Volume 17

DECEMBER 2023

Number 2

AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL of MISSION STUDIES

Australian Journal of Mission Studies

published by

Australian Association for Mission Studies

The journal is intended as a means for the exchange of ideas and opinions. Articles published express the views of their respective authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editorial committee, or the publisher.

Contributions to this Journal

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It publishes scholarly Articles in missiology, normally from 2,000 to 5,000 words, if accepted after scholarly, double-blind peer review (at least two double-blind peer reviews for each academic Article, where the reviewers' decisions are final).

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It also publishes Reflections and Reports of up to 2,000 words, and Book Reviews of up to 500 words.

Website: www.missionstudies.org.au

ISSN 1834-4682

GST free

SUBSCRIPTION: $50 Australian per year. One annual subscription or membership equals two (2) issues of the journal per year.

President of the Australian Association for Mission Studies:
Xiaoli Yang | xyang@whitley.edu.au

Editor of the Australian Journal of Mission Studies:
Graham Joseph Hill | ghill8@icloud.com

Correspondence regarding articles:
Email: ghill8@icloud.com
Post: Rev Dr Graham Joseph Hill
141 Lagoon Drive, Yanchep WA 6035, Australia

Correspondence regarding subscriptions:
Dr Peter Wilkinson, AAMS Treasurer
Email: pjw52@bigpond.com

OR

Rev Dr Darrell Jackson (Secretary AAMS)
djackson@whitley.edu.au
Whitley College, PO Box 134, Parkville VIC 3052, Australia

Purposes of Australian Association for Mission Studies

- Promote the theological, biblical, historical, practical, and contextual study of mission, local and global.
- Promote engagement with the cultures and people with whom Christians share and explore the gospel, including, in particular, Australian Indigenous voices.
- Encourage cooperation and sharing of research and experience among individuals and institutions engaged in mission.
- Bring together, through networks, conferences, and seminars, those engaged in mission studies.
- Stimulate publications in missiology, including a journal.
- Affiliate with the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS), work in partnership with the Aotearoa/New Zealand Association for Mission Studies (ANZAMS) and build links with those engaged in mission studies in the South Pacific.

Contents

ARTICLES

REFLECTIONS AND REPORTS

BOOK REVIEWS

ARTICLES

Editorial

Dear readers,

As we open the pages of this latest edition of our journal dedicated to mission and missiology in Australia, we are reminded of the weight of our collective calling. Australia has a history steeped in diverse cultures, vast landscapes, and a spirituality shaped by faith, colonialism, migration, spirituality, First Nations peoples, and secularism. It is within this setting that the church has been called to carry forth the age-old mandate given by Christ: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). But why, some may ask, is there still a pressing need for Christian missions and missiology in a modern, evolving Australia? The Australian Association of Mission and Studies and its journal editions seek to answer just that by drawing from theology, missiology, biblical foundations, and our undeniable societal challenges.

At the heart of Christian belief lies the conviction that God is on a mission to reconcile all things to Godself through Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:20). This mission is not limited by time, culture, or geography. The very nature of God is missional, actively seeking to restore creation and humanity to shalom and a proper relationship with Godself. If the character of God is inherently missional, so must be the church's character.

The Bible provides not only a command but a narrative of mission. From Abraham's calling to be a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:2-3) to the early church's expansion in the Book of Acts, God's people have been called to be God's witnesses, both in Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Our Australian context is part of that "ends of the earth." The baton has been passed to us to continue this narrative.

Today's societal landscape in Australia, however, poses distinct challenges. With the rise of secularism, a drift from traditional values, and the plurality of beliefs, there's a pressing need to present the gospel in ways that resonate with contemporary Australia. Understanding our cultural backdrop – one enriched by First Nations peoples' histories, marked by colonial narratives, and shaped by waves of immigration – is paramount. Missiology, the study of mission methods and strategies, becomes invaluable in navigating these intricacies.

Yet, it's not solely about methodology. Amidst our nation's societal struggles – ranging from reconciliation with our First Nations peoples, mental health crises, and the ongoing challenge of respecting diverse cultures – there's an undercurrent of spiritual hunger. A hunger that technology, affluence, or mere philosophy cannot satiate. Herein lies the relevance and urgency of our mission studies and intercultural theology.

This journal edition dives deep into these challenges, offering fresh (albeit brief and modest) perspectives and discussions on the way forward. Our contributors provide academically rigorous and practically applicable theological reflections and missiological insights.

As the editor of this journal, I believe this edition makes a vital contribution not only to the fields of mission and missiology but to the broader Australian society. We do not approach our task with arrogance but with a humble conviction that the gospel can transform lives, communities, and nations. As you engage with the articles, I hope your passion for God's mission in Australia is ignited afresh.

Amid an ever-changing world, the call remains constant: to make the love and truth of Jesus known in every corner of our vast continent. May this journal edition equip, challenge, and inspire you in that noble pursuit.

Warm regards,

Graham Joseph Hill

Editor

Synergy Between Pastoral Care and Evangelism: An Exploration of Evangelistic Dynamics Amongst Volunteers at Four Church-based, Intercultural Initiatives in Melbourne

Sue Holdsworth

Originally from the UK, **Sue Holdsworth** *lives in Melbourne, where she is a post-doctoral researcher. She has been a member of three mission organisations and has worked extensively amongst diaspora communities in Melbourne and Seoul. Her research interest is the local church and mission.*

Melbourne is a multicultural city, and many churches run mid-week community initiatives providing services for migrants. These range from teaching English to cooking classes and other expressions of care and inclusion. A desire for these initiatives to be a gateway into church life is a common motive for volunteers. Others desire simply that the church is seen as 'good news' for the community. Practical and ethical beliefs surround such initiatives regarding the place of evangelism at church-based community initiatives. Engaging in evangelism may seem clumsy or ill-advised.

A study of four church-based, intercultural initiatives highlighted this dilemma. All congregations were evangelical. I aimed to understand how the love of God and neighbour was expressed and what might enable this. Although this was an intercultural study, most findings are generalisable to any similar, church-based initiative. The study demonstrated different beliefs amongst volunteers regarding the role and execution of evangelism at the initiatives. The following article will suggest an approach based on the principles of pastoral care.

Four Case Studies

Swindon Baptist is a large church in an affluent suburb, settled by many wealthy economic migrants.[1] The church offered free English conversation classes, which were well attended, some students having come along for many years. I attended these classes for five months as a participant observer.

St Nicholas Anglican is a large, eastern suburbs congregation. I observed a sewing club for migrant women, run by church members on Sunday afternoons, over four months. The club had run for twelve years. The local Muslim migrants could not buy their cultural dress style in local shops and needed access to expensive sewing equipment to make their clothes. Women were free to come and go at the club as they pleased.

Govan Church of Christ is a congregation of around sixty people in Melbourne's western suburbs. They have been running English conversation classes for new migrants and refugees for around five years in response to need. Most volunteers rotate in every two or four weeks. I attended these classes on Saturday mornings for five months, getting to know volunteers and observing classes.

The fourth study was of child daycare training lessons in a registered training organisation run by a large Pentecostal congregation in the northern suburbs, Hope International Church. Teachers here were professionally trained and salaried. This situation had similar roots to the other studies in that the school was started as a response to need. The church leaders wanted to aim for excellence in delivering a service to new migrants that would most impact their lives. Many female students had arrived in Australia from the Indian sub-continent as brides. On arrival, they discovered their qualifications were not recognised in Australia, and this, plus having no work, meant they had difficulties entering Australian society. Training in child daycare addressed both needs. I attended classes most days of the week for three months.

The following literature review demonstrates how pastoral care practices can address evangelistic practices.

Evangelism in Relation to Pastoral Care and Mission

Bosch states that evangelism, defined in the simplest terms as "activities involved in spreading the gospel," is an essential dimension of mission."[2] Stone develops this statement by suggesting that

> [It] is a necessary condition of that witness [to the gospel], and it is intrinsic to the church's invitation to the world to accept that witness as truth . . . [seeking] neither separation nor exclusion but is instead a cruciform difference – a generosity toward and openness to the world that both witnesses to creation and invites other persons into that new creation.[3]

Themes relevant to this study emerge from this statement. The challenge to participants to be sacrificially (in a "cruciform" way) generous towards others reflects themes of hospitality and "openness to the world", as well as themes of making space for relationships with others and celebrating them as they are. The initiatives all offered ample scope for demonstrations of intercultural hospitality. Care for and with others begins within one's spirituality and functions as an invitation to consider the genesis of this care because of its attractive difference to society. Scott Jones bases his discussion of evangelism on the premise that the "essential connections between loving God, loving one's neighbour, and doing evangelism are fundamental insights."[4] The question of how the love of God and neighbour are expressed in evangelism helps explore this fundamental link.

Doehring considers that enabling a client to connect with a sense of the sacred is an essential facet of pastoral care, yet what she means by "sense of the sacred" is not defined.[5] This moment of spiritual connection might be where the disciplines of mission and pastoral care diverge or engage, clarified through participant motivation and hopes, dreams and goals for the projects. The liminal, or sacred, space of authentic relating may become the common ground for both disciplines. Doehring is more concerned that care-seekers attain the "spiritual integration of 'walking the talk' within persons, relationships, and organizations," warning against the imposition of caregiver theology on care-seekers. This had not been explored amongst participants at any of the initiatives. This may inhibit the sacred from emerging as authentic and being respectfully acknowledged.[6] This seems to indicate evangelisation as a process of genuine connection (rather than evangelism as an event) that reflects the gracious balance Pope Francis describes. For him,

> [pastoral ministry] in a missionary style is not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed . . . the message has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary. The message is simplified while losing none of its depth and truth and thus becomes all the more forceful and convincing.[7]

So, where does evangelism fit with this sense of the sacred? If we reject a notion of evangelism as mere verbal proclamation whenever possible, and instead define evangelism and mission as participation in the missio Dei, the disciplines of mission and pastoral care can correlate in many ways. Neither discipline should shy away from statements of Christian identity in theory or actions that reflect Christian identity in practice. However, an informed sensitivity as to when this is appropriate is vital for both. This sensitivity was unlikely to be demonstrated at Swindon and Govan, where participants had not explored this. Participants at St Nicholas spoke of their Christian identity to the migrant women, although this often felt forced and lacking the necessary sensitivity.

Lartey suggests that reconciling, as a function of pastoral care, strongly correlates with the broader societal processes of evangelism.

