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SATS launched Conspectus in 2006 with the goal of providing a platform for disseminating its faculty and student research. In 2011, Dr Zoltan Erdey took the reins as the Senior Editor. He has served faithfully in that capacity until April 2020. The release of Conspectus 29 marks the end of his tenure as the Editor.

The seminary would like to express its gratitude to Dr Erdey for his faithful service and direction. Under his guidance, Conspectus has grown in scope and reach, while continuing to serve its intended audience with Bible-based, Christ-centred theological research. We wish our friend and brother in Christ God's richest blessing as he focuses on new dreams and challenges.

Conspectus will continue to grow under the direction of Dr Batanayi Manyika (Editor) and Dr Cornelia van Deventer (Associate Editor). We wish the incoming editorial team God's wisdom as they seek to serve the mission of God through faith-filled scholarship.

In Christ,

Dr Kevin Smith

Principal

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Jesus as Creator in the Miraculous Signs of the Fourth Gospel and the Influence of Isaiah's Creation Theology[1]

Gerard Bernard and Dan Lioy[2]

Abstract

This essay is the first in a two-part series on the theme of creation in the Fourth Gospel. The essays are based on the author's dissertation written under the supervision of Professor Dan Lioy. In this particular essay, the investigation focuses on the portrayal of Jesus as Creator in the miraculous signs, as proposed by some scholars. The traditionally accepted seven miraculous signs present several significant features which portray Jesus as Creator. The features depict Jesus as the Word incarnate, who utters words to effect creative transformation. He is sent by the Father to the world in order to accomplish the work of new creation, which is partly expressed in the miraculous signs. The depiction of Jesus as Creator in the miraculous signs corresponds with the ideas in Isaiah 55:11. The 'sending' of the Son in the miraculous signs (the Gospel) parallels the 'going forth' of Yahweh's word from his mouth (Isa 55:11) and the efficacy of Jesus's words corresponds with the efficacy of Yahweh's word (*dbr*; LXX: *rhēma*). The efficacy of Yahweh's word is witnessed in Jesus Christ.

1 This article is a PhD thesis summary submitted by Gerard Bernard in 2020. Title of thesis: The Messiah as Creator in The Fourth Gospel: The Influence of Isaiah's Creation Theology. Supervisor: Prof Daniel Lioy. Institution: South African Theological Seminary

Keywords
Creation theology; servant of the Lord; Isaiah; Fourth Gospel.

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1. Introduction

The Fourth Gospel presents the theme of creation right from the beginning of the Gospel (John 1:1–3, 10). The prologue alludes to the Genesis creation narrative when it opens with the phrase 'in the beginning' (*en archē)*, resembling Genesis 1:1 LXX. It explicitly mentions the Word (*logos*), identified as Jesus (1:14–18), as the Agent of creation who has come into the world he created. Since the prologue serves 'as an entry point in which key themes are broached and woven together in a liturgical celebration of the advent of the divine Word' (Lioy 2005:57; cf. Carson 1991:111; Coloe 2011:2; Köstenberger 2009:176; Kruse 2003:20; Lindars 1972:81; Marshall 1982, 2:1082), it is assumed that the theme of creation also appears in the rest of the Gospel. Consequently, some interpreters have identified the theme of creation in the 'signs' (*sēmeia*), which John depicts in the first half of his Gospel (chapters 2–12) (e.g. Brown 2010:286–288; Moore 2013; Rae 2008:302–308). In conjunction with the theme, Jesus is also portrayed as Creator in the miraculous signs.

This essay is the first in a two-part series, which is written based on the author's capstone project (dissertation) under the supervision of Professor Dan Lioy at the South African Theological Seminary. In this particular essay, the investigation focuses on the portrayal of Jesus as Creator in the miraculous signs, which appear in the book of signs (John 2–12).

The study begins with a brief literature survey on the theme of creation in the miraculous signs in order to set a foundation for the subsequent investigation. Then, it analyses the constitution of the signs since interpreters differ concerning what they are. This analysis provides a delimitation to the study area. In the subsequent two sections following the analysis, the essay centres on the main focus of the entire treatise—the portrayal of Jesus as Creator in the miraculous signs and how they seem to be influenced by Isaiah's creation theology.

2. The Theme of Creation in the Miraculous Signs: Literature Survey

Interpreters such as Brown (2010), Moore (2013) and Rae (2008) have identified the theme of creation in the miraculous signs. Brown (2010) accepts the traditional seven signs and agrees with Painter (2002:77) that Jesus's signs 'are miracles, new acts of creation'. Brown argues that the signs 'point ahead in the narrative toward that final and greatest of signs, the resurrection of the Messiah—

the first moment of re-creation' (p. 287; cf. Wright 2004, 2:131). She further contends that John presents the seven signs in order to 'echo the seven days of creation, offering a final and eighth sign precisely to indicate the arrival of renewed creation' (p. 287). She points out as evidence Jesus's declaration in the temple concerning the 'rebuilding' of the temple of his body when the Jewish authority demands a sign (*sēmeion*; John 2:18). She also indicates the connection between the first and the seventh signs, pointing out the foreshadowing of Jesus's resurrection as the eighth sign in the raising of Lazarus.

Moore (2013) agrees with Brown on several matters. He accepts the traditional seven signs and argues that there is an eighth sign, which is the resurrection. He also approves Brown's contention that the signs echo the seven days of creation and goes further in detailing how each of the seven signs is seen 'to correspond to the "seven days" of creation' (p. 131; cf. pp. 135–192). The eighth sign, he says, 'completes the sequence, representing the octave day of the ordering of creation, the work of Jesus continuing beyond his earthly life and ministry into the "new week"' through the commissioning of the apostles (p. 132).

Rae (2008:302–308) argues that the series of seven signs in the Gospel of John alludes to the seven days of creation. However, Rae's view of what the signs are excludes the miracle of Jesus walking on water and includes as the seventh sign at Jesus's great hour: 'his mother, the cross, and the issue of blood and water from Jesus's side (John 19:25–37)' (p. 304). Rae contends that the signs are to be understood as a foreshadowing of Jesus's crucifixion-glorification and 'a participation ahead of time in the new life that is to come' (p. 303). Following a chiastic arrangement (cf. Girard 1980:315–324; Grassi 1986:67–80) which centres on the multiplication of loaves and fish (6:1–71), Rae argues that the pairing between the first and the seventh signs, the second and the sixth signs and the third and the fifth signs 'is concerned unmistakably with the redemptive transformation of the old creation and the ushering in of the new' (p. 304).

The brief literature survey on the theme of creation in the Fourth Gospel reveals three common features. First, the scholars indicate that the signs are God's acts of renewing the creation. Second, they see Jesus as performing the role of Creator in the renewal of creation. Third, they perceive a connection between the creation theme in the Gospel with the creation narrative in Genesis, thus suggesting that Genesis provides the background and the influence on the theme of creation in the Gospel. This study follows the features but diverges in this way: the portrayal of Jesus's role as Creator in the Gospel is influenced by Isaiah's creation theology instead of by Genesis alone.

3. The Constitution of the 'Signs' (*sēmeia*)

This investigation requires a brief analysis of what constitutes the signs, since interpreters differ concerning what they are. The brief analysis provides delimitation of the area where the investigation focuses.

Generally, the seven supernatural acts of Jesus in the book of signs (John 2–12) have been accepted as constituting the 'signs'. However, an analysis of the seven signs reveals that only five of them have been explicitly identified as 'signs' (sēmeia) in the Gospel. They are (1) the turning of water into wine (2:11), (2) the healing of a royal official's son (4:54), (3) the feeding of the 5000 (6:14), (4) the healing of a man born blind (9:16) and (5) the raising of Lazarus from the dead (12:18). The healing of a sick man at the Pool of Bethesda is not called a 'sign' but a 'work' (*ergon*) (7:21; cf. 5:17). In the Fourth Gospel, however, '"signs" are the "works" which Jesus willingly performs in order to bring people to believe in him' (Just 2013:§3 [Signs]). 'What Jesus meant by works was identical with what John meant by signs' (Guthrie 1967:79).

The act of walking on water has no reference to being a 'sign' or a 'work'. Consequently, some scholars do not consider this as a sign (e.g. Köstenberger 1995:97; 2009:330; Rae 2008:304). Köstenberger (1995:92–93) excludes this act from the seven signs because it does not fit the general characteristics of 'signs' he outlined—(1) 'signs are public works of Jesus's, (2) 'signs are explicitly identified as such in the Fourth Gospel' and (3) 'signs, with their concomitant symbolism, point to God's glory displayed in Jesus, thus revealing Jesus as God's authentic representative'. Consequently, instead of the act of walking on water, Köstenberger argues for Jesus's cleansing of the temple complex as a sign since it fits all general characteristics (pp. 96–101).

Nevertheless, this study does not exclude Jesus's act of walking on water in the examination of Jesus's role as Creator. This act is a supernatural feat that can only be accomplished by someone who possesses a creator-like power. It is the only incident among all the miraculous events in the Gospel where Jesus seems to imitate Yahweh's self-identification '*anî hû*' (LXX: *egō eimi*) (cf. Exod 3:15–16; Isa 41:4; 43:10, 13, 25; 44:6; 48:12; 51:12; 52:6) when he speaks to his disciples, 'I am; be not afraid' (*egō eimi; mē phobeisthe*) (John 6:20). Ball (1996:181–185) insists that the expression in John 6:20 alludes strongly to Isaiah 43:1–13, which, in turn, provides a theological explanation to Jesus's act of domination over the tempestuous Sea of Galilee and rescuing his disciples. All this makes this particular

incident unique in comparison to other miraculous events in the Gospel. Therefore, the investigation of Jesus's role as Creator in the 'signs' here focuses on the seven miraculous events in the book of signs.

4. Significant Features Portraying Jesus as Creator in the Miraculous Signs in Relation to the Entire Gospel

One may observe three significant features arising from an analysis of the miraculous signs. The subsections below discuss these features, which portray Jesus as Creator in the miraculous signs. The features present Jesus as uttering words to accomplish miracles, performing (*poieō*) miraculous signs (*sēmeion*) or work (*ergon*) and being sent by the Father.

4.1. Jesus utters words to accomplish things

The words which Jesus utters accomplish what they are intended to do. This idea is observed in four instances. In the first instance—the healing of the official's son—Jesus's words 'your son will live' take effect at precisely the time when Jesus uttered the healing statement (John 4:53). Köstenberger (2004:98, 171) indicates that Jesus 'not only cures the royal official's son but does so long-distance, a highly unusual way of working miracles (4:50–53)' (p. 98). The healing of the sick child at Jesus's words suggests that his words entail regenerative power that can accomplish long-distance healing. As the Creator-Word, Jesus can accomplish things that are extraordinary by his words and action. He grants life to the official's son by his utterance.

In the second instance, the occasion occurs in the healing of the paralysed man at the pool of Bethesda. Jesus's command for the paralysed man to get up, pick up his mat and walk goes against the person's current condition and prompted immediate healing (John 5:8–9). The command demands action from the man. The effect of Jesus's words was instant. There seems to be a supernatural, regenerative power in his words of command. The power of his words reconstructs and restructures the paralysed parts of the man so that the old, sick parts are renewed.

The third incident occurs in the healing of the man born blind. Jesus's instruction to wash in the pool of Siloam is met with the man's obedience and an act of faith, resulting in his healing (John 9:7). In this case, the combination of Jesus's action and words of command occurs in the whole process of healing. Jesus 'spat' (*eptusen*) on the ground, 'made' (*epoiēsen*) mud (*pēlon*) from the saliva, 'spread' or

'rubbed' (*epechrisen*) the mud on the man's eyes and 'said' (*eipen*) to the man to 'go' (*hupage*, imperative) and 'wash' (*nipsai*, imperative) in the pool of Siloam. The man goes to the pool as instructed and comes back seeing (*blepōn*).

In the fourth instance, Jesus's loud voice calling Lazarus to come out from the grave produces life in Lazarus's dead body (John 11:43–44). His shout of command is 'wonderfully succinct' (Morris 1995:498, note 89; cf. Barrett 1978:403) and one 'of raw authority' (Burge 2000:320). The Creator-Word raises the dead through his life-giving words. It can be said that Jesus's words have given Lazarus a new life. A reconstruction of Lazarus' decomposing body and all the elements inside it may have happened. The power of his voice expresses 'the power of God by which the dead are brought to life' (Ridderbos 1997:406). He can bring back life because he is the Creator of life, exercising his 'Creator-like power' (Brodie 1993:397).

In all four instances, the Greek term *legō* ('speak, say'; *legei* [John 4:50; 5:8]; *eipen* [9:7]) and the statement *phōnē megalē ekraugasen* ('he shouted with a loud voice' [11:43]) are employed to indicate that Jesus utters something. Although the term and statement inform readers that Jesus speaks, the effect of the words which come forth from his mouth makes *legō* and *phōnē megalē ekraugasen* significant. Thus, in his role as Creator, Jesus's words are effective in accomplishing what they are meant to do. He is the Creator-Word, whose utterances are sovereign and authoritative, powerful and effective.

The idea that Jesus accomplishes things by his utterances is enhanced when one considers the notions of the *logos* and *rhēma* in connection with Jesus. Special use of the term *logos* ('Word') occurs in the prologue when John associates it (*logos*) with Jesus. The prologue identifies Jesus as the incarnate Word. In the rest of the Gospel, the term is used 36 times. McDonough (2009:218) shows that the majority of the 36 usages cluster around words connected to Jesus and God. In most cases (22 times), John employs *logos* to describe the words that Jesus speaks (2:22; 4:41, 50; 5:24; 6:60; 7:36, 40; 8:31, 37, 43, 51, 52; 10:19; 12:48; 14:23, 24 [twice]; 15:3, 20 [twice]; 18:9, 32). In some instances, the usages describe reports about Jesus by different people (4:39 [the Samaritan woman]; 17:20 [the disciples]; 19:8, 13 [the Jewish leaders]). In several cases, *logos* is used to speak about God's Word, whether directly (5:38; 8:55; 10:35; 17:6, 14, 17) or by means of the Scriptures (4:37; 12:38; 15:25).

The clustering of the *logos* usages around words connected to Jesus and God is not surprising because in the Gospel, 'Jesus's words are

God's words' (McDonough 2009:218). In John 14:24, Jesus tells his disciples, 'the word that you hear is not mine but of the Father who sent me'. Moreover, the use of the phrase 'the word of Jesus' (*ho logos tou Iēsou*) in conjunction with the fulfilment formula ('might be fulfilled [*hina … plērōthē*]) (John 18:32; cf. 12:32–33) 'indicates that Jesus's words are tantamount to Scripture' (p. 219). Since Scripture is understood as God's Word, the fulfilment of Jesus's word is no less than the fulfilment of God's Word.

Therefore, when Jesus speaks, he speaks as the Creator-Word. He speaks God's words. Indeed, 'the identity between Jesus's word of proclamation and God's word is grounded in Jesus's being as the Word' (Silva 2014, 3:166). Schnackenburg (1968, 1:483) points out that Jesus's words 'have the force of God's words because he is the Logos, that is, the divine revealer and redeemer'. The fact that Jesus speaks the words of God is made clear in John 3:34: 'For he whom God has sent utters the words [*rhēma*] of God'. Even though *rhēma* is used instead of *logos* here, it clearly describes Jesus, the Creator-Word, as uttering God's words.

4.2. Jesus performs (*poieō*) miraculous signs (*sēmeion*) or work (*ergon*)

Jesus's performance of the miraculous signs involves the use of the Greek word *poieō* ('do, perform') in conjunction with the word *sēmeion* ('sign') or *ergon* ('work'). This juxtaposition of terms is observed in all the miraculous signs except in the instance of walking on water. Jesus is portrayed as the one who 'performs' (*poieō*) the 'signs' (*sēmeia*) (John 2:11; 4:54; 6:14; 9:16; 12:18) or the 'work' (*ergon*) (7:21). The combination of the terms also appears in several instances with similar connotation (2:23; 3:2; 6:2, 30; 7:31; 11:47; 12:37; 20:30). Since the LXX word for the Hebrew 'create' (*bara*') in Genesis 1:1 is *poieō*, it seems reasonable to posit that when the Gospel refers to Jesus performing a miraculous sign, it denotes an act of creation.

Nevertheless, the signs are not replications of the primal creation. Rather, they are an expression of Jesus doing the Father's work of new creation. In this sense, Jesus is not only portrayed as Creator of the primordial creation but also of the new creation. He is the 'new Creator' (Du Rand 2005:43). He renews all creation, including human life, which has been marred by sin. Rae (2008:295–296) contends that the work which Jesus does is the work of creation. The work was established at the beginning and continues toward its consummation at the end through redemption. The miraculous signs are works of 'redemptive transformation of the old creation and the ushering of the new' (p. 304).

Since the miraculous signs are an expression of the Father's work through Jesus, it is instructive to examine the concept of 'work' (*ergon*) in the Gospel in the subsequent discussions. That 'work' is linked to creation can be seen in the language Jesus uses in his statements concerning God's work. The echo to Genesis 2:1–3 is noticeable. First, the phrase 'his work(s)' (*autou to ergon* [John 4:34]; *ta erga autou* [14:10]) in John is similar to that in Genesis LXX (*ta erga autou* [Gen 2:2]); *tōn ergōn autou* [2:2, 3]). Second, the verb *poieō* in relation to 'doing' the 'work' appears in both places (Gen 2:2 [twice], 3; John 4:34; 5:36; 7:21; 10:25, 37, 38; 14:10, 12; 15:24; 17:4). Third, the use of the root verb *teleioō* occurs in both cases (*sunetelesthēsan, sunetelesen* [Gen 2:1, 2]; *teleiōsō* [John 4:34; 5:36]). Fourth, the relation of 'work' to the Sabbath appears in Genesis 2 and John. In Genesis, God rests on the Sabbath from all the works that he has done (Gen 2:1–3); in John, Jesus carries on the 'works' of God and performs them even on the Sabbath (John 5:16–18; cf. 9:14–16). Fifth, the description that the work Jesus does is 'good works' (*erga kala* [John 10:32]; *kalou ergou* [10:33]) seems to echo God's declaration that the work of creation is 'good' (*kalon* [Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18]; *kala* (vv. 21, 25]; *kala lian* [v. 31]).

Through the links, John signals that the work Jesus does in the incarnation is the work of creation. His activities in the incarnation constitute the work of restoration of creation after the Fall. The healing of the paralysed man and its aftermath in John 5, in particular, reveals that Jesus's 'work' (John 7:21; cf. 5:17) is a work of creation (cf. Rae 2008:295). When the Jews criticise him for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus responds, 'My Father is working until now, and I am working' (5:17). The Jews perceive Jesus's statement as making himself equal to the Creator-God since it is understood among the Jewish rabbis of Jesus's day that God was continually working on the Sabbath (Carson 1991:247; *Genesis Rabbah* 11:10; *Exodus Rabbah* 30:9). For example, *Genesis Rabbah* 11:10 indicates that God 'rested from the work of [creating] His world, but not from the work of the wicked and the work of the righteous' because he works with both groups, showing their 'essential character' (Freedman and Simon 1961:86). Brown (1970, 1:217) points out that rabbinic statements aplenty show God continually being active on the Sabbath because 'otherwise, the rabbis reasoned, all nature and life would cease to exist'.

The healing of the paralysed man on the Sabbath can be seen as Jesus's work of restoration in maintaining the existence of God's creation. In the same way, the restoration of sight to the man born blind on the Sabbath (John 9) is a work of creation, restoration or

renewal. Both miraculous signs, Köstenberger (2009:351) asserts, 'are designed to elicit faith among the Jews'. They are also a display of Jesus, 'the Creator and that Word-made-flesh', engaging in his messianic activity 'in powerful extension and escalation of creation and new creation theology'. Indeed, 'as the Creator, Jesus is the Giver and Restorer of life, and the one who has authority over the Sabbath'.

Rae's (2008:296–300) examination of three significant passages in the Gospel where Jesus speaks of his work—John 5:16–47; 10:22–39; 14:1–14—reveals four noteworthy themes. First, Jesus's work is 'linked with the theme of life' (p. 296). The work of creation is brought to its consummation in eternal life through the work of Christ. Second, 'the requirement of belief [is] set against the prevalence of unbelief' (p. 297). One's participation in the new creation requires that he believes in Jesus. Third, 'Jesus's works are said to provide testimony to him'. Knowing Jesus's works means to discern the fulfilment of God's purpose in creation in the works that Jesus performs (pp. 297–298). Fourth, the work testifies to 'the intimate relationship between the Son and the Father', thus bringing a transformation of life formed by God's creative word (p. 298). The last theme concurs with McDonough's (2009:233) assertion concerning Jesus's agency in creation—that the act of creation and redemption of humanity is performed within the framework of a loving relationship between the Father and the Son.

The 'work' that Jesus says he is sent to accomplish (John 4:34; cf. 5:36) is reaching its completion at the cross when, 'knowing that all things are now finished [*tetelestai*]' (John 19:28), Jesus declares, 'It is finished [*tetelestai*]' (19:30). Several scholars see the connection between John 4–5 where Jesus clarifies his given task of finishing the work of the Father who sends him, and John 19:28, 30 where Jesus declares the completion of 'all things' (e.g. Brown 2010:284–385; Brown 1970, 2:908; Keener 2003, 2:1147; Lincoln 2005:478). Jesus's declaration 'It is finished' (19:20) at the cross, followed immediately by John's mention that the Sabbath is about to begin (19:31) reveals a significant image concerning Jesus's act of completing the work of creation. Besides echoing the creation narrative in Genesis where God ceases from his creative work on the Sabbath (Gen 2:2–3) (Brown 2010:286; Brown 1970, 2:908; Keener 2003, 1147; Wright 2004, 2:139), the narrative also signals the completion of God's work (in creation) through the death of Jesus, 'ushering in Sabbath rest and re-creation' (Brown 2010:286).

4.3. Jesus is sent by the Father

Jesus indicates that the Father sends him to accomplish his (God's) 'work'. Jesus repeats the idea of being sent by the Father in three instances of the miraculous signs. First, in the dialogue that follows the healing of the paralysed man, Jesus indicates that the Father sends him. In the passage where Jesus speaks about the testimonies concerning him, he declares: 'The Father who sent Me has Himself testified about Me …' (*ho pempsas me patēr ekeinos memarturēken peri emou* …) (John 5:37). Second, in the interchange following the feeding of the crowd, Jesus indicates several times that the Father is the one who sends him (John 6:29, 39, 44, 57). The idea of being sent coincides with the idea of him coming down from heaven (6:32, 33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). The Father sends him. He comes down. He returns to his sender. Jesus's question—'what if you see the Son of Man going up to where he was before?' (6:62)—implies the idea of returning to the Father. Third, Jesus utters the idea of being sent in his prayer to the Father at the tomb of Lazarus. Jesus prays to his Father so that the crowd 'may believe that you sent me' (*hina pisteusōsin hoti su me apesteilas*) (John 11:42). The fact that the Father sends him is testified by the works which he does (John 5:36; cf. 10:25). They are works of creation (Rae 2008:295–296).

The theme of 'sending' also appears in several texts scattered throughout the Gospel. The theme is expressed by the Greek verbs *pempō* and *apostellō*. Both verbs appear a total of 60 times in the Gospel—*pempō* 32 times; *apostellō* 28 times. John uses both verbs without any obvious semantic difference (cf. John 4:34, 38; 5:36–38; 7:28–29; 20:21) (Silva 2014, 3:703–704). Of the total number of occurrences, 39 are found in Jesus's speeches. Most of the time, he speaks about the one who sends him in the third person. Only in seven occurrences Jesus speaks to the Father directly using second-person language (11:42; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 27 [all use *apostellō*]). The relationship between God's 'works' and the 'sending' occurs in John 4:34 and 5:36, where both motifs coincide. In 4:34, Jesus indicates the centrality of his task in accomplishing the work of the one who sends him. In 5:36, Jesus asserts that the work(s) that he does testify to the fact that the Father has sent him (cf. 10:25). In most cases, Jesus reiterates the idea that he is doing the will of the Father who sends him. Mercer (1992:457) points out that 'the primary thrust of the motif is that God sends Jesus into the world with a special commission'. Arguably, that commission is to bring redemption to humanity through the work of new creation (cf. Rae 2008:295–296).

The theme of 'sending' concerns the concept of agency. The sent one is an agent of the one who sends. In order to understand the concept

of agency, McDonough (2009:226–234) analyses several instances where 'sending' is modelled by Jesus. The examples include the calling of the first disciples (John 1:35–51), the aftermath of the story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), the story of the man born blind (John 9), the account of Lazarus raised from the dead and its aftermath (John 11), the passion narrative (John 13–17, 20:21) and a reflection on the disciple whom Jesus loved. Two of the examples are part of the miraculous signs. In the story of the man born blind, Jesus's telling the man to wash his eyes at the pool of Siloam serves 'to reinforce the Gospel's emphasis on Jesus as the Sent One' and 'to highlight the healed man's role as a sent witness to Jesus as evidenced later in the story' (p. 229). In the story of Lazarus' miraculous restoration to life, Lazarus is deemed to be 'a visible sign of God's glory' (p. 230). McDonough's analysis of the significance of all the instances leads him to conclude that 'personal relationship' is the main emphasis, 'that it [personal relationship] is manifestly a central part of his [John] theological vision' (p. 231). Thus, it becomes apparent that between the Father and the Son, loving relationships are so central that they 'are an end in themselves' (p. 232; cf. John 17:23–26).

McDonough (2009:233) further argues that the transference of the work of creation to Jesus 'serves' the deeper purpose of enacting and nurturing the Father's love for the Son. Because of the Father's love for the Son, he (Father) shares all things with him including the Messiah's participation in his (Father) life and work, 'including the work of creation'. The Messiah, therefore, is not a mere tool in creation but 'the fully personal executor of God's will', and as the Creator-Word, 'He is the one who brings to realization the desire, "Let there be …" of Genesis 1'. Thus, whatever the Son does on behalf of the Father and whatever the Father does for the Son are seen within the framework of a loving relationship. The Son's activity is 'a constitutive element' of their love for one another. He 'expresses his love for the Father by actively creating the world according to the Father's will and rescuing it from its fallen state' through the work of new creation.

4.4. Jesus as creator in the miraculous signs: a synthesis

The characterisation of Jesus as Creator in the miraculous signs seems to fall within a framework that involves the incarnation of the Creator-Word in Jesus. The incarnation of the Creator-Word seems to coincide with the depiction of the Father 'sending' his Son. The Son comes from the Father into the world to accomplish the 'work' he is sent to do, which is partly expressed in the miraculous signs.

In a concise statement, the characterisation can be written in this way: the Son, who is also the Word (*logos*), is sent by God the Father to the world in order to accomplish the work of new creation. This statement is similar to Du Rand's (2005:23–24) assertion concerning the creation motif, which underlies the theological perspective of John's Gospel. He states that 'God's mission in this world is manifested through the pre-existent Logos, the Son of God, who became man, destined to return to the Father after a mission of glorification' (p. 24).

5. The Influence of Isaiah's Creation Theology

The framework of Jesus's characterisation as Creator noted previously (4.5) corresponds to the ideas depicted in Isaiah 55:11. The text (Isa 55:11) highlights two components: (1) the efficacy of God's word (cf. Friesen 2009:346–347; Motyer 1993:457–458; Young 1972:383) and (2) the 'going forth' of the word from God (Dahms 1981:78–88). Both are tied with the theme of accomplishing what the word is intended to do.

Isaiah 55:11 in context is considered a creation passage despite the absence of explicit creation references (of the cosmological sense) in the text. There exist indications in the context (Isa 55:6–13) that creation in the redemptive and eschatological sense is in view. In the redemptive sense, the reference to repentance in verses 6–7 is, in essence, creative because it involves God's transforming act in dealing with human hearts. In the eschatological sense, the allusion to the new creation in verses 12–13 depicts a transformed environment restored to its original condition before the Fall (cf. Motyer 1993:458). The context of Isaiah 55:11 (i.e., vv. 6–13), therefore, emphasises new creation rather than the cosmological aspect. Yahweh's word is efficacious in the regeneration of the sinner's heart (v. 11). When sinners respond to God's word calling them to repent (vv. 6–7), the effective power of that word (v. 11) brings them into an experience of God's love, forgiveness (v. 7) and peace (v. 12) and 'lifts them into membership of a new world of eternal duration' (Motyer 1993:458). Concerning Isaiah 55:11, Friesen (2009) remarks: 'The word calling for light flowed from God's mouth' then 'the creation of light accomplished the purpose for which the word was spoken' (pp. 346–347).

The influence of the two components in Isaiah 55:11 on the framework concerning Jesus's role as Creator in the miraculous signs may be discerned through three correspondences: (1) the 'Sending' of the Son and the 'Going Forth' of Yahweh's Word, (2) Jesus's Utterances and the Word from Yahweh's Mouth and (3) Jesus's Works and the Accomplishing of Yahweh's Will.

5.1. The 'sending' of the Son and the 'going forth' of Yahweh's word

The 'sending' of the Son in the miraculous signs seems to parallel the 'going forth' of Yahweh's word from his mouth in Isaiah 55:11. The origin of the Son, who is the Word, is the Father in heaven. The origin of the word in Isaiah 55:11 is Yahweh. The concept of 'sending' is related to the idea of origin or 'coming forth from' God. The Greek word used in the Gospel is *exēlthon* (aorist of *exerchomai*). The Greek word reflects the idea of 'going forth' of the word (*rhēma*) from Yahweh's mouth in Isaiah 55:11 LXX which uses the aorist form of *exerchomai* (*exēlthē*) as in the Gospel.

John 8:42 and 17:8 indicate that the idea of 'coming/going forth from' God or the Father is analogous to being 'sent' by God or the Father. In 8:42, Jesus mentions that he came from (*exēlthon*) God, not on his own but sent (*apesteilen* [*apostellō*]) by God. The context depicts Jesus as repeatedly speaking the fact that the Father has sent him (8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42). God sends Jesus as 'God's messenger' (Michaels 2010, exposition §III.L). The aorist tense *exēlthon* 'indicates that the reference is rather to the mission of the Son, i.e. the Incarnation' (Brown 1966, 1:357). In 17:8, Jesus again indicates that he has come from the Father. The phrase 'I came from [*exēlthon*] you' seems to parallel 'you sent me [*apesteilas*]'. The last part of verse 8 can be put in this way (cf. Mueller 2019:3):

They truly understood	that I came from you
…they believed	that you sent me

The parallel suggests that 'coming from' God or the Father may be the same as being 'sent' by God or the Father. Morris (1995:641–642) posits that the two expressions are very similar and yet not identical. The first phrase ('I came from you') 'concerns the Son's divine origin' while the second one ('you sent me') deals with his mission. 'Jesus was sent to perform a divine task. It was this that the disciples had come to believe' (p. 642).

The parallel between 'coming/going forth from' and being 'sent' signifies strong Isaianic (Isa 55:11) influence on the concept of 'sending' in the Gospel (cf. miraculous signs). The picture is that

the Creator-Word is sent by the Father to carry on the work of new creation in the incarnation. The Son is being 'sent' on his Father's mission, just as the word goes forth from the Lord's mouth to accomplish its mission.

5.2. Jesus's utterances and the word from Yahweh's mouth

The efficacy of Jesus's words seems to parallel the efficacy of Yahweh's word (*dbr*; LXX: *rhēma*) in Isaiah 55:11 (cf. 48:3, 13). The idea of God's efficacious word in the work of creation may have influenced the way some miraculous signs portray Jesus's act of speaking to accomplish something. Jesus's utterances accomplish their purpose and are expected to result in those who witness the signs the belief that Jesus is the Messiah (cf. John 20:31).

In several instances of the miraculous signs, Jesus speaks in order to effect transformation in the created order. When he speaks, he also acts to accomplish what he speaks about. Speaking itself is his act of accomplishing restoration. For instance, in the healing of the paralysed man at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus asks the man, 'Do you want to get well?' (John 5:6). He acts to accomplish the healing by commanding the man to get up, pick up his bedroll and walk. The aftermath of this healing features Jesus speaking a long discourse. The raising of the dead Lazarus to life provides another example. Jesus repeatedly mentions his intention to wake Lazarus up from the dead (11:11, 23, 25–26, 40). He acts to fulfil what he speaks about by commanding Lazarus to come out of the tomb (11:43–44). His voice carries creative force to affect the restoration of life to the dead body.

Isaiah's creation theology presents a similar idea. Yahweh speaks and acts on accomplishing what he speaks about. In Isaiah 48:3, Yahweh declares (*ngd*) past events long before they happen. He acts (*'sh*) on what he speaks about and it occurs. Again, in 48:13, Yahweh calls (*qr'*) the earth and the heavens and they 'stood up together'. The calling of the earth and the heavens parallels Yahweh using his hands to create them.

Perhaps a remarkable depiction of the concept of speaking-acting can be observed in Isaiah 44:24–28. Isaiah 44:24 introduces Yahweh as 'your redeemer who formed [*ytsr*] you from the womb'. He speaks to Israel, identifying himself as the Lord who creates. Focusing on verses 26–28, one can see that Yahweh also identifies himself as one 'who says [*'mr*] to Jerusalem/cities of Judah ... who *says* [*'mr*] to the depths of the sea ... who *says* [*'mr*] to Cyrus' (emphasis mine). In each self-revelation, Yahweh announces what will happen ('she will

be inhabited/they will be rebuilt ... be dry ... my shepherd ....') then declares his promise to fulfil them ('I will restore her ruins ... I will dry up your rivers ... he will fulfil all my pleasure').

The context of Isaiah 44:24–28 is Yahweh's announcement of the restoration of Israel through Cyrus. This restoration is sometimes called the second exodus. It is a creative act of redemption of Israel. Similarly, the contexts of the healing of the paralysed man and the raising of Lazarus fall within a broad picture of the restoration of humanity. On the one hand, the restoration involves an individual's transformation of both the physical and spiritual life. On the other hand, the two miraculous signs serve the purpose of inviting people to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing they will have life in his name (John 20:30–31). This transformation and restoration of humanity is a creative act of redemption, a re-creation of humanity.

Perhaps the most helpful example of how Jesus's words or utterances are affecting people's hearts and accomplishing what the words are intended to do can be observed in the discourse of the bread of life (John 6:26–59). One can see the progression of the effect of Jesus's words on those who hear him. Jesus's words intend to persuade them to accept and believe him through the bread of life discourse. Their response to the discourse progresses from simple questions and statements to intensified misunderstanding. The Jews' complaints about Jesus's origin (vv. 41–44) and further misunderstanding of Jesus's speech about eating his flesh in verse 52 reveals how Jesus's words are affecting the heart and decision of the Jews.

Following the discourse is the response of those who heard Jesus's teaching (John 6:60–71). John's Gospel refers to this particular teaching of Jesus as *logos* (v. 60). The passage reveals that the words (*rhēmata*) that Jesus has spoken are spirit and are life (v. 63). Peter's answer to Jesus in verses 68–69 exposes the truth about Jesus's possessing the words (*rhēmata*) of eternal life. The words (*rhēmata*) that Jesus has spoken have taken effect in Peter's heart to the extent that he has come to believe and know that Jesus is the Holy One of God. In other words, Jesus's words have accomplished the purpose for which they are uttered. One can observe an allusion to Isaiah 55:11 here. Yahweh's word (*rhēma*) goes forth to accomplish what it is intended to do.

One can see a further connection between Isaiah 55:10–11 LXX and John 6:28–71 (cf. Burkett 1991:131–132; Endo 2002:241). John 6 describes Jesus as the living bread sent by God (vv. 29, 38, 39, 44, 57) from heaven (*ek tou ouranou*, v. 33) to do the will (*thelema*, v. 38)

of the Father who sends him. The description corresponds with the description of Yahweh's word in Isaiah 55:11—the word comes forth from God (v. 11), descending like the rain and snow from heaven (*ek tou ouranou*, vv. 10–11) to do the will (*ēthelēsa*, v. 11) of God who sends it. The will of the Father is to give life to the world (as implied repeatedly in John 3:16; 5:21, 26; 6:39–40; 12:50) and the ministry of the Son is said to accomplish the Father's will (as indicated in 6:38: 'I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me') (Endo 2002:242).

5.3. Jesus's works and the accomplishing of Yahweh's will

Jesus, the Word (*logos*), seems to embody all the will of the Lord in the word (*dbr*; LXX: *rhēma*) that goes forth from the Lord's mouth in Isaiah 55:11. In other words, the efficacy of the word (*rhēma*) of Yahweh is witnessed in the person of the Word (*logos*) and the works that he performs in his incarnation. However, Jesus is not to be equated with Yahweh's word itself, emanating from the Father. Despite the portrayal of Yahweh's word in a personified manner in Isaiah 55:11, it is not Jesus Christ. The correspondence, however, is remarkable. Just as Yahweh's word accomplishes repentance and regeneration of hearts in God's people (Isa 55:11), so the Word (*logos*) in John's Gospel accomplishes repentance and regeneration of spiritual life through his works in those who believe him.

The problem of associating Jesus Christ, the Word, with Yahweh's word in Isaiah 55:11 is that both use different Greek terminology. In the Johannine prologue, the Word is *logos*, while in Isaiah 55:11, Yahweh's word (*dbr*) is rendered as *rhēma* in the LXX. The case can be resolved by considering that both words can be or are used interchangeably in both Isaiah and John. In the LXX, the word *dbr* is rendered with *rhēma* more than 500 times, but even more frequently with *logos*. In fact, 'in some passages where *dbr* is repeated, the LXX alternates between the two Greek terms (e.g. Exod 34:27–28; 2 Sam 14:20–21) (Silva 2014, 4:207). In the Gospel, there seems to be hardly any distinction between the use of *rhēma* and *logos* (outside the prologue). For instance, there is hardly a real difference in John 12:48: 'The one rejecting me and not receiving my words [*rhēmata*] has one who judges him; the word [*logos*] that I have spoken, that will judge him on the last day'. Again, in 17:8a, 14: '… the words [*rhēmata*] that you gave me, I have given to them … I have given them your word [*logos*] …'.

The theme of the new creation is a conceptual link that can be drawn from what Jesus performs in John's Gospel and what the word accomplishes in Isaiah 55:11. The concept of new creation in Isaiah is depicted in two strands—historical-redemptive and eschatological.

The first strand (historical-redemptive) appears more prominently in Isaiah 40–55, where Yahweh is portrayed as performing something new (Isa 42:9; 43:18–19; 48:6), redeeming Israel from the exile. Yahweh's involvement in the deliverance of his people means that he is doing a new thing. The second strand (eschatological) occurs mainly in Isaiah 65–66, where Yahweh declares his intention to create new heavens and a new earth (65:17). 'This act of God involves complete reorganization of life; the hazards of life are removed (65:19–20, 23, 25)' and the redeemed people of God will forever live in a safe environment and with the certainty of life (Towner 1996, New Creation). Implied in both strands is the idea of reconstruction and transformation.

