

ISSN 2231-3230

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1, SEPTEMBER, 2019

JOURNAL
OF
C.O.T.R.
THEOLOGICAL
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C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary

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Journal of C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary (ISSN 2231-3230) is a peer reviewed publication of Church On The Rock Theological Seminary, located in Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, South India. The purpose of this journal is to promote the vision and mission of C.O.T.R College of Ministries; “of producing anointed and informed servants of God” in Indian churches, institutions, theological colleges and seminaries. Therefore, the journal intends to focus on scholarly articles from all theological disciplines that promote sound evangelical perspectives to current issues and trends. As an English-language journal, *JCOTRTS* actively seeks and promotes contributions from scholars from all over the world. This is the first edition of the fifth volume published in September, 2019.

Publisher : Mrs. Helen Johnson
Schedule : Published twice a year
Editor : Varun Deepak
Editorial Committee : Varun Deepak, Hirendra Prasad and Dr. Pari Titus

Subscriptions: *JCOTRTS* is available on a subscription basis both for individuals and institutions. Institutional journal exchanges are actively sought.

The rates of subscription per annum are as follows:

India: Rs. 350.00 Overseas : US \$ 50.00

Please send your subscription by Bank draft or Banker’s cheque payable to **C.O.T.R. College of Ministries**, P.O. Box - 3, Dorathota Village, Bheemunipatnam Post, Vishakapatnam – 531163, Andhra Pradesh, South India. Surface mail, handling and bank charges are included in the subscription rates.

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Send all communications to the Editor, The Journal of C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary, C/o C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary, P.O. Box - 3, Dorathota, Bheemunipatnam Post, Vishakapatnam – 531163, Andhra Pradesh, South India.

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JCOTRTS

SEPTEMBER , 2019

Vol.5 No.1

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EDITORIAL

30th April 2017 has left us in immense grief and inconsolable loss with the home calling of our beloved “Mummy,” the co-founder and the chair person of COTRTS, Mrs. Mary Titus. However, God has been faithful in helping the current leadership to shoulder the ministry in seeing some historical milestones in COTRTS which includes 2 Ph.D. candidates being enrolled in the Department of Missiology.

We had variety of resource persons from our faculty of COTRTS along with one of our former faculty, as the contributors of articles in this issue. With growing milieu of religious intolerance and other challenges against evangelism in India, Dr. Dasan Jeyaraj beckons the Christian community towards a thought provoking contemporary biblical model for Christian witness and life entitled, “wise as a serpent – bearing witness in the midst of challenges.” Secondly, in contrast to widely discussed ecumenism among the churches, Rev. Rajasekhar recommends the importance of practicing it within the church by studying the practice of ecumenism in his home church, CSI Yellandu entitling, “The practice of ecumenism today in one’s own church.” Having Hinduism as the majority religious window of evangelism, Mr. Rajababu presents a paper on, “a study on the significance of idols in popular Hinduism: implications for Christian witness.” Mr. Purna Chandra Rao has contributed a unique paper on, “Retribution Theology in Deuteronomy,” observing the roots of retribution in the book of Deuteronomy. Mr. Josfin raj, one of our former faculty members currently serving as academic dean at New Life Biblical Seminary, Ayoor, Kerala, contributed a paper entitled, “Re-membering

John Calvin for our time,” in commemorating the 500 years of Reformation. He has also contributed a book review on the book, “*Fulfilment of the Vedic Pilgrimage in the Lord Jesus Christ* by Acharya Daya Prakash.”

Pray that this effort of sharing the knowledge of God will make us a better disciple and witness of our Master – Jesus Christ.

Gripped in His Grace

Varun Deepak

Wise as a serpent – Bearing witness in the midst of challenges

*Rev. Dr. Dasan Jeyaraj**

“Intolerance” and “Saffron Surge” have become a famous cliché in the country, which has hitherto claimed to be ‘pluralistic and secular’ and ‘Unity in Diversity’. It has been expressed by the intellectuals, great personalities, politicians and minorities. “India at risk of turning into a Hindu Pakistan...every murder in the name of my religion defiles me as a Hindu”, writes Ramesh Thakur.² In *The Intolerant India*, Gautam Adhikari, a former editor of the Times of India, contends that ‘extreme religious ideologies and forces of violent politics – on the right and left alike – have overshadowed the idea of a liberal, tolerant society on which the Republic of India was established. That founding vision is steadily being replaced by narrow religious, regional or ethnic identities.’³ The minorities seem to be ‘strangers and aliens’ in their own mother land.⁴ Government dictates even our eating/dressing habits. ‘Gharwapsi’ and temple for ‘Godse’ has become a prominent talk for discussion and a conundrum. As though this is not sufficient, Sadhvi Deva Thakur, vice president of All India Hindu Mahasabha⁵, told reporters, “The population of Muslims and Christians is growing day by day. To rein in

* Dasan Jeyaraj, hails from Tamil Nadu and was brought up through Bethel Fellowship. He served with OM India for 35 years and was the principal of ICCS, OM for 15 years (1996-2011). He is the secretary for the Fellowship of Indian Missiologists (FOIM) and the dean of M. Th. and Ph. D. studies in COTRTS. He obtained his Ph.D. from Utrecht University, the Netherlands. He is married to Indra and they have two daughters, Preethi and Premi. This paper was presented to the COTRTS community, Vishakhapatnam

² Please refer to his article in www.japantimes.co.jp on October 26, 2015.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gohain reports that there were more than 85 major anti-Christian incidents in 2015 across 20 states. The report calls Madhya Pradesh as the worst state and Maharashtra is the ‘Hindutva capital’. The Catholic Secular Forum (CSF) claims that at least seven pastors were killed and 8000 (including 6000 women and children) targeted in 2015. There is at least a 20% increase in the incidents in terms of the number of people victimized as against 2014. Manash Pratim Gohain, “85 major anti-Christian incidents in 2015, claims NGO”, *The Times of India*, January 18, 2016.

⁵ The beginning of the Hindu Mahasabha may be traced back to 1907 and the major player of this movement was Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966).

this, Centre will have to impose emergency, and Muslims and Christians will have to be forced to undergo sterilisation so that they can't increase their numbers."⁶ She also instructed Hindus to have more children and increase their population so as to have an effect on the world. She would like to place idols of Hindu gods and goddesses in mosques and churches.⁷ Adding to this confusion, Giriraj Singh, union minister, sought for 'nasbandi' (sterilisation) after 'notebandi' (demonetisation).⁸ The honourable Supreme Court of India has now further added to the confusion by declaring, "Hindutva is a way of life of the people in the subcontinent and is a state of mind – not religion."⁹ Recently, Rajeshwar Rao, the leader of the RSS wing in UP, has declared that by 2021 Christians and Muslims will not be existing in India.¹⁰ Indeed we live in a challenging time; however we should be witnessing our faith, without any compromise, being wise as serpent.

I The challenging contemporary context

Hindus have been made to feel and are frustrated with the thought that India has been invaded by many groups (Greeks, Huns, Mongols, Muslims, Portuguese, Danish, Dutch, French and British) and Hindus have to be united to withstand the invasion and oppose the enemy with greater vigour and violence, if necessary.

Arya Samaj¹¹ could be named as the forerunner to the contemporary context. To Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883):¹²

- i. Vedas are the word of God and the source of all knowledge
- ii. The religion of the Vedas alone is the true religion
- iii. India is Aryavarta, and the rest is Melechadesa (barbarian land)

His ideas were: if Indians were to emerge as modern people, they had to do so as the inheritors and the continuators of their ancient religion (the Vedic

⁶ Deepu Madhavan, *Indiatimes*, December 19, 2015.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ "Giriraj Singh calls for sterilization", *The Hindu*, Hyderabad, 5 December 2016, p.10.

⁹ *The Supreme Court*, 18 October 2016.

¹⁰ www.abpnews.in accessed on 12 December 2016.

¹¹ Inaugurated on April 10, 1875 in Bombay.

¹² Simon Stylites, "Hindu fundamentalism on the move", *Areopagus*, volume 3, no. 4, 1990, pp.19-23.

religion), they must have one scripture (The Vedas), one language (Hindi) and one racial consciousness (being Aryan) and one territory (Aryavarta) and one supreme political authority.¹³

These ideas were later elaborated by Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), Vir Savarkar, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940) and Madhav Sadhashiv Golwalkar (1906-1973).

Tilak paved the way for 'Religious Nationalism' (or Hindutva). He was known as the 'religious – politician'. He held the view that religion and nationality are inseparably interconnected and an Indian cannot be a true nationalist, proud of his country, unless he feels proud of the religion of the land. He considered Hinduism as a powerful force for national regeneration and solidarity and thus revived the Ganesh festival and Shivaji festival.

Savarkar, known as 'the high-priest of Hindu revivalisms' and his famous work *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1923) has been recognized as the social and political doctrine. One of his statements was: Freedom is essential for progress and therefore any activity offered in the service of freedom is essentially and intrinsically a religious activity (see how he combines religion with nationalism). Thus he elevated politics to the rank of religion. He wrote, 'only when politics are religious are they sacred and only when religion is political is it sacred'. He did not like the word Hinduism (because it is alien in its origin and not comprehensive enough to embrace all that is Hindu) and preferred the word 'Hindutva'. It includes the religious, cultural, linguistic, social and political aspects of the life of Hindus.

The core belief of Hindutva is: Common nation, common race and common culture. It is a bond of common territory, common blood and common civilization. Savarkar claimed that the Indian nation has to be necessarily a Hindu nation and the Hindus alone are the sons of the soil. He considered the majority, which are the Hindus as the only nation and the minorities' as totally different race. A 'Hindu' is a person who regards the land of Bharatavarsha from Indus to sea as his fatherland as well as a holy land that is, the cradle of his religion. He made (pithrubhumi-punyanhumi Fatherland-holy land) equation/equality and thinks that only those who accept the Bharatavarsha (India) as Punyabhoomi are the real Hindus or Indians.

¹³ C. V. Mathew, *The Saffron Mission*, New Delhi: ISPCK, 2001, p.151. nationalism, Gandhian socialism and Hindutva.

Savarkar says that an Indian is a true Indian citizen only if he has the following four essentials.

1. Born in India territory (One who is born in Indian land).
2. Belonging to the India race i.e., possessing Hindu blood.
3. Appreciation of all the customs and tradition of Hindu Sanskriti and acceptance of India alone as one's fatherland and holy land its heroes as persons of veneration as well as Sanskrit as the common language.
4. Allegiance to one of the religious tradition that emerged from India, such as Hinduism or Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, which are considered as offshoots of Hinduism. If you are an Indian, you must consider India as your holy land or *Punyabhumi*.

Hedgewar traced the failure of Hindus as he asserted that there should be 'self-respect, unity and courage.' In his opinion, Hindu culture needs to be nurtured if Hindustan has to be protected. So Hindu dharma and Hindu culture should be revived and redeemed, however there is no historical community consciousness and unity among the Hindus. To revive this spirit, he founded RSS on 27th September, 1925 and membership was restricted to Hindus.

Golwalkar gave the institution (Savarkar gave the ideology) and gave the grounding for the ideology through his two books *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (1939) and *Bunch of Thoughts* (1966). He is hailed as the father of 'Cultural Nationalism'.

RSS claims that Hindus are the first and best people. They should adhere to varna (caste) duty, ashram (four stages of Hindu life) and dharma and the doctrines of karma and samsara. Hindus are the sons of the soil. Hindu religion stands for *varnasharamadharma*. It is the most ancient, comprehensive, scientific and spiritual religion. Only Hinduism can satisfy the deeper longings of the modern mind. It is the final refuge of the whole world. The Hindu society is the living form of God. Service to the Hindu people is service to God. There should be devotion to Hindu society.

The Hindu culture is the Hindu life in its totality. The entire society should become a *Sangh*. Hindu culture is the noblest and superior in the world. To bring national integration Hindi should be made national language and after some time, Sanskrit, the mother of all languages, should be made national language.

The aim of RSS is to create a Hindu Rashtra. Hindustan is for Hindus, Bharatavarsha is a Hindu Rashtra, a Hindu nation. Nationhood has ‘five factors and they are fused into one indissoluble’ (permanent binding) – geographical unity (country), racial unity (race), religious unity (religion), cultural unity (culture) and linguistic unity (language). To make a ‘Nation’ these five factors are essential.

‘Hindustan must be a Hindu nation’ and those who work for the sake of a Hindu nation are patriots and nationalist; others are traitors, or enemies, or simpletons (a person who is lacking common sense) or misguided ignorant fools. The options before the non-Hindus in Hindustan are to get assimilated into the Hindu race by losing their own identity, or to live wholly subordinate to the Hindu race with no rights, or to face a ‘holocaust’ – total annihilation. The national ideal of the Sangh is the establishment of a powerful unitary state – One Country, One State, One Legislature, One Executive with no trace of fragmentational, regional, sectarian, linguistic or other types of pride being given the scope of playing havoc with the integrated harmony.

The presence of non-Hindu religions is a threat to Hindu nation and nationalism. Muslims, Christians and Communists are seen as internal threat. All of them should be reconverted through the program of Shuddhi.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)¹⁴ comes from this foundation and tradition (RSS as an institution to promote the ideology ‘Hindutva’ of Hindu Mahasabha) as the political wing of Hindu Mahasabha and RSS. BJP was able to come to power with absolute majority in 2014 due to the consistent failure of successive Congress governments and the inability of coalition governments to provide alternate and stable government. L. K. Advani declared that to all Indians Ram is an ideal, a symbol of integrity, justice and compassion.¹⁵ Parliamentary Affairs Minister (now the Vice President of India) Venkaiah Naidu said that “All countrymen want a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. How, when and what is the question.”¹⁶ We need to remember that BJP politicians are not religionists but they use religion to achieve political supremacy. In the last 42 months, situation in India has changed radically especially for minorities. The present BJP government (the Hindutva proponents) has achieved some success in the following areas:

¹⁴ It was founded on April 6, 1980. The ideologies are: Integral humanism, Conservatism, Hindu

¹⁵ L. K. Advani, India Today, March 1991, p.11 and 20.

¹⁶ India TV, December 23, 2015.

- Ø They convinced the major sections of Hindu society that all Indians were Hindus.
- Ø They were able to convince the Hindus that Muslims (to some extent Christians) as the enemies of India and Hinduism.
- Ø They developed a positive attitude towards B. R. Ambedkar (to pacify the Schedule caste and tribes).
- Ø They clearly and cleverly delinked Mahatma Gandhi from Sardar Vallabhai Patel.
- Ø They developed a positive attitude even towards the killers of Gandhiji.
- Ø They succeeded in developing positive attitude towards Hindi, Sanskrit, Cow and Yoga.
- Ø They were able to obtain some form of sympathy from Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.
- Ø Made the Hindus to believe that 'the cause for Ram Janmabhoomi' was a noble one.
- Ø India existed as one country and Muslims and Christians are invaders.
- Ø India never invaded other country and it has been always a peace loving country.

What is the result?

- Ø It creates fear among the minorities
- Ø Secularism and unity of the country is in danger
- Ø Secular minded Hindus are side-lined and all government departments are filled with people with Hindutva orientation
- Ø It paved the way for religious/cultural renaissance – the change in the celebration of teacher's day (as Guru Utsav), the importance to Ganga, the internationalization of yoga and enforcing all children to perform it, celebration of 'Sanskrit week', wanting to declare Bhagavat Gita as the national book and giving importance/publicity to the celebration of Hindu festivals (politicization of religion and sacralisation of politics),

policing the practices like dress code, dancing in the clubs, celebration of January 1st, Valentine's Day and 'kiss ceremony' in some cities and giving preference to singing of 'Vande Mataram' than 'Jana Gana' and justify and glorify the attack on the minorities. Minorities feel intimidated by all these.

Ø The Growth of Communalism and Fundamentalism

Communalism refers to that attitude and action which emphasize the claim of primacy and exclusiveness of a communal group delimited by religion, region, race and demands solidarity of its members in thinking and doing. It purposefully undermines secularism by means of which it promotes violence in the society and destroys the very presence of harmony.

This communalism is masterminded and manipulated by a group of upper castes Hindus who are largely from urban middle class. It is characterized not by a sudden or accidental outburst of ill-will, but is the expression of malicious objectives and pre-planned and well-organized strategies.

The growth of communalism has brought inter-religious disharmony, violence, bloodshed, national disintegration and suffering to the innocent millions of people and effects secularism. Due to religious communalistic attitude, various forms of persecutions, inter-religious riots occurred in the past decades and even today.

Religious fundamentalism has become a great hindrance to the spread of true religious values and resulting in the destruction of peace and tranquility in many places in the Sub-continent. It denies the very concept of equality of all human beings by challenging the right to hold on to one's faith. Hence, Hindu fundamentalism in India has influenced the conscience of the people in such a way that it poses threat to minority communities due to the unexpected attacks and communal riots.

II Persecution in India

History of Christianity is no stranger to persecution. The early church was married to 'persecution, prison, and poverty' unfortunately we are now married to 'personality, popularity and prosperity'.¹⁷ Persecution of Christian

¹⁷ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/november/incredible-india-christianity-special-report-christward-mov.html> (accessed on 5 December 2016).

believers in India is not a new phenomenon. According to various traditions, persecution started with the martyrdom of Apostle Thomas in Mylapore, (situated in the suburbs of Chennai) in the first century AD. In 2015, Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) and other groups concerned launched a free 24-hour hotline for Christians to report persecution. The line initially collapsed from overload. Over 11000 calls were received in 2015. “Not a day goes by without a pastor being beaten up, a church being robbed,” says Vijayesh Lal.”¹⁸

According to the Hindu fundamentalists the Christians are unwanted guests in India. To quote Golwalkar, one of the stalwarts of RSS: Muslims, Christians and communists are collectively labelled as: ‘guests’, ‘refugees’, ‘invaders’, ‘aggressors’, ‘threats’, ‘enemies’, ‘traitors’, ‘potential fifth columnists’ and ‘hostiles’; therefore, according to Golwalkar, they do not qualify for citizenship.

According to the findings of the workshop group on ‘Persecution in Missions’ in All India Congress on Mission and Evangelism of 1988, the types of persecution for Christians in India are summarized as follows:

1. Government control of organized Churches;
2. Total ban on any kind of evangelism, and baptism;
3. Persecution and mass killing of Christians;
4. Organization of mobs by militant groups against Christian institutions, programs and workers;
5. Social ostracism of many new believers deprived of privileges and help during marriages, ceremonies and funerals, even forbidden to collect drinking water;
6. Kidnapping and brainwashing of new believers;
7. Christian literature collected, often purchased at nominal prices, and burnt.
8. Property of Christians encroached upon, looted and demolished;
9. Deliberate character assassination of Christian leaders;
10. The control of finances by government legislations;
11. A move to control and in some cases, take over Christian educational institutions.

¹⁸ Ibid. Lal is the Executive Director of Evangelical Fellowship of India.

III Being wise as Serpent

Here let me outline a few guidelines about 'being wise as serpent'. They are both missiological and practical.

Persecution for the sake of Christ is the confirmation of a believer's calling to discipleship. Jesus reminded the disciples during his earthly ministry that 'servants are not greater than their master. If they persecute me, they will persecute you' (John 15:20). There is so much emphasis in our churches now about 'prosperity, healing, blessings and peace'. This is a mistake and unbiblical too. Every pastor must prepare their congregations for persecution and the churches must be prepared to face it spiritually. In order to prepare spiritually, churches in India, need to conduct systematic bible studies on costly discipleship (teach about the causes of persecution, biblical basis and how to face it). Corporate prayers have to be conducted in order to stand together in times of persecution. Paul Cornelius, the regional secretary of ATA India says, "The right prayer is not for persecution to go away but for sustenance through it."¹⁹

Christian faith is yet to take root in the Indian spirituality. We have been lagging behind in expressing our faith/spirituality in the Indian forms. Several attempts have been made in the name of Adaptation, Accommodation, Indigenization, Inculturation and Contextualization and we have mostly failed. We tend to go extreme sides and unable to balance ourselves. Very little success we have achieved in our expressions – the way we speak, pray, preach, communicate, teach, share and reflect. Most Hindus don't understand the way we express our spirituality and there are more misunderstandings than proper understandings. We are bound by our denominations and western links and we are unable to move in expressing ourselves in an Indian way. We may make some mistakes but it is ok to take some risks but most of us are not even attempting it. At least we must experiment in the emerging churches in the rural context of India.

'The whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world' is the missional paradigm of the contemporary context. However, very little attention is paid to equip (most of the time believers are unaware or unavailable) the laity in our churches and we gladly cherish the unbiblical dichotomy. Clericalism has to go away and we need to move towards 'holistic

¹⁹ Ibid.

ecclesiology.’ Jesus did not choose the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees as his followers rather he chose the fisher men, tax collectors and other ordinary people. David Bosch reminds us, “Jesus of Nazareth broke with the entire Jewish tradition when he chose his disciples not from among the priestly class, but from among fisher folk, tax collectors, and the like.”²⁰ The ‘Great Commission’ is the collective responsibility of the body of Christ, who are called to be ‘royal priests’ (I Peter 2:9). The early church is filled with examples of ordinary followers of Christ doing extraordinary work for God. Acts 8:1-4 – vs. 1 ‘all except the apostles were scattered’ and vs 4 ‘those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went’ – this should be the paradigm for our present context. Make every effort to equip every member of the church to preach, teach, share and defend the gospel (1 Peter 3:15). In Acts 19, we read that Paul trained the Ephesian believers for two years. Great missional statesman Roland Allen says, “Our converts often display great virtues, but they remain, too often for generations, dependent upon us.”²¹ Some of us are afraid of training our Church members – let us not be afraid – this is God’s work and not our work. Let us encourage/equip our congregation members to live their sacred life in the secular spaces and be a witness there for Christ and His kingdom.

Equip and empower local/indigenous leaders. Christian faith arrived in India during the first century. For the first 1500 years it remained as a local faith. One of the foremost reasons could be the failure to train and equip local leaders as we read that bishops were sent from Persia/Syria even during the 16th century. The church was theologically weak and dependent. Christian faith went to China during the seventh century. Towards the end of the 7th Century AD according to records there were 378 Churches in China but at the beginning of 8th century there were no traces of Christianity in China. The reason is that all the leaders of the church were Persians and not even one Chinese was trained as a leader. Christianity went to South America in 1502 and it spread fast like a wild fire, however local South Americans were not trained. It was observed, “If out of these Indians (South Americans) one priest can be produced, he could be of more use, and bring more Indians to the faith, than fifty European priests.”²² The first three Indian priests

²⁰ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, New York, Orbis, 1991, p.467.

²¹ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours*, Michigan, Wm. Eerdmans Pub., 1962, p.82.

²² Stephen Neill, *The History of Christian Missions*, London, Penguin, 1964, p.148.

were ordained only in 1794 (almost after 300 years). When local leaders are equipped and empowered, there will be both radical growth and stability in the missional work. They will be able to respond to the challenging context in a positive way.

Get rid of the colonial baggage in reference to our language. We have to stop using terms like converts, natives, pagans, heathens, gentiles, crusades, campaigns, non-Christians, unbelievers, missionaries, etc.... Refer to people who they are and be positive in your presentation and language. The good news need not to be presented as bad news with labels. In our gospel presentation, let us be positive. We should refrain from criticising other faiths. We should not have crusading mind but crucified mind and avoid exhibiting superior attitude. Let us exhibit honesty and humility in presenting the gospel. Indians value true and authentic experiences and we should share our authentic experience of Christ in a transparent way. Let people see us in our daily life.

One of the major failures of Indian Christianity is its inability to deal with caste practices within the church. Majority of our present Church members hail from the so called 'untouchable castes' and they entered the church with a hope of liberation, equality, dignity and identity. 90% of our present Church leaders hail from the so called 'forward castes'. The church is helplessly hopeless in resolving this issue. It is a major stumbling block in the missional praxis of our churches. Denominations are created on caste lines. There are reports of Christians going back to their ancestral religions as they have not experienced liberation within the boundaries of the Church. The Indian Church leaders have to come together and work on this. Let us not blame others. Let each one of us look at our congregations. Every congregation should encourage inter-dining and inter-caste marriages. Let us be both be salt and light to the nation.

Our contemporary context demands that we equip our church members to be voices in the public spaces. Joseph and Daniel were prime ministers, Esther was a queen and Nehemiah was a cub bearer, however they were slaves living in a foreign land. Yet, they were influential in the socio-economic and political field. They turned the rulers and the whole country. They saved a nation from destruction. They were trained and equipped as God's people and they knew how to live in a foreign land without compromising their faith. The Christian community has miserably failed in producing public

voices, yet Christians are in a majority in states like Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and to some extent in Goa and Manipur. The churches in North East India are yet to make their full contribution to the main land India. Presbyterian/Reformed/Baptist churches are quite strong in these states and they must be encouraged to equip their members to be voices in the public spaces.

Visible expressions of spiritual unity of Christians is the need of the hour. Organic, Conciliar and Federal unity models have their limitations and they have been ineffective and failure in most cases. John 17, the high priestly prayer of Jesus envisages the 'spiritual unity' of all believers. Christians are a minority in India and further we are divided into 1000's of denominations. We must recognize one another and work in cooperation in areas which are common (transformational activities). Every village/taluk/mandal/city should have pastors' fellowship of all denominations. They must meet together for prayer, exchange of ideas and information about Christian community as a whole and face the challenges (persecution, attack on Christian community, destruction of Christian property, encroachment of Christian property, approaching the government with issues related with Christian community and so on) jointly to safeguard the interests of the Christian community. Form a pastors' fellowship if it does not exist in your area and actively promote joint ventures. Refrain from discussing doctrinal issues in the public forums like Facebook, Twitter, whatsapp, skype, messengers and so on. It is harmful to Christian mission in India. Christians worship one God but they are divided in all other areas. Doctrinal unity cannot be achieved by discussing in public domain, when denominationalism has existed for 2000 years. Paul gives the best advice in Eph 4:15 – 'Speaking the truth in love'.

Hindutva is a religious ideology, but it is used in India to achieve political ends. The church therefore, should co-operate with any group, both religious and secular, to raise social consciousness among the people. Christian leaders must remain in good/friendly relationship with the people of other faiths in their neighbourhood, the local leaders, the government officials and people in the civil society. Clare Purakary writes after studying the Kandhamal incident, "Good public relations, personal contact with the power holders and advocacy efforts can help us to remove suspicion and wrong ideas about our missionary activities, and help us to bring harmony in society and thus work together to build communities of love."²³ The church should not

be churchy, dealing only with the pious activities within the church boundaries, but they must be conscious about the things going on around them. Christians must cooperate with the politicians, government, etc... to eradicate the evil of religious violence. When occasion demands, however, they must defend their rights according to the law of the country. In practice, there have been a few socio-political responses at the national level. Such responses could include Christian rallies in front of parliament house or a delegation of Christian leaders to meet the Prime Minister of India, to safeguard the rights of Christians as per the Constitution of India.

In persecution, Christians often face the loss of personal property, their houses are looted and burnt down; properties are reduced to nothing or sometimes taken over (this is what happened in Kandhamal, Odisha). In such circumstances, fellow Christians must stand together in solidarity with them, both in cash and kind. We must together rebuild the suffering Christian community and assist one another irrespective of denominations.