> This pastoral skill is sorely needed in the world today at all levels- national, communal, interreligious and international. Pastoral caregivers need the sensitivity to culture, faith and personality that reconciliation calls for. This lies at the heart of the purpose of God declared within the Christian message: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Godself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).[8]

Our ultimate need for reconciliation is with God and in this sense the function of reconciliation in pastoral care is also mission, specifically evangelism. This synergises with Tizon, who writes of the broad scope of reconciliation as mission, including evangelism.[9] Furthering this theme, Whiteman argues that the "Gospel of reconciliation is integral to the Gospel of redemption and is possible only with God's help enabling us to bridge the religious, cultural, political, and gender chasms that too frequently divide us."[10] Clinebell and McKeever, in revisiting Clebsch and Jaekle's classic analysis, supported the continuing relevance of this theme. The individual (rather than the societal or systemic) focus emerges for the latter.

> The ministry of reconciling has enabled persons to renew a right relationship with God and with neighbour by using two interdependent modes of caregiving: *discipline* (a word that historically has meant correction by pastoral admonition or church discipline) integrated with *forgiveness* (through confession, penance, and absolution).[11]

Enabling care seekers who attend community service projects to reconcile with God is, therefore, a possibility, recognised or unrecognised, within a definition of pastoral care and certainly within a definition of evangelism. Key themes for the practice of evangelism are linked to practices of pastoral care. They must both be informed by a spirituality rooted in the experience of God's love and reconciling purposes, expressed through hospitality practices that reveal all humankind's equality. The common message of love helps people connect with self, community and the sacred.

The following section introduces the research methods used in this study.

Method

Qualitative research, specifically grounded theory (GT), was used to discover how the love of God and neighbour was expressed at the initiatives and what might improve this. GT does not apply existing frameworks for analysis, enabling researchers to let the data take them in any direction. The outcome of this approach is the generation of new theories. Once I suspected that volunteers at Swindon (the first initiative studied) were motivated by pastoral care rather than mission, I was able to conduct data sampling at subsequent locations to confirm or deny this. Subsequent case studies confirmed that these were primarily pastoral care projects, except for St Nicholas, which used pastoral care to create a context for evangelism. This was a helpful contrast.

Participant observation, a grounded theory methodology, enabled me to be fully present at the initiatives, and I discovered participants soon seemed to forget why I was there. This provided a level of reassurance that my presence only minimally affected proceedings. Data was also collected through interviews, searches through church records and attendance at other church events.

The four initiatives were visited weekly and sequentially, with up to five months at each, until data saturation was reached. I discreetly recorded observations in a small notebook and transferred these to an iPad the following morning. Data from each location was coded together, and emerging categories were compared across all four studies. Analysis was iterative, resulting in new theories and hypotheses.

Ambivalence and Intentionality: Findings from the Four Locations

Mutual respect and, in some cases, affection were evident between some of the twelve or so volunteer tutors and students at Swindon Baptist. Two volunteers invited students to Easter church services; otherwise, no attempt was made to invite students to other church events. When asked about his view of evangelism in classes, one volunteer told me he would tell students he went to church. This, however, had never happened. Another volunteer told me, "I don't believe God should be rammed down people's throats." Although other volunteers linked faith to their motivations for serving, none spoke of evangelism unless asked, and none were seen speaking of faith during classes or reported this happening at other times. Neither did they speak of their faith journeys with each other. After a session of observations, I noted, "God has gone underground!" This contrasted with the hope of the senior pastor, who wanted these classes to be an evangelistic vehicle and the youth pastor, who felt it was disingenuous to offer a service and not introduce Jesus in some fashion. The volunteers met briefly once during my time with them, at which the leader prayed briefly. No other prayer was noted or spoken of by volunteers. Two volunteers invited their students to social gatherings in parks and, in one instance, to their home at Christmas. Another tutor helped students make hospital appointments and offered other practical assistance. Most preferred to limit their time with students to lessons.

In contrast to Swindon English classes, volunteers at St Nicholas sought opportunities to speak of faith during sessions. This included a conversation comparing beliefs regarding drinking alcohol with the Muslim attendees. One volunteer prayed out loud numerous times for sewing equipment to work or, unsolicited, for a lady and her unborn baby. I noted this Muslim lady wasn't offended and turned to me laughing, saying, "She's praying for my baby!" One volunteer spoke during the interview about finding "opportunities" to talk with the women about God. During a group debrief following a holiday camp with the women, the team spoke excitedly about times when they shared the Christian faith with attendees. At other times, the women were described to me as difficult, resistant to the gospel and that volunteers were working on "tough ground." It seemed the women

were only celebrated regarding their response to Christian belief. In twelve years of the club running, none had become Christians. The volunteers prayed together each week before the club and spoke easily of their faith journeys and motivations for volunteering.

Although friendly with one another, the volunteers at Govan Church of Christ did not meet for prayer and planning, and the leaders spoke with frustration about their unwillingness to coordinate teaching. The pastor often visited classes and told me he didn't see the point of the lessons if the gospel wasn't shared. Most volunteers, in contrast, did not think the gospel should be relayed during classes. One volunteer noted it was a big ask for many attendees to simply walk into a church building without talking about Jesus. An invitation to an Easter service was given on one occasion. Other than this, there were no instances of meeting with students after classes were given. Attendees did experience love and acceptance during sessions, and volunteers displayed signs of enjoyment for students. Several volunteers spoke of private prayer for students.

The teachers at Hope International Church devoted themselves to their students. They prayed for and, on request, with them (most were Muslim). They provided meals to students in crisis and when babies were born and made themselves available to students day and night. Some students in crisis had been known to text teachers late at night requesting prayer. Teachers gave students as much time as needed to be successful, affording this school an impressively high success rate. It was clear that the year spent training was special for students and teachers. This was evident at graduation and in how tutors spoke of students. Most teachers met for prayer each Friday morning and spoke easily of their Christian faith and sense of God's immanence. Non-Christian staff spoke with delight of the school's caring ethos and said they felt fully included.

Pastoral Care as Evangelism

Stone describes evangelism as "a matter of being present in the world in a distinctive way such that the alluring and 'useless' beauty of holiness can be touched, tasted, and tried." He identifies evangelism as one core church practice in addition to worship, hospitality, and economic sharing.[12]

All the initiatives displayed a counter-cultural way of being in the world.[13] Volunteers and trainers gave their time freely, served people in need, mainly were warm in their welcome and tended towards hospitable, an essential part of the whole ministry of evangelism:

> To conclude that one can bear witness to God's reign without ever explicitly offering others an invitation to be part of that reign is not merely half right; it is wholly wrong. The practice of evangelism is intrinsic to the comprehensive *praxis* of an evangelistic faith . . . But evangelism must also be practiced explicitly and intentionally as proclamation, hospitality, invitation, and initiation if the church is to be faithful in its witness.[14]

Stone laments that evangelism usually has been reduced to an issue of personal salvation while tracing its roots to the shalom of the Old Testament, where shalom concerned the whole of life. A belief that there is no point in running church-based initiatives unless the gospel is preached demonstrates a reductionist view, possibly an approach that volunteers at Swindon and Govan reacted against. An alternative approach esteems others by recognising that felt needs may require addressing for others to feel loved by God, a model of holistic evangelism that closely aligns with pastoral care and which may lead to a context or environment for proclamation.

Thiessen agrees with Stone that proselytising must occur in the context of care for persons. This, he argues, is to treat others as whole persons.[15] He cautions against treating others as "an end, *and at the same time,* as a means to an end" because proselytising should occur in genuine care.[16] Findings at St Nicholas demonstrated difficulties with this approach, however, as the end influenced the means, apparent in how participants spoke of the women at the sewing club as difficult or resistant. This approach sets out to proselytise rather than allow this to happen if and when care seekers raise the subject of religious belief.

Stone concludes that verbal proclamation needs to take place within a loving and hospitable context, and it is suggested here that where pastoral care and mutuality in relationships are evidenced, issues of identity and community will eventually be raised by guests as a topic for discussion.[17] This is the point at which Christians can be free to express what they believe while also listening appreciatively to the beliefs of others, a situation more likely to arise in an intercultural context if sensitivity to other cultures has been demonstrated. This would entail not limiting relationships to initiatives but instead fostering relationships in informal settings.

Differing views regarding evangelism and initiative goals may create tension between team members. At Govan, aims were not clearly stated, and the level of individualism made it unlikely that this would ever become a topic for group consideration. Such ambivalence about aims and goals creates an uncoordinated approach to care where participants do not relate easily or consult in group/team settings regarding best practices. This confusion of aims was unlikely to communicate anything clearly to those attending other than the willingness to teach English to migrants.

The desire for the production of converts was apparent at St Nicholas, in what Stone describes as an application of false logic to evangelism: "While evangelism may be many things and while its practice may entail multiple logics, the central and foundational logic of evangelism is the logic of martyria, a logic of truthfulness, clarity, and incarnation, rather than the logic of production, accomplishment, or making."[18] This statement dovetails with my argument that a pastorally informed approach is better. There is nothing ambivalent about genuine person-centred care as a starting point, and, as Palmer notes,

> [any] obsession with getting results deforms our action more than any other element of the active life . . . We become blind to the reality of both the means and the ends, clues that call us to change course or speed or style if we want to stay in touch with what is really going on.[19]

Palmer extends Stone's comments regarding the logic of evangelism to the whole of Christian formation and ministry, including the style of outreach at the four churches. It appeals to an approach that listens to the voice of God and others and enables us to respond with love rather than react, primarily in ways other than loving, to the stimuli around us. To respond rather than react to stimuli, spiritual and theological formation needs to be fostered in ways that address self-awareness and the ability to identify reflexive moments from our practice, responses, and previously unacknowledged motivations. These moments of reflective practice prompt learning and insight that encourage us to work out the whys and hows of our responses and either to problem-solve or celebrate moments of deep connection.

This offers clearer purpose and balance whenever the tension between the goals of pastoral care and evangelism emerges. Michael Paterson suggests that in the lives of healthcare chaplains, "reflective practice can only be transformative for [those] who hold a faith commitment if it can bring us face to face with the gaps between who we say we are (vocation) and what we actually do (our practice)."[20] This is equally true for Christians in their care of others in church-based settings because "once we begin to see that life is a live encounter whether

we like it or not, once we begin to understand that we can't get out of it, so we must get into it, then this concern for results will take its proper place in our active lives."[21] An experience of just such a 'live encounter' might have encouraged the team at St Nicholas to add value to an existing strong pastoral base for ministry by discovering frequent and encouraging points of celebration as they shared life with the women rather than observing a vague sense of disappointment because no-one had become a Christian.