The Fourth Gospel depicts Jesus performing miraculous signs involving reconstruction and transformation of individuals and their situations. By performing the Father's work, which is expressed through the miraculous signs, Jesus is fulfilling or accomplishing Yahweh's will in his word.

Further enhancing the idea that Jesus embodies the fulfilment of Yahweh's will is an intriguing correspondence between Jesus finishing the work he is sent to do (John 19:28, 30; cf. 4:34; 5:36) and the accomplishing of the will of God (Isa 55:11 LXX) with creation connotation. The connection can be seen by associating Genesis 2:3, Isaiah 55:11 and John 4:34; 19:28, 30 by means of the words 'finish' (*teleō*) and 'work' (*ergon*). Thus, *tetelestai* (John 19:28, 30), *teleiōsō*, *ergon* (4:34), *suntelesthē* (Isa 55:11), *sunetelesen* and *erga* (Gen 2:2) are all suggestive of the connection between Isaiah and John in terms of creation. The completed work is a work of creation (John 4:34; cf. Gen 2:2). The one who is sent to finish the work is Jesus Christ (John 4:34) by his death on the cross (19:28, 30). Correspondingly, Yahweh's word goes forth from his mouth to accomplish what the word was willed to do (Isa 55:11). Yahweh's word accomplishes both creation and redemption.

6. Conclusion

The Fourth Gospel portrays Jesus as Creator in the series of seven miraculous signs. Several scholars have identified the theme of creation and new creation in the signs. Despite the differences in perspectives on what constitutes the seven signs, those scholars see that the seven signs allude to the creation narrative in Genesis. This study follows the traditional seven signs but diverges from focusing mainly on allusions to the creation narrative in Genesis. It contends that Jesus's role as Creator in the Gospel is influenced by Isaiah's creation theology rather than the Genesis creation account alone.

The analysis of the miraculous signs from a creational perspective reveals that Jesus, the Son, who is also the Word (*logos*), is sent by the Father to the world in order to accomplish the work of new creation through the utterances of his words (*rhēmata*) and the performance (*poieō*) of the signs (*sēmeion*) and deeds (*ergon*). This depiction of the Creator-Word seems to resemble the idea depicted in Isaiah 55:11: that Yahweh's word is efficacious and that it goes forth from him. Both are tied to the idea that Yahweh's word accomplishes what it is intended to do, which is a renewal of creation in the redemptive and eschatological sense.

The characterisation of Jesus's role as Creator in the Fourth Gospel corresponds with Isaiah 55:11 in three ways. First, the 'sending' of the Son parallels the 'going forth' of Yahweh's word. The Son, who is the Creator-Word, is being 'sent' on his Father's mission just as Yahweh's word goes forth to accomplish Yahweh's will. Second, the efficacy of Jesus's utterances corresponds to the efficacy of Yahweh's word. Just as Yahweh's word accomplishes what it is intended to do, Jesus's utterances accomplish miraculous effects. Third, Jesus's works (deeds) resemble the accomplishing of Yahweh's will. Jesus embodies all the will of the Lord. The efficacy of Yahweh's word is seen in Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the Word (*logos*), and the works that he performs. Thus, Isaiah's creation theology influences the characterisation of Jesus's role as Creator in the Fourth Gospel.

The manner in which Isaiah 55:11 influences Jesus's portrayal as Creator in the miraculous signs seems to resemble how the role and function of Yahweh's Servant are fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ in the Fourth Gospel. This resemblance presents intriguing connection between Yahweh's word (*rhēma*) in Isaiah 55:11 and his Servant as witnessed in Jesus Christ. The second part (essay) pursues this intrigue.

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Isaiah 55:11 with New Creation Theme and the Servant of the Lord as Witnessed in Jesus in the Fourth Gospel[1]

Gerard Bernard and Dan Lioy[2]

Abstract

This essay is the second in a two-part series on the theme of creation in the Fourth Gospel. The essays are based on the author's dissertation written under Professor Dan Lioy's supervision. In this particular essay, the analysis focuses on the connection between Yahweh's word (*rhēma*) in Isaiah 55:11 and his Servant as revealed in the person and works of Jesus Christ. In the redemptive sense of the new creation, Jesus fulfils the role of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah while embodying Yahweh's will contained in his (Yahweh's) word. It seems that the efficacy of Yahweh's word in Isaiah 55:11 to accomplish his will is witnessed in the fulfilment of the role of Yahweh's Servant in the person and works of Jesus Christ. At the same time, Jesus also assumes the role of the Creator-God in Isaiah.

Keywords
Creation theology; servant of the Lord; Isaiah; Fourth Gospel.

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The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

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SATS
Bible-based. Christ-centred. Spirit-led.

1. Introduction

The Fourth Gospel portrays Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the Creator-Word. In the incarnation, Jesus seems to be fulfilling the role of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah, particularly as described in Isaiah 42:1–9. While fulfilling the Servant's role, Jesus is also seen as embodying Yahweh's word (*rhēma*), which contains his (Yahweh's) creative will, in Isaiah 55:11. In other words, the efficacy of Yahweh's *rhēma* in the new creation is witnessed in Jesus Christ and his works. Thus a connection occurs between Yahweh's *rhēma* in Isaiah 55:11 and the description of Yahweh's Servant in Isaiah 42.

This essay is the second in a series of two treatises based on the author's dissertation on the theme of creation in the Fourth Gospel. In the current essay, the investigation concentrates on the connection between Yahweh's creative word (*rhēma*) in Isaiah 55:11 and his Servant as revealed in the person and works of Jesus Christ.

The investigation begins with an analysis of Isaiah 55:11 with the new creation theme since a conceptualisation of the text can be beneficial for one's understanding of the connection to the Servant in Isaiah. Following the conceptualisation is the main focus of the study. The section examines the connection between Isaiah 55:11 and the Servant of the Lord as revealed in the person and works of Jesus. Three examples demonstrate the connection, which presents Jesus as the Servant of the Lord, who is sent by God to accomplish the work of new creation. The discourse concludes with some theological implications.

2. Analysis of Isaiah 55:11 with New Creation Theme

Isaiah 55:11 is located within a passage that highlights the theme of repentance (55:6–13). The passage begins with a tripartite call to repent (vv. 6–7) followed by a tripartite substantiation of the call (vv. 8–9, 10–11, 12–13) with each part beginning with the explanatory 'for' (*ky*) (Motyer 1993:456). Motyer suggests the following structure:

A A tripartite call (vv. 6–7)

- A1 To seek the Lord (v. 6)
- A2 To forsake sin (v. 7ab)
- A3 To return to the Lord (v. 7cd)

B A tripartite substantiation of the call (vv. 8–13)

B1 The distinctive/different divine nature (vv. 8–9)

B2 The fruit-bearing word (vv. 10–11)

B3 The assured future (vv. 12–13)

Isaiah 55:11 is part of the second illustration from nature, which is read together with verse 10. Motyer (1993:457) points out the parallel between 'the life agency of rain and the effective word', stating that 'each has a heavenly origin and power of effectiveness and neither fails'. On the one hand, the origin of the word is more specific: 'from my mouth'. On the other hand, the result is less specific and undefined: 'which I purpose … the thing for which I sent it'. It is clear that God's word is 'the unfailing agent of the will of God'. It is meant to accomplish repentance. Motyer notes that 'the call to repent is a word of God bringing with it its own power of accomplishment'. God's word 'plants the seed of repentance in the heart and feeds the returning sinner with the blessed consequences repentance produces' (p. 458).

The text highlights the effectiveness of Yahweh's word in accomplishing what it is intended to do (cf. Friesen 2009:346–347; Motyer 1993:457–458; Young 1972:383). The word that comes from Yahweh's mouth (Isa 55:11; cf. 45:23; 48:3) is efficacious to accomplish his intended purpose. For Isaiah, Yahweh's word 'is not primarily something with a content, but the instrument by means of which something is effected. God's word is a word that does things. When God speaks, something comes about' (Westermann 1969:289). One of Yahweh's intended purposes, when he speaks, is the creation of the world, as seen in the Genesis creation account (Gen 1). Concerning this, Friesen (2009:346–347) comments: 'The word calling for light flowed from God's mouth' and 'The creation of light accomplished the purpose for which the word was spoken'. Isaiah brings this creation perspective beyond Genesis and introduces the idea of a new creation.

The context (Isa 55:6–13) indicates the idea of new creation in the redemptive and eschatological sense. The redemptive sense can be seen in the call to repent (Isa 55:6–7). The tripartite call (noted above) to repent—seek the Lord (v. 6), forsake sin and return to the Lord (v. 7)—is presented to the wicked ones so that God will have mercy on them and forgive them. This call to repent is, in a sense, creative because it involves God's transforming act in dealing with human hearts. The eschatological sense of creation is signified in Isaiah 55:12–13, where nature is metaphorically depicted as bursting into jubilant singing and clapping of hands. Motyer (1993:458) asserts

that 'the thrust of verses 12–13 is to encourage response [repentance] by affirming the joys that await, i.e. new life in a new world'. He points out that 'the personal transformation' noted in verse 12 is 'surrounded by environmental transformations'. The language Isaiah uses indicates the reversal of the curse that followed sin (Gen 3:17f). 'Thornbush' and 'briers' disappear and are replaced by much friendlier plants. The nature of the fallen state is now depicted in the original order of nature intended by the Creator before the Fall. 'The symbols of death and the curse are replaced by those of life'.

3. The Servant of the Lord as Witnessed in Jesus Christ

Hanson (1995:182) suggests that the Servant and Yahweh's word (Isa 55:11) 'play closely related roles in relation to God's will' in Isaiah 40–55. He points out the connection between Isaiah 53:10 and 55:11:

> '… the will of Yahweh will prosper/succeed [*ytslch*] by his [the Servant] hand' (53:10)
>
> '… My word … will prosper/succeed [*htslych*] in the thing for which I sent it' (55:11)

The parallel seems to suggest that the accomplishing of Yahweh's will contained in his word (*rhēma*) may be fulfilled in the person and works of the Servant. The Gospel of John depicts Jesus as assuming the tasks associated with the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah. As such, he accomplishes the work of new creation the Father sends him to do. Three examples may demonstrate this fact: (1) the healing of the man born blind, (2) the raising of Lazarus and (3) the breathing of the Holy Spirit on his disciples in conjunction with Jesus's commissioning of them.

3.1. The servant in the healing of the man born blind

The healing of the man born blind focuses on the revelation of God's work. Jesus's speech indicates that his motivation is 'working the work' (*ergazesthai ta erga*) of the One who sends him (*tou pempsantos me*) while it is in the daytime. His speech depicts the sender-messenger motif (John 9:4) and him being the light of the world (v. 5) who gives sight to the blind. Jesus's non-emphatic 'I am' statement ('I am the light of the world' [*phōs eimi tou kosmou*]) is uttered here in connection with working the works of God, implying that, as light, he reveals God's work in renewing the life of the blind man.

Jesus's action resembles the Creator's act in the creation of Adam (Gen 2). His actions involve hands, mud and words of command. The

story casts Jesus in the Creator's role. Irenaeus, one of the earliest commentators of John, suggests that Jesus's use of mud to heal the blind man alludes to God's use of the dust of the ground in the creation of Adam in Genesis 2:7 (*Against Heresies* 5:15.2 [Schaff 1885, ANF 1:1338]; cf. Brodie 1993:347; Brown 1966, 1:372; Michaels 2010, exposition §III.M). However, some modern commentators are not comfortable with the suggestion. Barrett (1978:358), for instance, considers that a reading such as Irenaeus' is 'improbable'. The main reason for the dismissal is the difference in the Greek terms used to identify the materials (mud or dust) which Jesus uses in the healing (McDonough 2009:34). However, lexical analysis of the terms used in the OT, the Dead Sea Scroll and ancient Near Eastern texts supports Irenaeus' suggestion (Frayer-Griggs 2013:670; McDonough 2009:35). 'John portrays Jesus as standing firmly in place of the creator God, fashioning from the earth new eyes for the man born blind, bringing his portion of the creation to its intended fullness' (McDonough 2009:35).

As one reads through the story of the healing of the man born blind, several correspondences may be discerned between the context of the story and the description of the Servant's tasks in Isaiah. First, Jesus claims to be 'the light of the world' (John 9:5; cf. 8:12 [the emphatic expression of the same]). This claim comes right before Jesus performs the act of restoration to the blind man. The Servant of the Lord is said to be 'a light to the nations' in order to 'open blind eyes' (Isa 42:6, 7; cf. 49:6). The allusion is clear: 'light of the world' corresponds to 'light to the nations' and healing the man born blind alludes to the Servant opening blind eyes. Jesus's claim and action 'seem[s] to answer the Isaianic motif of the Servant as the "light to the nations"' (Hamilton 2007:154) and as one who 'open[s] blind eyes'. Jesus 'implicitly assumes the identity of the Servant' (Ball 1996:260).

The coming of light into darkness to enlighten humanity is typically a Messianic expression, particularly from Isaiah (9:2 [HB 9:1]; 42:6; 49:6; 60:1, 3; Mal 4:2) (cf. Köstenberger 2004:32, 35; Horbury 1998:92–93, 99–100). Similarly, the recovery of sight to the blind is Messianic (Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7; 61:1 LXX) (Köstenberger 2007:459). The Servant is called 'My Chosen One' by Yahweh in Isaiah 42:1 (cf. 41:8–9; 49:7), an expression which refers to the Messiah. In John's Gospel, Jesus is 'the light of the world' (John 8:12; 9:5). Some walk in the night (darkness) and need to be led to believe in the light and walk in it so that they may become children of light (cf. 11:9–10; 12:35–36). Jesus has come as a light in order to deliver from darkness those who believe him (12:46). Jesus's Messianic/Servant

function as 'light' resembles the expression of the Messianic text in Isaiah 9:2: 'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light'.

Second, Isaiah 42:3 depicts the Servant of the Lord as one who 'will not break a bruised reed' or 'put out a smouldering wick' but 'will faithfully bring justice'. He will demonstrate 'sensitivity to the weak (bruised reed) and sympathy to the faint (dimly burning wick)' (Friesen 2009:249). Correspondingly, Jesus does not 'break' the already 'bruised' man or 'put out' what is left of him after he was thrown out from the synagogue by the Pharisees. In keeping with the portrait of the good shepherd in the ensuing discourse (Ridderbos 1997:347), Jesus takes the initiative to find him and 'brought him to decisive and knowledgeable faith' (Carson 1991:375). Jesus faithfully brings justice to the man by saying that he comes into the world for judgement in order that those who do not see will see and those who see will become blind (John 9:39). Thus, he implicitly brings justice to the man who was blind by declaring that he can now see spiritual truth concerning him as the Son of Man that the Pharisees cannot see (cf. 9:35).

Third, Jesus speaks of him doing the work of 'him who sent me' (John 9:4) as a prelude speech to the act of healing of the man born blind. Then, in verse 5 he claims to be the light of the world, which seems to allude to the calling of the Servant by Yahweh in Isaiah 42. The Lord, who is identified as Creator (Isa 42:5), calls the Servant 'for a righteous purpose' (42:6), indicating that the call is without dubious intent (Oswalt 1998:117). Although the passage in Isaiah 42:1–9 does not explicitly employ the term for 'sending', the language indicates that the call of the Servant is for a mission. Therefore, it seems appropriate to say that Jesus and the Servant are both called and 'sent' for a mission.

It is intriguing to note, however, that in this story, Jesus is also depicted as uttering efficacious words. He instructed (*eipen*) the man to go (*hupage*, imperative) and wash (*nipsai*, imperative) in the pool of Siloam (meaning 'Sent'). Both action and words of command are present in the whole process of healing. The man goes to the pool as instructed and comes back seeing (*blepōn*). Jesus's instruction is met with the man's obedience and an act of faith. An interesting wordplay occurs here. The Father sends Jesus. Now he is sending the man to the pool which carries the name 'Sent'.

3.2. The servant in the raising of Lazarus

The raising of Lazarus to life reveals the truthfulness of Jesus's claim: 'I am the resurrection and the life' (*egō eimi hē anastasis kai hē zōē*) (John 11:25). Life is in Jesus (1:4) and it is his prerogative to give to anyone he wishes (5:21). Lazarus' resurrection is a manifestation of God's glory and the glorification of the Son (11:4, 40). By raising a dead person, Jesus demonstrates God's creative power. He wants the crowd who witnesses the event to know his true identity—the Messiah whom the Father has sent (11:42). As the Sent One of the Father, Jesus acts as one with the Father in restoring life to Lazarus. He acts the role of a Creator.

Jesus calls Lazarus out with words of command: 'Lazarus, come out' (John 11:43). His shout of command is 'wonderfully succinct' (Morris 1995:498, note 89; cf. Barrett 1978:403) and one 'of raw authority' (Burge 2000:320). Life comes back to the dead body. The Creator-Word raises the dead through his life-giving words. The power of his voice expresses 'the power of God by which the dead are brought to life' (Ridderbos 1997:406). He can bring back life because he is the Creator of life, exercising his 'Creator-like power' (Brodie 1993:397).

The entire process implies a reconstruction and renewal of the decomposing body. The story emphasises the truth that death is not the end of life for those who believe in Christ. They experience a renewal of life. As illustrated by Jesus's command to 'unbind' (*lusate*, aorist imperative) Lazarus and to 'let him go' (*aphete auton hupagein*) (John 11:44), the renewed spiritual life will receive freedom from sin, which binds them, and the gift of eternal life.

The main correspondence one can discern between the story of the raising of the dead Lazarus to life and the portrayal of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah is in Jesus's command for Lazarus to come out and the proclamation of his (Lazarus) release. Jesus commands Lazarus, 'Come forth' (John 11:43) and when Lazarus has come out, he proclaims, 'Loose him and let him go' (v. 44). Hamilton (2007:157–158) suggests that this proclamation of Jesus is 'reminiscent of Isaiah's proclamation that the Servant would say 'to those who are bound, go forth, and to those who are in darkness, show yourselves' (Isa 49:9)'. The indication that Lazarus 'came out' (John 11:44) and the phrase 'go forth' (Isa 49:9) employ the same Greek verb, *exerchomai*.

The text in Isaiah 49:9 is not a direct creation text, but the context which speaks of the Servant does refer to Yahweh as speaking in his role as Creator 'who formed me from the womb' (49:5). Furthermore, in another Servant passage (42:1–9), the idea that the Servant

releases prisoners from the 'dungeon', those that sit 'in darkness from the prison house' (42:7), seems to parallel the idea in 49:9. Unlike the utterance in 49:9, Yahweh, in his identity as Creator, utters the words in 42:7. Thus, when one associates Isaiah 49:9 with the context of 42:7, a direct creation connotation emerges, which suggests that the release from the bondage of darkness is a creative work Yahweh does through the Servant. The implication of the story of Lazarus is that the raising of the dead Lazarus to life is a creative work done by Jesus, the Creator-Word (cf. 1:3, 10).

As noted in the previous example, 'light' and being called 'to be sent' for a mission are motifs that have been associated with the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah. One can see the same motifs in the story of the restoration of Lazarus to life. The context of the story depicts Jesus as speaking of one being able to walk and not stumbling because he walks during the day and sees the light (John 11:9; cf. 8:12; 9:5) and one who stumbles because he walks in the night and the light is not in him (11:10; cf. 12:35). Jesus utters his prayer so that the crowds who stand there may believe that the Father sends him (11:42). Both motifs—'light' and being 'sent'—provide links that could indicate an Isaianic influence on John's portrayal of Jesus as Creator in the story of the raising of Lazarus.

The restoration of Lazarus to life is possible because Jesus is the source of life (cf. John 5:21, 26). Yahweh is identified as the Creator of the cosmos and humankind in Isaiah 42:5. He gives 'breath' (*nshmh*; LXX: *pnoēn*) and 'spirit' (*rwch*; LXX: *pneuma*) to the people who live on the earth he created. It is instructive to note here that the giving of life to Lazarus does not assume any of the tasks of the Servant of the Lord, although his (the Servant) tasks involve redemption. The giving of life is Yahweh's work. Moreover, the giving of life through Jesus's utterance resembles the efficacy of Yahweh's word in Isaiah 55:11. In other words, Jesus assumes Yahweh's role in Isaiah 42:5–9 when he raises Lazarus to life.

3.3. The servant in the sending of the disciples and breathing of the Holy Spirit

In Jesus's first post-resurrection appearance to his disciples, he greets his disciples twice saying, 'peace be to you' (*eirēnē humin*) (John 20:19, 21). The double greetings seem to signal that what comes after the greetings is significant. The first greeting is followed by Jesus showing his hands and side, resulting in the disciples' rejoicing. The second greeting is followed by Jesus's 'sending' (*pempō*) of his disciples in parallel with the Father's 'sending' (*apostellō*) of

him (v. 21). Coloe (2011:9–10) suggests that the first 'peace' greeting focuses 'on the believer's relationship to Jesus' while the second focuses 'on the believer's relationship to the world, as the agent of Jesus in the world'.

Jesus's next act is one that alludes to the Creator's act of breathing (Heb: *nphch*; LXX: *emphusaō*) into Adam the breath of life in Genesis 2:7. Jesus 'breathes' (*enephusēsen*) on his disciples and commands them to 'receive' (*labete*) the Holy Spirit (v. 22). Brown (2010:282) asserts that this act of breathing is 'the final and most clearly recognized allusion to Genesis 2' and that 'virtually all commentators understand John to be echoing the moment in Gen 2:7' (e.g. Beasely-Murray 1999:380–381; Brodie 1993:569; Carson 1991:651; Lincoln 2005:499; Hoskyns 1920:216; Kesich 1982:167).

As noted, Genesis 2:7 LXX employs the verb *emphusaō* to convey God's breathing into Adam the breath of life (*pnoēn zōēs*). John uses the same verb *emphusaō* to express Jesus's breathing of the Holy Spirit (*pneuma hagion*) to his disciples. The word *emphusaō* is an unusual term—occurring only 11 times in the LXX and a *hapax* in the NT. John's use of it in 20:22 'clearly echoes the first story of human enlivenment in Genesis 2' (Brown 2010:282). Thus, 'John wants us to see here an act of creation' (Pryor 1992:89). However, since the Holy Spirit is involved (cf. Ezek 37:9), Jesus's breathing on the disciples is also seen as 'the beginning of the new creation, the awakening of the dead' in spiritual terms (Carson 1991:651; cf. Barrett 1978:570; Brodie 1993:569; Keener 2003, 2:1204); Morris 1995:747, n. 58; Wright 2004, 2:150). Jesus has the power to give life in its fullness through the Holy Spirit. The restoration of life in its fullness is possible in the new creation.

In addition to the giving of the Holy Spirit, Jesus gives his disciples the authority to forgive and retain sins (John 20:23). The forgiving and retaining of sins is a divine work of redemption, which Jesus now entrusts to the disciples. Rae (2008) asserts that 'the exercise of that authority, in the name of Christ, is the redemptive extension of God's creative work' (p. 300). The church is to continue the pattern of new creation 'because the Son has given his Spirit for the continuation of his work' (p. 299). As part of the 'sending' of the disciples, the giving of authority provides the disciples with the assurance of the source of their mission and power as they work in the formation of a new people who are born of the Spirit and endowed with new, spiritual life.

There seem to be some links between John 20:22 and the story of the healing of the man born blind in John 9:1–7. Both incidents depict Jesus as performing an act that resembles the act of the Creator-God in the creation of man. Also, both contain the instruction of 'sending'. In John 9:1–7, Jesus makes mud, apparently using his saliva and hands, rubs it on the man's eyes and instructs (sends) him to wash in the pool of Siloam (meaning 'Sent'). He identifies himself as the one whom the Father has sent to do his (Father's) works (9:4). In John 20:22, Jesus speaks of the 'sending' of his disciples just as the Father has sent him, then he breathes the Spirit on them. In both cases, it seems, 'Jesus's authority to act as the sender is based on his close association with the One who sent him' (Siliezar 2015:168–169). Thus, in portraying the resemblance of Jesus's act of breathing the Holy Spirit with the act of the Creator-God in the creation of man (Gen 2:7), John also associates Jesus with the idea of 'sending'.

Jesus's breathing of the Holy Spirit on his disciples (John 20:21–23) may not be directly related to fulfilling the role of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah. Nevertheless, Jesus's reiteration of the fact that the Father has sent him seems to evoke the calling of the Servant to accomplish the mission given to him.

Subsequently, Jesus modelled his act of 'sending' the disciples after the Father's act of sending him. He now seems to assume the authority of God. Jesus's acts of breathing the Holy Spirit and sending his disciples for a mission of redemption suggest that he may be assuming Yahweh's role as one who gives 'breath'/'spirit' (Isa 42:5) and calls the Servant for a mission (42:6).

Thus, when Jesus says, 'As the Father has sent me, I also send you' (John 20:21), he identifies himself with both the Servant of Isaiah, who has been associated with specific activities and the Creator-God, who called the Servant for a purpose. He identifies himself with the Servant by performing the Servant's activities and with the Creator-God by sending his disciples to continue his work.

4. Conclusion and Implication

This study focused on analysing the connection between Yahweh's creative word (*rhēma*) (Isa 55:11) and the role of Yahweh's Servant as seen embodied in the person and works of Jesus Christ. The analysis began with an examination of Isaiah 55:11 with a new creation theme. It revealed that Isaiah 55:11, in context, depicted the new creation in the redemptive and eschatological sense. The redemptive sense portrayed Yahweh's word as efficaciously uttered to accomplish his will for people's repentance. It was pointed out

that the efficacy of Yahweh's word in accomplishing his will (Isa 55:11) paralleled the Servant's success in accomplishing Yahweh's will (53:10).

Three examples demonstrated the connection between Yahweh's word in Isaiah 55:11 and his Servant: (1) the giving of sight to the man born blind, (2) the restoration of life to Lazarus' dead body and (3) the breathing of the Holy Spirit on the disciples. The analysis of the examples revealed that Jesus fulfilled the role of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah while also embodying Yahweh's word (*rhēma*) containing his (Yahweh) will in Isaiah 55:11.

The connection presented several intriguing implications. First, it implied that what Yahweh's word accomplished was what the Servant of the Lord also accomplished. Since Yahweh's creative word accomplished his will in the new creation, the Servant also accomplished the work of the new creation. In the Gospel of John, Jesus was portrayed as one who came down from heaven to do God's will (John 6:38), which was to give life to the world (as implied in John 3:16; 6:39–40; 12:50; cf. 5:21, 26) through acts of the new creation. Thus, for instance, Jesus gave 'new life' to the man born blind by giving him sight both in physical and spiritual terms. He also restored life to Lazarus who had been dead. In both miraculous signs, the tasks and functions associated with the Servant of the Lord—that is, the light of the world, restoring the sight to the blind and instructing to 'release' and 'let go'—were taken up by Jesus.

Second, since Jesus also uttered words, the connection seemed to imply that Jesus assumed Yahweh's role as he (Yahweh) spoke to the Servant in his role as Creator of the world and humankind (Isa 42:5) and uttered his *rhēma* that accomplished his will (55:11). In John's Gospel, Jesus uttered words to accomplish miraculous feats. Thus, in the first example noted above, Jesus spoke to the man born blind as part of the whole process of restoring the man's sight, which implied an act of creation. He also 'sent' the man to the pool of 'Sent' to complete the process of healing. In the second example, Jesus uttered words that restored Lazarus to life. His utterance of the life-giving words resembled that of the creation in Genesis 1 (cf. Ezek 37). Similarly, the breathing on the disciples was a reminiscence of the breathing of the breath of life on Adam at creation. Moreover, in the same post-resurrection narrative, Jesus assumed the authority of sending the disciples in the same way as the Father had sent him.

Thus, Jesus took up a dual role—as the Servant and as the Creator-God—all at the same time. In assuming the role of the Servant, Jesus claimed to be 'the light of the world' (John 8:12; 9:5) and sent

by the Father (11:42; 20:21). He gave sight to the man born blind (9:6–7) and called Lazarus from the 'bondage of darkness' (11:43:44). In taking up Yahweh's identity, Jesus called Lazarus from the grave—a 'bondage of darkness'—by his creative words and gave him life (11:43:44). He also sent his disciples and rebreathed in them a new life through the Holy Spirit (20:21–23). In assuming one role (Servant), Jesus also took up another (Yahweh). As he embodied both roles, all tasks and functions associated with both identities coalesced in him.

This dual portrayal of Jesus could also be seen expressed in the interplay between Isaiah 55:11 and Jesus's activities in the incarnation. Jesus, the Creator-Word, uttered words to effect miracles (e.g. the healing of the official's son and the raising of Lazarus). Jesus's words accomplished what they were intended to do. Jesus also performed the Father's work and will, which were expressed through the miraculous signs, so that those who believed might have life. By performing the miraculous signs, Jesus seemed to embody all the will of the Lord in the word (*dbr*; LXX: *rhēma*) that went forth from Yahweh's mouth. By uttering words that effected miracles, Jesus seemed to assume the role of Yahweh, whose word went forth like rain to accomplish his (Yahweh's) will.

Finally, the connection implied that the creation theology of Isaiah had influenced the way Jesus, the Creator-Word, is portrayed in the Fourth Gospel. Both Yahweh's *rhēma* and his Servant were themes coming from Isaiah and seemed to be related to the new creation motif. The Fourth Gospel has portrayed Jesus as the incarnation of the Creator-Word, who fulfilled the efficacy of Yahweh's creative word as well as the tasks of the Servant of the Lord.

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'You Are a Priest Forever': An Exegetical and Biblical Theology of High Priestly Christology[1]

Clifford B Kvidahl and Dan Lioy[2]

Abstract

The letter to the Hebrews is unique among its New Testament counterparts in that it is the only canonical writing to offer an in-depth explanation of the high priestly ministry of Christ within a detailed discussion of Israel's cultic theology. The purpose of this article is twofold. First, the question of timing with respect to *when* Christ was installed as high priest is addressed, noting the various answers that have been proposed. It is argued that similar to the ministry of the high priest on Yom Kippur, Christ's priestly offering is made not at the moment of his crucifixion, but instead his offering of atonement is made upon his entrance into the heavenly sanctuary. The second part of this article attempts to briefly situate Hebrews' high priestly Christology within a broader biblical theology of the New Testament, specifically focusing on select passages from the Gospels and the writings of Paul that have been imbued with priestly connotations. It is argued that, while often other writings of the New Testament are appealed to for a proper understanding of the cultic theology of Hebrews, this same practice is not often reciprocated in return. If this were so, it would seem to be rather clear that Hebrews offers no support for an earthly Jesus functioning in priestly manner.

Keywords
High priest, Christology, atonement, heavenly sanctuary.

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The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

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1. Introduction

One of the most important contributions the letter to the Hebrews offers with respect to Christology is its unique emphasis on the high priesthood of Christ. No other New Testament writing offers such a descriptive picture of Christ's installation as high priest, his process of perfection, or his entry into the heavenly sanctuary and subsequent offering for sin. Overall, Hebrews provides the most vivid picture of Christ's high priesthood ministry in action, one that follows the movement of the Levitical high priest on Yom Kippur rather closely. This article will explore the high priestly Christology of Hebrews, specifically as it relates to the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ into the heavenly sanctuary. Each of these aspects plays an important role in shaping Hebrews' discussion of priesthood, while the language of ascension takes precedence in Hebrews.

The central focal point of this article will address the following question: is there a discernible point in time when Jesus was appointed and installed as high priest? In light of the oath made by God to appoint Jesus high priest after the order of Melchizedek (see 5:6; 6.20; 7:17, 21), does Hebrews give any indication of when this oath was made, and consequently, when Jesus took his place as high priest? While it may appear that such a question is making a distinction without a difference, it will be argued that this is in fact not the case; the timing of Christ's installation as high priest is directly connected to the question of *when* and *where* the atonement occurred. Therefore, formulating a hypothesis as to the timing of Christ's installation serves a crucial part in the overall cultic theology of Hebrews.

As will be exhibited below, there have been a number of proposals put forward that attempt to answer the question of when Jesus became high priest. To address this issue, this article will be structured around two main parts. The first part surveys the proposals that have been offered regarding *when* Christ was installed as high priest. Because Hebrews offers the most extensive description and sustained argument on this topic, the various proposals focus exclusively on what commentators of Hebrews have concluded on this topic. The second part broadens out from Hebrews to examine what other writers of the New Testament have to say about Christ as priest. The focus in this second part is to examine briefly those passages that have been given some type of priestly association with respect to the person of Christ. Simply stated, does the New Testament portray Christ as functioning in a priestly manner?

While it is important to map various themes across the landscape of Scripture, it will be evident from this brief survey that sometimes these themes are informed more by a certain theological tradition than they are by the source of their origin.

2. A Survey of Hebrews' High Priestly Christology

The importance of the priesthood for the author of Hebrews cannot be overstated. In fact, Nairne goes so far as to suggest that the priesthood of Christ is the central theme of the entire letter (1913:136). As evidenced in the author's central section (Hebrews 8–10), where the focus is on the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ, the office and function of the priesthood lingers under the surface; just as there is no offering without an officiant, in Hebrews, there is no sacrifice of atonement without a great high priest serving at the *heavenly* altar. Moving outside the testimony of Hebrews, the references to Christ as high priest become fainter, with no more than possible echoes to activities associated with the priesthood attached to the person of Christ. And while there is some debate as to whether Christ is functioning in a priestly capacity outside of Hebrews, the testimony of Hebrews is clear in its affirmation that Christ is unable to serve at the altar (see Heb 7:13–14; 8:4).

This section will address the following question: is there a discernible point in time when Jesus was appointed and installed as high priest? In light of the oath made by God to appoint Jesus high priest after the order of Melchizedek (see 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21), does Hebrews give any indication of *when* this oath was made, and consequently when Jesus took his place as high priest? While it may appear that such a question is making a distinction without a difference, it will be argued that this is in fact not the case; the timing of Christ's installation as high priest is directly connected to the question of *when* and *where* the atonement occurred. Therefore, formulating a hypothesis with respect to the timing of Christ's installation serves a crucial part in the overall cultic theology of Hebrews.

2.1. Eternal High Priest

One answer proposed for the question of *when* Christ became high priest is to understand his priesthood as eternal. In this manner, the installation took place before the creation of the cosmos. The use of Psalm 110:4 (109:4 LXX) in conjunction with Psalm 2:7 in Hebrews 5:5–6 may be taken as support for such a view. As seen earlier in the catena of Hebrews 1:5–13, the author establishes the exalted status of the eternal Son by means of two royal Psalms: 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14 (see also Heb 1:3: ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς

ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ). Therefore, by connecting God's declaration (ὀμνύω) of an eternal priest (Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) with that of a declaration of Jesus's eternal Sonship, it can be deduced that Christ was both Son and priest from all eternity (see Büchsel 1922:15; Moffatt 1924:64; Bates 2015:55).

Also providing support for such a reading is the author of Hebrews' midrash on Genesis 14:17–20 (see Heb 7:1–10) and Psalm 110:4 (Heb 7:11–28) in chapter seven (Caird 1959:47–48; Fitzmyer 1963:305; Cockerill 1976:18; 288–307; Horton 1976:12–53; Thompson 1977:209–23; Ellingworth 1983:258; Parsons 1988:212–13; Attridge 1989:186; Lane 1991:158–59; Rooke 2000:81–94; Mason 2008:25–26; Granerød 2009:194–95). Take for instance the opening verses' historical recounting of the meanings of Melchizedek's royal names and lack of lineage (7:1–3). Of importance to the topic at hand is the author's assertion that Melchizedek has 'neither beginning of days nor end of life' (μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων). Alongside the lack of genealogical record, such vague and ambiguous declarations by the author of Hebrews provide just enough scriptural precedent for the possibility of Christ's preincarnate priesthood. For the author of Hebrews, the lack of parentage and genealogy provides for him the exegetical soil necessary for the comparison between Melchizedek and the Son of God, while also allowing just enough room for speculation with regard to the eternality of Melchizedek and the nature of his priesthood.

2.2. Earthly High Priest

Another way to answer the question regarding the timing of Christ's installation as high priest is to perceive of Christ's installation as high priest as an event occurring prior to his crucifixion. Chrysostom states in no uncertain terms that Christ became high priest at the moment of his incarnation: 'And observe the mystery. First it was royal, and then it is become sacerdotal: so therefore, also in regard to Christ: for King indeed He always was, *but has become Priest from the time that He assumed the Flesh*, that He offered the sacrifice' (*Hom. Heb.* 13:2, emphasis added; see Spicq 1953:2.211; Cody 1960:97; Loader 1981:245–47; O'Collins and Jones 2010:49–50; Richardson 2012:42; 47–48). Kistemaker and Scholer, on the other hand, are a bit more ambiguous, concluding at most that the Son functions as a priest during his earthly ministry (Kistemaker 1984:252–53; Scholer 1991:87–89; see Schreiner 2015:160).

2.3. High Priest at the cross

A third answer to this question of timing suggests that Christ is installed as high priest at the cross. In this manner, the cross functions not only as the place where atonement is accomplished,

but also as the 'starting point for the high priest's atoning work' (Käsemann 2002:223; see Peake 1879:137; Peterson 1982:195; Ellingworth 1993:397; Wallis 1995:146; Fuhrmann 2007:102–17; 2008:94–96). This view of Christ's installation coheres nicely with the more traditional understanding of the cross functioning as the place of atonement. In order to be consistent with the role of a priest and the presentation of his offering before God, it is necessary to hold to a view of installation that coincides with the cross. For the death of the Son of God to be considered as an offering for sin, Christ must also be high priest in order for such an offering to be acceptable to God.

2.4. Resurrected as High Priest

A final answer offered, and the one affirmed in this article, is the installation of Christ as high priest upon his entrance into the heavenly sanctuary and subsequent exaltation to God's right hand (Brooks 1970:207; Eskola 2001:259; 264; Moffitt 2011:194–208; Filtvedt 2015:85–87; Kibbe 2016:162–63; Jamieson 2019:25). The Italian theologian Faustus Socinus can be traced back as one of the earliest proponents of this view. Socinus rightly grasps the logical connection between the activity of the Levitical high priest (immolation → entry into the tabernacle → manipulation of blood) with that of Christ in Hebrews (cross → entry into heavenly sanctuary → offering of sacrifice). This leads him to conclude that the cross is the not the location of Christ's self-offering; instead, Christ's self-offering occurs in heaven. It is not until his glorification and attainment of an indestructible life that Christ is inaugurated as high priest and is thus able to offer his sacrifice as high priest (see Demarest 1976:22 n. 2; Kibbe 2014:25–61; 2017:134–55).