The Christian identity in India should not be mixed with that of the west. We are Indians and then we are Christians; however Christians are treated as the agents of the West. Arun Shourie, in his book, *Missionaries in India. Continuities, Challenges and Dilemmas* (1994) proves that Indian Christians functioned as the agents of western Colonialists, Orientalists and Missionaries. His discussion was about 19th century Christians in India. We are guilty of giving this impression even today. Let us be wise in the way we use westerners in the meetings. It is advisable not to conduct public meetings using western speakers. Exercise cautions in the way we report about 'Church Growth' to our donors. Reports, photographs and statistics are easily available to the religious fundamental groups due to the advancement in the technology. Refrain from posting in the social media about Christian meetings, statistics about people coming to Christ, baptism ceremony and westerners preaching. Christian leaders living in the cities normally escape the attack however village/rural evangelists and Christians suffer and I think it is unfair on the part of the Christian leaders. Rural Christians and pastors are attacked and persecuted and go through untold miseries for the mistakes of unwise urban Christian leaders.

Leaders and pastors must educate their members about their God given

²³ Clare Purakary, "Kandhamal: A Case Study" in *Christian Mission in the Midst of Violence*, edited by Siga Arles and Joy Thomas, Bangalore: FOIM/CFCC, 2013, p.185.

spiritual identity as 'followers of Christ'. There exists great confusion about the identity of Christians in India. There are pastors and evangelists who are officially Hindu in the government records; especially this is true in the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. This is creating both confusion and misunderstanding. There are no easy answers due to the benefits of reservation policy. Let us equip and empower our Church members to trust in God and let them be encouraged to declare themselves as 'followers of Christ'.

The Christian community in India should continue to get involved in the transformation of the nation. We have done well and we have to continue to do inspite of the oppositions. Let our institutions serve the poor and marginalized and refrain from running as business entities. Let us continually pray for the country and seek the peace and prosperity of this nation (Jeremiah 29:7). Encourage the church members to vote and not to accept cash for vote. Wherever possible, Christians must be encouraged to contest elections and join the public life. Churches/Christians must observe national days and join the local entities in celebrating both Independence Day and Republic Day.

The Government is becoming strict in regulating the donations received from abroad. Let us learn to follow all the guidelines given by the government in using the money in the proper way. A simple advice is to use the money for the purpose it was given. Social welfare organizations should be transparent and maintain both integrity and honesty. On the other hand let us continue to develop 'self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating', and 'self-theologizing' congregations.

Through the centuries, the church has always existed in the context of pluralism. Joseph and Daniel survived and prospered in the pluralistic context without compromising their faith. We and our congregations must learn this. On the one hand we don't need to compromise our faith and on the other hand, we don't need to be quiet about our faith. We must continually get involved in intentional evangelism and bring people to Christ. We have to obey God rather than man. We need to be wise but should not develop withdrawal symptoms.

Conclusion

The Church has gone through many challenging situations. It will survive as we believe that Jesus is the builder of the Church. Persecution of Christians and challenging situations are God permitted norms and the Church must

accept the challenges and continue to witness for Christ in a creative way but with cautions and carefulness. It is evident from the history that persecution and challenges will ultimately produce multiplication of believers and joy of unity in the church (Acts 8:1-8). So let us be 'wise as serpent' and educate the entire church and continue to remain as witness for Christ. The Church will grow; the Church must grow and let us be committed to this great high, holy and heavenly task.

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The Practice of Ecumenism today in one's own Church

Introduction

The gospel according to St. John 17:21, the prayer of Jesus Christ is very famous, “that they all may be one so that the world may believe” is the centrality part of ecumenism. The word Ecumenical is classical in origin, derived from a word meaning ‘the whole inhabited world.’ C. B. Firth denotes “Historically the modern missionary movement came in the form of a number of foreign missions from Europe and America to India. Each propagated its own type of teaching and its own system of organization and discipline, with the inevitable result, a number of separate Christian communities came into existence, as Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian and so on.”¹ Till today the Indian Church continues living with the same system. Therefore, the practice of Ecumenism today in one's own church is so significant that it help the churches to think about the practice of Ecumenism in a local situation or how the local church or congregation interacts, cooperates and engages in activities with fellow Christian of other denominations as well as with other non-Christian members of the local community. Thus, the presenter would like to bring his own local church known as St. John's Church at Yellandu in relation with the unity and renewal of the Church.

1. A Brief Background of Yellandu

Yellandu is a town in Khammam district in the state of Telangana, India. Yellandu is situated on the North-West side. Geographical area wise it is totally 7.09 Sq.km, No. of wards 20, Revenue wards 6, with population as per 2001censes - 38, 417. It is containing industry like, Singareni Collieries Company Ltd; it is known as black gold.² Because of SCC Ltd, due to coal mine people have being doing well in economic growth.

2. Brief History of St. John's Church, CSI of Yellandu

At the end of the 19th Century, American Methodist started Christian welfare programs in this area, initially the Mission field of the Methodist Church in

¹ C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1976), 234.

² www. Khammam dist. org (1st September, 2012).

Southern Asia (American) and the massive upstairs Ward Building, was build by an American Missionary.

In 1880s after few coal-mines were opened, people from distant places came for jobs in the company. Some of them were Christians. There is no proper evidence that these people gathered at certain place for worship. But it is said that the British who worked in the company had English worship services. These people intended to build a church in Yellandu. The foundation stone was laid on Feb 9th 1902 and dedicated for the glory of God by Bishop Henry Whitehead of Madras.³

For a long time this field proved quite unproductive under the leadership of Americans as well as Indians. So the Mission Board Secretary strongly recommended that the whole field should be handed over to Bishop V. S. Azariah, under whose leadership the church was rapidly growing. Therefore Azariah came to Yellandu with a few missionaries and shared the Good News to the natives of this place, even the history of Yellandu Church and Dornakal Diocese gives in sequence that he lived for some time in Yellandu. Even he took residence at 15th Number Street in Yellandu. ⁴

Then Yellandu area became a part of Anglican Diocese of Dornakal. Bishop Azariah recruited and ordained and lay missionaries from Tamil Nadu and from America. Rev. Van, B. Shrive, an ordained priest from the Protestant Episcopal Church in U.S.A. was responsible for establishing congregations in this area. With a few families, a small Church began in 1904 and families' attending to devotional service, remarkably increased by leaps and bounds.⁵

Throughout the history many Pastorate Chairmen, Deacons and evangelist led the Church in a marvelous way, besides many believers have a lot of stories to narrate about the wonderful ministry of St. John's Church at Yellandu. St. John's Church has celebrated its centenary. At present the church has five hundred families, two schools, two hostels and one chairman, two deacons and two evangelists and one Bible woman.⁶

³ J. Z. Hodge, *Bishop Azariah of Dornakal* (Madras: C.L.S, 1946), 12.

⁴ Souvenir/ on the dedication of St. John's Church , Church of South India-Diocese of Dornakal, Yellandu on May 01, 2005, 16.

⁵ S. Manickam, *Studies in the missionary* (Madras: C.L.S., 1988), 166.

⁶ Interview with Pushpa Raj by Phone, Yellandu, 3rd September 2012.

3. The Practice of Ecumenism

3.1. Structure of the Pastorate Committee

Under the gifted guidance of Synergistic steering Committee, the administration of the church is regulated by a team of elected members. The pastorate chairman is the head of the committee. At present a full time deacon, Hon-presbyter, all other committee members, including co-opted members always co-operate for the peaceful administration of the church. However this essential committee thinks over for the smooth running of the functional programs such as, spiritual needs of the whole community, arranging regular prayer meetings, all night prayers, mid-week services, revival meetings, fasting prayers and many other resourceful projects. Throughout the year, with diligent discretion the administrative wing enthusiastically keeps on arranging the various festivals and celebrations of every season.⁷ At present the Church has two schools; one hostel; one Chairman; three Pastors one Bible woman and two Evangelists.

3.2. Mission

The Church and missionary movement from its very beginning had placed propagation of the Gospel; Church planting and social works in its missionary agenda. St. John's Church states that the goal of mission is liberation of the people socially and spiritually.

St. John's Church approach towards the Mala, Madigas in Yellandu was to help them build a community and provide them with community life and cultural identity. Church believed that the total transformation of the People, in social, political and economical oppression.⁸ Mostly, the Church approach towards holistic transformation of the Malas and Madigas communities. Now the Church strongly condemns caste practices among Mala and Madigas in St. John's Church at Yellandu.

3.3. Work of Evangelism

Evangelism of the believers' in Yellandu was motivated almost exclusively with the evangelistic purpose of winning souls to Christ.

The Chairman, Pastors, laymen undertaking great efforts to make progress with the Evangelistic work. Again and again they admonished the Church

⁷ Souvenir/ on the dedication of St. George's Church, 17.

⁸ Souvenir/ on the dedication of St. George's Church, 17-18.

Believers and workers, and made them aware that a large part of their time should be spent preaching the Gospel and winning the souls to Christ. In the Committees, again and again instructions and teachings were given how to encourage the people and to join the congregation with ecumenical spirit.

3.4. Women's Ministry

St. John's Church, women played and are playing a constructive role in the life of the Church. In every stage, the women are included in its administrative role. Women's ministry is not just confined to local congregation but it is widely spread in Khammam district and Diocese.

Women's participation in the ministry (women's fellowship)

This wing can be described as the heart of women's welfare activities. The first and foremost object of the Women's Fellowship is unity in prayer, service and witness.⁹ Other activities they do have once in a year women leadership retreats and conferences and other profitable forms of gathering and service.

3.5. Youth (*Yavvna Samaja Seva*) and Sunday school (*Chinna Manda*)

These are two other ministries, which are being taken up by the Church from the beginning and later on these two organizations are the pillars for church. It is the place where one is trained, tuned and nurtured in Christian Faith.

Youth

During the last ten years some organized youth work has been started among the young men of the Church. On several occasions young men's camps have been organized. Their program centers on daily Bible study and discussion, and a notable feature is the singing band which goes out to the surrounding non-Christian villages to sing hymns, preach and share with all who gather. A few Christian youth teams carrying out this movement with great success.

Youth or students: each church chooses two or three youth or students to go on a six month or one year course. It is run ecumenically and is suitable for building confidence in the newly confirmed, or renewal for those more mature in the faith who might be taking on more responsibility in the church. Sharing a basic ecumenical mindset has proved so important too in believers relations with other faith communities.

⁹ T. Hepsaba Jawahar, Singareni Group Church yearly women fellowship in Yellandu, on 17-18 August 2001.

Sunday School

The Sunday school is carrying out their need for greater attention and carefully planned help. Every year annual Sunday school programme, VBS, Sunday school campus and etc... are conducted in St. John's Church, for these all churches and children with their parents in town come to participate wittedly and perform its great witness.

3.6. Hospital Ministry

This is one of the very old ongoing ministries in St. John's Church. The Methodist missionaries have started the first dispensary in Yellandu area in 1896, which later turned into a hospital. This dispensary in spite of its difficulties is still making remarkable achievements. At present different village people (Believers from different Churches and non-believers) come for treatment of various health problems.

3.6.1. Help for the poor and the sick

As well as proclaiming the Gospel the believers serve the sick and visiting poor. The helping the helpless widows were also supported by the Church believers.

3.6.2. Sandhya Nilayam (Home for the aged)

This is one of the oldest welfare activities run by the diocesan women's board in Yellandu. Literally it means Sunset Home; the purpose is to give care for helpless elderly people and widows in Yellandu.¹⁰

3.7. Vocational Training for Self Employment

This is one of the importance's to note Vocational Training center. In this center church have tailoring section and computers for poor youth to educate them for self-employment and knowledge. These programmes were conducted for both men and women mainly every year during summer occasion.

Daisy Kendram

This institution is named after the pioneering evangelist named Daisy V. Premasagar of the Diocese. This project was started in October 1994 at Kothagudem and in Yellandu. It is aimed for the school dropout girls, irrespective of caste color and creed. ¹¹ This is a self-employment Training

¹⁰ The Church of South India, Diocese of Dornakal 32nd statutory session of the Diocesan council held during 7th -10th November 2007. At SMSD Auditorium.

¹¹ Mrs.E.d.Luke and Mrs.Kemuel, "Report on Women' Work in Dornakal Diocese," Church of South India St. George on May 01, 2005

Center for Women. This project is run jointly by the Women's Board and the Socio-Economic Board of Diocese. So far many batches finished their programme in this Kendram and easily they are earning their daily bread.

4. Special Features

The success of union is the concern of the whole Church in Yellandu. This concern extends to everyone, according to believers talent, whether it is exercised in believers daily Christian life. This concern itself reveals all believers and it helps toward that full and perfect unity which God in His kindness wills.

Renewal of the St. John's Church is essentially grounded in an increase of loyalty to her own calling. Church renewal has therefore notable ecumenical importance. Already in various spheres of the St. John Church's life the renewal is taking place. The Biblical and liturgical movements, the preaching of the word of God and new forms of the spirituality, and the Church's social teaching and activity-all these are considering for the future progress of ecumenism in Churches at Yellandu.

Another good thing about St. John's Church is Openness to God's blessing sharing with others. When Shalem Church was badly collapsed, the congregation of St. John's Church believers invited the believer of Shalem to CSI Church building. This marked the important begin of the "sharing" in Yellandu Churches. Shalem church had a commitment to work together as a Christian witness; worshipping God and serving the community. The Shalem Church believer decided not to rebuild their Church, but to share with the St. John's in one building; resources were brought together.

Under the leadership of St. John's Church now all churches have a commitment to building up relationships of openness and trust within the church and a willingness to 'let go' of some appreciated traditions for the good of the whole. And openness to understanding each other's ways of worship and organization. Churches in Yellandu learnt that there are many ways to worship God and many ways to organize the church. And all churches have a commitment to promote the 'best' from each denomination; hymns, liturgy and pastoral care with appropriate skills and growing together in everything. Also Patience and perseverance to explain to others the joys and benefits of ecumenical ways of working.

United Christian fellowship at Yellandu is now over 20 years old. This fellowship conducts Gospel festival every year in the month of May. On *Palm Sunday* they have joint procession of palms from a central point (and some churches also have a joint Good Friday open air service or rally of witness).

They do *Prayers for Peace*, all churches have been open at noon on Saturdays in recent weeks, and will be for the foreseeable future and organizing Week of Prayer for Christian Unity events. Also events revolving around the churches looked at issues such as poverty, race, generation issues, sexuality, and other faiths.

Conclusion

The Spirit of ecumenism in St. John's Church is visible, particularly a natural common sense and normal way in which to think and operate. For the writer knowledge there are many wonderful ecumenical services, and prayer groups, and joint acts of witness have been done by the St. John's Church at Yellandu, even *more* working together could be achieved.

The Significance of Idols in Popular Hinduism : Implications for Christian Witness

*Mr. Odugu Raja Babu**

1.1 Introduction

Idol worship is an important ritual in Hinduism practised with great favour. Idols comprise a pivotal part of Hindu worship both at home and in the temple. For Hindus, idol worship is a part of their religious experience. In India, ordinary Hindus in popular Hinduism cannot think of worshipping their deities without idols. C.J. Fuller, an anthropologist of religion, says that for ordinary Hindus, idol worship is part of their devotion.¹ In line with Fuller, Diana L. Eck, a scholar of religious studies, also says "...in the Hindu understanding, the deity is present in the image, the visual apprehension of the image is charged with religious meaning. Beholding the image is an act of worship, and through the eyes one gains the blessings of the divine."² Eck also indicates that for lay people, this is the central act of Hindu worship.³

In this paper, I discuss the significant factors of Hindu idol worship, especially in popular Hinduism. Consequently, this overview on Hindu idols may be useful for Christian workers to understand the importance of idol worship in popular Hinduism and present the gospel to the ordinary Hindus, respectfully and relevantly. Works of scholars such as Eck and Fuller⁴ have been very useful for this paper. For this reason, I begin by discussing Hindu traditions in order to understand the position of popular Hinduism in Hindu traditions. I will then deliberate on the definition and the nature of Hindu idols. Following this, I explore the significant factors that influence the practice of idol worship in popular Hinduism in detail. Lastly, I draw implications for a mission context.

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¹ C.J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 62.

² Diana L. Eck, *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2007), 3.

³ Eck, *Darsan*, 3.

⁴ Eck and Fuller are prominent scholars on the subject of significance of Hindu idols. I have reviewed on *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* and *The Camphor Flame*. Hence, works of Eck and Fuller will be the main sources for my paper.

1.2 The Position of Popoular Hinduism in Hindu Traditions

Hinduism is one of the world's major religions today. Hinduism has a combination of many traditions. Before I discuss the understanding of popular Hinduism, it is essential to have an overview of Hindu traditions. This will help to locate popular Hinduism within the vast canvas of Hinduism. As Klaus K Klostermaier, a Hindu scholar, denotes, "The long history, the vastness, and the heterogeneity of Hinduism offer enormous challenges to each and every description of the tradition."⁵ Indeed, the study of Hinduism is challenging, because of the wide range of traditions and ideas which are incorporated into Hinduism. However, recent scholars like Gavin Flood, a religion scholar, have identified three dominant traditions within Hinduism: Brahmanical traditions, Renouncer traditions, and local traditions or popular traditions [popular Hinduism].⁶

1.2.1. Brahmanical Traditions

Brahmanical traditions are said to have developed significantly during the first millennium CE, and focuses on a specific deity or group of deities.⁷ Among these Brahmanical systems, there are three major branches of Hinduism which correspond to devotional practices that focus on the deities Vishnu (and his avatars), Shiva, and the Devi (or great goddess).⁸ Importantly the final religious tradition which is the culmination of these religious traditions is called Vedanta or philosophical Hinduism. Flood notes, "The Vedanta tradition became the philosophical basis of the Hindu renaissance during the nineteenth century and is pervasive in the world religion which Hinduism has become."⁹ Moreover, Julius Lipner, a professor of Hinduism, says that the Vedanta tradition emphasizes "deeper reflection on the inner meaning and reality of the ritual."¹⁰

1.2.2. Renouncer Traditions

Renouncer traditions are traditions that are quite distinct from the Brahmanical traditions. Patrick Olivelle, a religion scholar, says that the followers of renouncer tradition are a withdrawal from society. However, it is not in

⁵ Klostermaier, *A Survery*, 15.

⁶ Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17.

⁷ Flood, *An Introduction*, 17.

⁸ Zo Margaret Newell, "Picturing Goddess: Bazaar Images and the Imagination of Modern Hindu Religious Identity," (PhD Diss., Vanderbilt University, 2011), 31, <http://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu/available/etd-03232011101111/unrestricted/zonewelldissertation4262011.pdf>.

⁹ Flood, *An Introduction*, 17.

¹⁰ Lipner, *Hindus*, 32.

physical sense, rather ideological sense. Such person does not participate in the most significant of socio-religious institutions such as “family and sex, ritual fire and ritual activities, a permanent residence, and wealth and economic activities.”¹¹ Wendy Doniger, an American Indologist, calls the followers of renouncer tradition are the non-violent (vegetarian), spiritual, and ascetic.¹² The main focus of these traditions is “the values of asceticism and world transcendence in contrast to the Brahmanical householder values of affirming the goals of worldly responsibility (*dharma*), worldly success and profit (*artha*), and erotic and aesthetic pleasure (*kama*).”¹³

1.2.3. Popular Traditions

Popular traditions known as popular Hinduism unlike Brahmanical traditions and renouncer traditions, are popular traditions which exist within a bounded geographical area, even within a particular village.¹⁴ Anthropologists and scholars of religion use different names for popular Hinduism such as “village Hinduism,” “the religion of the masses,” “local Hinduism,” and so forth. Fuller defines, popular Hinduism as “the beliefs and practices that constitute the living, ‘practical’ religion of ordinary Hindus.”¹⁵ He further explains that popular Hinduism involving deities is known as popular theistic Hinduism.¹⁶ He denotes that popular theistic Hinduism refers to the beliefs and practices of ordinary Hindus who focus on the many deities with whom Hindus interact and communicate in ritual, not only that, ordinary Hindus see the relationships with deities as primary relationships as part of their religious experiences.¹⁷

In popular Hinduism, the texts are based in regional, vernacular languages rather in the Sanskrit of the Brahmanical traditions.¹⁸ Over the course of time, popular traditions have been influenced by Brahmanical traditions. This influence is known as *Sanskritization*. This concept “*Sanskritization*” (*Sanskritic Hinduism*) was coined by M.N. Srinivas, an Indian sociologist.¹⁹ J.F. Staal, a religion scholar, says that even though Srinivas coined the word, however, he did not define the concept.²⁰ Staal notes that *Sanskritization*

¹¹ Patrick Olivelle, “Renouncer Tradition,” in Gavin Flood (ed), *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 272.

¹² Wendy Doniger, *On Hinduism* (New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2013), 399

¹³ Flood, *An Introduction*, 17.

¹⁴ Flood, *An Introduction*, 17-18.

¹⁵ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 5.

¹⁶ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 5.

¹⁷ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 5.

¹⁸ Flood, *An Introduction*, 18.

¹⁹ M.N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1975), 75.

²⁰ J.F. Staal, “Sanskrit and Sanskritization,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, no.3 (1963), 261.

is a process by which a lower caste attempts to raise its status and rise to a higher position in the caste hierarchy by adopting *Sanskritic* gods, beliefs, and rituals.²¹ As a result of this process, Staal explains, local deities become identified with the great gods of the Brahmanical traditions and local myths become identified with great, pan-Hindu myths.²²

There is a long-standing problem in the academic study of Hinduism: popular traditions are regarded as less or little whereas Brahmanical traditions are considered as the greater traditions. Zo Margaret Newell, a professor of religious studies, points out that this greater/lesser concept distinguishes between the religion of the masses and the religion of the intellectual and scholar.²³ I would argue that popular Hinduism is not a lesser tradition. It is equal in stature to other traditions in Hinduism. Fuller argues that "...popular Hinduism is an authentic religion, equal in standing to any other."²⁴ He further clarifies that while Brahmanical traditions are based on sacred texts, ethnography is the main source of popular Hinduism.²⁵ Yet it is undeniable that popular Hinduism and Brahmanical are interconnected with each other.²⁶ Moreover, both traditions equally studied by religion scholars in the study of Hinduism. Thus, popular Hinduism is an authentic tradition of Hinduism. Having located popular Hinduism in Hindu traditions, I now explore meanings and the nature of Hindu idols.

1.3 The Hindu Idol and Its Nature

Idol worship is significant in popular Hinduism. It is essential to study the meanings of idol and its nature.

1.3.1 Idol and Other Meanings

What is an idol? While trying to understand this, I came across several other terms that are used synonymously. I list them to clarify which of these terms I employ in this study, and why.

1.3.1.1. Icon: The term "icon" is derived from the Greek *eikon*. Jitendra Nath Banerjea, an eminent historian and Indologist, says that icon signifies "an object of worship or something which is associated with the rituals relating to the cults of different divinities."²⁷ An icon cannot signify as an object of

²¹ Staal, "Sanskrit," 261.

²² Staal, "Sanskrit," 261-75.

²³ Newell, "Picturing Goddess," 33.

²⁴ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 6.

²⁵ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 6.

²⁶ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 28.

²⁷ Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2016), 36.

worship. The Greek word “icon” means likeness. Eck explains that the term icon conveys the sense of a “likeness,” as do the Sanskrit words *pratikrti* and *pratima*. These suggest the “likeness” of the image of the deity it presents.²⁸ Tanisha Ramachandran, a professor of Hinduism, in her presentation at Chautauqua Institution says that icon only implies the likeness of the divine. It does not necessarily contain divine characteristics.²⁹ Thus, this term does not tend a sense of worship to an object.

1.3.1.2. Image: The English word “image” is derived from Latin *imago*, which denotes an imitation, a copy, likeness.³⁰ Richard H. Davis, an anthropologist, explains that “image referred to a fabricated imitation or representation of the external form of an object and applied particularly to sculpted figure of saints and divinities that were treated as objects of religious devotion.”³¹ This is close to the meaning of icon.

1.3.1.3. Vighraha: The word *vighraha* is similar to “image”. As a noun, *vighraha* originates from a verbal root (*vi+grh*) and means “to grasp, to catch hold of.”³² Eck points out that “the *vighraha* is that form which enables the mind to grasp the nature of God.”³³ It is close to image and icon in meaning.

1.3.1.4. Murti: *Murti* is defined in Sanskrit term as anything which has definite shape and limits a form, figure, body, an embodiment, incarnation, and manifestation.³⁴ Eck points out that a *murti* is more than just likeness or representation of the divine; it is the deity itself taken form.³⁵ It is an image as a god. *Murti* cannot be defined in terms likeness or resemblance of the divine. It is a deity in form.

1.3.1.5. Idol: The word “idol” comes from the Greek *eidolon*. The word “idol” often has a negative connotation. Ramachandran says that the term “idol” and its pejorative implications come from its usage in the scriptures of

²⁸ Eck, *Darsan*, 38.

²⁹ Chautauqua Institution, “Idol, Art, Murti: The Multiple Identities of Hindu Images,” You Tube video, 2:37, August 1, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMgoFkFgGII>.

³⁰ Richard H. Davis, “Images,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Vol.7 (Farmington: Thomson Gale, 2005), 4379.

³¹ Davis, “Images,” 4379.

³² Eck, *Darsan*, 38.

³³ Eck, *Darsan*, 38.

³⁴ Eck, *Darsan*, 38.

³⁵ Eck, *Darsan*, 38.

ancient Israel; there the term “idol” implies to the adoration of a false god, contrary to the one true God [Yahweh].³⁶ However, I am not using “idol” in that sense. I use “idol” in the general sense according to the definitions of following scholars. Gregory Price Grieve, a religion scholar, says “idol is an image or statue of a deity fashioned as an object of worship.”³⁷ John E. Cort, a religion scholar, states that scholars of art and anthropology commonly prefer to use “idol” because an idol is “More accurately reflects the theological and ritual understanding of Hindus.”³⁸ Moreover, even some Indian religion scholars³⁹ like Sarasvati Chennakesavan, Arvind Sharma, and Edakkandiyil Viswanathan use “idol” in their books. However, Idol and *murti* are very close to each other. Moreover, these terms look different, however, their underlying meaning is same and interchangeable.⁴⁰ Thus, I will be using icon, image, and murti with alongside usage of idol in this paper. Because ordinary Hindus consider their idols as a deity.

1.3.2 The Nature of Hindu Idols

Hindus worship deities in aniconic and iconic forms. In this section, I explain the differences between aniconic and iconic forms.

1.3.2.1 The Aniconic Image

An aniconic image is a symbolic image rather than a literal representational image. For example, Hindus worship fire. Fire is an aniconic image. Eck says that stones, earthen mounds, and natural symbols indicated the presence of a deity before iconic images of the great deities came to occupy the sanctuary of temples and shrines.⁴¹ A few aniconic images are significant in popular Hindu religion. The *linga* is the best known of India’s aniconic image. Eck says that the word *linga* means “sign” and “mark” or “phallus” which is a sign of Siva, Mahadeva (the Great Lord). The *linga* is honoured in the sanctuary of the many temples and shrines.⁴² Some animals that were

³⁶ Tanisha Ramachandran, “Representing Idols, Idolizing Representations: Interpreting Hindu Images from Nineteenth Century to Early Twentieth Century,” (PhD Diss., Concordia University, 2008), 68, <http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/975224/1/nr45676.pdf>.

³⁷ Gregory Price Grieve, “Symbol, Idol and Murti: Hindu God-Images and the Politics of Mediation,” *Culture, Theory, & Critique* 44, no.1 (2003), 63.

³⁸ John E. Cort, “Images: Images, Icons, and Idols,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones Vol.7 (Farmington: Thomson Gale, 2005), 4388.

³⁹ Sarasvati Chennakesavan, *A Critical Study of Hinduism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 25; Arvind Sharma, “A Note on the Worship of Idols in India,” *Indian Journal of Theology* 30.2 (1981), 78; and Edakkandiyil Viswanathan, *Am I a Hindu?: The Hinduism Primer* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 1993), 205.

⁴⁰ Lipner, *Hindus*, 351.

⁴¹ Eck, *Darsan*, 33-34.