Participants were already serving incarnationally and sacrificially, an ongoing commitment not to be underestimated or discounted because of ambivalence regarding goals. Authentic Christian living was attractive to others at Northern Training, and trainers outside the Christian faith were happy in their work environment. During genuine, long-term friendships, a person's spiritual identity is likely to be discussed, relieving all parties of the need to create artificial opportunities for proclamation that are inevitably ineffective. Effective incarnational ministry is concerned with the question, "What is appropriate now?"

No evidence of this was noted. A commitment to ongoing personal relationships with migrants was needed, a principle generalisable to any Christian desiring to communicate the gospel in an unforced manner in response to an initiative from others. This allows those of other faiths, or no faith, to share what creates meaning for them.

No participants were observed sharing their Christian faith other than at St Nicholas. Although conversations about faith seemed forced and awkward during sewing sessions, they appeared to be tolerated by attendees, and perhaps they served an educative purpose with an unquantifiable level of value. Thiessen, however, would find this approach unethical, as volunteers were exploiting a setting with a captive audience.[22] Some volunteers at Swindon shared a little of their lives with students outside lessons, although it was not indicated whether they ever spoke of faith with students. There were few opportunities to do this after students graduated from Northern Training, although one teacher mentioned that she enjoyed catching up on news of former students.

While it was not appropriate to share the gospel during initiatives, it seemed insufficient if this was the sum of evangelism in church life. The initiatives all had great value in themselves. However, the church will not truly welcome new believers without environments where we journey with non-Christians in ongoing, mutual relationships. This may be a delight or hard work, and each initiative offered an excellent opportunity for this to happen. Campbell Johnson suggests that the starting point for evangelism is "an understanding of human beings" and their "needs, questions and desires."[23] This essentially pastoral task resonates with Kluckhohn and Murray's three aspects of humanness directed towards friendship-building and deep listening, cultural awareness, and a basic anthropological understanding.[24] The four initiatives offered a service while creating space for listening and friendship-building but never effectively integrated aims, education, vocational formation, and reflective practice.

These tensions challenge the expectations of churches and suggest the need to reframe missional reporting and evaluation, both for self-assessment and informing others. Success in pastoral and spiritual care is challenging to determine while gaining a convert would be viewed as a clear indicator of success.

Understanding the gospel message requires contextualising when presented within a different culture.[25] This is also true of pastoral care. Both require anthropological understanding and wisdom perhaps not yet evident in church-based pastors or volunteers. However, it is a reasonable expectation, given most congregations will be multicultural. Hesselgrave provides a framework for cross-cultural communication based on anthropological understanding.[26] This is one example of helpful intercultural resources and communication skills that are an

asset in many contexts. Although pastoral communication is always essential to church life, it is rarely taught as a skill, especially for volunteers in intercultural situations facing the additional complexities of cross-cultural communication within a pastoral framework.

A layer of complexity to gospel proclamation exists when migrants have limited English. It seems wise for church volunteers to incarnate the gospel through an ongoing commitment to community initiatives, corporate prayer and discernment, and mutual friendships where both parties self-disclose at a pace and depth decided by the migrant rather than the volunteer. Evangelism encompasses a way of being, sometimes including an invitation to respond to God. The role of bringing shalom needs to be understood and acted on amongst team members, an approach that contrasts with a production mentality that aims for results or outcomes. Life-bringing relationships with others are formed through listening and building friendships, although the complexities of intercultural friendship-building necessitate training.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that the goals of evangelism will be achieved as volunteers engage in ongoing pastoral care. This is not a quick process, and a long-term relationship does not guarantee conversion. That is not the point- this is participation in the broader work of God, a privilege, a calling, and an expression of worship, in which we learn and grow as we share life with others.

Pastoral care by volunteers, based on corporate spiritual practices including prayer, joint learning and reflection, will increase sensitivity in relationships with others. Volunteers will learn to discern what others might be asking of them in relationships and be able to adapt and position themselves as one of two equals, learning and growing together. In this mutual, trusting relationship context, questions and statements regarding identity might be explored together. This is evangelism at its most sensitive and effective. There are no quick fixes; instead, to borrow a phrase from Alan Kreider, writing of the early church's growth, it is a "patient ferment."[27]

Endnotes

1 Names, locations, and some identifying features of church have been changed to preserve anonymity.
2 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 409.
3 Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom*, 176.
4 Jones, *Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor*, chapter 1.
5 Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care*, xxii.
6 Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care*, 19.
7 Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 35.
8 Lartey, *In Living Color*, 65–66.
9 Tizon, *Whole and Reconciled.*
10 Whiteman, "The Gospel of Reconciliation," 200–01.
11 Clinebell and McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling*, 243–69.
12 Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom*, 15.
13 Counter-cultural is used here to mean going against cultural norms of belief and practice.
14 Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom*, 49.
15 Thiessen, *The Ethics of Evangelism*, 166.
16 Thiessen, *The Ethics of Evangelism*, 165.
17 Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom*, 179.
18 Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom*, 49.
19 Palmer, *The Active Life*, 73–74.
20 Paterson, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall," 67–74.
21 Palmer, *The Active Life*, 75.
22 Thiessen, *The Scandal of Evangelism*, 119.
23 Campbell, *Rethinking Evangelism*, 21–22.
24 Kluckhohn and Murray, eds., *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture.*
25 Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 81–92.
26 Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*.
27 Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church.*

The Shattered Community: Conflict, Violence, and Justice: Perspectives from Nagaland

Ellen Jamir

Rev Dr Ellen Jamir *is a trained psychotherapist, currently serving as a faculty member in the Department of Counselling at Oriental Theological Seminary, Nagaland India. As a member of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), she also engages in peace, trauma counselling, and reconciliation works.*

A presentation at an event co-hosted by the Baptist Union of Victoria and Whitley College, University of Divinity, on March 10, 2023

I thank the Baptist community and faculty of Whitley College, University of Divinity, Melbourne, for this humbling opportunity to share my thoughts on conflict, violence, and justice in my part of the world, in the Naga homeland. I want to share as someone still reeling and wrestling with issues brought upon by a profound tragedy just about a year ago in Nagaland.

This paper highlights the incident and the unfolding crisis that affected many people. This will be followed by my intake on the ensuing experiences of trauma and, last but not least, a call to respond from a theological-psychological perspective.

Oting Incident

December 4 and 5 of 2021 turned out to be black days in Nagaland, particularly in Oting village and the Mon area. We lost fourteen precious lives in a horrific, unimaginable way. The name *Oting* was unknown to many Nagas and the outside world, and suddenly, *#Otingmassacre* was everywhere! What happened on that fateful evening of December 4 in Oting village is a tragedy. Around 4:10 p.m. on December 4, eight unarmed coal miners were returning in a pickup truck, looking forward to being home for the weekend. Suddenly, they were ambushed and gunned down by the Para Special Force of the Indian Army. They were para-commandos of the Indian Army, trained to kill.

When the villagers noticed something was wrong and the men were not returning at the expected time, a group went down searching for them. They came upon the scene of the shooting and the terrible cover-up plot that was being cooked up. In confusion and anger, an altercation broke out, killing seven more villagers. The enraged villagers burnt three vehicles belonging to the Special Forces, which remain in the spot to this day. Eyewitnesses confirmed that the Special Forces opened fire indiscriminately as they fled from the scene towards Assam (the neighbouring state of Nagaland). The next day, more violence took place as the public counter-acted. The official report informed that thirteen civilians were killed on December 4; one died the

following day in the Sunday incident, fourteen were seriously injured, and eight more civilians suffered minor injuries. Security forces also suffered injuries, including one personnel who lost his life. These events shook the whole of Naga's homeland. People everywhere held vigils in memory of those killed. They demanded justice for the booking of the perpetrators and the removal of the draconian law, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which gives the Indian army the freedom to shoot and kill, even on suspicion.

I am a native of Kongan village, although I was born in Wakching village of Mon District. Kongan, Wakching, Naginimora, Tiru, and Oting are all in the same mountain range, touching the plains of Assam, where, in recent years, coal mining has become the primary source of income for the villagers. Many natives of these villages mainly engage in this mining business for their livelihood. There are many levels of operation, likewise, the people who work there. Unlike the landowners, contractors, or wealthy investors, the coal miners of December 4 are daily wage earners who work in dangerous conditions, risking their lives in the rat-hole mines. Like any other Naga, they want better lives, to sustain themselves, and to send their children to better schools or colleges instead of sending them to the shabby government schools. Most importantly, these villagers are the custodians of our culture. They take care of the ancestral lands. They are the ones who keep our hearth warm and welcome us home.

So, killing these young adults most inhumanly caused much grief and anger. This massacre touched us to the core, and we are still trying to come to grips with this horrible reality and the aftermath. It is hard to imagine the pain of the families of the slain brothers and the recovering injured and how they will live on.

It's been over a year since the December 2021 Oting tragedy. This past summer, eight of us trained counsellors from Oriental Theological Seminary, where I currently teach, in partnership with the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), made a trip to Oting village as part of our practicum program. This is our initiative to reach out to the victim's families, the injured and the community as a whole, mainly to provide counselling services to address their trauma and grief.

The team spent the first Sunday there worshipping with the community and later a visit to the graves of those who died. In the ensuing weeks, the team had a lot of personal time and interaction, as well as group interaction with the families of the victims. The sign of grief and loss was noticeable in the faces of the families. Their pain is still raw; relatives are still in mourning. Since all these were young men in their prime, their deaths meant the families' dreams were snatched away.

What the Oting community experienced back in 2021 is heart-wrenching. This is not an isolated incident in this part of the country, and records show the same story of justice for the victims being evaded and the perpetrators able to live on with impunity. We were reminded of other past similar traumas in the recent decades – the 1994 Mokokchung massacre, referred to as *Ayatai Mokokchung*, when forces of the 10th Assam Rifles and the 12th Maratha Light Infantry of the Indian Army raided upon the civilian populace of Mokokchung. Other incidents include the 1995 Akuluto firing incident, the Kohima March 5, 1995 ordeal where seven civilians were killed, and the Oinam Operation Bluebird in 1987, where more than three hundred villagers were brutally tortured, women raped and molested. After thirty-two years, survivors of the horrific operation in Manipur still await justice. The Morung Express, dated December 4, 2022, had a front-page article on the first anniversary entitled: "*Justice in Limbo: A Year Since Oting Killings . . . "* The report highlights the status today with the suspension of the legal proceedings of this case, causing further injury to the wound with the Government of India responding only with a partial repeal of the AFSPA in the state.

On the eve of the first anniversary, the Oting Village Baptist Church pastor sent me an invitation to their event and relayed the community's sentiments. As they prepared and observed the event, they sought God's wisdom and solidarity from people. Although help had been rendered and offered from various fronts, including the Government of Nagaland and the Assam Rifles army regarding jobs, monetary compensation, and development, they cannot replace the loss they have suffered. Their expectation of justice, especially regarding those at fault seeking forgiveness from the villagers, has not materialized. The trauma of December 4 and 5, 2021, is unforgettable.