While on earth, Christ is barred from serving as high priest. This is due in part to two important factors. First, Jesus's genealogy prohibits him from serving in the earthly sanctuary. As Hebrews makes clear, Jesus is a descendant from the tribe of Judah, a tribe that has no priestly representation (7:13–14). This distinction is important for the development of the author's cultic theology, particularly in its relationship with the inauguration of a new covenant, and with it, a new priesthood (see Heb 7:11–22; 8:7–13; 9:15–21). The second factor that prohibits Christ from serving as a priest while on earth is the presence of the Levitical priesthood itself. As long as the Mosaic covenant and Levitical priesthood were operative in Jerusalem, the Melchizedekian high priest is unable to offer gifts or sacrifices within the holy sanctuary (Heb 8:4). Moffitt rightly notes that the problem Jesus faces with regard to his role as high priest while on earth is a problem created by the incarnation. Although he is the Son of God

and appointed by God to be high priest, his elevation to that office is prohibited by his tribal genealogy (Moffitt 2019:160). Therefore, for these reasons the priesthood that Christ assumes must be one that has no geographical or genealogical connection to the Mosaic covenant or Levitical cult.

If it is the case that Christ is unable to present his offering for sin while on earth, where then is his offering made? Because a priest is appointed 'to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins' (ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν; 5:1), and Christ is genealogically barred from presenting such an offering while he is on earth, the logical conclusion, and one that is supported by the text of Hebrews, is that Christ presents his offering for sin upon his ascension into the heavenly sanctuary (8:1–4; see Moffitt 2017:162). Such a line of reasoning implies that Christ obtains his role as high priest at some time after his resurrection.

This conclusion is supported by the author of Hebrews' declaration that the priesthood which Christ receives is not because of genealogy, but instead is based on the 'power of an indestructible life' (ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου; 7:16). The word ἀκατάλυτος occurs only here in the New Testament, carrying the sense of 'endless' or 'perpetual' (BDAG: s.v. ἀκατάλυτος; GE: s.v. ἀκατάλυτος; LSJ s.v. ἀκατάλυτος). The only occurrence of ἀκατάλυτος in related literature is found in 4 Maccabees 10:11, where it refers to eternal torments (ἀκαταλύτους βασάνους). At the resurrection of Christ, God declares the Son a high priest in perpetuity, which enables him to present his offering upon his ascension into the heavenly sanctuary.

The author of Hebrews organizes his homily in such a way as to illustrate the Son of God's qualification to serve as high priest. The various qualifications for appointment to high priest can be grouped together under one rubric in Hebrews: the author's use of τελειόω and its related cognates. Perfection is the requisite characteristic that is required for the Son to function as the Melchizedekian high priest.

Hebrews 5:7–10 outlines the steps the historical Jesus took on his way to perfection, and ultimately his installation as high priest. In Hebrews 5:7, the author provides a snapshot of the earthly life of Jesus (ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ), along with his Passion (δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῴζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας), and because of his reverence/fear (ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας) he is heard by God (εἰσακουσθεὶς). There is some debate as to the precise meaning of ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας in the context of 5:7.

Most translations take ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας as a reference to Christ's piety, hence the translation 'because of his reverence/piety/reverent submission'.

Another possible meaning is to understand the noun εὐλαβείας as a reference to fear, which provides the following translation, 'because of his fear'. The fear referenced here points back to the prepositional phrase πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σώζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου in 5:7. This fear of death is similar to Hebrews 2:14–15 and the universal fear of death (φόβῳ θανάτου) that has plagued mankind since the Garden. By sharing in our humanity, Jesus likewise agrees to take on the shared experiences of humanity, none more universal than the fear of death. It is this fear of death that the Son experiences during his Passion, deliverance from which he prays for and is heard (Ellingworth 1993:290). The content of Jesus's prayer is important in the context of perfection and installation as high priest; it is the plea of the Son for deliverance from death (ἐκ θανάτου). But what precisely does the prepositional phrase ἐκ θανάτου refer to in 5:7, and how does it relate to perfection and priestly installation?

In the context of 5:7 Jesus is praying for deliverance from his impending crucifixion ('Bitte um Bewahrung vor dem Tod,' Braun 1984:142). But this understanding introduces an inherent contradiction within Hebrews 5:7, namely that Jesus's prayer went unanswered. Montefiore attempts to solve this by proposing that his prayer is in fact answered, just not in the way one would expect. Montefiore suggests instead of the cross, the deliverance that is granted to Jesus is from the fear of death itself (1964:98–99). Given the context of Hebrews 2:14–15 and the reference to fearing death, this is a plausible interpretive option. While not addressing the exact issue as Montefiore, Bruce likewise suggests a possible double entendre for ἐκ θανάτου in 5:7, offering Hosea 13:14 as a possible example of such an occurrence (1990:129 n.51). Attridge attempts to solve this conundrum by delaying God's answer to prayer until the time of Christ's exaltation (1989:150; see Jeremias 1953:109–110). Unfortunately, none of these options adequately solve the contextual problem of Hebrews' affirmation that Christ is in fact heard and his prayer answered.

In the context of Hebrews 5:7–10, it would appear what Jesus prays for, and which God answers, is to be saved *out of* death and not from the actual moment of death (Easter 2014:122–24; see Kurianal 2000:70; Moffitt 2008:69–71; Richardson 2008:60). The answer to Jesus's prayer is granted in the act of his resurrection out of the realm of death (see Sir 48.5: ὁ ἐγείρας νεκρὸν ἐκ θανάτου). The earthly life of Jesus is one learning obedience through suffering (5:8). This

all culminates in 5:9, where 'after Christ is perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation'. This perfection, indicated by the aorist passive participle τελειωθεὶς, refers to the earthly completion of Christ's sufferings in 5:8, after which he became the source of eternal salvation (ἐγένετο ... αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου). The events in 5:7–10 are laid out in a sequential manner: Passion, suffering and death, perfection/resurrection, source of eternal salvation and installation as Melchizedekian high priest. At his resurrection, Christ achieves perfection and is made fit to enter the heavenly sanctuary and offer his sacrifice before the altar of God (Jamieson 2019:25–35; see Moffitt 2011:194–214).

3. A Biblical Theology of the Priesthood of Christ

While the letter to the Hebrews is unique among its New Testament counterparts in its presentation of Christ as the great high priest, some scholars suggest that there are echoes in the Gospels and the letters of Paul of a Messiah functioning in a priestly manner (see Cullmann 1963:83–89; Feuillet 1975; Fletcher-Louis 2006:155–75; 2007:57–79; Pitre 2008:47–83; Wenkel 2014:195–201; Piotrowski and Schrock 2016:3–13; Perrin 2018a:81–99; 2019b). Although these echoes never rise to the level of Hebrews' overtly high priestly Christology, they nevertheless introduce incidents in the life of Christ that may contain echoes to activities associated with the Levitical priesthood.

3.1 The Synoptic Gospels

Perhaps the definitive role associated with the Levitical priesthood is the officiating of the sacrifice and the duty of the high priest in assuming the burden of Israel's sin. The duty of bearing the burden of Israel's sin is first set out to Aaron in a chapter focused on a description of the high priestly garments. Moses is commanded by Yahweh to make a pure plate of gold and engrave on it the words 'Holy to the Lord', after which he is to fasten it upon the turban with a blue cord (Exod 28:36–37). By wearing the engraving upon his forehead, Aaron assumed the guilt of the people (וְנָשָׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת־עֲוֹן; ἐξαρεῖ Ααρων τὰ ἁμαρτήματα τῶν ἁγίων), which transfers from the officiant to the high priest by means of the sacrifice. This transfer of guilt is also seen in Leviticus 10:17, where Moses chastises Eleazar and Ithamar for not eating the flesh of the goat of the sin offering and thus 'bearing the iniquity of the congregation' (נָתַן לָכֶם לָשֵׂאת אֶת־עֲוֹן הָעֵדָה; ἵνα ἀφέλητε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τῆς συναγωγῆς). What is of significance here is the transference of sin from one person/people group to that of the high priest, who alone is able to bear the transferred sin.

One such prominent New Testament account that illustrates this transfer of sin is located in Mark 2 (see Matt 9:1–8) at the healing of the paralytic man. Upon seeing the faith of the associates of the paralytic, Jesus pronounces a pardon of forgiveness for the paralytic man (2:3–6). This verdict causes immediate consternation among the religious leaders, who rightly acknowledge that it is only within the purview of God to declare one forgiven of sin (2:6–7). Jesus, knowing that the religious leaders were debating his pardon, provides the healing that was first sought as a testimony to his ability to not only declare such a pardon, but also the power to actualize the forgiveness pronounced (2:9–11). The man who came to Jesus paralysed and believing that he could be healed left that house not only walking away from the mat that carried him there, but also from burden of his guilt (2:12).

In declaring the paralytic forgiven, Jesus appears to assume the duty of the high priest and his responsibility of bearing the burden of sin. However, the context of Mark 2 does not highlight a priestly connection with forgiveness of sin; instead, it is the ontology of Jesus that is emphasized in his declaration of forgiveness and its juxtaposition with the singular truth that only Yahweh has such authority to pronounce forgiveness of sin. When the religious leaders reason that forgiveness is God's prerogative alone, they are correct in their estimation. The Old Testament is emphatic in its insistence that only God is able to forgive sin (Exod 34:7; Num 14:18; 2 Sam 24:10; Neh 9:17; Job 7:21; Ps 51:2; 130:4; Isa 43:25; 44:22; Jer 31:34; 36:3; Dan 9:9; Micah 7:18; cf. Acts 5:31; Col 2:13). Jesus uses this event not only to provide temporal healing for a man long paralysed, it is also a teaching moment to show the crowd that he is the long-promised Messiah, the very God incarnate. Therefore, while Jesus does in fact remove the burden of this man's sin, there is no indication in the pericope that what the author of Mark's Gospel had in mind was an allusion to the high priest's role in bearing the burden of the sin (France 2002:125–26). Instead, Jesus's declaration of forgiveness and its connection to the healing of the paralytic was affirmation of Christ's ontological claim to deity.

A further instance in the Gospels that differs from the priestly portrait found in Hebrews is Jesus's insistence that the observance of the Old Testament ritual laws be followed. In the account of the man healed of leprosy in Mark 1:44; Matthew 8:4; Luke 5:14 (see Luke 17:14), Jesus commands that this man go and show himself to the priest and offer the appropriate sacrifice Moses commanded in light of his cleansing (προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου ἃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς; see Lev 13:2–14:32). By pointing the healed man to the

priest for cleansing, Jesus acknowledges the legitimacy of the Old Testament cult for ritual purification (Guelich 1989:76). For if Jesus had been high priest at that moment in his ministry, he would have been able to rectify this defilement himself, thus rendering the Levitical cult null and void (see Heb 8:13). However, as a faithful Jew, Jesus was demonstrating to his detractors that he, in fact, kept the commandments of Moses.

In contrast with the Gospels, the letter to the Hebrews is clear that not only are people cleansed of the outward ritual defilement of sin, but more importantly they are also cleansed of the inward defilement caused by sin, a defilement of the conscience now purified through the blood of Christ's sacrifice (9:13–14). By healing the man of his leprosy, Jesus is demonstrating to the people (αὐτοῖς) his power over death and disease and his role as God's Messiah (Collins 2007:179); but in the case of requisite ritual cleansing, he leaves this responsibility in the hands of those who are qualified to handle such matters of religious and social importance.

3.2 The Gospel of John

Perhaps the most famous passage of scripture outside of Hebrews given the priestly designation is the so-called high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17. Although the textual basis for such a title in John 17 is debatable at best, since the Reformer David Chyträus (see Hoskyns 1947:494; Cullmann 1963:105; Schnackenburg 1990:433; Keener 2003:2.1051) in the sixteenth century onward, many have concluded that the content of the prayer alone is more than enough to warrant such an appellation. This conclusion is no doubt heavily influenced by an overt dependence upon the high priestly Christology outlined in the letter to the Hebrews (see Spicq 1950:258–69; Cullmann 1963:105; Ramsey 2010:873–74; Stevick 2011:310).

One of the earliest to ascribe priesthood to Jesus in their interpretation of John 17 is Cyril of Alexandria. In his exposition on John 17:9–11, Cyril refers to Jesus as 'our truly and all-holy High Priest'. Jesus is 'the Sacrifice, and is Himself our Priest, Himself our Mediator, Himself a blameless victim, the true Lamb which takes away the sin of the world.' As our high priest and mediator, Christ 'prays for us as a Man', and 'being a holy High Priest, blameless and undefiled, offered Himself not for His own weakness, as was the custom of those to whom was allotted the duty of sacrificing according to the Law, but rather for the salvation of our souls, and that once for all…' (*In Joh.* 11:8; PG 74:505).

While Cyril's exposition is on John 17:9–11, one cannot help but see the influence of Hebrews upon his reading of John 17. The most

obvious example of this influence is the use of the title High Priest with reference to Christ. Outside of Hebrews, this title is nowhere to be found in connection to Christ, and any reading of this title in John 17 is without doubt directly tied to one's familiarity with the high priestly Christology of Hebrews. Further evidence of the influence of Hebrews upon Cyril's exposition is found in the expression 'not for His own weakness'. According to Hebrews 7, Jesus's sacrifice was once-for-all, and unlike the high priests of the Levitical cult, he was excluded from making any such sacrifice for himself. Also, because of the weakness of man—that is, because of their inevitable death—the sacrifices of the Levitical priests were in essence only operative so long as a high priest was serving in the sanctuary (7:27–28). Therefore, when Cyril refers to the lack of human weakness with respect to Jesus, he does so informed by Hebrews' high priestly Christology and its theology of atonement.

With regard to the structure and content of John 17, a number of points can be highlighted that have been used to support a priestly reading. The structure of Jesus's prayer in John 17 is organized around three sets of prayers: Jesus prays for himself (17:1–8); Jesus prays for his disciples (17:9–19); and Jesus prays for the world (17:20–26). Some commentators suggest a connection between the trifold structure in John 17 and that of the liturgy of the high priest on Yom Kippur (Attridge 2013:9–10; see Dodd 1953:417–23). On Yom Kippur, the high priest first offers a sacrifice for himself and his kin (Lev 16:6). This is followed by an offering for the people (16:15). Finally, there is the universal prohibition against entering the tent of meeting (16:17). While these similarities are curious, as Attridge notes, they are not 'enough in itself to confirm that the evangelist is playing with priestly imagery' (2013:10).

Much has also been made of the intercessory nature of Christ's prayer in John 17. As noted above, Jesus engages in intercessory prayer for himself, his disciples, and future believers. However, such intercessory prayer could easily be understood in light of ancient farewell discourses often found in relevant Jewish literature (Carson 1991:550–51; Ridderbos 1997:546; Keener 2003:2.1051; Lincoln 2005:432). Both Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 32–33 offer similar examples to that of John 17. Similar to Jacob in Genesis 49 and Moses in Deuteronomy 32–33, Jesus is likewise engaged in preparing for his departure from this world and return to his Father in heaven (17:5, 11, 13, 24; see 7:33; 13:1, 3; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 28).

Such intercessory prayer is also common among the prophets. Moses on many occasions stood between God's wrath and the people, interceding on their behalf that God would spare them from

destruction (Exod 32:11–14; Deut 9:18, 26–29; see Ps 106:23). Such is similar with the prophet Samuel as well. One such example is found in 1 Samuel 7, where the people urge Samuel to cry out to the Lord on their behalf for deliverance from the hand of the Philistines (1 Sam 7:8–9; see 12:23). Likewise, another such instance of intercessory prayer on behalf of others is found in God's rebuke of his people in Jeremiah 7, 'Do not pray for this people (הַזֶּה סָעָה־דַעַב לֵלַפְּתִת־לַאַ), or lift up a cry or prayer for them (הָלְפִתְוּ הִנָּר סָדֲעַב אֶשָּׂת־לַאֲו), and do not intercede with me (יַבְ־עַגְפִּת־לַאֲו), for I will not listen' (7:16; see 11:14; 14:11; 2 Macc 15:14). Clearly, such intercession was not only a common occurrence among the prophets, it was also a duty of one's calling as a prophet.

Turning now to the content of Jesus's prayer, much has been made of Jesus's use of *ἁγιάζω* in 17:17 and 17:19. Ramsey posits that it is at this point in Jesus's prayer that one gets one's first taste of priestly language (Ramsey 2010:872). In John 17:17, Jesus asks that his Father would 'sanctify/consecrate [his disciples] in [his] word' (*ἁγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ*). In 17:19, Jesus sanctifies/consecrates himself (*ἐγὼ ἁγιάζω ἐμαυτόν*) so that his disciples would be sanctified/consecrated in truth (*ἵνα ὦσιν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἡγιασμένοι ἐν ἀληθείᾳ*). While this language of sanctification and consecration is associated with the priests in the Old Testament (see Exod 19:22: *ἁγιασθήτωσαν*; 28:41: *ἁγιάσεις αὐτούς, ἵνα ἱερατεύωσίν μοι*), it is also used for consecrating prophets for their prophetic mission (Barrett 1978:510; Baigent 1981:38). A clear example of this is Jeremiah 1:5: 'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you came out of the womb I have consecrated you (*ἡγίακά*); I have appointed (*τέθεικά*) you a prophet for the nations'. Here in Jeremiah 1:5, the prophet's consecration and appointment are parallel to one another and occur while Jeremiah was still in his mother's womb (see Gal 1:15a).

In John 10, similar language to that of 17:17 and 17:19 is used by Jesus in his confrontation with the Jewish leadership. In responding to the charge of blasphemy, Jesus comments that it is the Father who consecrated him and sent him into the world (*ὁ πατὴρ ἡγίασεν καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον*; 10:36). The language of consecration in 10:36 is connected to that of sending, so that what Christ is sanctified/consecrated for is his mission to the world. Further, the prayer of Jesus for his disciples in 17:17, and again in 17:19b is that they would be sanctified 'in truth' (*ἐν [τῇ] ἀληθείᾳ*). In Jesus's self-consecration in 17:19a, this same purpose of consecration *in truth* is implied, so that what is explicit in his prayer for the disciples is understood in his

prayer for himself (Brown 1970:766). Therefore, it is this sense of consecration for mission that Jesus certainly had in mind in both 17:17 and 17:19 (Barrett 1978:510; Ridderbos 1997:556; Keener 2003:2.1060–61).[3]

3.3. The Pauline letters

Outside of the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John (with the possible exception of Revelation), potential references to the priesthood of Christ become harder to identify with any precision. This is certainly the case with the writings of Paul, who speaks more about the sacrifice of Christ than he does about his priesthood. In fact, Montefiore emphatically insists that Paul does not even regard Christ as a priest anywhere in his writings (1964:5). Although lacking in explicit occurrences, as well as scant implicit references, there are a few verses that have been proposed as references to Christ's high priesthood.

Romans 8:34 is found within the crescendo of a prolonged discussion regarding justification by faith (Dunn 1988:497). This final pericope (8:31–39) is a celebration of that work of justification, and subsequent glorification, in the lives of those who have placed their faith in the work of Christ (Wright 2002:609). In 8:34, Paul concisely describes the work of Christ in the following manner: it is Christ who died (ὁ ἀποθανών), who was raised (ἐγερθείς), and who intercedes for his own (ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν). This rather formulaic statement (Dunn 1988:503; see Barrett 1991:162) rightly describes the procession of Christ, from death to intercession. Furthermore, the intercession of Christ echoes that of the Holy Spirit in 8:27 (ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων / ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν). Rather than a priestly function, there is a legal element of advocacy (παράκλητος) involved in Christ's intercessory ministry on behalf of his followers (see 1 John 2:1; Jewett 2007:542; *pace* Cranfield 1975:439).

Therefore, Paul's confessional formula of Christ's death, resurrection, and intercessory activity in 8:34 supports the argument of this thesis, namely that Christ became high priest upon his entry into the heavenly sanctuary. In order for Christ to engage in a ministry of intercession, he first had to die and then rise from dead. Although the sequence of these events does not prove definitively the argument that Christ became high priest *after* his entry into the heavenly sanctuary, it does argue against the idea that Christ engaged in a priestly function of intercession *before* his death and subsequent resurrection.

One final passage that may have priestly overtones is found in the creedal statement of 1 Timothy 2:5–6 (see Kelly 1963:63; Mounce

3 Some have suggested a different nuance for Jesus's self-consecration (ἐγὼ ἁγιάζω ἐμαυτόν) in 17:19. Rather than reading all three instances of ἁγιάζω in 17:17, 19 as parallel the meaning of Jesus's self-consecration has been turned into a reference to his impending death on the cross. Ridderbos follows this train of thought commenting that Jesus's self-consecration is a 'sacrifice for his own' (1997:556, emphasis in original; see Beasley-Murray 1999:301; Ramsey 2010:873-74; Bruner 2012:995. Bultmann appears to suggest both the act of sending and sacrifice are in view in 17:19, 1971:510-11, n.5). Furthermore it is through this self-sacrifice that Jesus's disciples are 'truly consecrated to the sacred ministry for which Jesus has appointed them to speak his name' (Ridderbos 1997:556; see Haenchen 1984:155). However such a break from the parallel uses in 17:17 and 17:19 does not fit the context of what Jesus is praying for. As noted in the commentary on these verses above what Jesus is praying for is the consecration of both his and his disciples' mission to the world (see 10.36; 17:18). Lincoln correctly surmises 'When now Jesus speaks of sanctifying himself this is in line with the way this Gospel portrays him as sharing what would normally be considered divine prerogatives and also as being in control of his own life and mission' (2005:438). Barrett likewise concludes along similar lines noting that whatever one makes of the meaning of ἁγιάζω in 17:17 (and, it may be added, 10:36) the meaning of Jesus's self-consecration in 17:19 cannot mean something altogether different (1978:510).

2000:87; Belleville 2009:42). Similar in some respects to the formulaic statement in Romans 8:34, 1 Timothy 2:5 portrays Christ as both a sacrifice and one who stands between God and man. Whereas Christ's activity of intercession is highlighted in Romans 8:34, in 1 Timothy 2:5 Christ is specifically referred to as the 'one mediator between God and humanity' (εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων). While on the surface Christ's role as a mediator may conjure up images of priestly intercession, such an interpretation is most likely reading into 1 Timothy 2:5 an idea that is not present in the context of the passage. Elsewhere, Paul uses the same word (μεσίτης) in reference to Moses's mediatorial work with respect to the giving of the law (Gal 3:19–20). A similar usage of the μεσίτης is to be found in Hebrews, but instead of Moses, it is Christ who is the mediator of a new covenant, one that is established by him and mediated through him (8:6; 9:15; 12:24). Therefore, rather than a priestly intercessor, Christ is the negotiator between God and humanity of the new covenant inaugurated through his sacrificial offering (Johnson 2001:191–92).

4. Conclusion

The focus of this article has been twofold. Beginning with the letter to the Hebrews, the question of timing with respect to the installation of Christ as high priest was examined. This examination consisted of four proposals for answering this question: Christ was high priest from all eternity; Christ became high priest at his incarnation or at a point in time before the cross; Christ became high priest at the cross; and lastly, Christ became high priest upon his entrance into the heavenly sanctuary. It was argued that the evidence in Hebrews best supports this latter proposal, noting that it follows closely the movement of the high priest on the Day of Atonement. Christ's lineage also prevented him from serving as high priest while on earth. Because he was a descendant of Judah, he was excluded from serving in the earthly temple, and was thus unable to make any type of offering for sin. This prohibition against making an offering presented a problem for Christ, since it is the duty of the high priest to offer sacrifices for sin. However, for the author of Hebrews this does not pose any serious problem; that is because the offering which Christ offers occurs upon Christ's entry into the heavenly sanctuary. The priesthood that Jesus assumes is one that is built not on any sort of legal requirement; rather, it is received upon the power of an indestructible life.

In the second part of this article, a biblical theology of priesthood was undertaken, built on the premise that Christ was unable to serve as high priest while on earth. This biblical theology was

constructed upon select passages from the Synoptic Gospels, John 17, Romans 8:34, and 1 Timothy 2:5–6. Each of these passages has in some part been associated with priestly activities. However, as was shown above, these activities are not exclusively priestly as they are also associated with other functions related to ontology, office, or consecration for ministry. In this manner, the activities of Christ portrayed in the Gospels and the writings of Paul are not exclusively connected to the role of high priest.

For the high priest, the main responsibility that set him apart from the rest of his kin was the sacrificial offering that he made for the atonement of sin, and no other offering was more important than the one he presented annually on the Day of Atonement. Because Christ was prohibited from making his offering of atonement while on earth, this by extension negates the argument that it was at the cross that Jesus became both the offering and officiant of the atoning sacrifice for sin. Instead, just as the high priest first sacrificed the victim outside the tent, and then entered into the Holy of Holies and by the manipulation of blood upon the mercy seat obtained atonement, so also Christ, after he was sacrificed outside the gates, entered into the heavenly sanctuary whereby he offered himself to God as the once-for-all-time sacrifice of atonement.

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Human Trafficking and the Church: Towards a Biblical and Practical Christian Response[1]

Marieke Venter and Willem Semmelink[2]

Abstract

How should Christians respond to the ever-growing international crime of human trafficking? This study seeks for an answer by holding up the current situation to the light of the mission of Jesus as expressed in Luke 4:16–21, and formulating the outline of a practical, workable model of response. It explores the international and South African situation surrounding modern-day slavery and human trafficking[3] from a Salvation Army perspective by consulting several expert studies, illustrating this reality by telling the stories of five women who were trafficked. Using the mission statement of Jesus as a basis for Christian love in action and building on the unique strengths of the Church, this study suggests requirements and key areas for a response by which the Church as a whole, as well as individual congregations and Christians may have a positive impact as part of a modern abolition movement.

Keywords
human trafficking; Luke 4:16-21; modern-day slavery; abolition.

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The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

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3 All references to human trafficking in this article refer to the umbrella-term 'modern-day slavery and human trafficking'.

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SATS
Bible-based. Christ-centred. Spirit-led.

1. Introduction

Maria: She stands on a street corner, scantily dressed on a cold Johannesburg winter evening. Her eyes scan the passing traffic and she is not keen to engage in conversation, although she seems grateful for the hot cup of coffee offered to her by a street worker. Maria is a commercial sex worker in the South of Johannesburg. She has a pimp and lives in a brothel. She was offered a job in Johannesburg via a niece, and travelled to Johannesburg alone, against the advice of her parents. Once in the city, she discovered that the nature of the 'job' was prostitution. She cannot leave because she does not have enough money to pay the fare home, and because she is addicted to drugs and needs the daily 'fix' they provide.

Sophie: They are usually huddled together on the pavement that forms an island in the busy road. The older woman is always accompanied by two small children. On Sunday mornings they make their way into the church for worship. The children lead the blind woman to a vacant seat near the front. Just before the conclusion of the service they leave quietly and return to their assigned task for the day—begging on the street corner. Sophie is one of many beggars on the street corners of Johannesburg. These beggars are blind, many are elderly, and they are accompanied and led by children in their work. They are given accommodation and are taken to their 'posts' in the morning and collected again in the late afternoon. They are given food, but all their proceeds must be handed over to the man who runs the establishment. Sophie is from Zimbabwe and believes herself to be lucky to have been brought to South Africa, because she has been promised an operation that will restore her sight. She is not in possession of her passport or any of her documentation. It is not clear who the children are that accompany her.

Christina: She agrees to meet at a small coffee shop. She tells her story of terror. She was deceived by someone within the agency she worked for, transported across a thousand kilometres, and forced to work as a prostitute until she was desperate enough to risk a dangerous escape. Does she have AIDS? Is she pregnant? She does not know. She refuses to report her story to the police because she has received serious threats from her traffickers.

Jennifer: She is brought to the shelter for victims of human trafficking with a laptop computer, a mobile phone and very little else in terms of worldly possessions. A Zimbabwean citizen, she was lured to South Africa by a businessman who offered her a large salary to work for him as his assistant. She travelled to Johannesburg in possession of a valid passport and visa (both of which were taken from her

upon her arrival), expecting to enter a very normal and pleasant working environment. The work she was required to do was indeed of a business nature as a private secretary, but she was locked in her apartment at night and did not receive any payment for her work until she escaped three months later.

Celeste: She stands fearfully, surrounded by a small circle of women in the city centre of Johannesburg. They seem concerned and agitated as they discuss her situation in a language she does not understand. She is just seven years old and lost in a strange country, a small foreigner amongst strangers. She was taken from her remote village in Mozambique by a 'friend' of the family without her parents' permission and brought to Johannesburg. She somehow became separated from her abductor and was found and helped by a group of street hawkers. The reason for her abduction was never discovered.

These are fragments of some of the stories that make up the human face of this study. These real people (their names and some of the details changed to protect their identity) illustrate some of the different forms of human trafficking. Their stories are heard first-hand by members of The Salvation Army's anti-human trafficking task team in South Africa. Some of their stories have happy endings, others do not.

The main question this study seeks to answer is how Christians should respond to human trafficking in the South African context. Sub-questions focus on what is known about human trafficking in South Africa, what the Bible says about challenging and responding to injustice, and how the Church responded to slavery in history.

Using the Loyola Institute of Ministry research design, which typically moves from an empirical description of a given situation as it is, through a Biblical-theological description of how the situation should be, to a suggested practical response that could help to move the current reality closer towards the ideal situation, this study argues that the Church can make a significant difference in the struggle against human trafficking. The 'what if' question (Sandelowski 1990:164) becomes a pivotal part of the narrative section, and acts as a bridge between the present situation and the preferred situation by drawing attention to what could have been done to prevent the situation or resolve it more expediently and painlessly, moving the focus from the world as it is, to the world as it should be. To understand the preferred situation, or the world as it should be, a study of historical and Biblical thinking reflects on themes of freedom and slavery, focusing on the mission of Jesus and

the mission of the Church. This study has been conducted through a Salvation Army lens, but hopefully, the resulting model will be equally useful for other denominations and congregations.

2. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking–an Overview

The definition underpinning the study is provided by the Palermo Protocol (UN General Assembly 2000:2), which defines human trafficking as,

"The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or in the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."

Essential criteria in deciding whether a case should be classified as human trafficking are legally classified under the elements of act, means and purpose as laid out in this definition.

2.1. Scope of the issue

Reliable statistics are hard to come by. The fact that organisations and agencies tend to disagree on the scope of human trafficking in terms of statistics, adds further frustration. Today the Global Slavery Index, a worldwide study on slavery published by the Walk Free foundation is a helpful tool and provides a clearer picture of the dimensions of human trafficking. According to the Index, South Africa ranks at 110/167 on a worldwide scale of countries affected by human trafficking, and based on 2016 figures, an estimated 155,000 people are living in modern slavery in South Africa. On a worldwide scale, the Index estimates that 40.3 million people are living in modern slavery, of whom 71% are women and 29% men. Children make up a significant percentage of both these groups.

International and South African studies agree that human trafficking is a flourishing and often highly-organised criminal trade in human beings. These studies indicate the changing nature of the face of human trafficking, including the global movement of migrants and refugees that has become a worldwide crisis, leaving many people vulnerable to exploitation by both traffickers and smugglers (UNODC 2016:1). The inclusion of targets towards an

end to human trafficking in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (8, 5 and 16) is a significant development (UNODC 2016:1). The conclusion of almost all international and South African studies that law-making and/or law-enforcement cannot solve the problem of human trafficking on its own should be of special interest to the Church. The clear indication is that there is much to be done that can only be accomplished with the help of civil society on grassroots level (HSRC 2010:110, IOM 2008:64, UNODC 2012:94). The Church, being situated in the very centre of communities, has knowledge, power and resources that would be well spent in cooperation with other parties to prevent and reduce slavery and human trafficking.

2.2. Legislation in South Africa

South Africa started working on a law against human trafficking in 2008, under pressure of the international community in the form of a ranking system, also known as a tier system, devised by the US Department of State which placed South Africa on its Tier 2 watch list in that year. Further pressure was caused by the imminence of the 2010 FIFA World Cup that was to be hosted in South Africa, and the links between international sporting events and human trafficking. The Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill was signed into law in 2013 (Department of Justice Official Notice 2012). In the ensuing years, South Africa has fluctuated between 'Tier 2' and 'Tier 2 watch list' (US Department of State 2017:362).

2.3. Vulnerabilities

Whilst anyone can be at risk of being trafficked, it is a crime that exploits vulnerabilities and feeds on world events like disasters, wars and conflict, migration and economic crises. Some special vulnerabilities have been identified, showing the most vulnerable groups to include refugees and migrants, minority groups, women, children and people experiencing extreme poverty (The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission 2018). Further underlying issues are rooted in unemployment, gender inequality and inadequate education (The Salvation Army, Southern Africa Moral and Social Issues Council 2010). Around the world unjust systems that perpetuate vulnerabilities and facilitate human trafficking still exist. These systems that are built on inequality and prejudice may be of a political, cultural, religious, or historical nature. Rigorous and honest research, followed by courageous and strategic action, is needed to challenge these systems.

2.4. The Salvation Army and social justice

The Salvation Army, having its historical roots in Wesleyan Methodism, has from its inception been actively engaged in issues of social justice around the world. Challenging the age of consent in Victorian England, where young girls of the poor classes were commonly exploited as sex slaves to wealthy merchants (Stead 1885), was the starting point of an active approach to sexual exploitation, including rescue shelters in Japan in the early 1900s (Gariepy 2009:44), a redemptive presence in the red-light district of Amsterdam (Duncan 1977:48) and outreach in the brothels of Bangladesh (Brekke and Knut 2005), to mention just a few examples. Today, the Salvation Army's response to human trafficking is well developed and documented.

3. The Mission of Jesus and the Mission of the Church

Christians, in seeking to understand God's mind on any issue, will usually turn to the Bible as their first port of call. In doing this, the enquirer is inevitably left to wonder what, if anything, the Bible really says about slavery. On the surface the Bible appears to advocate for freedom and yet appears to accept slavery. References to slaves and slavery present a theological maze, perplexing in apparent dichotomy, leaving the reader confused and bewildered about its actual message.

It became clear that focusing on a specific New Testament passage would shed more light on the subject of slavery and how Christians should respond, and Luke 4:18–21 was selected. Known as the 'Nazareth Sermon' (Kimball 1994:179) or the 'programmatic declaration' of Jesus (Abogunrin 2003:225) this passage contains the first sermon of Jesus in the Gospel according to Luke, outlining his mission statement and the purpose of his coming with reference to Isaiah 58:6 and 61:1, 2. In studying these passages, the first question was about the mission of Jesus and the second question was about the mission of the Church. The study reflected on whether the mission of the Church is the same as the mission of Jesus, and if so, the question raised was how God's people should respond to the crime and justice issue of human trafficking.

The context of the passage was studied, giving special attention to the significance of origin and order as well as culture and custom. In researching the text, the combination and word order of the quotations from Isaiah were noted, and a text analysis was conducted with special refence to freedom. Subsequently, the content of the passage was examined, reflecting on each separate section of the

whole. Finally, an enquiry was made into Jesus's choice of the specific texts from Isaiah, and his introduction of himself as the real 'I' of the passages. In doing so, the conclusion was reached that Jesus extends the mission plan of God in relation to the children of Israel in the Old Testament, to the mission plan of God for all of humankind throughout all time.

This study concludes the mission of Jesus to be a holistic mission of word (proclamation, v. 18, 19) and deed (bringing release, freedom and salvation, v. 18) to the poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed in the realms of the spiritual, social, moral and physical. It also concludes that the mission of the Church (the sent) is the mission of Jesus (the sender) who sent as he was sent by the Father, and that our mission too is one of word and deed to the poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed in every sense of the word (Mercer 1992:457).

How then, should the Church fulfil its mission in confronting human trafficking, a criminal act that robs human beings of their right to freedom and turns them into merchandise or property? This study proposes the following model of response.

4. Being Part of the Solution: A Practical Response to Human Trafficking

Returning briefly to the stories of Maria, Sophie, Christina, Jennifer and Celeste, the question may well be asked: Is there, or could there have been a way home for them? Perhaps an even better question would be: Is there a way in which their traumatic journeys could have been prevented, and could the Church have been part of this prevention? The graphic model below is entitled 'Celeste's way home' and indicates the centrality of the victim, the importance of the team (in this case The Salvation Army's Anti-Human Trafficking Task Team in South Africa), and the impossibility of the task if it were to be undertaken in isolation and without numerous partners. In the case of Celeste, these partners include government agencies, non-government agencies, professionals, and experts as well as groups and individuals representing civil society in finding a way home (or to a safe place) for victims of human trafficking.

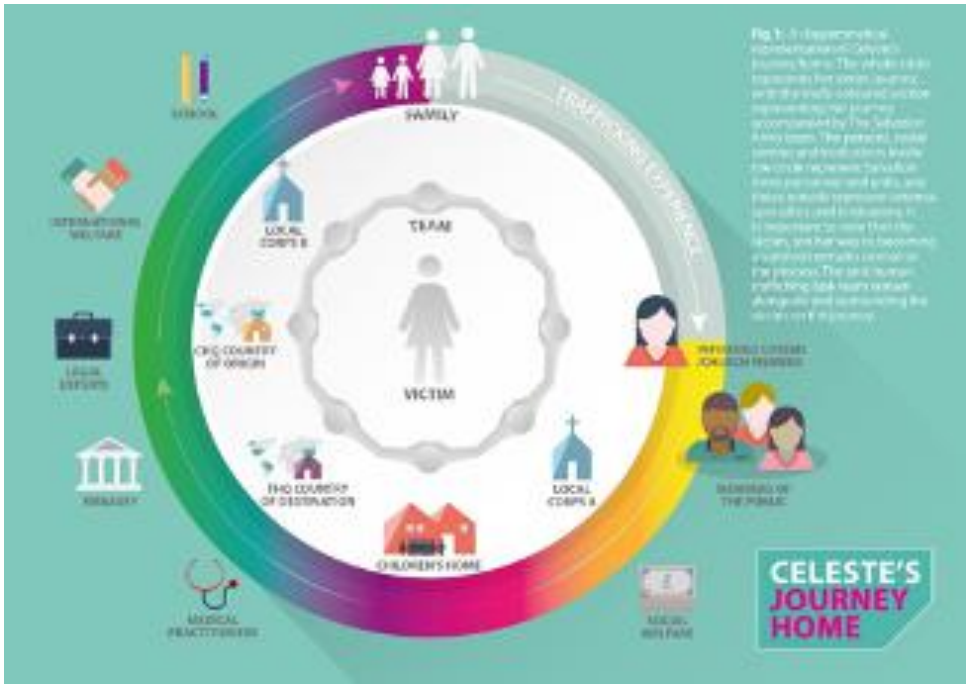

Figure 1 glossary: Corps = congregation, THQ/CHQ = national head office

4.1. Strengths and limitations

In formulating a specific Church response to human trafficking, it seems advisable to begin by focusing on the foundational realities of strengths and limitations of the Church in responding to human trafficking. Strengths include its presence at grassroot level in communities around the world. A second strength lies in its good name, and the trust that the public, many governments and other agencies place in its integrity and capacity to make a difference in matters of social justice. A third strength may be called the approval of heaven, as reflected in the conviction of Danielle Strickland in her address to the Canadian parliament, 'that light is more powerful than darkness, and God is on our side' (Strickland 2006). However, taking a stand against human trafficking, the source of which is an evil kind of greed and cruelty, places the Church in direct opposition to the very kingdom and armies of Satan himself. Whilst there are many things the Church can do (raise awareness, educate, train, advocate, care for victims and survivors, support families, address the root causes of poverty, inequality and prejudice, and do a host of other things), there are many activities (law-making, law-enforcement, border control, criminal investigations, arrests, trials, sentencing, international negotiations, to mention a few) required to eradicate this crime outside the scope of its mission or capacity. The Church is not equipped to deal with the issue of human trafficking on its own. The diagram above illustrates this concept through the story of Celeste.

