniority.[63]

4.2.2 The Contribution of Monasticism to Mission

Monastic movement appears to be a most unlikely agent of mission. The communities were certainly not founded as launching pads of mission. They were not even created out of a desire to get involved in society in their immediate involvement. Rather they regarded society as corrupt and stagnant. So monasticism stood for the absolute renunciation of everything the ancient world had prized.[64] In light of the above it may therefore sound ridiculous to suggest that monasticism was both a primary agent of medieval mission and the main instrument in reforming European society. But after the Constantinian era the supreme test of martyrdom was no longer demanded and developments in the aspect of mission began to develop.[65]

The exemplary lifestyle made a profound impact particularly on the peasants. The monks were poor, worked incredibly hard; they plowed, cleared away forest, and did carpentry work, thatched, and built roads and bridges. They found a swamp, a moor, a thicket, a rock and they made an Eden in the wilderness. Monks moved to areas where the land was not cultivated. So the monasteries kept the land useful for the society. They did farming and experimented new methods of farming. The society at large was benefited through this work of monasteries.

The monastery embodied the ideal of spiritual order and disciplined moral activity which in time permeated the entire church. Each monastery was a vast complex of buildings, churches, workshops, stores, and almshouse, a hive of activity for the benefit of the surrounding community.[66] Monasteries had a missionary tradition from the beginning. The Anglo-Saxons[67] were

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[62] Puthiadam, *A Short History of the Religious life*, 76.
[63] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastery.(18/12/2011/ 9.00. pm).
[64] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 289.
[65] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 290.
[66] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 290-291.
[67] Anglo-Saxon is a term used by historians to designate the Germanic tribes who invaded and settled the south and east of Great Britain beginning in the early 5th century.

evangelized by the monks. Pope Gregory the great had sent Augustine and 40 monks from the Roman Andreas monastery to England.[68] The Irish monks had in Britain and in Germany, mission stations. The Anglo-Saxon monks followed in the footsteps of these earlier monks and did missionary work in Germany. Individual monks came out of the monasteries and did missionary work. In the eastern part of the Kingdom, missionary monasteries were founded. Their chief occupation was to evangelize the surrounding villages. The first and the typical example of such a monastery was Fulda, founded by Boniface.[69]

The monasteries emphasized spiritual life (praise and worship, prayer, contemplation, silence, study of scripture, celebration of Eucharist and simplicity).[70] They became models to the society and Church.

Monasteries got involved in the society by taking care of the sick people, undertook relief work during time of famine and natural calamity. They helped the poor and worked for the elimination of poverty. They exemplified practical Christianity through their works.

Monasteries kept the learning alive by giving importance to education. They produced the theologians for the church. Copies of books and ancient manuscripts were made in the monastery. Researches were carried out. In those days, the monasteries managed best schools. During the war times, the monasteries were, generally, spared from attack, so the libraries were safeguarded in the monastery. They became the forerunners of the modern universities.[71]

The monastery established in a pagan area allowed the local population to see the application of Christianity to daily existence, as monks tilled the soil, welcomed visitors and carried out the offices of study and daily prayer.[72] Monasticism was both a primary agent of medieval mission and the main instrument in reforming European society.[73]

5. Christian Ashrams in India

The word ashram is derived from the Sanskrit term *a-srama*, which means total pursuit, full dedication, tireless striving stretching its arms towards perfection.[74] C. B. Firth says an Ashram means originally a hermitage, or a group of ascetics living their religious life together in some quite place, under

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[68] Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 46.
[69] Puthiadam, *A Short History of Religious Life*, 88-89.
[70] Dasan Jeyaraj, "History of Missions" (Lecture Notes. COTR Theological Seminary, Visakhapatnam. January, 2012).
[71] Dasan Jeyaraj, "History of Missions" Lecture Notes. 2012.
[72] Noll, *Turning Points*, 100.
[73] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 231.
[74] Sebastian Painadath, "The Spiritual Theological Perspectives of Ashram, A tribute to Santivanam,

the leadership of some sage, the idea of a life of retirement and meditation is familiar to the Indian mind.[75] The ashram therefore seemed to be an institution which Christians could use to express their religious ideal in a way which India would readily appreciate.

5.1 The Beginning of Ashram

The Ashram tradition goes back to early times. During the period of the Brahmanas (Vedic period) the early Aryans, then settled in the Punjab, entrusted the family burdens to their sons and resorted to forest for the purpose of contemplation on the major issues of life. There they put up huts for themselves and lived on fruits and vegetables immediately available to them. These hermitages were called Ashrams. So, primarily *asrama*[76] signified the forest dwelling of a person who devotes his time to religious contemplation and austerities.[77] According to Indian Christian concept the Christian Ashram began from the year 1607 at Madurai by Robert de Nobili (1606-1656).[78] He is known as the father of the Christian Ashram movement. After seeing the context of India he decided to overcome the cultural obstacles to his mission by adopting the various forms of a Hindu sannyasi. He was followed in this by Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907),[79] who was not a missionary but an Indian Brahmin who converted to Catholicism and wanted to use Ashram as an instrument for both training and tool for evangelism. He founded Kasthalic Matha, although it didn't last long.[80] Many Christian ashrams now exist in India. By 2004, there were at least 50 of them, including: Saccianandа Ashram,[81] Kurisumala Ashram,[82] Christukula Ashram, Christa Prema Seva Ashram, Jyotiniketan Ashram, Christi Panti Ashram and Sat Tal Ashram.[83]

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[75] C.B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2008), 255.

[76] The Aryan society was divided into castes, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra and the individual life of an Aryan twin-born or Dwiji should be marked into four stages- Brahmacharia (Stewardship), Grihastha (house-holder), Vanaprastha (forest dweller) and Sanyasa (wandering). The idea behind the scheme was that human life is a life of growth which passes though different stages and reaches its goal, i.e. salvation. Each stage was called an *asrama*.

[77] Philip Thomas, "Christian Ashrams and Evangelisation of India," in *Indian Church History Review* (Vol. XI, November 31, December 1977): 204.

[78] Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 57.

[79] Robert de Nobili (16th–17th century) was a Jesuit of noble birth who accommodated to the existing Indian social order. De Nibili is considered as the Father of incultaration in India Christianity.

[80] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Ashram_Movement. (18/12/2011.8.00. pm.)

[81] Saccidananda Ashram (also called Shantivanam) is a Benedictine monastery in India. Located in the village of Tannirpalli in the Tiruchirapalli District of Tamil.

[82] Kurisumala ashram is located in small town Vagamon, Kerala. This is one of the famous monasteries for the Christians.

[83] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Ashram_Movement.(18/12/2011.8.00 pm.)

Richard Taylor classifies into two kinds:

1. Kavi Ashram – Emphasis is given to contemplation
2. Khadi Ashram – Emphasis is given to work and witness

5.2 Indian Christian Ashrams' Contribution to Missions

5.2.1 Centre to Experience God

The Primary role of an ashram is God Seeking and God Experience, usually under the guidance of one or more experienced Guru. In Christian Ashrams Christ takes the place of the Guru. It is a place where all people live in an ever-deepening awareness of God's presence. This is fostered by renunciation and detachment in an atmosphere of silence, peace and joy.

5.2.2 Centre to Struggle for Justice

Indian Ashrams have remained instrumental for social and political reforms. People like Sadhu Mathai, Dr. Patron, Dr. Kethahn and others have involved in this process.

5.2.3 Sparsha Bhava (No untouchability)

India is divided on the lines of caste, community, regionalism and languages. Ashrams remain as centres of peace and reconciliation. Ashrams are opposed to war and violence. Ashrams remain as instruments in waging peace and peace-making. They attempt to practice equality at all levels.

5.2.4 Social Upliftment

Many ashrams in India have attempted to uplift the society through medical work, farming, running educational institutions, etc.... Anusandhan Ashram, at Raipur carries out scientific research for helping poor in practical ways. Christu Kula Ashram in Courtallam used to run free eye camps.

5.2.5 Centres of Dialogue

Remaining in the multi-religious context many ashrams in India invite people of other faiths to dialogue about spirituality, religious beliefs, socio-political problems like caste violence, communal disharmony, religious riots, etc.... Through dialogue they mobilise public opinion, conscientise people and bring about harmony. Many present day Catholic Ashrams function this way.

5.2.6 Experiment Indigenization and Inculturation

Ashrams carry out researches and experiment religious experiences of other traditions. Gyan Prakash Ashram, E. Bombay has a studio and school of Indian Classical music and dance. Krista Panthi Ashram, Varnasi has common

prayer sessions and experimentation in liturgical adaptation. Christu Kula Ashram attempted to show its indigenization through worship patterns and architecture.

5.2.7 Church Planting

Ashrams like Christa Mitra Ashram, Ankola; Christa Panthi Ashram, Sihora, M.P., Hoskote Ashram, Karnataka, etc. have made conscious efforts to do church planting in the villages around their areas.

Conclusion

The monasticism and ashram played an important role in shaping and producing many outstanding leaders, and also in preserving the document during the dark ages. More over through the monasteries and ashrams better method of farming was introduced. It also served as a place of refuge for the outcastes of an unjust society. They cared for the sick, the needy and weary travellers. One of the most important contributions toward the Christian society from monasticism and ashram was their methods of living and practices such as, prayerful life, works, poverty, chastity, humility, obedience and silence. The full impact of Ashrams for Indian mission and Ashram as an alternate for Church is yet to be discovered.

Jesus is Jehovah

Team Leader: Vijaya Amrit Shaini
Team members : Aneesh Abraham, I. Suresh, Darwin Charles Momin, Atoholi H. Zhimomi and Setsachem K. Sangtam
M.Div. III, Class of 2012, COTRTS

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present a cogent argument to establish that Jesus of the New Testament is indeed the Jehovah of the Old Testament. The main intention is to demonstrate the continuity of the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. This requires a thorough understanding of the Jehovah of the Old Testament and Jesus of the New Testament. This paper was presented to the M.Div class taught by Rev. CH. Vijaya Kumar for the subject of "Biblical Theology of Old Testament".

1. Jesus in the New Testament

"Jesus" is the name of God in the New Testament. 'Jesus' is the English form of the LXX Greek form of '*Iesous*'. *Iesous* in turn is a transliteration of the Hebrew "*Yehoshua*," meaning 'Jehovah is my salvation'. *Yehoshua* was a common name among the Jews (Ex. 17:9; Lk. 3:29; Col. 4:11). In the New Testament, it was given to the Son of God in incarnation as his personal name, in obedience to the command of an angel to Joseph shortly before He was born (Matt. 1:21). Several persons mentioned in the Bible bear this name, which is a Greek form of Joshua (Hebrew *Yehoshua*; Luke 3:29; Acts 7:45; Heb 4:8). One of these is the son of Sirach, who wrote the deuterocanonical book of Ecclesiasticus. The name "Jesus" also occurs as a surname of Justus, a co-worker of Paul mentioned in Colossians 4:11.[1]

In the New Testament, the name Iesous appears around 935 times. Except the epistle of 3 John, it occurs in all the books of the NT. This name is most frequent in the Gospels (243 times in John, 168 in Matthew, 94 in Luke, 93 in Mark); after that it is more frequent in Acts (67 times), Romans (38), 1 Corinthians (24), Philippians (21), and Ephesians (20), 2 Corinthians (16), Galatians (16), 1 Thessalonians (15), Hebrews (14), 1 Timothy (13), 2 Timothy (13), 1 John (12), Revelation (12), 2 Thessalonians (11), 1 Peter (10). And then, in rest of other NT writings, less than 10 times in 2 Peter (8), Colossians (8), Philemon (7), Jude (4), Titus (4), James (2), 2 John (2).