⁴² Eck, *Darsan*, 34.

considered as deities were cobras (as image of Siva), monkeys (as that of Hanuman), and elephants (as that of Ganesh).⁴³ Among aniconic images are the embodiments of divinity which cover aspects of nature, such as the River Ganga, the tulasi (basil) plant, and the sun.⁴⁴

1.3.2.2 The Iconic Images

Iconic images have had a central role in Hindu worship ever since the pre-Vedic. David Burnett says that iconic images are those that seek to represent the form or manifestation of the deity.⁴⁵ Temples as well as domestic shrines and other many places of worship contain sculptured images. When a Hindu comes to see a deity's image in a temple or a shrine, they may see Vishnu in his anthropomorphic appearance. Others see Narasimha (half lion and half man) in theriomorphic form. Fuller notes:

...since many images represent gods and goddesses with several heads, eyes, or arms and a host of other fantastic features, they are not designed to be exact likenesses of ordinary people or animals. The deities have powers and attributes transcending those of earthly beings, which their images are intended to display.⁴⁶

The design of the sculptured images is governed by traditional iconographic Hindu rules in terms of proportion and shape, as well as in the physical features (such as the number of arms, weapons, and animals) and is unique to each deity or form of a deity.⁴⁷ In fact, images are made by artisans. Images are not regarded as "sacred objects until they have been consecrated by installing divine power within them."⁴⁸ In most temples, two kinds of images are found: immovable and moveable images. Immoveable images (*mula murti* "root image") are those of the presiding deity, which is housed in the main shrine; around it stand subsidiary images which are placed inside shrines and sometimes not.⁴⁹ Moveable images (*utsava murti*, "festival image") are used in festival processions and other rituals [sacrifices].⁵⁰

⁴³ John Arun Kumar, "The Idea of the 'Family,' a Cognitive Model in the Popular Religion of the Hindus of South India," (PhD Diss., University of Leeds, 2007), 50.

⁴⁴ Eck, *Darsan*, 34.

⁴⁵ David Burnett, *The Spirit of Hinduism: A Christian Perspective on Hindu Thought* (Tunbridge Wells: Monarch Publications, 1992), 110.

⁴⁶ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 58.

⁴⁷ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 58.

⁴⁸ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 58.

⁴⁹ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 58.

⁵⁰ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 58.

In household shrines, Hindus usually use lithograph images⁵¹ of deities for worship. Ramachandran points out that lithograph images provide the ordinary Hindu access to the presence of the divine, regardless of literacy, caste, gender, and economic status.⁵² Eck says that “Hindus are great consumers of...polychrome glossy images of the gods and their deeds. Taking them home from a temple or a place of pilgrimage [or market], the devout may place such images in the home shrine.”⁵³ For ordinary picture images are also considered as deities. Fuller notes that a picture of a deity functions as a substitute for idol.⁵⁴ Thus, Hindus worship these deities in the form of pictures in their daily worship.

1.4 Significant Factors of Idol Worship in Popular Hinduism

It is interesting to note that ordinary Hindus worship deities in aniconic and iconic forms. This shows that they accept or worship idols in any form. Idols impact the lives of Hindus to keep going on as religious beings. This section discusses the vital factors of idol worship in popular Hinduism.

1.4.1 Ritual Factor

The ritual⁵⁵ factor is the main feature of idol worship among Hindus. In Popular Hinduism, Hindus perform many rituals which are performed to the images of deities for various reasons.

⁵¹ “An important transformation occurred with the emergence of lithographs in the mid-nineteenth century that altered the course of Hindu devotion. Previously, for liturgical or devotional reasons, in order to “see” god and receive *darsan*, a devotee would have to travel to various temples or pilgrimage sites. This not only involved physical movement, but was also restrictive in terms of who was permitted access to the temple space. While caste played an important role in this limitation of access...economic status was also an issue since one had to be able to afford the journey to the temple.” Now lithographic images of deities meant the deity is always accessible to the Hindus in their home shrine. See Endnote 16, Ramachandran, “Representing Idols,” 138. These images printed in cheap colour are used by most ordinary Hindus; however, these the images are consecrated and worshiped just like idols in the temples. See Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 59.

⁵² Ramachandran, “Representing Idols,” 139.

⁵³ Eck, *Darsan*, 44.

⁵⁴ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 59.

⁵⁵ The primary purpose of ritual is to create and consecrate image. According to Lawrence A. Babb, “The image (*murti*) of the deity is lifeless stone until the ceremonies of installation in the temple are performed. Once these rites have been completed the image *is* the deity, and those responsible for the operation of the temple are under an obligation to see that the image is treated with all of the consideration due to the deity himself. Thus, as a matter of routine, the image must be fed, bathed, clothed, flattered, even amused by the recitation of texts or song. Above all, those who are responsible for the deity’s welfare must make certain that his or her immediate environment is pure.” See: Lawrence A. Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy: Popular Hinduism in Central India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 184.

The first such reason to see the divine: Hindus go to the temple to see the divine in image. This translated into a ritual in the practice of *darsan* (seeing), the act of gazing at the deities in their image forms, especially in temple worship.⁵⁶ When Hindus go to a temple, they do not say, “I am going to worship,” rather they say, “I am going for *darsan*.”⁵⁷ Eck notes that *darsan*, in a religious sense, it denotes beholding the divine image and standing in the presence of God.⁵⁸ She further explains that “Hindus go for *darsan* especially at those times of day when the image is beautifully adorned with flowers, and when offerings of incense, water, food, and camphor lamps are presented to the deity.”⁵⁹ Fuller notes that *darsan* is not only just a passive sight of the deity in its image form; the deity is also gazing on the devotee with eyes that never blink, unlike those of human beings.⁶⁰ Eck calls this kind of activity the exchange of vision.⁶¹ Doniger points out that the idea of *darsan*, seeing the deity and the deity seeing the devotees is central to Hindu worship.⁶² Eck writes that “God is present in the image, whether for a moment, for a week, or forever. It is this fact of presence which is at the basis of *darsan*. People come to see because there is something very powerful there to see.”⁶³

However, *darsan* is not only limited to temple worship, it is present in domestic worship as well. John Arun Kumar, a professor of Hinduism, says that gazing on the images is not merely confined to temple worship, gazing on the image is quite common in homes as well.⁶⁴ Kim Knott, a religion scholar, notes that Hindus have images and pictures of their chosen deities in home shrines.⁶⁵ Lipner says that most of the Hindus set aside space for images or pictures of deities on a windowsill, in a cupboard, on a wall, or even dedicate a small room.⁶⁶ To these, they may offer food, water, incense, and light each day.⁶⁷ Hindus perform these rituals because they want to see the deities in the home shrine as they see the deities in the temple in order to gain good

⁵⁶ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 59; Eck, *Darsan*, 3.

⁵⁷ Eck, *Darsan*, 3.

⁵⁸ Diana L. Eck, *Banaras: City of Light* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 20.

⁵⁹ Eck, *Banaras*, 20.

⁶⁰ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 60.

⁶¹ Eck, *Darsan*, 7.

⁶² Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: An Alternative History* (New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Publishing PVT.LTD, 2015), 516

⁶³ Eck, *Darsan*, 51.

⁶⁴ Kumar, “The Idea of,” 200.

⁶⁵ Knott, *Hinduism*, 58.

⁶⁶ Lipner, *Hindus*, 313.

⁶⁷ Kim Knott, *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 58.

fortune. Fuller points out that for Hindus, *darsan* implies well-being and good fortune.⁶⁸ Thus, Hindus believe that seeing the divine could bring good in their lives.

Further, Hindus not only see the divine but also experience divine presence, especially in the temple. Davis writes, “An Indian religious image... does not appear to us in a museum the same it does to Indian worshippers in a temple.”⁶⁹ Rather, Davis says that “The way it is displayed, the frame of surrounding objects, and the expectations the two audiences bring to their encounters with the object differ dramatically.”⁷⁰ Eck says that the idol is the actual embodiment of the deity because it is charged with the presence of deity.⁷¹ Thus, as a matter of routine, the idol needs to be fed, bathed, clothed, flattered, and even amused by the recitation of texts or songs in the temple.⁷² The idols in the temple are sacred. Eck also points out that the temple is an idol. Though it is not an idol of a specific deity, it is the sacred *mandala* [circle] of the universe as a whole.⁷³ Thus, many ordinary Hindus go to the temple to experience the presence of the deity.

Finally, rituals are also performed to idols that for getting personal benefits from deities. A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, an anthropologist of religion, in his field work discovered that among the people of Chirakkal in Kerala, that Hindu worshippers perform rituals to images for the sake of getting personal blessings. Listing the expected benefits, he says Hindus do worship images of the gods for their own satisfaction and for mental peace. When these people take part in *puja* and receive *prasada*, they think that they get strength and courage.⁷⁴ Moreover, Hindus also bargain with images of deities for blessings during their worship. This style of worshipping is fascinating in popular Hinduism. Fuller notes that though there are some Hindus who worship in an attitude of devotion, there are also contexts in which respectful honouring largely gives way to interested bargaining for favours from the deity.⁷⁵ It is true that most of the Hindus honour idols for the sake of the blessings and to get favours. This is a true phenomenon in popular Hinduism.

⁶⁸ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 59.

⁶⁹ Richard H. Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2015), 17.

⁷⁰ Davis, *Lives of*, 17.

⁷¹ Eck, *Darsan*, 45.

⁷² Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*, 184.

⁷³ Eck, *Darsan*, 63.

⁷⁴ A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel, *The Sacred in Popular Hinduism* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1983), 101.

⁷⁵ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 81.

1.4.2 Social Factor

Idols impact society and social groups. Many scholars discovered that idol worship has social implications. I will illustrate a few examples to clarify.

1.4.2.1. Commensality: For this factor, I consider two examples *prasada* and festivals in order to explain commonality regarding image worship. *Prasada* is a material symbol of the deities' power and grace. Most of the Hindus think that *prasada* means sanctified food.⁷⁶ Fuller corrects this perception. He denotes that this is a wrong assumption; *prasada*, despite the definite importance of food, comprises a wide range of sanctified substances such as ash, water, flowers and other items which are offered to the image of the deity.⁷⁷ So Lawrence A. Babb, an anthropologist of religion, includes the concept of food *prasada* into commensalism. He says that the distribution of food *prasada* at the conclusion of *puja* carries "a potential sociological meaning."⁷⁸ He continues that the sharing of *prasada* in ritual can be constructed as "a symbolic statement of linkage" between the participants, between members of a family, between friends, and between co-residents of a community.⁷⁹ This linkage helps ordinary Hindus share and eat food *prasada* together in the temple. It shows commonality.

Another example of commensality is evident during the celebration of festivals. The main image of the deity may be taken in a grand procession on special carts (called chariots or *rathas*) through local streets so that image can be seen (*darsan*) by people.⁸⁰ Eck says that "the deities come to the people and give them *darsan* in the streets."⁸¹ For this to happen, many people have to pull chariots together as a community. In this kind of social gathering, B. K Sarkar, a religion scholar, says, society feels oneness and the strength of the bonds of unity and harmony with each other.⁸² Ordinary Hindus prefer a social gathering, and so it is an inherent part of their religiosity.

The unique aspect is that a few ordinary Hindus extend their social relationships with Christians. They participate in church services and keep idols of Jesus Christ in their home shrines beside the other images of deities

⁷⁶ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 74.

⁷⁷ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 74.

⁷⁸ Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*, 58.

⁷⁹ Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*, 58.

⁸⁰ Lipner, *Hindus*, 281.

⁸¹ Eck, *Darsan*, 57.

⁸² B K Sarkar, *The Folk Elements in Hindu Culture: A Contribution to Socio-Religious Studies in Hindu Folk-Institutions* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1981), 129-134.

with the expectation of receiving material blessings from Jesus Christ. In fact the ordinary Hindus are polytheistic in nature, who tolerate other faiths and participate in celebrations of other faiths as well. Doniger calls this “eclectic pluralism” and explains it as holding a toolbox of different beliefs more or less simultaneously, but is still a Hindu.⁸³ Doniger is correct in saying that the ordinary Hindus simultaneously practice two beliefs, the belief in Hindu deities and in Jesus Christ. The ordinary Hindus believe that there is only one god and that god can manifest in different ways. Lipner points out that Hindus keep Hindu images and the Christian cross together in their home shrines. Lipner explains what he saw in his field study, saying “I have even seen an abandoned crucifix placed among the sacred representations of the domestic shrine.”⁸⁴ He also states that “underlying belief, however is the same: “the Godhead is one but manifests in various ways.”⁸⁵ The ordinary Hindus cling to this pluralistic idea and they belong to a pluralistic society. Raimundo Panikkar, a proponent of inter-religious dialogue, says that present day Hindus are tolerant people and they generally see other faiths are good.⁸⁶ Because of this reason, Fuller points out that the ordinary Hindus have significant social relationships with Christians and people of other faiths as part of their religious activity.⁸⁷ Thus, the ordinary Hindus are eclectic pluralists to have good social relationships with Christians, as a part of their religious life.

1.4.2.2. Social values: Images of deities help Hindus develop social values. Idols can teach theological implications of deities. Eck states that idols are “visual theologies.”⁸⁸ Most of the Hindus draw lessons from their deities in order to be a good social being. Babb illustrates one example from the life of the god Rama. Babb says that Rama is the supreme “exemplary” deity for society. His cult is an absolute “encyclopedia of social values.”⁸⁹ Babb found in his field research among Chhattisgarhi Hindus who have drawn sociological lessons from the deity Rama:

He [Rama] himself stands for the Kshatriya ideal: a brave warrior and a good king. In popular imagination his kingdom, as described in the *Ramayana*,

⁸³ Doniger, *The Hindus*, 44.

⁸⁴ Lipner, *Hindus*, 313.

⁸⁵ Lipner, *Hindus*, 313.

⁸⁶ Raimundo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd, 1981). 46

⁸⁷ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 7.

⁸⁸ Eck, *Darsan*, 41.

⁸⁹ Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*, 224.

represents the ideal of the benevolent and just polity. Because of his devotion and obedience to his father, he is regarded as the type of the ideal son. His relationship with his brothers represents ideal fraternity. His wife, Sita, is the very model of wifely virtues. His servant, Hanuman, represents service in the most ideal form, and this is extended and amplified into a form of religious devotion; Hanuman emerges as the ideal religious devotee (*bhakt*) as well.⁹⁰

Babb demonstrates how the idol of the deity is an example in terms of responsibilities and values in society. Thus, ordinary Hindus try to follow examples set by the idols of the deities to develop in their social values to become good social beings.

1.4.3 Psychological Factor

Ordinary Hindus need idols in their worship. Ramachandran points out that it is not so easy to view the Upanishadic concept of God through idols. “How could a formless all-pervading God be represented by an image which clearly depicts form and restricts the God to an icon?”⁹¹ In answer to this, the Upanishad texts and the Hindu theologians explain the concept of Brahman in two ways. God had two forms of being—both with form (*saguna*) and without form (*nirguna*).⁹² Ordinary Hindus cannot focus on the highest form of Brahman (*nirguna*). They need a God with form (*saguna*), so that they can access God and his forms (other gods). Heinrich Von Stietencron, a professor of religious studies, explains:

One god only was considered supreme lord, encompassing within himself all aspects and functions of the other gods. He could be directly approached for all needs and aims of life, of which salvation or final release gradually attained special importance. The earlier emphasis on the gods’ actions and functions in an overwhelming world experienced by man, shifted towards an emphasis on man’s thoughts, emotions and actions in relation to a transcendental reality which could be experienced as a personal god. The image made his presence both visible and permanent.⁹³

Von Stietencron summarizes that Hindu worshippers can worship deities in image in order to experience the presence of god. Thus, the ordinary Hindus cannot access and focus to god without an idol. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, a scholar

⁹⁰ Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*, 224-225.

⁹¹ Ramachandran, “Representing Idols,” 17.

⁹² Ramachandran, “Representing Idols,” 17.

⁹³ Heinrich Von Stietencron, *Hindu Myth, Hindu History, Religion, Art and Politics* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005), 62.

of religious studies, says succinctly that a psychological factor leads devotees to worship idols.⁹⁴ The image helps maintain concentration during worship. Jonathan Martin Ciraulo, a religion scholar, states that “The image serves as a pedagogical device for Hindus.”⁹⁵ In line with Ciraulo, Anjula Bedi, a religion scholar, also says, “It is said that the image in the Hindu religion is like a diagram to a geometrician; it provides a focus for his [her] thoughts and worship.”⁹⁶ Saravepalli Radhakrishnan, an Indian philosopher, is a quite critique regarding idol worship, yet, he supports idol worship for ordinary Hindus in terms of concentration:

Man is anthropomorphic form, and is inclined to conceive God in vivid and pictorial form. He [she] cannot express his [her] mental attitude except through symbolism and art. However, inadequate the symbols may be as expressions of real, they are tolerated so long as they help the human spirit in its effort after the divine.⁹⁷

While meditating on an idol, the facilities of one’s mind are involved. Eck states that the image functions as a kind of device (*yantra*) to harness the eye and the mind so that the one-pointedness of thought (*ekagrata*) can be achieved for proper meditation.⁹⁸ Richard Lannoy, a religion scholar, suggests that this kind of meditation on the image involves one’s psychological state.⁹⁹ Eck uses a ritual agama text, the Vishnu *Samhita*, explains the importance of mind and consciousness:

Without a form, how can god be meditated upon? If (he is) without any form, where will the mind fix itself? When there is nothing for the mind to attach itself to, it will slip away from meditation or will glide into a state of slumber. Therefore the wise will meditate on some form, remembering, however, that the form is a superimposition and not a reality.¹⁰⁰

This text implies that the idol is a support to aid concentration. The mind affects the body to worship the idol of the deity in physical form. When Hindus see and worship idols a psychological state may occur. Thus, ordinary Hindus embrace to idol worship psychologically.

⁹⁴ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *Hinduism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 93.

⁹⁵ Jonathan Martin Ciraulo. “The Divine Image: Hindu Murti and Byzantine Iconography,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 48, no.4 (2013): 515. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost

⁹⁶ Anjula Bedi, *Gods & Goddesses in India* (Mumbai: Business Publications INC, 1998), 11.

⁹⁷ Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, “The Heart of Hinduism,” in Suresh K Sharma and Usha Sharma (eds), *Cultural and Religious Heritage of India*, vol.1 (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2004), 249.

⁹⁸ Eck, *Darsan*, 45.

⁹⁹ Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 29.

¹⁰⁰ Eck, *Darsan*, 45.

1.4.4 Relational Factor

Idols make a great impact in Hindu families. In fact, idols are said to narrate stories. Eck says that idols can serve as visual scriptures because many myths of the tradition are expressed in the image.¹⁰¹ Often one sees episodes of myth painted on the walls of public buildings, temples, and private homes. These idols teach lessons to ordinary Hindus. Because of this, Hindus visualize these stories with fascination and devotion. They adopt them in their lives.¹⁰² For instance, they imbibe “the concept of honour” from stories of deities of Laxman’s devotion to his brother.¹⁰³ Lakshmi’s gesture of “Namaste” illustrates that there is an upward hierarchical flow of honour in the kin relations of deities. As a result, in the Hindu context, a husband and a wife form a hierarchy of respect between them.¹⁰⁴ Kumar says that in the depiction of images, the gods become the recipients of the devotion shown in the gestures of respect by wives and the family that they were depicted as a part of.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Fuller observes:

[T]he Hindu gesture of respect - depending on the context in which it is made- certainly can be an act that legitimates social inequality between two people, such as husband and wife. Simultaneously, however, it can also be an act that equally plainly represents two people’s relationship as part of a distinctively Hindu cultural system of hierarchical relationships linking both divine and human persons: a wife is the devotee of her husband as a god and she acts in the image of Lakshmi, the perfect wife who bows down at the feet of her husband Vishnu.¹⁰⁶

When Hindus look at Hindu images, they identify themselves with the stories of the Hindu gods and goddesses. Kumar, in his field work in Kothanur, Bengaluru found relationships between Hindu idols and themes of family. He highlighted 20 points that denote the hierarchy of respect among Hindus, as expressed ideally in terms of deity-devotee relationships, and among both deities and devotees in terms of familial relations. I adopt only 10 points, which are reproduced below.

¹⁰¹ Eck, *Darsan*, 41.

¹⁰² Eck, *Darsan*, 41-43.

¹⁰³ Laxman obeyed to all the instructions of his brother, Rama. Laxman even accompanied his brother to forest for forty years. See Lipner, *Hindus*, 128-129.

¹⁰⁴ Kumar, “The Idea of,” 199.

¹⁰⁵ Kumar, “The Idea of,” 199.

¹⁰⁶ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 8.

Table 1: Kumar's table of images and themes of family:¹⁰⁷

	Images/Pictures	Specific themes of family
1	Siva- Parvati	Husband -Wife
2	Rama-Sita	Husband-Wife
3	Gauri-Ganesh	Mother and son
4	Shiva, Parvati, Ganesha and Shanmugha	A Family
5	Individual images of Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, Krishna, Hanumantha, Ganesha, Muruga, and many other village gods	Husbands of goddesses, kings, princes of divine families and symbols of maleness
6	Individual images of Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, Kali, Mariamma, Yellamma, Chamundi, and many other village goddesses	Wives of gods, queens princesses of divine families and symbols of femaleness
7	Rukmani, Krishna and Radha	A husband with a wife and a lover or a second wife
8	Krishna and Radha	The lover and the beloved
9	Linga	Symbol of Shiva, husband of Parvati, and symbol of maleness
10	Tantrik goddess	Usually Kali, seen as wife of Shiva, and symbol of female anger

It is interesting to observe that the sacred stories of Hindu images play a vital role in the families of ordinary Hindus and determine the kind of relationships they have with each other.

1.4.5 Spiritual Factor

Hinduism discusses three main paths to spiritual liberation (*moksha*): *karma marga* (the path of duty), *jnana marga* (the path of knowledge), and *bhakti marga* (the path of devotion). Among these paths, the ordinary Hindus are inclined to the path of devotion with regard to idol worship. K.M. Sen, a Hindu scholar, says that for Hindus, in the religious ceremonies, the images of deities help to focus devotion.¹⁰⁸ In line with Sen, Lipner says that "the image presents one of the most congenial ways for Hindus to display attachment or devotion to God."¹⁰⁹ In the path of devotion, there is a passionate relationship between the image of the deity and the devotees.

¹⁰⁷ Kumar, "The Idea of," 195-196.

¹⁰⁸ K.M. Sen, *Hinduism* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), 35.

¹⁰⁹ Lipner, *Hindus*, 353.

Madhu Bazaz Wangu, a religion scholar, points out that “The devotee envisions the physical image to be the ‘abode’ of the deity. Spiritual power is seen as infused into material form.”¹¹⁰ Hence, a devotee sees the image as a sacred, not as a material being. Wangu states that a devotee sees the image not in its material form, but in a spiritual form pervaded with sacred meaning.¹¹¹ She also argues that a Hindu deity graciously comes to dwell among people in image form, and thus, in the path of devotion, a devotee sees the spiritual in stone which he/she experiences inwardly; seeing an image of the deity helps to grow spiritually.¹¹² Thus, ordinary Hindus need an idol to meditate upon.

On the other hand, some scholars and Hindus see image worship as spiritual immaturity. Fuller says that there are some groups of Hindus opposed to idolatry and “have persistently argued that material images are needed only by the simple-minded and the spiritually immature, who cannot turn their minds to the godhead without a visible representations on which to focus.”¹¹³ T. M. P. Mahadevan, a Hindu scholar, calls idol worshippers feeble-minded as those who need the idol because an idol is “an index of the supreme.”¹¹⁴ Great Indian leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dayananda Sarasvati stood against idol worship and they considered idolatry as “the fount of all moral degradation and degeneracy.”¹¹⁵ In the midst of all these criticisms, ordinary Hindus continue to worship idols. Fuller states that in popular Hinduism, devotion and respect for deities have not diminished; they continue to be completely expressed “through the use of images in worship.”¹¹⁶ Ordinary Hindus cannot focus on the deities without idols. Thus, they need idols as part of their devotional life, to grow in spiritual life.

1.5. Implications for Christian Witness

As Protestant Christian witnesses, we need to understand that India is a pluralistic religious land. Most of the ordinary Hindus in India worship idols as a part of their devotional lives. As we have seen in this paper it is difficult for ordinary Hindus to focus on their gods without an idol to concentrate on,

¹¹⁰ Madhu Bazaz Wangu, *Images of Indian Goddesses: Myths, Meaning, and Models* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 2003), 15.

¹¹¹ Bazaz, *Images of Indian Goddesses*, 15.

¹¹² Bazaz, *Images of Indian Goddesses*, 15.

¹¹³ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 61-62.

¹¹⁴ T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism* (Bombay: Chetana Limited, 1977), 48.

¹¹⁵ Noel Salmond, “Hindu Iconoclasts,” 1

¹¹⁶ Fuller, *The Camphor Flame*, 62.

and they consider the idol as the real physical presence of god. Understanding the belief system and worldview of the ordinary Hindus, we need to present the gospel to them respectfully and relevantly.

Having been a Hindu for sixteen years and knowing the reality of the mindset of ordinary Hindus, I now identify a few important cautionary steps we need to remember while sharing the gospel with ordinary Hindus. A major obstacle hinders them in accepting Christianity is when we ask them to “accept Jesus Christ as the Lord and leave the idols” out of their lives. By way of example, I would like to illustrate a true incident which happened in my family.

This incident happened to my father’s brother’s wife. Her name was Sita. She had three children (two girls and one boy). She had been born and brought up in Hinduism and she was an idol worshipper. When she was 36, she had some complicated health issues in her life. She went through a series of medical treatments and spent huge money in the hope of healing and recovery. At this time, my aunt and uncle used to worship the images of their deities devoutly and even sought the help of a shaman so that my aunt would be healed. However, nothing seemed to work. Amidst all these struggles, my mother told her that if she believed in Jesus Christ, he could heal her completely. Having listened to my mother’s words, she put her faith in Jesus Christ. Slowly, she began attending church and asked the pastor to conduct weekly prayer meetings at her home. The pastor agreed to her request. Then, the pastor told her, “If you remove your idols from your home, only then can Jesus Christ heal you.” This statement hurt my aunt’s faith because she was very attached to idol worship. She was unwilling to give up the idols, even though she was facing complicated health issues. As a result, she lost her faith in Jesus Christ and stopped going to the church from then on. After a few months, thinking that she was a burden to her husband and having lost all hope in her deities as well, including Jesus Christ, she committed suicide. This incident shocked all our families.

This incident illustrates how attached ordinary Hindus are to idol worship. It is not easy for them to leave their idols for Christianity. Thus, as Christian witnesses, we need to sensitively reevaluate our mission goals.

First, we must be sensitive. It is essential that Christian witnesses know that idol worship is the core of the ordinary Hindus' devotion. To discuss the giving up of idols is a sensitive matter with these people. It takes time¹¹⁷ for one to leave one's idols and believe only in Jesus Christ. Our main task is to share that Jesus Christ is the Saviour and the redeemer, one who can deliver us from sins and reconcile with God. We also need to tell the truth that Jesus Christ cannot be contained in idols, but we must do so gently. In God's time, ordinary Hindus will accept Jesus Christ because the gospel has the dynamic power to bring about change (Rom.1:16).

Secondly, we must not be unduly judgmental. In Indian history, Christian missionaries from the West have called Hindu idol worship "evil," "stupid," "irrational" and "cesspools of immorality."¹¹⁸ Even now I hear some pastors preach very harsh sermons in front of Hindus, saying things like all those who worship idols are doomed to hell, etc. This kind of criticism and judgment hurts the sentiments of the ordinary Hindus and breeds resentment and anger. We need to understand that idols are a part of their devotion. We need to respect their beliefs and their religiosity,¹¹⁹ without adopting those practices and beliefs into our religion. For instance, when the apostle Paul saw idol

¹¹⁷ As Christian witnesses, we believe that the Holy Spirit will convince people of other faiths to accept Jesus Christ. However, there is usually difficulty in transitioning from one's own faith to another faith. This time factor varies for people. For instance, in my own family, my mother left idol worship and accepted Jesus as Lord within one year, from the time when she first heard of Jesus Christ. My father and sister accepted Jesus Christ after four years. And I accepted Jesus Christ after six years.

