

# The Mediator

*A Journal of Holiness Theology for Asia-Pacific Contexts*



**ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

*Bridging Cultures for Christ*  
*1 Timothy 2:5*

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## PREFACE

We are pleased to offer *The Mediator* once again. The faculty of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary is committed to excellence in publication through *The Mediator*. Significant changes in theological education and ministry continue to be made at the seminary since the first volume was published in 1996. We wish to address some of these changes by making *The Mediator* a relevant tool to leaders and educators in the Asia-Pacific region and those in other parts of the world who are interested in theological thought from this region. The journal is intended to be a mix both of professional scholarship of the highest standard and of contemporary and relevant ideas for the practitioner. This journal does not seek solely to be another publication in the swell of academic journals on the market. Rather, it candidly comes from the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition with focus upon issues of ministry and mission in the Asia-Pacific region. It meets the need for a journal of theological reflection from a holiness perspective for this region.

The Church faces new challenges as the new millennium begins. In this issue, the reader will find a series of essays from three new faculty members of APNTS who wrestle with the relevancy of theological education and the gospel in contemporary Asian and Pacific settings. Each of these essays represents the formal induction address each person gave in chapel services during the second semester, 1999-2000. These essays offer opportunities to consider significant topics facing the twenty-first century church. They also provide the new faculty opportunity to present their philosophy of theological education in their particular fields of expertise.

Chapel is a vital part of the APNTS experience, therefore, it is appropriate that this journal include several highlights from chapel messages given first semester 2000-2001. Included in this issue are some highlights of the theme for the year, "Loving God and Loving Each Other," from sermons given by our president, John M. Nielson. In addition, full sermons are given by our academic dean, Floyd T. Cunningham, and by our new professor, Christi-An Clifford Bennett. These contributions offer a balance between academic rigor, devoted spirituality, and creative homiletics so critical to contemporary theological education and ministry.

*The Mediator* is a journal in development, therefore, we welcome your comments and suggestions. We also welcome quality essays from our readers on topics related to multi-cultural ministry and mission for Asian and Pacific contexts. If you would like further information about contributing to this journal, or have comments and suggestions, please e-mail or write to the address below:

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# **PROCLAIMING BIBLICAL HOLINESS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

## **The Central Task of Wesleyan Biblical Studies**

David A. Ackerman

*An Induction Address delivered on January 11, 2000*

The call of the Bible rings out for the twenty-first century: “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them, “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy”’” (Lev 19:1-2; cf. 1 Pet 1:16). Is this command only an unattainable wish, or is holiness really possible in our world today? The answer is clearly that holiness would not be possible if it were not for the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The central mission of the people of God has not changed in almost 3500 years. We who call ourselves teachers and preachers of the gospel must proclaim the call to biblical holiness in this new millennium.

As we begin the new millennium, we are posed with a critical and essential question: how do we proclaim this high calling to an increasingly hostile and anti-Christian world where the old ways of doing “church” have become ineffective and are being constantly challenged? Now is a good time to re-evaluate our goals, priorities, and presuppositions so that we can proclaim once again the call to holiness with the result of transformed lives.

A question that has occupied the minds of many Wesleyan scholars in the last few years is this: how does the Bible fit into theological education, especially with the changes that are taking place in the church?<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I wish to offer my perspective on the task of biblical studies in theological education, preparation, and ministry. In the midst of this journey, I will expand a hermeneutical model which I believe holds promise for reaching the goal of proclaiming “holiness unto the Lord.”

## **I. The Need for Clarification**

### **A. Clarification and Ownership of the Meaning**

Each generation of leaders in the church must begin the theological task anew. Old answers are not always adequate for a changing world. Old paradigms need to be modified, new applications need to be found, and visions need to be focused and clarified. Those of us who call ourselves ministers are involved, to some degree, in the process of taking the gospel from our minds and experiences to the situations of other people in application to various situations. My basic thesis is that the biggest challenge for the Church of the Nazarene and other holiness denominations in the twenty-first century is one of hermeneutics. This is especially true and critical for the field of biblical studies. The process of hermeneutics challenges us to present the old time gospel message about Jesus Christ in terms that the world around us can understand, accept, and live by.

The goal of biblical studies in the academic setting should not be to improve or come up with new methods of interpretation, but to explain the gospel in ways people of diverse cultures can understand. According to Joel Green, there is a fallacy that lurks in the wings of

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<sup>1</sup>See especially the discussions in the last five years in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*.

biblical scholarship. This fallacy is called “presentism,” “the erroneous assumption that our methods and state of knowledge always evolve in higher forms, so that the way things are done in the present is necessarily better than in the past.”<sup>2</sup> “Presentism” is the notion that modern thought is the most advanced yet. There is a lot of pressure upon young scholars, such as myself, to say something ever new about the Bible. One must gain a reputation through publication and presentations at academic meetings in order for one’s ideas to be respected. This reputation building is critical if one wishes to secure a job in the academic setting in much of the world.

The greater goal of biblical studies must be, as John Wesley said, to give “plain truth to plain people.”<sup>3</sup> Sometimes in our pursuit of higher levels of knowledge we complicate the message so much that we, let alone the people to whom we minister, end up confused about essentials. Without making the Bible relevant to our time and culture, we assign it a secondary role in the life of the church. It becomes a relic of the past, an encyclopedia of ancient history, a tool for social studies, good literature for reading, a source book for ethics, or an ideological instrument for political, social, or sexual agendas.

## **B. Clarification of the Message**

Vital to the task of hermeneutics of holiness is clarifying the message of the Bible. Two basic approaches are used to clarify this message, both of which are inadequate in this task. The first method is one of education. We educate people to understand the Bible from our perspective using our cherished terminology and categories. The

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<sup>2</sup>Joel Green, “Reading the Bible as Wesleyans: A Response to Robert Wall,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33:2 (Fall, 1998): 120.

<sup>3</sup>John Wesley, Preface, §3, “Sermons on Several Occasions,” *The Works of John Wesley* (Bicentennial edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975-83) 1:104.



practice of this method suggests that translation of the gospel for the world today is a matter of education. This has been by far the dominant approach in missions for a long time. Holiness people are really good at coming up with complex terminology. Many people are confused in our churches because of the terminology we use. This approach is a significant hurdle for evangelism and church growth and is being challenged today on many fronts.

The second approach is to use a particular ministry context as the guide for understanding the Bible. This approach is called “ethnohermeneutics.” Ethnohermeneutics attempts to find the key for interpreting the Bible in a specific cultural context. For example, culture A approaches the Bible with hermeneutic A, and culture B approaches the Bible with hermeneutic B.<sup>4</sup> The problem with this approach is that it leads to syncretism or pluralism. Having an open-ended hermeneutic allows the contextualization process to progress without clear boundaries and standards.

The solution to this dilemma is with a combination of these two approaches. The wonderful thing about language is that it is not static but always changing. The concept of Christian holiness is more than a matter of terminology or culture. The narrative of God’s interaction with humanity throughout history can be understood by all cultures because every culture is part of that grand story. The challenge before the church today is the pressing need for clarification without a loss of identity. We should not lose the need for education while also not being afraid to embrace an ownership of terms and concepts. We

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<sup>4</sup>See Larry W. Caldwell, “Towards the New Discipline of Ethnohermeneutics: Questioning the Relevancy of Western Hermeneutical Methods in the Asian Context,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 1 (March, 1999): 21-43. See further the response by Daniel A. Tappeiner, “A Response to Caldwell’s Trumpet Call to Ethnohermeneutics,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 1 (September, 1999): 223-232.

work with an ear listening to the past and an ear listening to the needs of the present. We proclaim the gospel with flexibility within the specific framework of our orthodox inheritance.

### **C. Clarification of the Movement**

With the globalization of the Church of the Nazarene and other denominations which emphasize the doctrine of holiness, old ways of doing things are being challenged. The center of the Christian movement has shifted from North America and Europe to South America, Africa, and Asia. This shift signifies a move from guilt orientation to shame orientation, from individualism to communalism. A significant and important debate wages in the Christian Church today over the place of liberation theology, Asian theology, and other so-called “theologies.” Is there any justification in having a distinctive theology from a specific cultural context? The Bible is both timely and timeless and can speak to all cultures. The Bible is a document of history describing a great and grand story taking place in the created order of history. A problem results when this ancient story is interpreted to different cultural contexts.

The challenges to the church of today are significant. The increased secularization has made God-talk difficult. The increased globalization leads to the challenges of pluralism and syncretism. Temptation and compromise with culture have left some segments of the church with a loss of fervor for evangelism. What will be our reaction to such theologians as Keith Drury, Richard S. Taylor, and Kenneth J. Collins who say that “The Holiness Movement is Dead!”<sup>5</sup> But I must ask, are the problems facing the church of today any

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<sup>5</sup>Keith Drury, “The Holiness Movement is Dead,” *Holiness Digest*, 8:1 (Winter, 1994): 13-15; Richard S. Taylor, “Why the Holiness Movement Died,” *God’s Revivalist and Bible Advocate* 111:2 (March, 1999): 6-27; Kenneth J. Collins, “Why the Holiness Movement is Dead,” *Asbury Theological Journal* 54:1 (Fall, 1999): 27-36.

different than what previous generations faced? I suggest to you today that the basic problems facing the church in the twenty-first century are no different. We need to be honest and acknowledge that the basic problem has been and remains as sin, although we humans are quite creative in the ways we rebel against God. The response of the field of biblical studies to these problems must involve being faithful to the past story of the Bible while being concerned with building bridges to the present.

#### **D. A Clarifying Model**

New interpretive methods, like the New Hermeneutic and Reader Response Criticism, share the same premise: that the meaning of a text is determined to some extent by the reader of that text. Although this thesis can lead ultimately to pluralism, it suggests an important point for consideration. This point is that individuals and communities will interpret a text differently because of their location in a particular point in history. The text of the Bible is irrelevant to our world unless we interact with it and allow it to transform us. The power of the Bible as scripture and as the word of God appears with the intersection of interpreter and word. We need a flexible approach within a specific framework for this converging of text and reader.

### **II. A Model for a Holiness Hermeneutic**

I would like to offer to this community a hermeneutic for the Holiness movement in Asia and the Pacific for the twenty-first century. Models are only attempts to put into coherent and understandable terms complex realities and relationships, and are obviously prone to over-simplification. The following model is no different, but attempts to put in a figurative way the vital process of translating the ancient message of the Bible into terms that people of the twenty-first century can understand. In this model I want to focus on the relationship and interchange between the interpreter and the Bible. I am using a

figurative relationship of position. The one who stands over another has a certain relative degree of power or authority over that person, and can peer into and interpret the other party. Conversation and dialogue occur when people stand beside one another. Relationship is vital in all positions. The sequence of steps in the following model is also very important.

A. The first and primary step is that ***we as interpreters stand under the Bible.***<sup>6</sup>



The first and critical step in this holiness hermeneutic is that we stand under the Bible and allow it to be authoritative over us. We are accountable to the truth claims in the Bible.

1. Here we understand the Bible as God's unique revelation to us.

The Bible is part of a transcendent message from God to humanity. It is not the exclusive message, but the primary message of history. The marvel of grace is that the perfect and holy God chose to commune with sinful and imperfect humanity through the events of various people and nations over the course of several thousand years. The Bible is a book rooted in history reaching to the immortal. It is the story of God reaching in grace through the barriers erected by the rebellion of humanity. It describes the drawing force of prevenient

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<sup>6</sup>Illustrations are by APNTS student Jacob Urri.

grace throughout the ages culminating in the story of Jesus the Messiah, the incarnate Son of God.

2. In this step we also treat the Bible with reverence and seriousness.

We stand ready to submit to what God wants to say to us through the Bible. The Bible is not just any piece of literature, but unique in its authority over us. To call the Bible “scripture” is a statement of faith. To claim the words of the Bible as divine words is an act of faith.

We stand in the tradition of Martin Luther who acknowledged the authority of the Bible and applied his supposition, *sola Scriptura* (“scripture alone”), to counter the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church of his day. Scripture became for Luther and other Protestant Reformationists the only sufficient guide and rule of faith. For John Wesley and those in his heritage, the Bible is central to the theological task. The Bible shows the way to heaven. Wesley, in a now famous statement, wrote:

I want to know one thing, the way to heaven—how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri* [a man of one book]. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his Book; for this end, to find the way to heaven.<sup>7</sup>

The power of the Bible as the Word of God is not simply in a theological claim of inspiration but in the power of the message contained in the ancient, written words. The sufficiency of the Bible is confirmed by its ability to point the way to salvation. Wesley believed in the soteriological aim of scripture. The reason God has given us a

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<sup>7</sup>Wesley, *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:105.

Bible is so that we might find the way to Him. The Bible stands in the flow of God's grace. Donald Thorsen writes, "To Wesley, Scripture provided that means whereby God performs an action of grace corresponding to the finished and ongoing work of Christ in our lives for salvation."<sup>8</sup> The Bible shows us how to pursue holiness without which we will not see the Lord (Heb 12:14). The Bible points the way how to be transformed into the image of Christ through grace.

When we consider the authority of the Bible, we need to consider *all* of the Bible authoritative, including the Old Testament, and not a reconstructed word of source or form criticism, or its heirs like the recent Society of Biblical Literature *Jesus Seminar*, nor in selecting certain parts as more authoritative than others, thus ending up with a canon within a canon. Sometimes it would be convenient to drop some difficult passages from the Bible so that we end up with a nice, safe book that fits our modern sensibilities. The Bible is the book of the church. The Holy Spirit worked with the church through the canonization process to present a holistic story complete enough so that we can find our way back to God.

Allowing the whole Bible to speak to us makes it possible to construct biblical theologies. Some parts of the Bible, if read alone, seem irrelevant or even disgusting to the modern mind. Theological confusion results when texts are taken in isolation from the larger context of God's story of grace. It is vital in making the Bible relevant to our world that we begin with the entire story of the Bible. If we look carefully, we will find that we are part of the ongoing story of the Bible. We are between Acts 28 and Revelation 21. The Bible talks to us humans on the journey called life. Biblical theology is a necessary task in the academic study of the Bible because it allows us to see the soteriological aim of scripture. The Bible speaks primarily about God and God's relationship to humanity.

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<sup>8</sup>Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1990), 136.

The story of the Bible is complex and based on various situations, which makes constructing a systematic theology of the Bible difficult if not impossible. The Bible does not lend itself easily to the rational scrutinizing and categorization of systematic theology. The solution for this difficulty lies at the center of scripture: Jesus Christ. As heirs of Wesley and the Reformationists, we see the *kerygma* as the heart of the Bible. The *kerygma* is a broad term which basically refers to the message of proclamation, that Jesus Christ died, rose again, and brings a new existence to those who put their faith in Him. This *kerygma* must also be the center of Wesleyan theology if this theology is to be called Christian. The Bible is essentially evangelistic because it shows a God who, by love, has sent His one and only Son so that all who believe in this Son might have eternal life and experience restored relationship with God (John 3:16). We should be careful, moreover, that we not limit the scope of our concept of the *kerygma* or even salvation. Westerners tend to describe salvation in narrow, rationalistic terms. Eastern and third-world concepts challenge this narrowness by interpreting salvation in communal and relational terms, often with political and economic implications. We should not abandon one for the other but allow the two to dialogue under the umbrella of Christology.

### 3. The Bible in the Seminary Curriculum

We as a seminary community must join in this desire to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. The academic discipline of religion is becoming increasingly specialized. Indeed, it must be if one is to keep up with the exponential growth of literature and research being done in the field. This trend has discouraged conversation between the fields within the study of religion. To claim the Bible as authoritative over us invites us as a community to allow the Bible to be the basis of our curriculum. It is my conviction that all disciplines of the seminary must be rooted in the Bible. This is not intended to be a dogmatic or narrow statement, nor to say that each course is to be a course focused upon the Bible, but that each course should be built upon the

foundation of the Bible and biblical principles. The Bible needs to be the constant reference point for what we do.