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[1] Richard Bauckham, "Jesus Christ," in David Noel Freedman (ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 792.

The New Testament Greek *Iesous* originates from the LXX form *Iesous*, which is based on the postexilic shortened form of the name and makes it declinable with the attachment of final sigma in the nominative.[2] *Iesous* occurs 278 times in the LXX with maximum of 172 times in the book of Joshua to translate the name "Joshua". And is there most frequently a representation of *Yeshua* and the later form of the name, *Yesu*. In addition to Joshua the son of Nun (Ex. 17:9; Num. 11:28) *Iesous* is used in the LXX of other persons, e.g., the high priest Joshua (Hag 1:1; Zech 3:1) and the Levite Joshua (2 Chr. 31:15).

At the time of Jesus of Nazareth, *Yeshua* was still widespread. But, from the 2nd century A.D. the name *Yeshua/Iesous* disappears as a proper name in Judaism, probably due to conscious avoidance.[3] Later on, the Rabbinic Judaism regularly referred to Jesus of Nazareth, not with *Yeshua* but called him instead *Yesu*. This has been regarded as confusion of the name which lacks both the theophoric element and the verb which signifies "salvation."[4]

Further, Jesus in New Testament is presented as "Jesus Christ", a composite name. "Christ" was from Greek *Christos,* which translates Hebrew *masiah* and Aramaic *meshia* (Jn. 1:41), which means "anointed."[5] The Christian community confesses this *Iesous* as the prince of life (Acts 3:15), as the Christ of God, as Lord and Savior, and as God's Son. But it makes no separation between *Iesous* and *ho kurios; Iesous* is himself the one whom God has made both Lord and Judge (Phil. 2:7; Gal. 3:1; Acts 17:31). In the Synoptic Gospels and Acts the simple *Iesous* is commonly used along with *ho kurios* (e.g., in Luke) and such fixed expressions as *Iesous Christos* and *hos kurios Iesous Christos.* In the rest of the NT, however, the simple *Iesous* is rare. Paul has it mostly when thinking of Christ's life and death, as in 1 Th. 4:14; 2 Cor. 4:11ff.; Phil. 2:10. In Hebrews and Revelation, too, *Iesous* indicates that the history of Jesus forms the basis of faith (e.g., Heb. 2:9; 6:20; 10:19; Rev. 1:9; 14:12; 20:4; 22:16).[6]

The Scriptures teach that Jesus had two natures, one divine and one human when he was on the Earth. As an eternal Being (Isa. 9:6; Jn. 1:1ff.), He was

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[2] Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990), 181.
[3] Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey William Bromiley, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, trans. of: Theologisches Worterbuch Zum Neuen Testament. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995), 360.
[4] Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament,* 180.
[5] Richard Bauckham, "Jesus Christ," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 792.
[6] Kittel, Friedrich and Bromiley, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 360.

God; yet He became man (1 Tim. 2:5), though he was without sin, was made in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 4:15). Isaiah observed that Christ would be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" Who would grow up "as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground" (Isa. 53:2-3). As a human, the prophets had said, Christ was to be the seed of woman (Genesis 3:15), and a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. The New Testament confirms that, He was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4) who was a virgin (Matt. 1:23), and He was the descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David (Matt. 1:1ff.). The apostle John stated that He became flesh and dwelt among men (Jn. 1: 14). Paul wrote that Christ was "found in appearance as a man" (Phil. 2:7-8). Jesus experienced the human sufferings such as weariness (Jn. 4:6), anger (Mk. 3:5), frustration (Mk. 9:19), joy (Jn. 15:11), and sadness (Jn. 11:35). He was "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). But the most important fact is that He was able to die (Mark 15:44). If Christ had not become a man, He could not have died. Deity, as pure Spirit-essence, possesses Immortality (1 Tim. 6:16). The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that Christ partook of "flesh and blood" that "through death he might bring to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). If Christ had not died, there would have been no atonement, no forgiveness of sins; the humanity would have been hopelessly lost forever. In every respect, he was as human being for which he was referred as the "Son of Man" (Matt. 9:6).[7]

2. Jehovah in the Old Testament

It is the name of God in Old Testament. The 'Jehovah' is the Anglicized form of the Hebrew *Yehowah* (éÀäåÉÈä). The name is in fact always written with the four Hebrew consonants *yod*, *he*, *waw* and *he* (YHWH) without vowels, and is for that reason called the 'Tetragrammaton'. In this form the name appears more than 6000 times in the OT.[8] *Yehowah* refers to the proper name of the God of Israel, mainly the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses (Ex. 6:2, 3). The divine name has usually not been pronounced, mostly out of respect for its holiness (Ex. 20:7; Deut. 28:58). Until the Renaissance, it was written without vowels in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, as YHWH. However, since that time, the vowels of another word, "*adonai*" have been supplied to construct the pronunciation. Yet, some others have proposed "*Yahweh*" instead of "*Yehowah*". Even though the correct origin of the name is not clear, most scholars agree that

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[7] R.C. Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 15-16.

[8] Henry O. Thompson, "Yahweh," in David Noel Freedman (ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 1012.

its primary meaning should be understood in the context of God's existence, namely, that He is the "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3:14), the One who was, who is, and who always will be (Rev. 11:17). YHWH is most often rendered as LORD in the English Bibles (Gen. 4:1; Deut. 6:18; Ps. 18:31,32; Jer. 33:2; Jon. 1:9) but also as GOD (Gen. 6:5; 2 Sam. 12:22) or JEHOVAH (Ps. 83:18, 19; Isa. 26:4). The frequent appearance of this name in relation to God's redemptive work emphasizes its great importance (Lev. 26:45; Ps. 19:14, 15). The transition from *Yehowah* to LORD is attributed to the LXX rendering of "*Kurios*" to YHWH in 250 BC. And then on the Latin Vulgate and the translations of the Reformation time were much influenced by the LXX and rendered LORD or GOD to every occurrence of *Yehowah*, resulting in the disappearance of "*Yehowah*" from the Greek and English Bibles.[9]

The date and origin of the name has been debated. Some historians claim that its earliest appearances are in the Song of Deborah Judges 5; which has been dated to the 11th century B. C. Egyptian name lists contains a Syrian site, *Ya-h-wa*, which is identical to Yahweh. From a later time, the 8th century B. C. two Aramean princes have names with the element "*Yau*." So it has been considered that some Arameans may have worshipped Yahweh. This might relate to the earlier connection of the Patriarchs with the Arameans, e.g., Jacob's break with Laban, the ancestor of the Arameans (Genesis 29–31). Henry O. Thompson says that the divine name is not found in any cuneiform texts.[10] All historical data set aside, from the text of the Old Testament, it is very much clear that the name "*Yehowah*" was first originated in the context of Exodus, when God chose to reveal himself by the name "*Yehowah*" to Moses in Exodus 6:3. Therefore, the name '*Yehowah*' is inseparably connected with redemption and formation of the nation Israel.

Thompson says that in olden days, the significance of a name goes far beyond a mere label. In ancient times, the name held magical power. One who knew the name of the deity could use power over the deity and call him to his/her aid, e.g., against one's enemies. The importance of the name is highlighted by the story of Jacob wrestling with a divine being who was silent to reveal his name to Jacob (Gen 32:24–30; Judg. 14:17–20).[11]

Thompson says that the character of Jehovah is indeed clear, even though complicated in the biblical text. He is a storm God who speaks in the thunder,

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[9] Warren Baker, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 426.

[10] Henry O. Thompson, "Yahweh," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1012.

[11] Henry O. Thompson, "Yahweh," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1012-1013.

who hurls or shoots lightning (Ex. 19:16–19; 20:18; Ps 18:14; Job 37:5; Amos 1:2; Hab. 3:11). He is a God of the mountains (Exodus 19; 1 Kin. 20:3). Fire is both a sign of Yahweh's presence and a weapon (Ex. 13:21; 1 Kin. 18:38). He is a God of the desert (Judg. 5:4). He has control over the waters of the earth or the sea (Ex. 14:21; Jonah), the rivers (Josh. 3:16–17), and the rain (Gen 2:5; 1 Kin. 17). He is the giver of life and one who brings death. He is a God of war and of peace. But most important to the biblical belief, Jehovah is the God of the covenant. Jehovah created, maintains, and sustains the natural world, which includes humanity. There are covenants with Noah which include the natural world, with the patriarchs, with Moses and the people, Aaron and Phinehas and the priesthood, David and the royal house, and others. No matter what the origin of the name or the non-Israelite nature of his nickname, Yahweh had chosen Israel to be his people and had entered into covenants with them. This fact is the central theme of the Old Testament.[12]

3. Messiah in the Old Testament

The Hebrew word *mashiach* "anointed" is used in the Old Testament to identify a person in special relationship to God. The non-technical use of the term is simply to appoint "one anointed" with oil and/or the Holy Spirit, but especially for the one who was set apart by God for a special task. For example, the term is used for *kings*: Saul (1 Sam. 24:7, 11; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam. 1:14, 16); David (2 Sam. 19:22; 22:51; 23:1; Ps. 2:2; 20:7; 84:10; 89:39, 52; 132:10, 17); Solomon (2 Chron. 6:42); Zedekiah (Lam. 4:20); *patriarchs*: Psalm 105:15; 1 Chronicles 16:22; *foreign rulers*: Cyrus, the Persian king: Isaiah 45:1; *Israel*: Habakkuk 3:3; Psalm 28:8; *priests*: Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; 16:15; and *prophets*: Psalm 105:15; 1 Chronicles 16:22.[13]

Whenever the term Messiah is used in relation to an anointed king it appears strong and was used in a prophetic sense of the coming Davidic ruler. Both Second Samuel and the Psalms refer to King David as the "anointed one" whose descendants will rule forever (2 Sam. 22:50-51; Ps. 18:50-51). In the prophetic writings the messianic concept has a special reference to God's promised Davidic ruler who will restore Israel to the divine ideal (Isa. 9:7; Jer. 23:5-6; Ez. 34:23-24; 37:25; Amos 9:11-12). Psalms 2: 2-6, 7-9 and 89: 3-4, 20-29 shows a divinely appointed king messiah or anointed who will destroy God's Gentile opponents and as His representative will reign over the nations.[14] It is clear that the concept of Messiah in the Old Testament

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[12] Henry O. Thompson, "Yahweh," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1013.