It is important to acknowledge that each incident of human trafficking is different, and each victim and survivor will have different needs and require a bespoke response. Therefore, to write about a model may seem generic and generalised. The best that may be done is to formulate the 'broad strokes' or the framework of a model within which it will be possible to respond meaningfully to the issue of human trafficking, in the context of teamwork, and keeping the victim or survivor central to the process.

4.2. Requirements for a response

Inspired by the narratives of Maria, Sophie, Christina, Jennifer and Celeste (and many others) and guided by the 'what if' questions that emerged from their stories, this paper aims to answer the question of how the Church should respond to human trafficking by suggesting a number of requirements as a guideline. It stands to reason that the specifics of a response to human trafficking will vary from place to place and from time to time. Human trafficking is a crime that evolves and changes constantly, and the response must also be adaptable and flexible.

Person-centred: It is important to continue to offer a response that is victim (or survivor) focused, keeping in view the fact that, 'Every single occurrence of modern slavery is happening to a person —someone's sister, mother, brother, father, daughter, or son' (USA Department of State 2012:10). A person-centred response may also be focused on potential victims through awareness and education programmes that are adapted to culture and location, as well as the demographics of the target group. To be ethical in our methods, rehabilitation models should ideally be self-determined and individually tailored, even though it would be cheaper and quicker to adopt a 'one size fits all' response.

Bible-based: Since the mission of the Church and its calling to respond to exploitation in the form of human trafficking is clearly founded on the Bible (see section 3), its response should also be Bible-based. It must be rooted in the biblical principles of love, justice, respect, protection of the weak and vulnerable, and the right to fullness of life (John 10:10) for all people.

Partnership-empowered: Cooperation is vital for any effective response and will include partnership between likeminded denominations, organisations, agencies, and specialists. Representation on national and international bodies should be a priority. It is important to remain in touch and up to date with the evolution of human trafficking, and with issues of research and response (HRSC 2010:171). A holistic and comprehensive response

will require teamwork that involves finding common ground and possibly a measure of compromise in non-essentials (Pallant 2012:168, 169).

Learning-enhanced: It is important to continue to conduct and share on-going research and documentation (UNODC 2012:90). This should include creating a databank of resources containing knowledge, information, skills, and experience, as well as reference to the multitude of specialised training materials and manuals dealing with human trafficking that have already been developed by national and international agencies. Collating, storing, and distributing data, resources, information and knowledge has become much easier and faster in the digital age. Data can now be stored in the cloud, and information is easily disseminated via social networks and web pages. It must, however, be borne in mind that information in the wrong hands could be profoundly counterproductive, and all information in any form must be compliant with modern data protection laws.

Impact-focused: Impact measurement is a vital part of a learning-based response (USA Department of State 2012:10). Some questions the Church will ask in order to measure the impact of its efforts, will be whether these efforts are helping to decrease the number of victims, whether its training provision is sustainable and increasing capacity for action, and whether its awareness-raising campaigns are appropriately targeted.

Strength-driven: In addition to work that specifically combats human trafficking, the Church should continue to do what it does well, and that is to address the root causes of human trafficking. Poverty and the lack of social and economic security are major factors that push people into migration and situations of vulnerability to exploitation. The Church must continue to work for economic development and advocate for education, especially for girls. The Church must also continue to build capacity in the poorest communities, and support Fairtrade and other ethical trading models. Combatting human trafficking must include raising awareness about the exploitation of people on farms, in factories and many other industries, and should reflect in its own dealings such as the purchase of supplies and the procurement of services.

Advocacy-enriched: Since human trafficking is a crime that feeds on numerous systemic root causes like poverty and discrimination, the role of advocacy cannot be over-emphasised (Offutt and Bronkema 2016:6; Fileta 2017:55). More than just raising awareness, advocacy aims at bringing change for people who are disadvantaged or

suffering as a result of systemic injustice. Because of its positioning in communities, the local Church is in an ideal position to be an effective mechanism for advocacy. Any response to human trafficking should not be limited to treating the symptoms or even the causes of human trafficking but should also include the 'upstream' work of advocating for just structures and systems.

Motivated by the love of God and the example of Jesus: Jesus was, in his earthly ministry, concerned about every aspect of human suffering (see section 3), and he not only valued human freedom, but also gave his life to make freedom a reality. As believers, our struggle against human trafficking is based on our firm belief that 'God's love compels us' (2 Corinthians 5:14) in our efforts.

Having provided these essential requirements for a Christian response to human trafficking, it is possible to establish the basic key areas for an effective faith-based response. Whilst it would be necessary for all the requirements mentioned above to be present in a comprehensive Christian response, this is not the case with the key areas. Churches or congregations may choose to be involved in all, or only one or two of the areas mentioned, according to their capacity and mission priorities.

4.3. Key areas of a response to human trafficking

In reflecting on the areas of a Christian response to human trafficking, it is not necessary to re-invent the proverbial wheel. At a workshop held in 2016 by The Salvation Army and the Anglican Alliance in Nepal, the '7P's model' was introduced and documented (2016:32). The first three areas of response may be found in the Palermo Protocol (UN General Assembly 2000:2), and a fourth was recommended in the USA Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report of 2012 (USA Department of State 2012:7). Three further areas were considered important by Salvation Army consultation groups. The seven P's, as reflected in The Salvation Army International Positional Statement of 2018 (The Salvation Army 2018:4, 5) are Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Partnerships, Policy, Participation and Prayer. As a member of the design team of this model, the author offers the next section as a basic summary and her own interpretation and understanding of the 'seven P's model'.

Prevention: The preferred way to combat anything undesirable is through prevention. Because of its unique position in communities, the Church can be a powerful instrument in preventing human trafficking, utilising at minimum only its basic existing structures. Prevention initiatives may range from awareness campaigns, days of prayer, anti-trafficking or freedom Sundays and fundraising.

Protection: Whilst prevention is aimed at people who may or may not necessarily be vulnerable to human trafficking, the area of protection focuses more on victims and survivors. When victims are identified, they need protection in terms of a safe exit from their situation and access to a place of safety where they may recover physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally. Emergency support, short-term accommodation, basic supplies, care, support, and friendship are well within the scope that even the smallest congregation could offer. Church members are people from all walks of life, and amongst its members may be professionals and skilled persons who might offer such expertise as medical support, legal support, trauma care, skills training, counselling, and mentoring.

Churches may look out for and report cases of unethical labour practices and unscrupulous employment agencies. In cases of cross-border trafficking, the Church as a worldwide body may also be of great value in terms of practical assistance in repatriation and rehabilitation.

Prosecution: The thought of being involved with matters of prosecution does not necessarily sit comfortably with the Church and may seem quite out of its comfort zone. However, the Church understands human trafficking as a criminal activity that affects the lives of thousands of people and the Church realises that calling people to account for their actions is an important part of combatting it. Churches can help by encouraging victims and survivors not to be silent but to call on and cooperate with law enforcement officers in the prosecution of their perpetrators. This encouragement may take the form of accompanying victims to police stations and courts of law, and of actively preparing them for court hearings. Victims/survivors must always be informed correctly of their legal rights, and church members should be aware of their legal limits and obligations as citizens.

In many places court cases take time, and witnesses may need to appear in several hearings over a period of months. In order to achieve success, it is often necessary to provide accommodation and the basic requirements of life for the victim while the proceedings are underway. The Church may be of great help to someone whose life may be essentially in limbo until a legal court case has come to its conclusion.

Policy: The Church as part of civil society recognises its responsibility to be part of conversations about matters of national and international policy. The role of the Church in advocacy is of great importance in

the creation and implementation of effective policy regarding human trafficking, labour laws, laws relating to children's rights and other related laws.

In addition to national and international legal policies the Church is also well positioned to influence many other policy issues like consumer habits and practices. Congregations, businesses, and individuals must be made aware of the consequences of their choice of products and services.

Partnerships: No single movement or organisation can fight against human trafficking. In my experience, some of the most important partnerships the Church should have are with the national police, prosecuting authority, social welfare, and the national border control agency, as well as foreign embassies. On a more local level, each congregation is based in a community with schools, police stations, other churches and worshipping communities, clubs, groups, clinics and more—all of whom share a basic concern for the community and a desire for its people to live in safety. It is therefore easy for churches to reach out and join forces with other churches, non-government agencies, educational institutions, faith leaders and community leaders in order to safeguard their communities against exploitation and human trafficking and work together for justice and safety. The stories told in the beginning of this article illustrate the value of partnerships.

Participation: The Church with all its varied expressions is well positioned to participate in the fight against human trafficking, with possible actions ranging from very basic actions to high-level specialised involvement. In fact, even the smallest congregations in the remotest of places may be very successful agents of change, helping their communities to prevent human trafficking and creating safe and robust communities. Activities well within the remit of the Church may include calls to prayer, freedom Sundays, peaceful marches or demonstrations, awareness campaigns and training events, as well as the sharing of information and resources. Churches can support and participate in any local community action against human trafficking, such as campaigns and awareness-raising events. Participation by local churches may also take a more individual form, such as church members volunteering their time and skills in efforts to prevent trafficking, protect survivors and prosecute traffickers.

Prevention, protection, prosecution, policy, partnership, and participation are all vital areas of engagement in combatting human trafficking, and the Church has a greater or lesser role to play in

each one. There is one area of response, however, of which every single Christian and every Church unit can, and should be a part, and that is the area of prayer.

Prayer: Prayer is foundational to all Christian service. Mari Williams (Fileta 2017:43) describes prayer as underpinning everything Christians do. 'Prayer is at the core of the kingdom task of seeking justice.' Alita Ram (Fileta 2017:45) agrees by naming prayer as the bedrock of every effort of Christians to work for justice. Brueggemann (2018:66) describes prayer as 'a refusal to settle for what is' and writes in his book *Interrupting Silence* (2018:84), 'the very fact of prayer is a way to remain courageous, a way to resist resignation that would result in losing heart'.

Prayer is an appealing and inspiring challenge for groups and individuals of all ages, and it is accessible to all who share a burden for people who are exploited by means of human trafficking. Ideas and initiatives include prayer groups, prayer walks, special days of prayer such as an anti-human trafficking Sunday or weekend. Churches and denominations may choose to share in these events together in unity and solidarity.

Providing and regularly updating resources and prayer guides are helpful for focused and informed prayer, whether private or corporate. Prayer topics may include victims, survivors, vulnerable people, persons and organisations who work against human trafficking, politicians, police personnel, law makers, judges, prosecutors and even perpetrators.

4.4. Getting started

This study reflects on the journey of The Salvation Army in Southern Africa in the early years of this century with the joy of having been a grateful fellow traveller, and with the benefit of hindsight. Much of the journey was a roller coaster ride, being catapulted from one stage of the journey to the next by increased knowledge and information, by need and by the open doors of opportunity, and the response was often more pragmatic and intuitive than strategic. Plotting the journey and noting the lessons learned might be useful to other churches and believers. This study confirms that any Christian response to human trafficking must be accompanied by prayer and guided by thorough research. Armed with prayer support and research, a church or group will progress to the stage of designing and implementing a strategy.

5. Conclusion

The stories of Maria, Sophie, Christina, Jennifer, Celeste, and others have touched our hearts, broken our hearts, and filled our hearts with a longing for justice. This study endeavours to answer the question of how Christians should respond to the crime of human trafficking, by means of the Loyola Institute of Ministry research design. Starting with an empyrical description of the situation in South Africa, and followed by a Biblical-theological description of the mission of Jesus and the mission of the Church, the study tells the story of one team, outlining some of the important lessons learned and suggesting a practical response that could help to move the current reality of exploitation of human beings closer towards the ideal situation of freedom for all.

The stories present the Church with a question and a challenge. The question concerns how the heart of God responds to these and millions of other lives affected by human trafficking. The challenge is how his people will respond.

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The Influence of Akan Traditional Religious Conceptions on the Reception of Hamartiology of First John by a Selection of Charismatic Preachers of Ghana[1]

Clement Adjei-Brown and Annang Asumang[2]

Abstract

The general Christian tradition in Ghana has historically attracted local and cultural views to itself that have enriched its universal nature and strengthened it to address different doctrines in different cultural and religious contexts. This has, however, led to misconceptions in the interpretation of some Christian doctrines such as the doctrine of sin in 1 John. This study employs a tailored method for reception analysis to analyse the reception of 1 John's hamartiology by a selection of Ghanaian charismatic preachers. It discovers that both for better and for worse, Akan Traditional Religious (ATR) concepts of sin influence the reception of the hamartiology of 1 John by charismatic preachers in Ghana. This finding is in itself not surprising. However, the precise manner and extent to which the influences flow have immense implications for the communication of the Gospel in Ghana. The reception-analytical method developed from the philosophical framework of reception theory enables the study to establish that ATR concepts create a horizon of expectations for Akan charismatic preachers in Ghana that influence their reception of the doctrine of sin in 1 John. From the comparison between the doctrine of sin in 1 John and the horizon of expectations of charismatic preachers in Ghana, it is apparent that to a large extent they have succeeded in contextualising the Christian message. In the process, however, traditional Akan cosmology, both for better and for worse, influences their reception of the doctrine of sin in 1 John.

Keywords
Reception; Akan traditional religion; horizon of expectations; uses and gratification; Charismatic; hamartiology; 1 John.

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1. Introduction

Christian tradition in Ghana has attracted to itself local and cultural views that have enriched its universal nature and strengthened it to address different doctrines of the Bible. This enrichment serves as the undercurrents for the current stream of historically younger Pentecostal independent or charismatic churches. Vicariously, they possess intrinsic characteristics that are the product of cultural influences. This has sometimes led to their failure to adequately analyse, understand, and express some Christian doctrines such as the doctrine of sin.

Charismatic churches in Ghana may be classified as part of the neo-Pentecostal movement or the 'third wave' of the Pentecostal Christian tradition. This began with the 'first wave', which is Pentecostalism, and moved to the 'second wave' by the evangelical charismatic movement. A distinctive feature of charismatic churches in Ghana is that they keenly appropriate electronic media to become accessible (Meyer 2004:466). Live church services are beamed nationally and across the world through radio, television, and online platforms. For example, during the 'Greater Works Conference' of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) in 2018, the five-day conference was beamed on Facebook live and on myjoyonline platforms. Daily devotional messages are also posted on WhatsApp platforms. Charismatic churches are accordingly extremely influential in the national consciousness. Music is often given a prominent role in their liturgy. Hackett (1998:263) puts forth that music is one of the most important means by which charismatic churches in Ghana have constructed their identity. Many commercial gospel music performers are deeply rooted in charismatic churches and their music ministries have become part of the charismatic church 'brand' (Carl 2015:48). For example, gospel-music singer Gifty Osei was married to Prophet Prince Elisha Osei, a charismatic preacher, and Head Pastor of Blessed Generation Chapel International in Tema. Prophet Elisha Osei embodies the gifts of healing, teaching, and deliverance. The music videos of Florence Obinim, wife of Bishop Daniel Obinim of God's Way International Ministries occupy much of the airtime of the church's television channel, OB TV (Carl 2015:48).

Charismatic churches in Ghana have thus become very influential. They own universities and pre-tertiary schools. International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) owns Central University (CU), a prominent private tertiary institution in Ghana with a student population of over six thousand. The General Overseer of ICGC, Dr Mensah Otabil, is the chancellor of CU. Another prominent charismatic church in Ghana is the Christian Action Faith Church (CAFC). The

church owns Dominion University College (DUC) and the leader of CAFC, Archbishop Duncan-Williams, is the chancellor. Charismatic churches in Ghana attract many people from all walks of life to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Many prominent politicians in Ghana fellowship in these churches. The immediate past president of Ghana, Mr John Mahama, is, for example, a member of the Assemblies of God Church. Thus, any phenomenon responsible for their hermeneutics has wide-ranging implications for the Gospel—the direction of the church and inevitably also world Christianity.

There are reasons to believe that charismatic churches in Ghana are influenced by traditional concepts. Akrong (2011:32) points out how their soteriological assumptions, as well as social context, underlie their hermeneutical appropriations of Christian doctrines. This is unsurprising as the social context makes traditional notions prominent and important for social identity in Ghana. This, however, opens the potential for syncretistic influences. For example, as in traditional religion, charismatic Christians tend to acknowledge that beliefs and practices inform every facet of human life. The prominent role that the concept of the good life plays as part of its soteriology is for instance critical in this assessment (Quayesi-Amakye 2017:112). In many of these churches, just as it is in ATR, the realisation of the good life features prominently as the goal of salvation (Quayesi-Amakye 2017:116). Adherents, therefore, deploy the spiritual resources of Christianity to overcome the problems impeding their realisation of the good life. In the process of these interactions, it appears that some charismatic preachers have become susceptible to influences from Akan traditional religion. Another example is that, just as in traditional religion, many charismatic preachers and their followers perceive that setbacks are caused by evil spirits (Akrong 2011:31).

In broadly general terms, the main problem investigated in this study is to establish the precise way such parallels influence the reception of particular biblical doctrines. In specific terms, the investigation restricted itself to the hamartiology of 1 John, given the richness and comprehensive nature of the doctrine in the letter. Thus, the question posed is to what degree, for better or for worse, do ATR concepts of sin influence the reception of the hamartiology of 1 John by charismatic preachers of Ghana? The hypothesis of the study is that the reception of the hamartiology of 1 John by Ghanaian charismatic preachers has been adversely affected by beliefs and practices of Akan traditional, religious, and cultural conceptions. This is argued using reception analysis. The choice of reception theory for this study is based on the presupposition that

it enables the analysis of the link between the original hearers and future readers of 1 John. Despite its rich content on sin, there are no published studies in relation to the reception of the doctrine of sin in 1 John by Ghanaian charismatic preachers. This makes this study important not just for shedding light on the hermeneutical processes of influential preachers of contemporary Christianity, but also for establishing the exact contours of the biblical doctrine itself. The study then combines insights from hermeneutics, biblical theology, reception analysis, and contemporary Christian praxes. In some respects, then, this study takes up the challenge by Bediako to African scholars that they should seek to contextualise Christian theology in the current settings.

In the remaining sections of this article, we summarise the key features of the methodology employed, set out the exegesis on the doctrine of sin in 1 John, summarise the findings of the empirical investigation and provide some reflections on their implications.

2. Summary of Reception Theory

Reception theory as a literary method basically describes how the reader creates meaning (Klint 2000:88). Reception refers to the response a text provokes from the reader at different periods and places (Jauss 1982:27). It considers the effect of the reader's tradition and prejudices on the interpretation process. Different readers may understand a text differently (Lv and Ning 2013:114). Jauss and Iser were the leading proponents of reception theory, who developed it in two different directions. Critics who employed reception theory in biblical studies drew heavily on Iser's text-centred method that gave much attention to the dialogue between the implied reader and the text. Jauss, on the other hand, focused on the varying historical reception of literary works (Klint 2000:89). Iser put forward the view that meaning is developed in the process of reading. He points out that meaning is not the outcome of a single aspect of text or reader (Lv and Ning 2013). It is through his/her proactive investigation in the reception process that meaning emerges (Lv and Ning 2013:114–115). The point of convergence of the views of Iser and Jauss was their agreement that the reader's role was more important than the relation between author and text in the process of literary activity (Lv and Ning 2013:115). Two reception-analytical methods employed in this study are horizon of expectations and uses and gratifications.

2.1. Horizon of expectations

'Horizon of expectations' is the fulcrum of Jauss's interpretative theory. Gadamer (2004) affirms this concept by arguing that every experience has its own horizon of expectations. Experience is obtained from 'anticipation or preconception to fulfilment or disappointment of anticipation' (Jauss 2005:203–4; Parris 2009:149). Knowledge within the horizon of disappointed expectations constitutes some things that can be experienced and open a new horizon. Jauss saw the theory on the horizon of expectations as a hermeneutical foundation, and therefore developed a hermeneutical process for analysing a text that had three stages: understanding, interpretation, and application (Srouji-Shrajrawi 2013:6). This process is useful for revealing the role played by the reader's prejudices and previous knowledge of the subject matter. Experience and expectation constitute an important conceptual pair such that 'no expectation exists without experience and no experience exists without expectation' (Parris 2009:150). The fusion of the horizons may, however, give the erroneous impression that the reader is a passive participant. Jauss, therefore, used the term 'mediation' of horizons.

2.2. Uses and gratifications

'Uses and gratifications' is employed in communications theory to study the specific needs that attract and hold an audience to the kinds of media and the types of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs (Ruggiero 2000:3). It is a 'need seeking' theory of communications that points out the media's most important role as fulfilling the needs and motivations of the audience (Mehrad and Tajer 2016:2). In textual analysis, uses and gratifications take the interpreter's motivations for reading a text as its vantage point for understanding the exposure and impact of the text (Ballard 2011). It is an important concept that this study integrates under reception theory. Certain individual needs do interact with personal values and the cultural environment to produce perceived problems and perceived solutions that constitute different motives for gratification behaviour in the use of texts. The gratifications sought by the reader and preacher form the central concept in the theory and place the focus on the interpreter instead of the message, by asking 'what people do with the text' rather than 'what texts do to people.'

Two major pitfalls of reception theory as a literary study method may be relevant at this juncture. The first hinges on the inability of readers to agree on a single, non-contradictory interpretation of a text and indicate that the meaning of a text is significantly affected by several factors at the point at which it is read. The second is that the reception of texts without the original cultural context can be 'hair-

raising ahistorical' (Eagleton 2003:77). There is a degree of truth in the claim that texts have no fixed meanings, especially as different interpreters may arrive at different understandings of the text. Yet, the claim cannot be that when the writer wrote the text, he/she did not have a meaning in mind. He/she did, otherwise writing would be a meaningless activity. The reader must, therefore, be conscious of the degree of the influence of his/her own biases and traditions as he/she reads the text and takes the author's own context into consideration in the interpretation. It is this which underpins the use of the theory for the analysis.

2.3. Method of reception analysis

The following procedure for reception analysis was followed in this study. Interview questions were grouped under various themes and their rationale explained. The themes were: the influence of cultural background of charismatic preachers on their understanding of the doctrine of sin in 1 John; the perceived meaning of the epistle's concept of God as light, and sin as darkness; how ATR conceptions and sometimes vocabularies of sin influence charismatic preachers' understanding of the intersections of hamartiology of 1 John with the imagery of Christians as God's family; remedies for sin; sin as lawlessness and the role of the devil; and the central message and gratifications of sin. We also analysed sermons and books of these preachers. The account of the various responses was analysed and compared with an exegetical analysis of the doctrine sin in 1 John. In the process differences and reasons for such differences were teased out. The differences include highlights of how Akan conceptions were reflected in the answers. A general summary of the findings and reflections on their implications was then set out.

In applying the reception analysis for this study, we probed with the question: why do charismatic preachers read texts on the doctrine of sin in 1 John, and what do they use them for? The basic idea behind this approach is that the preaching needs of charismatic preachers influence what texts they select to preach on the doctrine of sin, how they use these texts, and what gratifications these texts give them. Akan traditional religious conceptions interact with the personal values of charismatic preachers to produce perceived needs. These perceived needs constitute their motive for gratification in interpreting and preaching on the text. The gratifications may be derived from many antecedent variables such as text structure, social circumstances, psychological needs, values, and traditional conceptual beliefs that relate to the gratification pattern. The task is to identify some of these variables and the extent and way they shape the interpretation and application of a text. This was obtained from interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions.

The thirty selected charismatic preachers were given a list of possible uses and gratifications and asked whether they constituted the motives behind their reading of the doctrine of sin in 1 John. They were asked which book of the Bible they preferred for studying the doctrine of sin; whether sinful behaviours attract their attention; how often they observe sinful behaviours; why they observe these sinful behaviours; how important these observations are to them and for their sermons; how often do they preach on sin; and what impact they make by preaching on sin. This study also examines the motives for reading or avoiding the doctrine of sin in 1 John as well as the gratifications rebuked or enhanced by this reading.

3. Summary of Exegetical Analysis of Hamartiology of 1 John

In addition to examining the key hamartiological terms, important passages such as 1:5–2:2, 11, 12, 29; 4:10, 20; 5:16–18 were examined in their putative socio-historical, cultural and religious contexts. John wrote the epistle to correct the doctrine of the false teachers. Some were influenced by proto-Gnosticism and others by Docetism who seemed to focus on ethics. These teachers held erroneous views about Christ. They regarded themselves as being superior and without sin. They also claimed better, and greater knowledge of God, yet did not know him or keep his commands. The secessionists argued that they were sinless and did not need purification from sin. They claimed continuous fellowship with God while they lived in the darkness of sin (1:8, 10). To this assertion, John responded, ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν (we have come to know him, if we keep his commands; 2:3). These false teachers claimed fellowship with God and that they walked in the light. They denied the influence of sin in their lives yet lived in a manner sharply in contrast to these claims. John refuted the Docetists' denial of Jesus's humanity with texts such as 2:1. He emphasises that Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν (Jesus Christ), παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα (we have as an advocate with the Father), and δίκαιον (the righteous[one]). This is the same Christ who has saving power and dwelt in the flesh. John refers to Jesus thus: αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν (he is the atoning sacrifice for sins; 2:2). He rejects the claims of those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh affirming that πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν (every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 4:2).

John used the diatribe and third-class conditional sentence ἐὰν εἴπωμεν (if we say) to express what we consider a disagreement with assertions of the false teachers (1:8, 10; 2:4, 6, 9). For instance, the

heretics were influenced by Greek philosophy from Plato to believe that fellowship is based on knowledge. John responded to this in 1:6 (Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν). The false doctrine of antinomianism was that a Christian can live as he/she pleases, for his/her relationship to God does not depend on the law. John exposes this false view, asserting that walking in the darkness of sin is a hindrance to fellowship with God. Further, if a person rejects the deity of Jesus Christ and salvation by grace, he/she is not saved and walks in darkness. John points out that ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων (if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another; 1:7). First John 1:6 underlines the depraved quality of antinomian Gnostic doctrine, whereas 1:7 reflects John's apostolic teaching. He contrasts the implications of adhering to Gnostic doctrine with the implications of conforming to the teaching of Christ Jesus. In 1:6, 'walking in darkness' is by implication not experiencing fellowship with God or not living in his presence, or not living according to his standard of holiness.

The condition for walking in God's light and fellowship is not the condition of sinless perfection. It is fellowship with God attained because of the atonement (ἱλασμός) for sins (2:2). The individual has a personal responsibility to confess his/her sins and be cleansed so as not to hinder his/her fellowship with God and with one another. The attainment of righteousness in Gnostic doctrine was the reason for John's thoughts and writings to his 'little children'. He denounced the falsehood of the Gnostics by putting forward that acting outside God's commands is lawlessness. He points out: Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία (Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness; 3:4). He thus affirmed that Gnostics were sinners. Sin destroys knowledge of God (3:6, 8).

The inference from the foregoing is that texts on hamartiology were a response to the socio-religious doctrine of proto-Gnosticism infiltrating the Johannine community. Whereas there may have been other issues plaguing the fellowship, this was probably one of the largest sources of doctrinal disputation at the time John wrote his epistle. Antinomian Gnostics maintained that Christians were free by grace from the moral law. This was based on their concept of the soul and body being morally independent of each other; that is, the sinful gratifications of the body had no bearing on the spirit. John applies the concept of light and darkness to explain moral issues. The antithesis of light and darkness was key in Gnostic doctrine. The remedy for sin according to 1 John is that the Christian must confess his/her sin to be forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. To

'confess' is 'to say the same thing' as God (Glasscock 2009:220). Put together, it is clear that the hamartiology of 1 John was significantly a response to the situation in which socio-cultural circumstances were resulting in adaptations of Christian doctrine by elements of the Johannine community. This provides a foundation for testing how it is received in a roughly similar context in which ATR conceptions vie for influencing the hamartiology of charismatic preachers.

4. Summary of Findings of Empirical Study

4.1. Akan cosmological influences on charismatic preachers' reception of hamartiology of 1 John

We discovered that the concept of sin espoused by some charismatic preachers betrays their horizon of *bònέ* (sin) in Akan conceptions. The claim that sinful spirits can be cast out of a person as an evil spirit is an Akan conception that has become ingrained in the horizon of expectations of the preachers. This concept is, however, absent from 1 John. The concept of sin in 1 John is that sin is a human failure and not ascribed to external spirits. The life of charismatic Christians proceeds in the form of salvation from sin, and spiritual enemies such as the devil, evil spirits, and witchcraft. These spiritual enemies constitute entities that deprive people of their well-being. We must point out, however, that charismatic preachers' view of sin from demonic powers and the devil may also come from other biblical texts. For example, Zechariah 3:1–7 describes a vision in which an angel shows Zechariah a scene of Joshua the high priest dressed in filthy rags, representing the sins of Judah. He was before God, and Satan was standing as the prosecutor. God rebukes Satan and orders that Joshua is given clean clothes, which represent God's forgiveness of Judah's sins. For charismatic Christians, salvation from sin becomes a stepping-stone to being empowered by the Holy Spirit to overcome these spiritual enemies. The reality is that no one—children or adults—can claim a past sinless condition.

The study also found that the charismatic preachers primarily talk of salvation in terms of the forgiveness of sin, atonement, and reconciliation with God, yet in praxis, salvation permeates their material horizons. Their gratifications include financial breakthroughs, need for marriages, and resolution of marriage problems, childbirth for couples, jobs, drunkenness, housing needs, and bad dreams. The concern for human welfare forms the axiological basis of their use of the hamartiology of 1 John and takes its strong and unreflective desire from Akan traditional conceptions. Like Akan tradition, charismatic preachers believe in the doctrine

of universal causality. They explain human moral actions with causal references to supernatural beings such as evil spirits. This situates well with Akan belief that misfortunes and tragedies are caused by evil spirits. This concept is antithetical to the conceptions in 1 John. Ἁμαρτίας (sin), *ἀδικίας* (unrighteousness) and *ἀνομία* (guilt, lawlessness) depict the failures of a human person and cannot be attributed to external spirits. They are not spirits in themselves. However, it must be admitted that the devil plays a role in the sinful acts a person commits (1 John 3:8–10). The Akan is thus predisposed to better understand the assertion that 'Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil' (3:8). It also makes him/her prone to exaggerate the understanding of the doctrine of sin in 1 John.

4.2. Notions of sin among the charismatic preachers

The Akan concept of *bòné* (sin) also regards sin only as an act. A child who has not been observed engaging in any sinful act has not sinned. The implication of this concept by some charismatic preachers asserts that a Christian possesses sinless perfection until evil spirits cause him/her to sin. It must be pointed out that this reception is inappropriate in light of the hamartiology of 1 John. This concept signifies a fundamental change in meaning from that of the first epistle. It unmistakably shows that the preoccupation of charismatic preachers' moral thought is their gratification for material possessions.

The metaphorical statement: 'God is light' is a penetrating description of God's nature. It portrays God's righteous functions and includes his holiness, intellectual and moral enlightenment. God's nature as light illuminates and purifies those who come to him just as physical light reveals and purifies. Charismatic preachers describe darkness, not as the absence of holiness and righteous functions, but rather the presence of witchcraft and evil spirits that influence an individual to commit sin resulting in misfortunes and serial sinful misbehaviours that require intense prayer to avert. This is similar to Akan thought of *mmusuyi* (deliverance from evil) in the sense that they both use darkness in a negative sense. Also, in the reception of sin by the charismatic preacher, sin is conceived as darkness that affects various areas of the sinner's life. This interpretation has connotations of Akan thought. Darkness in Akan tradition denotes evil motives, clandestine activities, and secrets that people refuse to disclose to one another.

The study also found that the charismatic preachers' understanding of sin as lawlessness interfaces with Akan conceptions of sin. They describe sin as *mmrato* (law-breaking) that attracts God's punishment. This is similar to the manner in which individuals in

Akan traditional settings are punished for disobeying regulations. The preachers claim that God punishes those who disobey his word. This concept is understood because in Akan tradition acts must be for the well-being of the community and must be sanctioned by spiritual agencies. Infractions are regarded as *mmrato* (law-breaking). The response that sin must be punished is reassuring. However, the severity of punishment causes fear and anxiety, as in Akan traditional communities.

4.3. The charismatic preachers' reception of remedies for sin in 1 John

The primary objective of the remedy for sin in 1 John is different from Akan conceptions. In 1 John forgiveness and cleansing from sin benefits the Christian in a manner that improves his/her fellowship with God the Father and fellow-Christians. The blood of Jesus cleanses all kinds of sin (1:7). Cleansing in this context is not just a one-time act for salvation but involves continuous cleansing throughout the Christian journey for continuous fellowship with God. This is unlike Akan conceptions, whose remedy for sin is to restore spiritual relationship with God and ultimately material benefits and physical well-being. While the means of remedy for the doctrine of sin in 1 John is the blood of Jesus that cleanses past and continual sins, the remedy for sin in Akan thought includes the blood of an animal. There was no evidence to show that any charismatic preacher had assimilated this ATR thought in their teaching. Their emphasis on the power in the blood of Jesus was quite pronounced and indeed chimes with that of 1 John.

4.4. Gratifications and the reception of the doctrine of sin in 1 John

One of the key attractions of Akan cosmological influences in the theology of the charismatic preachers is its underlying link between human well-being and sin. The pervasiveness of references to evil spirits in the charismatic preachers' account of hamartiology is more closely aligned to their thoughts regarding Akan cosmology. This may result in an exaggerated emphasis on spirits in their theology. These gratifications are derived from antecedent variables such as social Akan circumstances, psychological needs, values, and traditional conceptual beliefs that relate to the gratification pattern used by these preachers.

5. Reflections and Implications of the Findings

This study set out to investigate to what degree, for better or for worse, ATR conceptions of sin influence the reception of the hamartiology of 1 John by a sub-section of charismatic preachers in Ghana. It was discovered that the perception of the doctrine of sin in 1 John by the charismatic preachers is influenced by their soteriological goals, which are the realisation of salvation as well as healing, prosperity, and success. These soteriological goals are influenced by Akan traditional conceptions of salvation from sin and spiritual enemies such as the devil, evil spirits, and witchcraft. The following are some reflections of charismatic preachers' reception of the doctrine of sin in 1 John and their implications:

- In the attempt by charismatic preachers to interpret the doctrine of sin in 1 John they are unwitting captives of the notion of bòné (sin) in Akan conceptions. We discovered that it is difficult for them to arrive at the horizon of the hamartiology of 1 John by disregarding Akan conceptions. Akan concept of *bòné* (sin), *akyiwáde* (taboo) and *mmusuo* (evil) moved with them as they continue to live. They claim sinful spirits influence individuals to commit acts of sin and can be cast out of the person. The implication is that the charismatic preachers tended to dismiss the inner character flaws of human nature that include pride, hatred, and dishonesty (cf. 1 John 2:16; John 8:44).

- The charismatic preachers regarded sin as being caused by witchcraft and demons with the intended goal of denying them benefits such as good health, good marriages, profitable jobs, businesses, and prosperity. This interpretation has its positive and negative elements. The devil and his demons are described by John as the source of sinful behaviour (3:8). This cosmological emphasis raises awareness of the role demonic forces and evil spirits play in sin. This interpretation, however, results in some not taking responsibility for their sinful, fleshly gratifications. When they get themselves involved in sexual scandals, for instance, they describe the ladies involved as witches sent from the devil to tempt them to fall into sin. The devil, however, is not the only source of sinful behaviour in the epistle. While he is the originator of sin, he is not the immediate cause. Sin has selfish manifestations such as self-will, self-centredness, and self-assertion. The world is also a source of sin. Thus, there is a need for balance in how the charismatic preachers appropriate the cosmological speculations of ATR in their reception of biblical hamartiology.

- The shared mental framework within which charismatic preachers in Akan culture interpret the first epistle's doctrine of sin includes their knowledge of Akan expectations of some sins as forbidden because their resultant effects include curses. Also, these sins are to be exorcised through deliverance. This portrays the Akan concept of *akyiwáde* (taboos) and *mmusuo* (evil) which are regarded as abominations. This is a wrongful interpretation and antithetical to the doctrine of sin in 1 John. Ἁμαρτίας (sin), ἀδικίας (unrighteousness) and ἀνομία (guilt, lawlessness) depict human failures other than evil spirits.

- The concept of spiritual direction has become ingrained in the conceptual framework of charismatic preachers. They give spiritual directions for their congregants to overcome enemies. While the idea of counselling is perhaps universal, the particular practices of the selected charismatic preachers exhibit elements of the influence of the Akan traditional religious practice of *sumsum akwankyere* (spiritual direction or divination). It includes the diagnosis of hidden problems, predictions of future events, and prescription of solutions. This is comparable to traditional religious practices in Akan, where fetish priests offer solutions to problems in the form of directions from the spirit world for the protection and prosperity of clients. Often, a motivation behind the adoption of this practice is the gratification of material welfare and good health.

- As noted earlier, in the reception of sin by the charismatic preacher, sin is perceived as darkness that affects various areas of the sinner's life. This undergirds the tendency to believe in the influence of the evil eye and the fear that sharing good plans could lead to their supernatural abortion before manifestation. The charismatic preachers thus tend to encourage their congregants to keep personal plans secret, since agents of the devil could abort them. While this might feed a tendency to mistrust and fuel paranoia, it also catalyses constant prayer life.

5. Conclusion

The charismatic preachers studied have to a large extent succeeded in contextualising the Christian message resulting in the rapid growth of their churches. In the process, however, traditional conceptions such as Akan cosmology have, for better and for worse, influenced their reception and the presentation of the doctrine of sin in 1 John. We have demonstrated how the cultural and traditional contextual situation of Akan charismatic preachers in Ghana influences their

reception of a text. This means that the horizon of expectations of charismatic preachers of the doctrine of sin in 1 John will differ from other preachers with different expectations. Differences in interpretations can be minimised if the charismatic preacher becomes conscious of the danger of syncretism and confers with original manuscripts or avails himself/herself of sound theological education, especially in hermeneutics, to help him/her reduce these dangers.