The Bible must also be the basis of our creed, “Called unto Holiness.” George Lyons comments, “Loyalty to the primacy of Scripture gives Wesleyans a deep dissatisfaction with the easy conclusions of church dogma, even Wesleyan dogma. To be Wesleyan is to read the Bible with no prior constraint as to what it may mean.”<sup>9</sup> I can appreciate scholars quoting Wesley and other authorities; I obviously do this myself. But sometimes I wonder if we have relied too much on Wesley or the nineteenth-century holiness movement and not enough on scripture in the formation of our doctrine. Lyons suggests that Wesleyan scholars in the past thirty years have tended to rely more on systematic theology and philosophical presuppositions than exegetical conclusions. Lyons asks, “Have scholarly sophistication and objectivity made us reluctant to move from descriptions of what biblical writers said—or what Wesley and nineteenth-century holiness figures thought—to normative conclusions? Have we traded holiness scholasticism for Wesleyan antiquarianism?”<sup>10</sup>

I join Lyons in a call to exegetical rigor in translating and articulating the message of holiness to the world around us. We cannot replace scripture with reason, experience, or tradition. We cannot allow the needs of our ministry and context to become the norm, and scripture only a proof text for constructing our theologies. But yet the ancient scriptures must still be interpreted and translated for these ministry contexts. Therefore, there are two further steps which clarify this primary one.

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<sup>9</sup>George Lyons, “Presidential Address: Biblical Theology and Wesleyan Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30:2 (Fall, 1995): 23.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 24.



**B.** The second step in my model for a Holiness Hermeneutic is that ***we stand above the Bible*** because it is an ancient, written document needing interpretation.



We should not deceive ourselves by thinking that the Bible is a simple document and that we only need to read it to understand it. It is a document far removed in time from today. It is written in languages not spoken today; it speaks of cultures and ways of thinking that have disappeared from history.

### 1. The Bible as Literature

Thus, with this second step, we take seriously the Bible as literature and as a historical document. In this second step, the Bible is allowed to be a human document written in specific times for various situations. The Bible is an ancient document and difficult to understand without care and the tools of interpretation. It is vital that this step be seen in the shadow of the first one. We must take the authority of the Bible seriously before and while we seek to understand it as an ancient document. We need the best tools of interpretation available to us to understand this ancient collection of writings.

There are more tools today than ever before for interpreting the Bible. We should not be afraid to use all the critical tools and methodologies we can to understand the text and message of the Bible. God has given us minds that think and reason, and traditions rich with theologians, historians, linguists, and other specialists.

Gerhard Ebeling writes that church history for Protestants is a history of exegesis.<sup>11</sup> Yet there are dangers lurking close to this step in my model. If this second step is allowed to precede or supercede the first step, then the interpreter becomes the authority and not the Bible, and significant hermeneutical errors result. A displacement of authority leads to significant challenges to the Bible.

## 2. Challenges to the Bible

There are too many challenges to the Bible for me to list in detail, but a few are worth noting here. One clear and serious challenge to the Bible is *neglect*. I have heard many sermons in my life from well-meaning pastors which were not based on the Bible but were based on some other factor like experience or reason. I have also heard many sermons which were not what I would call biblical. They made little or no reference to the truths of the Bible. The basis of the sermon was a shaky theological dogma of tradition or a favorite illustration or story of the preacher.

A second challenge to the Bible is *ignorance* or *simplistic notions*. Many Christians and ministers today do not reflect upon the major messages and grand story of the Bible. They build their lives upon simplistic notions that are only part of the treasury of scripture. They do not consider how a particular text fits into the story of God's grace. Ignorance is one of the most significant dangers to the church. Please do not misunderstand me, because I believe God can use simple folk. Some of the most profound influences of my life have not only been my college or seminary professors but my dear old Sunday School teacher we called Grandma Roberts and my inspiring youth leader named Ken. These people were not trained in higher criticism and did not possess the exegetical tools I do, but they possessed sincerity and a love for the Bible. The result of this early training was that I was prepared to consider deeper issues when I entered college.

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<sup>11</sup>Gerhard Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1963).

A third challenge to the Bible is *modernism*. In an effort to make the Bible palatable to modern thought and not simply an ancient relic, some have taken the supernatural out. This is the driving force behind modern liberal approaches to the Bible. There are many heirs today of the existentialism of Rudolf Bultmann who attempted to remove the layers of myth within the New Testament in order to find more clearly the essential *kerygma* which could be made relevant to modern minds. Bultmann replaced the supernatural world of the New Testament with a modern, scientific worldview.<sup>12</sup> The significant danger of this approach is that humanity on its own is seen as having the ability to perceive truth and make sense of the world, that human intellect itself can make sense of the Bible. The Wesleyan understanding of inspiration and grace confronts this head on.

A fourth challenge to the Bible is the *extremism of Fundamentalism* and its doctrine of inerrancy. Many holiness people have too easily embraced the concepts of Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism relegates Christology to a secondary place in its emphasis upon scriptural authority, thus undermining the Living Word about whom the written word speaks. The written word has been allowed to take the place of the Living Word of God.<sup>13</sup>

A fifth challenge I present is *seeing the Bible as history or literature without seeing it also as revelation*, in other words, making this step of my model the only step in hermeneutics. This is the dominant approach today in the academic study of the Bible evidenced in the historical-critical method, the heir of the rationalism of the Enlightenment. The dominance of historical-critical questions leaves the reader of the Bible grasping for spiritual nuggets of application in a desert of barrenness. Wesleyan interpreters, however, should have paramount interest in

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<sup>12</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting*, trans. by Reginald H. Fuller (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 170-77.

<sup>13</sup>See Paul M. Bassett, "Conservative Wesleyan Theology and the Challenge of Secular Humanism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 8 (1973): 74-75.

application for the purpose of transformation. Questions of history are necessary but must be only one step among many to the greater goal of divine-human interaction. It is not that these other readings are invalid or unimportant, but that they are not ends in themselves.

A final challenge is that some main-line churches and seminaries are moving into a post-biblical era where *the Bible has no central place in the preparation of ministers*. Study is rather devoted to pastoral ministry theory and practice, social and political concepts, preaching, church growth, and systematic theology. A neglect of conscious attention to the study of the Bible has led to a clergy and ministry uninformed about the basic messages and facts of the Bible.

Let me give a personal illustration of the present state of biblical studies in a typical, main-line seminary in North America. My doctoral program has emphasized modern methods of interpreting the Bible. Most of my teachers in this program are major voices and leaders in the modern academic study of the Bible in North America. I have noticed a profound absence of spirituality in my doctoral classes. A Doctor of Philosophy is intended to be academic and not devotional. Yet, there is an emptiness that results from a purely rationalistic interpretation of the Bible. I had a bit of a controversy with one of my former professors. He read through some of the early drafts of my dissertation. His problem with my work was that my piety came through too much. I did not tell him this, but the reason my piety comes through in my writing is because of my theological orientation. I cannot deny nor do I wish to deny who I am, what I write, and the greater revelatory purpose of the Bible.

### 3. A Denial of Presuppositions

This leads me to another point. We interpret the Bible from certain perspectives and with certain presuppositions. It is my opinion that interpreters cannot separate themselves from their environment. We bring certain presuppositions to the text, no matter how hard we

try to be objective or scientific. We each have interpretive lenses that color what questions we ask of the Bible and how we interpret the answers we find. The goal of many biblical scholars is to be as objective as possible.<sup>14</sup> The trend of the last part of the twentieth century has been for scholars to keep their personal theologies—if they even have one—hidden.

I want to embrace the stream of tradition in which I stand. I studied under some great Nazarene biblical scholars including C .S. Cowles, Wendall Bowes, Joseph Mayfield, Morris Weigelt, Alex Deasley, Alvin Lawhead, William Greathouse, Roger Hahn, and others. They and other professors have taught me much about the Bible and interpretation. I have also been taught many excellent exegetical skills from professors in my doctoral program. My presuppositions have also been influenced by the denomination to which I belong. I was brought up in the Church of the Nazarene and know it well. I have studied its doctrines and polity. My stream of tradition joins others in the Wesleyan/Holiness river which combines with others emptying into the great ocean of Christianity. I have been influenced significantly by the books I have read and the churches I have attended. My family and personal decisions have also had a profound influence upon me. It is good to stand within this stream of tradition because this stream then becomes my intuitive and conscious guide in interpretation. The more I channel my pre-suppositions into conformity with streams I consider consistent with the intent of scripture, the firmer a foundation my hermeneutics will have. We must have the surety to accept sound teaching and the integrity to reject faulty instruction.

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<sup>14</sup>See Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" in *Existence and Faith*, ed. and trans. Schubert M. Ogden (New York: Meridian, 1960).

#### 4. Devotion to Scholarship or Devotion to the Church?

In my pursuit of clarifying my presuppositions and developing my interpretive skills, I must ask myself whether am I serving the academy and scholarship, or whether am I serving the church. A temptation for a young scholar such as myself is to replace devotion with intellectualism. I spend a lot of time in the pursuit of knowledge. I am reminded of Paul's words to the Galatians, "Am I now trying to please people or God?" (Gal 1:10). Scholarship can too easily replace ministry and application. The driving force behind biblical interpretation for us must be the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and the proclamation of the gospel (1 Cor 9:16).

C. The final step in my hermeneutical model is that ***we stand alongside the Bible***, in communication with the Living Word.



We dialogue with the Holy Spirit and allow the Spirit to use the findings of our research from step two. We allow the Bible to speak to us about the needs of our life and the world around us. This dialogue is a process which involves both speaking and listening to the Spirit as He inspires the Bible once again.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Wesley wrote, "The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote, but continually inspires, supernaturally assists those that read it with earnest prayer" (*Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* [London: Epworth Press, 1952], 794).

## 1. The Need for Divine Assistance

It should be immediately noted that we need divine assistance in interpreting the Bible. Karl Barth acknowledged that human language cannot be the bearer of divine revelation. God must empower human knowledge and language to speak about Him. In summarizing Barth's position, Bruce McCormack writes,

In and of itself, even the biblical language cannot teach us how to speak rightly of God. In and of itself, the biblical language is simply ordinary human language—language which awakens in readers all the connotations which they ordinarily ascribe to it. Barth's view is that this problem is overcome in that God continually takes up the witness of the biblical writers and bears witness to himself in and through their witness. In that he does so, the human words of Scripture are made to conform or correspond to the divine Word.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Contemporary Inspiration

For Barth, God continues to speak through the ancient scriptures in new ways because God is living. The power of the Bible came by way of the Spirit but was mediated in the church.<sup>17</sup> Barth spoke of the "analogy of faith" by which he meant that God acts in revelation, and humans then respond to that act of revelation by faith. God speaks to us by grace through the Bible. We acknowledge this gracious act by our faith in this divine word.

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<sup>16</sup>Bruce McCormack, "Historical Criticism and Dogmatic Interest in Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis of the New Testament," in *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective*, ed. Mark S. Burrows and P. Rorem (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 332.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 335.

This dynamic understanding of inspiration of Scripture fits well with Wesleyan theology. Wesley, commenting on 2 Timothy 3:16 in his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, writes: “All Scripture is inspired of God—The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote it, but continually inspires, supernaturally assists, those that read it with earnest prayer.”<sup>18</sup> This Wesleyan position does not weaken Scriptural authority, but strengthens it and puts it in its proper place in believers’ lives.

### 3. Divine-Human Synergism through Prevenient Grace

This final step in my model involves a divine-human synergism or working together enabled and sustained through prevenient grace. The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in the interpretation process. According to John 16:12-15, one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to lead us deeper into the truths of Christ. The Corinthian church is an example of believers failing to allow the Spirit to teach them the mind of Christ because of their fleshly living according to the ways of the world (1 Cor 2:16-3:3). The Holy Spirit can transform us into the image of Christ from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 3:17-18). Christ is the source, means, and goal of grace.

The Wesleyan optimism of grace is vital in the interpretation process. The Calvinist position is that our total being is fallen, including our mind, will, and reason. A Wesleyan would agree to a point. Where the two perspectives part ways is with the understanding of grace. The Wesleyan position is that God has restored a measure of freedom of the will through prevenient grace. Wesley writes, “There is a measure of free-will supernaturally restored to every man, together with that supernatural light which ‘enlighteneth every man that

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<sup>18</sup>Wesley, 2 Tim 3:16, *Explanatory Notes*, 794.



cometh into the world.’”<sup>19</sup> Grace enables us to respond to the Holy Spirit’s leading through the written words of the Bible. Prevenient grace enables the reader of the Bible to respond in a dynamic and free way to the message of Jesus Christ through the prompting of the Holy Spirit in the written words of scripture. Since grace is God’s message through Christ leading to Christ, the task of biblical interpretation is essentially and ultimately Christological.

We humans are dynamically involved in this hermeneutical process. To some degree we cannot avoid the second step of my model and use our minds and reason to interpret the Bible. In fact, we must and should use our reason to make sense of the text. We are free agents and can respond positively to the leading of the Holy Spirit or negatively by closing our minds and hearts to the leading of the Spirit. The Spirit works with our minds to provide us insights into the Bible and, more importantly, into the character of God.

Wesley talked of developing spiritual senses by which we can discern spiritual matters. It is impossible to have these senses until our spiritual eyes are opened by the Holy Spirit. Wesley writes,

So you cannot reason concerning spiritual things, if you have no spiritual sight; because all your ideas received by your outward senses are of a different kind; yea, far more different from those received by faith or internal sensation. . . . How will [reason] pass from things natural to spiritual; from the things that are seen to those that are not seen; from the visible to the invisible world? What a gulf is here! By what art will reason get over the immense chasm? This cannot be till the Almighty come in to your succour, and give you that faith you have hitherto despised. Then upborne, as it were, on eagles’ wings, you shall soar away

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<sup>19</sup>Wesley, *Works*, Jackson ed. (reprinted Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1986), 10: 229f; cf. 9: 273, 275, 294; 8: 52.

into the regions of eternity; and your enlightened reason shall explore “the deep things of God;” God himself “revealing them to you by His Spirit.”<sup>20</sup>

God can speak through the two rather subjective entities of our spiritual senses and our sharpened presuppositions to guide us deeper into biblical truths. We can develop skill and consistency through this divine-human relationship.

There is a reality behind the words of the Bible which is hidden from those without the eyes of faith. Jesus’ own teaching made little sense to the Pharisees and Sadducees because they lacked faith (see Mark 4:11-12). Much of Jesus’ teaching also made little sense to the disciples until after the resurrection because of their lack of faith. Their understanding grew with their faith. The Bible is seen today by many biblical scholars as simply a human document to be interpreted like other ancient and modern literature. By skipping the first step in my model, they also stifle the work of the Spirit within their own hearts. The influence of this rationalism has penetrated every fabric of the modern church and has even infiltrated the ranks of holiness denominations.

With this third step in my model, we dialogue with the Bible through both speaking and listening. There is no way around the speaking because of our presuppositions, but we can certainly do less speaking and more listening. In this dynamic dialogue we find the freedom to approach the Bible critically and the devotion to be changed by the message we hear. We find ourselves wrapped up in the story of grace.

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<sup>20</sup>Wesley, “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” *Works* (Jackson), 8: 13-14.

### **III. The Ongoing Story of Grace**

#### **A. The Goal of Grace**

The ultimate goal of all grace is to lead humanity back to God. The Bible is a means and channel of grace.<sup>21</sup> The ultimate goal of the field of biblical studies, even in an academic setting, must be the transformation of people into the image of Christ. Hence, biblical studies should be the major contributor to the evangelistic and training mission of the church (Matt 28:19).

#### **B. Knowing the Contexts**

Good exegesis and thus good hermeneutics are finally dependent upon the ability to retell the story of grace. Reason must be subservient to faith, but faith cannot do without the strength of reason. The ultimate transforming meaning of a text cannot be determined by examining that text in isolation from its contexts, both ancient and modern. The passage should be considered in the various settings throughout the ages in which it has been used. None of these contexts should be taken in isolation since all are part of God's redeeming activity in history. Consistencies should be embraced and variations considered.

#### **C. Knowing the Story**

The story of God's grace is quite simple, and every minister of the gospel should know it intimately and intricately. Basic to this story is, first of all, the command to obey resulting in relationship. A consistent theme throughout the Old Testament is that obedience to the commands of God results in relationship with God. Secondly, basic to this story is the human problem. The disobedience of Adam and Eve resulted in a broken relationship with God. This

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<sup>21</sup>Wesley, Sermon, "The Means of Grace," *Works* (Jackson), 5: 192-193; cf. Thorsen, 136-137.

disobedience became paradigmatic for the condition of the people of Israel. The Old Testament is a two-part story. It is the story of the failure of humanity to fulfill the terms of covenant with God and the consequences of this decision. It is also the story of the patient God of grace who, in spite of this sin, forgives and offers hope for the future. The Old Testament ends looking forward to a day when God would circumcise the human heart with His Spirit and make relationship once again possible (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:25-27).