"A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled because they are no more" (Matthew 2:18). Such was the scene in the homes of Oting village. The families of the deceased are still unable to come to terms with their loss and continue to grieve for their sons, brothers, husbands, and friends. Many feel powerless in the face of the unanswered questions of the tragedy – Why were innocent lives slain? What did they do to deserve death in that way? Why is there no "sorry" or forgiveness utterance from those responsible until today? Where is justice?

Oting, as a shattered community, is a reminder of our Naga story and our human story – a story of brokenness on many levels. Conflicts, violence and suffering are part of the human experience. One thing evident in all these is that unresolved pain and suffering often have undesirable consequences. There is a need for individual and collective effort to make sense of such tragedies that happen from time to time in our historical context. Humanity can destroy as well as create, harm, and do good.

Psychological Trauma

Witnessing the unfolding of the December tragedy made me ponder on the psychological trauma that many are experiencing. What is trauma? How does it affect people? What does it mean to survive it?

Trauma is a deeply distressing or disturbing event or series of events that are usually destructive, damaging, and horrible and disturb the psyche of any person experiencing them. Typically, trauma occurs in a way that disrupts the whole of life, changing the entire course. Before the occurrence of a traumatic event or events, there are generally certain basic assumptions that guide one's life. We probably believe in a good world with meaning and that things make sense. We believe in our goodness and worthiness of having good things happen to us.[1] Then trauma strikes like an overwhelming force that renders us helpless and vulnerable. We come face to face with our vulnerability and the human capacity to do evil and hurt others. Suddenly, life changes, and we no longer control what happens around us. In distress, we lose the capacity to think or respond positively to our new situation. We lose the sense of meaning in the world, connection with people and everything.

Trauma can range from personal to group or community experience. We can either be the direct victim (it happened to us) or the secondary victim (it happened to your world, or you were a bystander or observer) of a traumatic event. Or you may be someone who works with the victims of traumas but has not directly experienced a traumatic event. However, you have seen enough to know that your exposure to awful events has impacted you significantly.[2]

When it comes to surviving a trauma, there may be a fear of the unpleasant memories of the event that repeatedly intrude into one's awareness. Intrusive recollections can occur in thoughts, images, or perceptions and are often distressing, painful, or disturbing. They often provoke fear and vulnerability, rage at the cause,

sadness, grief, repulsion, or guilt.[3] When left untreated, such feelings may cause further mood disturbances, addictions, and self-destructive behaviours as a way of coping and somatic complaints.

As we live with this memory of the 2021 massacre and reach out to those directly affected by the events, some things come to our consciousness.

How Do We Respond?

As we retrospect on the past few years, it is safe to say we have experienced unprecedented times – COVID-19 affecting the entire world, with suffering and deaths in terms of millions. Wars and terrorism (Russian/Ukraine, ongoing Israel/Palestinian, Middle East turmoil, North West Asia, Syrian civil war, etc), school shootings, economic disparity – we are not free from conflicts and violence.

The world's recent events challenge the church and every believer not to disregard the world's sufferings. What is the relevance of our faith to this socio-political crisis of our world? What does the Lord require of us?

We must take our faith and theology to the public space – to retrospectively and honestly see where we are as a people of God and what we can do to care for each other. Many of us in this part of the world were born into this system where military presence in civilian areas is a norm. The past atrocities against our parents, brothers, and sisters are somehow tolerated because of the culture of impunity in our system and our ongoing geo-political crisis.

In a democratic country, we should be able to achieve our aspiration for self-determination in non-violent ways through sincere negotiations and dialogues. We need to do away with mistrust and apathy and fight for dominance. Our historical narrative is broken, confusing and complex. Often, the church also fails to live out as a witness and is often powerless against the evil forces around us. We should continue to appraise our realities, such as the massacre event – that the responsible parties look into the rightness of the incident, the truth, and that the Naga people's demand is fulfilled. We should not let this story be compromised or fade to oblivion or apathy.

There is a need to learn about the various facets of trauma and its effects while exploring ways to heal. To study psychological trauma means bearing witness to horrible events. The ordinary response to atrocities is to eliminate them from consciousness or to dismiss them as just another event. Atrocities, however, refuse to be forgotten or buried. Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites for restoring the social order and healing individual victims.[4]

Physical wounds are visible and can be treated and significantly healed. However, emotional and psychological wounds are invisible and more difficult to treat. Due to the nature of the wounds and the circumstances surrounding them, frequently, it is difficult to recollect and share traumatic stories. As Herman pointed out, the story of the traumatic event surfaces not as a verbal narrative but as a symptom. Only when the truth about the event is recognized can survivors begin their recovery.[5]

Time and again, the Biblical narrative reminds us of a God who is a God of love, peace, and justice. God is always at work in bringing restoration amid brokenness and unrighteousness. Through his son Jesus Christ, God has made available to all who believe in an alternative life and meaning. Jesus' ministry on earth encompasses what Isaiah taught and lived: "Learn to do good: seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, and please the widow's cause" (Isaiah 1:17).

We can do good by advocating for the powerless, providing a safe environment to heal from their loss and grief, and proactively engaging in the works of bringing healing and justice. Confronting horrible, terrifying memories in a safe environment helps people work through the traumatic history. Continuously avoiding trauma memories keeps those memories in the present, with all their associated pain, fear, rage, anxiety, shame, and self-blame.[6] Through recollecting and narrating, things come to light, and further understand what happened. The survivor learns to recreate the psychological faculties damaged or distorted by the traumatic experience, find new ways to restore connections, learn to trust again and take new initiatives to recover. The psychological wound is invisible and, therefore, often complex to deal with. However, with time, proper treatment, and care, people can experience healing in some ways.

Conflicts are inevitable. Human beings are capable of doing good as well as destruct. Most of the crises we face are our own doing when we fail to live in the light and teachings of Christ. Our world today demands from us our response, individual as well as collective. In light of the evil around us, we ought to practice thoughtful theological reflection and ponder on ways to address our pain and suffering.

I would like to end with these verses from Lamentations 3:46–57

> *All our enemies open their mouths against us; panic and pitfall have come upon us, devastation and destruction; my eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of the daughters and sons of my people.*
>
> *My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, until the Lord from heaven looks down and sees; my eyes cause me grief at the fate of my city's daughters and sons.*
>
> *I have been hunted like a bird by those who were my enemies without cause; they flung me alive into the pit and cast stones on me, water closed over my head, I said, I am lost.*
>
> *I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit. You heard my plea. Do not close your ear to my cry for help!*
>
> *You came near when I called on you; you said, "Do not fear!"*

Endnotes

1 Janoff-Bulman, *Trauma and Recovery*.
2 Williams and Poijula, *The PTSD Workbook*.
3 Schiraldi, *The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Sourcebook*.
4 Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.
5 Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*.
6 Astin and Rothbaum, *Exposure Therapy for the Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*.

Theological Education and Ministerial Formation at a Historic Crossroads in Nigeria

Ernest Chibuzo Osuchukwu

Dr Ernest Chibuzo Osuchukwu *has master's and doctoral degrees in biblical studies and theological education. He has authored some books and articles. He was a research scholar at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, United Kingdom, and Oversee Mission Study Centre, Princeton, United States. Ernest works as a missionary, priest, and theological and religious educator. He is the parish priest of Umunakanu and a lecturer in the Department of Religion at Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu Alaike Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.*

Theological education is an exciting and integrated system that requires a constant supply of qualified scholars to discover new knowledge and better ways of propagating the gospel. What I believe to be true is that most postulants who enter theological colleges in Nigeria desirous of graduating with zeal and regenerated hearts end up disappointed on graduation. This is because most of our Anglican seminary curriculum these days is explicitly based on those of the affiliate universities. Unfortunately, our Christian education has been concerned with information rather than formation for some time.

It is becoming evident in Nigeria that most theological programmes and teachers assume that doctrinal analysis and biblical studies are essential for a theologian's repertoire, but catechesis and related pastoral studies are not academic but merely the application of theology. Therefore, we need to urgently realize that the life structure of our theological education community will produce more spiritual transformation in the lives of our postulants than mere academic pursuits. Therefore, we need to practice and pursue a vision and mission of a Christian education that requires a correlated pedagogy that honours the spiritual formative role.

Pillay writes,

> A long time before the first universities in the West, the church, through its cathedral schools, was the progenitor of education and schooling. There was no England or Europe until languages were given a script and until oral histories were written down in a word, and schools began. Illiterate priests were taught Latin to read the scripture, which in turn fostered so much of the early medieval cultural renewal of what was to become Western Europe. The steeples of our cathedrals, therefore, are not merely a symbol of the religious moorings of Western European culture; they are also symbols of how Europe came to be civilized.[1]

Going by the reality of the assertion above, we need to rethink and restate the case of theological education in Nigeria, starting with linking religiosity and educational attitudes and achievements in ministry. We must

not be complacent about this very task. If we fail, it will lead to the demise of what used to be one of the best educational systems in the world.

Conceptual Framework

Many religious educators have called for an emphasis on constant evaluation of theological curricula and programmes. As far back as 1966, Wyckoff defined evaluation as:

> A systematic comparison of some aspects of Christian education practice with the standards that should characterize its operations in that area, looking toward identifying points at which improvement is needed.[2]

For Wyckoff, evaluation consists of deciding on functional categories, describing the existing situation, setting up standards, and comparing the situation with the standards.

Another strong advocate of systemic evaluation in religious education is Schaefer.[3] He gave attention to evaluation in his programme planning theory for adults' Christian education. In his view, evaluation is a general category that makes judgments about the programme's objectives, personnel, scope, process, timing, and context.

Finch and Crunkilton stated that the curriculum includes courses and experiences associated with preparing for life and earning a living.[4] A curriculum should be a powerful tool that can change and contribute to positive learning experiences in preparing students for all the changes and challenges of the twenty-first century.

According to Sunday B. Agang,

> Almost everyone in Africa acknowledges that we live in an Africa we do not want. It is not that we do not love Africa; we do, passionately and deeply. There is much that is good and beautiful in Africa and much that we can be proud of in our past. But when we look around us, we see abundant evidence that all is not well in Africa.[5]

The above assertion is further highlighted in the African Union Commission Agenda 2063, Aspiration 5, which states: "Africa is a continent of people with religious and spiritual beliefs, which play a profound role in the construction of the African identity and social interaction" while this Agenda opposes "all forms of politicization of religion and religious extremism," it does not deny that in Africa our ethics and values are shaped by our religious beliefs and theologies." Therefore, curriculum transformation and renewal is the needed opportunity to constantly reflect anew on the content and method of delivery of religious, theological, ethical, and moral education in Nigeria. There is no doubt that at all times, education shapes students who, in turn, will graduate to go and shape the society around them.