¹¹⁸ Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism, 1793-1900* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 24-26.

¹¹⁹ I am not trying to say that we need to adopt the religious beliefs and practices of Hindus into our faith. That would be false teaching. But I am trying to say that respect for other religions should not be considered as syncretism. Rather, the endeavour is to understand their religiosity and their devotion from their point of view. In doing so, we can share the gospel relevantly and have proper dialogue with them. World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and World Evangelical Alliance have promulgated twelve principles regarding "*Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*." Two of those principles are worth quoting here. The ninth principle talks about respect for all people: "Christians recognize that the gospel both challenges and enriches cultures. Even when the gospel challenges certain aspects of cultures, Christians are called to respect all people. Christians are also called to discern elements in their own cultures that are challenged by the gospel." Another is the tenth principle which talks about renouncing false witness: "Christians are to speak sincerely and respectfully; they are to listen in order to learn about and understand others' beliefs and practices, and are encouraged to acknowledge and appreciate what is true and good in them. Any comment or critical approach should be made in a spirit of mutual respect, making sure not to bear false witness concerning other religions." See: A Document on Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct (2011), [https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world\(15 Oct 2016\)](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world(15%20Oct%202016).).

worship in Athens, he addressed the people of Athens in this manner: "...I see that in every way you are religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23-24). His appreciation of their religious experiences and the gentle approach to explaining the truth of the gospel, drew people to hear his message. Of course the response to his message was mixed; some sneered while others followed (Acts 17:32-34). This method tells that we should be culturally sensitive and respectful while sharing the gospel.

Finally, we must be willing to learn. As Christian witnesses, we need to understand that idols play a central role in the lives of ordinary Hindus. They cannot think of worshiping without the images of their deities. Thus, we need to beware of the significant factors that encourage them to worship idols, in order to win the attention of ordinary Hindus and present the gospel effectively. Prabhu Singh Vedhamanickam, an Indian Missiologist, explains that Christian workers should know the relevant religious practices before presenting the gospel. He says, "We must be willing to listen, observe and learn from the songs and stories, poems and proverbs, myths and rituals, religious symbols and worldview of the culture of the people to whom we are presenting the gospel."¹²⁰ Vedhamanickam emphasizes that Christian workers need to properly learn of the religious practices of the people, to get the attention of the people.¹²¹ By learning of the religious practices and the significant aspects of the religious symbols of the people, we come to know the sentiments and belief systems of ordinary Hindus and are then able to serve Christ in an effective manner.

1.6 Conclusion

To sum up, popular Hinduism is an authentic Hindu tradition. It is evident that Hindu idols play a great role in the lives of ordinary Hindus. The rituals of idol worship are so important for the ordinary Hindus as part of their gratitude to them. Socially, the Hindus experience unity and oneness during times of celebrations, when they worship their images of deities together. Psychologically, the idols help them concentrate on their gods and goddesses. The ordinary Hindus look on their deities as examples, and model their deities

¹²⁰ Prabhu Singh Vedhamanickam, "Living Water in Indian Cups: A Call for Cultural Relevance in Contemporary Missions," *The Asbury Journal* 66/2 (2011), 63.

¹²¹ Vedhamanickam, "Living Water," 62-63.

in familial relationships, in order to be a good couple or family. Spiritually, the ordinary Hindus need idols as part of their devotional life, to grow in spiritual life. Thus, this research shows how idol worship is deeply rooted in the religious lives of ordinary Hindus. Hence, Christian workers need to present Jesus Christ for the ordinary Hindus in a sensitive manner, so that many ordinary Hindus perceive Jesus Christ as the living God who cannot be contained in any form.

Re-membering John Calvin for our Time

*Josfin Raj S. B**

INTRODUCTION

Last year we celebrated 500 years of Reformation movement. This paper is prepared with one among second-generation reformers namely John Calvin and his thoughts. He placed cornerstone for the reformed protestant theology with his lifelong revised and systematically arranged work *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.¹ This article would glimpse his teachings on God as Creator and Redeemer, Church and Sacraments, predestination and Calvinism with his magnum opus.

1.1. John Calvin: A Brief Profile

John Calvin was born on July 10, 1509, in the north of France, called Noyon.² In his twelfth age, he moved to Paris for an education in Latin and the Arts, graduating with both a B.A. and M.A. at about the age of 17. During these years in Paris, he was exposed to Christian humanism. Calvin's father had intended that his son pursue advanced study in theology and become a churchman, but because of his disagreements with the Catholic Church, he steered young Calvin into the study of civil law instead. Calvin worked on his law degree at the universities of Orleans and Bourges while studying Greek on the side. In law school, he committed to the Protestant faith. He was frequently forced to move and eventually had to flee France itself because of his Protestant faith. In the summer of 1536, Calvin stopped for the night in Geneva, Switzerland, on his way to Strasbourg, Germany. There he was prevailed upon by William Farel, one of the Protestant leaders in Geneva, to stay and assist with the reform of the city. After expulsion from Geneva due

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¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559 Edition), edited by John T. McNeill, translated by Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols, Library of Christian Classics, vols XX-XXI (Philadelphia: Westminster press, 1960). Hereafter cited as *Institutes* with book (in Roman numerical), chapter (in Roman numerical), section (in Arabic Numerical) and page number.

² The biography is prepared by consulting following works: William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Centuries Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Francois Wendel, *Calvin: Origin and Development of His Religious Thought*, translated by Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book, First Edition 1956, 1963); Lyle D. Bierma, "The Relevance of Calvin's Theology for the Twenty- First Century," *Doon Theological Journal* 3/1 (January, 2006): 42-54; John P. Asling, "Editorial," *Reformed World* 57/4 (December, 2007).

to the demand made for people for a high morality, Calvin settled in Strasbourg. There he served as a university lecturer and pastor of a French refugee congregation under the mentorship of Martin Bucer, the leading reformer of Strasbourg. During his three years in Strasbourg, Calvin also published the first of his many commentaries on the Bible and married a widow of a one-time Anabaptist. In 1541, Calvin was invited back to Geneva and remained there until his death. His last ten years of life were peaceful and productive. Besides his preaching and teaching, Calvin continued to provide the German city councils with political advice. He also persuaded the political authorities to build a theological academy in Geneva. During the last years of his life, he finished the final edition of his *Institutes*, a summary of theology.³ This writing was written for a practical purpose.⁴ Calvin writes, "It has been my purpose in this labor to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred things for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling."⁵ It will be the main source for our study of Calvin's theology. It is essential to interpret Calvin in his context of ecclesiological and pastoral preoccupations⁶, the influences of Christian Theologians⁷, and Christian humanism⁸ of that time.

³ The first edition appeared in 1536, the second in 1539, third in 1543 and the final edition was published in 1559, about the five times of the length of the first edition. In Latin *Institutio*, means something like "basic instruction/ handbook or instruction manual. The structure of the book can be summarized as follows: "Book I- God the *Father*, who creates us for love and fellowship, and who incarnates the Word as (Book II) Jesus the true *Son*, who has come to redeem us from sin and show us what this fellowship is really like. The *Spirit* (Book III) continues this wooing building the life of Jesus the Son into our broken lives so that we can truly be God's children who, as the *Church* (Book IV), live a familial life responding to this Triune God of grace." Lyle D. Bierma, "The Relevance of Calvin's Theology for the Twenty- First Century," 43- 44; Gerald Bray classifies Calvin's writing for the interpretation of a text, such as exegesis (represented by Calvin's commentaries), dogmatic (represented by his *Institutes*), and preaching (represented by his sermons). *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 203. This systematic exposition of the Protestant faith became one of the basic documents of the Reformed tradition. McGrath finds Calvin's *Institutes* intellectually molded reformed Christianity. He calls it is a work of *pedagogy*, based on careful reflection on how to communicate and commend ideas. *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution- History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (New York: Harper One, 2007), 93, 94. See also. Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought Vol. III: From the Protestant Reformation to the Twentieth Century* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 123; Julie Canlis, "Calvin's *Institutes*: Primer for Spiritual Formation," *Crux* 47/1 (Spring, 2011): 17.

⁴ R. Bruce Douglass, "The Difference Calvin Made," *Theology Today* 67/2 (July, 2010): 205.

⁵ *Institutes*, "John Calvin to Readers" (p.4).

⁶ See. Francois Wendel, *Calvin*.

⁷ The early Church Father John Chrysostom, Latin Father Augustine, and Martin Luther in relation to *Sola Scriptura*- the primacy of the Scripture as the supreme authority for faith, doctrine and life were influenced him. See. Vanlalngaka Ralte, "John Calvin and the New Testament," *Mizoram Journal of Theology* 1/3 (July- December, 2010): 99.

⁸ It was a late medieval reform movement, a program of educational, cultural, and church reform based on the study of classical and early Christian texts. French humanism gave Calvin both the incentive and the tools that enable the documents of yesteryear to interact with the situation of the city of Geneva in the 1550s. Calvin's background as a Christian humanist greatly influenced his methods of exegesis, his study of early Christian theologians. See. William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin*; Vanlalngaka Ralte, "John Calvin and the New Testament," 99.

1.2. Calvin's Knowledge of God the Creator

Knowledge⁹ of God is the starting point of the *Institutes*. Calvin writes, "Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God... True and sound wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and ourselves."¹⁰ There is in every person a 'natural awareness of divinity', as even the practice of idolatry. He writes, "God himself has implanted in all man [sic] a certain understanding of his divine majesty."¹¹ It is "God has sown a seed of religion in all men [sic],"¹² which only a few nurture and none succeed in bringing to fruition.¹³ Calvin again writes, "He not only sowed in man's [sic] mind that seed of religion... but revealed himself and daily discloses himself in the whole workmanship of the universe."¹⁴ The creation and its magnitude show the divine imprint in the world.¹⁵ Therefore, no one can excuse from knowing God. But, owing to the evil in the human heart, creation does not produce true knowledge of God.¹⁶ The natural and historical knowledge of God is obstructed or tainted by sin. We cannot know God because not only we are sinners, but also we are finite creatures and he is infinite. This, in turn, means that we must not seek to know God as he is in himself, but only as he reveals himself to us, mainly through the Scripture.¹⁷ His argument is that "God bestows the actual knowledge of himself upon us only in the Scriptures."¹⁸ The knowledge of God is solely based on the biblical revelation.¹⁹ He expounds the scriptural doctrine of God, the creator as

⁹ Calvin did not mean to imply intellectual apprehension of God by the term 'knowledge'. Knowledge of God involved for Calvin love, trust, fear, obedience, and worship of God. It embraced mind and heart, affections and will, worship and devout work. See. David C. Steinmetz, "Theology of John Calvin," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, edited by David Bagahi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 120.

¹⁰ This knowledge of ourselves is twofold: namely, to know what we are like when we were first created and what our condition became after the fall of Adam. The true knowledge of self, where we discover our own misery and insufficiency, also makes us realize that we need to seek after the knowledge of God. But, since in our present condition we are too prone to deceive ourselves, claiming that we are what we are not, and obscuring our infirmities, the proper place for true wisdom to begin is with the knowledge of God. *Institutes* I.I.1; I.XV.1 (p.183)

¹¹ *Institutes* I.III. 1 (page 43)

¹² *Institutes* I.IV. 1 (page 47)

¹³ Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought* Vol. III, 124.

¹⁴ *Institutes* I.V. 1 (pp. 51-52)

¹⁵ *Institutes* I.V. 4

¹⁶ *Institutes* I.V. 12

¹⁷ Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought* Vol. III, 124.

¹⁸ *Institutes* I.V.1 (p.69)

¹⁹ Against the scholastic tradition with its characteristic natural theology, which emphasized human reason on the one hand, and the radical wing of the Reformation which put too much importance on the working of the Holy Spirit as the means of knowledge of God, Calvin turns to the authority of the Scripture as the ultimate source of the knowledge of God. R. Lalthanmawia, "John Calvin's Social and Economic Ethics," *Mizoram Journal of Theology* 1/2 (January- June, 2010): 6.

correct over against all superstition. The true God has revealed himself as Creator so that we may distinguish him from all the idols. Calvin writes,

Indeed, the knowledge of God set forth for us in Scripture is destined for the very same goal as the knowledge whose imprint shines in his creatures, in that it invites us first to fear God, then to trust him. By this, we can learn to worship him both with the perfect innocence of life and with unfeigned obedience than to depend wholly upon his goodness.²⁰

Calvin believes God is Creator of all that is seen and unseen like angels.²¹ In Calvin's words, "God by the power of his Word and Spirit created heaven and earth out of nothing; that thereupon he brought forth living beings and inanimate things of every kind"²² When one contemplates on God's creation or works, one must ponder upon "immense riches, inestimable wisdom, justice, goodness, and power."²³ For Calvin, God as Creator expresses the divine rule over all creatures, human and nonhuman. Nothing is beyond wisdom and parental care of God.²⁴ Calvin believed that God, the sovereign and gracious Creator of all, desires to be in an intimate relationship.²⁵ Calvin says,

Moreover, although our mind cannot apprehend God without rendering some honor to him, it will not suffice simply to hold that there is One whom all ought to honor and adore unless we are also persuaded that he is the fountain of every good and that we must seek nothing elsewhere than in him. This I take to mean that not only does he sustain this universe (as he once founded it) by his boundless might, regulate it by his wisdom, preserve it by his goodness, and especially rule mankind (*sic*) by his righteousness and judgment, bear with it in his mercy, watch over it by his protection; but also that no drop will be found either of wisdom and light; or of righteousness or power or rectitude, or of genuine truth, which does not flow from him, and of which he is not the cause.²⁶

Calvin affirms God as the sovereign and sustaining One, who in love, grace, and justice, is in total care and control of the whole creation, the course of history, and in particular God's people.²⁷ This will lead one to thank and trust God.

²⁰ Institutes I.XI.2 (p.98)

²¹ Institutes I.XIV.10 (p.170)

²² Institutes I.XIV.20

²³ Institutes I.XIV.21 (p.180)

²⁴ Report of an International Consultation, "What is the Significance of Calvin's' Legacy?," *Reformed World* 57/ 4 (December, 2007): 233.

²⁵ Report of an International Consultation, "What is the Significance of Calvin's' Legacy?," 233.

²⁶ Institutes I.II. 1 (page 40-41)

²⁷ Institute I. XVI – XVII; Vanlalnghaka Ralte, "John Calvin and the New Testament," 114.

Human being, for Calvin, is the noble and remarkable example of God's justice, wisdom, and goodness.²⁸ But, God's image was corrupted in human.²⁹ Calvin writes, "There is no doubt that Adam, who he fell from his state, was by this defection alienated from God. Therefore, even though we grant that God's image was not totally annihilated and destroyed in him, yet was so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity."³⁰ After the sin of Adam what remains of the divine image is no longer recognizable.³¹ But, Christ is the most perfect image of God, if we are conformed to it, we are so restored that with true piety, righteousness, purity, and intelligence we bear God's image. Calvin quotes from scripture, for Christ is not without reason called "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15).³² Thus the knowledge of God as Redeemer is revealed in Christ. Calvin writes, "God is known not only as the Founder of the universe and the sole Author and Ruler of all that is made, but also in the person of the Mediator as the Redeemer."³³ His point is that "Scripture can communicate to us what revelation in the creation cannot."³⁴

1.3. Calvin's Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ and His Grace

The knowledge of God, in Scripture, is two sorts; the knowledge of God as 'the Creator' and 'the Redeemer' (*duplex cognitio Dei*).³⁵ Humans, as already said, both the will and reason are contaminated by sin.³⁶ Calvin writes, "The whole human race perished in the person of Adam. Consequently that original excellence and nobility which he have recounted would be of no profit to us but would rather redound to our greater shame, until God, who

²⁸ Human consists of a soul and a body. The soul is an immortal yet created essence, which is his nobler part of human being. Sometime it is called spirit. Institutes I.XV.2 (p.184). The God's image and likeness is much visible in human soul than body (Calvin rejects the traditional distinction between the image and likeness, affirming that Hebrew custom of using parallel expressions to refer to a single thing). Institutes I.XV.3-4 (p.187-188); I.XV.1 (p.183)

²⁹ Institutes I.XV.4 (p.189)

³⁰ Institutes I.XV.4 (p.189)

³¹ Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought* Vol. III, 128.

³² Institutes II.VI.4 (p.347)

³³ Institutes I.VI.1 (p.71)

³⁴ Institutes I.IV.4 (p.73)

³⁵ I John Hesselink, "Calvin's Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, edited by Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 79.

³⁶ Unbelief is thus seen as an act of will and reason; it is a deliberate decision *not* to discern the hand of God, and *not* to obey God. Calvin develops the consequences of this at two distinct, although related, levels. At the epistemic level, humans lack the necessary rational and volitional resources to discern God fully within the creator order. At the soteriological level, humans lack what is required in order to be saved; they do not *want* to be saved (on account of the debilitation of the mind and will through sin), and they are *incapable* of saving themselves (in that salvation presupposes obedience to God, now impossible on account of sin). See. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 371.

does not recognize as his handiwork men defiled and corrupted by sin, appeared as Redeemer in the person of his only- begotten Son. Therefore, since we have fallen from life into death, the whole knowledge of God the Creator that we have discussed would be useless unless faith also followed, setting forth for us God our father in Christ.”³⁷

True knowledge of God and salvation must be, therefore, come from outside the human situation. Christ is the unique channel through which God’s redeeming work is directed toward and made available to humanity. Calvin, after analyzing the Old Testament, tells “apart from the Mediator, God never showed favor toward the ancient people, nor given ever hope of grace to them.”³⁸ In such a manner, Calvin lays the foundation for his doctrine of the mediatorship of Jesus Christ.³⁹ His argument is, only he who was true God and true human could bridge the gulf between God and humanity. He writes, “for the same reason it was also imperative that he who was to become our Redeemer be true God and true man.”⁴⁰ His task was to restore humanity to God’s grace.⁴¹

Calvin proposes the second requirement of our reconciliation with God was this: that man, who by his disobedience had become lost, should by way of remedy counter it with obedience, satisfy God’s judgment, and pay the penalties for sin. Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam’s place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God’s righteous judgment, and in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved. In short, since neither as God alone could feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it, he coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he might submit the weakness of the one to death; and that, wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win victory for us. Those who despoil Christ of either of his divinity or his humanity diminish majesty and glory, or obscure his goodness.⁴²

In order to act as such a mediator, Jesus Christ must be both divine and human.⁴³ In McGrath’s words, “The Son of God became the Son of Man, and received what is ours in such a way that he transferred to us what is his, making that which is his by nature to become ours through grace.”⁴⁴

³⁷ Institutes II.VI.1

³⁸ Institutes II.VI.2 (p.342)

³⁹ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 371.

⁴⁰ Institutes II.XII.2 (p.466)

⁴¹ Institutes II.XII.2 (p.465)

⁴² Institutes II.XII.3 (p.466)

⁴³ Unless Jesus Christ was himself a human being, other human beings could not benefit from his presence or activity. In that it was impossible for us to ascend to God, on account of our sin, God chose to descend to us instead.

⁴⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 371.

Calvin tells that Christ's work may be summarized under three offices or ministries: prophet, priest, and king, the three great mediatorial offices of the Old Testament. In his *prophetic* office, Christ is the herald and witness of God's grace. In his *kingly* office, Christ inaugurated a kingship which is heavenly, not earthly; spiritual, not physical, which is exercised over believers through the Holy Spirit. Finally, through offering his death as a satisfaction for our sin he became *high priest*. In all these respects, Christ brings to fulfillment the mediatorial ministries of the Old Covenant.⁴⁵ With these, Calvin presents person and work of Christ. As a person, he was mediator having both human and divine nature. His works reflected upon his offices.

Calvin links God the Redeemer in Jesus Christ into the knowledge of human and sin, law, and the Old and New Testaments. Then moves on to speak of Christ and his work of redemption. He offered as a sacrifice so that he might wipe out our guilt by his act of expiation and appease the Father's righteous wrath.⁴⁶ Through his suffering, he satisfied the debt of sin; through his defeat of death, he broke the power of death over the human race. Calvin says the importance of Christ in relation to human salvation, "If we separate ourselves even by one single inch from Christ, salvation fades...where Christ's name does not sound, everything becomes stale."⁴⁷ He adds, "Unless God confronts us in Christ, we cannot come to know that we are saved."⁴⁸ Apart from Christ the saving knowledge of God does not stand. From the beginning of the world, he had consequently been set before all the elect that they should look unto him and put their trust in him.⁴⁹ The gospel, for Calvin, is the clear manifestation of the mystery of Christ.⁵⁰ It is "the proclamation of the grace manifested in Christ."⁵¹ Christ left unfinished nothing of the sum total of our salvation.⁵² Thus, Calvin's analysis of the knowledge of God as Redeemer and of human sin lays the foundation of his Christology.⁵³ Holy Spirit unites with Christ, inspiring us in our understanding of God's word, illuminating and sanctifying us in faith, and gathering us into the communion of the Church.⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Calvin's careful attention to the content and the unity of the Old Testament and the New Testament, shows that the centrality of the Bible's witness to Jesus Christ. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 372.

⁴⁶ Institutes II.XII.3 (p.467)

⁴⁷ Institutes II. XVI.1; Report of an International Consultation, "What is the Significance of Calvin's' Legacy?," 233.

⁴⁸ Institutes II.VI.4 (p.347)

⁴⁹ Institutes II.VI.4 (p.347)

⁵⁰ Institutes II.IX.2 (p.424)

⁵¹ Institutes II.IX.2 (p.425)

⁵² Institutes II.IX.3 (p.426)

⁵³ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 371.

⁵⁴ Report of an International Consultation, "What is the Significance of Calvin's' Legacy?," 233.

1.4. Calvin's Understanding of Church and Sacraments

Alister observes, it is Calvin and Martin Bucer who made the decisive contributions to the development of Protestant ecclesiology.⁵⁵ Calvin cogently deals with the doctrine of the church, the sacraments and the church's relation with the State in Book IV of his *Institutes*. For Calvin, the church is the congregation of the elect under the Lordship of Christ, both visible and invisible, the body of Christ, the mother of all believers, and there is no salvation outside the church.⁵⁶ Under the Headship of Christ, the ministers (pastors) who are on equal footing with one another administer the sacraments;⁵⁷ they are aided by teachers (doctors) in training future ministers,⁵⁸ and by the deacons in social concern.⁵⁹

Unity of the Church: Calvin maintains, the Church as catholic or universal because all Christians are united in the one body of Christ, which cannot be sundered.⁶⁰ He understood that unity requires mutual accountability and mutual admonition- discipline.⁶¹ He stresses repeatedly that Christ's body is one, that there is no justification for a divided church, and that schism within churches is a scandal.⁶² The church depends entirely on the presence of the living Jesus Christ through the power of God's spirit. Thus it becomes the communion of the "lovers of Christ". It cannot rely on tradition or on the strength of existing structures.⁶³ In addition to Luther's view, Calvin believed that church to be an institution for Christian education to teach how to live Christian lives in a practical way.⁶⁴

Order of the church: Calvin repeatedly points out that concept of hierarchy and lordship of bishops or presbyters are inappropriate in the governance of the church.⁶⁵ Since Christ who still alive holds threefold office, that is: as a prophet, as a king, and as a priest never relinquished these to the ecclesial institution. His relationship to the church is like that of the head of the body, and there are no substitute heads only he governs the church.⁶⁶ Every member

⁵⁵ See. Henry S. Lucas, *The Renaissance and the Reformation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1934, second edition 1969), 526-527; Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 71.

⁵⁶ *Institutes* IV.I.2,4,7,8; IV.III.3

⁵⁷ *Institutes* IV.I.3; IV.III.4

⁵⁸ *Institutes* IV.III.4

⁵⁹ *Institutes* IV.III.9

⁶⁰ *Institutes* II.VI.2 (p.343)

⁶¹ Jane Dempsey Douglass, "Calvin, Calvinism and Ecumenism," *Reformed World* 55/4 (December, 2005): 298.

⁶² Report of an International Consultation, "What is the Significance of Calvin's' Legacy?," 235.

⁶³ Report of an International Consultation, "What is the Significance of Calvin's' Legacy?," 233.

⁶⁴ Alan Thomson, 26.

⁶⁵ *Institutes* IV. IV. 1-4; Jane Dempsey Douglass, "Calvin, Calvinism and Ecumenism," 298.

⁶⁶ Eberhard Busch, "Who was and Who is Calvin? Interpretation of Recent Times," *Reformed World*, 57/4 (December, 2007): 240.

participates in the head, but only as a member of Christ's body. All Christians participate directly by faith in Christ. In this way, all Christians participate in the threefold office of Christ by faith. The human leaders of the ecclesial communion to are members of Christ's body, not heads of the church. This is made apparent by the fact that the three offices under their leadership are distributed to different persons who lead the church collectively.⁶⁷ This interpretation gives new significance to the three offices exercised by the government of the church which differs with the Roman Catholic Church's view.⁶⁸ The pastors embody the prophetic teaching of Christ. The elders embody the kingly office of Christ; they have the task of leading the communion and ensuring the care of souls (*cura animarum*), but they are not the sovereigns of the church. And, the service of the deacons to the poor corresponds to the priestly office, which Christ fulfilled once and for all on the cross.⁶⁹

Sacraments: Calvin asserts that the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ are only baptism and the Lord Supper, which are the visible signs of divine grace by which the believer's faith is spiritually nourished.⁷⁰ Baptism stands for- the initiatory sign or seal by which we are admitted into the fellowship of the church, washing regeneration, forgiveness of sin and union with Christ. He argued for infant baptism.⁷¹ As for the Lord's Supper, Calvin rejects the views of Roman Church, Luther, and Zwingli.⁷²

Calvin teaches that when we see the visible sign we must consider what it represents, and by whom it has given to us. The bread is given us to figure the body of Jesus Christ, with the command to eat it.... We must then truly receive in the Supper the body and blood of Jesus Christ since the Lord there represents to us the communion of both....we are truly made partakers of the proper substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. How that is done...on the one hand, in order to exclude all carnal fancies, we must raise

⁶⁷ See also. William R. Estep, *Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1986), 230.

⁶⁸ Pastors are not at all priests. And this is perhaps the deepest point of divergence with the Roman Catholic Church.

⁶⁹ Eberhard Busch, "Who was and Who is Calvin? Interpretation of Recent Times," 240.

⁷⁰ Institutes. IV.XIV. 12, 20; IV. XV. 1

⁷¹ Against the Anabaptists, who denounced infant baptism, Calvin cites Jesus' blessing of the children (Matt. 19:13) and baptism of the households in the early church (Acts 16: 15- 32), and argues that in parallel to Jewish circumcision. Institutes IV.XIV.20; IV.XVI.1, 3, 4; Vanlalngaka Ralte, "John Calvin and the New Testament," 116- 117.