Thirdly, basic to this story is the divine answer to the human problem. The reason Jesus Christ came was to impart the possibility of salvation for humanity. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds (Rom 5:20). In a world where the power of sin reigns, the message of hope in Christ must ring out with clarity. There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life sets us free from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:1-2). The clutch of sin upon the human race has been broken! For just as in Adam we die, so also in Christ we can be made alive (1 Cor 15:22). This transformative freedom influences all of life. Christ's sacrifice justifies us from the guilt of our sins. His death redeems us from the power of sin (1 Cor 1:30). His resurrection reveals His power over our last enemy, death, the consequence of sin (1 Cor 15:55-56; Rom 3:23; 6:23).

Christ brings not just freedom from . . . but freedom to. . . . The Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers in Christ to bring them to a point of total commitment, where the desire shifts from the ways of the world to the ways of God. We want God more than we want our fleeting and empty old ways (Luke 9:57-62). The Spirit writes on our hearts the ways of God and empowers us to walk in these ways (Heb 10:15-18). Purity of heart and life become our mark (1 Thes 4:3-7). Our desire every day becomes to be like our Lord in word, thought, and deed (2 Cor 3:18). His grace is so great that even when we mess up and give in to our temptations, the offer of forgiveness still stands

(1 John 1:9). Peace and assurance accompany this transformation (John 14:27; Gal 5:22-23; Rom 8:16). We see our neighbor and enemy in a different way. Where hatred and fighting once ruled, love now reigns (1 John 4:7-8).

This new life of holiness calls us to participate in this message of hope. I urge us as individuals and as a community to proclaim this message with urgency and clarity. The central task of the church is to offer this better alternative to our world. Offering this message of hope is the hermeneutical task which I have been speaking about today. It is there in the Bible. Our world needs it. Our job then is to take the gospel to the world and allow the gospel to confront and transform.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, students, scholars, and ministers in Asian and Pacific contexts have before them a tremendous opportunity to approach the Bible with eyes opened by the optimism of God's transforming grace. APNTS and its graduates should speak loudly in the twenty-first century about the call to discipleship. The task of hermeneutics urges us to proclaim the message of the Bible in ways that reach to the hearts and minds of those to whom we minister. Let us take the call to holiness out of the halls of learning and into the streets where real people can experience transformational living. We who are professors at APNTS can only equip students for the difficult process of proclaiming the gospel in a hostile world. It is impossible and even undesirable to translate the gospel into every situation and need represented by this diverse group. We cannot preempt the Holy Spirit in this task. We can set you on your way in a stream of tradition with presuppositions built upon sound methods all under the authority of the Bible. The world out there is a tough place that is in desperate

need of the message you hold in your hands. Indeed, as the hymn goes,

“Holiness unto the Lord,” is our watch word and song,  
“Holiness unto the Lord” as we’re marching along.  
Sing it, shout it, loud and long:  
“Holiness unto the Lord” now and forever.

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# **CHURCH LEADERS**

## **Theologians and Teachers**

Joven Laroya

*An Induction Address Delivered on February 10, 2000*

“What would you like to be doing for the next twenty years or so?” This was one of the questions asked by the Regional Advisory Committee during our interview. Of all the questions posed to me, this was the one that left a mark in my memory. Judging by the context where it was given, it was not meant to be a peculiar or special question. Just after that question was asked, I immediately and without hesitation responded with something like this: “I hope to see leaders who are trained for ministry. I want to have a part in that ministry.”

It sounds trite. In fact, it is to some. But when I said those words, they were pregnant with meaning.

The theme and thrust of this address this morning is an amplification of my response that day. I do not know if it was understood the way I meant it to be. Experts in cross-cultural studies say that human beings always commit blunders in communication. What did I mean when I referred to leaders as trained for ministry? What did I mean when I said that I wanted to have a share in this noble project of building up leaders?

## **I. Leaders for the Twenty-first Century Church in Asia and the Pacific**

When I say “leaders,” I have in mind the following images. These images are conventional but defy obsolescence. My agendum is to describe them as they touch upon the twenty-first century Asian and Pacific ministry contexts.

### **A. Servant-Leaders**

Let me begin with the most commonly used description of leaders that is moored in the truth of biblical revelation. It is an image which was modeled by no less than the Incarnate Christ Himself, “who, being, in a very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross” (Phil 2:6-8).

The church leaders I envision for my sphere of ministry are those who deliberately take the posture of a servant-leader. They are those whose authority or greatness is found in their ability to empower others. In Asia and the Pacific, servant-leaders are always in demand. Let me give you some of the characteristics of a servant-leader in the twenty-first century Asia-Pacific contexts.

Servant-leaders are those who show tolerance of people of other cultures, religions and backgrounds. The differences are humbling realities, things which we cannot change at all. Tolerance is like an overcoat—a lifestyle seen by others, and is motivated by love and respect which are, in themselves, the most powerful tools for witnessing on this side of the world. We hardly win others to the side of Christ by argumentation and debate.



Also, servant-leaders for Asia-Pacific contexts in the twenty-first century are those who keep a sense of mission even when their faith is an unpopular minority. Asia Pacific consists of about 66 percent of the total population of the world, yet barely 3 percent is Christian. There are factors that contribute to the continued unpopularity of the gospel of Christ on this side of the world. One is the sense of *nationalism* among peoples in Asia. In countries like Myanmar, Thailand, and India, where the politics and economics are hitched with the dominant non-Christian religion, Christianity and its leaders have to contend with entrenched traditional religions. In some other areas where modernization is unprecedented, the Christian religion has to contend with the *lovers of money and prestige* or those who venerate and idolize *technology*. Servant-leaders should recognize that their religion, although only a minority, has power to transform lives and communities; that this power has been evident in the lives of millions of professing believers all over the world; and that the concept that others may know and experience this power is their incessant and ardent desire. They should be those who are fully convinced that the gospel is the “power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16).

Further, servant-leaders in Asia and the Pacific are those who see their education not as a qualifying factor for position in the organizational structure of the church, but as enablement for nurturing God’s grace in the lives of many others for ministry. “Educatedness” should not be mistaken for “giftedness”; education should not be a substitute for spirituality. It is always tempting to Asian and Pacific leaders to regard “educatedness” as power in itself, and thus supplanting the truth that “salvation, and glory and power belong to our God” (Rev 19:1).

## **B. Transformed and Transformational Leaders**

Another image of leaders for the twenty-first century church of Asia and the Pacific is those who are transformed and transformational (in their mind-set and conduct). With the Apostle Paul, these people

can witness to the grace of God and say, “I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of His power. Although I am less than the least of all of God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches in Christ” (Eph 3:7-8).

Here are some characteristics of transformed and transformational leaders.

They are witnesses to the movement of the Spirit of God in Asia and the Pacific. Spirituality to a leader in Asia means rightness and righteousness. It is the experience of the radical change of loving God and loving other people as well. Education on or exposure to the varying cultural dispositions of Asia Pacific does not guarantee the spirit of relational understanding. It takes a radical transformation of the heart by the baptism of the Spirit. The disciples were prepared to do cross-cultural and trans-cultural ministry only after the Spirit came upon them and enabled them to cross and crumble down the walls of hostilities among people.

Transformed and transformational leaders in Asia-Pacific contexts are also those who are certain of their calling and have confidence in the gifts God has committed to them. With the limited resources of evangelism, there should be wisdom relative to the maximization of the utilization of personal gifts. Gifts for ministry are given in contexts where they fit. Years ago, I watched a stage play by one internationally renowned master of theatrical plays from Benguet, Philippines. He directed a play with a scant touch of (Western) technology using basically the indigenous materials available. After the play, in his lecture he said something like this: “If you are in the third-world, by all means use whatever resources are available. Indigenous materials are less expensive but more meaningful than ones that are foreign.”

A transformed and transforming church is one which is empowered and empowering. As Joel Ortiz puts it, “Transforming leaders are empowered individuals who seek to empower a given

people.”<sup>1</sup> His thesis is that leadership is orientated to the followers, that is, to the led. His concept of transformational leadership is hitched to servanthood and heroic leadership. That is, a leader is one who inspires “followership.” Based on social research, Ortiz further enumerated the following characteristics of an empowering leader: charismatic and persevering, eloquent and persuasive, compassionate, humble, sincere, approachable and sociable, practical-minded, aggressive, shrewd, authoritarian but paternalistic if need be, a good planner, and a dynamic organizer.<sup>2</sup>

### **C. The Leader as a Theologian and Teacher**

We now turn to the more formal and professional images of church leaders.

#### 1. Church Leaders as Theologians

In introducing the booklet of Helmut Thielicke, Martin Marty says that Thielicke firmly believed that “every minister of Jesus Christ must be both a disciplined theologian and practicing churchman.”<sup>3</sup> This is not at variance with the practice of ministers in the New Testament. After dealing with the doctrines of last things and creation, Paul admonished Timothy with these words: “If you point these things out to the brother, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith, and the good teaching that you have

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<sup>1</sup>Joel Ortiz, “Transformational Leadership: The Need of Our Time,” in Lee Wanak, ed., *Directions in Theological Education* (Manila: OMF Literature, Inc., 1994), 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>3</sup>Helmut Thielicke, *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*, trans. Charles L. Taylor (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962), xii.

followed” (1 Tim 4:6). A little later in the same chapter, he writes, “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, and to teaching. . . . Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save, both yourself and your hearers” (4:13, 16).

Furthermore, in his second letter, Paul enjoined Timothy with these words: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15). In all these, Timothy was enjoined to live a life in accordance with what he believed to be God’s truth. Was it Martin Luther who once said, “True theology is always practical”?

According to Roger Hahn, in a conference paper given at Breckenridge, “The role of theology was to instruct, shape, and shepherd believers until the theology was formed in them.” He asserts that theology combines orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathos.<sup>4</sup>

What kind of leader-theologians do we need in our contexts?

First, they must be a “glocal” people. This is a combination of the words “global” and “local.” These people are those who preserve the trans-cultural element of the final revelation of God by living it. As Wilson Chow asserted, “The task of theology is to bring the gospel of universal relevance and application ‘down to earth’ to the needs of a given context.”<sup>5</sup> Or as Saphir Athyal puts it, “If the Christian gospel

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<sup>4</sup>Roger Hahn, “Theological Education’s Responsibility to the Church for Clergy Preparation,” a paper presented at the Consultation on Clergy Preparation for the Church of the Nazarene in the twenty-first Century, held on June 20-24, 1990, at Breckenridge, Colorado, 10.

<sup>5</sup>Wilson Chow, “Biblical Foundations for Evangelical Theology in the Third World,” in Ken Gnanakan, ed., *Biblical Theology in Asia* (Bangalore: Theological

is the answer, one should know what are the real questions and this is the task of indigenous theology.”<sup>6</sup> These individuals should not be loners. They are, as Helmut Thielicke describes, those who think “within the community of God’s people and for that community, and in the name of that community.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, our theology should always have cultural foundations to be relevant, but it should not be bound by these foundations.

Second, the leader-theologians we need should be both pastoral and prophetic. They must maintain a theological norm which views the love of God as dispatched with holiness. The holy-love principle should be maintained if people are to understand what it means to be saved and transformed. God should be seen as kind and gentle, but also as wrathful, as one who has a settled reaction against sin and sinfulness. Leader-theologians should both proclaim the encompassing love of God and His overpowering judgment. If Jesus is to be understood as the way, the truth, and the life, the leader-theologian should serve as a modern prophet but also as a tolerant shepherd. While Christ may be found in all religions and in some ways in most cultures, He is the only way to the Father.

Leader-theologians should also take the mantle of a priest. A priest is one who mediates between God and mankind. These people bring to their people the very message of God. In some ways, priests bring to God the very struggles, aspirations, and pains of their people. But what is clear here is that as priests, leader-theologians come from among those to whom they minister. They are one with them. They identify with their own people. The Japanese theologian Kosuke

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Book Trust, 1995), 111.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Thielicke, 4-5.

Koyama said that theology must begin with an interest in people. Theologies which originated during the Enlightenment and patterned after them are born with the desire to discover knowledge. The interest was somewhat vitiated by human desire to discover knowledge for its own glory. The ministry of priesthood by leader-theologians always brings them to their knees while writing, agonizing, and reflecting on behalf of their people.

I think that no one is more prepared to write theology and clarify the revelation of God for a group of people than the theologian who comes from the same cultural perspective.

## 2. Leaders as Teachers

The Bible sets qualification of church leaders as those who are “apt to teach” (1 Tim 3:2). In the Pentateuch, God appointed leaders to instruct people regarding personal and corporate righteousness. Moses and Joshua are examples. Also, in the later part of the Old Testament, we have Ezra who “devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). Nehemiah, the leader of the building of the walls of Jerusalem, was a leader and teacher as evidenced by his instruction in the later part of his book. King Solomon was the best instructor of all time. The prophets also taught and proclaimed the word of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, was the Good Teacher too. Peter, John, James, and of course Paul were leaders in the New Testament as theologians and teachers. Peter, in his second epistle, “shows himself as both a concerned pastor and champion of theological orthodoxy. He lists the credentials of true teachers to help

his readers become discerning students of God's word (1:12-21)."<sup>8</sup> God calls leaders who not only have certain, established knowledge about God, people who are not only able to take on "followership," but who are also themselves teachers of the way of the Lord.

What are some characteristics of leaders who are equipped equippers for the contexts of Asia and the Pacific?

First, the leaders we need are those who are able to train and nurture ordinary Christians for works of ministry. Nurturing the gifts and the personality of church people requires skills in leadership, counseling, theology, and methods of teaching. We need the help of psychology, sociology and other fields in Christian education to help us prepare equipped equippers. Leaders need personal and professional preparedness. We need men and women who rely more on wisdom than technology. We need men and women who can teach others the ways of the Christian life even without the aid of "Power Point." My hunch tells me that the advanced technology of the Western World has been one of the alluring factors in the West that has been causing a brain drain in the Third World.

Second, equipped equippers are those who are able to generate ministries in their local churches. They are those who do not look at the church as a place to sing, pray, or listen to the explication of the sacred word of old. They are those who see the church as a group of people who are ready to work for Christ. Because of this concept, the equippers are masters of finding ways to generate ministries.

Also, equipped equipping leaders are those who see themselves as reproducers of other leaders, if not like themselves, better than

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<sup>8</sup>Kenneth Gangel, "What Christian Education Is," in Robert Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn Sloat eds., *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 27.

themselves. The equippers' concern is not only for developing their own leadership skills and abilities, but they are very much concerned about the development of more leaders so that the body of Christ may grow as it builds itself up.

Furthermore, equipped equippers do not only need to know *what* to teach as theologians, but also know *how* to teach as educators and educationists at the same time. They are not merely stating what they know, but they are enabling others. Equippers possess knowledge, skill, and abilities, and should master the art and skills of teaching.

Moreover, these types of people are able to teach by modeling and trusting (trusting is empowering). One of the qualities of a good teacher is being like the Lord Jesus who modeled for about three years and then entrusted to the disciples the job which He wanted done before His second coming.

## **II. The Mismatch: The Problem of Theological Education**

I wish that I had a magical formula for creating the human leaders that we need. All I know is that they come out through a processive methodology, a three-year rigorous training in an environment which is designed by fallible human beings.

Speaking of the limitation of theological education programs, some have always been unabashed and unashamed to admit that there has been a perennial problem experienced by students and faculty alike that is entrenched in theological education programs themselves.

Philip Anderson, of Chicago Theological Seminary, tells an anecdote which can illustrate the problem of the disparity between theories and practice in theological schools.



“Shortly after graduation, one year Phil received a frantic phone call from a former student newly established in his first parish. ‘Phil,’ panted his young caller, ‘What do you do at a funeral?’

“‘We covered funeral practices in my spring course on pastoral care,’ answered Phil.

“‘I know we did,’ said the caller, ‘but this guy is really dead.’”<sup>9</sup>

### **A. The Problem of Mismatch Between Theological Education and the Demands of Actual Pastoral Ministry**

Since two years after my graduation from the seminary, I have been pursuing further education in secular universities. In nearly every course I have taken, the problem of the mismatch of university education and the need of the society was touched upon. The Philippine government is not bashful to admit that every year, the list of “mis-educated” and “under-educated” young people is padded. Their mis-education stems from the fact that the education they receive does not prepare them for jobs that are available and are needed by Philippine society. I thought that this was only true in the Philippines until I saw on television that even in some affluent countries, the phenomenon of mismatch is already undeniably remarkable. Even one person from the University of Michigan said that the classroom discussions at his university could not cope with the fast changing society.