Religious and Theological Education in Nigeria

Religious and theological education have their origin anchored in the Old Testament scriptures. The Torah, which happens to be the first curriculum of religious and theological education ever known to humanity, was used in ancient Hebrew times as an instrument of sound education. The Torah was, for them, a pedagogical instrument. It was as a result of the use of the Torah that the Greek word *didache* was developed. This word means "teaching – religious and theological education."

Andrew Walls opined,

> The church's association with books and learning has always been manifest; even today, the English word "clerical" has two meanings: One referring to the ministry of the church (as in clerical dress"), and the other referring to occupations where writing is a characteristic activity (as in "administrative and clerical workers"). The clerical class, the "clergy," were the spiritual guides of Christendom and Christendom then was Christianity expressed territorially and virtually co-extensive with the church, the people of God. All community members were now church members and baptised in infancy accordingly. Christianity was the law and custom of the states and peoples that made up Christendom. No community member can easily opt out of that community's law and customs."[6]

The Eastern and Western earliest churches separated ministry into that of the "clergy", distinct from the "laity." Before this period, Christian education was for the whole church. After this distinction, western Christianity developed in a different climate in which, while the church as a whole, in principle, received Christian teaching, the clergy (the clerical class) were trained to be experts, both in theology and learning generally.

According to Andrew Walls,

> It was a network of immigrant churches in London that provided for the Church Missionary Society (CMS) most of its earliest missionaries. They eventually opened a training college at Islington, which continued through the nineteenth century. The school provided both missionary training and imparted sufficient liberal education. Many promising young men from West Africa were also sent there: Samuel Ajai Crowther, his son, son-in-law, and others. By mid-century, some young African clergy were becoming better educated than the senior English missionaries under whom they were serving, to the disgruntlement of the latter.[7]

For a very long time, the training of missionaries seems to have followed the general lines of training for the home ministry. It was long before topics specific to the mission field impacted Western theological education, even for missionaries. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that missionaries followed the patterns they already knew when it came to establishing training for the emerging churches of Africa and Asia.

Walls equally thinks that there were essentially similar patterns of theological education forged in the exceptional circumstances of Western Christianity, which were passed to the new churches that emerged in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. According to Martin Luther, the logos part of the word "theology" signals rational processes; it is equally important to insist that "a theology is born by living, nay dying and being damned, not by thinking, reading, and speculation."[8]

The history of theological and religious education in Nigeria is fascinating. In 1842, the Western missionaries established the first School in Nigeria, precisely in Badagry. Christian religious studies were obviously among the first subjects taught. It was one of the main requirements for graduation for every student. Within a very short period, it spread to northern Nigeria, where Christian religious education was taught in schools. The Christian missionaries, consisting of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Methodists, and Roman Catholics, were the owners of the schools. This was the genesis of teaching religious education in Nigeria, and ever since then, it has occupied a prominent place in the national school curriculum.

According to Nduka, the arrival to Nigeria of the Christian missionaries, whose primary aim was to convert the heathens to the Christian faith and to civilize them, brought about the beginning of Christian education in Nigeria—this period also coincided with that period in which attempts were made to abolish the slave trade. Consequently, formerly enslaved people captured and resettled in Sierra Leone attempted to trace their birthplace. Most of them had been exposed to the Christian faith and could read and write because of their contact with white missionaries who returned to Nigeria from Sierra Leone to preach the Christian faith to their brethren. They invited Christian mission agencies to settle in their birthplaces to spread the word of God to the people.

These various Christian missions did not arrive in Nigeria at the same time. The Methodist mission first came to Badagry in 1842 and, from there, moved into Yoruba land in 1850. From western Nigeria, they moved to the eastern part. Various other missions, especially the CMS, followed the same pattern. One thing common to all of them was that wherever they went, they opened church houses for the missionaries and worship and religious education took place. This made Christianity and education inseparable in most communities, especially in eastern Nigeria.

These mission agencies established mission schools, which were, in most cases, boarding. The motive behind the introduction of education then was for conversion to Christianity on the part of the mission agencies and to produce a literate class of people who would serve as clerks and run errands on the part of the colonial administrators. This gave rise to an education system that was not tailored to the cultural heritage and sociological environment that would promote African personality and heritage.

It is on record that the Protestant missions came to Nigeria before the Catholic missions; their aims and objectives differed. At the same time, the Catholic missions sought to provide moral and religious education and to bring civilization influence on "pagan" communities, the Protestant missions aimed at training the young by giving them liberal education to create well prepared, well instructed, and well-proven congregations. Thus, to the Protestant missions, education, the building of schools, hospitals, and centres for elementary industrial training were all integral parts of evangelism.

Janet Salubuji quotes Fafunwa as saying,

> The Christian missionary schools were more concentrated in southern Nigeria because the missionaries first settled and operated there long before appearing in the north. All the Christian denominations, Church Missionary Society, Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Qua-Iboe, and others taught religious education in their schools. They made their aim clear ("Africa for Christ") and spared no effort to achieve this using the schools.[9]

For Bishop Crowther, in particular, the school was his chief method of evangelization. The children admitted into these schools were converted whether their parents liked it. Bible knowledge, Christian hymns, and catechism were taught to pupils. The Bible was the master textbook, and every subject had to be connected to the Holy Bible, no matter how remote. Throughout the period of exclusive mission activities in southern Nigeria, missionaries were busy teaching religious education in schools. Even after promulgating the first education ordinance in 1882, the missionaries continued teaching religious education in southern and northern Nigeria. It was even made a compulsory subject which, if not passed, would cause a student not to be promoted.

Then, in 1976, the government of Nigeria took over all schools belonging to the missions and made them public schools. The resultant effect was that religious education was treated with contempt in the north and

south. This marked the beginning of the watering down of Nigeria's theological and religious education curriculum. It should be noted here that, to a very great extent, religious education in Nigeria's public schools is currently very susceptible to the sensitivities of the chequered religious climate in the country. Therefore, a serious attempt should be made to redress the many claims of religious bias and discrimination by evolving an excellent religious education curriculum and policies at all levels.

Nigerian Religious Landscape

Nigeria is home to Africa's largest Muslim and Christian populations. Nigeria is divided roughly in half between Muslims living primarily in the north and Christians mainly living in the south. Some Indigenous religions of the Igbo and Yoruba ethnicities are in the minority. The Christian population is declining due to a lower fertility rate compared to Muslims in the north, with higher rates. Nigeria's constitution ensures freedom of religion.

During the pre-amalgamated Nigeria, the introduction of Islam preceded that of Christianity. According to Timothy Njoku, the first contact of Islam with Nigeria was through the Arab and Berber traders who came to the northern part of Nigeria through Egypt during the 19th century.[10] The more substantial introduction of Islam to Nigeria was through Fulani Muslims, who migrated to Nigeria following the fall of the ancient kingdom of Songhay in the 15th century. Njoku claimed that Islam remained a minority religion in northern Nigeria for a while. Still, by the 19th century, the religion had become the dominant religion in northern Nigeria. Between the 17th and 18th centuries, it gradually entered other parts of Nigeria, especially among the southwest Yoruba people.

Ajibola Ilesanmi believes that the successful Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio in the 19th century marked the height of Islam's influence in parts of Nigeria.[11] For most of that religious revival, the spread of Islam was limited to the northern part and parts of the Yoruba land in the southwest. The British colonial rule bolstered the presence of Islam in these parts of the country. The British colonial officers prioritized the Muslims over Western-educated Nigerians, who were mostly Christians, for political reasons and gave Muslims some advantages over followers of traditional religions. They considered Muslims more intelligent and civilized than those adherents to traditional religions. Toyin Falola summarized it thus:

> Although the Muslim elite was initially hostile to the British, especially in the north, where it was worried about losing its political hold, there is not much truth to the assertion that the British authority was hostile. British colonial officers were ambivalent in their attitude to Islam but consistent in their belief that irrational treatment of Muslims would stand in the way of colonial objectives. It was unnecessary to persuade colonial officers of the importance of Islam's role; they wanted to tap its advantages for their benefit through a policy of paternalism. Muslims were regarded as more intelligent and civilized than adherents to traditional religions. Ironically, the Muslim elite were also preferred over Western-educated Nigerians, who came to be regarded as arrogant and impatient. Indeed, the British found it useful to minimize the influence of the Western-oriented elite by promoting the cause of Islam and its elite.[12]

Naturally, Muslims are deeply convinced of their religion and its precepts and take their religion as coherent and capable of aiding its adherents in navigating a world stained with moral decadence.

The advent of Christianity and Islam into Nigeria's political and religious landscape proves that both were positively disposed to engage the religion of the people they met on equal footing. Unfortunately, both were exclusive in their approach towards the religions and adherents they met on arrival. They focused on the propagation of their religious beliefs. As a result, they polarized most parts of Nigeria along different religious identities. As time passed, the schools these religious bodies established in areas where they were dominant became synonymous with the religions they professed. The desire of their followers to transmit their religious worldviews in their various strongholds found their expression in the kinds of curricula they executed in the various schools they established.

Regarding Nigeria's major ethnic groups and religious affiliations, the Hausa ethnic group in the north is mostly Muslims, and the Yoruba tribe in the west is divided among mainly Muslims and Christians, with many followers of traditional religions. The Igbos of the east and Ijaws of the south are equally predominantly Christians, with some practitioners of traditional religions. The middle belt minority ethnic groups are mostly Christians and Christian converts, as well as members of traditional religions with a few Muslim converts. The World Christian Encyclopedia figures predict that Muslims and Christians will continue to grow as a proportion of the population through 2050. Their projections predict Christians at that time will make up forty-eight per cent of the total Nigerian population while Muslims will be forty-eight per cent. Both are growing at the expense of ethnic traditional religions, which will move down to 2.9% of the general population of Nigeria by the year 2050.

Ministerial Formation in Nigeria

Pastoral formation and theological education in Nigeria were pioneered by missionaries from the West, most of whom did not know much about the inner dynamics of the Nigerian people's culture and religious heritage. This problem has continued until now due to the residential nature of most of our theological training institutions for pastoral formation. Most of the curriculum in use seriously lacked contextualisation. The problem will continue until our curriculum aligns with Nigerian society's cultural traits and religious dynamics, among whom they will do ministry after their training. As a result of schooling and indoctrination, every Nigerian elite has been invaded by the cultural and religious values of the country of origin of their religious denominations. Most of our school curricula have been overloaded with cultural values from Europe and North America to exclude Nigerian cultural and religious heritage.