⁷² Calvin rejects the Roman church's doctrine of transubstantiation, Luther's consubstantiation and Zwingli's mere memorialism.

our hearts upward to heaven, not thinking that our Lord Jesus is so debased as to be enclosed under some corruptible elements (i.e. 'in, with, and under' the bread and wine). On the other hand, so as to not to impair the efficacy of this holy ordinance, we must hold that it is made effectual by the secret and miraculous power of God and that the Spirit of God is the bond of participation (in Christ's body and blood) - this being the reason why (the sacrament) is called spiritual.⁷³

Christ was truly received, but the reception was due to faith and was not directly associated with the elements.⁷⁴

Church and State: Calvin maintains that the church and the state operate in different spheres though of course under the same divine providence and sovereignty.⁷⁵ At the same time recognizing that we live in two spheres-the spiritual and temporal means that our calling must be used to live out our knowledge of God as Redeemer in the world, where God's order is not always visible. The boundaries between the responsibilities of the church and state are not always clear and they can change.⁷⁶ For Calvin, the state is a positive blessing. To be a ruler here is the highest honor and it is always clear that a ruler is subject to divine law, as well as to natural and human law, for laws are the "stoutest sinews of the commonwealth".⁷⁷ For Calvin, the magistrates are instituted by God's ordination "and represent to the people divine providence, protection, goodness, benevolence and justice." It is for the well-being of the community (Rom. 13: 1-7).⁷⁸ The magistrates were to protect the church and the worship so that to attempt to depose them would not only be anarchy but would be acting against God.⁷⁹ If the magistrates act contrary to the ordinances of God, they are not to be obeyed; but even so, Calvin rejected active rebellion.⁸⁰ It is not the task of the authorities to do the actual preaching of the Gospel. It is evil if the civil authority seizes the church government and makes itself judge in matters of doctrine and of spiritual authority. Accordingly, throughout his life, Calvin worked to place ecclesiastical discipline in the

⁷³ John Calvin, *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, 16,60. Institutes IV.XVII.1, 12, 16, 17, 24; Vanlalnghaka Ralte, "John Calvin and the New Testament," 117.

⁷⁴ JWC Wand, *A History of the Modern Church: From 1500 to the Present Day* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1930), 37.

⁷⁵ Vanlalnghaka Ralte, "John Calvin and the New Testament," 118.

⁷⁶ Institutes IV.XX.31; Ian Breward, "Calvin in the Public Square," 16.

⁷⁷ Institutes IV.XX.14; Ian Breward, "Calvin in the Public Square," 16.

⁷⁸ Ian Breward, "Calvin in the Public Square," *Uniting Church Studies* 17/1 (June, 2011): 15.

⁷⁹ Alan Thomson, *New Movements: Church History A.D. 1500- 1800* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1987), 25.

⁸⁰ Institutes IV.XX.1; I. IV.32; Vanlalnghaka Ralte, "John Calvin and the New Testament," 117- 118.

hands of spiritual officials and guarantee the independence of the consistory vis-a-vis the power of the state.⁸¹ Calvin claimed for the church full and independent jurisdiction in discipline up to the point of excommunication.⁸²

1.5. Calvin's Understanding of Predestination⁸³

Calvin's doctrine of predestination is different from present day Calvinistic predestination, who claims it is the centre of Calvin's theology.⁸⁴ Alister McGrath says, predestination is not the centre of Calvin's system as popularly known.⁸⁵ Calvin defines predestination as "the eternal decree of God, by which he determined what he wished to make of every person. For he does not create everyone on the same condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others."⁸⁶ The primary function of the doctrine of predestination is to explain why some individuals respond to the gospel, and others do not. It is an attempt to explain the variety of human responses to grace.⁸⁷ An international consultation on John Calvin by Reformed Churches said like this, "His doctrine of predestination, must be seen and interpreted in the framework of his primary intentions in understanding God, creation, human salvation and the fulfillment of all things."⁸⁸ Calvin writes, "When we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things always were, and perpetually remain, under his eyes, so that to his knowledge there is nothing future or past, but all things are present."⁸⁹ The election – predestination leads to reconciliation, justification, sanctification (holiness) and good works on the part of the elect with its final

⁸¹ Erwin Iserloh, *et al.*, *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, translated by Anslem Biggs and Peter W. Becker (London: Burns & Oates), 381.

⁸² Williston Walker, *et al.*, *A History of the Christian Church*: Fourth edition, 1918 (New York: Scribner, 1985), 475.

⁸³ In Editions 1539- 1554, Calvin treated the topics of providence and predestination in the same chapter. In the final edition they are widely separated. Providence being set in the context of the knowledge of God the Creator, while predestination is postponed to III. XXI- XXIV, where it comes within general treatment of the redemptive work of Holy Spirit.

⁸⁴ The notion- predestination was the central doctrine of Calvin's theology was introduced by Alexandre Schwiezer in 1844 and Ferdinand Christian in 1847. Following this tradition Philip Schaff writes, "The dogma of a double predestination is the corner-stone of the Calvinistic system." *History of the Christian Church* vol.8 (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, originally published 1892, 1996), 545; Karin Y. Maag, "Hero or Villain? Interpretations of John Calvin and His Legacy," *Calvin Theological Journal* 41/2 (November, 2006): 233; Francois Wendel, *Calvin*, 263- 264.

⁸⁵ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 68.

⁸⁶ Institutes, III.XXI.5 (p.926)

⁸⁷ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 467.

⁸⁸ Report of an International Consultation, "What is the Significance of Calvin's' Legacy?," 232.

⁸⁹ Institutes III.XXI.5 (p.926).

⁹⁰ Vanlalnghaka Ralte, "John Calvin and the New Testament," 115.

goal to glorify God.⁹⁰ Belief in predestination is the final outcome of scripturally informed reflection on the effects of grace upon individuals in the light of the enigmas of experience.⁹¹ Calvin maintains that God in his eternal wisdom, divine grace and love, has elected, justified and predestined his people to salvation in Christ and others to damnation.⁹² Divine election was the final proof that everything is of grace, including the division between those who come to faith and those who do not.⁹³ Calvin took many of his ideas on predestination from St. Augustine.⁹⁴

1.6. Calvin and Calvinism

The question of the relationship between the theology of John Calvin and later Reformed theology has been the subject of considerable debate. There are mainly two strands- continuity and discontinuity.⁹⁵ The term ‘Calvinism’ is used historically, apart from its application to Calvin’s own teachings, in two senses. Firstly, it signifies the doctrines emphasized by seventeenth-century Calvinists scholars, especially the ‘five points of Calvinism’ summed

⁹⁰ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 467.

⁹¹ Institute III. XXI; Vanlalngaka Ralte, “John Calvin and the New Testament,” 115.

⁹² B.A. Gerrish, “The Place of Calvin in Christian Theology,” *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, edited by Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 293.

⁹³ Calvin agrees with Augustine that while the division between the elect and the non-elect is inescapably the teaching of Scripture, the reason *why* God chooses some, not all, is hidden in God’s inscrutable justice. Calvin and Augustine agreed that only the doctrine of election can safeguard the sovereign freedom of grace. But Calvin had also a secondary use for it: to establish assurance of salvation. Augustine, by contrast, held that none can know whether or not they are elect; the doctrine accordingly inspires fear rather than assurance. Other difference between both of them was on *single* and *double* predestination. Augustine wrote a *single* predestination of the saints that simply passes by the rest of humanity whereas for Calvin was the doctrine of a *double* predestination, to eternal life or to eternal damnation. Karin Y. Maag, “Hero or Villain? Interpretations of John Calvin and His Legacy,” 233; B. A. Gerrish, “The Place of Calvin in Christian Theology,” 292.

⁹⁴ However the model of continuity and discontinuity is not accepted by many. For this see. Martin Foord, “God Wills All People to be Saved- or does he? Calvin’s Reading of I Timothy 2:4,” in *Engaging with Calvin: Aspects of the Reformer’s Legacy for Today*, edited by Mark D. Thompson (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), 180.

⁹⁵ Five points of Calvinism are *Total Depravity*: - Every part of human is affected by the fall and that s/he can make no move towards God without his grace. *Unconditional Election*: we choose God because he first chose us. This is the fundamental point at issue between Arminius and Calvinistic traditions. *Limited Atonement*: - While the death of Jesus Christ is more than sufficient to expiate all the sins of all people, god’s intention in giving him was not merely to make *possible* the salvation of all, but actually and infallibly to save the elect alone. *Irresistible Grace*: - God’s grace works in the elect in such a way as to guarantee that they will respond to it. The effect of this grace is not to destroy the will but to evoke a willing response. *Perseverance of the Saints*: - Those who are truly converted will certainly be saved- not regardless of how they live but because God will preserve them from finally turning away from him. It is emerged out of a conflicting with Arminianism. In 1610, one year after the death of James Arminius, a Dutch seminary professor five articles of faith based upon his teachings were drawn up by his followers. The Armenians, followers of Arminius presented it in the form of a remonstrance (i.e., a protest). In the synod of Dort rejected Armenians doctrines and drawn “Five Points of

up in the mnemonic TULIP, affirmed by the Synod of Dort.⁹⁶ Secondly, the term is applied broadly to the churches which took their rise under Calvin's influence, and their impact upon society and culture.⁹⁷ However, the term "reformed" is now preferred, whether to refer to those churches or religious thinkers (like Theodore Beza, William Perkins, and John Owen) that based themselves upon Calvin's celebrated text book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, or church document based upon it.⁹⁸

EVALUATION

One must appreciate John Calvin for his genuine effort to defend Christian faith based on the Scripture. His system solely rests in his lifelong work, *Institutes*. Justo Gozalez comments that the time of Calvin was the high point of Protestant systematic theology during Reformation period.⁹⁹

Calvin located Scripture for the revelation of God as Creator and Redeemer. God as a creator is to be understood as natural revelation, unlike Calvin, in the pluralistic contexts like of India since creation itself, according to Psalm 19, reveals the handiwork of God. Evaluating from a pluralistic point of view other traditions bear witness God as 'Creator'. However, often less we find God as redeemer from other living traditions. Therefore standing with Calvin, theologian must affirm that only Scripture can bring the notion of God as Redeemer in its fullest sense.

Present time 'redemption' is an obscure term for humanity. The reason is that scientific developments and human centric self-sufficient vision. The existing notion is that, if the redemption is inevitable, human systems can do it. Human redemptive systems like Marxism, socialism, or democracy can bring humanization, as praxis theologians argue. Redeemer from outside of humanity is less important. Then, Calvin's Christology must be re-evaluated. Redeemer is not only from outside of the humanity, but He is one among as, He is in us. This reading helps to understand redemption possible 'within'. Christ's redemption is not only an outsider activity, but 'insider' activity.

Calvinism. For detailed discussion on Arminianism and Calvinism refer, William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburg: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1862, reprinted 2000), 292- 608; See. Preface to the Hendrickson Edition. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, translated by Henry Beveridge (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), xv. David. N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (New Jersey: Presbyterian & reformed Publishing, 1963), 13-14.

⁹⁷ J.T. McNeill, "Calvinism," *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Alan Richardson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969): 43.

⁹⁸ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 64.

⁹⁹ Justo L. Gozalez, *The Story of Christianity: the Early Church to the Present Day* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001), 64.

However, Calvin's high Christology finds implication to church's order and administration. Equality (lovers of Christ) is the implication of Christology in the church. Church as a place of education and discipline, Calvin paves a way for mature Christian life. In Indian terms, the Church becomes an *Ashram* of Jesus Christ, where disciples learn and lead a disciplined life. The distinctiveness of Church and State is very much similar to secular understanding of present day India. Government should protect Christian churches, which is a minority in India. Nevertheless, demarcation between secular and sacred, spiritual and temporal is a topic that one needs to ponder upon for further reflections. One Catholic and Universal Church under Christ's headship is implied to an ecumenical appeal to present time. He did not understand that he had left the church or created a new church but rather that he was helping to restore the one true church of all times and places.

Calvin's predestination is under heavy criticism. Missiologically, if God has destined some to be saved and others for damnation, there is less importance for evangelism. Theologically speaking, one must accept sole sovereignty of God. But sovereignty of God should not affect human will or freedom of choice. If God has destined everything, human beings are mere puppets on the earth. For practical reason, therefore, it must be accepted that gospel is a freedom given to human to respond. The salvation is a free gift of God. Positive response to it, receives salvation. Negative response denies divine gift. The responsibility lays on human alone.

In relation to the influence of Calvin to contemporary time, Max Weber once said, Calvin was one of the fathers of capitalism. A poet Stefan Zweig in 1937 used characterization of Calvin to accuse Adolf Hitler to being a demonic human. Even though there are many clichés of Calvin, Harris Harbison rightly said, "Calvin scholarship...(is) sensitive to human needs, relevant to social ills, productive of Christian piety, conducive to better understanding of fundamental beliefs, concrete, and vital where the older tradition of Christian learning had been abstract and dead."¹⁰⁰

CONCLUSION

Calvin belonged to the second generation of the Reformation movement. He decisively contributed to the consolidation of the Reformation by his life and thought. He clearly laid the foundation for Protestant faith. God as Creator and Redeemer is a balanced approach to view of Father and the Son. Humanity is under sin unable to help her/himself. It rejected the Roman

¹⁰⁰ Harris Harbison, *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 104.

Catholic teaching of indulgences and other works that merited for salvation of that time. The Church as a fellowship of lovers of Christ consists of Sacraments, the Word and discipline. The Lord's Supper is spiritually viewed. The relation of the government to church is merely to support and preserve them. Since spiritual activities of the church solely rests upon leaders of the congregation. The order of the church is scripturally oriented implying three offices of Christ too serve one another. Predestination reveals God's sovereignty and makes believers firm in their faith. Centered on this concept, the double predestination of Calvin, took another turn when it fecundated with Arminianism. It was a contextual interpretation of Calvin's teaching, but heavily depended on other sources than Calvin.

The rise of fundamentalism and the response of the Indian Christians amidst the present political scenario of India

*Thepfuneizo Yhor**

Introduction

People of different ethnicity, languages, cultures, and religions are found in each and every nation in the world, in the sense that every country or nations is exposed to various cultures, languages, etc. Therefore one can say that every nation is pluralistic in one way or the other. However, the problem of religious fundamentalism is present in almost every nation of the world. In India, Hinduism is the largest religion with a population of 79.80 percent, Islam forms the second largest religious group with a population of 14.23 percent, followed by Christianity which has 2.30 percent of the total population of India, according to religious census taken in 2011.¹

When religion is seen as absolute it becomes fundamentalism. Theorists previously used the concept of fundamentalism in more restricted sense to refer to evangelicals in USA. The word is now used in Asia to identify extremists: Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims especially in the countries where there are a majority. They are claiming the right of their religion in such a way that they deny the equal place of other faiths. Fundamentalists would like to prohibit the conversion of their own people to another religion.² In the present context of India, a religious group or political party trying to make a particular religion's laws and beliefs as one national laws has been the main issue of fundamentalism. The actual meaning of the fundamentalism is trying to return to the fundamentals of their religions. Today it has taken a different direction. For example, fundamentalists often use violence on religious minorities. The term is now often used to describe groups of people who will stick to their (mostly moral and religious) values even though these values may be criticized by many people.

This paper is divided into four major sections: (1) the first section will discuss the meaning and definitions of fundamentalism, (2) second section highlights the historical development and the rise of religious fundamentalism in India, with special reference to the largest three religions (Hindu, Islam, and

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¹ <https://www.census2011.co.in/religion.php> (7 Feb 2018).

² Ajith Fernando, *Relating to people of other Faiths* (Mumbai: GLS Publishing, nd.), 25.

Christianity), (3) the present political scenario under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in India will be dealt with in the third section, and (4) the fourth section will discuss the Christian response to this fundamentalism issues in India. In this paper, the researcher has given more emphasis to the Hindu fundamentalism in India due to the rise of Hindu religious fundamentalism related violence that is prevailing in India today.

1. The meaning and definitions of Fundamentalism

The term “fundamentalist” was first used with reference to a group of U.S. Protestant churches that arose in the 1920s.³ For many liberal or mainline Christians, the term “fundamentalist” is applied, rather indiscriminately, to all those who advocate a literalist Biblical position. Generally, fundamentalists are regarded by their opponents as static, retrospective, and extremist.⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica* described them as “a motley group of theologically conservative communities which emphasize total and even literal inspiration from the Holy Scriptures and their absolute authority in matters of faith and works.”⁵ The term eventually came to be used for all religious movements that seek to return to “fundamentals” and to any movement seeking political power for the purpose of governing according to religious values.⁶

Scaria Kuthirakkattel defined fundamentalism as “The strict maintenance of traditional orthodox religious beliefs or doctrines; especially the creeds as fundamentals of Protestant Christianity.”⁷ Isaac Padinjakekuttu defined it as, “A proclamation of reclaimed authority over a sacred tradition which is to reinstated as an antidote for a society that has strayed from its structural mooring.”⁸ M.T. Cherian says, “Fundamentalism is neither a ‘new religious movement’ (in the technical sense of the term) nor ‘traditional’, ‘conservative’

³ Fundamentalism began as a movement in the US, starting among conservative Presbyterian academics and theologians at Princeton Theological Seminary in the first decade of the 20th century. It soon spread to conservatives among the Baptists and other denominations during and immediately after the First World War. The movement’s purpose was to reaffirm orthodox Protestant Christianity and zealously defend it against the challenges of liberal theology, German higher criticism, Darwinism, and other movements which it regarded as harmful to Christianity. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 39.

⁴ John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 47.

⁵ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1973 ed., vol. VII, s.v; “Fundamentalists”, 777.

⁶ Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg, eds., *The Next Threat: Western Perceptions of Islam* (Boulder Colorado: Pluto Press, 1995), 84.

⁷ Scaria Kuthirakkattel, “Fundamentalism: Biblical Perspective” *Jnanadeepa* 6/2 (July 2003): 25.

⁸ Isaac Padinjakekuttu, “Fundamentalism: Historical Perspectives” *Jnanadeepa* 6/2 (July 2003): 5.

or 'orthodox' expression of religious faith and practice. Rather fundamentalism is a category by itself."⁹ In his book, *Defenders of God*, Bruce Lawrence defines "fundamentalism" as "the affirmation of religious authority as holistic and absolute, admitting of neither criticism nor reduction; it is expressed through the collective demand that specific creedal and ethical dictates derived from the scriptures be publicly recognized and legally enforced."¹⁰

In the present lexicon some religious movements with political implications are described as fundamentalist movements. "Fundamentalist" connotes a certain kind of believer who wishes to form or defend a state or society based in some explicit way upon sacred history, customs, traditions, and moral obligations.¹¹ In contemporary political discourse in India, a "fundamentalist" is a person who resorts to selective retrieval, picking out from his religious tradition certain elements of high symbolic significance with a view to mobilizing his co-religionists for action. The goals of such action are usually a mixture of religious objectives and the politico-economic interests of one's own community as against those of similarly defined other communities.¹² The term fundamentalism is made synonymous to patriotism (in India) after the experience of First World War."¹³ But then violence becomes the tool of religious fundamentalism, and terrorism the strong weapon of fundamentalist politics. Thus, violence as a tool of the rightist fundamentalist and that of the reactionary fanatic has become a global phenomenon in recent years.¹⁴ Today Fundamentalism is one of the most detested terms. It is often felt to be a hostile and opprobrious term, suggesting narrowness, bigotry, obscurantism and sectarianism.

2. Historical Development and the Rise of Religious Fundamentalism in India

India is a land of diverse and multi-religions, multi-lingual, and multi-culture. Many major religions of the world had its origin in India and flourished since long ago. The presence of other foreign and major world religions like Islam

⁹ M.T. Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights: A Christian Response* (Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2007), 28.

¹⁰ Bruce Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 78.

¹¹ This is precisely the point of fundamentalisms: they and their gods are not to be judged according to human standards. In their view, one cannot evaluate social behaviour along strictly humanistic lines; behaviour is good if it conforms to God's will. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 17.

¹² Krishna Kumar, "Religious Fundamentalism in India and beyond", <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6803/5d899dfe3a33470ef901ba683e61d4ff7c07.pdf> (29 Jan 2018).

¹³ Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda...*, 19.

¹⁴ Sri Veerabhadra Channamalla Swamiji, "The Rise of Fundamentalism in India." *Religion and Society* 49/1 (March 2004): 11.

and Christianity make it more diverse religiously. It was never mono-religious or mono-cultural. However, there were some aspects of religious fundamentalism present in India from long ago. Therefore, historical development and the rise of religious fundamentalism among the three largest religions: Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, in India will be discussed under this section.

2.1 Hindu Fundamentalism

The contemporary nature of Hindu fundamentalism can be traced back to a renaissance in different parts of India, especially in Bengal in the 19th century. This was the time when Hindu intellectuals started reforming Hinduism as a result of the knowledge they gained from the western education. The vision of Hindutva also emerged following the subjugation of the Hindus by the Moguls and later by some western European colonial rulers. In the light of 19th century renaissance there were several political and religious reform movements arose in India. These movements express the mixed kind of response of Indian intellectuals to the cultural impact of the west. "The Hindu fundamentalist is based on three H's, "*Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan,*" and its members had to share a common language, common religion and a common origin."¹⁵ There are two types of religious fundamentalism: spiritualized and politicized. Therefore, some of spiritualized and politicized religious fundamentalism will be discussed below.

2.1.1 Spiritualized Hindu Fundamentalism

Following the 19th century renaissance period in India one can naturally recognized the development and mushrooming of spiritualized Hindu fundamentalist movements. Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Rama Krishna Mission, Theosophical societies, Yoga, International Society for Krishna Consciousness, etc are some of the spiritualized Hindu fundamentalism in and outside India. But among these many spiritualized Hindu fundamentalist groups only a few selected movements will be highlighted below.

2.1.1.1 Brahma Samaj

Brahma Samaj (the society of Brahma) founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) in 1820, against the idol worship in Hinduism, is said to be the most significant religious movement of the 19th century. The society or community believed in one Supreme Being and the feeling of brotherhood

¹⁵ Ravi Tiwari, "Religious Fundamentalism and Nationalism: Reflections on Hindu perspective," *National Council of Churches Review* CXX/10 (November 2000): 998.

across the universe.¹⁶ The society tried to reform Hinduism by eradicating erroneous religious beliefs and degenerate social practices among the Hindus.¹⁷ It forbade its members from attacking any religion. The greatest achievement of this society was the abolition of Sati in 1829. This society also advocated the abolition of polygamy, advocated the right to women education and given right to inherit property.¹⁸ The Hindu reformation that was started by Roy came to climax during the period of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). He represented Hinduism at the parliament of religions held in Chicago in 1893. He founded the Vedanta Society (Vedas are ultimate), which won many converts to Hinduism.¹⁹ Under his leadership the political consciousness that was started during Bengal renaissance also became stronger among the Hindus.

2.1.1.2 Arya Samaj

Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (1824-1883) founded Arya Samaj in 1875 at Bombay. His main concern was to purify the religion and reform the society. He started preaching against blind beliefs, idolatry, social evils, etc. The two fundamentals of Samaj were belief in God and in the Vedas as the true source of knowledge. He was against Christianity and Islam, and wanted to remove them from India. His aim was to make Hinduism the only religion of India superseding Christianity and Islam.²⁰ Within Arya Samaj there was a group of people who were militant in nature. They affirmed and propagated exclusive religious orientation.²¹

Arya Samaj was also called as the “origin of the Hindu Dharma.” Arya Samaj started three movements: (1) *shuddhi* (Purification) this is done for two classes of people that is reclaiming Hindus, who were converted to Christianity and Islam, and investing the so-called untouchables and depressed

¹⁶ Initially, the reform was named as Brahma Sabha in 1820 but later in 19th century, it was renamed as Ai Brahma Samaj meaning the society of men believing in the worship of spirit form but opposing the idol worship of the Almighty. www.indiaonline.in (16 Feb 2018).

¹⁷ T. N. Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 205.

¹⁸ <https://www.jagranjosh.com> (16 Feb 2018).

¹⁹ Vivekananda believed that the Advaita Vedantha (Veda that talks of One Reality) is superior to all the religions of the world. He became missionary of Hinduism to so called Christian- west, thus it was a counter attack to Christian Mission work in India. Moreover he endorsed validity of practice of *Shuddhi* (re-conversion) and gave tremendous inspiration to re-conversion. Thus the re-conversion was more forceful method used by fundamental Hinduism. C. V. Mathew, *Neo-Hinduism: A Missionary Religion* (Madras: Church Growth Research Centre, 1987), 31-32.

²⁰ Aleyamma Zachariah, *Modern Religious and Secular Movements in India* (Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 2002), 67.

²¹ <https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-2-1/280-v2n1-shadakhari.pdf> (29 Jan 2018).

classes with the sacred thread and giving them equal status with other Hindus.²² It involves performing a *homam*, a ritual conducted in front of fire and chanting Vedic hymns directed by a priest. Once this 90 minutes long ceremony is completed a certificate of Conversion to Hinduism is issued by Arya Samaj.²³ (2) *Sanghatan* this is a Hindu organisation for self-defence which helps the Hindus to cultivate a militant spirit and to meet the enemy in their strongholds. It is against Christianity and Islam. Its main activities include re-converting those Hindus who have been converted to other religions, defending Hindu religion and society even at the cost of life and cultivating a militant spirit. (3) National Education, by this is understood primarily the opening of Sanskrit schools and encouraging Vedic teachings.²⁴ Thus, one can find the three characteristics of Fundamentalist Movement in Arya Samaj (Vedas as revealed scripture, Hinduism as the true religion and as prerequisites for faith and practice).

2.1.1.3 Yoga

Yoga is one of the prominent forms of spiritualized Hindu fundamental movement that is spreading in India and all over the world today.²⁵ Yoga has invaded the whole world on this post-Modern or contemporary world. The literal term Yoga comes from the Sanskrit root “*yuj-* and *yujir*,” which signifies ‘join,’ ‘yoke,’ ‘unite,’ ‘connect,’ ‘fasten,’ and ‘harness.’ In the sense of ‘yoking’ the word can mean ‘bringing the senses under control’ and also ‘joining man’s soul with the Supreme spirit.’²⁶ The aim of the *Yoga* is to quiet the mind, to free from its instability, to gather it at its very centre, to lead it, beyond all its activities, to the stillness of pure self-awareness. According to Pavulraj Michael, the goal of Yoga is to attain *Moksha* (liberation).²⁷ However according to Patanjali the aim of Yoga is the union

²² Zachariah, *Modern Religious...*, 71.

²³ K. Giri, “GharWapsi and Christian Response,” *Renewing and Enriching Life: Revive*, 08/7 (July, 2015): 15.

²⁴ Zachariah, *Modern Religious...*, 71.

²⁵ Many theories are invented about the origin of Yoga. It is believed that, the practice of Yoga originated during the pre-Vedic and Vedic period (c. 3000-800 BC). Slowly, various forms of yoga were developing throughout the centuries. During the Modern age (1600-1900 AD) The great Yogacharyas - Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Paramhansa Yogananda, Vivekananda etc. have contributed for the development of Raja Yoga. This was the period when Vedanta, Bhakti Yoga, NathaYoga or Hatha-Yoga flourished. Ishwar V. Basavaraddi, *Yoga: Its Origin, History and Development, 1*, www.Yogamdny.nic.in/WriteReadData/LINKS/...60790971e651.pdf (5 Jan 2018).

²⁶ Pavulraj Michael, “Jnana Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita – The Path for Self-Realization,” *Asian Journal of Theology* 29/2 (October, 2015): 196.

²⁷ Pavulraj Michael, “Karma Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita: Way for all to Self-Realization,” *Asian Journal of Theology* 28/2 (October, 2014), 219-220.

of the human and the divine (*jivatman* and *paramatman*), the union of self both within and without. It aims at the transformation of human self from its actual and imperfect form to a perfected form.²⁸

The status of Yoga was elevated from its minimal position to maximum position on the day International Day of Yoga was proclaimed. The idea of an International Day of Yoga was first proposed by Narendra Modi during his speech at the United Nation General Assembly on September 27, 2014.²⁹ On December 11, 2014, the United Nations proclaimed 21st June as International Yoga Day by resolution 69/131.³⁰ From the perspective of Yoga the first yogi, is said to have begun imparting the knowledge of Yoga to the rest of mankind on this day, and became the first guru.³¹ The central government made yoga compulsory for the people across the country to commemorate this auspicious day, and furthermore, yoga is included in the syllabus and course material for the students of government schools.³² This issue has become a hot debate in the country, especially in the North Eastern part of India where Christianity is the predominant religion.