[13] Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1990), 3.

[14] Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*, 4.

marks the essence of the hope of the nation Israel. Apart from this, the other parallel hope that was building up in the prophetic literature was that the future of Israel shall be marked with God himself who shall be born among them (Isa. 9:6) and shall dwelling among them (Isa. 7:14). Alongside of this the other hope was that the messiah shall suffer and die (Isa.53). This complex web of messianic hope was existing during the pre-Christian era.

4. God in the Old Testament

Scripture reveals the Supreme Being as the Spirit existing in three persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One can readily distinguish three manifestations or personalities, who are not three gods in one, yet they appear as equal and eternal. Charles Trombley convincingly argues that "If it can be demonstrated from the New Testament that there are three persons who are called God and Jehovah, and then shown there is only one God, Jehovah, there is only one conclusion, these three personalities must be God. Things being equal to the same thing are equal to each other."[15]

The Plural noun *Elohim* is used for God and always with a plural verb. This is clearly understood when Jehovah refers to Himself using plural pronouns, "Let us make man in *our* image after *our* likeness" (Gen. 1:26), which shows Jehovah addressing a co-equal Godhead. Trombley says that the manifestation of Jehovah were frequently triune. In Genesis 18:2 Jehovah appeared to Abraham on the plains of Mamre with two angels. In verse 3 he addressed them as Jehovah as though they were all one. And in verse 9 "they" spoke to him as one voice. Fourteen times Abraham spoke to "them" as Jehovah.[16]

5. God in the New Testament

From the New Testament point of view, the God of the Old Testament is the same God as in the New, except he manifests himself in different ways, most importantly in the incarnation. Yet the basic attributes of God are the same as those of the Old Testament. In one sense, the study of God in the New Testament is a study of Christology. The generic term for God in the New Testament is *Theos*, but *Kurios*, the Greek rendering of the Hebrew YHWH, is frequently used instead of the generic term. The God of the New Testament is frequently called *Kurios* or *Lord*, mostly referring to Jesus. The New Testament, like the Old, does not try to prove God's existence. Rather it declares, also like the Old Testament, that he

[15] Charles Trombley, *Bible Answers for Jehovah's Witnesses* (U.S.A.: Expositor Publications, 1975), 44.
[16] Trombley, *Bible Answers for Jehovah's Witnesses*, 45.

exists and manifests himself in various ways, but finally he speaks through his Son Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1–4), who is superior to angels, priests, and all other manifestations of the divine Word.[17]

6. Jesus is Jehovah

The Scriptures not only speaks of Christ's humanity but they also speak about His divinity. In most of its occurrences, the name "Jehovah" is applied to the first person of the Godhead i.e., the Father (Matt. 28:19). For example: "Jehovah said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" (Ps. 110:1). Jesus later explained that this verse pictures the Father addressing the Christ (Lk. 20:42). The name Jehovah is also used to refer to Christ. For example, Isaiah prophesied concerning the mission of John the Baptist: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3), whereas John was sent to prepare the world for Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:29-34). If we observe the words of Isaiah it is clear that John would prepare the way of Jehovah that means Jesus and Jehovah are the same. In Zechariah 12:10 Yahweh is speaking prophetically: "They will look on me, the one they have pierced." Though Yahweh is speaking, this obviously is a reference to Christ's future crucifixion.[18] So it is clear that "the one they have pierced" is Jesus, for He is described this same way by the apostle John in Revelation 1:7.

The Septuagint provides additional insights on Christ's identity as Yahweh. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament that dates prior to the birth of Christ. It renders the Hebrew phrase for "I AM" in Exodus 3:14 as *ego emi*. On a number of occasions in the Greek New Testament, Jesus used this term as a way of identifying Himself as God. For example, in John 8:24 Jesus declared, "For if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins." The original Greek text for this verse does not have the word *he*. The verse is literally, "If you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins." Then, according to verse 28, Jesus told Jews, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He." Again, the original Greek text reads, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM." Jesus purposely used the phrase as a means of pointing to His identity as Yahweh.[19]

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[17] C. Hassell Bullock, "God," in Walter A. Elwell (ed), Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, electronic ed., Baker reference library; Logos Library System (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997, c1996) n.p.

[18] Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, 16.

[19] Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scripture with the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Secunderabad: O M Books, 1993), 63-64.

In Isaiah 6:1-5, the prophet describes his vision of Yahweh "seated on the throne, high and exalted" (Verse 1). He said, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory" (verse 3). Isaiah also quotes Yahweh as saying: "I am the LORD: that is my name: I will not give my glory to another" (42:8). Later, the apostle John under the inspiration of The Holy Spirit wrote that Isaiah "saw Jesus' glory" (Jn. 12:41). Yahweh's glory and Jesus' glory are equated. In Hebrews, Father addresses His Son saying, "You, Lord in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands" (Heb. 1:10). But in Psalms, Psalmist addresses same to Jehovah (Ps. 102: 25). Foster says, "This verse not only applies the word "Jehovah" to Jesus, but actually attributes the quotation to the mouth of God."[20] Here again, Jesus and Jehovah are used synonymously. Furthermore, Jesus spoke and acted like God. He affirmed that He was "one" with the Father (Jn. 10:30). He forgave sins, a prerogative of God alone (Mk. 2:5, 7). He accepted the worship of men (Jn. 9:38), which Jesus explained to the devil is due only to God (Matt. 4:10).[21]

In Revelation 1:8 we read, "I am the Alpha and Omega, says Jehovah God, the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty God". Turning to chapter 22:7 the One speaking says, "I am coming quickly," and again in verse 12: "Look! I am coming quickly, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the Beginning and the End." By cross referencing with Revelation 1:8 we can identify the speaker as Jehovah the Almighty. In Revelation 22:16 the One speaking says, "I Jesus have sent my angel…" and again in 22:20: "Surely I am coming quickly, Amen." The One coming quickly in 22:7 is the same one in verse 12 who is the Alpha and Omega of verse 13, identified in 1:8 as Jehovah God the Almighty. Now back to 22:20: "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus." The Alpha and Omega of 22:13 is the First and the Last of 1:17 who is Jesus in 1:18. But if this identification is insufficient, then the matter is settled by Isaiah 44:6: "Thus saith Jehovah…I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God." The identity is irrefutable. Either there are two firsts and lasts (which would be linguistic sucide) and there are two Alpha and Omega (which would be Greek confusion) or they are the same Person. In Revelation 1:8 the Alpha and the Omega was also identified as the one who was, and is, and is coming. By comparing Matthew 24:30 we discover the only One coming in clouds is Jesus.[22]

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[20] Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, 17.
[21] Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, 17-18.
[22] Trombley, *Bible Answers for Jehovah's Witnesses*, 45-46.

In addition, Jesus clearly called as "God" a number of times within the New Testament. In John, regarding Him "Who became flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14), the Bible says that "the Word was God" (1:1). And in John 20:28, one of the disciples, Thomas, after seeing the evidence for the Lord's resurrection, proclaimed: "My Lord and my God!" and Christ accepted the designation. If we compare Hebrews 1:10-12 which is addressed to Jesus with Psalm 102:24-27 which is addressed to Jehovah, Christ is identified with Jehovah. 1 Peter 2:3 quotes from Psalms 34:8 and clearly identifies Christ as Jehovah.[23]

Foster says that the apostle Paul had no problem with the identity of Jesus when he quotes Isaiah 45: 23, in Philippians 2:10; 2:32 in Romans 10:23, and Isaiah 45:23 again in Romans 14:11. In each Old Testament passage Jehovah is mentioned and Paul identifies Him as Jesus. Other passages that reveal Christ as God are Philippians 2:5ff, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15.[24]

The following table of comparison is borrowed from Ron Rhodes' Reasoning from the Scripture with the Jehovah's Witnesses.[25]

Description	**As Used of Yahweh**	**As Used of Jesus**
Yahweh ("I AM")	Exodus 3:14 Deuteronomy 32:39 Isaiah 43:10	John 8:24 John 8:58 John 18:4-6
God	Genesis 1:1 Deuteronomy 6:4 Psalms 45:6,7	Isaiah 7:14; 9:6 John 1:1, 14 John 20:28 Titus 2:13 Hebrews 1:8 2 Peter 1:1
Alpha and Omega (First and Last)	Isaiah 41:4 Isaiah 48:12 Revelation 1:8	Revelation 1:17, 18 Revelation 2:8 Revelation 22:12-16

[23] Trombley, *Bible Answers for Jehovah's Witnesses,* 46.
[24] Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ,* 18.
[25] Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scripture with the Jehovah's Witnesses,* 67-69.

Lord	Isaiah 45:23	Matthew 12:8 Acts 7:59, 60 Acts 10:36 Romans 10:12 1 Corinthians 2:8 1 Corinthians 12:3 Philippians 2:10, 11
Savior	Isaiah 43: 3 Isaiah 43:11 Isaiah 63:8 Luke 1:47 1 Timothy 6:14 -16	Matthew 1:21 Luke 2:11 John 1:29 John 4:42 Titus 2:13 Hebrews 5:9
King	Psalms 95:3 Isaiah 43:15 1 Timothy 6:14-16	Revelation 17:14 Revelation 19:16
Judge	Genesis 18:25 Psalms 50:4, 6 Psalms 96:13 Romans 14:10	John 5:22 2 Corinthians 5:10 2 Timothy 4:1
Light	2 Samuel 22:29 Psalms 27:1 Isaiah 42:6	John 1:4, 9 John 3:19 John 8:12 John9:5
Rock	Deuteronomy 32:3, 4 2 Samuel 22:32 Psalms 89:26	Romans 9:33 1 Corinthians 10:3, 4 1 Peter 2:4-8
Redeemer	Psalms 130:7, 8 Isaiah 48:17 Isaiah 54:5	Acts 20:28 Ephesians 1:7 Hebrews 9:12
Our Righteousness	Isaiah 45:24	Jeremiah 23:6 Romans 3:21, 22

Husband	Isaiah 54:5 Hosea 2:16	Matthew 25:1 Mark 2:18, 19 2 Corinthians 11:2 Ephesians 5:25-32 Revelation 21:2, 9
Shepherd	Genesis 49:24 Psalms 23:1 Psalms 80:1	John 10:11, 16 Hebrews 13:20 1 Peter 2:25 1 Peter 5:4
Creator	Genesis 1:1 Job 33:4 Psalms 95:5, 6 Psalms 102:25, 26 Isaiah 40:28	John 5:21 Colossians 1:15-18 Hebrews 1:1-3, 10
Giver of Life	Genesis 2:7 Deuteronomy 32:39 1 Samuel 2:6 Psalms 36:9	John 5:21 John 10:28 John 11:25
Forgiver of Sin	Exodus 34:6, 7 Nehemiah 9:17 Daniel 9:9 Jonah 4:2	Mark 2:1-12 Acts 26:18 Colossians 2:13 Colossians 3:13
Lord our Healer	Exodus 15:26	Acts 9:34
Omnipresent	Psalms 139:7-12 Proverbs 15:3	Matthew 18:20 Matthew 28:20 Ephesians 3:17; 4:10
Omniscient	1 Kings 8:39 Jeremiah 17:9, 10, 16	Matthew 11:27 Luke 5:4-6 John 2:25 John 16:30 John 21:17 Acts 1:24