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Theology of the Prophet Amos: A Paradigm for Addressing Ghana's Socio-Political and Religious Challenges

Frederick Mawusi Amevenku and Isaac Boaheng[1]

Abstract

Amos is often considered one of the most important prophets, mainly for his uncompromising message about social justice and God's righteousness. This article examines the theology and social ethics of the prophet Amos, who ministered to Israel during the reigns of King Jeroboam II of Israel and King Uzziah of Judah. In Amos's time, materialism was prevalent, hedonism and selfishness increased, and social disparity intensified. This condition necessitated his theology of social justice and true worship of Yahweh.

This paper, through a critical analysis of data extracted from textbooks, theses/dissertations, and scholarly articles, compares the context in which the prophet prophesied with the Ghanaian context—intimately associated with poor governance, fraud and corruption, abuse of power, social injustice, religious hypocrisy, misallocation of resources and self-centredness. While admitting that Ghana's current socio-religious climate is not wholly similar to that of ancient Israel, the paper identifies similarities between the present Ghanaian context and that of Israel of Amos's time, and points out how Amos addressed the challenges. This then becomes a basis for drawing lessons for church and political leaders in addressing socio-economic challenges in Ghana.

Keywords
judgement; justice; prosperity; righteousness; sovereignty.

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1. Introduction

Positively, the history of ancient Israel in the 8th century BCE was characterized by peace and economic growth and consolidation. This positive situation, however, affected Israel negatively as the people forgot their roots and did what they liked. Israel, as we shall discuss shortly, began to bear the common fruits of prosperity—pride, luxury, selfishness, and oppression. Sunukjian (1983:1425) describes Israel's situation as follows:

> Commerce thrived (8:5), an upper class emerged (4:1–3), and expensive homes were built (3:15; 5:11; 6:4, 11). The rich enjoyed an indolent, indulgent lifestyle (6:1–6), while the poor became targets for legal and economic exploitation (2:6–7; 5:7, 10–13; 6:12; 8:4–6). Slavery for debt was easily accepted (2:6; 8:6). Standards of morality had sunk to a low ebb (2:7).

In response to this situation, Yahweh raised the prophet Amos to give a message of condemnation, indictment, punishment and hope upon repentance. Thus, Amos's prophetic utterances took place against the background of a politically-stable, economically-prosperous, and religiously-decadent society. He demonstrated immense bravery against the established order of the day as he proclaimed Yahweh's gross displeasure and divine judgment for the manner in which those in power had treated the poor.

This article contends that Amos's message is relevant to the contemporary Ghanaian context, which is comparable to Amos's context in several respects. For example, Ghana, like Israel of Amos's time, has become intimately associated with poor governance, fraud, bribery, corruption, abuse of power, social injustice, religious hypocrisy, misallocation of scarce resources and self-centredness. While we do not claim to know of any study that has proved this assertion, the fact that a majority of political debates in Ghana today, whether on television or on radio, in newspapers or even public buses never fail to lament that the problem of corruption is not in doubt. Top political leaders, either from the ruling government or the opposition often lament corruption and make various suggestions to address it. The situation, we believe, calls for a thorough assessment of how people engage politically, socially, economically, and religiously with one another. This article therefore examines the theological views of the prophet Amos and attempts an answer to the question: what lessons can we draw from Amos's message for politicians and ministers in Ghana?

2. Amos the Prophet and His Calling

Barre (2011:209) describes the prophet Amos as the "first of the 'classical prophets', the first whose oracles have come down to us in the form of a book." The prophet's name, Amos, means 'burden-bearer' or 'load-carrier' (Constable 2015:np). Amos was a shepherd and he described himself as a herdsman (7:14). He was more than a shepherd. He evidently owned or managed large herds of sheep and goats and was probably in charge of shepherds. Amos also described himself as a grower of sycamore fig trees (7:14–15). The prophet's hometown, Tekoa, stood 'twelve miles' (Ironside 2004:95) south of Jerusalem in Judah and he ministered during the reigns of King Jeroboam II of Israel (793–753 BCE) and King Uzziah of Judah (792–740 BCE), specifically two years before 'the earthquake' (1:1). Archaeological excavations at Hazor and Samaria point to evidence of a violent earthquake in Israel about 760 BCE (see Boaheng 2020:17–18). Amos might therefore have ministered in about 762 BCE. Following this analysis, one also deduces that Amos was a contemporary of the prophets Jonah, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah who also lived in the eighth century BCE (see Boaheng 2020:18).

Amos 'tells us that he neither was born into the goodly company of prophets nor chose that calling himself' (Ironside 2004:95). But when he was shepherding his flock and gathering his sycamore fruit, the Lord called him and said to him, 'Go and prophesy unto my people' (7:14–15) (Ironside 2004:95–96). The prophet responded promptly to God's call and left all that he was doing and 'began declaring the word of the Lord far away into the capital of the northern kingdom' (Ironside 2004:96). After declaring God's message, the prophet went back to continue his usual activities. One may therefore argue that Amos performed a prophetic role but was not called to be a prophet all his life (Boaheng 2020:16).

In order to understand Amos's message, it is necessary to have a closer look at the political, economic, and religious contexts within which the prophet ministered. At the end of it all, it will be discovered that Amos's prophetic utterances took place against a background of a politically-stable, economically-prosperous, and religiously-decadent society.

3. The Historico-Political Context

In Amos's time, Syria lost its military might and Assyria was too weak internally to be a threat to Israel (Fosbroke 1969:764). With the reigns of Jeroboam II in Israel and Uzziah in Judah, both kingdoms entered a golden age in terms of political expansion. Ben-Sasson

(1979: 128) attributes this success 'not only to the weakening of Aram-Damascus and the end of its hegemony over Syria-Palestine but also to the close commercial and economic ties between the two kingdoms during that half of the century.' The two kingdoms took advantage of the foreign political situation and the absence of an Israelite-Judean war to form an alliance which brought about peace and expansion of their territories. Israel was able not only to recapture its territories previously taken from it (2 Kings 13:25) but also to extend its border as far north as Hamath (2 Kings 14:25, 28; Amos 6:14). For Judah, Uzziah, its king, had subdued the Edomites and the Philistines, put the Ammonites under subjection, encouraged agriculture and the domestic acts of peace, and raised a large, powerful army, fortifying Jerusalem strongly (2 Chron 26:1–15).

Having restored the former boundaries, Israel became the largest and most influential country along the eastern Mediterranean coast, and king Jeroboam II certainly became famous for that. In addition, the alliance of the two kingdoms resulted in the emergence of a new power, the consequence of which was Israel's political and military superiority over the Syrians, Ammonites and Moabites. This situation ensured a period of stability in which trade boomed, making the two kingdoms very prosperous (Scheffler 2001:105).

4. The Socio-Economic Context

In the words of Ben-Sassan (1979:126), Jeroboam II's reign was 'a period of economic growth and consolidation'. In the final half of Jeroboam's tenure, Israel had reached its height in terms of economic prosperity (Stuart 1987:283). Israel, at this time, once again gained control over the major trade routes joining Mesopotamia and Anatolia with Egypt, thereby making Israel gain profits through trade (Ben-Sasson 1979:129). Considerable wealth was generated through the major trade routes spanning the Transjordan, northern Arabia, the coastal plains, the hinterland, and the Phoenician ports. Tolls were extracted from passing caravans and goods were exchanged freely, adding to the wealth generated (Bright 1981:258). People became rich and began to build more elaborate houses to replace the old clay houses in which they had lived since their settlement in the Promised Land (Boaheng 2020:45). The extravagance of the buildings was referred to when Amos speaks of the summer and winter houses (3:6, 11, 13–15) some of which were constructed from carved stones, which was unusual (5:11). The fittings of the houses were expensively furnished, beds inlaid with ivory and provided with damask cushions (3:12–15; 6:4).

The economic growth certainly affected the people's lifestyles. Bitrus (2006:1063) rightly observes that, 'Human beings generally fall prey to a sense of false security when they become wealthy and live comfortably. Their way of life insulates them from the real issues of life.' This observation is expressed differently in Akan[2] parlance in the saying *asetena pa ma awerefire* literally meaning, 'good living has the tendency of leading one to forget his or her roots'. This saying was proven true when Israel forgot their roots and did what they liked. The common fruits of prosperity—pride, luxury, religious laxity, selfishness, oppression—were ripening plentifully in both kingdoms during this time of peace and economic stability. Knight (2011:63) describes the macro-sociological pattern of Israel and Judah as that of an agrarian state or society characterised by 'a pronounced social inequality in power, privileges, and honour'.

2 Akan is one of the major ethnic groups of Ghana comprising of Bono, Akyem, Fanti, Akuapem, Ashanti and others.

The market was occupied by profiteering commerce, false weights, and fraudulent economic practices (8:5–6). Corrupt merchants indulged in dishonest business practices to make money. There was no justice in the land (3:10) for every judge was corrupt (3:12) and they turned 'justice into poison' instead of healing, and 'the fruit of righteousness into wormwood' (5:7). Coote and Coote (1990:48) even contend that, at this time, better quality oil and wine were exported and reserved for the wealthy internally while a second pressing of the olive pulp, yielding a lower quality fuel, was sold to the poor. The result of this situation was the creation of a blunt contrast between the luxury of the rich and the misery of the poor, such that the rich enjoyed an indolent, indulgent life (4:1ff; 6:1–6) while the poor became a tempting target for legal and economic exploitation (2:6–8; 4;1; 5:10–12; 8:4–6). In reality, the rich prospered at the expense of the poor (4:1) by crushing the needy, taking possession of the land of those who had fallen into debt or subjecting them to slavery (2:6; 8:4, 6), denying them justice in the lay courts at the city gates (2:7; 5:10, 12), and cheating them in the marketplace (8:5–6).

People excelled in drinking wine, often from sacral vessels (2:8, 9, 12; 6:6). The wealthy women were likened to fat cows of Bashan (4:1). They were addicted to wine and had no compassion for the poor and needy. Banqueting tables were provided with the choicest foods—lambs, calves, and fatted beasts (5:22; 6:4). Unfortunately, not all the people of Israel enjoyed such luxurious living. It was only, in fact, experienced by very few people, mostly the ruling elite of Israel who were also the governing class. The society was thus divided into rich communities and embittered, poor communities as a result of spatial injustice.

5. The Religious Background

Israel's economic growth led to an increase in religious activities. The shrines at Bethel, Dan, Gilgal, and Beersheba were constructed and people trooped to these shrines with sacrificial animals. These shrines provided spiritual identity to the nation (5:5; 8:1–14). Amos tells us of many sacrifices (4:4), peace-offerings (5:22), meal offerings (5:22), thanks offerings (4:5), freewill offerings and tithes (4:4–5). These were, however, only ritualistic observances lacking in any internal holiness and having little effect on the day-to-day lives of the people. The religious interests of Israel were summed up by Amos, 'Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days. Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened and proclaim freewill offerings; publish them for so you love to do, O people of Israel.' (4:4–5)

From the perspective of the Israelites, this religious 'awakening' was closely related to economic success, because they believed, from the Deuteronomistic tradition, that economic success was a sign of God's favour towards them (Deut 28). It seems therefore that the people's eagerness in building religious temples and high places was a way of expressing their gratitude for God's blessing and favour. Unfortunately, this motivation was ironically turned into self-satisfaction. While these religious activities happened, the ruling elite still oppressed the downtrodden and poor. Stuart (1987:284) asserts that 'Israel was a people often orthodox in style of worship but disobedient in personal and social behavior.' Sharing the same view, Achtemeier (1999:170) directly points out, 'the conscience of the rich was placated by participation in an elaborate cultus'. The Israelites thus were in a paradoxical situation in which the economic and formal religious ascent co-existed with the moral and social decline.

Clearly, the people were self-centred. By self-centredness, we mean a situation in which the self takes on a central point of reference regarding many psychological activities (i.e., conation, motivation, attention, cognition, affect/emotion, and behaviour) (Ricard 2011:140). The exaggerated importance given to the self emerges mainly from self-centredness and refers to the increased degree with which the individual considers that his/her own condition is more important than that of others and this takes unquestionable priority. Self-centred psychological functioning includes characteristics such as biased self-interest, egoism, egocentrism, and egotism (Ricard 2011:140). It could be contended that the more the Israelites built their shrines and offered sacrifices, the more they treated the poor and the powerless unfairly and discriminated against them. The point

is that, the frequency with which Israel went to the shrines to make sacrifices did not reflect in their moral, spiritual and social lives. In fact, 'The pilgrimage to the shrine was the occasion for pleasurable feasting, with opportunity for extraordinary observances as might attest a man's social position' (Fosbroke 1969:768).

Furthermore, the Israelites worshipped the native Canaanite deities together with Yahweh (4:4–5; 5:4–6, 14–15, 21–27; 8:9–10), treating their God as one of the gods of the land of Canaan (Fosbroke 1969:768). Accordingly, the Israelite religious institutions and theology were being perverted, misunderstood and rejected, and although they performed elaborate rituals as proud demonstrations of piety (4:4–5), those activities were unrelated to justice and righteousness (5:21–24) or to really seeking after God (5:4–6).

6. The Theology of Amos

The main message of Amos was to call the attention of God's people to their sins and tell them of their imminent judgment. Firstly, the prophet establishes the sovereignty of God. By sovereignty is meant 'God's control over his creation, dealing with his governance over it: Sovereignty is God's rule over all reality' (Geisler 2011:536). As Boaheng (2020:85) notes, the Sovereignty of God makes him comparable to a potter who chooses to mould a piece of clay into whatever form he likes (cf. Rom 9). In an attempt to emphasise Yahweh's sovereignty, Amos referred to Israel's God as Yahweh (YHWH) and deliberately avoids the use of the expression 'the God of Israel' because of the tendency of such expression leading to the thought that 'God' is the God of Israel alone and not for other nations (Boaheng 2020:51). Brueggemann (2002:238) writes that Yahweh is the 'proper name' for the God of Israel, unlike the other names that are either 'generic names for deity', or 'titles that give respect or identify attributes for this God'.

For the prophet, Yahweh was indeed a sovereign God. He stressed the sovereignty of Yahweh over history, saying, 'If he had brought Israel up out of Egypt, he had also brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir (9:7)'. His judgment fell not only upon Israel but also upon the neighboring peoples' (Fosbroke 1969:769). As sovereign God, Yahweh controls the movements of peoples (9:7) and the order of nature (4:13; 5:8). Amos had no doubt that Yahweh was Lord and Master above all gods, the Creator and Sustainer of nature, because: 'he who forms the mountains, and creates the wind and declares to mortals what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness and treads on the heights of the earth, the Lord, the God

of hosts is his name' (4:13). According to Amos, Yahweh is great, and possesses all power, over and even beneath the earth and fixes the stars in the firmament. The interests of Yahweh spread beyond the confines of Israel and Judah and for this reason he can punish all the nations such as Damascus, Gaza, Edom, Tyre, and Israel's neighbours (Amos chs. 1, 2).

Secondly, Amos establishes the righteousness of Yahweh and his demand for social justice. For the prophet, 'Yahweh is preeminently the God of righteousness' (Fosbroke 1969:769) and hence his true worship (true religion) comprises justice informed by righteousness. This is the message he expounds, especially in chapter 5. Amos (5:6–7) demonstrates that, justice and righteousness are absolutely part of the presence of God as the life-bestowing force. For Amos, the Israelites perceived evil as good and were practising it in the society. As a result, the so-called 'justice' had turned into its opposite term 'injustice' and the people were striving for wealth by exploiting and oppressing the weak and the poor. They hated and opposed those who spoke the truth (5:10). Therefore, Amos reminded the people that their opposition to the essence of the court-justice system, in which the truth lay, was an embrace of death in God's eyes. Only when God's concern for the weak is disclosed and heeded, would the people of Israel live in justice and peace. For Amos, the key to experiencing the presence of God is not meaningless, formal piety, but the exercise of justice between and among humans (5:21–24) (Grimsrud 1999:73–75). Sunukjian (1983:1439) observes:

> 'Justice' was proper functioning of judicial procedures that a enabled court to declare who or what was right in a given case. 'Righteousness' was the behavior of one who sought this end, who did 'right' to those involved in the case. A righteous man was willing to speak in defense of an innocent person who had been wrongly accused. Righteousness was the action; justice was the end result.

Yahweh showed no interest in Israel's rituals (5:21–27) but instead sought justice and righteousness (1:17). In 4:4 the prophet writes sarcastically, 'Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days'. Some Israelites naively thought that practising religion could cover their sins. But Amos bluntly declared that no matter what religious rituals they performed, these empty and superficial acts (rituals) were futile. Thus, the law broken through unrighteousness could not be mended through any sacrifice, festival or ritual alone, because the most elaborate ritual that the people carried out remained detestable to God as long as it was offered by people who

fell below God's holy moral standards (5:18–27). Amos, like Samuel, insisted that, 'To obey is better than sacrifice and to heed is better than the fats of rams' (1 Sam 15:22). He wrote, 'I hate and despise your feasts. I take no pleasure in your solemn festivals. I reject your sacrifices. Let me hear no more of your chanting. But rather let justice flow like water and integrity like an unfailing stream' (5:21). In Amos's view, true religion had to come from the bottom of the hear, and had to rise from true faith in God. True religion is justice informed by righteousness rooted in the righteousness of God. It is a kind of religion that cares for the poor, widows and the needy. James makes the point when he says, 'Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world' (1:27). To Amos, a vertical relationship with Yahweh should automatically lead to a healthy horizontal relationship with one's neighbour and the environment. In this sense, the rich should stop exploiting the poor and rather help the poor come out of their miserable states.

Amos's message about Israel's relationship with Yahweh is closely related to his theology of divine judgment upon the ills of his contemporary society. Due to Israel's social injustice and porous cultic religion, what was to come next was the Day of the Lord. Amos declares, 'The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness, that, behold, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks' (4:2). Further, Amos said, 'And it shall come to pass on that day that I will turn your religious feasts into mourning' (8:10). This punishment is ensured by Divine Oath. Yahweh swears by his holiness that severe punishment will come upon Samaria. Clearly the holiness of God had been defiled by the people's disobedience and covenantal violations. Surely this had become the guarantor of their punishment. The oath is enforced by his holiness and guarantees and strengthens its validity. That is, through their disobedience, they had violated Yahweh's covenant and he is now determined to enforce his covenant. It was a universal punishment that no one could escape. In the words of Boaheng (2019:68), the day 'would be as if someone runs away from a lion and was met by a bear. In an attempt to avoid the second danger, he runs to his house, but as he leans his hand against the wall, a poisonous snake concealed in a corner bites him with its venomed [sic] fangs (5:18–19)'. Due to their sins, God's judgment will fall upon all social classes of the nation including the king and his house, the royal chaplain and his family, the leaders and the nobles, the luxury-loving men and the pampered women, the rapacious landowners and the idle rich. Under the judgment, the common people will be included

along with the nobles. On the other hand, the Day of Yahweh will be characterized by a pouring of divine blessing upon God's people (9:11–15; cf. Isa 4:2–6; 30:26).

7. The Ghanaian Socio-Politico-Religious Context

Ghana made history in the sub-Saharan African region by becoming the first country to break the shackles of colonialism. However, after Ghana's independence in 1957, the country's history was primarily characterized by social and political violence and bloodshed through coups d'état and military rule. Military rule led to violent suppression resulting in numerous detentions without trial, political deaths in detention, capital punishment and a general and continuous state of emergency. However, in 1992, the nation decided to go back to constitutional rule—a decision that was reached through a referendum. For close to three decades since then, Ghana has enjoyed political stability. There have been seven peaceful general elections of a four-year term each. The next election is due in 2020. Ghanaians are always proud that the practice of democracy has stabilized their political system. With this background, Ghana's current political situation can be said to be analogous to that of the nation Israel in the time of Amos. Despite its momentous achievement of transitioning from military rule to democratic rule, Ghana remains an enigma.

Today, many of the issues that were confronted by Amos in eighth-century Israel run through the Ghanaian society. Issues such as corruption in both public and private sectors for the purposes of accumulating wealth, the alleged opulent lifestyles of some politicians, clergymen, government officials and senior corporate executives, bribery and corruption in our criminal justice system and the issues of national disasters like fire outbreaks and inadequate supply of electric power (*dumsor*) are common. These social challenges coupled with labour unrests and a struggling economy ultimately manifest in poor service delivery and large-scale unemployment affecting the poor and marginalised most profoundly. Agboluaje (2007:175) is therefore right to contend that the OT prophets 'still speak to our age with tremendous challenge'. Corruption is found in various aspects of our lives. Heads of departments, heads of institutions, civil servants, the security services all express corruption in one form or another.

At the heart of the social problems of ancient Israel at Amos's time lay poverty, social inequality and a combination of practices that perpetuated social chaos and facilitated illicit wealth. The story in Ghana is probably not different. Poverty and social inequality are some of the key challenges facing the country. In his *Inequalities*

Country Report – Ghana, Osei-Assibey (2014:np) observes that 'Ghana's growing overall economic inequalities reflect to some extent large and growing spatial and gender inequalities'. Like Israel in the time of Amos, Ghana has also experienced a situation where the rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming poorer, even though Ghana cannot generally speak of enjoying economic prosperity on the scale Israel experienced in the time of Amos. The following facts and figures come from Osei-Assibey's (2014:np) report:

> There is growing evidence that while the incidence of income poverty in general has reduced, income distribution has widened. …Whereas the poorest average income has fallen from 6.9 in early 1990s to 5.2 in the mid-2000s, the richest incomes have increased from 44 to 48.3 over the same period. One of the worrying aspects of this growing income inequality is that it actually reduced the impact of economic growth on poverty reduction in the country over the periods under consideration.

The implication of this situation is that Ghana's modest economic growth appears to have benefitted the rich more than the poor. Not only is the gap between rich and poor extremely wide, justice systems are often inaccessible, especially to the poor, and rights and entitlements are unknown to many. Civic, socio-economic, and political rights are therefore frequently flouted, and conflict is rife. Discrimination against the poor is not uncommon these days. Boachie (2015:23–25) avers that, 'in Ghana, the basis for discrimination among people includes gender, ethnicity, age and social class', a situation similar to that of Amos's Israel.

In addition, territorial social injustice finds expression in Ghana such that socio-economic development is spatially concentrated in few regions while vast areas of the country remain largely undeveloped. The result is that, while the poor majority of rural residents live without social amenities such as accessible roads, electricity, drinking water, schools and health facilities, urban residents enjoy these and other. Many citizens are victims of poverty, hunger, ignorance, malnutrition, disease, unemployment, low life-expectancy, and hopelessness. That spatial injustice is present in Ghana is also confirmed by Osei-Assibey's (2014:np) assertion that, in Ghana 'Over 70% of people whose incomes are below the poverty line can be found in the Northern/Savannah areas.' Thus, there is the widening of income and infrastructure disparity between rural and urban dwellers.

What about religious hypocrisy and malpractices? Ghana is known to be a Christian country. Out of a population of about 32 million, about

22 million are professing Christians. In our churches, exploitation of the poor abounds as seen on many television stations today. Some ministers take advantage of people's situation and take huge sums of money from them. Consultation fees are charged as high as five hundred Ghana cedis (Gh¢ 500.00, about $100). Deliverance practices abound in Ghanaian churches whereby the dignity and human rights of unsuspecting and vulnerable members of congregations are blatantly violated. Obeng (2014:32) rightly observes that deliverance practices in Ghanaian churches are characterized by 'the demand for monetary support from the vulnerable in exchange for blessing….' Some pastors 'charge exorbitantly, sometimes even before attempting a cure. The patient's generous donation in form of tithe is sometimes made a prerequisite for healing' (Umoh 2013:663). At the end of it all the signal sent to viewers or listeners to television and radio respectively in Ghana is that God's 'blessings can be bought or earned' (Obeng 2014:37). Writing about the quack pastors in Ghana, Adofo (2014:np) observes:

> Their foremost priority is to make money rather than to seek the salvation of their congregants. They entice their church members, victims I may call them, with completely false prophecies in most instances. Their churches have they turned into mints; their members subserviently brainwashed to churn out money at the crack of the pastor's fingers. What a pity!

Today, the evangelistic purpose for using electronic media has been turned into 'church advertisement' and the projection of the image of pastors. Large billboards are erected in advertisement of ministers rather than Christ. This situation has prompted some churches (like the Methodist Church Ghana) to ban the use of photographs (of minsters, speakers or any other church official) in publicizing church programmes. The church hierarchy has directed that the picture of Christ or the Cross should be used instead. Though this directive comes with its own challenges (for example, the challenge of getting the photograph of the historical Jesus so as to avoid projecting the image of someone who acted in a movie as Jesus), it definitely tells us that most contemporary ministers are projecting themselves rather than projecting Christ.

The priorities of many contemporary Christians have shifted from the pursuit of the kingdom of God and its righteousness to the accumulation of material wealth, the pursuit of upward social mobility and the fixation on earthly gratification, among others. In the spirit of agreement, Asamoah-Gyadu (2012:140) asserts that today's church is 'committed not to the core business of mission

or the things of the Spirit as defined by the Cross, but carnality that manifests in foolish jesting, ecclesiastical pomposity, and the exploitation of the Gospel for economic gain'. In his recent article, Atiemo (2016) laments over the church's over-concentration on mega revival meetings which, in effect, do not result in shaping the conduct of participants. He describes modern Christianity as 'clouds that gather without giving rains'. People gather for religious activities which are expected to inform their daily-life choices—yet, sin abounds in the society because the expected impact of those rituals is not achieved (Atiemo 2016:7). The Methodist Bishop of the Sunyani diocese, The Rt Rev. Daniel Kwasi Tannor, made a similar point when he preached against those who use false scales in the market for economic gains.[3] The bishop advised those who claim to be Christians but do not live according to the ethics of Christianity to change their ways or face the wrath of God. His observations and pronouncements underscore the fact that many contemporary Ghanaian followers of Christ are superficial.

3 Rt Rev. Daniel Kwasi Tannor made this and other observation during a diocesan crusade organized from 15th to 19th January 2020 at Fiapre, Sunyani, Ghana.

In contemporary Ghana, some pastors use the media to showcase their 'spiritual gifts' and not to preach the gospel to the perishing. A typical message often heard on radio goes like this: 'There is more blessing in giving than receiving. Take my number, 024410…., tomorrow meet me here or there for *akwankyere* (spiritual direction). Once you see me all your problems will be gone'. Eventually, attention is drawn to the minister rather than the Saviour. Some ministers have bodyguards around them, making it extremely difficult for people to get access to them. It is interesting how ministers with bodyguards could convince their followers to seek protection from Christ when they themselves seek it from armed men. Some ministers are full of pride, behaving as if they are the only people who know God.

There are also sexual abuses involving ministers. Some ministers engage in sexual immorality with their church members, associate ministers' wives and sometimes even defile children. In the October 25, 2011 issue of *The Chronicle*, Apostle Kofi Nkansah-Sarkodie[4] was reported to have drawn attention to cases of fornication, rape, armed robbery, adultery, stealing, and fraud, among other vices allegedly involving some 'men of God'. He stated, 'Our church leaders, who should be shepherding the flock towards salvation, are themselves shamefully leading ungodly lifestyles.' More so, some ministers preach messages that only entertain people without convicting them of sin. In other words, they preach what people want to hear and not what God wants them to preach. Preaching against sin has been replaced by preaching about prosperity and good health. Preaching for Christ has been replaced by Preaching for Cash (PFC). Some

4 Apostle Kofi Nkansah-Sarkodie is the General Overseer of the Open Arms Ministries at North Suntreso in Kumasi.

ministers intentionally exchange their pulpits with others in order to receive fat envelopes after supplying their colleagues with pulpits. The situation makes it very difficult to distinguish between a true minister of God and a false one. Certainly, the credibility of the Christian Church in Ghana is now at a low ebb.

Obeng also mentions noise pollution caused by religious bodies as one of the bad religious practices going on in Ghana. In his view, though Christian churches claim to promote the wellbeing of their members, they cause 'immense harm to their parishioners and their surrounding communities through their noise pollution' (Obeng 2014:33). 'The noise that keeps others awake throughout the night or during the day', as Obeng rightly observes, 'is harmful to people and the environment'. Unfortunately, those who complain are often accused of being demon possessed.

Analogous to the Israelites in Amos's time, many Christians in Ghana boast of their obedience to rituals such as tithing, thanks-offerings, church attendance, and fasting. Just as the Israelites made sacrifices to the shrine, with the aim of showing their social position, thereby distinguishing the poor from the rich, so are Ghanaian churches filled with activities that distinguish the rich from the poor. Fund-raising activities are done in such a way that those who are able to give bigger amounts are not only distinguished from the poor and hailed, but are also showered with special prayers filled with words of blessings that are clearly different from prayers offered for those who give smaller amounts. Will God bless a rich person for giving a big amount according to his or her strength and not bless the poor widow for giving the little she has? Clearly, anybody who studies the book of Amos diligently and prayerfully will come to the realization that Amos's world and ours have several similarities. Thus, Wiersbe's (2007:1416) assertion that, 'If the prophet Amos were to come to our world today, he would probably feel very much at home; for he lived at a time such as our[s]', is right when understood from the perspective of the task the prophet undertook.

8. Lessons from Amos for Ghanaian Church and Political Leaders

To turn our present circumstances around, it is important for both political and church leaders to listen to the prophet Amos. If political leaders and the Church heed the preaching of Amos to break the bonds of injustice and economic exploitation (5:7), God will restore the nation to life and vigour. Reken (1999:201) suggests that individual Christians must be responsible, compassionate, law-abiding citizens.

In this regard, Christians must regard economic inequality as unjust. If leaders of the society are led by godly standards, they would make policies to ensure the redistribution of resources in society in order to bridge the gap of inequality. In this sense, social justice must be seen as taxing away some of the justly acquired income and capital of the better-off in order to give it to the worse-off. Part of our responsibility as Christians is to exercise mercy and love for others in tangible ways. Amos is urging Ghanaian political leaders and Christians to feed the hungry, comfort the mourning, and visit the sick. John Wesley shared this view when he charged the rich, 'Be ye ready to distribute to everyone according to necessity' (Asante 1999:104). This idea is expressed in Wesley's economic principle, 'Gain all you can; save all you can and give all you can' (Asante 2014:130). If all Ghanaian Christians put this principle into practice, it will go a long way to change the current situation for the better.

How do we as Ghanaian Christians, political or church leaders heed Amos's prophetic call? As a prophet, Amos was a spokesman for God. The Church is a prophetic institution. It should thus be the first to endorse the preaching of the prophet Amos. 'A prophet', in the words of Kudadjie and Aboagye-Mensah (1992:41), 'is a person called by God to stand between him and his people.' The Christian Church should be the first to put its house in order as a response to Amos's prophetic message so that it does not lose its relevance. The idea of social justice must be understood in light of this relationship, especially 'the covenanted relationship' between God and his people, and the relationship among his people. Social justice is overwhelmingly related to the idea of relationship and the life of the community. Thus, justice in biblical thought concerns fidelity to the demands of relationship, to God and to one's neighbour. Confirming this point, Mays contends that, 'righteousness expressed in justice is the indispensable qualification for worship—no justice, no acceptable public religion' (Mays as quoted by Wright 2004:267).

Empowered by the message of Amos, the Church must rediscover itself by exemplifying godly obedience, to powerfully influence the rest of society as light and salt of the earth (Matt 5:13–14). Knowing God's displeasure and divine judgment for the maltreatment of the poor and the promotion of inequality, the church should be the first to reverse such situations within its ranks to serve as a worthy example to the rest of society. Ministers of God are called upon to shun greed and materialism, discrimination against the poor, and suppression of patrons, just as Amos did in his time. This will send clear signals to political leaders, especially those who profess to be Christian and yet do not apply Christian principles in their political

activities. The centrality of justice in Christianity is pointed out by Mott (as quoted in Wright 2004:267), who contends that, 'The duty of justice to the afflicted is so central that if it is not fulfilled, God will not even accept the divinely ordained sacrifices and worship.' Once the Church heeds and lives out the message of Amos in the Ghanaian society, it will then become a matter of course for it to speak the language of Amos as well, so that no one has occasion to accuse it of preaching virtue and practising vice. In that event, the Church could truly serve as the conscience of society.

What lessons can we draw from Amos's message for political leaders in Ghana? Firstly, political leaders, at all levels, are 'charged with the primary function of maintaining or restoring righteousness and justice, in their various senses' (Wright 2004:269). Government policies must be fair and just in response to Amos's call. 'A just policy or state of affairs' according to Miller 'is one that ensures that no person, or more usually category of persons, enjoys more or less of the advantages due them or bears more or less of the burdens they ought to bear relative to other members of the society' (Miller 1999:1). In this sense, a situation of social justice exists when all members of a given society, irrespective of status or class, receive equitable shares of public assets and bear equitable shares of collective burdens. Political leaders are called upon to seek good and not evil (5:14). Political leaders are expected to help people regardless of their political affiliation. This is not currently the case in Ghana. It is true that political leaders help people to find jobs—however, the people they help are usually those who are affiliated to their (the politicians') party. Developmental projects are done to win votes and so they are usually situated in communities where the majority of the people are likely to vote for them. This is unfair and unbiblical.

The national cake must be distributed equally. Political leaders are urged to establish justice in the gate (land) so that the grace of God may be bestowed upon the people (5:15). From the above review, the central concern regarding social justice seems to be one of fairness and equity in the allocation of societal rewards and burdens among people. 'Given that about 46 percent of all households in Ghana are agricultural households, of which a higher proportion is engaged in crop farming (95.1%)…, if the agricultural sector is not doing well … then the country is not winning the battle against inequality, since those in that sector will continue to be poor and their conditions worsened' (Osei-Assibey 2015:n.p.). Government must therefore formulate policies to help improve the agricultural sector.

Judges are called upon to 'exercise justice with integrity and impartiality' (Wright 2004:269). Lawyers must be ready to help the poor by ensuring that justice prevails. Justice should not be given to

the highest bidder but to those who deserve it. It should be ensured that no one takes the law into his or her own hands and abuses the helpless. The lawyer's call as well must not be motivated merely by the desire to attain economic comfort but an overriding concern to serve God by helping improve the administration of justice in the society.

Amos dealt with local, national, and international matters and relationships as well. He called for absolute social justice and also condemned Syria for treating Gilead with savage cruelty (1:3–5). In the same way, political leaders should not only confine themselves to their nation but address international malpractices as well.

9. Conclusion

We have considered the context of Amos's message, his theology, and the implications of his message for church and political leaders in Ghana. From the study of Amos, the following conclusions could be made. The socio-religious contexts of the time of Amos and that of the contemporary Ghanaian society are comparable to some extent, but there are also marked differences. Oppression of the poor and the righteous, immorality, rejection of divine messages, pretentious religiosity, corruption in business, and idolatry mark the two situations. The Church must heed the message of Amos to reverse this. Individual Christians are called to be responsible, compassionate, law-abiding members of society. The Church must also exemplify obedience to the prophetic call of Amos. Political leaders at all levels are called upon to maintain or restore righteousness and justice and redistribute the national cake equally. Judges are called upon to 'exercise justice with integrity and impartiality'. Political leaders should not only confine themselves to their nation but address international malpractices as well. Finally, just as God punished Israel for non-compliance with his word, so he could visit Ghana with judgment if we refuse to heed his counsel.

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Ecclesial Hierarchy and Subordination Between Regenerate Men and Women in Public Worship: A Renewed Look at 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and 14:33b–36

Dan Lioy[1]

Abstract

The role of regenerate men and women in the church remains an ongoing, intensely-debated subject within evangelical faith communities. The preceding also includes the narrower issue of church services involving the dynamic relational tension between the genders centred around ecclesial hierarchy and subordination. Pivotal to the preceding disputation is Paul's discourse in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and 14:33b–36 regarding male and female believers in congregational gatherings. My disquisition takes a renewed look at these two passages to discern what they do and do not teach on the topic mentioned above. A key premise is that when these texts are examined within the context of their first-century AD, Greco-Roman setting, Paul taught Christians to observe common cultural conventions of the time regarding the practice of wearing head coverings and maintaining decorum within public worship. A corresponding premise is that the apostle was not mandating a corporate practice that is directly applicable to 21st-century believers, regardless of whether they reside in the global north or the majority world.

Keywords
Corinth; head coverings; public worship; gender identity; hierarchy; subordination; Greco-Roman culture.

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1. Introduction

Among researchers well-versed on Paul's theology concerning men and women, 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and 14:33b–36 remain an ongoing source of controversy. The following essay, being aware of the dissonant and competing perspectives on these two disputed passages, seeks to contribute to the dialogue from the perspective of a confessional Lutheran who lives in the global north.[2] This includes affirming that God created all people to be equal in dignity and worth, yet distinct as male and female in his sacred presence.

My paper deals with various contextual and exegetical insights on the roles of regenerate husbands and wives (and more generally saved males and females) within the first-century AD church at Corinth. The disquisition takes a renewed look at 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, along with 14:33b–36, to discern what both do and do not teach on the topic mentioned above. A key premise is that when these texts are examined within the context of their first-century AD, Greco-Roman setting, Paul taught Christians to observe common cultural conventions of the time regarding the practice of wearing head coverings and maintaining decorum within public worship. A corresponding premise is that the apostle was not mandating a corporate practice that is directly applicable to 21st-century believers, regardless of whether they reside in the global north or the majority world.

2. Paul's Affirmation for Holding to Settled Apostolic Tradition (1 Cor 11:2)[3]

Comfort (2008) observes that 1 Corinthians 11:2 begins a new section of Paul's letter (signalled by the Greek particle, *de*).[4] Ellingworth and Hatton (1995) advance the discussion by noting that the apostle's usage of 'traditions' (or, oral 'teachings'; v. 2; Greek, *paradosis*) and 'practice' (v. 16; Greek, *synētheia*) form an inclusio that brackets off the passage. They also point out the strong 'contrast' between Paul's affirmation in verse 2, 'I praise you', with his censure verse 17, 'I have no praise for you'; yet, as the authors explain, there are relevant 'points of contact', both with the preceding 'section' and 'earlier' sections of the 'epistle'.

2 Cf. Peppiatt (2015) for an exploration of Paul's use of 'diatribal argumentation' as a 'rhetorical strategy' in 1 Cor 11:2–16 and 14:33b–36. The author postulates that the regenerate males at Corinth were forcing their saved female counterparts to 'veil themselves when praying or prophesying' (10). Furthermore, the author maintains that Paul 'cites his opponents' views' (4) in an 'extended fashion in order to refute them'. While the author's approach is innovative, this essay does not share the author's key supposition that Paul constructed 'powerful … arguments against the Corinthian practices of head coverings for women' (5). Also, contrary to the author, I think a major flaw in the author's central thesis is that 'there is no signal in the text itself indicating' (12) that Paul 'might be referring to a Corinthian idea'. In short, the author resorts to an argumentum ex silentio (i.e. an argument from silence), in which a litany of assumptions, claims, and conclusions are made within an information vacuum.