This significant dissonance between our theological relevance has led to a pastoral workforce that is very inadequate and very weak to deliver and serve in their different congregations contextually. Indigenisation of our ministerial formation in Nigeria is long overdue and should be pursued vigorously.

Currently, in most of our theological training institutions in Nigeria, we operate in what Bernhard Ott termed "additionalism" as far as our curriculum is concerned. According to him, this means a situation where the core curriculum and the programme's overall structure have arisen over time and are more or less given. The calm that this has created by merely maintaining and administering a given study programme will be frequently disrupted by new demands. Some of these demands arise from the area of praxis, more training in counselling, enterprise education, missions, and additional areas of pastoral theology.

The situation created by these demands could lead to "additionalism" – add something here, place additional hours there, expand this course, supplement that course, etc. Because the core curriculum must be maintained,

this scope and length of study grows. Our intended solution can only be found in a proactive curriculum. This will require those responsible for the curriculum planning to take control and notice of these issues at hand now. They should develop it with wisdom and perspective.

Most seminaries have a significant student-teacher ratio gap due to the student population. This makes it impossible for the students to get the necessary personal and individual attention from the tutors for their proper formation. The theological seminaries with manageable sizes still have a big gap between tutors and students. At best, they emphasise discipline, rules, and regulations.

Socially, there seems to be a considerable gap between the teachers and seminarians in most theological colleges. Life in the seminary seems to be much more controlled and different from real life outside the seminary premises. The seminarians seem to see themselves as being in a different class than life in the outer society, where they are being prepared to serve after training. Because the priesthood is regarded as a privileged class here in Nigeria, the postulants believe they are a special class of human beings. The consequence is that it sometimes degenerates into a clear superiority complex, an attitude that creates a big gap between them and the members of the society they are meant to serve after graduation. This creates a situation whereby there is a huge social distance between the clergy and the laity in real-life practice.

This problem could be traced to colonial legacy because social stratification is an idea Africans inherited from the colonial masters and has refused to leave off our psyche and practice. For any meaningful, significant change on this, the curriculum must find a way to address this social dichotomy issue.

As pointed out earlier in this work, the present seminary formation curriculum in use is overtly laying a firm emphasis on highly intellectual and academic content. The aspect of spiritual and human development formations is minimal and ineffective. Much of what is taught and learned may not be the students' basic needs to help make them effective in their future pastoral ministry. This has a way of being transferred into parish ministry where, most of the time, their output will be very much divorced from the reality on the ground and the pastoral needs of the parishioners. As a result, spirituality and theology do not actively encourage positive change for social justice. Much religiosity, praying, etc., goes everywhere in Nigeria but is never linked to positive action and output. There has continually been a significant gap between faith and practice in all facets of Christian life. Religion still functions as opium that can lull people to fatalism and slumber. This is still the situation we are in presently. If this must change, then there is a great need to confront it using an improved content of the seminary training curriculum.

Missiological Theology and Formation

The formation of ministers in theological colleges should emphasise different approaches aimed at preparation for work, development of analytical thinking and critical reflection, and induction into the culture of missiology. In theological education, one of the recent advances has been the growing recognition that theological education should attend to the development of the whole person and that spiritual formation and rational skills are all significant and cognitive development in preparing people for a successful Christian ministry. The goal of the traditional intellectual approach and the academic approach to the study of theology in theological colleges in Nigeria has often omitted personal missionary formation elements despite evidence that the students in these colleges have often enrolled for formation and missionary reasons.

Du Preez et al. asserted, "If one can effectively change theological institutions to be truly missional, the impact in sub-Saharan Africa will be notable."[13] They further argued that it is indeed regrettable. Still, some theological institutions, their curricula, and models of training pastors are often a stumbling block for church growth. It seems evident that to prepare leaders for missional congregations; the curricula should be missional by nature, dedicating ample time to the witnessing task of the church and involving other spheres outside of the comfortable borders of the congregation or institution. For any institution to be able to prepare leaders for missional congregations, the thrust and ethos of the institutions should equally be missional.

Challenges Facing Religious and Theological Education in Nigeria

All over the world today, higher education in general and religious and theological education in particular is witnessing a historic shift in social role. Evan Schofer et al., in their research study, write:

> In 1900, roughly 500,000 students were enrolled in higher education institutions worldwide, representing a tiny fraction of about one per cent of College age people . . . By 2000, the number of tertiary students had grown two hundredfold to approximately 100 million people, which represents about twenty per cent of the university enrolment age-cohort worldwide.[14]

As the Nigerian society and economy are changing in knowledge-driven and several other ways, demand for access to higher education has continued to grow. The traditional assumption regarding higher education is that it can serve a broad public purpose. This has put higher education in Nigeria under colossal pressure to accommodate more students. Our higher education system is now earnestly begging for new ways to make it a process of formation rather than just a process of information.

As a result of these situations, a lot of challenges have arisen. The researcher, therefore, has identified some of the significant challenges facing religious and theological education in Nigeria, including but not limited to the following:

1. **The Development of Viable Faculty:** The quality of teaching and learning that will ever take place in any institution depends on the efficiency of the teaching staff. Nigeria's educational institutions have churned out several scholars doing well in teaching and research. However, much still needs to be done in providing sound professional development for evangelical academic and administrative leadership to help our theological institutions pursue a quality and excellent theological education.
2. **Revitalization of Cultural Identity**: In the early periods of Christian education in Nigeria, most Christian mission agencies that came and worked in Nigeria introduced various cultural and religious values from their home countries. What seems to be a significant cultural invasion took place everywhere in Nigeria. Today, we are troubled by the after-effects and counter-effects of that.
3. **Models of Our Theological Training:** In Nigeria today and across all the denominations, theological and even religious education is almost always linked to ordination. The academic and professional study of religion and theology is left to a very privileged few. It is now becoming very unusual for anybody to enrol for religious or theological studies except for the intention of joining the clerical hierarchy as a priest and pastor. This has reduced the number of potential students to those needed by the various denominations dominating specific regions and localities.

4. **Poor Funding of Theological Institutions:** In almost all our religious and theological educational institutions, contributions from the congregations who own these institutions are not always sufficient to sustain the expected expenditure by these institutions. We inherited a system of theological education that is highly dependent.
5. **Governance, Management, and Administration:** In Nigeria today, our universities and theological institutions are meant to be committed to the basic principles of good governance to ensure an atmosphere that will encourage teaching and research. This requires them to cultivate the ability to respond to operational agility, technical ingenuity, and strategic relevance challenges. In Nigeria, one of the most significant problems is that sometimes, most board members of our tertiary education institutions do not have the requisite skills and education to govern these institutions.
6. **Facilities:** In most universities and theological colleges in Nigeria presently, facilities are not yet sufficiently developed to achieve maximum standards of academic and spiritual formation of the students. These facilities need improvement, including good academic blocs with well-ventilated classrooms. Classroom furniture such as tables, chairs, chalkboards, electricity, projectors, internet services, etc., will make teaching and learning easy and pleasurable. We need good administrative buildings with staff offices and conveniences, well-equipped libraries that professionals, halls of residence handle with adequate and comfortable accommodation for the students, well-built and equipped chapels for daily worship and other practical events, good recreational facilities like a standard football pitch, sports arena, and even indoor games, good functional school buses for ministry, and well-built and equipped staff quarters.
7. **Others:** There are numerous problems and challenges facing religious and theological education in Nigeria. A few others include the following:

    A. Fragmentation of theological knowledge.

    B. Competitions and rivalries among various institutions and denominations.

    C. Rivalry between the church and the Nigerian society.

    D. Inadequate curricula development and delivery.

    E. Shortage in staffing supply and unfavourable conditions of service.

    F. Staff and student discipline.

    G. Staff and student welfare.

    H. Flaws in the admission processes and procedures.

    I. Teaching and learning methodologies.

    J. Clergy and laity rivalry, unorganized alumni, ecumenism, evaluation, and accreditations.

On the other hand, many scholars have been clamouring for the Africanization of religious and theological education in almost all the countries of Africa in this current post-colonial Africa. This means a renewed focus on Africa and her worldviews. Theological and religious education has always reflected Europe in scope and delivery. Some black African theologians have also contributed to this because they grew up learning how to

write, teach, and assess students just like the Europeans to fit into the dominant culture and Western hegemony as well as their epistemology. This idea was emphasized by M. E. Andraos thus:

> Eurocentric approaches are dominant in the field of theology influencing both the content and the way knowledge is communicated. The black African is challenged to ask the question how do we include voices and sources from other cultural perspectives in our knowledge importation?[15]

A theological curriculum appropriate to its context must ensure success in both theological education's knowledge and skills aspects. Africans must ensure that the curricula used in their theological institutions are relevant to the African context. This can be made possible by continuously revising the curriculum regularly, so it doesn't become outdated. This is more urgent now because, in the past three decades, the mushrooming of several African independent churches has also led to the proliferation of several Bible schools, most of which are not up to standard. This equally includes university religious studies departments and even faculties of theology. The appetite for giving the clergy and other church workers sound theological education is growing.

These and many other issues beg for solutions in our universities and theological colleges.

Endnotes

1 Pillay, *Mapping the Field*, 10.
2 Wycoff, *Theory and Design of Christian Education Curriculum*, 144.
3 Shaefer, *Program Planning for Christian Adult Education*, 200.
4 Finch and Crunkilton, *Curriculum Development in Vocational and Technical Education*.
5 Agang, *The Need for Public Theology in Africa*, 14.
6 Walls, “Theological Education from its Earliest Jewish and African Christian Beginnings,” 7.
7 Walls, “Theological Education from its Earliest Jewish and African Christian Beginnings,” 11.
8 Luther, *Table Talk*, 352.
9 Salubuyi, “Christian Religious Education Curriculum Development,” 203.
10 Njoku, “Christians and Muslims in Nigeria,” 1.
11 Ilesanmi, *A Theological Analysis of Confessional–centric Curriculum of Christian Religious Education*, 46
12 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 27.
13 Du Preez et al., “Missional Theological Curricula and Institution,” 1.
14 Schofer et al, “The Worldwide Expansion of Higher Education in the Twentieth Century,” 898.
15 Andraos, “Engaging Diversity in Teaching Religion and Theology,” 3.