Omnipotent	Isaiah 40:10-31 Isaiah 45:5-13	Matthew 28:18 Mark 1:29-34 John 10:18 Jude 24
Preexistent	Genesis 1:1	John 1:15, 30 John 3:13, 31, 32 John 6:62 John 16:28 John 17:5
Eternal	Psalms 102:26, 27 Habakkuk 3:6	Isaiah 9:6 Micah 5:2 John 8:58
Immutable	Isaiah 46:9, 16 Malachi 3:6 James 1:17	Hebrews 13:8
Receiver of Worship	Matthew 4:10 John 4:24 Revelation 5:14 Revelation 7:11 Revelation 11:16	Matthew 14:33 Matthew 28:9 John 9:38 Philippians 2:10, 11 Hebrews 1:6
Speaker with Divine Authority	"Thus says the LORD," used hundreds of times	Matthew 23:34-37 John 7:46 "Truly, truly, I Say…"

Conclusion

Enough scriptural proof has been amassed to demonstrate that "Jesus" of the New Testament is indeed the "Jehovah" of the Old Testament and that Jesus is eternally self-existent, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father. Both Old Testament and New Testament speak and identify Jesus with Jehovah. There is an unbroken continuity and unity of God of Old Testament with the God of the New Testament. Before time began Jesus was "I AM." He was before all things. Like the Father, He is everlastingly the living one.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the hope of the Old Testament. It seems apt here to conclude with the statement of Gerhard Hasel: He says

"The OT does relate a history of salvation. But in many respects it is an unusual history of salvation. The expected messiah did not come in the Old Testament. In that sense the Old Testament is incomplete, pointing beyond itself, ending in a posture of waiting. Down to its very last page it speaks of a fulfillment of the promise in the future tense. The God who acted in creation, in the Exodus, and Conquest, guiding His people, will act again one day. The completion of the incomplete history of salvation is a primary concern of the NT. The turning point of all history has taken place in Jesus Christ. The God who acted in Israel's history has acted decisively in human history through Jesus Christ."[26]

[26] Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, rev. and exp. 4th edn. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1991), 196.

Salvation through Law?

Team Leader: Graceson Victor
Team members: Kipli. R. Sangtam, Vikugha.G. Zhimo,
Jeyale Magh. Satish Kandi, and Jatan Kauri
M.Div. III, Class of 2012, COTRTS

Introduction

This paper investigates whether there is salvation through law in the Old Testament. And whether there was such teaching about the salvific nature of the law or whether the law was given for salvation of Israel are issues that concern this paper. In this pursuit the paper will demonstrate the OT understanding of the law and salvation and climaxing with the Jesus' and Paul's view of law. This paper was presented to the M.Div class taught by Rev. CH. Vijaya Kumar for the subject of "Biblical Theology of Old Testament".

1. Law: Its Meaning and Understanding in the Old Testament

This section deals with the understanding of the law as found in each book of the Old Testament. Law generally is understood as an orderly system of rules and regulations by which a society is governed. The basic word used for law in the Old Testament is *torah* which occurs some 220 times, derived from the word *yarah* which means to direct, teach or instruct and basically it meant instruction.[1] In the Old Testament God establishes the law code to direct His people to worship and have relationship with Him and socially relate themselves with one another. The Biblical law code which God gave through Moses to Israel was different from other ancient near eastern law codes. Biblical law code was first of all different in its origin. Throughout the ancient world the laws were believed to have come from gods and even those gods were subject to those laws and could suffer punishment if they violated the law. But in contrast, the God of the Old Testament at the giving of the Mosaic law, it came from Him, from His nature which is holy, righteous and good. Furthermore it reflected God's universal rule. Unlike the laws of the ancient world the law of God was more humane and everyone was equal before God's law.[2] This affirms the fact that God's giving of the law reflected His universal sovereignty to be acknowledged and obeyed by all.

1.1 Law in the Pentateuch

From the earliest times in Jewish history, the Pentateuch has been known as

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[1] William Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (USA: Inter Varsity Press, 1977), 129.
[2] "Law" *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary,* edited by Herbert Lockyer (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 632.

a book of law and attributes these laws to the great lawgiver Moses. Early Christian scholars such as Tertullian and Origen adopted the name Pentateuch as a convenient title for the first five books of the Old Testament and this "Law" was regarded by the Jews as a unique and authoritative exposition of all individual and social morality.[3] John H. Sailhamer remarks that Hans-Christoph Schmitt "has argued that the Pentateuch is a unified compositional strategy that lays great emphasis on faith."[4] But on the other hand the study on this concept of "faith" raised important questions in the Pentateuch which intended to stand against the Mosaic Law. God brought forth the Israelites out of Egypt by fulfilling His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. At Sinai, God made a covenant with them, setting out obligations which have often been understood as 'law' and this 'law of Moses' became a regular designation for the entire Pentateuch. The covenant between God and Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-24) provided the foundations for all Israel's law which became the most precious possessions among the Israelites.

1.1.1 Law during Patriarchal Period

Before the giving of the law of Moses, the patriarchs appeared to have observed the local customs in place at their time, example: Rachel's possession of the Teraphim possibly reflects provisions in the Nuzi tablets (Gen. 31). The barren Sarah giving her slave girl to Abraham (Gen. 16). Abraham's faith response to God was described not only in terms of doing what is right (Gn. 18:19) but also to his obedience to God's commandments. Genesis 26:5 clearly states that God has fulfilled His promise "because Abraham obeyed Me and Kept My requirements, My commands, my decrees and my laws." It was in fulfilment of God's promises to the Patriarch, God brought the Israelites out of Egypt (Gen. 50:24) leading them to Sinai and entered into a new covenant with them and gave them the laws.[5] Hence God's covenant nature embedded in His law had an age long beginning even before Mount Sinai.

1.1.2 The Sinai Covenant

God made a formal covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai providing them with laws and instructions by which they were to live their lives in covenant relationship with Him (Ex. 19:3-9). These laws and instructions given by God to Israel at Sinai represented one of their greatest possessions. No other nation had such righteous decrees and laws as those Moses set

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[3] M. J. Selman, "Law" in T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (eds) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Illinois: IVP, 2003), 498.

[4] Hans-Christoph Schmitt, "Redaktion des Pentateuch im Geiste der Prophetie," *VT*, 32 (1982), 170-89. cited by John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 253.

[5] C. G. Kruse, "Law" *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2000), 629.

before them at Mount Sinai (Deut. 4:5-8). These laws were to govern the Israelites' relationship to God with one another and with the peoples living around them.[6]

In the Pentateuch law occurs mainly in groups and they are found in four main collections:

1.1.2.1 The Book of Covenant (Ex. 20:22-23:19)
Israel's law is accordingly covenant law. It is the covenant that stands as the basis of Israel's relationship with the Lord and it is the covenant with Abraham to which God will remain faithful.[7] This law rests upon an understanding of the meaning of life in community. The law was added to help the Israelites understanding what God required of them. God gave the law to bridge the gap and to enable them to know His will without being more personally involved.[8] The most important characteristic of the covenant code is that it is sanctioned by the Lord as His laws for His people.

1.1.2.2 The Holiness Code/ the Law of Leviticus
This law confirmed the covenant of the tabernacle but some scholars regarded both collections as part of the same priestly work in view of their similar outlook. The Levitical laws are much more widely ranging than the tabernacle laws. A. Klostermann recognized a separate code of laws within the priestly code in Leviticus 17-26[9] and gave it the appropriate name of holiness code. It was on the ground that this section is characterized by the demand for Israel to be a holy people (Lev. 19:2 c.f. 20:7, 26). Therefore, the laws are concerned primarily with the maintenance of Israelites' holiness and purity. Sacrifices are to be offered only in premises of the tabernacle. And nowhere in the Old Testament legislation of judgment is expressed with such force and representatives as in the holiness code.[10]

1.1.2.3 The Laws of Deuteronomy/ the Deuteronomic Code (Deut. 12-26)
The laws of Deuteronomy are part of a series of addresses by Moses set in the plains of Moab as Israel stood on the brink of the Promised Land.[11] He urged Israel to keep law if they wanted to prosper in the land they are about to enter.[12] Deuteronomy emphasizes that law (*Torah*) should pervade Israel's

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[6] Kruse, "Law" *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 630.
[7] W. J. Harrelson, "Law In The Old Testament" *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* edited by George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 80.
[8] David F. Hinson, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 93-94.
[9] Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Adam and Charles Black, N.D), 502-03.]
[10] Harrelson, "Law in the Old Testament" *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 86.
[11] Selman, "Law" *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, 503.
[12] G. J. Wenhan, "Law" *New Bible Dictionary*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 673.

life from beginning to the end. Having being nurtured on what Moses had taught (Deut. 4:5, 8), Israel's life in the future should continue to conform to God's way as taught by the priests and the judges (Deut. 17:8-13; 31:9-12).[13]

1.1.2.4 The Priestly Code (Ex. Lev. & Num.)

The large body of priestly law deals with the building and equipping of the tabernacle. Exodus 25-31 contains the prescriptions for this undertaking and for the consecration of the tabernacle of the worship of Yahweh. In Exodus 35-40, the execution of these commands is recorded.[14] The book of Leviticus consists entirely of priestly legislation which deals with sacrifices (Chaps. 1-7), consecration of priests (Chaps. 8-10), cleanliness and uncleanliness regulations in Leviticus (Chaps. 11-15), and the ritual for the day of atonement (v16). Although the book of Leviticus is distinct from the book of Exodus it continues thematically the story of Exodus. The book of Numbers consists primarily of priestly materials only a part of which are of a specifically legal character.[15]

1.2 Law in the Historical Books

The historical books illustrate the outworking of the promises and sanctions of the law found in the Pentateuch. "These books show how obedience to the laws of God are rewarded with God's blessing and how disobedience attracts his judgment."[16] When the people of Israelites were obedient they enjoyed security and prosperity in the land. When they were disobedient the rains were withheld, they were overrun by their enemies and finally suffered in exile.

The books of I & II Kings include the stories of Elijah and Elisha who called Israel to abandon their alliance with Baal and give their allegiance wholly to God (I Kings 21:1- 29). The second book of Kings includes a description of the reforms carried out by Josiah. The king led his people back into the ways of righteousness and gave instructions that the house of the LORD should be repaired. While carrying out this task those responsible found 'the book of the law'[17] in the temple. It was taken to the king and read in his presence (II Kings 22:8-10). When Josiah heard the book of the law read, and realized how far the Israel had departed from its requirements, he was deeply disturbed. He led the people in an act of covenant renewal (II Kings 22:11- 23:3). He destroyed pagan shrines, offered sacrifices to God, and

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[13] Selman, "Law" *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch,* 499.
[14] Harrelson, "Law in the Old Testament" *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 86.
[15] N. Kiuchi, "Book of Leviticus" *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), 523.
[16] T. D. Alexander, "Law," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2000), 629-636.
[17] Alexander, "Law," *New Dictionary of Biblical* Theology, 629- 636.

kept Passover which had long been neglected (II Kings 23:4-23). This national repentance produced a stay of judgment (II Kings 22:14-20).