3 It is beyond the scope of this essay to undertake a detailed structural analysis of 1 Cor 11:2–16. This essay follows the divisional breakdown appearing in Fee (1987:493–4) and Waltke (1978:47–8). For two different interpretations of the potential chiastic pattern (inverted parallelism) in this passage, cf. Garland (2003:511) and Hoelke (2014:62–3), along with the explanations offered in each work, respectively.

4 Cf. Robertson and Plummer (1911).

After completing the part of his letter regarding meat offered to idols (8:1–11:1), Paul next addressed the manner in which the Corinthian church conducted public worship (11:2–14:40).[5] Keener (1992:21) remarks that the apostle's 'arguments' were 'meant to persuade his readers in terms of the logic of their own culture'. The first topic in this new section of the letter (11:2–16) includes Paul's observations concerning married female believers (and less specifically those who were single) who discontinued covering their heads in corporate Christian gatherings.[6] As the discourse in the following section indicates, the precise meaning of what Paul intended to convey is disputed among specialists.

At the outset, it is important to recognize that the Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures of the first century AD were patriarchal. As Phiri (2017:119) ascertains, it was the norm in antiquity for men to be the primary leaders and decision-makers of society, while women were mainly relegated to subordinate roles. Likewise, this 'social-cultural' (135) arrangement was mirrored in the 'hierarchy and values of the church'.

Both Testaments of Scripture faithfully reflect the preceding historical backdrop; yet, it would be incorrect to conclude from this observation that patriarchy is the *de facto* biblical norm either for societies (in general) or ecclesial communities (in particular).[7] Indeed, it stands to reason that churches today can remain faithful to Scripture and operate along the lines of shared leadership among regenerate men and women (sometimes referred to as *amphiarchy*, which means 'government of both kinds').[8]

Returning now to the Greco-Roman culture of the first century AD,[9] men perceived the hair of women as a potential source of lust. So, to minimize this possibility, it was customary for women to cover their hair in public settings and community gatherings.[10] Johnson (2004) labels these and other referents that follow as 'sexual identity markers' that were 'customary' in Paul's day.

5 Holmyard (1997) claims that Paul, in 1 Cor 11:2–16, neither addresses the 'corporate worship of the church' (461) nor deals with 'congregational settings'; instead, the author thinks the passage 'pertains to nonchurch settings'. Despite the novelty of the author's supposition and arguments, this treatise holds to the 'traditional view' espoused by the majority of specialists, namely, that throughout 11:2–14:40, the apostle discussed the way the believers at Corinth engaged in public worship. In this regard, Lowery (1986:157) points out that Paul, in appealing to 'church practice elsewhere as a feature of his argument' (cf. 11:16), indicates that he had in mind congregational 'meetings'.

6 In this essay, no distinction is made between what Ellingworth and Hatton (1995) refer to as larger 'church meetings' and smaller domestic gatherings in 'private homes' (cf. Acts 18:7; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15). Despite the potential notional distinctions between the preceding two referents, my discussion intentionally regards them as being generally synonymous and conveying closely related ideas. On a correspondent note, Fee (1987:492) remarks that with respect to 'early Christian worship', specialists 'know next to nothing' about the following four areas: (1) the 'time / frequency of gatherings'; (2) the 'place(s) of gatherings'; (3) the 'kind(s) of gatherings'; and, (4) the 'role of leadership'.

7 Concerning ecclesial communities, Johnson (2004) refers to the 'traditional male-authority viewpoint with its restrictive subordinate roles for women in the church'.

8 For example, cf. Gupta (2019).

9 The discourse that follows is in essential agreement with the observation made by Thiselton (2000:801) that greater emphasis should be given to 'Roman cultural and social norms for mid-first-century Corinth, rather than those of Greece' that 'precede 44 BC'. Expressed another way, the 'main social norms to which Corinthian culture aspired were those of Rome, rather than Greece'.

10 Cf. the discussion in the following representative publications: Allo (1956:258, 262); Ciampa and Rosner (2010); Garland (2003:509–10); Gill (2002); Grosheide (1984:253–4); Hays (1997); Horsley (1998:154); Keener (1992:28–9); Morris (1985); Prior (1985); Thiselton (2000:801–2); Verbrugge (2008:354); Westfall (2016:85–6).

One possibility is that the upper-class women in the congregation at Corinth wanted to dislodge their husbands' authority over them, and so removed their head coverings as a sign of their freedom. Another possibility is that some female believers thought they had reached a spiritual state in which the male / female distinction no longer existed, and so were trying to blur the variance between the genders with their dress.[11]

In either case, the apostle began this portion of his letter by commending his readers for consistently maintaining the instruction and practices he orally handed down to them (v. 2). Paul, who had spent some time with Jesus's earliest disciples,[12] verbally passed on what he had learned to the church at Corinth, as well as to other congregations the apostle founded. As an emissary for the Messiah, Paul undertook the responsibility to teach—through both his preaching and letters—the key doctrines and practices of the Christian faith. He urged the Corinthians to follow these 'traditions' (v. 2) as closely as possible.[13] In many ways, the apostle's readers had not let him down, even though his letter contained much criticism.

3 Paul's Argument Based on Christ and Culture (1 Cor 11:3-6)

To form the basis for the teaching that would follow, Paul stated a principle that had its beginnings at the creation of the world, including God's bringing Adam and Eve into existence (Gen 2:21–22). The Father was the 'head' (1 Cor 11:3) of the Son, the Son was the 'head' of every 'man', and the 'man' was the 'head' of the 'woman' (specifically within the faith community).

The underlying Greek nouns, as determined by their usage in 1 Corinthians 11:3, could also be rendered as 'husband' (*anēr*) and 'wife' (*gynē*), respectively. Some specialists favour the view that Paul was generally referring to men and women within an ecclesial context, while other specialists side with the narrower view that the apostle was addressing married couples within a faith community.[14] Admittedly, the weight of evidence could go in either direction. Even so, when taking into account 14:33b–36[15], I tend to side with those

11 At various points, differing interpretive options are presented; however, it is beyond the scope of this essay to sort out and advocate strongly for any intensely-debated hermeneutical view. This is especially so when the overall thrust of my discourse and the conclusions I reach are not materially impacted by the fact that the weight of the biblical evidence for various sides of an issue could equally go in either one direction or another. Informative in this regard is the acknowledgment made by Johnson (2004), 'This passage has generated a mountain of contemporary literature addressing in detail almost every possible nuance of these verses'; yet, despite the abundance of scholarship dealing with 1 Cor 11:2–16, Holke (2014:4) voices the following candid assessment: 'Commentators and scholars alike have struggled to find consensus not only in regard to issues such as structure, language, and cultural context, but also in regard to the broader focus and argument of the passage itself'. For detailed presentations of the pros and cons of arguments connected with the panoply of positions broached herein, cf. the representative list of exegetical and theological works formally cited in this treatise and listed in the Bibliography.

12 Cf. Acts 9:26–28; Gal 1:18–20; 2:1–10.

13 Cf. 1 Cor 11:23; 15:3; Rom 6:17; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6.

14 Cf. the discussion in the following representative publications: Ciampa and Rosner (2010); Barrett (1968:248); Ellingworth and Hatton (1995); Fitzmyer (2008:413); Grosheide (1984:250); Morris (1985); Pratt (2000); Sampley (2002:928); Taylor (2014); Thiselton (2000:822); Verbrugge (2008:351).

15 Cf. the excursus in section 8, which deals with 1 Cor 14:33b–36.

exegetes who think Paul, to a considerable extent, primarily had in mind regenerate husbands and wives.[16] Of course, the apostle's teachings could apply more generally to all saved men and women within a corporate worship setting.

There are at least four primary ways in which the Greek noun, *kephalē*, which is translated as 'head', has been interpreted by specialists.[17] First, some think the term means 'ruler' and was used to denote someone who had authority over another. If this was Paul's intent, then he was saying that the Father is in authority over the Son, the Son is in authority over the man, and man is in authority over the woman. Second (and related to the above), others maintain that the term 'head' denotes prominence and supremacy. If this was Paul's intent, then he was saying that the Father is preeminent over the Son, the Son is preeminent over the man, and the man is preeminent over the woman.

Third, still others hold the view that Paul followed the order of Creation in stating one entity as being the 'head' of another. If this was the apostle's intent, then, first, the Father sent the Son to be his agent of Creation. Second, the Son made the man, Adam. Third, the woman, Eve, was formed from one of Adam's ribs. Fourth (and related to the above), some argue that the term 'head' means 'origin' or 'source' and was used to refer to someone who was responsible for another's existence. If this was Paul's intent, then he was saying that the Father is the source of the Son's existence, the Son is the source of the man's existence, and man is the source of the woman's existence.

In stepping back from the above four views, it is important to recognize that Paul's comment dealt with the relational dynamics between believers within a specific congregational and cultural setting. For instance, as stated earlier, because Greco-Roman and Jewish societies were patriarchal (male-controlled), men were regarded as the authority figures within the household. This being the case, as Stern (1996) notes, it is groundless to allege that what the apostle taught fostered 'male chauvinism' (or prejudice against and 'dominance' of women).[18] Thiselton (2000:831) seems close to the mark in proposing that while the missionary-evangelist affirmed a 'difference' among the genders, he did so 'without any necessary inference of gender hierarchy'.

Furthermore, Paul was addressing then-prevalent issues involving regenerate husbands and wives (and more generally saved men and women) during church meetings at Corinth. Garland (2003:514) observes that the apostle's 'purpose' was 'not to write a theology

16 Cf. Eph 5:22–33; Col 3:18–19; 1 Tim 2:11–12; 1 Pet 3:1–7.

17 Cf. the discussion of the lexical and literary evidence in the following representative publications: Baker (2009); Cervin (1989); Fitzmyer (1993; 2008:409–11); Grudem (2001); Hoelke (2014); Hjort (2001); Johnson (2009); Payne (2006); Perriman (1994); Taylor (2014); Thiselton (2000:812–22).

18 Cf. a comparable observation made by Witherington (1995:231).

of gender'; instead, it was to 'correct an unbefitting practice in worship', which threatened to 'tarnish the church's reputation'. Given this objective, it is imprudent to make overly generalized and dogmatic assertions that universally apply today to all male and female believers throughout any society, anywhere around the globe, regardless any particular historical and cultural context.

Paul, having established a theological foundation for his criticism, admonished his readers for not following the traditional instruction concerning head coverings (v. 4). Unlike today, in the Greco-Roman culture of the apostle's day, men generally did not wear head coverings (Latin, *capite velato*; 'with veiled head') in public.[19] One exception to the above practice involved men of elite social status.[20] Their prominent standing in Roman society permitted them to preside as priests at heathen religious gatherings. When they did so, as Oster (1988:496) explains, it was customary for them to drape their long togas (Greek, *himation*) or tunics 'over the back of the head and then forward until it approached or covered the ears'. This action enabled them to pray, offer sacrifices, and pour libations to pagan deities in a semi-private and intimate way, without being distracted by unimportant sights and sounds.[21]

I surmise that, against the preceding liturgical backdrop, during a Christian worship service, if a male believer 'covered' his physical 'head' while praying or prophesying,[22] he signalled (whether intentionally or unintentionally) his devotion to heathen gods and goddesses. In this way, he dishonoured, disgraced, or disesteemed

19 Concededly, some specialists have interpreted 1 Cor 11:2–16 through the lens of first-century AD Jewish liturgical customs (especially the use of the yarmulke, kippah, or skullcap); yet, as Hjort (2001:59) stresses, the 'majority of the Corinthian church were pagan Christians, for whom the adoption of Jewish gender roles was not immediately apparent'. So, it seems unlikely that Paul would overtly 'allude to such Jewish traditions' as he addressed the 'shameful element' of his readers' 'behaviour' within their predominately Greco-Roman cultural context. In this regard, the observations made by Oster (1988:487) are especially trenchant: 'Paul's specific injunction about the liturgical veil for men cannot be traced to practices in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Septuagint, the Dead Seas Scrolls, the Gospels, the corpora of Philo and Josephus, or the Mishna'.

20 Oster (1988) is an early influential study regarding the practice of elite males within Greco-Roman society donning head coverings within pagan religious settings. Later confirming studies include the following: Finney (2010); Gill (1990; 2002); Massey (2018); Oster (1992); Thompson (1988); Witherington (1995). In keeping with what I noted in fn 11, given there is no scholarly consensus regarding the precise nature of the cultural background and social customs Paul addressed in 1 Cor 11:2–16, what appears in this essay is my attempt to reason through and explain the overall logic of the apostle's directives to his original readers within its first-century AD, Greco-Roman context.

21 Phiri (2017:130) delineates that a 'family's ancestral deities' were called 'lares' (Latin for 'household gods'). These were placed on a 'lararium' (plural, laraia), which 'functioned as the shrine for the lares'. A 'lararium' typically 'consisted of a niche in the wall', which was often located either 'in the 'kitchen' (especially near the hearth) or on an 'altar in the atrium' (the front reception room, near the main entrance to the home).

22 Herein the gift of prophecy is defined as the ability to spontaneously proclaim fully inspired and authoritative revelations from God, whether the foretelling of future events, the heralding of apostolic truths, or the denouncing of social injustices; cf. 1 Cor 12:10, 28–29; 13:2, 8–9; 14:1–40; Ciampa and Rosner (2010); Fee (1987:595–6); Fitzmyer (2008:412, 467); Garland (2003:582–3); Thiselton (2000:826, 963–5). Noteworthy is the sermon Peter delivered on the day of Pentecost. The apostle quoted from Joel 2:28–32 (Acts 2:16–21) to declare that the outpouring of the Spirit on Jesus's followers (being evidenced by speaking in foreign languages) was a partial fulfilment of what would occur at the second advent of the Messiah. In contrast to the former days of the old covenant, the latter days of the new covenant would be characterized by unique manifestations of the Spirit among all God's people. There is no restriction, either, on regenerate men and women prophesying. The Spirit would enable both saved males and females to proclaim divine oracles to their fellow human beings. What occurred at Pentecost would find its ultimate fulfilment in the end-time kingdom of the Son.

his metaphysical 'head', namely, the Messiah.[23] Hjort (2001:60–2) lends weight to the plausibility of the preceding supposition, the disparate conjectures offered by other specialists notwithstanding. The passage under consideration is located after a 'treatment on idolatry' in 8:1–11:1 and the 'abuse of the Lord's Supper' in 11:17–34. I concur with Hjort that the 'positioning' of 11:2–16 signifies 'one of the most important hermeneutical keys to reading the text'. Specifically, the 'heuristic function of the context' highlights the 'religious' nature of the problem Paul was addressing, namely, 'idol worship'. This particularly involved the tendency of some within the Corinthian faith community to be 'polytheistic' and 'syncretistic'.[24]

Paul's comments in 10:18–22 are of particular interest. The apostle revealed that, like the Lord's Supper and the sacrifices offered by Jews at the Jerusalem temple, there were also deep spiritual realities underlying the sacrifices made to idols. While the sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem were offered to the one, true, and living God, sacrifices at pagan shrines were offered, in effect, to demons (v. 20).[25] Demons beguiled people into venerating idols to hinder them from worshipping the Creator. Because of the relationship of demons to the idol feasts, Paul implored his readers to have no part in such lavish meals.

Some of the believers in Corinth were participating in both the Lord's Supper and idol feasts. Both practices brought them into fellowship with spiritual beings—in the first case with the Saviour, in the second case with Satan's fiendish associates. Paul viscerally believed this contradictory set of practices was abhorrent. So, if the Corinthians wanted to enjoy the sacrament of holy communion with the Messiah, then they had to break off their fellowship with demons. This meant they had to stop going to idol feasts (v. 21). If Paul's readers persisted in attending heathen banquets, they would risk the Lord's anger. Because he is a zealous Lord,[26] he would not share his holiness, honour, and worship with demons. Moreover, no human being could withstand his wrath when it occurred (v. 22).

Returning once more to the discussion concerning 11:3–6, Hays (1997) indicates that the 'immediate concern of the passage is for the Corinthians to avoid bringing shame on the community'. Furthermore, Baker (2009) explains that both 'in Corinth', as well as throughout the rest of the 'Mediterranean world', 'honour and shame' were a 'powerful force', especially involving 'what others in

23 Cf. a comparable emphasis made by the following specialists: Garland (2003:517); Pratt (2000); Thompson (1988:104); Wire (2003:131–2).

24 Cf. 1 Cor 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:19–22; 12:2. Oster (1988:504) points to the need of 'evaluating possible Christian adaptation of non-Christian rites', along with 'analysing the processes of acculturation and syncretism in Roman Corinth'. The view taken in this essay contrasts with that of Schemm and Köstenberger (2019:250), who assert that the 'gospel itself is the interpretive key'. While the good news of salvation is pertinent, it is an exaggeration to claim that it furnishes the 'integrative glue for Paul's argument'.

25 Cf. Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37.

26 Cf. Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9; 32:15–21; Ps 78:58.

society' thought 'about someone'.[27] Along the same lines, Johnson (2004) remarks that in the passage under consideration, Paul made use of an 'ancient honour-shame motif' to promulgate his argument. This included detailing the 'correct social honouring and avoidance of shame behaviour between males and females'. In fact, an 'elaborate honour-shame code' governed the 'public and private behaviour of men and women'. [28]

Worthy of consideration is the circumstance for married women, which operated differently than for married men.[29] According to the custom of the day, wives emphasized their purity, rectitude, and submission to their husbands by wearing a head covering in public. For married female believers, this practice carried over to their participation in corporate Christian gatherings. Specialists debate the exact reference of the Greek phrase translated 'head covered'. Some think it refers to a veil or shawl placed over one's head, while others maintain the reference is to the length of a person's hair (and possibly including the way the hair is styled). Perhaps both options are equally viable, rather than being mutually exclusive.[30]

Paul drew attention to an unsaved woman having her hair 'shaved'. As indicated above, in the first century AD, devotees of pagan deities would meet in private homes to venerate heathen gods and goddesses.[31] In these gatherings, female participants would fulfil their religious vows and signal their worship of pagan deities by offering the hair from their sheared or shaved head at the altar of an idol.[32]

27 For a concise overview of the concepts of honour and shame in the Greco-Roman and Jewish cultural contexts, cf. Domeris (1993). The author advocates for a conflict model, rather than the method prevalent in structural functionalism, for exploring honour and shame in the New Testament, including the Pauline corpus. The author regards the 'conflict model' (290) as being 'more dynamic than the rigid structural functionist approach', the 'limitations of any model' (293) notwithstanding. Furthermore, the author notes that the 'society' (294) of the first century AD was 'radically divided by status, wealth, power, and gender'. He also observes that both Jesus and Paul, in their distinctive ways, promoted a 'society with upside-down estimations of honour and shame' (295). For this reason, the author thinks it is valid to recognize 'early Christianity as a counter-culture movement'.

28 There is a plethora of studies in the academic literature dealing with the issue of honour and shame in the New Testament, including 1 Cor 11:2–16 (cf. deSilva 2000:23–93). While my own discourse in this treatise draws upon the insights arising from such scholarship, I have intentionally avoided making the honour-shame dialectic a central and extended focus of my disquisition (which would otherwise result in duplicating what others have already stated in a fulsome manner). More seminal to this essay is the issue of idol worship and the way in which it potentially serves as a complementary hermeneutical lens through which to better understand the nature of Paul's comments in the passage being deliberated.

29 Cf. the detailed discussion in the following representative publications: Finney (2010); Hoelke (2014); Massey (2018).

30 Cf. the discussion in the following representative publications: Baker (2009); Barrett (1968:249–50); Ciampa and Rosner (2010); Grosheide (1984:253); Hoelke (2014); Horsley (1998:153–4); Hurley (1973); Johnson (2004); Massey (2018); Sampley (2002:928); Verbrugge (2008:351).

31 Regarding the customary practices of female social elites within Greco-Roman society, cf. the substantive analysis offered by Finney (2010); Gill (1990); Massey (2018); Thompson (1988).

32 Cf. Keener (1992:35); Thompson (1988:113); Witherington (1995:234, 236, 238).

Once again, I surmise that, against the preceding backdrop, during a church service, any married, Christian 'woman' (v. 5) who did not cover her physical 'head' while praying or prophesying signalled (whether intentionally or unintentionally) her devotion to heathen gods and goddesses.[33] In this way, she dishonoured, disgraced, or shamed her spiritual 'head,' namely, her husband. The implications for the proclamation of the gospel cannot be overstated. Gundry-Volf (1997:154–5) avers that the faith 'community's social acceptability' was 'diminished and its missionary task hindered'. Oppositely, as Hoelke (2014:iii) asserts, 'By covering their heads, the women [would] avoid self-promotion, acknowledge the value of their male human counterpart, and honour God'.

33 Cf. a comparable emphasis made by Bruce (1971:105).

Next, Paul used a line of reasoning called an *appeal to extremes*. The apostle sought to highlight the affirmation of a premise that logically resulted in an objectionable conclusion. Paul said that if the saved female spouses in the Corinthian congregation refused to wear head coverings during corporate worship, they might as well shear their heads (v. 6). However, if cutting or shaving their hair seemed offensive, demeaning, and degrading, they should 'cover' their 'head' (or have long hair).

4. Paul's Argument Based on the Creation Account (1 Cor 11:7-12)

As an elaboration on the point Paul communicated in verse 4, he stated that men, beginning with Adam, were made in the 'image' (v. 7) of the Creator and reflected his 'glory'. So, if a saved male believer at Corinth covered his head during corporate worship, he was in some way veiling God's 'image' and depreciating his 'glory'. Then, the apostle stated that the 'woman' reflected the man's 'glory'.[34]

34 Cf. Prov 11:16 (LXX); 1 Esd 4:13–28; along with the observations in fn 48.

Payne (2009:200) elucidates that Paul, in articulating an 'exalting affirmation' of 'woman' as the 'glory of man', did not 'imply or suggest that woman' is somehow 'less' than 'man' in bearing the 'image' and displaying the 'glory' of the Creator. Indeed, 'woman' is the 'human splendour that catches man's eye'. For this reason, 'woman' is the 'pride and joy of man'.

Admittedly, as Johnson (2004) indicates, Paul articulated a 'patriarchal reading of the creation narratives'. Gundry-Volf (1999:285) likewise states that the apostle used 'first-century Mediterranean shame-honour culture with deeply ingrained patriarchy as a lens through which to read creation'; yet, it would

be incorrect to conclude from these observations that he denied the truth revealed in Genesis 1:27, namely, that women (along with men) bore God's 'image'. Indeed, Gundry-Volf (1997:156) cautions that interpreters should 'keep in mind' the missionary-evangelist's 'purpose' so that they 'avoid' making 'false inferences from his argument'.

Paul's line of reasoning continues in 1 Corinthians 11:8–9, where he reiterated what Moses stated in Genesis 2:18 and 21–23. Specifically, Adam was the first human being whom God created in his image, and he subsequently formed Eve from Adam's rib.[35] The Hebrew noun rendered 'helper' (v. 18; *'ē'zĕr*) can also be translated as 'companion' or 'partner'. 'Suitable' renders a noun (nĕ'ḡĕḏ) that conveys the idea of close correspondence. In this case, Adam needed a mate who would complement him.[36]

While it is true that Eve was created to be Adam's 'helper', there is nothing in the language to suggest that this made the woman in some way either ontologically or functionally inferior to Adam.[37] On the contrary, the same word is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to refer to the kind of help God provides.[38] Consequently, even though Eve physiologically differed from Adam, Eve was not less than Adam as a human being made in God's image. Eve was Adam's feminine counterpart, colleague, and co-labourer. The emphasis, then, is more in the direction of an egalitarian, rather than a complementarian, view of the genders, whether in society or the church.

Accordingly, Gundry-Volf (1999:283) surmises that 'both man and woman are the source of the other's existence' and so 'interdependent as equals from the perspective of creation'. Johnson (2004), in agreement, observes that Paul gave a 'fully egalitarian, redemptive reading of creation where male and female are mutually and equally dependent on one another'. Hays (1997) goes further with this cautionary remark: 'Anyone who appeals to this passage to silence women or to deny them leadership roles in the church is flagrantly misusing the text'.

In 1 Corinthians 11:10, Paul referred to saved women in the Corinthian church services literally having 'authority' (or 'control'; Greek, *exousia*) over their 'head'. Metzger (1994) surmises that the ambiguity of the apostle's reference led to the 'explanatory gloss,' *kalumma*, or 'a veil' in 'several versional and patristic witnesses' as a replacement for *exousia*. In this case, the head covering (whether the presence of long hair or wearing a veil) was an outward symbol of the regenerate wives' conscious decision to honour their husbands in a visible, culturally appropriate way. [39]

35 Henry (1994) offers the following salient thought in connection with Gen 2:21, 'The woman was … not made out of [Adam's] head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved'.

36 Cf. Kidner (1967); Pratt (2000); Reyburn and Fry (1998); Speiser (1964); Wenham (1987).

37 Cf. a similar point made by the following: Hays (1997); Westfall (2016:69, 86).

38 Cf. Pss 30:10; 121:2.

39 Numerous modern translations reflect the interpretive view stressed here for 1 Cor 11:10 by adopting one of two renderings, either 'sign of authority' (NIV; NJB) or 'symbol of authority' (CSB; CSV; Lexham; NASB; NET; NKJV).

Paul explained that adhering to the above custom was important due to the presence of 'angels'; yet, specialists remain unsure what precisely the apostle meant. What follows are three noteworthy interpretive possibilities put forward by specialists.[40] One option draws attention to the throne room scene of Isaiah 6:1–2, which reveals that a cohort of seraphim covered themselves as they ministered in the Creator's sacred presence. Proponents maintain that in imitation of these mighty angels, women likewise should veil themselves.

A second option is that Paul had in mind angels observing the Corinthian Christians during their worship services.[41] As stated earlier, according to the cultural norms of first-century AD Greco-Roman society, the long hair worn by women exemplified their sexuality. Also, when women wore some sort of head scarf, they signalled their marital status and commitment to their husbands. To do otherwise would suggest the women were available and promiscuous. So, according to this line of reasoning, onlooking angels would be enticed to sin, perhaps in the same manner alluded to elsewhere in Scripture.[42]

A third option is that the reference might have to do with Christians eventually judging angels.[43] In this case, the idea is that God's heavenly emissaries would balk at the sight of believers—whom the angels served[44]—doing anything within a church service that violated the hierarchal order of creation that God originally established.

In keeping with the assertions put forward above, it would be incorrect to surmise that women—whether single or married—are ontologically and functionally inferior to men. After all, as Ciampa and Rosner (2010) observe, Paul's inclusion of the Greek phrase rendered, 'in the Lord' (*en kyriō*; 1 Cor 11:11), is a 'reference to the new creation context established by the gospel'. [45] Allo (1956:261) draws attention to Galatians 3:28, which reveals that distinctions based on ethnicity and religion (e.g. 'Jew' and 'Gentile'), socio-economic status (e.g. 'slave' and 'free'), and gender (e.g. 'male' and 'female') become subordinate to the baptismal union believers have in the Saviour.[46] As a result of the cross-resurrection event, saved men and women are spiritually equal and mutually interdependent.[47]

Although Paul had partly been basing his argument on Adam's creation before Eve, the apostle now balanced that by pointing out that men are born from women. So, in one sense, man is prior to woman; yet, in another sense, woman is prior to man (1 Cor 11:12).[48] Robertson and Plummer (1911) capture the essence of thought by opining, 'if [the man] is [the woman's] initial cause (*ek*), she is his

40 Cf. the discussion in the following representative publications: Barrett (1968:253–5); Bruce (1971:106); Conzelmann (1975); Fitzmyer (2008:417–9); Garland (2003:526–9); Grosheide (1984:256–8); Hurley (1973); Morris (1985); Prior (1985); Robertson and Plummer (1911); Sampley (2002:929); Taylor (2014); Verbrugge (2008:355); Westfall (2016:86); Wire (2003:121–2).

41 Cf. Eph 3:10.

42 Cf. Gen 6:1–4; 2 Pet 2:4–7; Jude 1:6–7.

43 Cf. 1 Cor 6:3.

44 Cf. Heb 1:14.

45 Cf. Rom 16:12–13, 22; 1 Cor 4:17; 7:22, 39; 9:1–2; 15:58; 16:19; Phil 4:2.

46 Cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:11.

47 On the one hand, as Payne (2009:87) conveys, 'the gospel transforms all aspects of human life'; yet, on the other hand, Fitzmyer (2008:416) adds the cautionary note that 'because the promise' in Gal 3:28 is 'eschatological, Christians do not yet have full possession of it'.

48 Cf. Gen Rab 8:9; 1 Esd 4:14–17; 4:33–41. For an extended treatment of possible allusions Paul made in 1 Cor 11:7–12 to 1 Esd, cf. Newberry (2019); Westfall (2016:66–8, 72–3, 103). Newberry (2019:48) surmises that the 'repeated and sometimes distinctive echoes of 1 Esdras 4 increase the probability of a direct and not inadvertent connection between these passages'.

instrumental cause (*dia*)'. Thiselton (2000:842) draws attention to the essence of 'human relationality' as encompassing a mutual 'respect' for each gender's 'otherness'. Johnson (2004) sharpens the focus by deducing that Paul inverted the 'hierarchal relationship between the sexes' and broke 'out of the strictly patriarchal system for constructing gender identity and roles'.

Furthermore, Paul argued, the Creator is the one who brought all life into existence. Indeed, He is eternally prior to both men and women. So, everything that was done in corporate worship needed to be consistent with this truth. According to Witherington (1995:238), the salient implication of the apostle's statement for regenerate husbands and wives, along with all saved males and females, is that 'men and women share a horizontal dependence on each other and a vertical dependence on God'.

5. Excursus: The Image of God in Biblical Perspective[49]

49 What appears in this section is adapted from material appearing in Lioy (2016:26–8), along with the secondary sources cited therein.

The broader context of Genesis 1:26–27 indicates that the Hebrew noun, '*adam*, which is translated 'mankind', refers to the male and female genders of the human race. Additionally, only human beings are created in the divine image. For that reason, they are distinguished from the rest of the creatures God brought into existence. Accordingly, all members of the human race bear the 'image' (v. 26; Hebrew, *tselem*) and 'likeness' (Hebrew, *demuth*) of God. *Tselem* is typically used in reference to such replicas as models, statues, and images; and *demuth* is derived from a primitive root (Hebrew, *damah*) that means 'to be like' or 'to resemble'. In verse 26, the two terms seem virtually synonymous in meaning.

The Creator-King gave humans the capacity and authority to govern creation as his ruling representatives. Their jurisdiction as his theophanic deputies extended to the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and animals on the land. The mandate for people to govern the world as benevolent vice-regents of the true and living God is a reflection of his image in them. By ruling over the rest of creation in a responsible fashion, people bear witness to the divine likeness placed within humanity. Also, as they mediate God's presence, they make his will a reality on earth.

The preceding statements should not be taken as permission for people to exploit and ravage either the environment or its inhabitants, including other humans. After all, people are not the owners of creation, but rather stewards who are accountable to their divine Owner. So, while people have jurisdiction over animals and

plants, in the present era of redemptive history, they exercise no authority over cosmic entities and forces. Moreover, because all people bear the image of God, they have sanctity and innate worth. Correspondingly, they are to be treated with dignity and respect.

6. Paul's Argument Based on the Created Realm (1 Cor 11:13–15)

Paul invited the Corinthians to evaluate the facts for themselves. The apostle did so by asking two rhetorical questions. First, Paul wanted his readers to recognize that during times of public prayer, while saved men should not wear head coverings, their regenerate female peers should do so (v. 13).[50] Barker (2009) comments that 'in terms of contemporary application, wearing a hat or not is not really the point'. Similarly, Pratt (2000) remarks that 'modern Christians cannot simply put veils on their wives and believe they have fulfilled the intention of Paul's teaching'.

Second, Paul appealed to the cultural attitudes of his day. Keener (1992:42) clarifies that the apostle's 'appeal to nature was a standard Greco-Roman argument' among 'Stoics', 'Epicureans', and 'other philosophers'. The apostle did so by pointing out that, according to the general way God designed the created realm ('nature', which translates the Greek noun, *physis*; v. 14), along with what Greeks and Romans in that day innately perceived to be appropriate behaviour (as defined by their societal norms), men typically kept their hair short.[51] To do otherwise was considered shameful or disgraceful. Meanwhile, women behaved honourably by wearing their hair long (typically either braided or knotted; v. 15). As suggested by the NLT, the Greek noun translated 'glory' indicates that a woman's 'long hair' was not just intended to be a 'covering' for her head, but also a beautiful source of 'pride and joy' for her.

7. Paul's Appeal to Hold to Established Church Practice (1 Cor 11:16)

Paul anticipated that some of his readers might not readily accept what he said. To those individuals, he pointed out that all the other churches he established followed the same 'practice' (v. 16) he taught. Keener (1992:45) elucidates that 'Paul's appeal to custom' was a 'standard way for an ancient lawyer or speech writer to argue a case'.[52] In the case of the apostle, he expected the believers at

50 Verbrugge (2008:352, 355) draws attention to the fact that it is only in 1 Cor 11:13 that Paul spotlighted, without any corresponding 'parallel for men', what was 'proper for a woman' to do. The implication is that, for the apostle, a woman praying to 'God with her head uncovered' was the 'core problem' that was 'uppermost in his mind' and needed to be remediated.

51 Thiselton (2000:844) delineates 'four distinct views' for making sense of Paul's use of physis ('nature') in 1 Cor 11:14, as follows: (1) an 'intuitive or inborn sense of what is fitting, right, or seemly'; (2) the 'way humans are created', namely, their 'constitution as men and women'; (3) the 'physical reality of how the world is ordered'; and, (4) the 'customs of a given society'. The interpretation offered in this treatise has given particular emphasis to options 3 and 4.

52 e.g. Isocrates, Theon, and so forth.

Corinth to adhere to his ecclesial authority by falling in line with other likeminded congregations (referred to as the 'churches of God') regarding this custom.

As the preceding discourse indicates, the proper interpretation of many parts of the above passage remain open to debate. Also, different faith communities—whether Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Weslyan, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Charismatic, or otherwise—glean different principles from it. For example, a less favourable option is that Christian women ought to find culturally appropriate ways to show submission to their husbands. A more likely option is that, while regenerate men and women are spiritually equal in Christ, distinctions between the genders ought to be reflected in ways that mirror current societal norms, whether in the global north or the majority world.

8. Excursus: Paul's Comments in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36

One's understanding of 11:2–16 influences the way in which 14:33b–36 is interpreted.[53] Concededly, there is some disagreement among interpreters over whether the second half of verse 33 goes with what comes before or what comes after. Was it the need for 'peace' that was in all the Christian congregations or the rule about married 'wives' (or 'women'; v. 34) there remaining 'silent'?

The literary analysis put forward by Garland (2003:510) suggests that verse 33b belongs with what follows. He surmises that these two passages 'form a bookend', as seen by the following parallels: (1) the 'churches of God' (11:16) and the 'churches of the saints' (14:33b); (2) an 'allusion to Genesis 2' (11:7–12) and an appeal to the Mosaic Law (14:34); and, (3) the repeated emphasis on what is 'shameful for a woman' (11:6 and 14:35, respectively).[54]

On the surface, 14:33b–36 seems to be an outright prohibition of wives (or women) speaking in the congregational meetings at Corinth. Paul added that the accepted protocol was for the female attendees to remain silent and submissive, as the Mosaic Law taught.[55] However,

53 Cf. the detailed discussion in the following representative publications: Barrett (1968); Bruce (1971); Ciampa and Rosner (2010); Fee (1987); Fitzmyer (2008); Garland (2003); Grosheide (1984); Kistemaker (1993); Sampley (2002); Thiselton (2000); Verbrugge (2008).

54 For the counter argument that 1 Cor 14:33b is more closely linked with v. 33a, cf. Ciampa and Rosner (2010).

55 Perhaps Paul's moderately ambiguous statement in 1 Cor 14:34 is a reference to Gen 2:18–24 and 3:16, along with the broader teaching and Jewish interpretive tradition (both oral and written) connected with the Pentateuch.

the apostle noted that it was culturally permissible for wives (or women)[56] to ask questions of their husbands at home.[57]

As with 11:2–16, when considering 14:33b–36, it is important to situate Paul's remarks within their first-century AD, patriarchal context. Phiri (2017:102) explains that the Corinthian congregants 'belonged to a larger community' in which the prevalent 'cultural values, lifestyle, and rhetoric' influenced their thinking and actions. Westfall (2016:190) clarifies that the apostle's readers convened 'in small, intimate house churches organized around fellowship meals'.[58] According to the cultural conventions of the day, 'women were busy with food preparation, serving food, and cleaning up'. This created an 'environment where women naturally' tended to be 'noisy and talk among themselves to facilitate their work and enjoy each other' as they completed their tasks.

Keener (1992:70) deduces that, in all likelihood, Paul was 'addressing relatively uneducated women who were disrupting the service with irrelevant questions'. Furthermore, Keener (83) indicates that in Paul's day, 'women' (whether 'Jewish' or 'Greek') were 'less likely to be educated than men'. Keener (80) additionally notes that Paul opposed the female congregants 'learning too loudly in public'. Keener argues that this was an 'issue related to an ancient culture', one which 'no longer relates to women as a group'.

The preceding analysis strongly suggests that the wives (or women) were getting involved in loud, acrimonious, and disruptive quarrels about the theological accuracy of what was being prophesied and proclaimed in worship services. So, rather than arguing and demanding an immediate explanation, the female congregants were directed to wait until after the service to receive further clarification. Keener (1992:84) maintains that Paul's 'point' was 'not to belittle women's ability to learn'; rather, the apostle was 'advocating the most progressive view of his day'.

In the above case, then, Paul did not issue an absolute, all-out, and permanent ban of female congregants (whether married or single) ever uttering any comments within a corporate worship service; rather, the apostle was advocating for the preservation of decorum and public order. Keener (1992:72) elucidates that the 'way' the agitators were 'trying to learn, rather than the learning itself', was 'problematic'. In a similar vein, Garland (2003:669) regards the nature of the 'problem' as the way 'wives comport themselves in the public sphere', especially within the 'context of examining prophecies'. For this reason, Paul's injunction has 'nothing to do with the public ministry of women'.

56 According to Keener (1992:82), 'nearly all Greek women in Paul's day were married'.

57 Some later manuscripts place 1 Cor 14:34–35 after verse 40. Omanson (2006) details one conjecture that vv. 34–35 are an interpolation, namely, a passage that Paul did not originally pen; instead, it is claimed that 'copyists' added these verses sometime later, possibly 'under the influence' of 1 Tim 2:9–15 (for a lengthy defence of this view, cf. Payne 2009:251–82); yet, as both Comfort (2008) and Metzger (1994) attest, this postulation lacks sufficient textual support in the earliest and best Greek manuscripts (cf. Nestle-Aland; United Bible Society; Westcott-Hort; Textus Receptus). Niccum (1997:243), based on his thoroughgoing analysis of the 'external evidence', deduces that it 'unanimously supports the inclusion' of 1 Cor 14:34–35 and that the interpolation view is 'untenable'. Kistemaker (1993) advises that the best way to 'resolve difficulties with this text' is not to resort to the notion of it being a 'marginal gloss'; instead, it is to 'consider the structure, the larger context, and preeminently the themes or principles Paul has explicated'.