An Introduction to World Christianity as a Discipline and Methodology

Graham Joseph Hill

Rev Dr Graham Joseph Hill *is Baptist Mission Australia State Leader (WA), Editor of the Australian Journal of Mission Studies, and author of thirteen books (see his author website at www.GrahamJosephHill.com). Hill is a Research Associate at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. ORCID: 0000-0002-6532-8248*

Any expedition through the grand narrative of global Christianity must pause and consider the cartography of scholarly terrain. The disciplines of practical theology, intercultural theology, and world Christianity are not isolated islands in an academic archipelago but interlocking landforms in a rich and complex tapestry. Viewing them as wholly independent would be as misleading as reductionist.

Let me be clear: while there exists a certain distinctiveness within each of these disciplines and methodologies—each with its contours, its particular landmarks—it is precisely in their overlap, their rich interplay, that some of the most profound insights are to be found. In this volume, I respectfully salute this triad of interwoven disciplines as I map out the methodological course for our journey through world Christianity.

So, there will be instances in these pages where you will find me laboring in the vineyards of practical theology, meandering through the rich landscapes of intercultural theology, or setting sail on the expansive waters of world Christianity. Often, you will find me engaging in a harmonious blend of all three. These are not rivalrous undertakings. Far from it, they are harmonious endeavors, each enriching and informing the other in a divine choreography of interdisciplinarity.

It is true, perhaps much to the academic purist's discomfort, that the terms 'intercultural theology' and 'world Christianity' sometimes find themselves used in a manner that suggests interchangeability. While subtleties may be lost in this linguistic flexibility, my abiding allegiance is to the methodologies and vibrant vistas of world Christianity. This discipline not only stands with its unique bearing but also graciously borrows from the other two, enriching itself while preserving its unique timbre and methods.

Thus, as we navigate this intricate maze, I invite you to keep your eyes open to the interlocking disciplines that inform our quest. The richness of our journey depends not on a simplistic division of these realms but on a deep appreciation for how they mutually illuminate and invigorate one another.

Practical or Applied Theology

To navigate the rich landscape of practical theology, one must first come to terms with its multifaceted identity, a project undertaken with vigor by scholars in the field. Helen Cameron et al. provide one such vista: "Practical theology is a discipline committed to making whole and dynamic the truthfulness of Christian thought and action, through the bringing together aspects of faith which, in truth, can never be separated from one another. Practical theology seeks explicit and varied ways to enable the Christian practitioner to articulate faith – to speak of God, in practice."[1] John Swinton and Harriet Mowatt also weigh in, writing, "Practical Theology is critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, to ensure and enable faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world."[2]

As we might expect in such a rich field of inquiry, various seminal figures have provided contours and landmarks. Thinkers like Dale Andrews, Don Browning, Elaine Graham, Thomas Groome, Gerben Heitink, and Richard Osmer have contributed significantly, among many others, and the choir of their voices reverberates in academic halls and parish pews alike.[3]

Practical theology finds itself wonderfully and challengingly poised at the crossroads of grand theological ideas and the gritty particularities of lived faith. It aims to be neither a remote ivory tower nor a retreat into the comfort of unexamined devotion. In this energetic tension, practical theology claims its unique character, tirelessly working to make sense of faith within the labyrinth of human existence.

At the epicenter of this quest lies the notion of reflective practice. Far from standing on the sidelines as a detached observer, practical theology plunges into the depths of real-world religious phenomena. It holds the actions and beliefs of faith communities up to the light, scrutinizing and refining them in an ongoing cycle of theological examination.

The versatility of practical theology is evident in its willingness to seek wisdom from neighboring disciplines like sociology, psychology, and education, among others. This isn't an eclectic shopping spree but a deeply considered methodological choice. It acknowledges that understanding religious practices and beliefs necessitates a comprehensive grasp of the human condition in various dimensions.

When you get to the crux of the matter, the term "praxis" seems to distill the essence of practical theology. It denotes a concern for marrying theory with practice, aiming to understand religious actions and enrich their meaning and effectiveness.

Perhaps Richard Osmer's articulation of the "four tasks" best captures the discipline's methodological sophistication. There's an initial mapping of the terrain by describing a religious practice or situation, then an interpretative phase that considers its significance in wider historical and cultural contexts. This groundwork is followed by forming a normative response, often rooted in classical theological traditions. The whole endeavor then culminates in constructing actionable strategies in sync with theological and practical wisdom.

Following in the footsteps of scholars like Don S. Browning, the discipline works to yoke theological concepts to the lived experiences of individuals and communities. It seeks not only to hover above the realm of human experience with high-flown theological ideas but to incarnate these ideas in the daily challenges and opportunities of human living.

The pastoral heartbeat of practical theology is palpable. Informed by its insights, pastors and counselors approach their tasks with a new depth, and its influence can be felt in the methodologies of ministries spanning a wide array of community and individual concerns.

True to its nature, practical theology employs empirical methods to provide solid ground for its reflections. It does not shy away from the rigor of interviews, surveys, and direct observations, ensuring that its assessments are not castles in the sky but are deeply rooted in the lived experiences of communities of faith.

Yet, practical theology is not satisfied with being a mere chronicler. It picks up the lens of critique, evaluating practices against established theological norms, hoping to generate richer, more robust, and theologically congruent ways of practicing faith.

The discipline, acutely aware of its social and cultural milieu, gives due weight to contextual factors. Recognizing that faith is practiced in particular spaces shaped by history, culture, and a host of other influences, it pays close attention to these shaping forces as it conducts its theological analysis.

Lastly, practical theology is, at its core, a conversation—a multi-voiced dialogue within religious traditions, between theological experts and ordinary believers, and even between faith communities and the wider societies in which they exist. These dialogues bring new perspectives into view, enriching the discipline and allowing for constructive growth and understanding.

Practical theology emerges as a vibrant nexus of thought and action, dynamically engaged with the Word and the world. Its embrace of real-world phenomena, interdisciplinary wisdom, and commitment to the transformative power of reflective religious practice make it a vital, pulsating part of the theological constellation today.

Intercultural Theology

The rich tapestry of human experience, stitched together by threads of culture and spirituality, calls for a theological imagination capable of grasping its complex textures. Here enters intercultural theology, to which Henning Wrogemann offers a precise introduction: "From a cultural-semiotic perspective, [intercultural hermeneutics] is the attempt to decode other, foreign cultures using the medium of their conceptions and terminology, i.e., to identify that meaning, those referential connections, and that relevance that things have for people from the culture in question."[4]

The guild of scholars who map this intricate field is noteworthy and varied, featuring names like Walter Hollenweger, Maria Pilar Aquini, and Maria Jose Rosado-Nunes.[5] Each adds unique contours to a sprawling theological landscape that increasingly demands attention in our globalized, multicultural epoch.

In navigating this fertile ground, intercultural theology, as a discipline, positions itself as a theological cartographer of the crossroads where cultures and religious traditions meet, converse and even clash. In a world swept up in the tides of globalization, the discipline offers a lighthouse illuminating the multifaceted interactions that characterize contemporary spiritual landscapes.

At its core, intercultural theology thrives on dialogue. This is not a sign of indecisiveness but an acknowledgment that no single religious or cultural narrative can claim to possess the complete lexicon in which the Divine has chosen to speak. Through the mutuality of discourse, the lexicons of diverse traditions can enrich, clarify, and deepen our collective understanding of divine mysteries.

The dialogical principle, however, is anchored in the recognition that theology is always conducted within particular frameworks—each woven from the threads of specific socio-cultural and historical fabrics. Therefore, the vocation of intercultural theology lies in its acute sensitivity to context. It seeks to interpret the Gospel's eternal melodies in ever-changing cultural keys.

The discipline is not merely content with a seat at the table. It challenges the architectural designs of the table itself, particularly when these have been drafted according to Western blueprints. It carries the democratic impulse into the theological sphere, diversifying the voices that shape our conceptions of the Divine and thereby widening the spectrum of theological discourse.

For intercultural theology, the 'faith once delivered to the saints' is lived out in the myriad marketplaces, temples, and homes that dot the global landscape. By attentively listening to the daily rhythms of faith as they resound in diverse cultural auditoriums, the discipline gains valuable insights into the multitude of ways spirituality is conceived and practiced.

Justice, that great biblical theme, pulsates at the heart of intercultural theology. In kinship with other contextual theologies like feminist and liberation theology, it engages in a vigorous critique of entrenched power dynamics and systemic injustices, seeking to articulate a spiritually enriching and socially transformative faith.

Today's world is not a monolith but a mosaic—intricate patterns of cultural overlap and intermixture shape each piece. Intercultural theology celebrates this hybridity, even as it engages in postcolonial self-examination, interrogating the imperial shadows that still haunt theological and missiological conversations.

The discipline employs a kaleidoscopic lens, synthesizing insights from academic theology, practical theology, and religious studies. This multifaceted perspective enriches its analytical depth and counters the reductive tendencies that often beset theological endeavors.

Intercultural theology brings the 'other' from the margin to the center, offering a platform for voices often relegated to the periphery. It aspires to enlarge our theological canvases by incorporating the hues and textures from genuinely engaging those outside our immediate cultural or religious circles. It invites us to transcend parochialism, broadening our theological imagination's horizons.

Henning Wrogemann's definition of intercultural hermeneutics, placed at the outset, serves as a thematic overture, encapsulating the grand symphony of intercultural theology. It calls us to the noble task of decoding our global neighbors' spiritual and cultural lexicons, not as an academic exercise but as a pathway to mutual enrichment and understanding.

So, intercultural theology stands as a sentinel at the frontiers of religious thought, beckoning us toward a future marked by deeper dialogue, greater inclusivity, and a richer, more harmonious tapestry of global faith expression.

World Christianity

Peter Phan says *world Christianity* studies "the historical, sociological, cultural and theological *diversity* and *multiplicity* of Christianity."[6] In my conversation with Lamin Sanneh at Yale University on April 20, 2015, he made the following insightful observation: "We in the West are a confident and articulate people, and theology has served us well as a vehicle of our aspirations, desires, and goals. There is no shortage of theological books on all sorts of imaginable subjects, with how-to-do manuals instructing us about effective ministry, how to fix

our emotions, how to affirm our individual identity and promote our choices and preferences, how to change society through political action, how to raise funds and build bigger churches, about investing in strategic coalitions, etc. All this language leaves us little time or space to listen to God with the chance that God may have something, and even something else, to say to us, especially if that something else challenges what we want to hear. Regarding the cultural captivity of the gospel in the West, the renewal of world Christianity may have lessons to teach us all."[7]

Some influential scholars in the discipline of world Christianity include Andrew Walls, Dorottya Nagy, Lamin Sanneh, Martha Frederiks, Klaus Koschorke, Brian Stanley, and Peter C. Phan.[8] There are, of course, many others.