This thing should not happen to theological education, so I thought. But Rick Kalal gives the following observation:

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<sup>9</sup>From James S. Hewett, ed., *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1996), 351.

Many of the larger churches in America question the relevancy and veracity of theological education as it is carried out today. These churches claim that seminaries produce young people with great academic skills but weak relationship skills. Many graduates can exegete a passage of Scripture but cannot run a church meeting; they can stand at the pulpit and preach but cannot stand by one's side and offer comfort. Seminary education is criticized as being more content-driven than character-building. It's not surprising that churches are questioning the relevancy of theological education.<sup>10</sup>

Before this statement, Kalal shared the observation made by pastors from "mega-churches," saying that "while seminary graduates excelled in exegeting Scripture, they lacked the ability to exegete culture."<sup>11</sup>

### 1. The Problem of the Mismatch between Expectations of the Whole Church and the Curriculum

Based on Kalal's observation, the problem of theological education is the apparent lack of partnership between church and seminary. Kalal points out, "When one looks at the situation, it seems the church has abdicated responsibility to train its leaders by sending them to theological schools; and that theological schools are abdicating the responsibility to develop spiritual, emotionally secure, moral men and women of God and sending them back to the church."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Rick Kalal, "We've Got Trouble," *Christian Education Journal* (Spring, 1999): 55.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 64.

## 2. The Mismatch of Two “Natures”

Not many years ago a conference paper in Breckenridge, Colorado, was presented with this sub-title: “Can Professors Prepare Persons to Pastor?” The author’s answer leans toward the negative. One of the reasons for this is that professors and pastors speak different “languages.” He explains, “The realm of the professor’s functions demand that he speak with the precision of prose—words that describe a world that is organized and settled formulae.”<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, pastors primarily speak in poetry; that is, pastors are poetic, challenge imagination, and purvey fantasy. Pastors tell stories not state facts.

In addition, they function in different time zones. The professor operates on *chronos* time which means that schedules are specified, and predictable. On the other hand, the pastor operates on a *kairos* time which is nicely explained in expressions like, “Till death do us part.”

They also operate with different currency. The medium of exchange in the classroom is knowledge. Mastery of information is expected of every professor. For pastors, the medium of transaction is wisdom which calls for more creativity. While there is wisdom operating within a classroom, students are graded with how much they appropriate knowledge. The author says, “I am saying that GPA is no indicator of wisdom. And I am saying, with emphasis, that *summa cum laude* does not prepare a person for the creative function, of the pastor.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Millard Reed, “The Mysterious Mission Field as Distinct from the Beloved Imperial Realm,” a paper presented at the Consultation on Clergy Preparation for the Church of the Nazarene in the 21st Century on June 20-24, at Breckenridge, Colorado.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

Lastly, they have different political philosophies. Professors model somewhat an elitist posture in which the classroom is an empire.<sup>15</sup> Pastors cannot choose with whom they come in contact or with whom their ideology is compatible. They cannot be selective in their care. Not all can become a reader or an assistant to a professor. But in the church, everybody has a role to play.

With this mismatch, can professors produce pastors? It seems impossible!

### 3. The Mismatch Derived from Polarization through Professionalization

Several years ago when I was in seminary, I observed that there was a wedge between Christian Education, on the one hand, and Theology, on the other. There were not just a few times that I heard students say, "I am pursuing an M.A.R.E. degree, I don't need much theology." Or, "I am pursuing M.Div.; I don't need much Bible and Theology course exposure." This, I think, has a debilitating effect on the training for the Christian ministry. Kalal's observation, I mentioned a while back, might have been derived from the illegitimate professionalization of degrees or concentrations.

## **B. Towards a Well-Rounded Preparation Through Inter-Disciplinarity**

Based on the immediately preceding observations, there is a need to re-discover the important role of Christian Education and Pastoral Ministry courses in the seminary curriculum.

These courses provide the very engine for ministry—the lifeblood for ministry. It is through these courses that action and knowledge are bridged together. A church leader who knows theories and

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

information but does not know how to apply them and communicate them to others will certainly not make a good minister in the real sense of the word. No one minister is qualified unless he or she combines action with reflection.

Christian education and pastoral ministry courses provide orientation on education and leadership based on time-tested and empirically proven theories and methods in human relational transactions. These courses make learning touch with home base. They make the otherwise abstract concrete. That is why they are called “practics.” They enable ministers to understand from a human vantage point why people behave as they do.

Christian education and pastoral ministry provide the needed opportunity to hone skills of communicating the gospel in ways that others understand.

### **III. Towards Developing a Method of Ministerial Education in Asia and the Pacific**

Given the perennial problem of mismatch in any kind of education, and our insistent desire to produce ministerial leaders in Asia who possess the characteristics we just outlined, I humbly endorse a framework of understanding and the developing of a method of education that fits our context. I am aware that I am speaking to both faculty and administrators, as well as students. You who came with the intention to “receive” education and be conferred degrees will someday go out and discharge your duties in the real world. When that time comes, you will struggle to understand how you may effectively educate others for ministry.

There is no other way to grow the church except by nurturing believers. In nurturing others, personal and professional skills, knowledge, and attitudes in teaching are necessities. Not only that, I believe that you can in fact participate in defining and developing an

education that is relevant to your particular context. This is the assumption of this proposed approach.

The proposed approach to developing a method of education has the following components.

### **A. The Component of Contextuality**

As touched on a little earlier, ministers should not only be people who can analytically exegete the Bible or the text, they should also be able to exegete their very own culture and sphere of ministry to which the gospel should speak. Contextualization is the method of defining and identifying within a given sphere some educational materials, means, methods, and models which can be used to facilitate communication aimed at transformation. However, I would like just to talk about some areas in which we can create themes that have bearings in ministerial preparation in Asia and the Pacific.

#### 1. Religious Pluralism and the Religion of Christ

The most traditional and yet most missionary of religions are found in Asia. Themes in theology and theological education should point out that among these diverse religions there is uniqueness found in the religion of Christ. The uniqueness of the religion of Christ was clearly delineated by the Joint Consultation Sponsored by Asia Theological Association and the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship in Manila in 1992. This group affirmed the uniqueness of Christ as the only way that leads to the Father (God), and that “all salvation in the biblical sense of eternal life, life in the Kingdom, reconciliation with God, and forgiveness of sins comes solely from the person and work of Jesus Christ.”<sup>16</sup> Also, “Christ is the hope and judge in relation to other religions,” and that He is the

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<sup>16</sup>Joint Consultation Sponsored by Asia Theological Association and the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship, Manila, 1992, *The Unique Christ*, in Gnanakan, *Biblical Theology*, 306.

“center, ground, norm, and goal of all religious insight and knowledge.”<sup>17</sup>

## 2. Secularity and Spirituality

Modernization is the root cause of secularity. There is a new wave of values that brings in secularization as its “leaven.” Secularity is both a by-product of the increase of technology and, at the same time, a factor for secularism. Secularity supplants spirituality. Tano observes that although modernization has brought a “great measure of economic and social and physical well-being” it has disrupted “Asian traditional values of harmony which preserve human dignity and solidarity. It has encouraged an acquisitive attitude and secular outlook which eliminate the importance of the concept of the transcendent”<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Joint Consultation identified the harm brought about by modernity in these words:

The concern for the individual’s dignity and worth has degenerated into a rampant individualism that focuses on one’s own rights at the expense of one’s duties, on meeting one’s own needs at the expense of one’s neighbor, on orienting the world around one’s own gratification at the expense of service, and the pursuit of one’s own happiness at the expense of the health of the larger community. . . . The same secular cultures of modernity that often allow the preservation of free thought and intellectual exploration have also made it impossible to control pornography, sexual deviance, moral relativism, official graft, exploitation, and nihilism that destroy families, communities and nations.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 311-12.

<sup>18</sup>Rodrigo Tano, “Towards an Evangelical Asian Theology,” in Ken Gnanakan, ed., *Biblical Theology in Asia*, 62.

<sup>19</sup>Joint Consultation, in Gnanakan, 313-14.

Spiritual values are beginning to dissipate in the emergence of humanistic tendencies as brought about by modernity. Such humanistic tendencies pave the way for relativism, the denial of objective truth.

Such an alarming situation should challenge theological education proffered in seminaries to magnify Christ as the answer to the problem of secularity. We should affirm that “the presence of God in Jesus Christ reveals the banality, triviality, and hollowness of modern materialistic societies which have lost the capacity to sense the presence of God”<sup>20</sup>

### 3. Impoverishment and Empowerment

Unjust political structures, inequality of economic opportunities, and neo-colonialism breed impoverishment of the people of Asia. The need for an education that focuses upon people empowerment is needed. If transformation of the society is to be made possible, a rife support for liberating the people from the bondage of powerlessness is to be done by the most peaceful, non-violent, and loving means. Empowerment should be seen in partnership with salvation.

The Asian Report on Socio-economic and Political Realities to the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) among others underscored the following:

(1) There is the continuing reality of the scandalous and pervasive poverty and misery in which masses of people live in each country alongside the abominable luxury and opulence which a relatively small number of people enjoy.

(2) There are countries in which economic growth has been quite slow with overly large poverty-stricken portions of their population.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 315.



In both the Philippines and Bangladesh, for example, rough estimates show 80 percent of the people living below the poverty level.

(3) There is the continuing control of the economies of Asian countries by imperialistic powers, e.g. the United States, principally through the operation of transnational capital and the intensified incursion of multinational corporations.<sup>21</sup>

Samuel Rayan commented that there are three modes of awareness and interpretation of poverty which also have correspond-ing responses:

(1) Poverty is natural, assigned by fate, or willed by God. The response is that it cannot be abolished. All that is needed to be done is to alleviate the sufferings of others by giving aid or alms. This is called *the spirituality of relief*.

(2) Poverty is a product of failing to bring about revolutions in thought, philosophy, technology, and social organization. The response to this grips upon modernization by following the West, like accumulating capital, and moving towards industrialization. This is called *the spirituality of reform*.

(3) Poverty is brought about by the work of nature, fate, and providence. The response here is to respond via changing the system, dismantling the structures of exploitation, decolonizing our minds, and redefining life's ways and goals. This is called *the spirituality of liberation*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>K. C. Abraham, ed., *Third World Theologies: Commonalities and Divergences* (New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 4.

<sup>22</sup>Samuel Rayan, "The Search for an Asian Spirituality of Liberation," in Virginia Fabella, Peter Lee, and David Kwang-sun Suh, *Asian Christian Spirituality* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992), 27-28.

For Rayan, the spirituality of liberation should be the best option for Christians. In his words, “The spirituality of liberation works for radical change in the setup of human existence and relationships. The criterion for change is the promise that change carries, finer humanity, and new earth.”<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. Governments and God’s Sovereignty

In the context where the political situations are unstable, where strikes, violent demonstrations, and armed conflict frequently occur, themes and issues that revolve around relationship between government and the Christian become meaningful. Generally, government should be seen as God’s vehicle of “rule over the affairs of men.” However, once government does not do its basic functions, like (1) preserving order and stability, (2) restraining and punishing of evil, (3) rewarding good, and (4) promoting social justice and welfare and, therefore, becomes corrupt, cruel and unjust, one is then faced with the issue of giving a Christian response. What then should the Christians (or church leaders) do? Should they resist and work to change their world? When governments become violators of the justice of God, should Christians participate in changing them? If ever church leaders or ministers participate, how and to what extent?

Tano observes that not all “revolution and radical violent change in political order” may result in justice. It may in fact bring worse forms of bondage and tyranny. It could trigger a series of counter-revolutionary actions and reactions. The Christian response should be to “join all men of good will in exposing exploitation, in support of just legislation, in opposing ideologies that encourage the wrong use of power.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

## **B. The Component of Conscientization**

I have been drawn to an educational philosophy of a Brazilian educator who just died a couple of years ago. He is author of the book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Dr. Paulo Freire had a doctorate in education and quite a number of honorary doctorates given by renowned universities both in the First and the Third Worlds. In education, he popularized the term “conscientization,” which means “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.”<sup>25</sup> Its equivalent term in Christian Education and Theology courses is the word “praxis.” Praxis is composed of two distinct elements: action and reflection. For Freire, action and reflection are not dichotomized. This means that education, for him, aims at raising consciousness by critical analysis of the sphere of existence and the forging of resolute action toward transforming that same reality.

As a method, conscientization unveils the reality by problem-posing. Students are posed with problems found in their sphere of existence, the daily problems they encounter. Then a critical reflection follows. In this stage, the students struggle, agonize over, and define the answers. This is followed by the formulation of committed action.

In his article, “A Social Theory of Religious Education,” Allen Moore categorizes one method of education as “lifestyle education.” Building upon Freire's statement on conscientization, Moore says that “Lifestyle education serves to bring persons to an awareness of the value statement they make by their way of life . . . the goal is to transform cultural contradiction in order that a synthesis between what people believe and do may take place.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1997), Preface.

<sup>26</sup>Allen Moore, ed., *Religious Education as Social Transformation* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1989), 25.

A conscientizing Christian education orients learners to their world, encourages them to have visions not only for themselves, but for their society as well. This education as lifestyle education creates an opportunity where personality and religious transformation are united with social transformation, and personal morality with social ethics.<sup>27</sup> Is this not the vision of Wesleyan social holiness? Is this not the doctrine of loving God and loving our fellow humans? Wesley even defined sanctification in one of his journals as “a continued course of good work.”<sup>28</sup> Marquadt comments, “Wesley accomplished a dual end: he prompted others to recognize social problems as early as possible and to investigate them all the way to their underlying causes, while he made it clear that analyses alone do not signify a solution until the necessary practical consequences are drawn from them.”<sup>29</sup>

Robert Pazmino gave the following commendations, among others, on Freire’s method of education based on conscientization: (1) it emphasizes a service-oriented salvation and education; and (2) it takes seriously the need to demonstrate an incarnational theology, one that is lived out. It seeks to relate faith to life.<sup>30</sup>

### **C. The Component of Constructive Collaboration**

In a multi-cultural context, there is a need for collaborative learning which is constructive. What usually comes to mind when confronted by the concept, “collaborative method,” is the small group

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>28</sup>Manfred Marquadt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics: Praxis and Principles* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 98.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>30</sup>Robert Pazmino, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988).

method of partnering students and allowing a learning partnership, exchanging of notes and ideas through journaling, or saying something to somebody with a call for response. But what is meant here is expressed by Paulo Freire's word, "co-intentional learning." This is a situation where the student and the teacher join together in a mutual inquiry. This is a dialogical, educational process where

the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but the one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.<sup>31</sup>

That is almost shocking to hear from a man who has had broad experience in education, and writing about his experience with the illiterate poor farmers and urban poor illiterates in a third-world country. What do educators learn from those who are several steps down the line. The teacher stops being a depositor and parent and starts to become a dialoguer. In non-dialogical education, the teacher talks and the students listen meekly; the teacher chooses and enforces his or her choice, and the students comply; the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it.<sup>32</sup>

Collaborative education puts emphasis on the students' responsibility to cultivate a culture of active participation in the process of their education. In a multi-cultural setting like ours, the teacher and even the class may have difficulty defining the real world of the students. It may take years of serious study about and within the culture of the students. But this could be done if the students bring the

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<sup>31</sup>Freire, 60.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

world into the class and discuss how that world may be transformed through the grace of God.

### **Conclusion**

We have something to do at APNTS. We are helping in the training of men and women who will become church leaders, theologians, and teachers. They are the very key to the evangelization of the remaining 97 percent of the 66 percent of the world's population. If they are educated enough, they can have a part in that noble task. These men and women may include you, your classmate, or your professor.

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# THE JOURNEY OF ONE MISSIOLOGIST

Robert C. Donahue

*An Induction Address Delivered on March 7, 2000*

## Introduction

I believe the practice of missions is crucially influenced by our attitudes. Godly attitudes of the heart are vitally important for effective missions. Christians must confront their racism, prejudices, and paternalistic attitudes if the peoples of the world are to hear and receive effectively the gospel. Billy Graham has said: "Racial and ethnic hostility is the foremost social problem facing our world today . . . our world seems caught up in a tidal wave of racial and ethnic tension. This hostility threatens the very foundations of modern society."<sup>1</sup> It also threatens the integrity of the world missionary enterprise.