58 Cf. the remarks made in fn 5.

The believers at Corinth had been going their own way when it came to conduct of their worship services, and so they had become disorderly. For this reason, Paul reminded them that God's Word did not 'originate' (v. 36) with them, nor were they the only ones to hear it. With respect to congregational decorum, the missionary-theologian's readers needed to come in line with apostolic teaching, as had other the churches he founded.

9. Conclusion

This essay has sought to take a renewed look at 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, along with 14:33b–36, to discern what both these texts do and do not teach concerning the roles of regenerate males and females within the first-century AD church at Corinth. In 11:2, the apostle affirmed his readers for holding to settled apostolic tradition. His remarks in the verses that follow dealt with female believers (especially those who were married) who discontinued covering their heads in corporate Christian gatherings.

The disquisition in the essay identified verses 3–6 as Paul's argument based on Christ and culture. Verses 7–12 were understood to be the apostle's argument based on the creation account. Verses 13–15 were seen as Paul's argument based on the created realm. Finally, verse 16 was said to be Paul's appeal for his readers to hold to established church practice when it came to the issue of head coverings.

Early on, it was recognized that there is no consensus among specialists about various interpretive issues examined in this paper. It was also determined that making an effort to sort out the contested matters and advocating vigorously for one option over the others was beyond the scope of the essay. Instead, it was decided to objectively and concisely set forth dissimilar views that did not materially affect the discourse and conclusions presented in the treatise. The points of debate included the following three items: (1) how the Greek noun, *kephalē* ('head'; v. 3) should be understood; (2) what is the exact reference of the phrase translated 'head covered' (v. 4); and, (3) what is the precise nature of Paul's reference to the presence of 'angels' (v. 10) when believers gathered for worship.

The preceding comments notwithstanding, there were other disputed issues broached in the treatise in which specific interpretive options were favoured. For instance, it was observed that a greater number of Paul's readers were predominately Gentiles who came from pagan backgrounds. For this reason, it was argued that the missionary-theologian alluded to Greco-Roman, rather than Jewish, liturgical

practices as he addressed the troublesome conduct of the Corinthians. It was also noted that 11:2–16 is thematically connected with Paul's comments about idolatry in 8:1–11:1. Specifically, the issue of head coverings was linked to the problem of idol worship among the apostle's readers.

Moreover, it was acknowledged that Paul lived within a patriarchal culture and that both 11:2–16 and 14:33b–36 reflect this backdrop. It was also stated that this historical detail is more incidental than prescriptive. Expressed differently, the predominance of patriarchy during the first century AD does not support the conclusion that male superiority / dominance is the transcultural biblical norm for societies (in general) and ecclesial communities (in particular). Just as important for churches today—whether in the global north or the majority world—is the necessity of congregations remaining faithful to Paul's teaching on men and women and operating along the lines of shared leadership among regenerate males and females.

Two key premises, which were broached in section 1, are reaffirmed here. First, when the 11:2–16 and 14:33b–36 are examined within the context of their first-century AD, Greco-Roman setting, Paul taught Christians to observe common cultural conventions of the time regarding the practice of wearing head coverings and maintaining decorum within public worship. Second, the apostle was not mandating a corporate practice that is directly applicable to 21st-century believers, regardless of where they reside.

The preceding two premises have direct pertinence to the issue of how regenerate men and women relate and function within the broader mission of God. To reiterate what was said earlier in the treatise, Paul's emphases, even with respect to the Genesis creation account, are more in the direction of an egalitarian, rather than a complementarian, view of the genders, whether in society or the church. One outtake, as noted above, is that the alleged ontological and functional inferiority of women—whether single or married—to men signifies a deeply flawed inference. A second outtake is that saved men and women, in baptismal union with the Messiah, are spiritually equal and mutually interdependent. A third outtake is that both genders enjoy shared, unrestricted access to any and all vocal and executive leadership roles within their faith community.

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The Curious Case of Apphia, our Sister

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Abstract

Far from being formulaic, the Pauline letter opening serves as a dynamic rhetorical strategy that intertwines characters and themes to suit the objectives of each letter. In *Philemon*[2] the person of Apphia appears in the opening, occupying the unique intersection between identity and rhetoric, where she is inscribed into a social group privileged with proximity to Paul. As the sole female to be included in a Pauline address, questions regarding the inclusion of her name, the seemingly vague appellation of sister (ἀδελφή), and Paul's silence regarding her relationship to the other parties in the greeting, have led to an ongoing debate regarding this mysterious character. This paper traces and critically engages various renderings of Apphia in the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of *Philemon*. It explores the potential rhetorical effect of her inclusion in the Pauline corpus and what it means for Bible interpreters engaging her narrative from the Global South. It is, therefore, a central claim of this paper that tracing the many versions of Apphia retrieves history for contemporary audiences to appropriate meaning from Paul's salutation to our sister.

Keywords
Apphia; Philemon; Paul; *Wirkungsgeschichte*; deliberative rhetoric.

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2 We distinguish the letter to Philemon from the person by italicising the former.

1. Introduction

Mentioned once in a letter about a slave called Onesimus and a *paterfamilias* called Philemon, Apphia remains an enigmatic figure that makes a sudden appearance in *Philemon's* opening, and in the broader New Testament (NT). While her sole reference may appear disconnected from the epistle's rhetorical emphases, the *deliberative* role played by both her presence in a prominent part of the epistle and her gender should not be understated. Contrastingly, the limited description accompanying her textual location among a group of men, who make multiple appearances in the broader Pauline corpus (cf. Phlm 23–24; Col 1:7–8, 4:7–17; 2 Tim 4:10)[3] presents to the reader a peculiarity that has not gone unnoticed. It is into this space that this essay voyages as it explores Apphia's inclusion from both historical and rhetorical shores. First, we locate Apphia as a character standing in continuity with other female personalities in the broader Pauline corpus. A brief treatment of her fictive kin, in the non-disputed and so-called 'disputed' letters, is undertaken to elucidate her pride of place in what is essentially Paul's promissory note to Philemon (cf. Phlm 17). Second, the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of *Philemon*, vis-à-vis Apphia, is given due attention demonstrating the divergent interpretive preferences and the social forces behind them, where appropriate. Third, a (re)imagination of the various renderings of this figure, for the Global South, converges *Philemon's* opening with a new hermeneutical horizon in which an epistolary salutation serves as a harbinger of universal equity in the new society. Arguably, such a vision underscores Paul's revolutionary egalitarian ethic (cf. Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:12–13), moving the conversation to a new norm in which Apphia's social location—as an equal among the brothers—reverberates across a host of interpretive frequencies.

3 In this paper Pauline authorship is ascribed to Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy, part of the so-called 'disputed letters'.

2. Apphia Among the Sisters

2.1. Phoebe, Apphia's sister

Apphia is one of many women mentioned and celebrated in the Pauline corpus. However, unlike her, most of them are named in the closing greetings of Romans 16. In this chapter, Paul greets Phoebe (vv.1–2), a person who probably functioned as the courier of the letter and the first public reader of the epistle. Phoebe is identified as τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν (our sister)[4] and οὖσαν διάκονον ([one] being a deacon) of the church at Cenchreae, a seaport near Corinth. Paul commended her to the church in Rome, so that (ἵνα) they would welcome her and contribute (lit. 'place besides') to whatever need she may have had. Paul ascribes his commendation of Phoebe to the fact that she

4 Paul's reference to Phoebe as 'our sister' essentially forces the Romans to recognise her as their sister too.

became a patron (προστάτις) to many, including Paul. Phoebe is thus given three identity markers: [our] sister, deacon, and patron. It is worth noting that within the Graeco-Roman milieu, the role of patron was mostly associated with men, although not exclusively (Wajda 2017:47).[5] Being the feminine of προστάτης, which is rendered 'front rank man', 'leader', 'chief' or 'ruler' (LSJ:1527), προστάτις denotes a female benefactor or 'a woman in a supportive role' (BDAG:885). Therefore, when Paul uses the term, it indicates that Phoebe's support may have been financial, which would mean that she was a woman of means and the owner of the house in which the church gathered.[6] While patron and benefactor constitute the social descriptions awarded Phoebe by Paul, we cannot extrapolate this to mean that Paul and Phoebe were in a patron-client relationship. This is because '[al]though *prostates* is used by Classical Attic writers in the sense of 'patron'… it is not unlikely that its widespread use in this way in the Roman times took its cue partly from this Macedonian context', (*NewDocs* 4:242). This non-monolithic use of the term negates the uncritical collapsing of its use into the Roman world, where patronage and clientism were pervasive (BDAG:885). Nevertheless, what is uncontested is Phoebe's prominence and the support she awarded Paul and others (Rom 16:2).

5 Although it is telling that its only use, by Paul, is for a woman.

6 Belleville (2005:38) emphasises that patrons of benefactors did more than provide financial means, but that they 'welcomed clients to their house, rendered assistance as called for, and offered legal aid as needed'.

2.2. Prisca, Apphia's sister

Next, Paul greets Prisca and her husband, Aquila (Rom 16:3–4).[7] This couple is mentioned in Acts 18:1–3, where Paul joins them at Corinth. Both are identified as Jewish believers and tentmakers by trade (not just Aquila).[8] After they encounter Paul, they accompany him to Ephesus, where they remain. During this phase they expound God's word to Apollos in a more accurate way (18:24–26).[9] Paul also

7 Luke uses the diminutive suffix by referring to her as Priscilla (Acts 18:2, 18, 26).

8 …ἦσαν γὰρ σκηνοποιοὶ τῇ τέχνῃ (Acts 18:3).

9 This is despite the writer's description of Apollos as λόγιος (learned) v. 24b, δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς (competent in the Scriptures) v.24b, ζέων τῷ πνεύματι (fervent in spirit) v.25b, and ἐδίδασκεν ἀκριβῶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (taught about Jesus accurately) v. 25b-c. Perhaps Apollos's oratory and rhetorical prowess is suggested by the juxtaposition of his accurate knowledge of the baptism of John and his limited knowledge of the Christ as proclaimed by Paul, Prisca and Aquila. In Acts, the limitations of John's baptism and the agents who proclaimed it are often placed in continuity with the message about Christ, as propagated by his agents. The latter seem to occupy a higher plane of understanding and are often seen serving the former with instruction on how to ascend the ladder to fuller knowledge (see Acts 1:5, 13:23–25, 18:25,19:1–6; cf. Luke 7:29, 20:4). On this, Pervo (2009:459) writes, 'Although it seems to cut the Gordian knot, the best solution is to view "the baptism of John" as a Lucan cipher for inadequate doctrine and rite, not explicitly false teaching, since it is based on ignorance rather than deceit, and the like'. Whether this is a Lukan strategy aimed at harmonising the emphases of different Christian groups in the first century CE, is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, what can be deduced from the text is that Prisca led the charge in transitioning and forming Apollos from the 'baptism of John' to the 'message about the Christ'.

mentions Prisca and Aquila in 1 Corinthians 16:19. On this occasion they, and the church that meets in their home, send greetings to the church at Corinth.[10] In 2 Timothy 4:19, Paul presents the couple as the recipients of greetings, unlike in 1 Corinthians 16:19 where the reverse is true. The depth of relationship inferred from the bi-directional greetings may serve as a pointer to the partnership they shared with Paul. This seems to be supported by Paul's use of 'my fellow workers' (τοὺς συνεργούς μου) in Romans 16:3, where he adds that they 'risked their necks' for his life. Their authenticity and quality, as presented by τοὺς συνεργούς μου, are perhaps underlined by the fact that a group of believers gathered in their home (v.5a). Effectively, these descriptions reveal two things about the couple: firstly, they were prominent leaders in the church and secondly, they were people of some means. Based on Friesen's (2004:341) poverty scale, an economic categorisation for different groups in the first-century CE Mediterranean world, we would place Prisca and Aquila in the PS5-PS6 groups.

2.3. Junia, Apphia's sister

Paul then greets Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7) who lived in Rome when the letter was written. He refers to them as his kin (τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου) and his fellow prisoners (συναιχμαλώτους μου), probably implying that they spent some time in prison for their labour in the Gospel. While there is no consensus on the relationship between Andronicus and Junia, two main interpretations prevail. On one hand, if one takes συγγενής (kin) as referring to blood relations, both Andronicus and Junia are relatives of Paul, which means that they are probably related in a familial way (cf. Lazarus' relationship to Martha and Mary in John 11:5). On the other hand, if it refers to their status as Jewish kin, the coupling of their names probably indicates that they are husband and wife (cf. Prisca and Aquila) (Stenschke 2009:155–156).[11] Paul further describes the pair by affirming that they were prominent or 'well known among the apostles' and that they were in Christ before he was.[12]

2.4. Other sisters

Next on the greeting list in Romans 16, is Mary (v.6). The only thing said about her is that she toiled greatly for the church in Rome (ἥτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν εἰς ὑμᾶς).[13] Finally, Paul greets Tryphena and Tryphosa (v. 12), whom he labels as 'those who are toiling in the Lord' (τὰς κοπιώσας ἐν κυρίῳ) and Persis, the beloved (τὴν ἀγαπητήν), who is also commended for her hard toil in the Lord. He also greets the mother of Rufus (v.13), whom he commends for being a mother to him also (μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐμοῦ). Julia, together with the sister of Nereus and Olympas (v.15), are also greeted, although not much context is given regarding their origins and function.

10 …τῆ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ.

11 Westfall (2016:270) identifies Andronicus and Junia as Hellenistic Jews, part of the dispersion set off by Stephen's stoning in Acts 7.

The phrase εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ('they are prominent among the apostles') has led to many a controversy in NT scholarship, especially in the conversation around women in ministry. While some have opted to interpret Junia as a male, this interpretation finds no archaeological support as there seems to be no trace of the male name Junias in any Latin or Greek document during the Graeco-Roman period, while the female name Junia is well-attested (Belleville 2005:38). The second controversy relates to the use of the preposition ἐν plus the dative. This phrasing could mean that Junia (and Andronicus) was either simply well-known by the apostles or that she was a well-known member of the apostolic group. While engaging this debate would take this paper beyond its stated scope, it is worthwhile to note that the category of apostle in this context refers to a wider group than the twelve (cf. Paul's inclusion of himself in the apostolic group in 1 Cor 4:9, Gal 1:17 and 1 Thess 2:6, which he omits here) and that the category of apostle as gift to the church (1 Cor 12:28–29; Eph 4:11) is not qualified by any gender qualifications or limits.

13 Westfall (2016:275) observes that Paul only employs κοπιάω for women (Mary; Tryphaena; Tryposa) in the letter to the Romans—a term he characteristically uses to refer to his own missionary work (cf. 1 Cor 4:12, 15:10; Gal 4:11; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 4:10).

First Corinthians and Philippians are two epistles that contain explicit references to women, although not in similar vogue to Romans 16. Paul's reference to τῶν Χλόης (lit. 'those of Chloe'; 1 Cor 1:11) probably indicates that she had a church meeting in her house. The report from the saints in her household is one of the main occasions for the letter to the church in Corinth. In the letter to the Philippians (4:2), Euodia and Syntyche are greeted. Both are described as those who strived/contended (συνήθλησάν) together with Paul, Clement, and other co-labourers (συνεργόι) in the Gospel. These two women are exhorted by Paul to agree or 'think the same' in the Lord (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ), implying that there was probably some form of strife or division between them which had spilled over into the ἐκκλησία and was causing tension among its members. Among the so-called disputed letters, Paul sends regards from a woman named Claudia to Timothy (2 Tim 4:21). However, apart from her probable Roman identity as revealed by her name (Walls 1996:209), nothing else is known about her. In Colossians 4:15, Paul greets a woman named Nympha together with the church meeting in her house (τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίαν) in the Lycus Valley.

Based on the above, it is evident that Paul's salutations to other women were far from superficial. Women occupied key roles in the new society and steered the substantive matters of the movement drawing from their manifold resources. However, despite Paul's positive portrait of female Christ followers, only Apphia appears in a Pauline letter opening, making her a unique figure in his corpus. What follows is a treatment of Apphia's reception across the ages, and it is shown that this reception is a product of interpretation and socially-motivated happenings in front of the text.

3. Apphia's *identities* Across the Ages

Apphia's name, probably of Phrygian origin, was common in Western Asia Minor (Bieberstein 2012:850). Apart from the epithet, ἡ ἀδελφή (v.2), Paul provides no additional social identity markers to identify her. Important to note, regarding the epistolary greeting, is that it did not simply function as a salutation but was essential in establishing the relationship between sender(s) and receiver(s) (Wall 1993:193). The senders of the letter to Philemon are identified as Paul and Timothy, while the addressees are fourfold: Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the church 'in your house' (τῇ κατ' οἰκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ).[14] The fact that Philemon, Apphia and Archippus are not collapsed into this category of ἐκκλησία is significant, as it indicates that all three function as distinguished members of the community

14 The single genitive of possession (σου) seems to rule out the possibility that the house belonged to more than one of the three addressees. The implications of this singular use for the possible marital status of Apphia and Philemon will be discussed in a later section of this paper.

(Wajda 2017:44). In Apphia's (and Archippus') case, the reason for this distinguished status has, however, plagued interpreters for centuries, because, while Paul clearly wishes to single her out, he (probably due to the high-context nature of the letter) does not specify why he does so.

3.1. Apphia in the middle

Worth noting is that Paul places Apphia's name between that of Philemon and Archippus. While it makes sense to identify Philemon as the primary addressee due to the placement of his name as the first one (Quient 2017:10), the order in which Apphia and Archippus appear is a bit more curious. There are those, like Jerome (*c*.347–419/420) who held that the placement of Apphia's name in the middle of the two male names (whom Jerome recognised as two apostles) illustrates a sense of protection and support from them (*in Philm*. 1–3, 88.196).[15] Jerome also recognised that her placement before Archippus denotes a sense of merit, meaning that she ranked before him (88.196–7). Theodoret of Cyrus (*c*.393–457) speculated that the inclusion of Apphia's name served to appease her. Portraying a view of women as jealous (Hill 2001:265), he (insubstantially) argued that, if her name were to be left out of the letter, she would have resisted Paul's commands out of spite (*in Philm*. 1–3, 288.12–13). While Apphia is absent in the writings of the likes of Ambrosiaster (Bray 2009), Luther (1968) and Calvin (2010), others have resorted to ascribing a variety of possible identities to her to solve the mystery. The most popular among these is the theory of Apphia as Philemon's wife.

15 Bucchi's (2003:75–106) critical edition was used here.

3.2. Apphia the *materfamilias*

Seemingly the first to explore the possibility of Apphia as Philemon's wife was the church father John Chrysostom (*hom. in Philm*. 1.2, 6.329.35),[16] writing anywhere between AD 386–404. Chrysostom (1.2, 6.329.35–38) praises Paul for not only consulting the *paterfamilias* of a household, but also his wife and friends, implying that this speaks of Paul's humility. While Chrysostom (1.2, 6.330.6–8) speculated that Archippus could be part of the clergy, this possibility was ruled out for Apphia. Tolmie (2016:290) ventures that this is probably because the office of deacon was only embodied by virgins in Chrysostom's time and since he assumed Apphia to be married, he did not consider the possibility of her holding the office.

Later, Theodore of Mopsuestia also affirmed the hypothesis that Philemon and Apphia were husband and wife. Additionally, he argued that Archippus was Apphia and Philemon's son (*in Philm*. 2, 782.6; 786.25).[17] Theodore did not see Philemon as an apostle,

16 Field's (1849–1862) text was used here.

17 There is some merit to this point of view as it would be customary to name a husband, then his wife, and then their son (Tolmie, 2016:296). If Apphia was not Philemon's wife, the mention of her name before that of Archippus becomes quite curious to an historically informed audience. This is something that Jerome, who saw Archippus as a bishop, had an immense struggle with.

but as a virtuous husband and father, who, together with his wife and son, are addressed in Paul's letter (2, 782.14–17). Theodoret of Cyrus argued along a similar vein, referring to Apphia as τὴν ὁμόζυγα —a yoke bearer, which he interprets both as one sharing the faith and as a wife (*in Philm*. 1–3, 288.9). However, he did not identify Archippus as Apphia and Philemon's son, but as one entrusted with the apostolic teaching based on Colossians 4:17 (288.11–12).

Others like Lightfoot (1975:306), Stuhlmacher (1975:30), Lohse (1988:190), Vincent (2000:176) and Harris (2010:211) have also argued that Apphia was Philemon's wife. Locating the role of wife in the Graeco-Roman context introduces us to the demarcation of public and private space (πόλις and οἶκος). In this context, wives were expected to manage the household, which included exercising authority over household slaves (Westfall 2016:264). If Apphia was Philemon's wife, then her role as *materfamilias* (which was essentially locked up in her relation to the *paterfamilias*) would have given her *potestas* over the slaves in the household. This would have warranted the addition of her name to the greeting (McKnight 2017:58). However, any indication of spousal status on Apphia's part is simply missing from the text.[18] Apphia is not identified as γυνή (wife). Furthermore, Apphia as Philemon's wife was a view that only gained traction five centuries after the letter was composed. Consequently, Tolmie (2016:296) cautions against a simplistic perpetuation as this view was conditioned by a socio-historic climate that placed nuptials in high stead. Perhaps, this is grounded in the echoing of androcentric ways of thought which assume a woman cannot be named on her own terms (Bieberstein 2013:850). Equally, the text does not allow us to make assumptions regarding Apphia's office within the early church. This is because claiming that she was ordained in a specific office would be just as presumptuous as claiming that she was married to one of the two men.[19] However, what the text does reveal is that she was honoured and valued as a contributing member within the household of God. Both Apphia and Archippus are marked by their participation and role in God's kingdom rather than Philemon's household, as demonstrated by the appellations that identify both figures in an ecclesial sense (τῇ ἀδελφῇ for Apphia; τῷ συστρατιώτῃ ἡμῶν for Archippus).[20]

Assuming that Apphia and Philemon were married, simply because her name follows his, is not a compelling argument as her name is one of three (as opposed to one of two; Cotter 1994:351). Moreover, after greeting Philemon, Apphia and Archippus, Paul greets a fourth party: τῇ κατ' οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ ('the church in your [singular] house'). When one considers the fact that Paul uses the plural possessive noun

18 Other than Prisca and Aquila (see Acts 18:2) we have no evidence from this epistle or from other biblical texts to infer that the two were married. Bieberstein (2012:849) emphatically states, 'There is not a single word that relates Apphia to either of the two men. Even the fact that she is named directly after Philemon does not automatically indicate that she is characterized as his wife'. While the designation of Apphia as τῇ ἀδελφῇ could be linked to Paul's reference to a believing wife (ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα lit, 'sister wife') in 1 Cor 9:5, the accusative ἀδελφὴν, as used in the letter to the Corinthians, does not refer to the spousal status of the woman, but qualifies the spousal status contained in the accusative γυναῖκα. The claim that τῇ ἀδελφῇ alludes to wifely status on Apphia's behalf is thus wanting (Stenschke 2009:168).

19 This is an important observation. The nomenclature of ἀδελφή does not necessarily imply leadership or office. However, Apphia's inclusion in the address, which sets her apart from the ἐκκλησία, does seem to imply some special role in the church community.

20 Perhaps the possibility of a marital union between Apphia and Philemon adds further significance to the language used by Paul. Even if Apphia and Philemon were married, Paul does not address Apphia on the basis of her status as spouse (and therefore *materfamilias*), but on the basis of her identity as sister in Christ.

when referring to the church meeting in Prisca and Aquila's house in Romans 16:5 (τὴν κατ᾽ οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν), the claim that Paul saw Philemon and Apphia (and Archippus) as *familia* does not hold water. One would expect Paul to use the plural possessive pronoun, instead of the singular, if the house belonged to both Philemon and Apphia (Bieberstein 2012:849; Winter 1994:309).[21] Moreover, Philemon is individually identified as co-worker (the singular dative συνεργῷ is used; v.1), while nothing is said of Apphia's participation in this working, not to mention a co-working between the two as yoked believers (cf. Prisca and Aquila being addressed as τοὺς συνεργούς μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ in Rom 16:3). Rather, all three addressees receive individual and different appellations (Cotter 1994:351).[22]

3.3. Apphia, Philemon's sister

While the theory of Apphia as Philemon's sister is not as common as the one identifying her as his wife, there are some who take Paul's identification of Apphia by the appositional τῇ ἀδελφῇ ([to]the sister) in a literal manner.[23] One of the first to explore this possibility is the church father Pelagius (*c*.360-418), who regarded Apphia as Philemon's biological sister (*in Philm*. 2, 536.10–11). While Pelagius seems to be the first to champion this idea, the absence of a developed defence to accompany his theory may suggest a repetition of an unrecorded existing idea (Tolmie 2016:292). Pelagius also turns to the possibility of Apphia as Philemon's wife but does not endorse this view with the same fervour as he does the former.

Tellingly, Paul uses 'sister' for three women: Apphia (Phlm 2), Phoebe (Rom 16:1), and an unnamed woman identified as the sister of Nereus (Rom 16:15). While the epithet used for Phoebe seems to indicate a more spiritual use of the word,[24] and that of Nereus' sister seems more literal,[25] Apphia's designation as sister is more ambiguous because of the absence of a possessive noun. Moreover, Paul frequently uses a similar label to refer to churches in other epistles.[26] It follows, therefore, that the use of this expression does not necessitate a hereditary kinship but rather 'spiritual relations' (Wajda 2017:44). This means the nomenclature employed in *Philemon* 2 cannot be used to determine Apphia's relationship to any of the men within the epistle. Nevertheless, what can be discerned from καὶ Ἀπφίᾳ τῇ ἀδελφῇ is that Apphia was recognised by a believing community and, based on her contribution, was regarded as τῇ ἀδελφῇ.

21 Cf. Col 4:15, where the singular is used to refer to the church meeting in Nympha's house.

22 If one were to identify a potential marriage partner for Apphia based on the appellation of ἡ ἀδελφή, the most probable one would be Timothy, who is identified as ὁ ἀδελφὸς, the masculine equivalent of Apphia's title, within the same greeting (Cotter 1994:351).

23 One of the reasons for this theory being less common is that some manuscripts (mainly Textus Receptus) contain the appellation of 'beloved' where others (codices A, D*, E*, F, G, and ℵ) use 'sister' for Apphia (Tolmie 2016:293, 5). Translations from the former were used by Chrysostom, Theodore and Theodoret. Apphia's epithet, 'beloved' coincides with the appellation used for Philemon (τῷ ἀγαπητῷ), which lends itself to the hypothesis that the two were married. Translations from the latter were used by Pelagius and Jerome, although Jerome favoured the interpretation of Apphia as Philemon's wife.

24 Phoebe is identified as τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν ('our sister') by Paul. The plural genitive includes others (probably individuals like Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus and Quartus; Rom 16:21–23), which makes it highly improbable that it refers to blood relations.

25 The woman is identified only as τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτοῦ. If Paul were using the word in a spiritual sense, he would have rather opted for a possessive noun in the first-person plural like the one used for Phoebe (Rom 16:1).

26 See Rom 1:13; 7:1, 4; 8:12; 10:1; 11:25; 12:1; 14:10, 13, 15, 21; 15:14, 30; 16:14, 17; 1 Cor 1:10, 11, 26; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 5:11; 6:5, 6, 8; 7:12, 15, 24, 29; 1 Cor. 8:11–13; 10:1; 11:33; 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39; 15:1, 6, 31, 50, 58; 16:11, 12, 15, 20; 2 Cor. 1:8; 13:11; Gal 1:11; 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 18; Phil 1:12; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:4; 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:7; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25–27; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:1, 13, 15; 3:1, 6, 13; 1 Tim 4:6; 6:2.

3.4. Apphia the slave

Some, like Barth (1961:228), Bruce (1984:206), Harris (1991:245), Martin (1991:142), Dunn (1996:312), Malina and Pilch (2006:322), Witherington III (2007:54), and Moo (2008:382-383) have suggested an alternative possibility, where Apphia is not related to Philemon or Archippus, but functions as the wife of Onesimus, making her a slave. Slave marriages (*contubernium*), like everything in the household, were under the governance of the *paterfamilias* and were not recognised beyond the confines of the household (Goodman 2012:198; Barth & Blanke 2000:7). Therefore, even if Apphia were a slave in Philemon's household, the mention of her name among the addressees would either be inconsistent with his convention (Quient 2017:10) or would be a herald to something more revolutionary—which is quite unlikely. Moreover, the problem with treating Onesimus and Apphia as a married couple is effectively an argument from silence, one that remains uncorroborated by the text. For instance, Apphia is mentioned in verse 2 and Onesimus is only brought to the fore in verse 10. Nowhere does Paul draw lines of relationship between them save the ἀδελφή/ἀδελφός designations which he also applies to Philemon (vv.7, 20) and Timothy (v.1). However, if Apphia, were a *vilicus* (a slave in charge of other slaves), then her appearance in the letter opening would imply a rhetorical strategy consistent with the rest of the letter. This, however, would be difficult to establish, since *Philemon* nowhere elaborates on her role in Philemon's οἶκος. Perhaps what is most telling is the fact that nothing is said of Apphia's legal status, a certain way of identification in the first-century CE milieu, rendering this position speculative at best.

When one considers how *contubernium* were used as tools of social control, the speculative nature of this view is further underlined. Commenting on these 'marriages' Cohick (2009:260–261) notes how they were not protected by law and could be dissolved by the *paterfamilias* at a moment's notice. As a slave in such an arrangement, Apphia would have been totally under the *potestas* of the *paterfamilias*, rendering redundant her mention in the letter opening, and by extension doing little to advance Paul's agenda. Thus, if Paul is leveraging influence on Philemon by mentioning a slave in a 'loose marriage,' he weakens his premise and the cogency of his argument from the onset.

3.5. Apphia the witness

Another view championed by the likes of Bieberstein (2012) is that Apphia was a witness. Bieberstein bases this on elements of *deliberative rhetoric* that can be detected in *Philemon* 4–22. According to Aristotle (*Rhet* 1358a36), *deliberative rhetoric* serves

to 'persuade or dissuade' a person or persons. Typically, this type of rhetoric has three parts, an *exordium*, a *proof*, and a *peroration*. One may say Paul's thanksgiving and prayer section (vv.4–7) functions as a form of *exordium* (προοίμιον) whose express purpose is to 'establish the appropriate mood and to secure the goodwill of the hearer, both by praise itself and by linking that praise to the subject in question' (Church 1978:20). With praise and its linkage to a subject, it is plausible to say that in *Philemon* 4–7 Paul employs elements of *deliberative rhetoric* to set the stage for the request he later makes in the *proof*. According to Ip (2017:58), the *proof* (πίστις) 'sometimes called the body of the letter, mainly serves the function of advancing the argument'. This stands in contrast to the *exordium* whose purpose is to set the mood between sender and recipient. This it does by establishing 'two motives for action, honour (*honestas*) and advantage (*utilitas*)'—elements that richly course the flow of the epistle (Church 1978:19). The *peroration* (ἐπίλογος) forms the final phase in *deliberative rhetoric*. It is characterised by four elements which are: 'restating one's appeal; securing the hearer's favour; amplifying one's argument; and, setting the hearer in an emotional frame of mind' (Church 1978:20). In *Philemon* this coincides with verses 17–22 whose climax is Paul's indication of impending release together with expected hospitality at Philemon's home.

Since Paul's objective is to persuade Philemon, the first authoritative voice that Paul brings into the conversation is that of Timothy, a well-known brother and leader in the faith. In mentioning Apphia and Archippus, he is adding to his list of (authoritative) witnesses (Bieberstein 2012:848). Either these two had the authority to ensure that Onesimus would be treated appropriately, or they had the authority to influence Philemon and call him to account. Such a perspective takes *Philemon* beyond a conversation between two men but classifies it as an exchange which also submits itself to the watchful eyes of a woman. Bieberstein (2012:850) goes as far as to argue that Paul saw Apphia as someone willing and capable of intervening if Philemon were not to honour Paul's requests. This indicates that the matter addressed in the letter is more than a personal issue, but essentially concerns a wider group of people. In this vein, McKnight (2017:57) classifies the letter as 'public-personal' because Paul includes other addressees.[27]

27 Moreover, the identification of the church as the fourth recipient and the corresponding use of first-person and second-person plural pronouns in vv. 3 (ἡμῶν; ὑμῖν), 22 (ὑμῶν; ὑμῖν) and 25 (ὑμῶν) indicate that this is not a private letter between one sender and one receiver.

4. Apphia Our Sister

4.1. Apphia and other addressees

Philemon 2a reads, '*καί* Ἀπφίᾳ τῇ ἀδελφῇ…' making Apphia the fifth person mentioned in the letter, all within a space of two verses. Arguably, the social designation τῇ ἀδελφῇ (the sister), serves to connect Apphia with Paul, Timothy, Philemon, Archippus, and the ἐκκλησία in the context of Christ's mission. This concentration of names accompanied with descriptions of close affinity to Paul, sets the foundations for a rhetorical strategy that employs *pathos* in *Philemon's deliberative* flow. When Apphia is considered against the backdrop of fellow male actors in the letter's opening and closing, she forms an odd portrait that deviates from the *status quo* in both *Philemon* and the wider Corpus Paulinum. With her name nestled in a group of names with varying levels of ecclesial and social authority, Apphia's sisterhood does not appear neutral but is employed by Paul to layer his plea with the witness of authoritative figures known to both the apostle and the *paterfamilias*. It follows, therefore, that for Apphia to be inscribed in the opening, among persons with established relational ties to Paul—and who themselves are recognised ministers in the Christian mission—is an indelible testament to her acumen and ecclesial function.

4.2. Ἀδελφοί terminology in *Philemon*

Considering the entire context of *Philemon*, ἀδελφοί terminology (encompassing both ἀδελφός and ἀδελφή) appears five times (vv.1, 2, 7, 16, 20). First, Timothy is introduced as a co-author and brother in *Philemon* 1. On this use of ἀδελφός, Porter (1999:58) notes how it signifies 'a linguistic move of power on Paul's part'. This is because the weight of the community of leaders (of which Timothy is prototypical) is brought to bear vis-à-vis Paul's direct communication with Philemon, with the aim of creating both familial association and sobering seriousness in the *paterfamilias*' disposition. The second use of ἀδελφοί occurs in verse 2 and is directly linked to the mention of Apphia. With the address to Apphia appearing in the dative, speculation about her relationship to Philemon whose social identity is described in *Philemon* 1 and *Philemon* 16. It is here that some have advocated that Apphia was Philemon's wife or sister, a position difficult to affirm from the text, as was covered earlier.

The remaining uses of ἀδελφοί terminology in *Philemon* occur in verse 7 and verse 20, respectively. Both cases constitute 'instances of address'. Strikingly, in both instances Philemon is the subject, and he is addressed in the vocative case via the designation ἀδελφέ. Concerning the first ἀδελφέ in *Philemon* 7, this occurs at the end

of the letter's προοίμιον, punctuating the transition to the *πίστις* in which Paul celebrates Philemon's love evidenced in the refreshment (*ἀναπέπαυται*) of the saints' *σπλάγχνα*. Below is a representation of the five uses of *ἀδελφός* in *Philemon* and the persons they refer to. Included in this representation is the source of this kinship group as supported by *Philemon* 3.

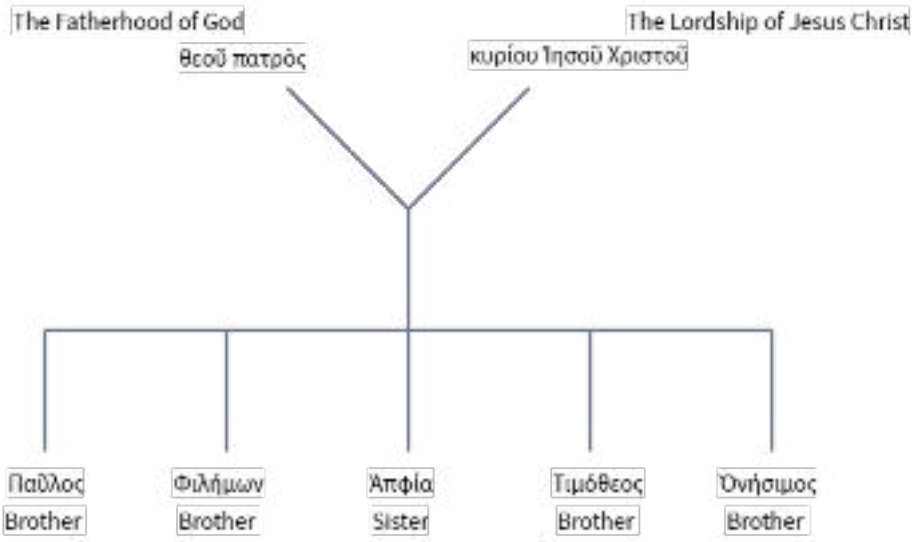

Figure 1. Ἀδελφοί representations in Philemon. Taken from Manyika BI 2019. Philemon: A Transformation of Social Orders, (PhD Diss. unpublished). South African Theological Seminary: Johannesburg, p. 252.

With *ἀδελφοί* denoting both male and female members of the new society in Christ, Apphia is presented as a member of the community of believers on one hand, and a fully-fledged worker, on par with Timothy and Philemon, on the other. This seems to be supported by the fact that Paul does not refer to other workers, besides those mentioned above, as *ἀδελφοί* in the context of *Philemon*.

4.3. Apphia on her own terms

While Apphia's relationship to the men in the greeting remains somewhat mysterious, this in no way compromises her contribution to the letter's message. Instead of looking to Philemon or Archippus as Apphia's social agents, we propose that the conversation shift to ask why Apphia *herself* (not Apphia the wife, sister or slave) would be addressed in this letter. An important observation to make is that Paul is not simply identifying her as someone related to a recipient, but bestows upon her the status of a recipient on an equal status with Philemon and Archippus. Furthermore, the absence of subordination and the use of the dative case for all four recipients (Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and the church) connected with the coordinating conjunction *καί* erases notions of dependence on her part (see Wallace 2000:294).

5. Apphia in the Global South

Sadly, the lack of identity markers and more importantly, official titles (cf. Phoebe, who is identified as διάκονος in Rom 16:1 and Junias, who is arguably associated with οἱ ἀπόστολοι in Rom 16:7) has led to the general neglect of Apphia in scholarly and ecclesial circles (Quient 2017:10). This muted reality is underscored in the Global South where Apphia's reception history is relegated to the margins consistent with the predominant androcentric leanings facilitated by reformation persuasions following Luther's and Calvin's silent treatment of the character (Luther 1968:1789ff; Calvin 2010:348). The consequence of such strategy may seem innocuous, but when considered in the frame of *Philemon*, the Southern African reality diverges somewhat from the text's injunctions.