1.3. Law in the Poetical Books

The book of Psalms contain what in recent times have been identified as '*torah* songs,' Psalms 1 which extols the virtues of the person 'whose delight is in the law of the LORD,' Psalms 15 and 24 says that those who can approach God are obedient to Him. Psalms 119, the longest of all the Psalms, is acrostic in from and each Hebrew alphabet is used, all of which extol the virtues of the law and the advantages of ordering one's life by it.

The Book of Proverbs has few explicit references to the law but the wisdom which extol is often couched in terms reminiscent of Deuteronomy. Two explicit references indicate how wisdom is related to the law. Proverbs 6:23 depicts the commandments as a lamp that guides; and Proverbs 29:18 calls those who keep the law 'blessed'. The book of Ecclesiastes explores the limits of wisdom and concludes that the whole duty of human beings is to 'fear God and keep his commandments' (Eccl. 12:13).

1.4 Law in the Prophetical Books

Charles Dyer & Eugene Merrill reflecting on Israel's attitude towards God's law in the book of Isaiah states that people of Israel had out rightly discarded God's law of Deuteronomy 6:5, where in God commanded them to love him with all their heart, soul and strength. But people of Israel on the contrary in their rebelliousness are offering an insincere worship to God and thus are appearing to be hypocritical.[18] In the book of Isaiah, law is mentioned in the chapters 1:10; 2:3; 5:24; 30:9, all in the context of people and priests rebelling against God's law. And in chapters 8:16; 42:4, God promises to establish His law through the Messiah and asks His people to keep the Law.

In the book of Jeremiah, chapters 6:19; 8:18; 9:13; 18:18; 44:23 all are suggestive of God's complaint against Israel and Judah's stubborn rebelliousness to God's law and their complacency in having the law. And Dyer and Merrill state that in ch. 26:4, God therefore would make the temple desolate if Judah continued to refuse His law.[19] Further, Jeremiah in Lamentations 2:9, says God in His anger finds no more law in them.

In Ezekiel 7:26 and 22:26, God is vexed by the wickedness of Israel's priests in causing the law to perish. But He promises in 43:12 to re-establish His law in the temple. In the book of Daniel in ch. 6:5 Daniel being in a gentile

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[18] Charles Dyer & Eugene Merrill, *Nelson's Old Testament Survey* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 528.

[19] Dyer, *Nelson's Old Testament Survey*, 614.

nation keeps God's law. Dyer and Merrill consider the covenant curses in Leviticus 26 and in Deuteronomy 28 and the promises in Deuteronomy 30 as background to Daniel's prayer in Ch.9.[20] Therefore in ch. 9:13-19, Daniel prays on behalf of His people to God for having transgressed His law.

Further in Hosea 4:6; 8:1, and in Amos 2:4 God through these prophets declares that his people have rejected his law and have committed idolatry. This wickedness of Israel against God's law is seen in Zephaniah 3:4 and in Habakkuk 1:4 also. Habakkuk complains that God has allowed to make His law powerless. In Zechariah, God resents the hardheartedness of His people for having rejected His law. Further in Malachi 2:6-9 Dyer and Merrill state that God complains against the priests of Israel for having corrupted His law.[21] But in Micah 4:2, God in His reign in Zion promises to bring forth His law.

Hence, it is quite evident that throughout the prophetical books God through His prophets shows His deep concern to the obedience of His law in which His people failed due to their disobedience and wickedness in running after other gods. Therefore the purpose for which God gave his law to His people fails. But ultimately God through the Messiah promises to re-establish His law (Is. 42:4). This indicates the fact that law through Jesus only achieves its ultimate purpose.

1.5 Purpose of the Law in the Old Testament

Law, in general, for the OT believers meant "divine revelation." For them, sometimes it referred to the totality of revelation and other times to a part of it. It included commandments, admonitions and advice, theological affirmations, stories, worship, etc. Since the law was given after the Exodus from Egypt, it is inseparably connected with both the story of God's gracious deliverance of the Israel and the requirements that were laid upon them, and as well as the law became the blueprint for the following stories of failure and forgiveness.[22]

Citing this as a reason, Wayne G. Strickland argues for the non-salvific design of the Mosaic Law. He says, "God never intended his law to provide spiritual redemption for his people."[23] Because, he continues,

> "Note, however, that the consequences for disobedience to the law are not stated in terms of eternal condemnation, but rather in terms of physical,

[20] Dyer, *Nelson's Old Testament Survey*, 711.
[21] Dyer, *Nelson's Old Testament Survey*, 841.
[22] E. P. Sanders, "Law in Judaism of the New Testament Period," in David Noel Freedman (ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996, c1992), vol.4:254.
[23] Wayne G. Strickland, "The Inauguration of the Law of Christ with the Gospel of Christ: A Dispensational View," in Stanley N. Gundry (ed), *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Secundrabad: OM Books, 1996), 232.

temporal punishment (Deut. 28:58-62). This also indicates that the Old Testament law did not have Israel's eternal salvation in view."[24]

In addition to this, E. P. Sanders states that, both theologically and chronologically salvation through election comes before the law, reward and punishment come afterward. Judaism regards the obligation to obey the law as the response to God's choice and deliverance of the Jewish people.[25] That is, not as a means to salvation. Therefore, there is no salvation offered, taught or believed in the Old Testament.

1.6 Pauline and Jesus' Understanding of the Law in the New Testament

While making his observation on Paul's view on Mosaic Law in Thessalonians and in Corinthians, F. Thielman affirms the fact that Paul never undermines the law but has only re-established it by presenting it in the form of a new covenant.[26] Also inferring from Galatians and Philippians, Thielman states that Paul in these two epistles argues that law demanded works thus placed one's confidence in his flesh whereby one found himself inadequate to fulfil the demands of the law.[27] Paul has expounded this argument so widely in the epistle of Romans through which it can be inferred that Paul nullified the Mosaic Law. But in fact for Paul law in itself was never wrong; but it's the observance of law by a Jew without obedience that made law ineffective and unfruitful; taking it away from God's intended wish behind giving law.

Alexander states in order to derive Jesus' understanding of the Mosaic Law one must refer to his six antitheses in Matthew 5:21- 48. A peripheral glance makes one feel that He was contradicting the law in favour of His own teaching. But a closer examination reveals that in four cases He was extending the application of the law. But before the six antitheses a very important statement is made by Jesus concerning His relationship to the Law. He said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but come to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, nor the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished'(Matt. 5;17-18). Hence Jesus by this statement fulfilled the law in its original intent, extended its application and thus made it to fruition of what it foreshadowed and also he fulfilled the law by personally

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[24] Strickland, "The Inauguration of the Law of Christ with the Gospel of Christ," 238.
[25] Sanders, "Law in Judaism of the New Testament Period," 264.
[26] F. Thielman, "Law," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (eds), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (England: Inter varsity Press, 1993), 534-37.
[27] Thielman, "Law," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 538-39.

carrying out its demands. Further in Luke 16:16 Jesus is quoted as saying: "the Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it." This is suggestive of the fact that Jesus believed that the Law remained in force until the coming of the kingdom of God, but when the kingdom arrives, the law's role as a regulatory norm would cease, being superseded by the coming of the kingdom.[28] Thus Jesus never undermined law as outdated rather He affirms it during His earthly ministry.

But, both the first century Jews and the 21st century Christians are confused over the purpose of the law. They consider that obedience to the law resulted in salvation.[29] Ernst Reisinger points out that "Paul as a Pharisee, thought that people should keep the law in order to be saved. As a Christian, he saw that people must be saved in order that they might keep the law."[30] This statement of Reisinger not only exposes the false interpretation of the purpose of the law by first century Pharisees, but it also demonstrates the need to revert back to the original purpose of the law. Law, originally, was given to sanctify a saved community. A community of believers who were already redeemed from the bondage of slavery of Egypt, a community which had already expressed its faith in its God, to such a community the law was given not that they will be saved again; rather they will regulate themselves as a holy people of God. Law was intended to transform the people of God into the holy image of God.

This in effect excludes law as the means to salvation, and proposes that even in the Old Testament; salvation was always by faith in God. Strickland states,

> "Not only does the New Testament specify that Old Testament saints were saved by faith rather than works (e.g., Rom. 4:3), but the few Old Testament passages that comment on the way of salvation confirm that obedience to the Mosaic stipulations is not the requirement for redemption."

The following section deals with the understanding of the salvation as found in each book of the Old Testament.

2. Salvation: Its Meaning and Understanding in the Old Testament

The Old Testament Hebrew words for salvation include *nasal* ("deliver"), *palat* ("bring to safety"), *padah* ("redeem") and *malat* ("deliver"). Two major salvific terms in OT are *ga'al* ("redeem," "buy back," "restore," "vindicate,"

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[28] Alexander, "Law," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 635.

[29] Strickland, "The Inauguration of the Law of Christ with the Gospel of Christ," 232.

[30] Ernst Reisinger, *The Law and the Gospel* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing Company, 1997), 118.

or "deliver") and *yasa* ("save," "help in time of distress," "rescue," "deliver," or "set free"). The LXX translates *yasa* as *sozo* ("save") 138 times.[31] More particularly the terms means deliverance from sin and its consequences and the coming to peace and reconciliation with God. The Old Testament passages which indicate this are Psalms 34:18; 51:1-17.[32]

2.1 Salvation in the Pentateuch

Biblical faith is essentially the faith in God as saviour. The Hebrew people think that God had saved them from destruction and was fulfilling His purpose of salvation. The Genesis narrative develops the theme of God's blessing, which initially seems to rest on certain individuals, but renders them as agents for some greater work of God. For example, Joseph's rise to fame in Egypt preserves the lives of his entire family (Gen.45:4-7). Through Noah's faithfulness God brings salvation to his family as well as animal life (Gen.7-9). And the blessing of the promise of nationhood and land for Abraham was not only for his descendants but for all families on the earth (Gen. 12:1-3). After 430 years in Egypt, an entire people is delivered through Moses (Exod. 1–12). [33]

The deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage formed the basis that God was the saviour of Israel.[34] Various means were used to achieve salvation, some impersonal, such as the pillar of cloud and the wind at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:19-21), and in one such case at the Exodus (Deut. 6:21-23) which brought about physical deliverance[35] from Egypt and the establishment in Canaan, that the fundamental certainty of all biblical faith was based (Ps. 68:19-20).[36]

In the narrative passages, "save" is natural and its cognates are used in Genesis 47:25 and in Exodus 1:17-18, as in everyday sense. The principle example of God's intervention to save, are His salvation in the Exodus, when the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians (Ex. 14:30; c.f. 14:13; 15:2) and entered into covenant relationship with the newly constitutes nation (Ex. 19:1-20:17). The covenant brought the two parties not only into a contractual relationship but also into communion and God promised to be present with His people (Ex. 29:45-46; Lev. 26:12).[37]

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[31] Gerald G. O'Collins, "Salvation" in David Noel Freedman (ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 907.