2.1.2 Politicized Hindu Fundamentalism

There are many politicized Hindu fundamentalism in India. They are: Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayam-Sevaka Sanagha, Vishva Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena, Bahujan Samaj Party, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sang, etc. Among these politicized Hindu fundamentalism Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayam-Sevaka Sanagha, Vishva Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, and Bharatiya Janata Party will be highlighted and discussed below.

2.1.2.1 Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam-Sevaka Sanagha (RSS)

Arya Samaj surely laid a foundation towards Hindu fundamentalism with two main ideologies: ‘return to scripture’ and ‘purification and reformation.’ Later arose the third idea that was the “quest for power.” In this context the Hindu Mahasabha was established in 1915,³³ which was distinct from Indian

²⁸ Pushparajan, “Yoga and Christian Spirituality...”, 58.

²⁹ “India’s Modi calls for reform in speech to UN,” *BBC*, 27 September 2014 (5 Jan 2018).

³⁰ <http://www.un.org/en/events/Yogaday/> (3 Jan 2018).

³¹ J. , ”, 3 July 2012, 2.

³² “Yoga to be a compulsory subject in govt. schools: Here’s what the plan is”, <http://www.firstpost.com> (4 Jan 2018).

³³ The All-India Hindu Mahasabha came into being in 1915, perhaps partly in reaction to the Muslim league and as an adjunct of the Indian National congress (which initially allowed dual membership).

National Congress. The main agenda of this group was to promote Hindi as the national language. The Hindu Mahasabha became increasingly militant, gained considerable growth in North India from 1926 onwards, and by 1940 it gained great momentum among the fundamentalist Hindus all over India.³⁴ Madan Mohan Malviya (the founder of Benaras Hindu University) and Lala Lajpat Rai involved in the effort to make the Mahasabha a strong political force. The significant development of this was the Publication of a book *Hindutva: who is a Hindu?* written by a notable Mahasabha leader Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923. The acknowledgement of a common nationality (*rashtra*), a common race (*jati*), and a common culture or civilization (*sanskriti*) was made very clear in his book.³⁵ In this, one can see clearly, the Savarkar's ideology of Hindutva. Although the Hindu Mahasabha did not call for the exclusion of other religious communities from government, it identified India as a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu Nation) and believed in the primacy of Hindu culture, religion and heritage.

Keshava Balirama Hedgewar (1883-1966) further strengthened the idea that was started by Savarkar in the modified form when he started *Rashtriya Swayam-Sevaka Sanagha* (RSS) that is the national organization of volunteers in 1925. The identity of his organization was national (*rashtriya*) rather than Hindu.³⁶ Under the leadership of Madhav Sadashiv Golwalker³⁷ the RSS spread across the nation and he gave clear ideological framework. They rejected the political activity, they emphasized the idea of nationality based on "fatherland" and "Holy Land" and they excluded Muslims and Christians from the nation. Golwalker led the organization towards the nation of monolithic culture.³⁸ The present chief of the organization, Mohan Bhagwat, on Sunday (11th January 2018), said that "Sangh will prepare military personnel within three days which the (Indian) army would do in

³⁴ P. Daniel Jayaraj, eds., *Dharma Deepika* 2 (July-December. 2004): 14. M. T. Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights: A Christian Response* (Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2007), 177.

³⁵ Savarkar rejected non-Vedic faiths such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. "Savarkar emphatically favoured the term "Hindu," tracing it back to the geographical designation Sindu-Hindus being the people who lived in the lands between the river Sindu (Indus) and the high seas, and whose original scriptures were the Vedas. For them, the country so defined was both their fatherland (*pitribhu*) and their Holy Land (*punyabhhu*), and they constituted one nation, the Hindu nation. Madan, *Modern Myths...*, 218-219.

³⁶ One should not ignore the particular context in which the RSS was started. There were conflicts between both Muslims and Hindus and Brahmins and non-Brahmins in the national movement at that particular context.

³⁷ After the death of Hedgewar in 1940 Madhav Sadashiv Golwalker became the leader of RSS.

³⁸ Madan, *Modern Myths...*, 221.

6-7 months.... Swayamsewak will be ready to take on the front if the country faces such a situation and constitution permits or allow them to do so.”³⁹ This was said in a RSS workers meet in Bihar.

The above is explicit and ideologically enforcing Hindu monopoly. The emphasis of RSS is about culture, which is based on religion. It is one of the most disciplined voluntary forces in India and a major political force as well. The aggressive militancy of the RSS is threatening to religious minorities like Christianity and Islam. The main objective of the RSS was and is to take the nation to glorious past and establish “*Hindu Rashtra*” (Hindu nation). The RSS involved actively, also in conversion and re-conversion process.⁴⁰ RSS has a significant place among these movements (BJP, VHP, etc), which have been trying to rejuvenate Hindu Dharma (religion) and Hindu Nationalism.

2.1.2.2 Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal

The VHP was founded on 29th August, 1964 at Sandeepany, Sandyalaya, and Bombay. The main objective of VHP was to consolidate and strengthen the Hindu society, to protect, develop and spread the Hindu values of life. The conversion and re-conversion constitute a major aspect of the VHP’s task. They claim that they reconverted good number of Christians and Muslims to Hinduism. Their ultimate aim is not just to convert or reconvert but also to bring all religious faiths in India under the monolithic culture of Hinduism.⁴¹ The VHP is often regarded as a front organization of the RSS because both of them share the same concerns of establishing Hindu nation and attacking other religions. The Bajrang Dal is a militant organization that forms the youth wing of the VHP. The ideology of the organization is based on Hindutva. It was founded on 1st October, 1984 in Uttar Pradesh.⁴² Since then it has spread all over India. Many of the religious violence are carried out by these Hindu fundamentalist groups in India today.

2.1.2.3 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is one of the two major political parties in India, along with the Indian National Congress (INC). The BJP is a right-

³⁹ Rahul Gandhi termed this as an “insult” to soldiers who have laid down their life for the country, all the soldiers who defend the country and to every Indians. “RSS Chief’s Speech an Insult to Every Indian: Gandhi”, *Northeast Today*, 12 February 2018. www.northeasttoday.in (12 Feb 2018).

⁴⁰ <https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-2-1/280-v2n1-shadakshari.pdf> (29 Jan 2018).

⁴¹ Mathew, *Neo-Hinduism...*, 41.

⁴² vhp.org (5 Feb 2018). Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001), 199. P. M. Joshy and K. M. Seethi, *State and Civil*

wing party,⁴³ with close ideological and organizational links to the Hindu nationalist RSS. The BJP's origins lie in the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, popularly known as the Jana Sangh, founded by Syama Prasad Mookerjee in 1951 in response to the politics of the dominant Congress Party. After the State of Emergency in 1977, the Jana Sangh merged with several other political parties to form the Janata Party, it defeated the incumbent INC in the 1977 general election. After three years in power, the Janata party dissolved in 1979, but then some members of the former Jana Sangh revived the party and renaming it as Bharatiya Janata Party. Thus, BJP was formed on 5th April, 1980 under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L. K. Advani.⁴⁴ Their major agendas are such as: to maintain, protect and promote of the Hindu race, culture, and civilization, religion, politics, conversion of the non-Hindus, and reconversion of the former Hindus for the advancement of the Hindu nation.⁴⁵

The BJP came to power at the centre, by forming a coalition of parties called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) from 1998-2004. Again in 2014 general election NDA was elected to power, with the BJP getting a clear majority in the parliament since 1984. Thus, BJP is spearheading the present NDA government at the centre. Since mid-2014 under BJP led NDA government religious minorities have felt increasingly under attack in India. The reason is the BJP and its volunteer arm, the RSS, are known to promote Hindu nationalism, defining India as a "Hindu nation" in terms of language, culture and religion.⁴⁶ Their mission is to unite together which is the only way for the salvation of the Hindu race and to counter the menace of proselytizing by Islam, Christianity and others.⁴⁷ They are using the force of violence to accomplish this mission. In fact the philosophy of Hindutva is that "to be powerful one needs to be violent" stated by V.S. Nair.⁴⁸ Violence, hatred, terrorism and intolerance based in religious fundamentalism have become a major threat to secularism and democracy in India today.

⁴³ Right-wing politics hold that certain social orders and hierarchies are inevitable, natural, normal or desirable, typically supporting this position on the basis of natural law, economics or tradition. Rodney P. Carlisle, *Encyclopedia of Politics: The Left and the Right* (New Delhi: SAGE Publishing, 2005), 356.

⁴⁴ www.elections.in (6 Feb 2018). Cherian, *Hindutva...*, 218.

⁴⁵ C.V. Mathew, "Hindutva: A Christian Response" in *Mission Mandate II*, edited by Ezra Sargunam (Chennai: Mission Educational Books, 2006), 174.

⁴⁶ http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/17358/1/11_11_chapter%207.pdf (17 Nov 2017).

⁴⁷ Mathew, *Hindutva...*, 227.

⁴⁸ V.S. Nair, "Ideological Hinduism and Violence: An evaluation of Modern Political Hinduism" in *Christian Mission in the Midst of Violence*, edited by Siga Arles and Joy Thomas (Bangalore: Centre for contemporary Christianity, 2013), 113.

2.2 Islamic Fundamentalism

The entire Muslim world turned fundamentalist around the 12th century.⁴⁹ Several forms of fundamentalism promote revivalist movements of various religions, but internationally, Islamic fundamentalism is the most pronounced and widespread.⁵⁰ The phenomenon of Muslim fundamentalism at the global level and some other Muslim dominated countries in the world is very high. However, Christians, Hindus and other religious groups in India are not much affected by Islamic fundamentalism except perhaps through terror attacks in general.

Islam was first introduced to India's coastal regions by Arab Muslims traders soon after its advent. In 711, a young general commanding an Arab army captured the kingdom of Sindh and established Muslim political power on the Indian subcontinent. Muslim sultanates ruling from Delhi, beginning in the 11th century, and the great Mughal Empire (1526-1857) that followed created a substantive Islamic legacy before India fell under British colonial rule. Decolonization resulted in the partition of India along religious lines, but it did not sever India's linkages with Islam. At least one-third of pre-partition India's Muslims stayed in India.⁵¹

The ruling Muslim minority was tolerant toward the majority. This coexistence resulted in an Indo-Muslim syncretism exemplified in art, architecture, and culture throughout the subcontinent. However, the decline in Muslim political power in India from the late 18th century onwards changed Muslims attitudes significantly. After the downfall of the Mughal Empire, Islamic fundamentalism increased. Muslim elites, seeing a decline in their power, prestige and influence, focused on ways to revive their dominance. This generated in India's Muslim elites a preoccupation with the revival of Islam's lost glory, which has been an important factor in the rise and spread of Islamist ideology

⁴⁹ In the 12th century the ultra-conservative interpretations of the Koran triumphed among the Muslims. Since that time, whenever Islamic ways of life have "softened," ultra-fundamentalists have reacted against the laxity of leaders who failed to implement the *Shariah*, the revealed laws of the religion of Islam. Fereydown Hoveyda, *The Broken Crescent: The Threat of Militant Islamic Fundamentalism* (Westport: Praeger, 1998), 66-69. Islam divides the human family into two factions: the believers and the infidels. It divides human history into two periods: the age of ignorance (*jahilya*) and the age of enlightenment. And it divides the inhabited earth into two camps: the land of the believers (*Dar-ul-Islam*) and the lands of the infidels (*Dar-ul-Harb*). Further, it postulates a permanent war between these divisions. The believers are called upon to wage an unceasing war (*Jihad*) on the infidels until the latter are converted or killed off. The age of enlightenment should strive in the same way, until everything belonging to the age of ignorance is remolded or replaced. And the *Dar-ul-Islam* should continue to send faithful followers of Islam to the *Dar-ul-Harb* until it is converted into *Dar-ul-Islam*. This is the behaviour pattern of Islamic fundamentalists. Sita Ram Goel, *Muslim Separatism: Causes and Consequences* (New Delhi: Voice of India, 1995), 100.

⁵⁰ Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 3.

⁵¹ Husain Haqqani, "India's Islamist Groups", Hudson Institute, <https://www.hudson.org> (6 Feb 2018).

and fundamentalism. From the Muslims point of view, the syncretism emerging under Muslim rule in India amounted to blending Islam with un-Islam. Maududi says that any program for Islamic revival must include a scheme “to wrest authority from the hands of un-Islam and practically re-establish government on the pattern described as ‘Caliphate after the pattern of Prophethood’ by the Holy Prophet.”⁵² Therefore, the foremost task for Islamic revival, as they saw it, was to purify Islam by purging it of outside influences.

2.2.1 Mujahidin and Faraizi Movements

The 19th and 20th centuries in India witnessed, on the one hand, the rise of the Indian national movement and, on the other, the growth of religious revivalist organizations among both Hindus and Muslims. Muslims were influenced by the Mujahidin⁵³ Movement initiated by Sayed Ahmed Rai Barelvi (1700-1850)⁵⁴ in northwest India in 1820-1821. He was not a freedom fighter rather he was the chief exponent of Wahhabism (Islam as the purest form of religion) in India, an adherent and fervent advocate of puritanical fundamentalism and physical jihadism in place of spiritual jihad against the baser instincts and carnal desires (jihad al-nafs).⁵⁵

Barelvi attempted to purge Indian Muslims and Islam of the inclusive, pluralistic and composite traditions, the most conspicuous job he did was his *tahrik-e-jihad* or Mujahidin movement against the Sikhs of Punjab. The first battle against the Sikhs was fought on December 21, 1826 near Akora. The Sikhs were defeated. The second battle was fought at Hazro. It was also won by the Muslims. These victories inspired a number of Pathan tribes to join Jihad Movement. Thus, Islamic laws were enforced in the area which was controlled by Barelvi.⁵⁶

Around the same period Haji Shariatullah (1781-1840) initiated a movement to bring the Muslims of Bengal back to the true path of Islam. This movement came to be known as Faraizi movements in 1818. As such, his followers

⁵² S. Abul Ala Maududi, *A short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 1963), 5, Cited by Husain Haqqani, “India’s Islamist Groups”, Hudson Institute, <https://www.hudson.org> (6 Feb 2018).

⁵³ The literal meaning of Mujahidin is ‘striving’ or ‘struggling,’ especially with a praiseworthy aim, and this term is used for one engaged in Jihad. The Mujahidin are holy knights of Allah who are willing to sacrifice their life for the sake of Allah. Their goal is to defend the weak, uphold justice, vanquish the oppressors and establish peace, order and justice as well as facilitate the worship of Allah. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahideen> (7 Feb 2018).

⁵⁴ Syed Ahmed Rai Barelvi (1700-1850) is considered one of the early Muslim freedom fighters of India and a great reviver and thinker of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. He is popularly known among the Indo-Pak Islamic clergy and ulema as a “shaheed” (a martyr of Islam) who led the Mujahidin movement in India.

⁵⁵ Feb 2018).

⁵⁶ Feb 2018).

were called the “Faraizis” which derives from the word *farz*, meaning obligation. Shariatullah emphasized a return to the five pillars of Islam and called any deviation from them a *bida* (sinful innovation).⁵⁷

The influence of the Mujahidin and Faraizi movements receded as the British gradually dispersed the fruits of modernity and introduced representative institutions among Indians, while simultaneously repressing their militant opponents. However, apparently, Mujahidin and Faraizi movements are now an age-old history for Indian Muslims, but many still are influenced by their religious exhortations and teachings.

2.2.2 Darul Uloom Deoband

Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi (1831-1880) founded the Darul Uloom (Center of Learning) at Deoband in 1867. The Deobandis, as the seminary’s graduates and followers of the movement it inspired are known, attribute the decline of Islamic societies in all spheres of endeavour to Muslims being seduced by an amoral and materialist Western culture, and from assorted Hindu practices believed to have crept into and corrupted the Islamic religion. The basic goal of the Deoband School is purifying Islam of such un-Islamic beliefs and practices. In the training of *ulama* (religious scholars), the Deobandis emphasize the teachings of the Quran and the practices of Prophet Muhammad as reported in the Hadith. Within a couple of years of its establishment, the Darul Uloom spawned several branches in different parts of India, the more prominent of which were a sister school called Mazahirul Uloom at Saharanpur and Nadwatul Ulama at Kanpur.⁵⁸

The curriculum at Nadwatul Ulama was an amalgamation of traditional Islamic curricula, as taught at Deoband, along with modern sciences, vocational training and some paramilitary training. Deobandi religious scholars have historically been opposed to the West, and this tradition endures today. The rhetoric of jihad notwithstanding, the Darul Uloom has not been charged so far with direct involvement in violence or militant training. The only significant Deobandi groups known to be involved in acts of terrorism have operated primarily in Kashmir. These Kashmiri groups including Harakatul Mujahidin (Movement of Holy Warriors), Harakatul Ansar (Movement of Enablers) and Harakatul Jihad al-Islami (Movement for Islamic Holy War) are the main Deobandi militant groups.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ (1) Shahada: Faith, (2) Salah: Prayer, (3) Zakat: Charity, (4) Sawm: Fasting, and (5) Hajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca. https://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1342_haqqani_vol3.pdf (7 Feb 2018).

⁵⁸ <http://mahajjah.com> (7 Feb 2018).

⁵⁹ Husain Haqqani, “India’s Islamist Groups”, Hudson Institute, <https://www.hudson.org> (6 Feb 2018).

2.2.3 *Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind (JIH) and Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)*

The Jamaat-e-Islami was founded in 1941 by Abu Ala Maududi (1903-1979). The Jamaat-e-Islami of India, named “Jamaat-e-Islami Hind,” was organized in 1948, soon after partition, at Allahabad. In 1960 its headquarters were moved to Delhi. The JIH continues to advocate Maududi’s fundamental worldview for several years.⁶⁰ While the organization in Pakistan, and subsequently Bangladesh, embraced electoral politics in addition to organization and training of cadres, the Jamaat-e-Islami in India stayed away from the electoral fray. Rather, the Indian Jamaat seeks to expand its influence through social and charitable work. The JIH has a women’s organization (JIH Women’s Wing) and a students’ wing (SIO). The JIH is operating in several states in India (Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, etc).

The first major setback to the JIH came with the arrest of its leaders in 1954 under the Preventive Detention Act. The organization was banned twice by the Government of India and its leaders were detained during Emergency (1975-1977) because of its communal and inflammatory politics, and then in 1992. While the first was revoked after the Emergency was lifted, the second was reversed by the Supreme Court of India. Since then, the JIH has changed its orientation (jihad) and is concentrating promoting in communal harmony and social and charitable work among Muslims.⁶¹

A radical offshoot of this movement is the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). The SIMI sounds reasonably peaceful by its name, but it is considered to be one of the most dangerous terrorist groups in India. Founded at Aligarh in 1977 by students tied to Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, SIMI is a radical Islamist organization dedicated to converting India to an Islamic land.⁶² Since SIMI turned militant, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind has distanced itself publicly with it, however, covert links between SIMI and Jamaat-e-Islami are alleged to have continued.

⁶⁰ Maududi put forth the concept of “theo-democracy,” which meant a theologically circumscribed democracy or, as Frederic Grare puts it, “limited people’s sovereignty under the suzerainty of God.” His main ideas were focused on the notion of a single law (*sharia*), divine sovereignty and the belief that the struggle between Islam and un-Islam would lead to an Islamic revolution that would bring about the creation of an Islamic state. For that reason, he insisted, it was necessary to Islamize society before creating the Islamic state. <https://www.hudson.org> (6 Feb 2018). Frederic Grare, *Political Islam in the Indian Subcontinent: The Jamaat-e-Islami* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2001), 21.

⁶¹ <https://googleweblight.com> (8 Feb 2018). <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/special-report/story/19800515-no-less-than-establishment-of-islamic-order-jamaat-e-islami-hind-806687-2014-01-30> (8 Feb 2018).

⁶² www.christinefair.net/pubs/APX_x_IndiaIslam_111109.pdf (7 Feb 2018).

According to SIMI, Islam is not just a religion but an ideology, the Quran is the only basis for governing human life, and it is the duty of every Muslim to propagate Islam and wage jihad to establish an Islamic state. SIMI is against not only the Western culture and modernization, but also the prevalent Hindu Brahmanical culture and idol worship. SIMI was banned by the Indian government in 2001 for having links with terrorism,⁶³ shortly after 9/11 its remaining members were prosecuted for membership of an outlawed organisation in 2011. This caused the movement to decline swiftly. In 2014, the ban on the group was renewed as it is still believed to be a terrorist organization.⁶⁴

2.2.4 Indian Union Muslim League (IUML)

Indian Union Muslim League came in to being on 10th March 1948 at a national Muslim leader's convention at Rajaji Hall Chennai. Having a political party for Muslims and other weaker sections with the nomenclature of Muslim League was very risky at that time but some the leaders like Ismail Sahib and K.M. Seethi Sahib from Kerala took the initiative to organise the party braving heavy odds. Indian union Muslim League was formed with an object of achieving the constitutional rights of Muslims, other backward and minority people of India. Muslim League has been standing always for democracy and the integrity of the nation and it's all round development and the League's motto is secularism and communal harmony. The League could uphold the sacredness of diversity of Indian life besides fighting for the existence and rights of the Muslim minority.⁶⁵

Indian Union Muslim League is the largest forum for Muslims to achieve their rights through democratic means. Muslim League's history is nothing but the story of this mission. It was possible for the Muslim League to voice and become forerunners of the rights of the minorities with the help of the secular principle and support of the other communities.⁶⁶ From the very beginning the Muslim League has been working by holding the flag of secularism, communal harmony, peace and political wisdom in the Indian

⁶³ Most prominent Indian analysts like Praveen Swami and Animesh Roul believe that SIMI and Indian Mujahideen (IM) are no longer distinct organizations; rather, these analysts believe that IM emerged largely from militant elements of SIMI, enjoying the support of, and possibly personnel from, Pakistan-based LeT and Bangladesh-based Harkat-ul-Jihad-Islami (HUJI-B). http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM_007_4_03.pdf (8 Feb 2018).

⁶⁴ "Arrests Made After SIMI declared Unlawful Association," Government of India Ministry of Home Affairs 2001, <http://mha.nic.in/pr092001.htm> (7 Feb 2018). <http://eskify.com/10-active-terrorist-groups-in-india/> (7 Feb 2018).

⁶⁵ <http://iuml.com/aboutiuml.html> (7 Feb 2018).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

democratic process. The acceptance that Muslim League has received in Kerala politics gave impetus for the League to enforce democratic character and fight for minority rights in India.

India's Muslims have lived in a functioning democracy for many years while Muslim-majority states have been mostly governed by authoritarian regimes. Muslims have regularly enjoyed representation in parliament and ministerial cabinets. The inclusion of Muslims within the democratic process has, by and large, kept radicalism among Muslims in check. But communal riots, involving Hindus and Muslims, have erupted on several occasions. It is important to note that after the violence erupted at Ayodhya in northern India on December 6, 1992, when thousands of Hindutva volunteers tore down the sixteenth-century Babri Masjid (Babar's mosque, named after the first Mughal emperor), Militant Islamist groups gained some ground as Muslims rioted across India to protest the destruction of the Babri Masjid.⁶⁷

2.3 Christian Fundamentalism

Christianity and Islam are two major world religions which are always fundamentalistic in nature. They always try to evangelize and propagate their faith to others and hold the absolute and exclusive claim of their sacred text. Some kinds of fundamentalistic activities always accompany Christianity wherever it went and goes. It was the case with Christianity in India too. Christian missionaries and colonialists, during colonial period, had worked together to propagate and evangelize the Hindus and Muslims in India. Many Hindu temples and Muslim Mosques were demolished and the public worship places of Hindus and Muslims forbidden in the Portuguese territories. Many conversions were made through the use of inducement, manipulation and persuasion methods rather than the preaching of the Gospel.⁶⁸ Moreover, Missionaries, especially under the renewed Charter of 1813 and 1833 of the British East Indian Company, worked hand in hand with the British Government. They also provided financial assistance to Christian mission works.⁶⁹

Christian writers like Kuthirakkattel says that in India fundamentalism is closely linked with Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity which centers on the emotional, non-rational, mystical, and supernatural: miracles, signs, wonders, and the gifts of the Spirit (charismata), especially speaking in tongues

⁶⁷ https://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1342_haqqani_vol3.pdf (7 Feb 2018).

⁶⁸ C. B. Firth, *Introduction to Indian Church History*, Revised Edition (Delhi: ISPCK, 2013), 52.

⁶⁹ Woba James, *Major Issues in the History of Christianity in India: A Post-Colonial Reading* (Jorhat: TDCC Publications, 2013), 234.

(glossalia), faith healing, and casting out of demons (exorcism). Supreme importance is attached to the subjective religious experience of being filled with or possessed by the Holy Spirit.⁷⁰ Pentecostalism that began in the 1920's in India has been experiencing extraordinary growth since 1980. Apart from mention above, it is fundamentalice in the sense that it is based on the implicit politics of eventual Christian domination. The agenda includes conversion, an aggressive stance towards non-Christians and the use of the media to extend their sphere of influence. Christian fundamentalists, like their Islamic counterparts, belong to a global *umma* and harbour real and perhaps imagined, even delusional, longings directed towards making all of God's people Christian. These Christian groups may not use real physical violence, though they are well-versed in using the media and non-media means to propagate symbolic violence that is often backed up by economic enticements to persuade individuals and communities to become Christian.⁷¹ The researcher agrees that this particular Christian denomination in India can be well categorised with other religious fundamentalists or fanatics in several ways. Nonetheless, like Hindus and Muslims, Christians in India do not form or have any militant group and separate political party in India.

3. The Present Political Scenario in India and Issues Facing by Other Religious Groups

Since BJP led NDA formed the government at the centre in 2014 there have been regular religious violence erupting among various religious groups. A joint report by two rights groups accuses Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its active promotion of Hindu nationalism for the spike in communal violence in India since it came to power. According to official statistics, India witnessed more than 700 outbreaks of communal violence in 2016 that killed 86 and injured 2,321 people. The actual number, however, could be higher as many cases go unreported, adds the report by the Mumbai-based Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS) and the UK-based Minority Rights Group International (MRG). Communal violence over the last five years has taken a huge toll on minorities, including Christians and Sikhs. But Muslims, who form 14.23 percent of the country's population, have borne the brunt of these hate crimes, such as lynching, threats, attacks on places of worship and forced conversion, the report says.⁷² Therefore, the present political

⁷⁰ Kuthirakkattel, "Fundamentalism ...", 26.

⁷¹ Lancy Lobo, "Religious Fundamentalism – A Challenge to Democracy in India." *Social Action* 59 (April – June, 2009): 149. www.isidelhi.org.in/saissue/articles/artapr09.pdf (3 Feb 2018).

⁷² <http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/2100513/modis-party-stokes-anti-muslim-violence-india-report-says> (7 Feb 2018).

scenario under the BJP led NDA government at the centre and issues facing by other minority religious groups in India will be highlighted below.

3.1 Anti-Conversion Bill

Laws restricting religious conversions were originally introduced by Hindu princely states during the British Colonial period—mainly “during the latter half of the 1930s and 1940s.”