Today nationals often resent paternalism from well-meaning missionaries. Many Christians refuse to worship with those different from themselves. Today, Christians even kill Christians in places like Nagaland and Manipur in India.

A change of heart is essential to eliminating our sinful attitudes. To say that a change of heart is the answer alone is not complete. The heart change must produce a change in the outer social structures if it

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<sup>1</sup>Billy Graham, "Racism and the Evangelical Church," *Christianity Today* 37 (11): 27.

is to be of real value. Heart change must bring about a change in the ways we relate and act toward one another.<sup>2</sup>

The love ethic of Christ transcends every culture and every personal situation and in so doing, produces right relationships and peace. The true love ethic of Christ is the greatest contributor to effective missionary endeavor. “Dr. E. Stanley Jones once asked Mahatma Gandhi, ‘What can we Christians do to help India?’ Without hesitation Gandhi replied, ‘Live like Jesus lived. Don’t adulterate or tone down your religion. Make love central.’”<sup>3</sup>

“Notwithstanding the high ideals and clear teachings of the equality of man and the unity of the body of Christ, the Church has not infrequently stood self-condemned as a result of her racial attitudes that have closed the doors of the Kingdom of God to the souls of men.”<sup>4</sup> Often prejudiced behaviors have resulted due to neglect or indifference, but with unresolved fear, hostility, or pride in the background. Tony Evans reminds us that “the net result of this benign neglect is that the gospel is either hindered or rejected, as people view as untenable a message that seems to have little effect on how people relate to their neighbors. This leaves the Christian community with a theologically accurate message but an empirically deficient model.”<sup>5</sup> This deficient model can often be seen in the practice of missions.

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<sup>2</sup>Waldo Beach, *Christian Community and American Society* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), 166.

<sup>3</sup>John T. Seamands, *Tell It Well: Communicating the Gospel Across Cultures* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1981), 56.

<sup>4</sup>Charles W. Carter and Ralph Earle, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 145.

<sup>5</sup>Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice, *More Than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 8.



It is sad, but true, that conservative evangelicals who take their Bibles seriously are the very ones who tend to be more racist than their more liberal counter parts. This certainly includes holiness church groups which teach and profess a high state of Christian living. Sociologist Rokeach declared, “My research reveals that the more conservative one’s theology is, the more bigoted and prejudiced one is likely to be.”<sup>6</sup>

Gordon Allport’s research discovered that increased bigotry and prejudice among theological conservatives is true only of what he termed “extrinsic” conservative church people. This part of the evangelical church is most interested in religious comfort, getting things, rules, and outward appearances. According to Allport, “intrinsic” conservative Christians manifest interest in challenges, giving, people, and inward condition. Allport adds that intrinsic conservative Christians tend to be far less prejudiced.<sup>7</sup>

It is the condition of the “heart” which is all-important. The Bible says, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov 23:7b). Jesus indicated that the issues of life flow out of the inner being of a person. Those who emphasize outward conduct will run the risk of becoming preoccupied with rules and regulations, and may well miss the vital importance of the inward attitudes and dispositions.

J. Herbert Gilmore comments, “There is too much ‘cultural Christianity’ these days. Such Christianity is respectable, decent, lovely, indulgent, and sentimental, but is as weak and ineffective as

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<sup>6</sup>Jerry L. Appleby, *Missions Have Come Home to America* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1986), 55.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

adolescent daydreams.”<sup>8</sup> Culture may modify the mode of expression of the Christian ethic, but it must not modify its essence. Christ is the one who can change our cultures at their points of failure.

## Definitions

### ***Mission***

In biblical and theological terms, “mission” means “sending.” It refers to the *missio Dei* or “mission of God” who desires all people to be saved and come to the truth. God sent His only Son to make provision for this salvation on the cross and through the resurrection. The Father and Son have sent the Holy Spirit to empower the believers in the mission of taking the gospel to others.

The understanding of mission is rooted in the promise of God to Abraham. God’s promise to Abraham was, “And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen 12:3b). The purpose of God’s call to Abraham is that God might bless all peoples of the earth. “The call of Abraham . . . is the beginning of the restoration of the lost unity of mankind . . . the history of Israel is only to be understood from the unsolved problem of the relation of God to the nations.”<sup>9</sup>

The completion of the promise was not to be realized in the Old Testament period. G. Ernest Wright has noted, “Yet at the end of the Old Testament the chosen nation was still looking forward to the completion of the promise. The Christian Church understood that

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<sup>8</sup>J. Herbert Gilmore, *When Love Prevails* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 68.

<sup>9</sup>Johannes Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 19.

only in Christ was the covenant fulfilled.”<sup>10</sup> In the New Testament Paul refers to this passage to argue that God preached the gospel to Abraham, thus foreshadowing justification of the Gentiles by faith. Paul equates the gospel with the promise of blessing all nations through Abraham (Gal 3:8). “Indeed, world-wide blessing was the whole purpose of the . . . promise . . . .”<sup>11</sup>

## **Missions**

*Missions* is a term that generally refers to the world missionary activities both through the churches and para-church organizations. It is a word that means the Christian witness in other lands. It has been in use especially in Protestant circles in the past two hundred years, although Roman Catholics made use of the word earlier. The term can also be used in the plural form to mean organizations involved in mission.

There is a tendency to use *mission* instead of *missions* in ecumenical circles. Some consider *missions* to be associated with an older, outdated paradigm which carries the baggage of colonialism, individualism, and Western theology. However, the terms are often used interchangeably.

## **Missiology**

Most people cannot define *missiology*. Even most dictionaries, even theological dictionaries, do not define *missiology*. My computer spell checker does not even recognize the word! What is *missiology*?

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<sup>10</sup>G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, *Christian Scholarship Interprets the Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957).

<sup>11</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books; published by Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 86.

Paul Orjala defines the word as such: “*Missiology* is the scholarly discipline which studies and delineates the whole field of mission and missions from the biblical, theological, and historical perspectives with additional relevant input from the social sciences.”<sup>12</sup> Missiology is grounded in an understanding of the biblical text. It draws from the findings of theology. It takes into account historical perspectives. The work of anthropology and sociology is taken seriously. The Bible, however, is the foundational source and authority for both understanding and doing mission. Missiology can be viewed as the integrative discipline of the theological college or seminary.

### **Early Impressions**

An awareness of missions came relatively early in my Christian life. My home church was blessed with the regular visits of missionaries of the Church of the Nazarene. My pastor, Eugene Culbertson, and his wife had prepared to go to China. They were not able to go, but they imparted a love for the people of China and for missions in the heart of an eleven year old boy. The heartbeat of the church for the world was emphasized with visits from leaders like Dr. Hardy C. Powers and Louise Robinson Chapman. Campmeetings and other district gatherings featured missionaries like Prescott Beals, Dr. and Mrs. Earl Lee from India, Joseph Penn, Sr., Dr. and Mrs. Bob Jackson from Africa, and the Wesches from China.

Foreign missions were impressed upon me as a young person. As a young teenager I sent missionary boxes to Post Office Box 14 in Baguio City, Republic of the Philippines, and joined the first teen chapter of the missionary society at our local church. But cross-cultural missions in the United States was to form my primary

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<sup>12</sup>Richard S. Taylor, editor, *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983), 340.

experiences. This began with leaving home at eighteen and traveling almost 2,500 miles across the United States to the Deep South.

My home community consisted mostly of people of similar ethnic and racial backgrounds. My college days were spent at a segregated, fundamentalist university in the South during the height of the civil rights movement and desegregation. The grace of God worked in my life to help me meet people and to have experiences that created a sensitivity to people of other ethnic backgrounds, races, and languages. I am thankful to God for his patience with me. I am hopeful for others caught up in the ethnocentrism, racism, and classism of our times.

Believers in Jesus Christ are called to a ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation is at the heart of our mission (Col 1:19-20). Reconciliation is possible through the Christian community. Ethnic, class, and racial reconciliation could unleash an unprecedented wave of revival, evangelism, and missionary activity.

### **Recognition of a Need**

As a college freshman I was invited by a college friend to go with him into the city to conduct a Bible study class for children. The children were African American. Their community was over one hundred years old. Most of the families had lived in the community for generations. The small group of children I met that day in the home of our Black hostess began much of my education in understanding the essence of mission. Eventually I became very involved in ministering in the Black community. Some close friendships developed during my ministry in that community.

### **Mentors**

I believe effective missionaries have mentors and become mentors themselves. It has been my privilege to have had some outstanding mentors, including Pastors Eugene Culbertson, William Russell, Dr.

Al Jones, and later Dr. Donald D. Owens. Another very precious mentor was Dr. John Henry Smith.

Rev. Dr. Smith was over eighty years old at the time we met when I was nineteen. One Sunday afternoon Dr. Smith invited me to be his guest at the homecoming day at his boyhood church. It was a large, country church miles from any town. The church was full when we arrived. Dr. Smith was the special speaker for the homecoming. Dr. Smith spoke for seventy minutes with the vigor and fire of a twenty-five-year old! After dinner on the grounds, Dr. Smith took me aside and told me a little about the church and his conversion to Christ as a boy. He told me about his parents who were born in slavery. Their graves were nearby in the church yard. I will never forget the tenderness of those moments he shared of his family's life. He went off by himself to meditate and pray beside his parents' graves. It was a moving experience for a young fellow nearly out of his teens to catch a little bit of the depth of "soul" of a people whose experience I did not really know.

Dr. Smith asked me to help serve communion with the deacons. Two or three of the deacons objected strenuously afterwards because they resented a White person having this kind of position in the church. Dr. Smith simply told them it was not God's way of thinking and besides, I was one of God's children, too. His own kind and loving example spoke more than any words.

### **The Need Within the Church**

At Nazarene Theological Seminary I saw within my own denomination the impediment of racism in spreading the gospel. Shortly after arriving at seminary, I was asked to take a staff position at a large and respected church. The church was almost entirely White in membership. I seriously considered taking the position. However,

I was asked to specifically exclude Blacks from certain programs of the church. I made the decision to decline the staff position. I felt especially keen about doing this since our denomination had already made a strong anti-racism statement. The statements for public consumption did not seem to always match the practice. It was this decision which led me to work with a Black congregation and a mixed race congregation during seminary.

“Ministers must teach that God does make a difference in our lives when we are converted. The Holy Spirit at work in us can permeate to the deepest attitudinal levels. However, we must realize that prejudice (though built on sinful attitudes) is taught largely by culture.”<sup>13</sup>

God does not necessarily destroy cultures, but he refines them and filters out the elements of hostility, animosity, and hatred which have penetrated them all. We must not stop here as though sinful culture is some insurmountable obstacle beyond the power of the Holy Spirit. For too long many have spoken and acted as if this were true. Even some who have professed a sanctified life have excused racism and ethnic hostility on cultural grounds rather than yielding these areas to the transforming power of God, and rather than personally entering into the ministry of reconciliation committed to believers by Christ. The truth is that Christ not only justifies the believer through faith, but through the Holy Spirit Christ also sanctifies the believer through faith. The Christ-like life, the holy life, is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. This sanctification is both the privilege and the obligation of every believer.

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<sup>13</sup>Appleby, 55.

## Significance of Mission

According to William A. Dyrness, Emil Brunner writes that the Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning. “Mission is not merely an application of theology—something we teach our students after they have learned theology . . . But mission lies at the core of theology—within the character and action of God himself.”<sup>14</sup>

Mission must be driven by the dynamic of the love of God put in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Respect and love should characterize our every attitude . . . This love is more than just our puny, finite love. . . . It is the divine . . . love of Christ operating with us and flowing through us into the lives of others. This sort of love is not natural to us, neither can it be self-generated. It has to be received as a gift from God and poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us (Rom 5:5).<sup>15</sup>

Mission is the application of the Word in obedience to God in fulfilling both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. To love God supremely and our neighbor is to be expressed and taught in the fulfilling of the Great Commission to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach the things commanded by Christ. “In biblical mission we are doing theology.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>William A. Dyrness, *Let The Earth Rejoice!: A Biblical Theology of Holistic Mission* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1983), 11.

<sup>15</sup>Seamands, 56.

<sup>16</sup>Dyrness, 11.



At best, the next generation will probably find very little encouragement for real faith in a managed and engineered church; and, at worst, our use of modern methods and techniques will simply confirm the suspicion that the church is really not fundamentally different from other humanly-constructed organizations . . . . [W]e have contributed—albeit unwittingly and unintentionally—to the erosion of the church’s primary mission in the world, which is simply to bear witness to Immanuel, God with us.<sup>17</sup>

Our natural tendencies are toward selfishness, toward zones of cultural comfort, toward ethnocentrism. “My nationality, my ethnic group first and foremost” is often how we really feel and act. It is easy to follow the homogeneous principle of ministering to and preferring only people who are like us. We Christians are called to something more. Christ has called us to join Him in making a new humanity in Himself (Col 3:9-17)!

The Christian church should have no barriers of nationality, race, education level, social standing, wealth, gender, religion, or power. Christ breaks down all barriers and accepts all people . . . Nothing should keep us from telling others about Christ or accepting into our fellowship any and all believers . . . Christians should be building bridges, not walls.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Craig M. Gay, “Evangelicals and the Language of Technology,” *Crux* 31 (1995): 32-40, as quoted in: Dennis W. Hiebert, “The McDonaldization of Protestant Organizations,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 29:2 (1999): 261.

<sup>18</sup>Bruce B. Barton, general editor, *Life Application Bible: New International Version* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 2166.

## Who Are the Missionaries?

There is some debate over just who are the missionaries. In Protestant organizations, until recently the term has applied primarily to those who were involved in the preaching-teaching-evangelism ministry and particularly in church planting. There is ample evidence for this usage in the New Testament. Now there is a tendency to apply the term to a broad spectrum of persons who may not be involved in any way in preaching-teaching-evangelism or church planting. These persons may be administrators, academics, main-tenance engineers, secretaries or accountants.

Where is the NT term for *missionary*? It may be found in the word *apostolos* which means “one who is sent or commissioned to deliver a message.” The term is used in both the Greek and Roman churches to this day to describe those engaged in missionary activity. Kirsopp Lake states that there are two usages of *apostolos* in the NT: one limited in reference to the Twelve in certain contexts, and another used in the sense of a Christian missionary.<sup>19</sup>

There may be a broader understanding of missionary. It is found in the concept stated by Peter: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pet 2:9, NIV). This passage implies no special order of persons for declaring the message of God. Here is a call for all believers to be equally employed in such declaration—so-called clergy and laity alike. Christians are all engaged in carrying out the ministry of reconciliation which is the bedrock of the mission (2 Cor 5:18).

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<sup>19</sup>As cited by Taylor, 341.

Those who proclaim the message of Christ for salvation certainly participate in the mission of God (Rom 10:9-15). Jesus commanded the disciples to pray specifically for “laborers” in the harvest. These laborers surely are believers who participate in the great mission of God to reconcile the world unto Himself.

All believers are called to participate in mission, though each believer will have a specific function within the scope of spiritual gifts. “Missionaries” could be understood as meaning every believer, but that does not seem to be the case in the New Testament. Biblically, the term should probably be reserved for those who are engaged specifically in the preaching-teaching-evangelism and church planting type of ministries. All believers, however, participate in the mission of Christ but may have other specific designations.

## **Issues for Missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

### ***Theological Education***

Theological education has tended to be driven by systematic theology. Systematics has been limited in both asking the questions and proposing adequate answers to those questions. This is seen in Asia where “theological education . . . has been dominated by the West.”<sup>20</sup>

In Asia, Western systematic theology has not given much support to understanding the spirit worldview. Therefore, such a view and the questions that arise from it often have been dismissed or trivialized. Serious interaction would tend to take place if missiology were treated as the integrative discipline within the theological seminary. Biblical

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<sup>20</sup>Lee C. Wanak, “Theological Education and the Role of Teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Look at the Asia Pacific Region,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 2:1 (March 2000): 3.

theology would take its rightful place of prominence in theological education. Missiology understands that good theology must arise from a direct grappling with the text of Scripture and a direct application and interplay with the questions from both the worldview and the text. The Scriptural text more adequately addresses the various life concerns and worldviews of the various peoples of the world than does Western and Western-informed systematics.