[32] Millere Madeleine "Salvation," *Black's Bible Dictionary* (N.P:, N.P:, N:D), 636.

[33] William T. Arnold, "Salvation," in Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library; Logos Library System (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997, c1996).

[34] Allan Richardson, "Salvation" in George Arthur Buttrick (ed), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 169.

[35] M. J. Harris, "Salvation" in T. Desmond Alexander (ed), *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 763.

[36] Richardson, "Salvation" *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 171.

[37] Harris, "Salvation" *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 764.

One of the most distinctive Old Testament descriptions of God is "I am The LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6; cf. Ex. 29:46; Lev. 26:13). God's deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, the miracle of the Red sea and the subsequent experience of God's fatherly care in the wilderness gives the determinative experience of Yahweh's salvation. The Lord had worked salvation for Israel at the Red sea (Ex. 14:13, 30-31; 15:1-2, 13).[38]

God's saving intervention involved His chosen people Israel which had recorded mostly. Noah and his family who were preserved from flood (Gen. 7:1-7) and the rescue of the whole Israel from Egypt (Exo. 14 -15). Thus Israel is called both a saved nation and a saving nation because it is through Abraham's seed that all the people on earth will be blessed (Gen.12:30). It was God's prerogative to save and to save when He chose and through what or whom He chose.[39] Thus in the Old Testament the salvation of Israel is already assured for it as achieved at the Exodus from Egypt and ratified by the everlasting covenant which God made with Moses on Mount Sinai.

2.2 Salvation in the Historical Books

2.2.1 The Covenant at Shechem (Joshua 24:14- 28)

After the people of Israel had settled in the promise land they understood that it was God who had given them the land. Here "Joshua recounted the history of Israel from the day of Abraham to that day, God had shown His faithfulness in every step of the way."[40] He had acted in history to redeem His people. He had sustained His people through difficult times in the wilderness and He also had dealt with His people totally by His grace. In their thankfulness for this, they were willing to make a vow of obedience to Him. "Joshua exhorted the people to commit themselves fully to the LORD by adding his own personal testimony to the people (v. 14)"[41] and also warned them that they could not make any agreement with God that would compel to favour them (v. 19). When the people affirmed that they would follow the LORD, "Joshua made a covenant with them and erected a large stone as a demonstration to their words."[42] God's love for His people had been freely given, and He was equally free to punish their evil deeds. This covenant too was founded on God's goodwill, and provided for a continuing relationship

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[38] Richardson, "Salvation" *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 171.
[39] Harris, "Salvation" *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 764.
[40] Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey* (Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), 177.
[41] Arnold, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*, 177.
[42] David M. Howard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 93.

among the people themselves and between the people and God.[43] The tribes of Israel were only insecurely associated at that time and the covenant helped to draw them closer simultaneously, and so to prepare them for full national life.

The Shechem Covenant was important because the people themselves as a group took the initiative in response to God's goodness. The only sign required from them in return was that they should show their sincerity in promising to serve God alone, by ceasing to worship foreign gods.

2.2.2 The Covenant of David (II Sam. 7:8- 17; 23:2- 5; I Kings 8:22- 26) The different tradition which David have been drawn together in the book of Samuel give conflicting evidence about the appointment of king in Israel. Some passages suggest that this was "an act of disobedience against the LORD, but other suggest that God Himself initiated this new development in the history of Israel."[44]

Prior to David's establishment of his rule as King the people were prepared to accept his reign as a gift from God. They believed that it was the fulfilment of God's intention. Nathan expressed the conviction that David's relationship with God was on the foundation of new covenant. He assured David that his family would continue to reign after him.[45] Solomon accepted that his own reign was part of the fulfilment of this promise. The people of the Northern Kingdom rejected Rehoboam's claims to inherit these promises, but the people of the kingdom of Judah accepted the rule of the house of David throughout the years that led up to exile.

2.2.3 Covenant Renewals (II Kings 23:1- 3; Nehemiah 9:32- 10:29) The people of Israel often failed to fulfil God's purposes as described in the various codes of Law. Then their leaders would call them to turn back to the LORD and serve him faithfully. These leaders recognized "God's goodness in all his dealings with the people of Israel and believed that the people's disobedience had caused these times of national and personal distress."[46] So it was logical to urge obedience, and to ask the people to commit themselves to the service of the LORD. Josiah did so after the discovery of the Law book in the temple. Both Ezra and Nehemiah did so, though we find it difficult to be certain of the order of events in their time. But disobedience was a constant problem in Israel, and the prophets came to believe that

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[43] David F. Hinson, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2009), 94.
[44] Hinson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 94.
[45] Hinson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 94.
[46] Hinson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 94.

God's people were incapable of changing their ways and serving the LORD (Jer. 2:22; 13:23).[47] Back in Persia, through Esther's rise to power the Jewish people were spared annihilation (Esther 7).

2.3 Salvation in the Poetical Books

The books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Job were began to be regarded by the Jews as specifically as "the books of Truth." This constituted a decided development in thought form where in this literature the mighty acts of God were commemorated.[48] The psalms are replete with praise for God's salvation, which is experienced as joy (51:12). It is a cup of thanksgiving lifted to God (116:13) and a horn (18:2).[49] The principal Hebrew term translated 'salvation' is *yasa* and its cognates, its meaning is 'bring into a spacious environment' (Ps. 18:36; 66:12; 91:11, 12; Prov. 4:12), but it carries from the beginning the figurative sense of 'freedom from limitation' i.e., "deliverance from the factors which constrain and confine."[50] It can be referred to deliverance from disease, from trouble or enemies (Ps. 40:14; 44:7; 70:2, 3; 71:13, 24). In the vast majority of references God is the author of salvation. God rescues His people, he saved fathers from Egypt, and save the poor and needy when they have no other helper (Ps.44:7; 34:6; 106:7- 10; Job 5:15.

2.4 Salvation in the Prophetical Books

The anticipated salvation of the prophetic writings manifests a tension similar to that which pervades the New Testament. While salvation is a fait accompli[51] –God saved Israel from slavery in Egypt unto a covenant relationship with himself– Israel still awaits God's salvation. God had saved Israel in the past, and therefore God can be expected to deliver in the future. The dimensions of salvation in the prophetic literature span both the "settled past" and the "anticipated future," with its scope covering the entire trajectory of history.[52] In the book of Isaiah chapters 12:2, 3; 25:9; 265;1; 33:2, 6; 45:8, 17; 46:13; 49:6, 8; 51:5, 6, 8; 52:7, 10; 56:1; 59:16, 17; 61:10; 62:1, 11; 63:5 and also in Jeremiah 3:23, Lamentation 3:26; Jonah 2:9; Micah 7:7; Habakkuk 3:13, 18 and in Zechariah 9:9, God is being ascribed as the great Saviour of Israel who brings forth His salvation for her and His people rejoice in the salvation He offers. But in Isaiah, in chapters 17:10; 59:11, Israel forgets God's salvation and therefore God's salvation goes far away from them.

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[47] Hinson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 94.
[48] R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament: With a Comprehensive Review of Old Testament Studies and a Special Supplement on the Apocrypha* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1982), 965.
[49] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[50] W. Forester, "Salvation," in J. D. Douglas (ed), *New Bible Dictionary* (Illinois: IVP, 1996), 1046-1050.
[51] "Fait accompli" means "an accomplished fact" or "an irreversible accomplishment."
[52] William T. Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.

2.5 Means of Salvation in the Old Testament

In general, most of the biblical scholars consider salvation in OT as a reality more physical than spiritual, more social than individual.[53] And, whenever, the individuals are singled out it is always for the good of the community. Nevertheless, salvation is attributed above all to God. Only God can save (Isa. 43:14; Hos. 1:7). Expecting salvation from mountains and idols is in vain, because the salvation of Israel is in the Lord (Jer. 3:23). Salvation is something to stand and watch, for "The LORD will fight for you; and you need only be still" (Exod. 14:13). "In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength" says Isaiah (30:15).[54]

Salvation is of two kinds. One, includes personal and the other is national deliverance from one's enemies, deliverance from slavery (Deut. 24:18), ongoing protection and preservation from evil (Ps. 121), escape from death (Ps. 68:19), healing (Ps. 69:29; Jer. 17:14), inheritance of land, descendants, and long life.[55]

Some have considered that the idea of "salvation from sin" is absent in the OT. It is not true, at least in the prophetic literature. Ezekiel stresses the need for salvation from uncleanness, iniquity, and idolatry (36:22–32). Here salvation involves the gift of a new heart of flesh and new spirit, which will finally empower his people to keep the commandments, after which comes habitation in the land. This passage, in addition to salvation from sin, as it was already noted that OT concept of salvation is always though individual the focus is always national, that is why, here too, Ezekiel is foreseeing that such salvation, when it comes, will be neither for the sake of Israel nor her deeds, but for God and his glory, which has been profaned and which now must be vindicated among the nations.[56]

The idea of "salvation from sin" was prior to Ezekiel. For, Isaiah had already preached of a salvation yet to come, which will be achieved through the vicarious suffering of the Servant (ch.53) *who bears the sin of many*. This salvation will last forever (51:6).

But, above all, the important fact was that for the Jews of the Old Testament salvation was not an abstract concept, but a real and present experience.[57] This is the reason, the OT believers emphasized the now and here of salvation which hoped for the physical and material well being here on earth than of a future state of "eternal life." This led to the attachment of salvific value to

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[53] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[54] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[55] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[56] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[57] William T. Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.

the obedience to law, which brought such physical and material blessing. The sight of the future state of "salvation" was overshadowed by the state of well being in the present. The OT believer began to see the obedience to the law is what mattered most. Since law governed the covenant keeping and breaching, keeping the covenant through keeping the law became of foremost interest for the Old Covenant believers. Then, is the law salvific? If not, then the kind of salvation that comes through the obedience to the law is undermined or even the obedience to the law then seems trivial or dispensable.

3. Is There Salvation Through Law?

On the basis of the understanding of the Mosaic Law found throughout the Old Testament, we can derive the fact that law in itself never offered salvation it only gave a temporal atonement to people from their sins and transgressions. Time and again the way the whole nation Israel disobeyed and fell short of the requirements of the law is indicative of the fact that law expressed the demand for good works and at the same time exposed their sinfulness. In this business of keeping and failing, they lost sight of the primary mode of relationship with God was to have faith in God, in order to achieve the purpose for which God had given the law to His people.

Even salvation in the Old Testament right from the time of Exodus till the post exilic times demanded faith in God from Israel as the only one prerequisite to achieve it. The ones who had faith alike Abraham fulfilled both law and achieved the salvation which God offered not by law but by obedience to Him through law achieved by faith. But the Jews failed to put their faith in God, the origin of their salvation who gave them the expectation of a future anointed king, Lord Jesus Christ, the messiah in the line of King David (Is. 42:1; 52:13)[58] who came as the Saviour in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4) to save the whole humanity.