Following India’s independence, the Parliament introduced a number of anti-conversion bills, but none were enacted.⁷³

India’s Freedom of Religion Acts or “anti-conversion laws” are state-level statutes enacted to regulate religious conversions that are not purely voluntary. Such laws began to be introduced in the 1960s after the failed attempts to enact an anti-conversion law at the Union (or central) level, and were first enacted by Odisha and Madhya Pradesh states.⁷⁴ Odisha was the first state to enact anti-conversion legislation, the *Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, 1967*. Section 3 of that Act stipulates that “no person shall convert or attempt to convert, either directly or otherwise, any person from one religious faith to another by the use of force or by inducement or by any fraudulent means, nor shall any person abet any such conversion.” Similar provisions appear in all current anti-conversion laws. The crime of “forcible conversion” is punishable with imprisonment, which may extend to one year, or with fine of up to 5,000 rupees, or both. If the crime is committed against a minor, a woman, or a person belonging to an SC/ST, the term of imprisonment may be increased to a maximum of two years and the fine increased to 10,000 rupees.⁷⁵ At the present time, such laws are in effect in six states: Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, and Himachal Pradesh. The law in Arunachal Pradesh has not been implemented due to a lack of subsidiary rules. The State of Rajasthan has passed its anti-conversion bill, but it is yet to be signed by the President of India. Several other states, including Manipur, are reportedly “considering similar laws.”⁷⁶

⁷³ First, the Indian Conversion (Regulation and Registration) Bill was introduced in 1954, “which enforced licensing of missionaries and the registration of conversion with government officials.” This bill failed to gather majority support in the lower house of Parliament and was rejected by its members. This was followed by the introduction of the Backward Communities (Religious Protection) Bill in 1960, “which aimed at checking conversion of Hindus to ‘non-Indian religions’ which, as per the definition in the Bill, included Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism, and the Freedom of Religion Bill in 1979, which sought “official curbs on inter-religious conversion.” These bills were also not passed by Parliament due to a lack of parliamentary support. <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/dcc/sites/www.sas.upenn.edu.dcc/files/uploads/Coleman.pdf> (7 Feb 2018). <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/anti-conversion-laws/india.php> (9 Feb 2018).

⁷⁴ <http://www.lawandreligion.com/sites/lawandreligion.com/files/A10S-6Huff.pdf> (5 Feb 2018).

⁷⁵ http://lawodisha.gov.in/files/acts/act_884132771_1437987451.pdf (7 Feb 2018).

⁷⁶ <https://perma.cc/2QJX-KLEB> (5 Feb 2018).

Anti-conversion laws seek to prevent conversions carried out by ‘forcible’ or ‘fraudulent’ means or by allurement or inducement.

Ministers of the current BJP government have voiced their support for the adoption of an anti-conversion law at the national level, which some critics see as an attack on the secular values of India’s Constitution. In 2015, high-ranking members of the ruling BJP party, including the party’s president Amit Shah, called for a nationwide anti-conversion law. Two members of the BJP, including Amit Shah, have announced that anti-conversion bills are to be introduced in both houses of Parliament so as to criminalise religious conversion without the government’s consent. However, the BJP government’s plan to enact national legislation reportedly hit a roadblock with the Ministry of Law and Justice, which advised against the move, stating that it is “not tenable” since it is “purely a state subject” (i.e., a matter that lies purely under the constitutional domain of the states under the State List in Schedule Seven of the Constitution).⁷⁷ The present BJP government is given its all out effort to enact anti-conversion throughout India and this shows their zeal to make India a Hindu state or country.

3.2 Cow-Slaughter Act (Beef Ban)

The cow is considered a sacred animal in Hinduism and worshipped widely across the country. Historically, in Indian society, and Hinduism as a religion, has been a very tolerant and compassionate religion. However, in the thorny social climate that our current government has fostered, it’s unfortunate than an issue as seemingly harmless as dietary preference has become so dangerously polarizing.

The “Preservation, protection and improvement of stock and prevention of animal diseases, veterinary training and practice” is Entry 15 of the State List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, meaning that State legislatures have exclusive powers to legislate the prevention of slaughter and preservation of cattle. Various states have legislation in place to control the level of cattle slaughter. But more recently, Hindu nationalists have been demanding the law be more stringently applied and even calling for a blanket ban on beef. The laws governing cattle slaughter in India vary greatly from state to state. On 26th, October 2005, the Supreme Court of India, in a landmark judgment upheld the constitutional validity of anti-cow slaughter laws enacted by different state governments in India.⁷⁸ Some States (Assam, etc) allow the slaughter of cattle with restrictions like a “fit-for-slaughter”

⁷⁷ <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/anti-conversion-laws/india.php> (9 Feb 2018).

⁷⁸ www.thehindu.com (7 Feb 2018).

certificate which may be issued depending on factors like age and gender of cattle, continued economic viability, etc. Others completely ban cattle slaughter (Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, etc), while there is no restriction in a few states (Kerala, West Bengal, and North-East States).⁷⁹ On 26th, May 2017, the Ministry of Environment of Indian Central Government led by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) imposed a ban on the sale and purchase of cattle for slaughter at animal markets across India, under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals statutes.⁸⁰

From 2010-2017 it was recorded that there were 63 beef ban related violence incidents in which 28 persons were killed and as many as 124 people were injured in India. 97 percent of these attacks were reported after BJP led NDA government came to power in 2014 till date, and about half the cow-related violence (32 out of 63 cases) were from the states governed by BJP. The attacks include mob lynching, attacks by vigilantes, murder and attempt to murder, harassment, assault and gang-rape. In the first six months of 2017, 20 beef ban related attacks were registered. These attacks were done by people belonging to Hindu fundamentalist groups, such as the VHP, Bajrang Dal and local Gau Rakshak Samitis.⁸¹ Again, the Supreme Court of India suspended the ban on sale of cattle in its judgement in July 11, 2017, but with no prohibition of eating,⁸² giving relief to the multi-billion dollar beef and leather industries as well as for beef meat consumers.

3.3 Re-conversion or Home Coming (*Ghar Wapsi*)

Re-conversion or home coming (*Ghar Wapsi*) from other religious groups to Hinduism has become a subject of discussion since BJP government came to power in 2014. It started with the Arya Samaj in 19th century called “*shuddhi*” (purification).⁸³

Today, there are constant efforts by Hindu nationalist organizations such as RSS, VHP and the BJP and Hindu organizations to make India as a Hindu State. Dharm Jagran Samiti (DJS) aggressively involve in *Ghar Wapsi* with the target of making India a Hindu nation by 2021 in order to restore the glory of Hindu religion. On the 4th All India Hindu Convention or Adhiveshan (June 11-17, 2015) organized by Sanantan Sanstha and Hindu Jannagruti Samiti (HJS) in Goa, passed a resolution to declare the Bharat (India) and

⁷⁹ <https://googleweblight.com> (9 Feb 2018).

⁸⁰ www.thehindu.com (7 Feb 2018).

⁸¹ <https://www.hindustantimes.com> (9 Feb 2018).

⁸² <https://googleweblight.com> (9 Feb 2018).

⁸³ Varughese, *Religious Violence...*, 22.

Nepal as Hindu Rashtra (Nation). Their 12 resolution also included complete ban of conversion and cow slaughter.⁸⁴ Thousands and thousands of Muslims and Christians are converting back to Hinduism through this Ghar Wapsi programme since 2014.⁸⁵ It is also fearful truth for all the minorities in India that, in 300 days of Modi's rule, 600 incidents of communal violence have taken place. Several persecutions were and are taking place in the name of Ghar Wapsi throughout India today.⁸⁶

The RSS strategy of making a Hindu Rashtra is no more a secret agenda. Mohan Bagawat (present RSS chief) spoke of it openly that the campaign to help people of other faiths to re-convert to Hinduism will continue.⁸⁷ In the middle of Pranyasi Baithak (Global Trustee Body Meeting) of VHP in Bhubaneswar, the VHP declared that it would carry on its Ghar Wapsi campaign more vigorously, alleging that gullible tribal people were being converted to Islam and Christianity through deceptive tactics across the country.⁸⁸ Thus, looking at the present situation in India one can say that Ghar wapsi related violence is not going to end soon.

3.4 Sanskritization in Education

Many Hindu fundamentalists believe that Sanskrit is the language which bound the whole Aryan race together as one nation. Therefore, they insist

⁸⁴ Giri, 14.

⁸⁵ More than 8,000 people in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were converted to Hinduism from July 2014-December 2014, and 1,200 people in Hyderabad under Ghar Wapsi programme. In April 2017, at least 53 tribal Christian families were converted to Hinduism as part of the RSS's "Christianity-free" block campaign in Jharkhan. In May 2017, RSS performed conversion of at least 22 Muslims, including women and children, into Hinduism in a secretive ceremony at an Aryasamaj Temple in Uttar Pradesh. "Faith Matters: 'Ghar Wapsi' boom in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh," *Deccan Chronicle*, 4 January 2015, 4. Saurav Roy, "RSS converts 53 families in drive to make block in Jharkhan 'Christianity-free'", *Hindustan Times*, 18 September 2017, 4. "Ghar Wapsi: 22 Muslims convert into Hinduism in Faizabad, UP", *Oneindia*, 22 May 2017, 3.

⁸⁶ Human rights and civil society groups have documented at least 43 deaths in over 600 cases of violence, 149 targeting Christians and the rest Muslims, have taken place in 2014 in India till March this year, marking 300 days of the National Development Alliance government of Narendra Modi. The violence has continued well into the New Year 2015, the rape of the aged Catholic Nun in a Convent and School in Ranaghat in West Bengal, is the most horrendous crime reported in the first quarter of 2015. In May 2017, six pastors were arrested at a prayer meeting in Salempur in Uttar Pradesh, alleging them of disturbing the peace, creating hostility between religions and attempting to incite a riot. Most recent one being the rejection of visa to the Baptist World Alliance President, Paul Msiza, to attend the 150 years celebrations of Garo Baptist Convention (Maghalaya) which is scheduled to be held from February 8-11. Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, "The Lynch Mob," *Frontline*, 32/21 (October 17-30, 2015): 4. <https://www.opendoorsua.org> (9 Feb 2018). "Church Leader's Visa Rejected, Maghalaya CM Hits out at PM Modi," *North East Today*, 9 February 2018, 3.

⁸⁷ Jessy Kurian, "Secularism Under Siege." *Indian Currents XXVII/01* (01-11 January 2015): 22.

⁸⁸ <https://hinduexistence.org> (9 Feb 2018).

that Sanskrit should be the language of India. In its effort to achieve the goal of Hindutva the BJP government announced all the schools and colleges to celebrate Sanskrit week from August 7, 2014. BJP leader Rajnath Singh was quoted saying that English had caused a great loss to the country.⁸⁹ Therefore they are trying to take steps in an attempt to bring Sanskrit into daily usage, like raising their children in Sanskrit.

3.5 Good Governance Day

25th December was declared as “Good Governance Day” in 2014 by Prime Minister Modi to honour former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (born in 1924) by fostering awareness among the Indian people of accountability in government. In keeping with this principle, the Government of India has decreed “Good Governance Day” to be a working day for the government which falls on 25th December a Christmas day for the Christians. It can be noted that, the good governance day idea comes at a time when there appears to be a concerted attempt being made by a section of the Sangh Parivar to demonize the Christian community by raising the bogey of conversions and insist on so-called ‘*gharwapsi*’.⁹⁰ This development can be purely seen as an extreme step taken to oppress the freedom of minorities in India. Such moves can be described as discriminatory acts against the minorities. It can be seen as a design of the Bharatiya Janata Party and its ideological source Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to promote communal agenda.

3.6 Civil Society and Freedom of Association

Since BJP came to power, the government continues to use the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), which regulates foreign funding for civil society organizations, to cut off funds and stop the activities of organizations that question or criticize the government or its policies. The FCRA licences of more than 11,000 NGOs have been cancelled so far by the government after they were found to be allegedly violating various provisions of the FCRA, thus barring them from receiving foreign funds. A large number of Christian NGOs licences have been cancelled through this act (Bethel Ministry, St. Joseph Babies Home, etc). The government also refused to renew FCRA for 1,300 NGOs, including several prominent human rights groups last year.⁹¹ Many Christians and Muslims believe that this

⁸⁹ <http://forumforhinduawakening.org/dharma/news/2014/06/18/hindu-nationalists-renew-push-sanskrit/>. (23 November 2016).

⁹⁰ Rajdeep Sardesai, “Good Governance Day sends wrong message on Xmas,” Hindustan Times (Dec 26, 2014) <http://www.hindustantimes.com> (24 Nov 2016).

⁹¹ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/india> (7 Feb 2018). <https://www.hindustantimes.com> (9 Feb 2018).

government is using the FCRA to tighten restrictions on NGOs, and also consider it as a hidden agenda of Hindu nationalists to stop foreign funds that minority religious groups who receive foreign funds for social and charitable works.

4. Christian Response to Religious Fundamentalism in India

Christianity and other minority religions in India face threats that have come from the religious fundamental and fanatic organisations that have carried out their programs on the pretext of superiority and cultural nationalism. However, looking at the present political and religious scenario one can say that this issue is not going to stop any time soon. Therefore, minority religious groups in India must find ways and strategies as to how best they can live, work, carry out their mission works and handle the situation. There may be various ways in which Christians can do mission in the midst of prevailing communal violence scenario in India.

The current escalation of persecutions raises a critical set of questions in the Indian Church. Indian church leaders have been debating how Christians should respond to them. The researcher agrees with some of the Indian Church leaders in saying that Christians should not succumb to the general temptation to attack one fundamentalism with another competing fundamentalism.⁹² Christian must not respond to Hindu fundamentalism with Christian fundamentalism, rather fundamentally Christians have to have new approaches.

Today, some Indian Christian leaders argue why Christians don't form a separate political party at the national level like the Indian Union Muslim League. In 1945 a suggestion was made to form a League of Minorities, with a view to safeguard the political interests of minorities. But Christian leaders rejected the suggestion of a separate electorate for the Christians in India because the general view was not to fight for its own benefits but to dedicate itself for the common good.⁹³ The researcher agrees with the latter view that instead of forming a separate Christian political party at the national level Christians must work towards uplifting and promoting peace among various religious groups in India.

⁹² Santhianathan Clarke, O. V. Jathanna and some other Indian church leaders have similar view on this. Sathianathan Clarke, "Religious Liberty in Contemporary India: The Human Right to be Religiously Different," *The Ecumenical review* 52/4 (October 2000): 479-489.

⁹³ D. Arthur Jeyakumar, *History of Christianity in India: Selected Themes*, revised and enlarged edition (Chennai: Author, 2016), 105.

Divisions in the church based on ethnicity (Caste, tribe) and class (denomination) are central issues in churches in India. Lack of unity among various Christian denominations and denominational communalism in the Indian Churches are still painful facts that need to be seriously considered. The Churches in India (various denominations) must not ignore and forget to have a spirit of “Unity in Diversity” in order to face this issue of religious fundamentalism from other faiths. Christian also have to learn to stand in solidarity with the people of other faiths on the issues that concern them and lend their support to them. The spirit of solidarity needs to be preserved, maintained and strengthened in order to preserve the unity and secular character of the nation.

In the context of pluralistic society like India, the traditional exclusive approach is not advisable; rather Christians must use the inclusive approach in their mission. The activities of Christians’ mission must not be that of rooting out other religious groups, condemning other religion as demonic and superstitious, rather respect other religions without compromising the Gospel truth. This will enable Christians to have a positive attitude to people of other faiths and it will help them to avoid unnecessary attacks from other religions. Christians have to find more and more alternative models that provide possibility for all religions to live together in harmony. Christians must learn to live exemplary lives, in tune with the Gospel teaching, so that instead of searching and persuading others others will come to them.

Christians must not walk away from the Indian identity, rather maintain it with high dignity. The Christian identity should not be mixed with that of the west. They must be acquainted with the culture and preserve it. Christians must learn to dress like an Indian, live like an Indian, and name their children with Indian name. Moreover, Christians must define its message in the Indian cultural context without selling out the Gospel, and they must communicate the Gospel in ways Indians can understand and accept it without opposing it.

The methodologies and means which Christian uses to evangelize people belonging to other faiths need some serious consideration and thinking in the prevailing context, such as in India, today. They must be careful in using the advance technology such as Radio, TV, and other social media (facebook, whatsapp, etc) in order to avoid violence, hatred and enmity between different religious faiths. One of the most common criticisms brought against Christians is the explicit but improper use of persuasion as a goal in evangelism. Persuasion is not bad in itself because the advertisers persuade people to buy their products and politicians persuade people to accept their policy

and vote for them. But particularly “inappropriate ways of persuasion”⁹⁴ must be avoided. Insensitivity in adopting and following wrong mission methodologies and strategies usually invite unnecessary problems and persecution upon Christians. Therefore, Christians in India have to become more self-reflective and self-critical in the way they do mission work.

Conclusion

India is the world’s most populous secular democracy. The Indian constitution is supposed to guarantee minority groups the freedom to practise their religion without fear. But today there are worrying signs everywhere suggesting that intrinsic right to freedom of expression and affiliation is under threat. While attacks against minorities, and indeed writers and intellectuals have occurred in India before, some groups within this new wave of resurgent Hindu nationalism may be more brazen and potentially dangerous than anything we have seen before. All the above mentioned points in this paper depict a gloomy picture of the future of “secular India” unless immediate efforts are undertaken to stem the rising tide of Hindu fundamentalism and purge Indian politics of its vicious influence. There is a dire need to revitalise secular ideals in India today.

Krishna Kumar says,

In the Indian democratic, secular system, there is only one real criterion that needs to be used to evaluate any type of movement. Does it infringe on the rights and liberties of other people within the democratic society? If it does, then it has transgressed beyond what a democracy should allow. By opting for democracy, we have accepted the fact that the people have a right to choose their way of life. But this freedom of action should not lend itself to creation of opposing fundamentalist movements and the likely conflicts between these movements. How can we prevent such communal confrontations? The answer lies in finding ways to evolve better communal relations.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Some of the inappropriate ways and forms of persuasion may include (a) Cultural Imperialism: The cultural imperialism is one of the disrespectful persuasions. In this one group forces its culture upon another culture. This is what happened when missionaries converted most of the people in India. Unfortunately, some Christians in India today, also practice this. (b) Imposition: The imposition takes place when authority and power are used to force people to follow Christianity. (c) Manipulation: This takes place when we use things alien to the heart of the gospel to induce others to accept Christianity. For example, manipulation can take place when people’s emotions are roused so that they accept Christianity in a way that does not involve the proper use of mind. <https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-2-1-280-v2n1-shadakshari.pdf> (29 Jan 2018).

⁹⁵ Krishna Kumar, “Religious Fundamentalism in India and beyond”, [https:// pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6803/5d899dfe3a33470ef901ba683e61d4ff7c07.pdf](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6803/5d899dfe3a33470ef901ba683e61d4ff7c07.pdf) (29 Jan 2018) .

The problem of fundamentalism is on the rise since the BJP led NDA government came to power in 2014. Fundamentalism is a common enemy of humanity. Therefore, every individual and religious group must ask not only how effective have fundamentalist movements been in influencing their own adherents, but also how much impacts have they exercised in the lives of non-fundamentalists and to adherents and group/s of other faith.

Retribution Theology in Deuteronomy

*Mr. M. Purna Chandra Rao**

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to observe the theology of retribution which is primarily rooted in the book of Deuteronomy. The term retribution according to Wong is recompense for good or bad based on the merit or demerit respectively of the action of the doer. “Etymologically, the word “retribution” is composed of re + tribuere, meaning literally “to pay back, to give back” (Wong 2). Given the range of meanings from reward to punishment, for this reason the attempt to understand retribution theology in its full scope, through exegetical study of selected passages from Deuteronomy (21:1-9; 11:18-21; 7:6-9; 8:3-5). These selected passages are carefully chosen for two reasons. Firstly, all the major principles of retribution are postulated by various scholars from these passages, and secondly, these are the core passages in Deuteronomy which seem to teach on the principles of retribution.

Retribution theology in the book of Deuteronomy

Weinfeld mentions ‘Retribution’ as one of the doctrines among nine theological doctrines¹ which form the Deuteronomistic phraseology (Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic school, 1). According to Chapman, divine retribution is basically a “biblical depiction of the relationship between human action and divine response” (Chapman 175-176). It also means that God administers judgment or punishment for negative behaviour. However, in a broader sense, it also refers to God endowing reward or blessing for positive behaviour (Chapman 176). Consequently, Biblical scholars have different opinions on Divine retribution based on the book of Deuteronomy which can be broadly classified into three types: The traditional or judicial model, the Act-consequence model, and Gamine’s model. We will now look at each model in detail.

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¹ Nine theological Doctrines are “The struggle against idolatry”, “The centralization of the cult” , ““Exodus”, “covenant and election”” , “The monotheistic creed” , “Observance of the law and the loyalty to the covenant”, “Inheritance of the land”, “Retribution and the material motivation” , “Fulfilment of prophecy and The election of Davidic dynasty” (Weinfeld 1).

1.1. Traditional or Judicial Model

According to Chapman, the Old Testament doctrine of retribution in the early twentieth century among scholars was understood as “a single consistent depiction” (Chapman 176). It is the only model as understood from the book of Deuteronomy. Chapman argues that this model of retribution is like “tit for tat,” which refers to a rigorous “correspondence between human obedience and divine blessing, and between human disobedience and divine curse” (Chapman 176). In this view of retribution, God’s role constantly remains as a judge. Chapman calls this as the “judicial model” (Chapman 178). In the “judicial model” God punishes when humans fail in their covenantal obligations (Chapman 177-78). Eichrodt also mentions that Israel understood this punishment as a “personal action of offended God”, who “intervenes with fearful jealousy against any contempt shown to him” (Eichrodt 425). This judicial model which is also called as the traditional model, limits God to judge within the framework of human actions.

Therefore, in the traditional or judicial model of retribution, first, God is held as a judge administering punishment or reward in correspondence to the human actions. Secondly, punishment is meted out only when covenantal obligations are breached.

Although traditionally this model of retribution was understood as sufficient to explain the retributive principle from the book of Deuteronomy, scholars have differed recently and have found more retribution principles. We shall look at them now.

1.2. Automatic Retribution Model

There are two views that express the idea of Automatic Retribution. One is Koch’s act-consequence model and the other is Gammie’s impersonal principle of retribution. I will look at both the views here.

In the twentieth century, Koch published an article in which he rebuffs the idea of Retribution theology in the Old Testament (Martens 771). Koch argues that there is a natural and inward link “between an action and its consequences” and “there is an apodictic alternative in force” that gives explanation depending on the deed of a person and the significance of that deed (Koch 59-60). Further, Koch explains that the role of Yahweh is not juridical in sense as the one who rewards or punishes on the basis of established norms. Instead, Koch claims that, God is just like “a mid-wife who assists at the birth” in the completion of something which previous human action set in the motion (Koch 60-61). However, Koch’s generalization

fails to define adequately God's role in the act consequence model, because Koch relegates God merely to a "passive midwife". Based on this understanding, it is apparent that the "Act consequence model" undermines the role of God and renders him docile. As a result, it fails to understand the kaleidoscopic and wholesome aspects of retribution in Deuteronomy.

In sum, it is clear firstly that in the act-consequence model the consequence of the deed is directly linked to the action itself. Secondly, human beings merely reap the consequence of their actions. Thirdly, God is only passively enabling the doer of deeds to experience the fruit of one's own deeds. Nearly similar to act-consequence model is Gammie's impersonal principle.

Gammie suggests that there is an "impersonal principle" which works "in society according to which an evil deed will inevitably bring guilt upon the wrong doer" (Gammie 6). Gammie provides several biblical references to substantiate this aspect of retribution from Deuteronomy (24:7,13:2-6, 17:2-7,19:11-13, 19:16-19, 21:1-9,21:18-21, 22:13-29 and 7:8-13). In all of Gammie's suggested passages, there is an idea which is expressed about the ruin of the land based on the act of certain offenses and consequently requiring the land to be purified. The Israelites believed that the wrong doing of an individual will not only bring guilt upon that particular person, but also would defile the whole land and bring evil. This defilement and evil would automatically come upon all the inhabitants including the innocent people of that particular society (Gammie 6-7).

Gammie calls this aspect of retribution as an "impersonal principle" (Gammie 6). This principle is in operation particularly in the event of guilt to effect punishment. Such an idea of retribution aligns closely well with the idea of the act-consequence model of the theory of retribution purported by Koch. However, for Gammie the impersonal principle is only associated with negative action and negative results. It is not about good deeds and rewards, it is about negative deeds and punishments. Feder, reports that, "Mesopotamian, Hittite and Israelite texts to describe oath-curses and bloodguilt reveals a growing tendency to depict divine retribution as a mechanical or automatic process" (Feder 119). Feder says, "the elliptical treatment of oaths in ritual texts, which frequently do not explicitly mention divine orchestration of retribution, seems to imply that the oaths possess an autonomous mechanism for self enforcement" (Feder 124). This means that the automatic or mechanical retribution appears as though there is no intervention from God. Yet, the absence of the Divine Agent performing the retribution is completely strange for those who lived in ancient west Asia.

Feder argues that in the ancient west Asian culture the treatise and legal texts show “theistic depiction of retribution” even though it is not explicitly mentioned (Feder 119-123).

Hence, Feder’s concept of retribution is slightly contrary to the idea of Gammie’s impersonal principle and Koch’s act-consequence theory of mechanical retribution. According to Gammie an impersonal force is to be accounted for the consequence of guilt and according to Koch God’s role is more of a passive role in facilitating the human beings to receive the resultant consequence due to the actions performed. However, Feder contradicts the impersonal or act-consequence model after a thorough analysis of the ancient west Asian literature. Feder argues that in the ancient west Asian context “the expression of the wills of personalized supernatural actors was ultimately treated as an embedded law of nature” (Feder 153). For him the biblical passages which do not mention explicitly the role of God needs to be understood in the context of theistic world view. Consequently, Gammie’s impersonal principles that are “operative in society according to which an evil deed will inevitably bring guilt upon the wrong doer” (Gammie 6) should also be understood in this context. It is evidently clear that the mechanical or impersonal retribution principle is a misnomer. Moreover, in that context God cannot be held as passive as Act-consequence model suggests. Therefore, the guilt is paid back in full by the divine agent although it appears like an impersonal or act consequence principle.

In sum, the automatic retribution suggests that it is guilt which brings automatically defilement and evil upon the whole land. Such a retributive principle appears like an impersonal principle. It is also in a sense like the Act-consequence in which the punishment or reward is directly correlated to the deeds. The difference between impersonal principle and Act-consequence model of retribution is that the impersonal principle views only the negative aspect whereas the Act-consequence principle treats both the negative and the positive aspects of retribution. However, in neither of the models God is held as directly responsible for the retributive action. Hence Feder contradicts them and implies that the divine agent is the one who automatically effects punishment for guilt or reward for good as understood in the ancient West Asian context. Therefore, according to Feder, good or bad happens automatically in conjunction with the respective deed but with divine intervention which may be explicit or implicit.²

² Such a view is closely similar to the Judicial or Traditional model.

1.3. Anthro-centric Retribution Model

According to Gammie Anthro-centric Model is a positive retributive principle in “which the faithful are assured” in their belief that God works without faltering on behalf of them (Gammie 7). Seemingly, it looks like a Theo-centric view, and yet the biblical passages appear to be “anthro-centric” (Gammie 7). In this view, “God is only a reactor to man rather than the determiner of history” (Gammie 7). It also is like Gammie’s impersonal principle but the difference is that the impersonal principle is treating the negative aspect of retribution but the Anthro-centric view looks at the positive aspect of retribution.