Theological education must capture the mission essence of the church. It must become a leading factor in the doing of mission. Donald Hoke has proposed that all theological curricula in Asia be re-oriented to the end that every worker is “inner-directed toward aggressive evangelism, church planting and growth, and cross-cultural missions.”<sup>21</sup>

It is necessary for the theological seminary to become a working partner with the churches in theological education. No longer should curricula be formulated solely by the theological faculty. “At every level of design and operation our programmes must be visibly determined by a close attentiveness to the needs and expectations of the Christian community we serve.”<sup>22</sup>

## **Young Churches**

“Young churches” is simply a phrase used for the newer churches started by the missionary work of the Western churches. For too long these younger churches were treated as immature and incapable of

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<sup>21</sup>Donald E. Hoke, *The Church in Asia* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 42.

<sup>22</sup>“Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education,” 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE), 1990. The first edition was published in *Theological Education Today*, 16:2 (April-June 1984):1-6; and *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 8:1 (April 1984):136-43. This second edition includes minor changes and a revised preface.

managing their own affairs. This was a reflection of the colonialism and paternalism practiced by Western nations. Even with the early emphasis of the “three-self’s” movement, there was often little consideration given to relinquishing ultimate control of the churches in “foreign lands.” Western personnel tended to remain in control, and Western mission boards tended to retain a system of financial dependence. The mainline churches associated with the World Council of Churches moved away from this type of relationship by about mid-twentieth century. These “mission field” churches assumed an equal status with the Western churches, at least administratively.

“The younger churches refuse to be dictated to and are putting a high premium on their ‘autonomy.’”<sup>23</sup> However, many evangelical churches and mission groups have attempted to maintain both administrative and financial controls over the younger churches. This has led to tension between the nationals and the foreign mission board representatives. The paradigm is defended upon some of the same grounds that multi-national corporations operate. This is doing missions in a “McDonaldized” mode—utilizing globalization with Western controls but making certain cosmetic local alternations for local consumption. This is known as “glocalization.”

McDonaldization of the missionary enterprise has been called “McWorld.” This paradigm is competing with a hyper-fundamentalism which wants to destroy the whole idea of globalization as practiced by “McWorld.”

Jihad is the holy struggle or ‘centrifugal whirlwind’ of parochial retribalization, whereas McWorld is the “centripetal black hole” of global homogenization. Both possible futures are bleak. McWorld breaks down national borders, tying everyone together

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<sup>23</sup>David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 4.

with technology, ecology, communications, and commerce, while simultaneously eroding community, identity, and independence. McWorld does not require social justice and equality, only orderly universalizing markets for standardized goods.<sup>24</sup>

World missions is caught up in this struggle today. The choice is not between a hyper-fundamentalism which wants to “retribalize” the world, and an insensitive McWorld approach which retains controls in the West and gives scant regard to social justice and equality. There is a third choice. Genuine brotherly partnership based upon the reconciliation of God in Christ is the biblical alternative for Christian believers. It is an alternative which we often have been slow and reluctant to choose.

One of the key reasons for our slow response to engage in a genuine partnership based in equality is because of the attitudes that have pervaded especially the evangelical and holiness circles. While professing very high ideals, we have too often come far short of those ideals. The late W. T. Purkiser spoke for Nazarenes some years ago: “Honesty compels admission that the sin of snobbery is almost universal in the Church today . . . Dr. P. F. Bresee . . . felt his former denomination was too committed to seeking the upper middle class . . . It is the poor who are neglected. James shows no hesitation in naming this kind of discrimination evil.”<sup>25</sup> The attitude of snobbery affects how we do missions and to whom we aim our missionary work. It affects adversely how we treat our brothers and sisters in other ethnic groups and in other lands.

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<sup>24</sup>Hiebert, 261.

<sup>25</sup>W. T. Purkiser, *Beacon Bible Expositions: Hebrews, James, Peter*, Volume 11; series edited by William M Greathouse and Willard H. Taylor (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1974), 142.

James urges us not to engage in favoritism in our dealings with one another (James 2:1-4, 8-9). If we regard people in this way, we are doing wrong. Love of neighbor is in sharp contrast to a position of favoritism, prejudice or racism. Our practice of missions must be without this kind of attitude.

### **Conclusion**

Missions was my major subject at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Dr. Donald D. Owens, missionary to Korea, was my mentor. His enthusiasm for missions and love for the Lord inspired me to study. Dr. Owens' specialty was anthropology. I was able to concentrate my studies in anthropology to inform my understanding of missions. It was Dr. Owens who challenged me, and several other classmates, to earn doctorates and join him in teaching at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary!

For thirteen years I accepted an assignment in what became a multiethnic ministry in the western United States. I understood this ministry as a missionary assignment. Our general church has only recently begun to assign official missionaries in the United States. Missionary work is not necessarily geographically based. Our mission truly encompasses the peoples of the world. It is encouraging to see our church come to this understanding of missions encompassing the whole world.

Ministry was possible with people from many ethnic backgrounds from all over the world: Navajo (the largest Native American group), Mexican, Laotian, Hmong, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Iranian, Samoan, Tongan, African American, Lebanese, German and Dutch. We formed a lasting friendship with the Her family from a Thailand refugee camp—Hmong people from the mountains of Laos. There were precious young people—a young Lao named Bounmi who lived with our family for some time, and Konchai who was a delightful Christian young man also from Laos. A young teenage girl from Southeast Asia became a vibrant Christian but endured a humiliating

rape and years of sadness. Her faith still shines brightly today as a proud grandmother who is praying that her youngest son will be called by God to take the gospel of Jesus Christ back to their people in Southeast Asia. There was “grandma” Maria de la Luz who was saved when past sixty years old. She used to crawl on her knees to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico to find peace with God. What a testimony of God’s redeeming grace she shared at her baptism before her family and friends!

For nine years we ministered in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. We intentionally sought out people of diverse ethnicities. To all the other ethnic groups were added several different Chinese groups, Russian, Ukrainian, Uzbeki, Afghani, Iraqi, Japanese, Korean, Palestinian, Cape Verdian, Congolese, Columbian, Bahamian, Brazilian, Filipino, Thai, Sikh, Kuki, Naga, and many others. Some of these people became dear friends and workers together in ministry.

Intentionally crossing barriers to reach out to people is still the call for the missionary today. An attitude of intentionality is absolutely necessary. God intentionally committed Himself to us. “God so loved the world that He gave . . .” (John 3:16). “But God commends His love toward us, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). In the story of the Woman of Samaria (John 4:4-42), we are told that Jesus *must* go through Samaria. It was against every Jewish expectation to go through Samaria. Yet He *intended* to do so. He intended to sit at the well, and He intended to speak to a woman of questionable character. He intended to offer her “water springing up unto eternal life.” Jesus broke so many of the Jewish taboos and customs of His day so that He might bring eternal life to a neglected people.

The animosity of Jews toward Samaritans is well known. “Straight Gentile would probably have been easier for Jews to stomach, but a



mixture . . . how detestable!”<sup>26</sup> In the mission of God, Jesus calls us to be molded into members of a new humanity. “As members of ‘His Body, belonging to the single new humanity,’ can His present day followers do less than go where the modern ‘Samaritans’ are, break the taboos upon social intercourse and accept the label?”<sup>27</sup>

Our attitudes have a direct relationship to our true participation in the great missionary enterprise of Jesus Christ. The Lord calls us to intentional ministry in the harvest fields of the world today. There are so many millions today who need to know the transforming and saving power of Christ. The words of the song say, “Send the gospel tidings over land and sea; let the hungry souls be satisfied. Till the power of Jesus sets the captive free, oh, lead them to the Master’s side.”<sup>28</sup>

Let us hear the words of the great New Testament missionary again: “There is no difference between Jew and Greek, because they all have the same Lord, who gives His riches to all who call on Him. Everyone who calls on the Lord’s name will be saved. But how can they call on Him if they haven’t believed in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they haven’t heard Him? How can they hear if no one preaches? How can men preach if they’re not sent? Just as the Bible says: How beautiful is the coming of those who bring good news!”<sup>29</sup> Will you join those who joyfully bring that good news to others?

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<sup>26</sup>Ralph D. Winter and Stephen Hawthorne, editors, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981), 61.

<sup>27</sup>Patrick Sookhdeo, editor, *Jesus Christ: The Only Way* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978), 39.

<sup>28</sup>Haldor Lillenas, “Dusky Hands,” *Glorious Gospel Hymns* (Kansas City: Lillenas Publishing Company, n.d.), 514.

<sup>29</sup>William F. Beck, *The Holy Bible: An American Translation* (New Haven, Missouri: Leader Publishing Company, 1976), 201.

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# LOVING GOD, LOVING EACH OTHER

## *Chapel Theme, 2000-2001*

John M. Nielson

As we involve ourselves in the fulfilling of the Great Commission in our Jerusalems, Judeas, Samarias, and to the end of the earth (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8), it is important that we remember that *the Great Commandment precedes and empowers that Great Commission*. When challenged to choose the greatest commandment, Jesus replied:

The most important one is this:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

The second is this:

Love your neighbor as yourself.

There is no commandment greater than these (Mark 12:29-31).<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, Jesus believed that both concepts had to be combined. Paul said that the whole Law is fulfilled in one word—*love* (Rom 13:10). It is against this background that we have chosen our annual theme that provides a structure for our chapel services and spiritual development: *Loving God, Loving Each Other*.

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<sup>1</sup>Scripture citations are from *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House), 1984.

## Loving God, Loving Each Other

There are eight months of chapels in our school year, and so our theme has an equal number of divisions.

|           |                                      |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| July      | Loving God with all my Mind          |
| August    | Loving God with all my Heart         |
| September | Loving God with all my Soul          |
| October   | Loving God with all my Strength      |
| Advent    | Loving God because He first loved us |
| January   | Loving Others through Relationships  |
| February  | Loving Others through Compassion     |
| March     | Loving Others through Evangelism     |

Woven into these themes will be weeks of special emphasis such as Missions Week, Spiritual Deepening Week, and Compassionate Ministries Week. Love for others is being expressed through our weekly Agape Offerings and in our prayer focus each week for one of the countries of our Region.

We recognize that it is only by LOVING GOD that we can LOVE EACH OTHER and fulfill our campus motto of “**Bridging Cultures for Christ.**” It is the only way that, despite our many differences, we can live together in community within these walls. It is only by LOVING GOD and LOVING EACH OTHER that we can be empowered to transform our learning into ministry, and that we can move beyond these walls with the message of God’s Love. The following are some excerpts from a four-part series of messages on Loving God.

### Loving God with All the Mind

The theme passage for this year is found in each of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; and Luke 10:27) and is based on the *Shema* found in Deuteronomy 6:5. In Mark’s account, Jesus unites the Hebrew and LXX versions. The Greek word translated as “love” is

*agape*. The meaning of the four words, heart, soul, mind, and strength, are not so narrowly defined as to be mutually exclusive, and various scholars interpret them differently, acknowledging that they overlap.

“Mind” includes our thinking ability, intellect, and understanding. John Wesley cared about the mind and reproduced a library of books for the stimulation and academic development of his pastors. The Church of the Nazarene has always taken higher education very seriously. In fact, on the date designated as its founding, there were already colleges and “universities” in many parts of the United States. Our tradition reminds us of the importance of *loving God with our mind*.

### ***Loving God with all the Mind Means –***

- The gospel is not only to be enjoyed; it is to be understood.
- We must add *understanding* to our *knowledge* (Prov 4:7).  
In the parallelism of this verse, the second line goes beyond the first line. We need understanding, not just knowledge. God does not want us simply to learn *how* to re-tell Bible stories. He wants us to understand *what* they mean.
- The mind is not divorced from spirituality; the Gospel is holistic.
- Study can be sacramental: a sacred obligation and an act of obedient, reverent love for God.
- We must learn to think like preachers and theologians.
- We should approach our devotions thoughtfully, and we should approach our studies devotionally.
- We must have a willingness to have our minds changed.

Speaking to students, someone said, “Sometimes, the most spiritual thing you can do is to go to the library and ‘hit the books.’”

**As we begin the school year, I challenge you to love God with all your mind. But don’t lose the simplicity of the Gospel.**

Oh God, I offer You my heart–  
 In many a mystic mood, by beauty led,  
 I give my heart to You. But now impart  
 The sterner grace–to offer You my head. (Anonymous, edited)

### **Loving God with All the Heart**

The first point we have emphasized is that the obedient, effective use of our minds is an act of love toward God and is a spiritual exercise. That truth is balanced by the second emphasis: *loving God with our hearts*, a phrase that includes the concept of the heart as the seat of the emotions and relationship.

#### ***Loving God with all the Heart Means –***

- The Gospel is about *emotion* and *affection* as well as *intellect*. Faith is more than rational assent.
- We must not *agapao* the World (1 John 2:15), or simply *phileo* God (John 21:15). We must not give the world the special, self-giving love (*agapao*) reserved for God, and we must not give God merely the affection (*phileo*) found in the world.
- We must have total devotion to Him—with a level of exclusivity. Loving my wife with all my heart does not exclude loving my mother or my daughter—but it does exclude loving anyone else with the kind of love (marital love) I have for her. In the words of the wedding vows, I have “forsaken all others.” Loving God does not exclude loving my wife, my mother, and my daughter, but it does exclude having any other gods. And I want my wife’s love to be offered, not begged for, to include affection, not just will, to include emotion, not just rationality. And God feels the same way!
- In loving God with our whole minds, we must not neglect the the growth of our hearts.

There are many stories of those whose years in graduate school were spiritually the most “dry” years of their lives—even times of falling away. That danger is always lurking at our door.

**Pray that God will make this year a time of outstanding spiritual growth. Give Him your whole heart. Tell Him you love Him.**

### **Loving God with All the Soul**

For eight years, Janice and I lived just around the corner from the family home of the sixth president of the United States, John Quincy Adams. We visited his grave in the local church where he is buried beside his father, the second President of the USA.

John Quincy Adams served in the congress after his term as president. He was a noted diplomat, serving overseas from the time he was 14. He also fought against slavery. In 1814, he wrote in his diary, “My hopes of a future life are all founded upon the gospel of Jesus Christ.” On his 79th birthday, he again affirmed his deep gratitude to God for all the blessings of life. Weeks before he died, he met a friend on the street who shook his trembling hand and said, “Good morning! And how is John Quincy Adams today?”

He replied, “He himself is quite well, sir, quite well. But the house in which he lives at the present is becoming dilapidated [worn out]. It is tottering upon its foundation. Time and the seasons have almost destroyed it. Its roof is pretty well worn, its walls are much shattered, and it crumbles a little bit more with every wind. The old tenement [apartment] is becoming almost uninhabitable, and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon; but he himself is well, sir, quite well.”<sup>2</sup>

We have an innate understanding that we are more than—and other than—our bodies. There are various interpretations of the meaning of

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<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Peter Kennedy and Lorraine Espinosa, *From Generation to Generation* (Urichsville, Ohio: Barbour Publishing Inc., 1998), 382.

the word translated “soul,” including “life,” “spirit,” and “being,” and there are many discussions about the issues of dichotomy, trichotomy, or the unity of the person. But at the least, we can say that the term *soul* refers to my innermost being—that which makes me to be *me*.

There are a number of relevant scriptures that speak about the soul, including Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalms 103:1-2, 20-22; Ecclesiastes 12:6-7; Matthew 16:24-26; Luke 12:16-21; and Mark 12:28-33. These Scriptures remind us that

- Praise to God must come from the inmost depths of our being.
- There is part of us that eventually goes back to God.
- God sees the deepest recesses of our being.
- The destiny of the soul is more important than the death of the body.
- The real me is priceless.
- Our priorities reveal the condition of our souls and we can be called into account at any moment.

I think John Quincy Adams was expressing all of that.

### ***Loving God with all the Soul Means –***

- Loving Him with the essence of who we are.

It is possible to enjoy God with the mind or the heart—  
but not one without the other.

It is possible to enjoy God with the mind,  
without loving Him with all our inmost being.

It is possible to enjoy God with our emotions,  
without loving Him with all our inmost being.

- Loving Him holistically.

If we love Him at the core, then we cannot have a love that is compartmentalized or is superficial.

If we love Him at the core, then a Christ-like life will flow from the depths of who we are. As Jesus said,

The things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man “unclean.” For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man “unclean” (Matt 15:18-20).

- Loving Him without legalism.

Not outward conformity,  
but inner grace.

Not duty,  
but devotion.