4. Salvation in the New Testament

The New Testament continues the Old Testament affirmation that salvation belongs to God alone, but with greater specificity. The name "Immanuel" (God with us) of Isaiah 7:14 signifies new meaning in the history of salvation, from an Old Testament point of view.[59] The very name of Jesus, in Matthew 1:21-23 signals new beginnings in the work of salvation in the New Testament. The name "Jesus" is derived from the Hebrew *Joshua*, which means "*Salvation is from Yehowah*." Luke 19:10 presents the very mission of Jesus as "to seek out and save the lost."

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[58] John B. Taylor, "Salvation in the Hebrew Scriptures," in Donald English (ed), *Windows on Salvation* (Great Britain: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1994), 21.

[59] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.

In the Gospels, Jesus uses Kingdom of God as a synonym for salvation. The advancement of God's kingdom is advancement of salvation. And the kingdom of God spreads through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, which again in turn is the gospel of Jesus himself. The gospel of his death, burial and resurrection. This later is concretized in the declaration of Peter in Acts 4:10-12. Here the manner in which Peter connects between "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified" and the "God [who raised him] from the dead" results in a categoric declaration that salvation belongs only to the name of Jesus Christ. By using God's kingdom as a circumlocution for salvation, Jesus deepens the Old Testament conviction that salvation belongs to God, for the kingdom signifies a sphere of reality in which God reigns sovereign.[60]

The following are paraphrasing of what William T. Arnold writes on "Salvation in the New Testament." He says, salvation in the New Testament is described as the mystery of God revealed in the NT (Eph. 3:9; 6:19), a plan conceived before the foundations of the world (Eph. 1:3–14), a light for revelation to the Gentiles (Luke 2:30–32), a transition from death to life (John 5:24), a message for sinners (Mark 2:17), a gift of grace through faith not of works (Eph. 2:8–9), that for which the whole creation groans (Rom. 8:22), the revelation of God's righteousness to faith (Rom. 1:16–17), the justification that comes through faith (Rom. 4:22–25), reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18–19), and redemption (Rom. 8:23). In response to Nicodemus's statement, salvation is a spiritual birth, a birth from above without which one cannot enter the kingdom (John 3:1–11). Salvation means death to and freedom from sin (Rom. 6), a new perspective that transcends the human point of view and participation in a new creation (Rom. 5:16–17), peace with God (Rom. 5:1), life as adopted children of God (Gal. 4:4), baptism into Christ's death (Rom. 6:4), and the reception of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5, 8).[61]

Arnold says, in the New Testament, salvation encompasses both the physical and spiritual dimensions of life, having relevance for the whole person. On the physical side, entrance into the kingdom requires attention to earthly needs, especially those of the poor. Jesus demands that a wealthy man give his riches to the poor (Mark 10:17–22). The salvation that comes to Zacchaeus's house inspires him to give half his possessions to the poor (Luke 19:8–10). Care for the poor was a regular function of the earliest Christian communities (Acts 9:36; 10:4, 31; 24:17; Gal. 2:10; James 2:1–7). But for Jesus the physical and spiritual dimensions are held very close together. Forgiveness of sins and physical healing frequently coexist, as in

[60] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[61] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.

the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1–12). Other healings done in Jesus' name call attention to the intimate connection (Acts 3:16; 4:7–12) among spirit, mind, and body. In these examples salvation means not only forgiveness of sin but mitigation of its effects.[62]

Salvation also extends beyond the parameters of national Jewish identity. On at least two occasions Jesus corrects national expectations concerning the kingdom, once in response to the disciples' question (Acts 1:6–8) and once on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:25–26). Since Jesus' death was for all people (John 11:51), repentance and forgiveness of sins were to be proclaimed to all nations (Luke 24:47). This gospel, says Paul, was given in advance in the form of God's promise to bless all the nations through Abraham (Gal. 3:8).[63]

The objective basis and means of salvation is God's sovereign and gracious choice to be "God with us" in the person of Jesus Christ, who is described as both author and mediator of salvation (Heb. 2:10; 7:25). But the movement of Jesus' life goes through the cross and resurrection. It is therefore "Christ crucified" that is of central importance for salvation (1 Cor. 1:23), for "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3) and was handed to death for our trespasses (Rom. 4:25). What Jesus did in our name he also did in our place, giving "his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). And if Christ demonstrated his love by dying when we were still sinners, how much more shall we now be saved by his life? (Rom. 5:8–10). So critical is the resurrection to the future hope of salvation that "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17).[64]

The subjective basis of salvation is personal repentance and faith, often associated closely with water baptism. John the Baptist preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4), a message echoed by Peter (Acts 2:38) and Paul (Acts 20:21). Jesus said salvation required belief in him (Mark 16:15; John 6:47). Paul enjoined confession with the mouth that "Jesus is Lord" and belief that God raised him from the dead (Rom. 10:8–9). The writer of Hebrews suggests that the hearing of the gospel is of no value unless combined with faith (4:1).[65]

The New Testament articulates salvation in terms of past, present, and future time. In Christ we were elected before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). In hope we were saved (Rom. 8:24). Yet the cross is the power of God for those who are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18). Likewise Paul's readers are

[62] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[63] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[64] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[65] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.

admonished to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). And there is yet a salvation that lies waiting to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:5), a redemption for which we groan inwardly (Rom. 8:23). For Paul, the past dimension of salvation is generally conceived as justification, redemption, and reconciliation, while its present dimension is depicted in terms of the Spirit's sanctifying work. Its future dimension is said to be glorification, the culmination of the saving process wherein believers will experience Christ's presence in new and resurrected bodies no longer burdened by the vestiges of sin.[66]

5. Christian, Salvation and the Law

Christians are not under the law, but under grace (Jn. 1:17; Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:17). Yet, the same Paul argues that Christians are obligated to fulfil the law. The whole of the commandments are summed up in one word- love. Both in Romans 13:10 (Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.) and in Galatians 5:14 (For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."). Then according to Paul, fulfilling law for a Christian is inescapable, only that the manner of fulfilling is new. Then, Reisinger is right when he says,

> "Christians are delivered from sin, not from what is holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12). They are freed from their disobedience to the commandments, not from themselves. The believer is not redeemed from what is right; his relationship to what is right has changed. In particular, what has changed is his power and desire to do right, not his duty to do right."[67]

This newness is very stated by both prophet Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah 31:33 reads "But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." And, Ezekiel 36:26-27 reads "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*." Both the passages stress that the primary characteristics of the new covenant is that of the writing of the law on the hearts the believers and the giving of the Spirit into the hearts of the believers so that the Spirit will cause obedience to the law. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Christians are saved not from the obedience to the law, but from its tyranny. Christians are saved for obedience to the law through love.

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[66] Arnold, "Salvation," electronic ed., n.p.
[67] Reisinger, *The Law and the Gospel*, 19.

Conclusion and Application

In sum, it could be stated that the law was never given as a means to salvation; rather it was given to the saved to be sanctified through obedience. On one hand, the law reveals the character of God. God's righteousness is reflected in the law. The nature of God determines what is right, and then the will of God imposes that standard upon all His creatures as a moral obligation. Because His will flows from His nature, if the law is perfect (Ps 19:7), we can expect that His nature is no less perfect. On the other hand, the law reveals the condition of man. Law makes man accountable to God. Law brings the awareness of sin to man. The awareness of sin leads to the need of salvation.

Reisinger notes how John Calvin had began his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by describing two knowledges necessary for salvation. *One*, the knowledge of God and; *Two*, the knowledge of one's self. Calvin's argument was that the law revealed the two knowledges necessary for salvation. He established two propositions. He said, without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God, and without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self.[68] This way, it has now become clear that law is indispensable to Christian salvation and faith.

But, such an emphasis on law must not ignore the classification of the law into moral, civil, and ceremonial. For this, Reisinger makes a very relevant observation. He says,

> "It is important to note that in the precepts of the moral law we find the goal of all other laws. The ceremonial law would not have been necessary, nor would it make sense, if it were not for sins against the moral law. The civil laws applied the principles of the moral law to the specific context of national Israel. Though we [Christians] are not bound to the particular civil laws themselves, they embody ideals that remain valid to us, though in new ways."[69]

Then, according to Reisinger, the moral law is the mother of all laws. He says, such a classification of the law and consideration of moral law as foundational became clear only in the New Testament after the coming of Christ, but the distinction of moral, civil and ceremonial laws was existing even among the Old Testament believers. For example, David sings in Psalm 51:16: "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it;* You do not delight in burnt offering." Here David is speaking about ceremonial laws, but David was aware in the same context that God required conformity to

[68] Reisinger, *The Law and the Gospel*, 41-43.
[69] Reisinger, *The Law and the Gospel*, 52.

the moral law. Reisinger opines that such a distinction was not a work of men but at the very inception of the law had made such distinction. There is a drastic difference in how God revealed them. God revealed the ceremonial and the civil law to Moses, who wrote them on vellum or parchment. But God Himself wrote the Ten Commandments, and not on perishable skins, but on tables of stone (Deut. 9:10). The other indication is that most of the predictions of the ministry and sufferings of the messiah were given in ceremonial terms, which indicated that they were of temporary character. The ceremonial and civil laws were types and figures. The moral law is neither type nor figure.[70]

The words of Reisinger sound very much relevant for all Christians today. He says, "It is of the utmost importance, therefore, to discern the differences between the ceremonial law, which pertained to the worship of Israel and prefigured Christ; the civil or judicial laws, which detailed the duties of Israel as a nation (having their roots in the moral law, particularly in the second table); and the moral law, by which the Creator governs the moral conduct of all creatures of all times."[71]

Christians today must realize that the sovereign God who gave the law through Moses in the Old Testament is the one who today offers His salvation to His world through Jesus Christ. And that He has only one purpose that is to bring the fallen humanity back to Him. Every day for a Christian is a new beginning which demands a complete trust in Him. Each day is required to live in all obedience to the law written in our hearts. The Spirit has come to lead us into all obedience. A Spirit-filled life is lived in all obedience to the law. This way, the sovereign God takes all glory through our lives, if not we similar to Israel may slip away from the purposes for which He created us in Christ Jesus.

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[70] Reisinger, *The Law and the Gospel*, 53-55.
[71] Reisinger, *The Law and the Gospel*, 54.