According to this Anthro-centric principle, it is understood that human beings can receive good based on their actions as God has already set the principles and informed them. Those who obey His law will be endorsed with His promises -including blessings (14:28-29), long life (6:2; 11:18-21), land (6:18) and increased offspring (11:18-21) (Gammie 8). The picture provided here is of “positive” retribution – “that good works bear good fruit” (Gammie 7). Laato has a nuanced view which is closely similar to Gammie’s Anthro-centric retribution. Laato calls it “the free will theodicy”. According to this concept, it is believed that humanity has inherited the “capacity to fulfil the will of god”. So those who fulfil God’s will receive blessings, and those who fail receive the punishment (Laato 183). Laato acknowledges that whenever “the people or kings followed the will of YHWH” they were blessed and whenever people failed to follow the will of YHWH they were punished (Laato 193). Such a view clearly attaches significance to the human actor just like Gammie’s Anthro-centric view. Nonetheless, Laato sees both negative and positive consequence, while Gammie only sees positive consequence in this view. But both Gammie and Laato attach much significance to the human actors in deciding the course of their life whether for good or bad in correlation to the decisions they make vis-à-vis the will of God.

In Sum, the Anthro-centric model assumes that it is human beings that determine their destiny in accordance to their deeds. Good deeds will be rewarded by God. Nonetheless, it is the human beings who alone determine unalterably their reward.

1.4. Theo-centric Retribution Model

Theo-centric model places weight to God’s role in retribution. It is “Theo-centric” because it is not contingent upon human beings. “The stress is no longer on the principle according to which man may expect his deeds will turn back on him”. Gammie argues, “even though the divine anger is a

response to the deeds of men, it is not inexorably determined or unalterably contingent upon the deeds of man” (Gammie 9). Hence, the third aspect of retribution depends upon God’s relationship with man (Gammie 9). Gammie mentions that the divine election of Israel did not depend upon their merit of actions (Gammie 9). Moreover, God is the one who provided commandments and statutes for the welfare of human beings. It indicates that the role of God is the deciding factor in the relationship between God and human beings. If God chooses to exercise retribution in response to each human action, then retribution would be the norm always. However, Gammie points out that in Deuteronomy 9:7b, Yahweh chooses to show mercy because of his relationship with his people, so he did not exercise the “full measure of judgment” warranted by their actions (Gammie 9-10).

Thus, the third aspect, that is the Theo-centric one, points out to the type of retribution which is based on God’s relationship with His people. Out of love and grace, God elected Israel in spite of their failures to their covenant obligations and it is God who is the deciding factor in this form of retribution. Hence in the Theo-centric model, God determines the response irrespective of human action based on His relationship with His people.

1.5. The Dissolution Model

The Dissolution model is the model in which the retributive principle is nullified. According to Gammie, a sort of “dissolution of idea” happens in retributive principle. It simply means that God wilfully sets aside the principles of retribution in order to accomplish his ultimate purposes. This aspect of retribution is also apparently “theocentric but the idea of retribution is more or less consciously set aside” (Gammie 10). In order to support this principle Gammie makes four observations. Firstly, in Duet 8:2, we notice that God humbled Israel not because of any particular sin; but to test whether they would follow His commandments. It is God’s “probationary” activity. Secondly, Israel’s suffering for the lack of food was God’s chastening in order to discipline them as a father (Duet 8:3-5). It is God’s “pedagogical” activity and not a punishment for any misdeed. Thirdly, it is to remind them that their wealth is from God and not from their own efforts (Duet 8:18). Hence, God is the sole reason for Israel’s blessings. Finally, God gave them the land, not because of their righteousness, but to honour His covenant with Israel’s ancestors and also to expel the wicked who were living on the land prior to them. Hence the land is not earned by Israel but it is God’s benevolent provision (Gammie 10-11). Consequently Gammie observes, “Misfortune may be sent for reasons other than man’s sin; prosperity is not necessarily a sign of man’s virtue”. God does not always respond with retributive measures

based on man's action. "Extreme anthropocentricity" is not the manner in which good or bad happens to Israel (Gammie 11). It is God who determines. To explain a similar concept, Latto uses the term "educative theodicy". According to him the sufferings of human beings serve to produce endurance and forbearing which in turn develop "deeper understanding of life" (Latto 184). Accordingly, all the negative aspects of life need not be the result of disobedience. This idea closely aligns with Gammie's "dissolution of idea". Moreover, Kaminsky's idea as illustrated through "uni-generational"³ and "transgenerational"⁴ punishment in his retribution chart (see Kaminsky 190) appears to be similar to Gammie's views. Kaminsky's chart shows that it is God who decides the scale of punishment based on his will. Such choices are within the ambit of God and not on any set of norms.

Therefore, in the dissolution model God cannot confine Himself to a particular set of principles. He will work according to His ultimate purpose and towards the welfare of the human beings. And to do that, He may even set aside the retributive principles.

1.6. Summary of all the major Retribution Principles

Hence this study of scholarly work on retribution suggests that there are five retributive principles as found in the book of Deuteronomy. First is the Traditional or Judicial Model. In this model God is the judge who dispenses judgement as reward or punishment on the basis of human beings' corresponding actions of good or bad. However, punishment is awarded only when the covenant is violated. Second is the Automatic Retribution Model, in this model guilt brings automatic defilement and evil upon the land. It is a sort of an impersonal principle that is in force. Good or bad accrues based on the impersonal principle which is at work all the time. Nonetheless, in the ancient West Asian context and within Israelite society the supposed impersonal principle which effects good or bad in response to human acts is to be considered as subject to the divine agent or divine being. The important aspect of this model however is the automatic nature of retribution. Third is the Anthro-centric Model in which human beings are assumed to determine the outcome of their future based on their own decisions and actions. Unalterably humans control their destiny. Fourth is the Theo-centric Model. In this model God outworks the response based on his relationship with His people. God controls the response completely. Human action does not take the prime stage. Fifth is the "dissolution of idea" Model in which the idea of

³ Punishment for sin is limited to single generation (Deut 1:37; 3:36; 4:21; 13:16; 20:17)

⁴ Punishment for sin is extended to several generations (Gen 3, 9; Exod 20:5; Deut 23:4).

retribution is set aside so as to aid human beings. In this model God does not primarily operate based on set principles but according to His purposes and benefit of human beings.

1.7. Exegetical Analysis of Select Text

Apart from the commonly understood judicial or traditional model⁵, herein I seek to exegetically look at all the retribution principles from the book of Deuteronomy.

1.7.1. Deuteronomy 21:1-9

Deuteronomy 21:1-9 appears to suggest automatic retributive principle in force. In this narrative, a murder has happened and the murderer is unknown. Hence, it is about the “unsolved murder” (McConville NBC Deuteronomy, 219). Despite not knowing the mysterious murderer, the passage seems to suggest that the bloodshed has automatically defiled the land. In order to, avoid consequence of the guilt, the elders of the nearest village come forward to solve the problem. In this passage the possibility of automatic retributive principle is indicated in three ways.

First, the text shows that the injury on the victim is intentional and thus the consequence is automatic. According to Merrill, it is not an ordinary death but death happened by injuring the victim. It is explained by using the adjective “*q̄ÈiÈi*” meaning “a pierced one” or in common “a victim of homicide” (Merrill 288). North says that according to Numbers 35: 33-34, any bloodshed in the land where the Israelites live would be polluted because the presence of God is in that place. “Expiation can be effected only by the killing of the murderer” (Noth 256). McConville observes that, “The issue in cases of murder is not just the due punishment of the guilty person, but also a religious purification of the whole land and people (19:13), so that the covenant can continue” (McConville, NBC Deuteronomy 219). Since the murderer is unknown any action upon the murderer is impossible. Hence the consequence of the evil action still remains in the land. In order to avoid the consequence of the evil action that results based on the automatic retribution principle, the elders of the city come forward to perform a ritual sacrifice confirming their belief that the negative consequence is upon them.

⁵ Traditional or Judicial model is left out from the list for two reasons. First, it belongs to the earlier school of thought when scholars held that there was only one model of retribution in the book of Deuteronomy. However, current scholarship sees more than one model. Secondly, it can be nonetheless said that the Judicial or Traditional model overlaps with some of the other retribution models and therefore, no need to treat this model separately.

Secondly, the purification process indicates clearly the presence of automatic retributive principle in the event of a murder. As part of the process the elders slaughter an animal to cleanse the land and appease God. It is not considered as sacrifice because in Deuteronomy to “propitiate God” Israelites never sacrificed a cow (Wright 390-91). Moreover, the verb in (v.4) *כָּטַף* used in this sentence means “cut off the head or break the neck” (Zipor 369). This verb does not mean the legal slaughter. It is found in killing of the first born ass (Exod 13:13, 34:20) and the same word is used in the context of non-Israelite sacrifice (Isa 66:3). If Deuteronomy wants to recognise the killing of the cow as sacrifice they would use the word “*זָבַח*” (Wright 391). In the old testament the word “*זָבַח*” means “a sacrifice of slaughtered sheep, goat or cattle to create communion between the God to whom the sacrifice is made and the partner of the sacrifice, and the communion between partners themselves” (Averbeck 1068). Also, Wright notes that the Sacrifice was not done by the priest. The priest entered the place after killing of the animal. On the other hand, the presence of the priest has brought some authentication to the act of the elders. In addition to that, the offering of the animal is not on the altar. It does not have any connection to the temple as Deuteronomy does not permit the sacrifices outside the temple (Wright 391). All these point to the fact that is a consequence upon the land for the unsolved murder and that the consequence of the evil act is nullified by special ritual outside the temple by elders in the presence of the priest.

Thirdly the animal slaughter as offering was done outside the camp in a valley instead of an agricultural land to remove the guilt (which is due to an unknown murder) from the land. McConville mention that “It is interesting that neither the heifer nor the place chosen for the ceremony should have been used for agricultural purposes (3-4)” (McConville NBC Deuteronomy, 219). Moreover, the blood is to be washed in a flowing river. In v.4 the phrase “*בְּאֵיֹם־חַיִּים*” indicates that the river is to be the one which has everlasting flow. Scriptures mention some examples where “*חַיִּים*” is used in the same sense of the ever flowing river or water (Exod14:27, Ps74:15). In Amos 5:24 we find the same term “*חַיִּים*” that is used in Deuteronomy 9:24 (Wright 397) with the same meaning. Hence, after killing the animal, the elders wash their hands in the flowing water upon the animal and profess that “Our hands have not shed this blood.” Here the word “*אֲשֶׁר־שָׁפַךְ*” has dual function, it not only refers to offering animal blood, but it also refers to the blood of the cow similar to the blood offering of the innocent person which would bring restoration of the murder (Wright 394). The verb

אֶל־עֵינֵי הַבְּאֵרִים indicates that the animal must be killed near the valley which has flowing water. This symbolizes that the blood of the innocent man is washed away from the land through the waters of the ever flowing streams. In this manner, the blood guilt that automatically came upon the land due to the murder of an innocent is removed from the land (Wright 398).

Therefore, we can see the presence of automatic principle of retribution in this passage (Deuteronomy 21:1-9) in three ways. First, the murder of the person defiles the land automatically. Secondly, even though the elders of the city or no one knows who did that murder, the negative retribution takes place due to the defilement of the land. In order to prevent negative retribution, the elders carry out a purification ritual outside the land. Thirdly, the inherent guilt due to the murder is removed through the ever flowing water. Hence, the whole process of purification ritual and the reason for such a ritual indicate strongly the presence of automatic retribution principle in the event of an unsolved murder.

1.7.2. Deuteronomy 11:18-21

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 suggests the presence of anthro-centric principle of retribution. In this passage (Deut 11:18-21) Moses gave instructions to the Israelites in the form of “exhortation” (Von Rad 85). Moses explains the importance of complete obedience. How obedience to God’s commandments would bring positive blessings on them.

According to Craigie, in chapters 6-11 of Deuteronomy, Moses appeals to the Israelites to be faithful to Yahweh (Craigie 278). McConville says that “the blessing may be secured not only for the present generation but for all that follow, if the requirements of the covenant are faithfully taught as part of the life-style of the people (19-21; cf. 6:5-9)” (McConville, NBC Deuteronomy, 212).

First, the blessing is completely dependent on the total submission of human beings. In 11.18a the phrase “heart and soul” indicates the significance of following the commandments of God. Merrill describes about the heart in Hebrew as “the psychology of the Old Testament” where it “is not the centre of emotional life and response, but the seat of the intellect or rational side of humankind” (Merrill 167). It is understandable that the reference to the heart indicate complete wilful inward obedience. In 18b the narrator instructs, “Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your fore heads.” The Hebrew verb “-:ÈùÇÑø” indicates to attach. Davis observes that the aspect of attaching or tying and binding gave rise to the practise of wearing phylacteries (which are small leather boxes) containing verses of

Scripture (Exod 13:1-10; 11-16; and Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21) (Davis 808). Merrill explains that it always reminds them that they are “members of the covenant community” (Merrill, 168). Hence whether an act of obedience in the heart, or attaching God’s words externally to the body make it clear that both inward and outward obedience to the commandments of God are required. Such a submission according to this passage will secure God’s blessings.

Secondly, V.19 explains about the importance of teaching God’s word to their children in order to secure God’s blessings. In V.19, the narrator explains the activity of teaching children in various ways: “when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Merrill notices that, “The pairing of these sets of contrasting places and postures forms a double merism⁶” (Merrill, 167). Further Merrill explains that, “sitting suggests inactivity; and walking of course activity. Together they encompass all of human effort likewise; to retire at night and rise in the morning speaks of the totality of time” (Merrill, 167). As per Weinfeld, this verse in Duet 11:19 is parallel with Deut 6:7 where the author uses the Hebrew word “Shanan” which means “to teach sharply, diligently; to impress upon” (Weinfeld, Commentary, 332). In other words, this verse instructs the Israelites to passionately talk about God and His commandments through every possible way and every possible time. It reminds the Israelites that the word of God must be the center of every aspect of life in order to receive God’s blessings.

Thirdly, Moses instructs Israelites, “Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (Duet 11:20). Merrill report that in the post biblical times the “observant Jews placed a mezuzah (the same word as that for “doorpost”), a small receptacle containing Duet 6:4-9 and Duet 11:13-21 in twenty -two lines, at the right way of doorway” (Merrill 168). Again Merrill says, “Moses expanded sphere of covenant claim to the house and then to the village. In this manner and his entire family and community become identified as the people of the Lord” (Merrill 168). This verse explains that every Israelite must be part of the covenant by obeying the commandments of God. Finally verse 21 explains the result of their obedience; God will provide long life in the land. In v 21 the particle “יְאִי־וְיִשְׁׁרָׁ” indicates the condition for the blessing, and the word “וְיִשְׁׁרָׁ” points to the state of blessing. Hence when an Israelite complies to the mandate of the commandment, with the whole family as under the covenant, blessing of long life is assured. Such a blessing is completely contingent upon human obedience.

⁶ “using opposing terms to express an all-encompassing concept”(Merrill 167)

Hence anthropocentric retribution is evident in Deuteronomy 11:18-21 in three ways. First, absolute obedience inwardly and outwardly secures blessings. Secondly, teaching the word of God always to children will bring God's blessings eventually. Thirdly, when the whole family is brought under the covenant mandate in obedience then there will be blessings from God. Hence all these point to the fact the human agent can determine his/her own blessings from God based on their compliance to God's commandments.

1.7.3. Deuteronomy 7:6-9

Deuteronomy 7:6-9 points to the presence of "Theocentric" retribution principle. This passage is where the narrator explains that the election of Israel is not because of their merits. Their election is purely out of the grace of God and His relationship with Israel. Such a relation with God is depicted in three ways.

First, according to Crump, Deuteronomy 7 is the repetition of the Covenantal Sermon which was established at Horeb (Deut 5:2) (Crumps 225-226). In 7:9 the main aspect is the faithfulness of God. McConville identifies the Hebrew word "בְּרִית" in 7:9 as the "covenant." Another word "אֱמוּנָה" which is mentioned in 7:9 means "faithful love." These two words demonstrate the character of God and it explains the trustworthiness of God, showing God's character as the One "who keeps covenant and faithful love" (McConville, Deuteronomy, 157).

Secondly, Deuteronomy 7:6 declares, "For you are a people to the lord your God." However, the people in Deuteronomy 6 are said to be a people who failed to remain faithful to God. According to Brueggemann, the generation which is mentioned in Deut 6 were at loss "to recognize and cherish Israel's distinctiveness that is rooted in YHWH'S love and embraced in Israel's obedience" (Brueggemann 93). Yet, in 7:6 the people are held as God's people. It is a statement about God's election of Israel out of all nations to be His people. The author uses the Hebrew phrase "קָדוֹשׁ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ" in Deut.7:6, which means holy people or holy nation for Him. McConville mentions that "the holiness of Israel in Deuteronomy is always explained in terms of Yahweh's having chosen them as his own people 'out of all the nations on earth (cf. 14:2; 26:19; 28:9)'" (McConville, Deuteronomy, 155). According to McConville, the Hebrew word "אֲדָמָה" (possession) which is used to refer to Israel as God's possession means "a people particularly for him." Also "אֲדָמָה" is used in other places with the meaning "the king's private fortune" (1 Chron. 29:3). Hence the strong connotation that emerges is that the Israelites are given special status and special love from

God (McConville, Deuteronomy, 155). Driver refers to “*am Yisrael*” as an indication to “a people of special position” (Driver 100). According to Nicole, the verb “*chayav*” in this verse means “choose” (Nicole, 638-42). Furthermore, “*chayav*” is used in OT in the sense of divine election (Nicole 638). Winfield notes that the verb “choose” is used in a theological sense in Deuteronomy, with respect to Israel as receiving God’s love (Weinfeld, Commentary, 367). Hence, in spite of Israel’s failure, God sees them as his chosen people in faithfulness and love.

Thirdly, Deuteronomy 7:7-8 further explains the reasons for God’s love towards Israel. McConville explains that, “it had nothing to do with Israel’s own power (7); God’s people must not boast in that (see 8:17). They had done nothing to deserve the love which had led God to rescue them from Egypt (8)” (McConville, NBC Deuteronomy, 208).

In Deuteronomy 7:7 the author uses the Hebrew word “*chayav*” to show God’s relationship with Israel. Cairns remarks that the meaning of *chayav* is “bind or to attach,” and it is used in the context of the young man fascinated by a young woman as in Genesis 34:8. “*ahavah*” is another word which denotes the love of God in v.8. It expresses covenantal relationship. Hosea used this word to show the marital relationship between a wife and husband (Cairns 90-91)., McConville explains that in the ANE context the word “*ahavah*” conveys common faithfulness between two parties who are bound with a covenant (McConville, Deuteronomy, 156). Driver says that God did not forget the promise out of love He had with Israelite’s forefathers. Hence, God’s election and deliverance of Israel is not because of their numerical strength (Driver 100). McConville notes that the verb used in v.8 “*chayav*” means “setting free” and it shows the love of God towards Israel and their deliverance from Egypt (McConville, Deuteronomy, 157). From the above explanation God delivered Israelites because of His promise to the forefathers. Israel election is not because of their numerical value. It is because of God’s love and mercy. And it also shows God’s covenantal faithfulness.

Hence, the theocentric retribution principle is illustrated in three ways. First God demonstrates his faithfulness through his covenant with Israel. Secondly, in spite of Israelite’s failure, God chose them and delivered them. He considers Israel as his holy nation because of His election of Israel. It is certainly not because of their merits. Thirdly, God shows His love not because of their numbers or merits, but because of His own will.

1.7.4. Deuteronomy 8:3-5

Deuteronomy chapter 8 mainly speaks about hardships and prosperity (Crains 90). Deuteronomy 8:3-5 suggests the presence of the type of retributive principle which is like the “dissolution of idea”. This passage talks about God’s punishment of Israel in order to bring discipline. There are three ideas that emerge from this portion which suggest that the retributive principle in focus is “dissolution of idea”.

First, God is the cause of their distress (V. 3) in order to teach them humility. Driver suggests that God humbled Israel by causing them to hunger. He put them in situations where they needed something to eat. And by doing that, He made them understand their insufficiency (Driver 106). The verb “*ḏēḏēä*” in v.3 in Piel imperfect form means humble. According to Wenger, the Hebrew verb “*ḏēḏēä*” signifies words such as “bowed down, bow, humble, afflict” (Wenger 449-452). It shows God as the agent who humbled Israel. According to Connell the verb “*āēçì*” implies - “eat, consume, devour” (Connell 393-397). “*āēçì*” is also in Hiphil stem indicating an agent causing them to eat as “caused to eat.” The idea is that God is the one who caused them to eat. Without God, Israel could have had nothing to eat. It shows complete dependence of Israel on God for food. Hence, the suffering is to produce humility and teach Israel that they need to depend completely on God even for basic needs such as food.

Secondly, According to Merrill, Moses remembers the historical making of the Covenant at Mount Horeb, and reflects on the redeeming and protecting aspect of the Grace of God, as well as peoples’ incredulity and insufficiency (Duet 8:2-5)(Merrill 185). According to McConville this passage is known as “Discipline in the desert”. However, here the narrator explains the other side of the desert experience. It is “an opportunity for faith to grow” for Israel (McConville, NBC Deuteronomy, 209). God disciplines the Israelites like a father (Duet 8:5) so that they will learn and grow. The Hebrew verb (*ēñçø*), according to Merrill means “discipline or correct” (E.H. Merrill, NIDTE 479-482). Merrill says that the verb discipline needs to be interpreted in the light of the previous use of “*ḏēḏēä*” which means humble and test. The wilderness experience is a learning experience rather than a punishment (Merrill 186).

Thirdly, God tests them to know them. Fretheim explains the meaning of the Hebrew verb “*ēäèð*” as “know, observe, realize, find out,” (Fretheim 409-414). Hence, God tested their faith by allowing suffering in order to know their heart.

Therefore, Deut 8:3-5 shows that God brought hunger upon people for three reasons. First, teach them humility and dependence. Secondly, it was to discipline them. Thirdly, it was to know what was in their heart. All these three points illustrate that their present situation is not to be understood as punishment for sin but as a learning experience. Hence, sin and punishment does not always fit well for interpreting passages where sufferings are mentioned. Hence, the retributive principle is “dissolution of idea”. After all, God certainly cannot be confined to any normative principles of retribution.

Conclusion

The retribution principles found in the book of Deuteronomy. Initially scholars held that there was only one retribution principle, it was regarded as traditional or judicial model. In this model God is understood as the judge dispensing punishment or reward corresponding to human actions. Punishment is rendered only when covenant terms are breached. Beyond this model which is held as sufficient to explain retribution, recent scholarship has found more retribution principles. They are automatic retribution, anthro-centric retribution, theo-centric retribution, and dissolution of retribution.

Automatic retribution model is the one in which punishment is rendered automatically for sin because guilt automatically defiles the land and people. However, it is God who brings judgement automatically for sin. Anthro-centric model suggests that human beings could determine their future based on their deeds. Humans control their destiny. However, it is God who rewards based on human good deeds. Theo-centric model suggests that it is God who responds to people’s deeds based on His relationship with them. God determines the response altogether. Human action is sidelined in this model. God is on the center stage. Finally, the “dissolution of idea” model suggests that God need not always act on the basis of set principles. He may decide according to his purposes and for the benefit of human beings.

A Book Review

Titus, Acharya Daya Prakash. *Fulfilment of the Vedic Pilgrimage in the Lord Jesus Christ*. Revised Second Edition. Secunderabad: OM Books, 2004 [1982]. Pp. 252.

Josfin Raj *

Acharya Daya Prakash Titus, has been an ordained minister of the gospel, and unwavering advocate of the gospel in Indian cup. He travelled extensively throughout India holding *satsangs* to help people to find fulfilment in Christ, and to enable Christian workers in bridging the values to Hindu philosophy and the Christian faith.

The contents of this book have been shared by the author at many *satsangs* across the country, and been most cordially received by learned *Vedantins* and Christians over the past three decades. The author trusts this book will further help in breaking past barriers and that *Moksha* of the spirit will no longer elude his learned kinsmen in the flesh. The book is arranged in nine sections and at the end, we have 15 appendices on basic concepts are explained and worthy of reading.

First part talks about “the bondage of sin”. He shares the universality of sin. It is a systematic theology for Indians starting with the universal problem of the sin. He emphatically proves that any human attempt to overcome sin is a failure, since human nature itself is sinful. It is not that we do sin, we are sinners, but since we are sinners we do sin. He ends the section with God’s initiative to solve the problem of sin or bondage of karma.

The second chapter discusses about “karma and grace”. He tries to equalise *karma-bandhana* (bondage of karma) and *papabandhana* (bondage of sin). the Hindu understanding of Karma is that no one (none) can escape from the reality of karma. Karma is active in one’s cycle of rebirth. Acharya observes the doctrine of Karma affected India in three ways: firstly, “it has produced relinquishment to one’s unseen fate,” secondly it “has created

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indifference towards others and robbed people of the motivation for social concern,” thirdly “it pathetically postpones, or puts off, any serious attempt by the soul for liberation from spiritual bondage and realisation of *moksha* in this very life....” He argues that *moksha* is not by *karma*. He critiques both Christian and Hindu practices of religious ritual or deeds are not curable for sinners. It is the human predicament, he says with the support of Hindu scriptures. He then moves on to share about the ‘Grace of God’. “Grace of God as the supreme and quickest source of *moksha*”.

The third section is a discourse on “the Experience of *moksha*”. He finds common grounds from Indian *darsanas* for the experience of salvation and makes clear the distinct Christian experience of *moksha*. Fourth division elucidates “the difference between *Dharma* and *Moksha*.” *Dharma* as a religious duty hinders one to find *moksha*, the ultimate realisation of soul.

The fifth section is prime in the sense of its subject that is “The Christ in the Vedas.” In this section he takes a good look at the Lord Jesus Christ with Indian eyes. He lists Jesus Christ as the eternal Word and Creator, the Sinless One, the Knower, the *Karmayogi*, *Siddha Brahmachari*, the great *Sannyasin*, Christ and *Sachchidananda*, the sin-bearer of the world, and cosmic Christ from the Indian point of view. The details are self explanatory and exemplary with in-depth details found out from Indian religious traditions.

The sixth section is more practical aspect of the book under the title “the *Sadguru* and His Discipleship.” He differentiates *acharya* and guru. For him, God is only *Guru* and human agents are called as *acharya*. He demands that Christian life is a life of a disciple and need to carry the cross as his/her *Guru* Christ has carried.

The seventh section is a discussion on “*Yoga*- Hindu and Christian.” Though *yoga* is now understood as an Indian exercise system, it has more things to offer – as Titus argues for. *Yoga* is a communion and he finds lots of imageries from Christian scripture such as the vine and branches, yoke of oxen, temple and its stones, husband and wife, man and women, as a human body, father God and His son, bridegroom and bride, and grafting of wild olive to the true. He concludes this section with a Christian reflection of *yoga* with the ‘in Christ’ formula.

The eighth chapter concludes his discussion and “search and fulfilment”. He laments that, “the non-recognition of the Saviourhood of the Lord Jesus Christ first by Israel, and secondly by people of the *Vedanta*, has been a serious spiritual tragedy in the life of the world” (153). He makes a table of nearly twenty entries of Indian search and Christian or biblical fulfilment. He also applies the gospel to the downtrodden segment of the society at the end.

And the final chapter is the author’s testimony under the title “how grace found me.” It is a personal testimony of experiencing divine grace and *moksha* in his life.

Acharya writes with a good motif and is acceptable for anybody, especially of Hindu devotees. He uses Indian imageries, makes the writing close the Indian heart and mind. His authentic quotes from Upanishads and Vedas shows that he is command over these scriptures. He tries to get the original language (Sanskrit) for the lovers of Indian classical language and it is an authentic way of doing Christian theology in India. Acharya not only uses authentic Hindu scriptures, but also accommodates Adi Granth Saheb, Quran and other religious faith scriptures to communicate the Christian message. It opens wide avenues in Inter-religious dialogue. I would recommend this book to people of other faiths especially of Hinduism to find their quest is quenched in Christ Jesus and also as a manual for Christian servants to Hindu hearts.

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