**Today’s question is this: Do you Love God with your inmost being, with what is most truly You? Is it well with your soul?**

### **Loving God with All Our Strength**

We come finally to the fourth concept from the *Shema*—from what Jesus said is the greatest commandment. I must love God with

- All my intellect,
- All my emotions and affection,
- All my inmost being, and
- All my energy and body and effort, with all my physical being.

Commentators observe that “strength” refers to mental and physical energy, possessions, and all the efforts of body and will. If we



are to be sanctified through and through (1 Thes 5:23), and sanctification is all about holy love—then we must Love with Spirit, Soul, and Body.

***Loving God with all your strength means—***

- Giving Him your energy and time.  
You only have so much strength, so much energy, so many hours in a day, and so long to live. To what and to whom will you give that energy? On what will you use up your strength? Do you give Him the best of your energy or the leftovers?
- Giving Him your best effort.  
He was to get the first fruits of the harvest, the firstborn of the herds, and the best of the flock. He was angry when He was offered the castoffs.

We must give our best effort  
To become Godly (character)  
To live out His values (lifestyle)  
To build His kingdom (service).

- Giving Him your body.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your *bodies* as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship (Rom 12:1).

It is clear that Paul meant “body” not just “life.” He underscored that in the following passages from earlier in this epistle:

Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be

your master, because you are not under law, but under grace (Rom 6:13-14).

I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness (Rom 6:19).

Paul made the same point in the analogy of marriage in Ephesians 6:2ff and in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5. And again—"You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Cor 6:20). Does your body belong to God or to yourself? Are the parts of your body used as an expression of your love for God?

If I love God with  
All my body—  
All my energy and time—  
All my Actions and best efforts  
Then, like Paul, I die daily—  
Then I become a "living sacrifice."

We do not have a "private" life that is separate from our "God life." All of our life, all of our beings, and all of our relationships must come under the authority of God and flow from our love of God that is empowered by His love in us.

Part of today's lesson is that "Loving God" takes hard work and all our energy and strength. Ministry will take more than four hours a day or even eight! Your time will be swallowed up in the agendas of others. Your energy will be insufficient to the task.

In the recently completed Sydney Olympic games, how much energy, effort, and strength did the athletes invest in winning a gold medal, a wreath that will not last? Paul knew all about the Olympics

which were played hundreds of years before and after he lived. It was out of that knowledge that he wrote,

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize (1 Cor 9:25-27).

Paul realized that spiritual exercise is as hard as physical exercise. That's why he also wrote,

Train yourself to be godly, for physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come (1 Tim 4:7-9).

**In addition to all that God's grace accomplishes in your life, loving God will demand all of your strength!**

So in these four words, God Himself has declared that He expects us to love Him with all that we are—with heart, soul, mind, and strength—with affection, inmost being, intellect, and energy. We can offer Him nothing less.

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## A WORD TO THE WISE

Floyd T. Cunningham

*A sermon preached in the Chapel of APNTS on July 6, 2000*

Text: I Corinthians 1:17-31; 2:12-16 (Phil 2:1-11)

Helmut Thielicke relates the story of a theological student returning to a Bible study group in which he once played a vital part. A zealous young medical student is enthusiastically seeking truth and life from the Word of God, and poses a question. However, the theological student answers with “paralyzing and unhappy trivialities” that have something to do with Bultmann and the Synoptic Problem, but nothing to do with truth and life. So, Thielicke says, “the muscular strength of a lively young Christian is horribly squeezed to death” by “abstract ideas.”<sup>1</sup> The seminary student used what he had learned in Seminary to diminish others’ faith, rather than to build it up.

Loving God with all of our minds means a willingness to allow him to use what we have learned. Knowledge in itself can be mis-used. Perhaps the Word of God helps us. To the Corinthians, Paul contrasted true wisdom with the world’s “wisdom.”

### I. “Wisdom” and Wisdom (1:17-25)

The so-called “wisdom” of the world is not the wisdom of the gospel. The Corinthians think that there is virtue in “words of human wisdom” (v. 17). They were evaluating the gospel that Paul brought

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<sup>1</sup>Helmut Thielicke. *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*, trans. Charles L. Taylor (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1962), 8.

them by the standards of the “wise,” this world’s scholars and philosophers. Have they forgotten that wisdom must be more than fine sounding words?

For a time, Augustine was a follower of the Manichean orator, Faustus. Crowds followed him everywhere just for the sound of his words. But when Augustine tried to have an intelligent conversation with him over some philosophical issues, he found Faustus shallow, even ignorant. Augustine turned away from him disappointed. His next mentor, the saintly Christian bishop Ambrose, was no orator. He was a plodding and dull speaker. But Augustine found in him depth of insight and profound wisdom, and that is what led the great Augustine into the bosom of the Church. There are many Faustuses today, too few Ambroses.<sup>2</sup>

The Ambroses of the world have surrendered themselves to the cross of Christ rather than to the lure of the crowds. The cross, however, is not a sign of wisdom to the world. The very phrase sounds foolish: is there any “logic” in the Christ dying? To pagan minds, one may have a Savior or a crucifixion, but not both. The words “cross” and “salvation” come crashing against each other in human logic. Should God have consulted us, we would have told him that this violates all wisdom, this plan of salvation. Though the cross is always folly to the wise of the world, there is no wisdom greater to those who follow Christ than the cross.

There was scarcely any “wisdom,” as the world reckons, in God choosing you and me. There were persons of means in the Corinthian church. The city was a place of social mobility. Freed slaves could become respectable and prosperous citizens. But in the church, Paul

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<sup>2</sup>*The Confessions of Augustine*, Book V, chapters 6-7, 13-14.

says, none must forget where they have come from, and who has made them what they are.<sup>3</sup>

Like the Corinthians, not many of us were from influential families or so-called “noble birth.” Most of us, like the Corinthians, were gathered from the weak and lowly. There was no logic or wisdom in God choosing me, who was chosen the “Most Quiet” male for the freshman class of 1973 at Eastern Nazarene College, and whom a fellow student, knowing I was a religion major, discouraged from thinking that God had called into ministry. Unless there was a radical change in my personality, he said, I should give up such notions of ministry.

If we were choosing leaders for the kingdom, we would have chosen a more telegenic group, a bunch of better looking and more intelligent people than we are. It is by sheer grace. It was not because of who we are that we were chosen. Even now, we carry with us “thorns in the flesh” and human weaknesses. As Paul wrote later to the Corinthians, we house the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” in earthen vessels—in jars of clay—so that the excellency of the power might be in God, not in ourselves (2 Cor 4:7).

Some would say, you are wasting your talents by teaching at APNTS; your career will go no where if you go to the Philippines. In reality, without him we would be nothing. Not by our merits, nor for our personality or brains did God choose us. “My mind is not much,” we say when we come to Christ, “but it, along with my heart and soul, is yours to use.” A mind presented to Christ in that way is never wasted.

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<sup>3</sup>Abraham J. Malherbe. *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, second ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 71-79.

## **II. Boasting . . . in the Lord (1:26-36)**

The Corinthians have been boasting about their “wisdom,” and tending to forget the limitations of it.

Theological study has an almost unavoidable tendency to produce vanity: a kind of gnostic pride that covers our spiritual insecurity. It leads some to suppose that there is a theological elite with more knowledge than the “theological proletariat,” and to demean or ridicule those who have never even heard of John Wesley or Karl Barth, who cannot even pronounce “soteriology” and “eschatology”—much less explain what they mean! Theological education sometimes breeds this kind of arrogance. Often there is a lapse between a theological student’s intellectual growth and his or her spiritual growth. I talked with a student just graduating from a Seminary in the US. He confessed that he was spiritually weaker than he had ever been in his life. I remember feeling the same way.

We are anything but worthy of being preachers and teachers if we are spiritually down and intellectually arrogant. Helmut Thielicke advises seminary students not to preach or teach until after they graduate (perhaps partly because they are too fond of quoting obscure German theologians like Helmut Thielicke). There is danger in being unleashed into local churches rattling obscure words of English or Greek theological vocabulary. Why do we do so? To impress more than to bless, I am afraid.

Theological students must not forget their obligation to the church to communicate the gospel plainly and lovingly. We need to be humble enough to receive spiritual wisdom from common laypersons—uneducated in theology and lowly in the eyes of the world—whose walk with the Lord has been long and close. Their wisdom and spiritual depth cannot come through three years in a theological seminary. They are his saints, and they must be our—yes our—spiritual mentors and teachers when we enter pastorates. Else,

we are truly fools. We must not forget that the church is our “pastor”—and that we too, need a pastor.

In our attempt to impress others we neglect love. If we use our learning to stifle sincere faith, we neglect love. No wonder some are suspicious of theological study if it is prone to dampen spiritual enthusiasm and ardor. In a setting here in Asia I was proudly remarking how many of our faculty members have earned doctorates. A church leader remarked later in the conversation: “What good are PhDs if they cannot lead men and women to faith in Christ?” In a subtle way, the remark chastised me. I may have needed chastising.

The spirit must be mature as well as the mind. It is tragic if it never becomes so. We have known people like that—brilliant in mind, but useless to the kingdom. Others, not so brilliant, year after year have blessed ministries.

Remember (v. 24) that it is Christ who is the wisdom and power of God. He is the final Word. In his Kingdom that is to come, there is no Christian elite based on theological education. What matters is that we love the Lord our God and our neighbors as ourselves. Love requires no seminary degree. It is tragic if instead of nourishing love, theological education starves it, if instead of helping us to connect with people it separates us from them. Love is destroyed when we have to show others how smart we are. As students and even as faculty members we are too prone to this, rejoicing too little in the accomplishments of others and boasting about ourselves.

The gospel reminds us that whatever we are comes by grace: “God has eliminated every human pretension and all self-sufficiency.”<sup>4</sup> Christ alone is our righteousness, holiness and redemption. He is our righteousness since we cannot perfectly keep the law, and he writes the law within our hearts. He alone is our holiness since we are not

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<sup>4</sup>Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 84; 63-88, 112-20.



unblemished offerings, and he both sanctifies us and calls us to be holy (1:2) like him. He alone is our redemption, for without Him we are but slaves to sin, and he demands that we also be crucified with him.

### **III. The Crucified Mind (2:12-16)**

To say we have the mind of Christ is to say that we have a crucified mind. That is a truly consecrated mind set on knowing Christ. It is a teachable mind. It is a mind set free from selfish interests and desires. It is a mind directed fully toward God and toward others. That requires teachability. Sometimes students come to APNTS believing that they already have all of the answers. They just want a degree. It is difficult for a teacher to break through that type of intellectual arrogance.

It is not arrogance to believe that God wants to sanctify and use our minds. Later in this letter, Paul tells the Corinthians that when he prays he prays with his mind as well as his spirit, and that when he sings he sings with his mind as well as his spirit (14:15). God does not bypass our minds when he speaks to us or speaks through us. Our minds are precisely where God speaks to us using the “language” of Christ.

Our minds are surrendered to Christ for the sake of others. That means allowing Him to teach us what otherwise we could never understand, and allowing our thoughts and words to be vehicles of grace for others. That is our goal: by our actions and by our words to make plain the gospel. We must know the doctrine of the trinity well enough to defend it before Moslems, but also well enough to explain it to third-graders. Usable preachers and teachers (and the ones who best understand what they are trying to preach and teach) are able to convey deep truths plainly to common and simple men and women. Kosuke Koyama, who served as a missionary from Japan to Thailand, “decided that the greatness of theological works is to be judged by the extent and quality of the service they can render to the farmers” to whom he was sent. He wrote: “I also decided that I have

not really understood *Summa Theologiae* and Church Dogmatics until I am able to use them for the benefit of the farmers. . . . I dare to give priority to the farmers over Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth in my theological thinking.”<sup>5</sup> The “crucified mind” is necessary for conveying the gospel. We must be constantly ready to crucify our urges to display our erudition, and instead, to humble our minds for the sake of both learning and building up the community of faith.

#### IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, a prayer of St. Anselm may help us to center on the connection between the “wisdom” of the world and true wisdom, which comes through belief.<sup>6</sup>

*I confess, Lord, with thanksgiving that you have made me in your image,  
so that I can remember you, think of you, and love you.  
But the image is so worn and blotted out by faults,  
so darkened by the smoke of sin,  
that it cannot do that for which it was made, unless you renew and refashion it.  
Lord, I am not trying to make my way to your height,  
for my understanding is in no way equal to that,  
but I do desire to understand a little of your truth which my heart already  
believes and loves.  
I do not seek to understand so that I may believe;  
But I believe so that I may understand;  
and what is more, I believe that unless I do believe I shall not understand.  
Amen.*

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<sup>5</sup>Kosuke Koyama, *Waterbuffalo Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1974), viii.

<sup>6</sup>*The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*, trans. Benedicta Ward (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), 243-44.

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# **JESUS AND THE SINFUL WOMAN**

## **A Sermon on Luke 7:36-50**

Christi-An Clifford Bennett

*A sermon preached in the Chapel of APNTS on September 28, 2000*

As far as anyone knew Simon had always been a good man. He had studied the Scriptures and the rabbinical writings carefully. He had attended synagogue every Sabbath and had gone to Jerusalem to present sacrifices every festival day. Simon had meticulously tithed his produce to the Lord, right down to the smallest herbs in his garden. He had been careful to maintain a good public image, to model a life of law-keeping to the community. Simon sat on the synagogue board and gave moral leadership to his community. Simon was proud of his efforts. Surely God was proud of him, too. Simon felt no shame; he could hold his head high in any company.

When this new prophet, Jesus, came to town, He intrigued Simon. Jesus seemed so common, and yet He spoke with such authority. He was a simple carpenter's son, and yet He taught like the most learned rabbi. Simon was intrigued, but not humbled. So Simon invited this prophet, this Jesus, to his home for a meal. This sort of meal was a public affair. Anyone could wander in and observe the proceedings. Jesus was technically the guest of honor. This was a chance for Simon to examine this strange rabbi a little more closely. But Jesus was still just a commoner, just a carpenter's son. Simon would feed Him, but he would not go overboard in honoring Him. He would not take the role of a servant and wash Jesus' feet. He would not treat Jesus as an honored celebrity by anointing His head with oil. Simon would feed

Jesus and converse with Him; that is all. Simon felt no need to humble himself in the presence of Jesus. After all, Simon was a Pharisee. He was Jesus' social equal, if not His superior.

As far as anyone knew, she had always been a sinful woman. "Sinful" is the polite word for what she was. "Shame" is the word for what she felt. Everyone knew she was shameful and worthless, and she knew it best of all. So she lived out her shame the best she could, dressed it up in fancy clothes and rich ornaments and tried to make a living out of it. Some kind of living. Every day she felt more dirty and worthless than the day before. No matter how many ornaments she wore, she still felt naked and shamed. Respectable people crossed the street to get away from her. She wished she could cross the street to get away from herself. But shame was her lot in life and she could not get away from it.

Then Jesus came to town, a respectable man who was not afraid of sinners. He preached words of hope. He told people to "Go and sin no more," and suddenly they were set free from their shame and bondage. One time when He was preaching, Jesus looked her right in the eye. It was not an accusing look. It was not a look that undressed her. It was a look that said, "I love you, I value you and I want to give you life." That was the day she gave her shame away and began a new life of purity and dignity. She put her faith in the love of Jesus and her life was forever changed. For the first time in her life she felt dressed and dignified. Oh, the respectable people still thought of her as "that sinful woman" and they still crossed the street to avoid her. But that was okay. Jesus had looked at her with love and respect and whatever other people thought, she knew her shame was gone.

When the woman heard that Jesus was having dinner at Simon's house, she determined to find a way to thank Him and honor Him. She knew how the other guests would stare and whisper, but she was determined to honor Jesus anyway. She reached up on the shelf and pulled down her precious, very expensive jar of perfumed oil, tucked

it into her cloak, and hurried down to Simon's house. There was Jesus, leaning on the table as was the custom, His legs stretched out beside Him on the floor. She would not disturb His meal; she would not be so bold as to anoint His head. No, she would take the servant's place and feel honored to do so. And so she approached Jesus' feet with the perfume. She was so overwhelmed with gratitude as she drew near Him that she began to weep and her tears spilled onto His feet. She unpinned her hair, something a proper Jewish woman would never do in public, and carefully wiped the tears away. She had no thought for herself, no concern about the spectacle she was making. All she could see was Jesus. All she could think of was how He had clothed her with dignity and holiness, how He had freed her from the chains of shame. Nothing was too good for Him, no expression of love too rich. She kissed those precious feet and anointed them with perfume.