A Book Review

Ch. Vijaya Kumar
Faculty COTRTS

Title : *The Myth of the Historical Jesus and the Evolution of Consciousness*
Author : Hal Childs

Bibliographical Information

Childs, Hal. *The Myth of the Historical Jesus and the Evolution of Consciousness*. Atlanta, Georgia: SBL, 2000. xiii + 278 pp., h/b. Rs. 2500.00. ISBN 0-88414-029-6

The Review

This book is an excellent comparative analysis of Carl Jung's psychological method and John Dominic Crossan's historical method in relation to historical Jesus studies. Childs addresses the problem of the multiplicity of Jesus images and the subjectivity of the scholars. So, he focuses on the nature of the relationship between historical critical method, and the scholar's hermeneutic preconceptions or bias (i.e., their subjectivity) in historical Jesus studies.[1] This resulting methodological crisis, Childs says, is due to the 19th century Cartesian epistemological dichotomy of subject/object which, he says, continues to plague the historical method.[2] Childs intends to propose an integration of analytical psychology and historical criticism to suggest a phenomenological approach to the image of the historical Jesus as a mirror.[3] In other words, Childs intends to establish the impotency of historical-critical method and impossibility of establishing the "facts about Jesus," and so proposes to supplement or integrate psychology as an aid to historical method to resolve the issue of "historical Jesus."

Childs, an active psychotherapist, has worked with the Guild for Psychological Studies in San Francisco, where he had studied and led seminars on the historical Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. And his previous Master of Divinity thesis was on a Jungian interpretation of the "Son of Man" as a principle of incarnation, with a focus on Jesus' possible use of the term. Therefore, the author is not new and is well qualified to this cross disciplinary study.[4]

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[1] Hal Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus and the Evolution of Consciousness* (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL, 2000), 1-2.
[2] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 2.
[3] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 20.
[4] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, xi.

In the book, the first chapter describes the subject, elaborates the problem and discusses the methodology. The second chapter analyzes Crossan's historical method, by examining his major works on Jesus, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (1973), *Raid on the Articulate: Comic Eschatology in Jesus and Borges* (1976), and *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish peasant* (1991). Childs discovers that Crossan is after definite facts and not interpretations of the facts, that is, the shifts is from *ipsissima verba* to the *ipsissima vox* of Jesus. But, this shift, Childs says, is Crossan's unconscious historical and psychological shift from "the myth of the heavenly Christ (the legacy of Christianity for almost two-thousand years) [to] becomes the myth of the historical Jesus (the legacy of historical consciousness for approximately the last three-hundred years)."[5] Because, Childs says, Crossan writes about Jesus as if he were writing about the actual Jesus, which is historiography, forgetting that his findings are a result of historical critical method.

This problem of historical critical method and historiography becomes the focus of the third chapter. Childs after discussing the perspectives on history that are missing in Crossan's work, he presents the fundamental limitation and ambiguity of history as discourse, or story, or myth in contrast to history as the real past, which Crossan either failed to notice, and as a result confuses his story of historical Jesus with the real Jesus. Childs argues that historian makes a selection of events out of the totality of what has happened and links them in a meaningful way by thought or ideas, this Childs says is "myth."[6] Then, according to Childs, "the totality of what has happened" is real past or "history," out of which, what is selectively and thoughtfully passed on historiographically is "myth."

In the fourth chapter, Childs explores Jung's psychology. He says, for Jung, all historical knowledge is fundamentally hermeneutic. And Christ, the archetype of the self, is understood in mythic terms. Jesus is seen as an ordinary empirical person and the Christ as the symbol of an unconscious projected self.[7] So, for Jung, Christ is the projected self of Jesus.

This leads to the comparative analysis in the fifth chapter. Childs discovers that Jung presents several contradictory images of the historic Jesus. One is of a failed eschatological figure; another is youthful, irresponsible, wandering, philosophical tramp who has little, if anything, to say to people today. Jung

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[5] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 56.
[6] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 79.
[7] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 97-165.

says, because of his illegitimate birth, Jesus suffered from inferiority complex, which he compensated by preaching his spiritual kingship.[8]

On the other hand, Childs understands that Crossan always made a clear distinction between "the historical Jesus" and "the confessional Christ." For Crossan, the confessional Christ is the heavenly Christ and Lord of dogmatic Christianity. Crossan argued that the gospel traditions were creative interpretations or even distortions, by early Christians, of the significance of Jesus of Nazareth. For him, to look at Jesus through the gospels was to look down through the surface of a body of water – Jesus is at the bottom, but badly distorted by refraction. Crossan believed that historical critical method could counter and correct the refraction and restore the original image. In his *In Parables*, Crossan presents Jesus as a teacher who presents a difficult and challenging truth about God. In his *Raid on the Articulate*, Jesus is a radical comedian, a satirist. And in *The Historical Jesus*, Crossan presents Jesus as a "peasant Jewish Cynic."[9]

In the sixth chapter, Childs clarifies the meaning of his very unusual title "*the myth of historical Jesus and the evolution of consciousness*." In the first part of the title, the term "myth," he says, is not used in the sense of being false, illusion, fiction or just a story. While referring to the Gospels, Childs defines that "history as discourse and memory is never what actually happened – it is a written account of how something was remembered, and therefore includes a significant dimension of subjectivity."[10] This idea of history, Childs calls, "myth." So, concludes that, whatever source we have today about historical Jesus is "the myth of historical Jesus."

And the second part of the title, "the evolution of consciousness," Childs uses the Jungian theory of five levels of projections, through which the evolution of consciousness takes place. Childs uses this theory to expose Crossan''s phenomenological shift from catholic worldview to protestant worldview, as a result of which, Crossan tries to isolate Jesus from his self, i.e., Christ. Childs had already concluded, based on Jungian psychology, that Jesus and Christ are an ontological and archetypal unity, analytical thinking can separate them for discussion, but in reality there are not separable.[11] So, now Childs says, Crossan after having isolated Jesus' self from him, projects his own self on to Jesus, which he says is futile, for the words of

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[8] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus,* 197.
[9] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 206-222.
[10] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 227.
[11] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 221.

Jesus have no value unless they are imbued with the self, either with Jesus' own self – Christ, now that Crossan has done away with Christ, he psychologically compensates it with his self. This way, Crossan sees his own reflection at the bottom of a deep well. To explain this subjective exercise of Crossan, Childs gives an interesting illustration.

> "The whole process of using historical critical method and literary analysis under the mantle of Cartesian epistemology in order to isolate the original "words" (i.e., voice) of Jesus is to me not unlike someone who is determined to isolate a fragment of the true and pure wheat before it became distorted with the water, egg, yeast and salt in the final loaf of bread. So they probe all the way down to a molecule or atom and feel they now *have* a piece of the *original*, *pure*, *undistorted* wheat. However, an atom of wheat, or even a molecule of wheat is an abstraction, an idea (ideal) of pure and undistorted wheat...The true and undistorted words of Jesus can never be isolated or recovered, but because the idea of contact with the pure and undistorted original historic Jesus is so gripping....in order to convince ourselves that epistemologically and ontologically, we have *touched* the original Jesus."[12]

In this manner, Childs not only exposes the impotency of historical critical method, but also how Crossan's use of historical method is plagued with subjectivity, and how it leads to project his own self onto the self of Jesus. The amount of subjectivity involved in the whole exercise of retrieving the historical Jesus has resulted in multiplicity of images of Jesus. However, he says, this multiple historical-Jesus-images are an unavoidable necessity in the light of the apparent mythic essence of history. As such, he opines, it is not to be struggled against but embraced. That is, the multiple images of Jesus are due to reflections in the bottom of a deep well, and it is an unavoidable reality, which reveals the meaning of being, world and particular historical epochs and at the same time various aspects of the self of God. The advantage in this kind of historical Jesus studies, Childs sees is that the unconscious projections of a former age become conscious to us, and our own conscious projections will become conscious to later ages.[13] Based on this, Childs proposes to approach the Jesus-texts with the combined awareness of historical criticism and archetypal-subjectivity, that holds in tension an awareness of the past and an awareness of the present, and to realize the figure of Jesus as a projective field for imagination for continual

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[12] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 252-253.
[13] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 259.

creation of the contemporary Gospels. In this way, he says, the image of Jesus acts as a mirror, facilitating the incarnation of the self, not in Jesus, but in the individual.[14] This reflective nature of the whole quest for historical Jesus, Childs says, is not an obstacle but a gift, within which there is the potential to reveal the self, world and God.[15]

Childs' study is commendable for its novelty and its methodological soundness. And especially, his honesty in accepting the scholarly subjectivity is appreciable, but the way he legitimizes it and considers it as hermeneutical tool in retrieving the historical Jesus is questionable. Childs takes what was the primary weakness of historical-critical method transforms it as the strength of his hermeneutical proposition. For him, Jesus is a mirror, who when attempted to retrieve, does not come to the fore, but reflects back the face of the scholar. This is legitimate for him, because, he sees written history as "myth," i.e., subjective reflections of the historians. Going by Childs' definition of "history", the picture of the Jesus in the Gospels are mere reflections of their writers. Then how could he appeal to study the Jesus-texts – the Gospels (which do not have the picture of real Jesus, rather images of the writers) to be studied to retrieve the figure of Jesus, which at first place is not there at all. Then any 21st century quester looking for Jesus in the Gospels will not find Jesus, but the image of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Then, either the image of Jesus is irretrievably lost, and the contemporary images of Jesus unearthed by the scholars are reflections of the images of the Gospel writers; or if the scholars are in fact looking at Jesus as the mirror in the Gospels, then it presupposes that the Gospel writers to some extent succeeded in presenting an objective image of Jesus, which is now acting like a mirror at the bottom of the well, reflecting back the scholar's own face. But, if the Gospel writers achieved objectivity in some way successfully presenting the figure of Jesus, then why does Childs deny the same privilege of objectivity to the contemporary scholars. This seems to be due to Childs' presupposition that Jungian psychology can be a corrective to historical-critical method. It is right that Childs has exposed the subjectivity of historical-critical method by using Jungian principles and using its theory of projections to diagnose the psychopathology of Crossan and his use of historical method. But, ironically, what was seen as the chief problem throughout the book is at last condoned and encouraged by Childs as a legitimate means of exegeting the Jesus-texts.

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[14] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 260.
[15] Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus*, 261.

Just as it is acceptable that pure objectivity is unattainable, so also the possibility of objectivity cannot be ruled out. Though, it is evident and noticed by most of the scholars that the quest of historical Jesus has been plagued by subjectivity from its very inception, yet legitimizing it does not help the cause. This subjective self-reflective hermeneutics of Childs is a subtle way of legitimizing "reader-response criticism." The phrase "reflection seen at the bottom of a deep well," found in the beginning of the book (page. 15) and at the end of the book (page.261) forms a perfect *inclusio*. And the term "mirror" in the phrase "the image of Jesus acts as a mirror," shows that Childs was from the beginning moving away from "historical-critical method" to the "reader-response criticism." This observation is reinforced by the constant recurrence of the terms "reflection, projection, ideation, imagination, creation, picture, mirror, depiction." This explains why Childs is so critical of Cartesian split ontology of subject-object. Whereas, Henry Thiselton says, in the reader-response criticism the two horizons of hermeneutics collapse into one single horizon. That is, the text and the reader and are fused into one, which Thiselton says is betraying the primary function of hermeneutics as "listening, openness, and dialogue which stands at the heart of hermeneutical theory."[16]

[16] Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), 546.

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