Firstly, Apphia, a woman is a fully-fledged member of the ἐκκλησία that meets in Philemon's home. She functions as a rhetorical device that serves to curtail deviant behaviour on Philemon's part. In other words, Apphia has authority enough to function as a sentinel of honourable behaviour. She is an independent player in the *public court of reputation* (henceforth PCR) functioning as a watchdog that strengthens Paul's deliberative piece while modelling prototypical kinship behaviour in the new society. Paul raises Apphia to heights of example in the letter opening, warning and modelling for Philemon what is expected of the *paterfamilias* vis-à-vis Onesimus.

When this is translated into the Global South, the naming of a woman in a place of prominence in kinship and literary spaces in the ἐκκλησία, provides a model for the church in our context. A woman's gifts and quality of service become the only arbiter of ministerial contribution in the broader *missio Dei*. This challenges notions of nuptial status as the gateway into broader participation in the new society. Like Apphia, the female minister of the Gospel can and should function as a model of Christian ethical behaviour and a warning against deviant behaviour within a broader PCR. Like Philemon, a *paterfamilias*, who is warned and exhorted by a female co-worker, men in the church in the Global South can be encouraged into in-group ethical behaviour through the example of our sisters.

Secondly, to retrieve Apphia from the interpretive margins, however scant the information on Apphia might be, is an example of holding a high view of Scripture. A hermeneutic of trust looks at the text without regressing into predetermined doctrinal superstructures where the creased contours of the text are smoothed out to make the seemingly vague palatable. Apphia refuses to be relegated to the margins. She is prominent in the letter opening for a reason, a reason

consistent with the preservation of Gospel ethic. Thus, when the church in the Global South reads *Philemon*, it becomes imperative to use Apphia as a hermeneutically redemptive counterpoint (Webb 2005:331–349), characterised by amplifying her place in literature and reception history. Arguably, this could be paradigmatic for doing biblical studies and theology from the margins and from the bottom.

6. Conclusion

In this paper we attempted to give a précis of the interpretive factors surrounding the person of Apphia in *Philemon*. In locating Apphia among other sisters mentioned in other Pauline letters, we underlined continuity between female members of the new society. Next, the contours of *Philemon's Wirkungsgeschichte* were treated in the context of the many versions of Apphia that have been advanced to date. The third phase dealt with Apphia in the context of the letter where ἀδελφοί terminology is seen at key junctures in the rhetorical flow of the letter. When framed within this flow, Apphia stands on her own terms. She assumes the role of sentinel within a broader PCR. This strategy was shown to be an instruction to the *paterfamilias* on how to treat the slave Onesimus, also called an ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν. This slave, like Apphia is on equal kinship status as Philemon, Timothy, Paul, and Archippus leading one to conclude that in the new society the voiceless and weak are given voice and identity. We, therefore, propose that liberating Apphia from the imposed categories of wife, mother, sister or slave has far-reaching implications. It not only challenges how we see Apphia, but how we see Paul, who has often been held in contempt because of his so-called misogynistic ways and belittling of the role of women in the early church. For us, Paul's inclusion of Apphia in the letter opening is not a mere literary device, but a cue for the transformation of readers and church communities in the Global South, and indeed the world over.

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Frank Jabini, Book Review of *Brethren and Mission: Essays in Honour of Timothy C. F. Stunt*

Franklin Jabini[1]

Brethren and Mission: Essays in Honour of Timothy C. F. Stunt edited by Neil TR Dickson and Thomas J Marinello. *Studies in Brethren History.* Ayrshire: Brethren Archivists and Historians Network, 2016.

1. Introduction

A review of this important work requires an introduction to the Brethren and the *Studies in Brethren History* series. Plymouth Brethren are known under different names such as Brethren, the Assemblies Movement, Christian Brethren, or New Testament Churches. According to a recent survey with data from 101 countries covering mostly Open Assemblies, there are more than 30,000 assemblies worldwide, with an estimate of more than 2 million adult attendees. Whereas the movement seems to be in decline in the North, there is growth in the South. More than 70% of the attendees live in the Global South (Jabini 2018).[1]

The Brethren Movement started in Europe in the second half of the 1820s, at the time of the Evangelical Awakenings in Europe. The Awakenings led to a renewal in national churches and the establishment of independent churches, free churches, and (Brethren)

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The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

1 Jabini, F. "Brethren" in Mark A. Lamport ed. Encyclopaedia of Christianity in the Global South New York/ London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018.

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assemblies. Christians participating in this renewal emphasized personal spiritual experience, the authority of the inspired word of God without dead orthodoxy, avoiding what is worldly without becoming ascetic or legalistic, the imminent return of the Lord Jesus without avoiding daily responsibilities, and Christian activities without a social gospel (Jabini 2018).

In 1848, the Brethren experienced a major split, which divided the movement into Open Assemblies and Closed Assemblies (also referred to as Exclusive Assemblies). Open Assemblies generally allow all Christians to participate in their weekly Lord's Supper. Each local church is autonomous. Closed Assemblies, on the other hand, practise a 'close table', allowing only those believers within the worldwide circle of fellowship to participate at the Lord's Supper (Ouweneel 1977–8; Grass 2012). Sadly, the Closed Assemblies experienced many splits that saw different 'exclusive' groups. One of these exclusive groups is the Taylorites. Even though most of the contributions in this book discussed issues related to the Open Assemblies, the Taylorites are also mentioned in two essays.

Brethren and Mission is the fourth volume in the series *Studies in Brethren History*.[2] The first volume in the series was a reprint of Tim Grass's history of the Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland in 2012.[3] The second volume, *Witness in Many Lands*, was on Leadership and Outreach among the Brethren and appeared in 2013. In 2014, the third volume on *Culture, Spirituality, and the Brethren* appeared. In 2018, the fifth volume *Bible and Theology in the Brethre*n appeared.[4] All the volumes in this series were collections of papers presented at the biannual International Brethren History Conference organized by The Brethren Archivists and Historians Network (BAHN).[5] The conference is open to anyone interested in the history of theBrethren.[6]

2. Summary of *Brethren and Mission*

Brethren and Mission consists of 20 essays divided into 4 parts: 1) Missiology and Missiologists; 2) Europe; 3) Africa; 4) North America, Asia, and Australia. Part 5 consists of a Bibliography of the works of Timothy CF Stunt, in whose honour the essays were written.

Andrew Walls and Thomas Whittaker (chapters 1 and 2) presented a background to Christianity in the period prior to the beginning of the

2 The series editors are Neil Dickson, Tim Grass and TJ Marinello.

3 Gathering to His Name: The Story of Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland. Ayrshire: Brethren Archivists and Historians Network, 2012.

4 This volume reached the reviewer too late for a detailed review. A quick survey revealed that eight of the thirteen contributors in this new volume contributed to the volume under review.

5 The first conference was held in 2003. A collection of the papers of this conference appeared in 2006, under the title *The Growth of the Brethren Movement: National and International Experiences.* This volume was part of the *Studies in Evangelical History and Thought,* and was not included in *Studies in Brethren History* series.

6 Contributors to the volumes came from different countries and covered Brethren issues in Angola, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Faroes Islands, Germany, India, Italy, Jamaica, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Tanzania, USA, and Zambia. However, most contributions came from or were related to the UK.

Brethren Movement.[7] Walls provided the religious and Whittaker focused on the social background of 18th- and early 19th-century Europe. The ideals of the Enlightenment had an impact on the religious life of Europe. 'The notion of "common sense" developed by the British Enlightenment thinkers stressed the authority of personal experience' (23). Many European countries were Christianized, 'ruled by a Christian prince and subject to the law of Christ, within a single Church' (12). The religion of law and custom was not necessarily the religion of heart for most people. This development gave rise to radical movements such as the Puritans, Pietists and Evangelicals, who seek to distinguish 'between formal and nominal Christianity and *real* Christianity' (12). These radical Christian movements were influenced by the European Romanticism's emphasis on personal experience, as can be seen in their emphasis on a personal experience of salvation. They got rid of the 'surrender of creation to personal laws' that did not seem to leave room 'for the miraculous God of the Bible. One of the most fascinating attempts to demonstrate God's action in daily life is known as the 'faith principle' (24). The faith principle was characterized by a radical dependence on God.

Protestant churches in Europe looked for ways to Christianize European colonies in the Global South (Africa, Asia and Latin America). This gave birth to the Protestant missionary movement, leading to the work of the Moravians, William Carey and the establishment of voluntary and church missionary societies (pp. 14–17).

One particular person who critiqued the mission policies of the missionary societies was Edward Irving (17–19). According to him, missionaries must live by faith. He reached this conclusion based on a study of Christ's instruction to the twelve in Matthew 10:5–42, which he called 'The Missionary Charter'. This charter, also given to the Seventy, was never repealed and must serve as a model for apostles today. Apostles, that is missionaries, are to be emptied of all self-dependence, and all dependence on human resources… they must live by faith… they are to be poor and foolish in lifestyle (18–19).

One person who applied the principles advocated by Irving was Anthony Norris Groves.[8] Groves reached similar conclusions about missions as Irving, or may have been influenced by him (p. 20). His vision of the true Christian was:

Unreserved dedication to God, excluding all provision for the future, and securing the surrender of all we possess, and of all we can

7 Walls, 'Edward Irving's Critique of Mission Policy' (chapter 1) and Whittaker, 'Providence, Prophecy, and Prosperity: Rethinking the "Romantic" Premillennialism of the 1820s through the Faith Principle of Anthony Norris Groves' (chapter 2). Whittaker's contribution was a reworking of his Bachelor thesis 'Providence, Prophecy, and Prosperity: The 'Faith Principle' of Anthony Norris Groves in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain' Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012.

8 Two essays in the book were devoted to Anthony Groves (see chapters 2 and 3).

by diligence in our several vocations procure, for the extension of Christ's kingdom upon earth (pp. 24-25).

Christians should live a life of simplicity and give their wealth towards evangelism and missions. Groves 'tested' the 'faith life' principle empirically when he left Europe for the Middle East as a 'faith missionary', expecting God to do what he promised in his word. Groves kept a journal to record God's dealing with him in keeping his promises. This included God's financial provision, miraculous protection, and providence in the midst of severe trial, including sickness and death (36–37).

Groves' theology at times showed similarities with the Romantic movement of his day, including being 'comfortable with the mysterious and the supernatural' (39). However, he did not follow that movement slavishly. He was more a student of the British Enlightenment and used 'experiment' to prove that God was able to provide for his servant who depends on him (42). The faith principle, demonstrated in a life of poverty was also an apologetic tool, 'to convince the Christian community of its error' (43). Christians should turn away from a life of wealth and luxury and give more to mission. Groves influenced many with his 'faith principle', including George Müller and James Hudson Taylor. 'As evangelicals and Pentecostals seek to prove God's agency through miraculous but empirically demonstrable experiences, they carry on the legacy of Anthony Norris Groves and the faith principle' (48).

George Müller (1805–1898) was better known than Groves as a man of prayer and faith. He was also known for his work among orphans in England. Neil Summerton's essay (chapter 4) discussed George Müller's promotion of Mission.[9] Müller offered himself for overseas missionary service since 1826. However, the Lord closed all the doors before him. He said:

> at five different times, within the first eight years after I had been brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, I offered myself to Him most solemnly for work among the heathen; but each time it was most plainly shown to me, that I should serve the Lord by remaining in Europe (81).

9 Summerton, George Müller and the Promotion of Mission.

Müller became 'a major encourager, motivator and funder of, and prayer for, the mission work of many others, at home and abroad' (83). In 1834, he established the Scriptural Knowledge Institution (SKI). One of its goals was 'to aid in supplying the wants of Missionaries and Missionary Schools' (82). SKI became a channel through which many 'Faith' missionaries received financial assistance for their ministry. It supported overseas missionaries, 'and evangelists and

itinerant teachers at home' (88). Overseas missionaries worked in India, Guyana, China, North America, Spain, Italy, the rest of Europe (Roman Catholic countries) and others (96).

SKI was not a missionary society. It encouraged the missionaries to never look up to it for supplies, but to the Lord himself (84). Support was given only to those who were not associated with any society. Most of these were Brethren missionaries. Müller, however, also supported the work of China Inland Mission (95). 'I have sought the guidance of the Lord as to *whom*, to send means, *when*, and *how much*' (90). Both Müller and the workers often testified that the money provided was the amount they needed and that it came at the right time. The amount given to missions work between 1840 and 1900, was £256,306. This amount in today's value would have been £25,000,000 or US$ 33,270,500 (93). Müller, as 'a classical Victorian evangelical', did 'what he regarded as God's direction to him personally'. His approach to missionary funding became the model that is practised among Brethren assemblies.

Roger Holden's essay was on an exclusive Brethren view of missions (chapter 5).[10] He started his article with a quote from a Taylorite Exclusive Brethren: 'Sending out missionaries is not scriptural at all'. This was the view of the Closed or Exclusive assemblies. Even the Open Assemblies did not become heavily involved in missions prior to 1860. The focus of the article was on the Exclusive Assemblies. One of the reasons Exclusives were not involved in missions was their dispensational theology. Matthew 28:18–20 had not taken place, it 'would be carried out in a future dispensation' (110). At this time of 'a low terrible state of Christendom' Christians must be gathered from different systems. In other words, the Brethren did not have a mission to the unconverted but were instead to gather Christians from other churches (111).

Over time, the Brethren became a closed group of people (112). There were gospel meetings, held traditionally on Sunday evenings. Prior to World War I, outsiders sometimes attended these meetings. After that, gradually only Brethren believers attended these meetings (113).[11] Open-air meetings near assemblies were organized to proclaim the Gospel. Their effectiveness cannot be established.

Tórður Joansson discussed the mission strategy of William Gibson Sloan in the Faeroes (chapter 7).[12] Sloan, a young Scot, took his first missionary trip to the Faeroes in 1865, at a time when Christianity was a foreign-run institution. He held open-air meetings and visited different villages (132). He gave sermons in English or broken Danish and sang songs. Sloan continued to visit the Faeroes every summer,

10 Holden, 'Sending out Missionaries is not Scriptural at all: An Exclusive View of Missions'.

11 In chapter 6 of this book, 'The Rise and Fall of the Brethren Gospel Meeting', Tim Grass discussed the origin and practice of Gospel Meetings among the Brethren. The decline in attendance of unbelievers started in the 1890s. He concluded that they became gradually ineffective as an outreach model and yet, assemblies continue to carry them on (pp. 119–130). Other contributors also make reference to the practice of 'Gospel Meeting'.

12 Jóansson, 'William Gibson Sloan (1838-1914): Mission Strategy in the Faeroes'. This work is based on Tórður Jóansson's unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brethren in the Faeroes: An Evangelical movement, its remarkable growth and lasting impact in a remote island community. Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2012.

sharing the gospel to most of the islands, preaching in several villages and visiting the people at home, ministering to young and old (134). The rest of the year, he did his itinerant evangelistic work in 'Scotland, Norway, Iceland, Shetland, and Orkney' (135). When he died in 1914, there were five or six assemblies, which were all led by local people. As such, Sloan practised what Anthony Groves taught.

The assemblies that [Sloan] and his fellow British and, later Faeroese missionaries helped established did not *become* indigenous, they were always indigenous (136).

TJ Marinello's essay focused on 'New Brethren' in Flanders (Belgium), at the end of the twentieth century (chapter 8).[13] The study focused on the assemblies that were planted after 1971 by Canadian Brethren missionaries Herb Shindelka, Richard Haverkamp, and Henk Gelling. 'Twenty-six churches were planted in a nineteen-year period' (137). The founding missionaries started with home Bible studies that became churches. At first these churches were loosely connected (148–152) and later became an organized association (152–156). Under the guidance of a Flemish fulltime worker, Guido de Kegel, the churches were transformed into an organized denomination (156–159), called *Evangelische Christengemeenten Vlaanderen* (ECV). ECV remained 'true to the theological ideals and New Testament convictions of the wider Brethren movement' (159). However, ECV adopted forms and practices that differ from assemblies in the home country of the missionaries (160). For example, the workers did not practise the so-called 'faith principle', in that the needs of the workers were made known in a specific way (158).

13 Marinello, '"New Brethren" in Flanders at the End of the Twentieth Century'. This was the topic of his doctoral dissertation entitled New Brethren in Flanders: The Origins and Development of the Evangelische Christengemeenten Vlaanderen, 1971-2008. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013.

In chapter 9, Neil Dickson studied twenty-four nineteenth-century Brethren missionary memoirs from Africa between 1883 and 2010.[14] The missionaries came from the West, but all served in Africa (163). The study revealed the challenges, and anxieties associated with Brethren autobiography, as these missionaries did not want to 'blow their own trumpet'. The missionaries regarded self-promotion as being rooted in 'the most sinful of human appetites. Their faith advised humility' (165). Most of the authors wrote their works in the third person (164). The purposes for the biographies were to record experiences at the request of others, to inspire others, assure them of God's faithfulness, and love (166). These works were also intended to generate interest for missionary work and to recruit new missionaries (167).

14 Dickson, 'The 'nasty nominative'. Brethren missionary memoirs from Africa, 1883–2010.'

The missionaries did used the literary autobiography method for their books. The genre was more of a memoir 'using anecdotal accounts', conversational tone, maps and pictures (168). The most prolific writer among the missionaries was according to one writer an 'unexciting writer in the cause of missions' (168).

Missionaries were often portrayed as Christian heroes, people who were set apart by obeying a unique call from God (169). They experienced God's provision and protection at their time of need and danger, during accidents and illnesses (170–171).

Some biographies portrayed Africa as the Dark Continent, with people living immorally and under the dominion of Satan. The greatest crimes were slavery, cannibalism and the burying alive of wives of tribal leaders. The traditional religion was dismissed by most as 'superstitious', and together with Islam was deceptive (172). Some Africans were 'a very simple folk' and 'should be treated like a badly brought up lot of children' (173). African believers remained nameless in the autobiographies (175).

The majority of biographies, however, were more balanced in their judgement, by arguing that Africa was not as dark as portrayed. The problem of sin was universal and in that respect, Africans were as bad as Europeans. Some deemed Africans to be superior or equal to the Europeans. They praised the beauty of African languages and the insights that they received from native doctors. 'Africans are presented as a spiritual people who can grasp the gospel and attain salvation' (175). They were the spiritual equals of the Western missionaries and at times better than they were. They were capable of managing their independent churches. Many missionaries saw Africa as their home and the Africans as their own people (176).

The plot in the memoirs followed biblical examples, such the life of Jeremiah or Jesus Christ, with hardship and suffering. All end in triumph over the difficulties and challenges (178).

Ian Burness reassessed the impact of Frederick Stanley Arnot on African Mission (chapter 10).[15] Arnot was born in 1858 and came to faith in the Lord Jesus at the age of eleven. He went as missionary to the African continent and served there from 1881–1888 and 1889–1892. After returning to the UK in 1892, he made seven more trips to the African continent (184–187). He died in 1914.

In his first seven years in Africa, Arnot served as a missionary pioneer in Central Africa (188–190). 'Today in Katanga there are around 1,500 Brethren assemblies… These run over 400 schools, nine hospitals and clinics, and at least nine training centres and

15 Burness, 'Frederick Stanley Arnot (1858-1914): Reassessing his Impact of on African Mission'. Ian Burness wrote a book, dealing in details with the life and ministry of Arnot. Besides pictures, the book contained a number of helpful maps. See Ian Burness, From Glasgow to Garenganze: Frederick Stanley Arnot and Nineteenth-Century African Mission. Studies in Brethren history. Lockerbie: Opal Trust, 2017

Bible schools'. During the second phase of his stay in Central Africa, he served as 'the leader of a team of workers' (190).

Arnot served as a missionary spokesman and advocate (191–192). He did this through his books, as an editor of a missionary magazine and as missionary conference speaker. Arnot served as an advisor and counsellor to many who left Europe to serve as missionary in Africa (192–193). He received them in his house and corresponded with them while they served in the field. Arnot set an example as a missiologist (193–196). He followed most of the practices of evangelical missionaries of his time. He differed from them, in applying the 'living by faith' principle (194). He also advocated and practised a simple lifestyle similar to that of the people he was serving (195). Added to this, his knowledge of African languages allowed him to open doors to missions in Central Africa (196).

Kovina Mutenda evaluated the gospel work in Zambia (chapter 12). Brethren missionary work started their ministry in what is now Zambia, in 1898.[16] The missionaries did educational and medical work. Their focus, however, was on evangelism. Therefore, they encouraged their converts to become evangelists in their own areas. The converts received Bible teaching from their mentors and served under them. But, because they had limited 'secular and theological' education, 'the national church could be described as being one mile wide but one inch deep' (214). The local workers, mentored by the missionaries, struggled to respond appropriately to their own culture. On the one hand the missionaries 'tried to impart Western culture and values as if it were the gospel' (214). On the other hand, they gave the impression that everything African was pagan. An exception among the missionaries was George Suckling. Teachers trained at an institution that he established were effective evangelists, who planted many churches (212).

16 Mutenda, 'An Evaluation of Gospel Work in Zambia'. For a detailed history of the Brethren in Zambia, see Kovina L K Mutenda, A history of the Christian Brethren (Christian Missions in Many Lands - CMML) in Zambia: one hundred years of God's faithfulness and partnership in the gospel, 1898-1998. Chingola, Zambia: Christian Resource Centre, 2002.

One problem that national evangelists who served in evangelistic ministry faced was financial support. Brethren emphasized the 'living by faith' principle for workers. The national workers were supported by the foreign missionaries. The churches that were planted were not taught to support their local workers. Most of the current national evangelists in Zambia 'are self-supporting through peasant farming or fishing' (215). In order to help support national workers, a group of local leaders established the Christian Resource Centre Trust (CRC). Most of the help received by CRC came from foreigners and foreign churches and agencies.

The local workers in Tanzania faced similar financial problems as their western neighbours in Zambia, as Detlef Kapteina

demonstrated in his essay (chapter 14).[17] Brethren missionary work in Southern Tanzania, among a predominantly Islamic population, started in 1951, under the umbrella of Christian Mission in Many Lands (CMML). In 1960, a team of German missionaries, who arrived in 1957, baptized the first converts. The local church that was established became known as *Kanisa la Biblia* (KLB). In 2010 KLB had ninety churches with around 3,000 people participating in the church services (233). The foreign missionaries were associated with CMML and the local workers operated under KLB. However, for more than thirty years the mission paid all regional or local fulltime church workers and financed their transport to the conferences and seminars and covered the cost of lodging and feeding all the KLB meetings (235).

In 1989, KLB was 'forced' to pay the expenses of its workers. CMML continued to carry the financial burden for the medical and educational work. The decision not to continue to support fulltime workers led to half of them quitting their ministry. This is because their local churches were not able to provide for their financial needs. Some village churches 'were left alone in their villages quite discouraged and not able to develop their little church' (237). The leadership of KLB faced the challenge of developing the church into a self-supporting organization. CMML on the other hand was moving more towards a developmental social organization (238).

17 Kapteina, 'Cooperation in Mission or Foreign Mission Continuation? The KLB Church and the CMML Mission in South Tanzania'.

Anne-Louise Critchlow's contribution was on some Brethren missionary work in Algeria from 1920 to 1990 (chapter 13).[18] Algeria had a rich early Christian history until the conquest by Islam in the seventh century (220). The first Brethren missionary arrived in Algeria in 1883. Brethren missionaries did personal and literature evangelism, radio ministry, translated the Bible, and served in medical work (228–9). They and their converts faced hardship and persecution. The expatriate missionaries were expelled from the country in the 1960s and 1970s. A convert from Islam for example was accused by his mother of betraying his country, family, and mother (230). When the missionaries left the country, the small churches they left, 'started to grow and be established independently' (224). They transformed from a group of 'guarded and sometimes fearful' witnesses to an 'exuberant and powerful witness of Christians' (224). The current church retained much of the Brethren ecclesiology, but it 'is more charismatic in its theology…, more tolerant of the Roman Catholic Church and willing to acknowledge the faith and sacrifice of the monastic orders' (230–231). The Lord used the Algerians to continue to build on the foundation laid by the early Brethren missionaries.

18 Critchlow, 'Too hard for God? A Survey of some Brethren Missionary Work in Algeria, 1920-1990'.

Mark Stevenson wrote on Canadian opposition to Brethren evangelists (chapter 15).[19] The Scottish Brethren evangelists Donald Munro and John Carnie were the pioneers of the Brethren in Canada in the 1870s (241). Their message caused a controversy and they received criticism from a Presbyterian (244) and a Methodist minister (245). The criticism of the evangelists had to do with their rejection of clergy and churches and their doctrine of assurance (247–248). Based on their experience with traditional churches in Scotland, the missionaries regarded the churches in Canada as dead and the ministers as 'unconverted men' (249). The Brethren movement in Canada started in the midst of this controversy.

19 Stevenson, 'Canadian Opposition to Brethren Evangelists:'The Great 'Plymouth Brethren' Controversy in South-Western Ontaria, 1872–1873'.'

Peter Lineham contributed an essay on 'James Kirk and the New Zealand Brethren Missionary Tradition' (chapter 16).[20] The Brethren movement established a presence in New Zealand in the 1850s and commended twenty-three-years-old James Kirk as missionary to Argentina in 1896 (251). Kirk served for more than 50 years in his mission field (254). Due to the lack of financial support from his home assembly, in 1909, he 'took a job on the railways and remained in their employ for the next thirty years' (255). Other Brethren missionaries to Argentina faced similar financial challenges and followed Kirk's example of becoming 'tent-makers.' The Brethren, however, did not recognize 'part-time' service in ministry as a missionary call, because it lacked the devotion and self-denial of true Christianity (261). New Zealand Assemblies had since the days of their pioneer overseas missionary grown in their interaction with missionaries.

20 Lineham, 'James Kirk and the New Zealand Brethren Missionary Tradition'. See also his There We Found Them: A History of the Assemblies of Brethren in New Zealand. Palmerston North: G.P.H. Society Ltd., 1977

Ken Newton wrote about Brethren missionary enterprise to Malavalli in South India (chapter 17).[21] He divided his contribution following the era of four leading missionary couples. Brethren work in Malavalli was established by William and Annie Redwood in 1886.[22] Soon other missionaries followed (265). The beginning of the evangelistic work in that part of India met with hostility (264). At Malavilli the people 'believed that God had sent the missionaries among them to be their protectors' (266). A mission school was established in 1887. The missionaries also provided medical services (267). However, the major focus of their work was evangelistic (268). They used every opportunity to share the gospel in the villages of these Hindu people. They reached out to children and in 1893, a home for poor children was established (269).

21 Newton, 'The Brethren Missionary Enterprise to Malavalli'. See his Glimpses of Indian Church History. Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, 1975 and his doctoral thesis The Plymouth Brethren in India from 1833 to 1970. Melbourne: Melbourne College of Divinity, 1978.

22 The chapter sometimes referred to William Redwood as William Redford (264).

When William Redwood died in 1895, Thomas and Fanny Patient became the leaders of the Malavilli missions (270). One of the challenges that the Patients had to deal with was a famine that

resulted from a 'drought on a national scale' (271). Brethren missionaries responded to this challenge by rescuing and taking care of children who were affected by the famine (272). Soon the Brethren were taking care of over 400 children (273–7). The evangelistic work continued besides the work among the children. The missionaries sometimes faced 'mass conversions', where a group of people would ask to be accepted as Christians. This was a challenge for the missionaries who wanted to lead people individually to Christ (278). The converts who broke ties with Hinduism to follow Christ alone faced opposition and persecution from their tribesmen (279).

Three years after Thomas Patient passed away in 1940, John Evans took over the leadership of the missionary work. Evans had been in Malavilli since 1910 (282). The work continued under his leadership under challenging situations. The 1940s in India were characterized by strong nationalistic sentiments, leading to threats to expatriates and their converts (281). The school continued to function, but the number of children in the orphanages and boarding schools declined sharply. John Evans died in 1957.

In 1950, Bert and Elma Overton arrived in Malavilli from Tasmania. 'They came from rural backgrounds and proved to be the right people for the mission at this stage of its history' (283). The number of children in the orphanage grew from fourteen boys in 1950 to fifty-nine in 1957. The boys learned new skills after primary school and were able to cultivate rice and build bricks (283). Overton transferred the leadership of the children home to Indian nationals in 1972. He also transferred leadership of the missions in 1977. Sadly, he was murdered in 1981. At the celebration of the centenary of the mission in 1986, most of the more than a thousand people that attended, 'had been old boys from the home' (285).

Crawford Gribben's contribution was a biographical sketch of Lizzie Crawford Gillan in China from 1901 to 1945 (chapter 18).[23] Lizzie arrived in the north of the Jiangxi province, in southeast China in 1901. She worked in education and evangelism (288). Her work and legacy is often ignored by Brethren mission historiographers (298). In 1915, she married William Gillan and enjoyed ten years of marriage with him. The couple did evangelistic and medical work. Two years after her husband passed away, she returned to the UK, but went back to China the next year in 1928 to continue her work. Letters written by Lizzy from 1929-1932, and from 1940-1950, provided further information about her work (289). Her letters followed the pattern of acknowledgement of recent gifts, basic information about recent missionary work, and a 'human interest' story (290). The 1930s saw the rise of communism, which posted dangers to

23 Gribben, 'Lizzie Crawford Gillan and the Brethren in China, 1901-45: A Biographical Sketch'.

missionary work in China. And yet, Lizzy was able to report that 'the work is expanding despite the effect of military upheaval and political insecurity' (292). One of her 1941 letters indicated that she and other missionaries were living in uncertain times (294). The Japanese interned her in 1943. At the end of the war in 1945, she left China for the United Kingdom where she died in 1950, one year after missionaries were expelled from China (298). The 'bamboo curtain' kept expatriate missionaries out of China but did not prevent the seed sown by missionaries like Lizzy from growing. The work done 'had indeed borne fruit' (299).

David Woodbridge studied Watchman Nee and the Brethren in China (chapter 19).[24] Watchman Nee was an influential Chinese leader of the 20th century, who was influenced by Brethren ideas (301). He was born in 1903 and grew up on the south-east coast of China. In 1920, he came to faith in the Lord Jesus through the evangelistic activities of the female evangelist Yu Cidu and was baptized in 1921. He was further discipled by the English missionary Margaret Barber (303). 'Under Barber's direction, Nee pursued a path that in many ways paralleled that of Darby and others in the early years of the Brethren movement' (304). He severed his ties with the Methodist church and met with other Chinese believers to remember the Lord. Nee went further and did not want to work alongside Western missionaries. This happened at a time when China experienced anti-foreign and anti-Christian protests (305). He established a community of believers that became known as the Little Flock. The Taylorite wing of the Brethren movement accepted the Little Flock into their fellowship in 1932. Nee faced opposition from different sides. He was excommunicated from the fellowship, because he broke bread with non-Taylorite believers when he visited Europe and North America (306). His encouragement to Chinese Christians in other churches to join the Little Flock, led to tension with other churches. Missionaries accused him of 'poaching their converts' (307). Brethren organizations such as *Echoes of Service* were also critical of Nee (309). Nee, however, had his defenders among the Brethren. According to these supporters Nee practised Brethren principles which Brethren in Britain 'had largely surrendered' (308). Before his imprisonment by the Communists in 1952, Nee saw the ministry growing to over 700 meetings with around seventy thousand believers (301). The growth came about because of their so-called 'evangelism by migration' programme, in which Little Flock members relocated to various parts of China to establish churches (311). After twenty years in prison Nee died in 1972 (312). His ministry impacted China and the Brethren movement in the West, and through his writings he impacted many believers in the rest of the world.

24 Woodbridge, '"Finding that more in according with what they saw in the Word": Watchman Nee and the Brethren in China'. See also his doctoral dissertation, Missionary Primitivism and Chinese Modernity: the Brethren in Twentieth-Century China. Manchester: The University of Manchester; 2012.

Elisabeth Wilson's concluding essay dealt with Brethren Evangelism in the Australian Colonies from the 1860s to the 1880s.[25] The work of some well-known and some lesser known Brethren evangelists, led to the establishment of many assemblies (315–330). These evangelists were influenced by the British revivals of 1859–60. Through their ministry they 'kept the priority of evangelism at the forefront, challenged denominational barriers, and encouraged the latent stirrings of Christian unity' (330). The methods they used besides the 'regular gospel meetings', included open-air meetings, meetings in gospel halls, ladies' meetings, and rural outreach (331). The evangelists travelled from place to place, preached the gospel, 'establishing assemblies and then moving on' (332). Some settled in one place for a number of years to do evangelism and church planting. The work of the evangelists led to many conversions and baptisms, growth of existing assemblies and the establishing of new assemblies. Evangelism, as a result of these two decades, became the DNA of Australian assemblies.

25 Wilson, '"Richly rewarding the labourer for his work": Brethren Evangelism in the Australian Colonies, 1860s-1880s'.

3. Evaluation of the Book

The *Studies in Brethren History* series provided scholars with various historical issues from the Brethren movement. *Brethren and Mission* continued with the high level of scholarship demonstrated in previous volumes. The foundational articles, dealing with Anthony Norris Groves and George Müller provided insight into the specific historical and cultural context of the origin of mission practices still prevalent among brethren, for example, the 'faith principle'. The subsequent articles demonstrated how Brethren assemblies in different continents applied these principles, showing diversity and unity.

The seed planted by these historians requires interaction from missiologists. In line with a soccer (football) analogy suggested by the South African missiologist Prof. 'Klippies' Kritzinger, the missiologists will have to respond to these findings as a player, spectator, coach and referee. Should Brethren missionaries be coached to continue to 'play' according to the principles of old? Should there be a serious review of the 'faith principle' as it relates to the support of fulltime workers, based on what happened in Argentina, Zambia and Tanzania for example? Should a referee use a yellow or red card for this principle? Which model of local church evangelism should be followed, since the historical study demonstrated that the 'gospel-meeting' did not work in many countries? Should assemblies be cheered to use the Faeroes or Australian example? Is there a need

to refrain from 'sheep-stealing'? Is the model of the Belgians and Watchman Nee's 'apostle' transferable to other contexts, to have better relationships among Brethren assemblies in a country?

For Holden's essay specifically, there are a few questions. Should there not be a more careful distinction between the different 'wings' of Exclusive Assemblies? The Taylorite experience may not be true of others Exclusive Assemblies. Was successful Brethren involvement in missions—in its early years—limited to the activities of Groves? Leonard Strong did effective conversion missions among descendants of Africans and Meyer among the natives in Guyana.

I would recommend the editors of the series to seriously consider adding indexes to the volumes. Furthermore, it would be helpful to make the series available through different distribution channels, including electronic media (e.g. Kindle or Logos). I recommend this work to mission scholars and people interested in Brethren history and missions.

Editorial Policy

Positioning Statement

Since *Conspectus* is a scholarly publication that is evangelical in its theological orientation (i.e. predominantly classical and historically orthodox in its interpretive approach), submissions entirely void of a theological component (i.e. engagement with the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures), along with submissions that deny, either directly or indirectly, the key tenets put forward in the SATS statement of faith, will not be considered for publication. It is at the discretion of the editorial board to make the decision, and their decision is final. *Conspectus* is a refereed evangelical theological e-journal published biannually by the South African Theological Seminary (www.satsonline.org). The journal is a publication for scholarly articles in any of the major theological disciplines.

Purpose

The purpose of *Conspectus* is to provide a forum for scholarly, Bible-based theological research and debate. The journal is committed to operate within an evangelical framework, namely, one that is predominantly classical and historically orthodox in its interpretive approach, and that affirms the inspiration and authority of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. The journal seeks to publish well-researched essays and reviews on a broad range of suitable biblical and theological topics that are as clear and accessible as possible for the benefit of both specialist and non-specialist readers.

Standard

Conspectus aims to combine sound scholarship with a practical and readable approach. Submissions must present the results of sound research into a biblical, theological, or practical problem in a way that would be valuable to scholars, pastors, students, missionaries, or other Christian workers.

Kind of Articles

Conspectus publishes three kinds of theological research:

Scholarly essays of 3000–10000 words on biblical, theological, or ministerial topics, which should demonstrate mastery of the current scholarship on the topic.

Book reviews of 1000–5000 words reviewing publications in fields of interest to *Conspectus*. We favour detailed reviews that can offer students and pastors insight into the content, strengths, and limitations of the book.

Project reports of 1000–4000 words reflecting the findings of theological research projects, including theses and dissertations.

Doctrinal Basis

In doctrine, the South African Theological Seminary is broadly evangelical. We believe in the inspiration of Scripture, the doctrine of the Trinity, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the sinfulness of man, the need for salvation through the atoning death of Jesus Christ, the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through believers, and the centrality of the local church to the mission of God. SATS stands on three foundation principles—Bible-based, Christ-centred, and Spirit-led. *Conspectus* reinforces these three core theological tenets by means of scholarly research that deliberates their meaning and application for the modern church.

Submitting an Article

The author of an article that is submitted for review is required to submit the names and contact details of three potential referees. The entire review process is completely anonymous from the perspective of both the reviewers and authors.

The Review Process

The article is provisionally evaluated by the senior editor or assistant editor of the journal to determine whether it is in line with the type of articles the journal publishes, and is of sufficient academic quality to merit formal review. If in the opinion of the editor the submission is not suitable, the author is notified and the article is not sent to reviewers. If the editor sees some potential in the article, he proceeds with the remainder of the review process.

The senior editor advances the submission to two referees with appropriate expertise on the particular topic. The editor removes the name of the author from the submission. The potential reviewer receives an electronic copy of the submission, together with a Conspectus Review Form, which contains three sections: (a) the

review criteria, (b) the recommendation, (c) developmental feedback (i.e. comments).

Each reviewer is required to make a recommendation, which must be one of the following four options: (a) publish without changes, (b) publish with minor changes, (c) publish with major changes, and (d) do not publish. The reviewer is also expected to provide qualitative comment on aspects of the article that he/she believes could be improved.

The review process is developmental in nature; reviewers provide in-depth assessment of both the strengths and weaknesses of the article. If they recommend 'publish with minor changes' or 'publish with major changes', they are expected to explain the perceived deficiencies and offer possible remedies.

Based on the recommendations made by the reviewers, the editor compiles the feedback for the author, indicating any changes that are required prior to publication. The final decision as to which changes are required lies with the senior editor. When the required changes are substantial, the revised submission is returned to the reviewers so that they can confirm that the deficiencies which they raised have been adequately addressed.

In the case of conflicting reviews, the decision to publish or not publish lies with the senior editor. If the senior editor sees merit in the recommendations of both reviewers, he may forward the article to a third referee.

Before publication, the author receives a proof copy of the article in PDF format for final inspection and approval.

Closing dates for submissions:

- 28/29th of February for the March issue
- 31st of August for the September issue