Simon was appalled. How could Jesus allow a woman with such a sinful past to come anywhere near him? Obviously Jesus was not the prophet people thought He was. But Jesus didn't worry over the woman's sinful past. He saw her loving heart. And so Jesus told a story of debt and love and gratitude. One man owed a money lender 500 days' wages; another owed the money lender 50 days' wages. The lender forgave both debts. Which one loved him most for that forgiveness? The lesson was clear; this woman who had been forgiven much for her many sins loved Jesus immensely more than Simon did. Simon, in fact, had not sought Jesus' forgiveness for any of his sins as far as we know. He had not even humbled himself so much as to wash Jesus' feet or anoint His head. Simon had very little, if any, love to spare for Jesus.

What's going on here? Did Simon not need forgiving? Only in Simon's own mind. Four chapters later, in Luke 11: 39, Jesus speaks these words, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness." Simon had a carefully groomed public image, while the woman had a hopelessly soiled public image. But the woman had a heart open to hear God's

voice, while Simon had a heart closed to God's voice. Inside Simon's heart, pride, greed, envy, and hateful anger seethed, but it could not be forgiven because he refused to humble himself. He refused to place his faith in Christ. Instead, Simon put his faith in his own so-called righteousness. That is what is called "self-righteousness."

The woman could not hide her sin and shame—it was too public, everyone knew about it. That is why she had no trouble admitting to it and submitting to Jesus for forgiveness. She had nothing to hide, no dignity to protect. But Simon's sin was hidden. Simon's shame was private. Simon had succeeded in covering his sin with a public mask of respectability. That made it very difficult for Simon to submit to Jesus for forgiveness or for anything else. He had too much pride at stake, too much dignity to lose. Simon's heart was so filled with self-righteousness that there was no room in it for love.

Simon the respectable Pharisee remained unforgiven. But hear the blessed words of Jesus to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

How wonderful it is to go in peace and leave all our sin and shame at Jesus' feet. We don't have to live in it anymore. It doesn't have to control us and drag us down. It doesn't have to eat away at our insides. It doesn't have to determine our identity for eternity. Jesus heals the broken; He clothes the naked. In the place of shame, He gives dignity. In the place of emptiness, He gives the fullness of love. Praise the Lord!

Statisticians in the US estimate that one out of every four women in my country was abused as a child. Other statistics estimate that there are over 50,000 child prostitutes in the county of the Philippines—both girls and boys, most of whom were forced into that shameful life-style. An adult life of prostitution too often begins with a child life of abuse and exploitation. I imagine our sinful woman's shame began in her childhood. That is Satan's way. He wants to

clothe people with shame as children, and then he wants to make them think that that is all they are worth as adults. Satan uses that shame to chain so many people—to chain them to alcohol and drugs, to chain them to pornography, to chain them to overspending or anger or illegitimate sexual relationships. Like the woman in this story, people desperately seek to dress up their shame, to find love and acceptance or at least escape and forgetfulness. But the more they fight to dress it up, the more that shame slaps them down. The harder we try to rewrite our own stories and clothe ourselves, the more the shame asserts itself. It seems inescapable. It leaves a person feeling so powerless.

Until we look Christ in the eye. It takes a while because we are practiced at avoiding direct eye contact. But He is there looking at us and waiting. And there is something remarkable about the way He looks at us. It is clear that He sees our shame, but that is not what He is looking at. His look is a look of love. It is a look that actually dresses us, a look that clothes us with dignity and holiness. And in that moment that our eyes meet His, we feel Him take our shame on Himself and give us dignity in return. That is what Jesus wants to do for us if we will only look Him in the eye.

Too often, though, instead of putting our faith in Christ like the woman, too many of us follow Simon's example and mistakenly put our faith in our own efforts at righteousness. We see Christian holiness as a long list of do's and don't's. Do go to church every time the doors are open, attend all-night prayer meetings and read five chapters of the Bible every day. Do take five classes, pastor a church and report a 20 percent increase in membership every year. Do tithe, give to the missionary offering and dress respectably. Don't smoke, drink, use bad language, gamble or go to movies, and don't hang around with those who do. Those are all good enough things, but too often they become a badge of spiritual pride that we wear on the outside to prove that we are better Christians than the Presbyterians or

Methodists, better even than the Nazarene sitting next to us. Too often, instead of being the fruit of a deep inner faith in Christ, those do's and don't's become brave attempts to mask the shame we feel over our own spiritual failures. Like Simon, it becomes hard for us to lavish our love on the Lord, because we are too busy trying to prove to Him that we are worthy of His attention.

When we put on Pharisaical robes of self-righteousness, we have a hard time loving God. Instead we find ourselves holding back on God. We even find ourselves trying to control God by offering our pitiful attempts at holiness in exchange for His favor. See all I am doing for You, God? Now don't You think You should do something for me? Do we really think we can establish *utang na loob*<sup>\*</sup> with God? Is that what holiness is?

When we put on Pharisaical robes of self-righteousness, we have a hard time loving God. When we have a hard time loving God, we also have a hard time loving those lost ones that Christ loves so much. We demand that they earn our love the same way we are trying to earn God's love. We become the Accuser in other's lives, just as Simon became in that woman's life—making ourselves the judges of who does and does not deserve God's grace. Self-righteousness makes it difficult for us to reach out to those lost people whom Jesus loves. It makes it uncomfortable for us to share Jesus with those people who aren't quite respectable, those whose shame is very public. In fact, self-righteousness can make us judgmental even toward our own brothers and sisters in the faith, just as Simon was judgmental toward Jesus. That is when holiness becomes a legalism that shuts people out of the kingdom instead of drawing them into the kingdom.

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\*A debt of obligation established when one person does a favor for another.



But that is not true holiness. True holiness is what Jesus gave to that sinful woman when she looked into His eyes. Holiness is what Jesus gave to that sinful woman when He said, “Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” That is the holiness I need, a holiness of grace. I look into my own heart and I see my own sins. I see the many times when I have complained and whined instead of thanking God for His great and gracious gifts. I see the bitterness I have often harbored in my heart against people Christ loves. I see the moments of craving for human applause. I see the people I have wounded with thoughtless words. I see it all. I see it more than anyone else could. Jesus sees it, too, but instead of exposing my failings to the world, He, in His great love for me, has buried it all in the sea of forgetfulness. He has forgiven all my debt and set me free to serve Him. He has clothed me with strength and dignity. He has clothed me with His own righteousness. How could I help but pour out my life in love for Him when He has been so kind to me?

True holiness is the deep love that rose up in the heart of that humble woman who interrupted Simon’s dinner. Holiness is what prompted her to pour her most precious perfume on Jesus’ feet. Holiness is not a list of do’s and don’t’s that proves to God that we are worthy of His love. Holiness is a response of grateful love from a soul that knows it is utterly unworthy of Christ’s kindness. If you want to be clothed in true holiness, do not follow the example of proud, legalistic Simon the Pharisee. Nazarene works-righteousness has no more saving power than Catholic works-righteousness or Pharisee works-righteousness. It will not do to exchange the works-righteousness of the confession box for a works-righteousness of the prayer mountain.

If you want to be clothed in true holiness, follow the example of the sinful woman with a heart full of loving gratitude. Confess your failure to reach Christ’s standard; look into His eyes and feel His forgiveness. Continually pour your grateful love on His feet. Don’t worry about being respectable. I can still picture old Brother Lowry, running around the tabernacle at campmeeting. He couldn’t sit still.

He would run, wave his handkerchief and shout, “Hallelujah!” Brother Lowry wasn’t worried about being respectable. Christ had forgiven Him, and he was too grateful to keep quiet and proper. Don’t worry about being respectable and dignified. Jesus is your dignity. He has taken your shame on Himself! Be outrageously extravagant in *your* response of love to Jesus. Humble *yourself*, love sinners, raise eyebrows—pour out your very best on Jesus’ feet. Hold nothing back. Love Him with all your heart, mind, soul, strength, and even with all your perfume.

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## **NEWS BRIEFS**

During the 1999-2000 school year, APNTS received re-accreditation of its programs by both the Asia Theological Association and the Association for Theological Education in Southeast Asia.

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Various committees of the faculty are at work on enhancing Seminary academic programs. Recommendations adopted by the faculty will be forwarded to the Administration and the Board of Trustees. Committees are currently working on proposals for On-line Extension Education, enriching Field Education experiences, and the development of the Missions degrees.

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Currently, plans are in process for some significant progress in the development of the APNTS campus. Improvements are being made to the creek that runs through the center of the campus. The woodshop is being moved. Plans are being submitted for new faculty bungalows that relieve the shortage of housing for faculty. Transfer to those buildings (to be built as Work and Witness teams are available) will allow transfer of single students into better dormitory facilities.

The proposed Center for Education and Evangelism is at the center of the new phase of development. It will house classrooms and faculty offices, the Regional Communications Center, and a large, multi-purpose auditorium.

These and related changes will make it possible for the library to expand eventually into the remainder of the current administration building.

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Work is proceeding on the development of the information infrastructure of the campus. New phone lines are being installed as well as a campus computer network. The computer server that is being added will also allow more reliable Internet connections for use by faculty, students, and offices. Simultaneously, work is continuing on the new web site at [apnts.com](http://apnts.com)—a site that will be enhanced to offer more services in the near future, including on-line applications for admission and other forms.

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Within the last two years, APNTS has added seven new faculty members in addition to the existing faculty of Anelia Bugaay (Librarian), John Nielson (Preaching and Pastoral Ministry), Janice Nielson (Christian Education and English), Beverly Gruver (English), and Floyd Cunningham (Church History), and instructors including Doug Flemming and Immanuel Jatayna in Christian Communication, and Jason Hallig in New Testament Greek. APNTS has a stronger faculty now than at any time in its history. Two of the seven new persons are women, and three of the seven are from the Asia-Pacific region. The new faculty members include:

**DAVID ACKERMAN** was born in Spokane, Washington, USA. He received his education at Northwest Nazarene University, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and University of Denver/Iliff School of Theology. He received his Ph.D. in Biblical Interpretation from Iliff

and DU in 2000. His dissertation was entitled, “*Lo, I Tell You a Mystery*”: *Cross, Resurrection, Time, and Paranaesis in the Rhetoric of First Corinthians*. He contributed a chapter to the book, *Generation Xers Talk About the Church of the Nazarene*, and also contributed an article to *Preacher’s Magazine*. While in his doctoral program, he pastored in Denver, Colorado, and was ordained in 1999. David and his wife, Rhonda (Gerdes) have two children, Shan (5) and Joel (3).

**IMELDA LAROYA** is serving as APNTS registrar. Imelda was born in Binalonan, Pangasinan, the Philippines. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Philippine Women’s University in 1980, and has undertaken further studies in religious education and counseling at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary and Benguet State University. She served as dietician, college nurse, and science instructor at Luzon Nazarene Bible from 1992 to 1999. Imelda and her husband, Joven, are parents of Joshua (15), and Jonathan (14), and Jovy (13).

**JOVEN LAROYA** was born in Binalonan, Pangasinan, the Philippines. He has completed degrees at the University of Pangasinan, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, and the University of Baguio. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in education through Saint Louis University (Baguio). He has pastored in the Philippines for fifteen years and taught elementary school for six years (while pastoring). He was ordained in 1992. Joven comes to APNTS from Luzon Nazarene Bible College where he served at various times as registrar, dean of students, and academic dean while also teaching there full time. His article, “The Social Theory of Jurgen Habermas: Its Implications to Doing Research in the Philippine Context,” appeared in the *Saint Louis Research Journal*.

**ROBERT DONAHUE** was born in Boise, Idaho, USA. He received his education at Bob Jones University, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity school (now Trinity

International University). He was ordained in 1980. At Trinity Evangelical Divinity School he earned the Doctor of Ministry in 1985 and the Doctor of Missiology in 1995. His D.Miss. project developed manuals for reconciliation in a multiethnic society. Before coming to APNTS, he pastored in the San Francisco Bay area of California, where he also founded New Beginning Family Services. Previously, he pastored for thirteen years in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, where he planted a church and helped to begin the Utah Institute for Biblical Studies. He also served as adjunct faculty member in the extension programs of both Columbia Bible College and Nazarene Bible College. Robert and his wife, JoAn, have two grown children, Corrie and David.

**CHRISTI-AN CLIFFORD BENNETT** was born in Wareham, Massachusetts, USA. She completed degrees at Eastern Nazarene College, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and University of Manchester (England). She was ordained in 1990. She completed her Ph.D. at Manchester in 1995, submitting a thesis entitled, *The Development of the Idea of Mission in British Wesleyan Thought, 1784-1914*. Her articles have been published in *Methodist History*, *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, *Herald of Holiness*, and *Preacher's Magazine*. She has also presented a paper for the North Atlantic Missiology Project. She has served as a pastor in Massachusetts and England and as a pastor's wife in New Zealand. She has taught for short terms at Luzon Nazarene Bible College and Visayan Nazarene Bible College in the Philippines, Nazarene Bible College in Australia, and Southern Nazarene University and Nazarene Theological Seminary in the USA. Christi and her husband, Stephen, are the parents of James (5) and Daniel (3).

**STEPHEN BENNETT** was born in Hamilton, New Zealand. He received his education at Auckland University, New Zealand; Nazarene Theological Seminary, USA; and University of Manchester,

England. In 1995 he earned a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Manchester. His thesis was entitled, *The Abrahamic Covenant and the Idea of Mission*. He has pastored Nazarene churches in Whangarei, New Zealand, and Fitchburg, Massachusetts. He was ordained in 1997. He has taught for short terms at Visayan Nazarene Bible College and Luzon Nazarene Bible College in the Philippines, Nazarene Bible College in Australia, and Southern Nazarene University and Nazarene Theological Seminary in the USA.

**STANLEY CLARK**, a Wesleyan missionary, is joining the faculty second semester 2000-2001. Born in Kansas, USA, he is a graduate of God's Bible School and College, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. At the University of North Carolina he earned a Ph.D. in Education in 1999. His focus was on curriculum and teaching. From 1970 to 1988 he served as a missionary of the Wesleyan Church in Colombia and Peru, South America. From 1988 until coming to APNTS, he taught Spanish at two universities, and Bible and Christian education at Spanish Bible Institute. He ministered among Spanish-speaking people in North Carolina. Stanley and his wife, Janice, have three grown children.

\* \* \* \* \*

The arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Clark marks a milestone in the history of APNTS and the relationship between two significant holiness denominations. Dr. Clark has been assigned to the faculty of APNTS by the world mission office of the Wesleyan Church. While there have been many cross-over faculty members over the years, this is the first time that a missionary, fully funded by the Wesleyan church, has been assigned to the faculty of a Nazarene institution.

It was former president Dr. Lebron Fairbanks who first presented the suggestion to leaders of sister holiness denominations, that this seminary be a cooperative partnership. That possibility has been pursued for the past decade. Out of that vision came the Fraternal Scholarship Program which the Wesleyan Church was the first to take

advantage of. The idea of having a Wesleyan professor assigned to the APNTS faculty was presented repeatedly to leaders of both denominations. Early on, it received approval from the Church of the Nazarene.

About five years ago, Regional leaders of the Wesleyan Church (including adjunct professor, Dr. Barry Ross, and current Regional Director, Dr. Paul Turner) drew up a document of cooperation similar to the relationship between the Wesleyan Church and Asbury Seminary in the USA. That document has now come into full force. Leaders of both denominations are excited at what this models for cooperative efforts in other institutions and other countries as well as what it models for our relationships with other holiness denominations.

In addition to their teaching duties, the Clarks will also serve as mentors to all our Wesleyan students who will receive the same benefits as Nazarene students.



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# BRIDGING CULTURES FOR CHRIST

*For there is one God and one mediator between  
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Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary is a graduate level school of the Church of the Nazarene. It is located on the outskirts of Manila, Republic of the Philippines.

This graduate school exists to prepare men and women for ministry in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world by developing personal and professional attitudes and skills so as to enable analytical reflection upon Christian faith and life, and competencies in the practice of ministry. Since its first graduating class in 1986, APNTS has trained men and women for a wide range of vocations. Today, over 175 graduates serve as pastors, teachers, Bible college presidents, missionaries, and various other church and para-church workers.

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