In his article "Method in Mission Studies: Comparing World Christianity and Intercultural Theology," John G. Flett argues that the two approaches to mission studies, world Christianity and intercultural theology, are complementary rather than contradictory.[9] Flett says that world Christianity outlines the worldwide spread and development of Christianity, including related historical and sociological factors. He then proposes that intercultural theology examines how Christian faith and culture engage.

Flett then argues that world Christianity is primarily concerned with mission's historical and sociological dimensions. In contrast, intercultural theology primarily concerns mission's theological and missiological dimensions. He argues that world Christianity is more descriptive, while intercultural theology is more normative.

However, Flett argues that these two approaches are not mutually exclusive; they are complementary and enrich our theology and practice of mission. Flett then discusses the implications of his argument for the methodology of mission studies. He argues that mission studies should be descriptive and normative and use world Christianity and intercultural theology. He also argues that mission studies should be contextual, considering the specific needs and contexts of the studied people. Flett's article provides a helpful overview of the two approaches to mission studies and their implications for methodology. His argument that the two approaches are complementary rather than contradictory is valuable to mission studies.

For Flett, world Christianity and intercultural theology are both necessary for a comprehensive understanding of mission. World Christianity is primarily concerned with mission's historical and sociological dimensions, while intercultural theology is primarily concerned with mission's theological and missiological dimensions. World Christianity is more descriptive, while intercultural theology is more normative. Mission studies should be descriptive and normative and use both world Christianity and intercultural theology. Mission studies should be contextual, considering the people's specific needs and contexts. Flett's article is a valuable resource for anyone interested in mission studies. It provides a clear and concise overview of the two main approaches to mission studies and argues persuasively that the two approaches are complementary rather than contradictory.

While I value Flett's scholarship and advocacy for world Christianity, intercultural theology, and mission studies, I bring a different perspective on some similarities and differences between world Christianity and intercultural theology. Flett rightly highlights the historical and sociological emphasis of world Christianity as a discipline. However, in my opinion, he overstates the descriptive nature of world Christianity. It's not the case that intercultural theology is normative and critical while world Christianity is descriptive.

The tapestry of world Christianity, woven in diverse threads yet converging into a unified fabric, presents a vision that challenges our existing paradigms and invites us to venture into uncharted territories of intellectual

exploration. This discourse is not simply about categorizing diverse expressions of the Christian faith globally. Instead, it offers a critical framework for understanding Christianity as a dynamic and complex reality situated within a matrix of power relations, cultural interactions, and historical influences.

To this end, scholars in the realm of world Christianity delve deeply into topics of considerable import, such as the multifaceted nature of religious dialogue—encompassing not merely interfaith but also intercultural, ecumenical, and socio-political conversations. With an analytical finesse, they dissect the contextual elements that shape Christian expressions, scrutinize the colonial shadows cast upon the faith, and offer a more nuanced understanding of the power dynamics at play.

Not to be lumped together simplistically with intercultural theology, world Christianity sets its gaze on a broader horizon. It focuses on themes like power dynamics, colonization, diversity, marginalization, and shared humanity. It is not merely descriptive but analytical and critical, challenging the hegemony of dominant cultures and elevating the voices of those often relegated to the periphery.

If one might venture to encapsulate the essence of world Christianity, it would be that of a critical, analytical, and theologically informed discipline. This lens can sharpen our understanding of the faith's multifaceted expressions, enabling us to avoid cultural imperialism and embrace a pluralistic ethos in our ecclesial practices. It serves as a cartography of global Christian experiences that enriches our faith and deepens our grasp of mission, worship, and theology. While it remains an emerging field, the potential for transformational insights cannot be underestimated.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge world Christianity's paradigm-shifting impact. No longer confined to a Eurocentric or Western-centric vantage point, it affirms the global nature of Christian faith, especially acknowledging the growing Christian presence outside the West.

What we have here is not a fleeting flirtation with diverse Christian expressions but a profound archaeological project. It unearths the rich Christian traditions of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Oceania, and Indigenous cultures, underscoring their historical rootedness.

Similarly, contextual theologies find their home within this discipline. Theological articulation, it contends, is always entwined with cultural, social, and historical contexts. In this crucible of diversity, open dialogue flourishes—dialogue that celebrates the polycentric and decentralized nature of theological authority and acknowledges that wisdom can emanate from any corner of the global Christian community.

Methodologically, world Christianity adopts an interdisciplinary stance. It draws from history, anthropology, cultural studies, and sociology to offer a kaleidoscopic view of Christianity's global incarnations. It also engages in postcolonial critique, taking stock of the complex legacies of Christian missions and colonialism.

This academic endeavor also highlights the ecumenical landscape, examining the confluence of multiple ecclesial expressions and denominations. It explores the intricate relationships between Christianity and other religious traditions, acknowledging the realities of religious pluralism.

Rather than an undue preoccupation with formal doctrines, world Christianity orients itself towards the quotidian experiences of ordinary believers, existing within a myriad of sociopolitical landscapes. It critically examines how Christianity has operated both as an instrument of empire and a voice of resistance, thereby illuminating the complexity of its historical and contemporary manifestations.

In its majestic scope, world Christianity extols the virtues of diversity within unity, challenging us to rethink our inherited norms and doctrines, particularly those tinged with colonial hues. At its core, it aspires to a vision of shared humanity, celebrating each culture's unique contributions to the Christian story while affirming our shared human journey.

Finally, we see a set of holisticostal commitments in world Christianity that bring together the world Christianity methodology, polycentricity, polyvocality, interculturality, integrality, pentecostality, and glocality dimensions of the faith. These nuances, dear reader, are worth further exploration in subsequent discourses. For now, let us be content to stand on the shores of this vast intellectual ocean, contemplating the immeasurable depths that await our discovery.

Table: Eighteen Qualities and Features of World Christianity Methodology

1. Global Perspective: Prioritizes a sweeping understanding that captures the diverse expressions and landscapes of Christianity worldwide.

2. Historical Depth: Dives deep into history to contextualize the emergence and evolution of global Christian movements and traditions.

3. Contextual Theologies: Recognizes theologies arise out of specific cultural, historical, and regional experiences.

4. Intercultural Dialogue: Champions dialogues that bridge cultural gaps, encouraging shared understandings and learnings.

5. Interdisciplinary Approaches: Draws from various academic disciplines to comprehensively understand global Christianity.

6. Collaborative Learnings and Partnerships: Emphasizes learning and growing in collaboration with varied Christian traditions and communities.

7. Attention to Migration and Diaspora: Directs attention to the significant influence of migration patterns on society and Christian expressions and beliefs.

8. Postcolonial Critique: Takes an evaluative approach to understanding and critiquing remnants of colonialism in Christian narratives.

9. Ecumenical Sensitivity: Holds an unwavering appreciation for Christ's diverse but united body, promoting unity amid diversity (and diversity amid unity).

10. Inculturated Leadership: Recognizes and uplifts leadership that emerges directly from grassroots Christian communities.

11. Religious and Secular Pluralism: Engages with the myriad of religious and secular beliefs that coexist with Christianity on the local and global stage.

12. Lived religion: Honors the everyday lived experiences and expressions of faith by Christians locally and globally.

13. Examining Power Dynamics and Hierarchies: Takes a discerning look at power structures, promoting a more egalitarian understanding of Christian theology and institutions.

14. Diversity and Multiplicity: Revels in the vibrant tapestry of traditions, practices, and beliefs within world Christianity.

15. Critical Consciousness: Promotes a conscious engagement that is introspective and responsive to global Christian dynamics.

16. Shared Humanity: Holds dearly the common threads that unite humanity, emphasizing shared experiences and values.

17. Flexibility and Adaptability: Highlights the need for adaptability in methodologies, understanding that contexts and realities are ever-changing.

18. Comprehensive Commitments: Embraces a "holisticostal" approach, incorporating elements like world Christianity methodologies, polycentricity, polyvocality, interculturality, integrality, pentecostality, and glocality, to get a fuller picture of the global Christian landscape.

Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity

When I engage in world Christianity methodology, I shape it around my broader theological method and convictions. I call this theological enterprise *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity.*[10]

Now, to explain this theological method and why I call it *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity.* This is an applied and intercultural theology. Its purpose is to serve, equip, enrich, and reflect the worldwide Body of Christ and enhance theology, *communio*, and mission. It is constructed through a *glocal*, attentive conversation, which honors the voices and contributions of all cultures, but especially those that have been silenced, ignored, and marginalized. This theology prioritizes intercultural, glocal, missiological, and applied theological themes.

Below are the ten *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity.* These ten methodological hallmarks shape my theological enterprise.

Here, I describe these ten methodological hallmarks in shorthand. They are a work in progress. I will explain them in more detail in a future work.

1. Communio is the essential and unifying theological motif. The center of this theological vision and method is the eternal community of the triune God and the community he constitutes. This is not some abstract notion of community. This is not a "communiology," it is a theology.

Communio is the foundation, means, and telos of creation. The triune God exists in eternal *communio* and invites his church into that love. *Communio* is essential to our individual and corporate being, purpose, and future. The triune God calls us into communion with the divine nature, his future glory, fellow Christians, the gospel, and his sufferings, consolations, and hope. We share this vital fellowship with the Trinity and God's

people. A common possession unites Christians. This possession is the divine life and grace offered us in the life, death, resurrection, and hope of Jesus Christ.

Communio ensures that this is a trinitarian theological vision and method. *Communio* tells us that the triune God is the essence, source, aim, and direction of human desire and life. We desire union with God and with others.

The church is a trinitarian, global-local, missional, diverse, transformed, sanctified, and historical-eschatological community. The triune God calls it into *communio* with Godself and each other, shaping us into the new humanity in Jesus Christ. This communion makes us attentive to and passionate about world Christianity methodology, polycentricity, polyvocality, interculturality, integrality, pentecostality, and glocality.

So, *communio* is the essential and unifying motif in *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity.* This theological imagination is shaped for and by the new humanity in Jesus Christ. This community comes from every nation, culture, ethnic group, and language.

2. The gospel is the climax of the defining narrative. A narrative defines my theological method. This is the triune God's story, especially the story of Jesus Christ. The gospel is the climax of this defining narrative.

1 Corinthians 15:3–4 tells us that the gospel is "of first importance." What is the gospel? "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, he was buried, and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." How does this gospel shape our lives, communities, and theology? "For Christ's love compels us because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor 5:14–15).

Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity attends to the entire, defining biblical narrative (creation to eschaton). In one sense, this whole narrative is the story of Jesus and the gospel. But, in another sense, the gospel is the climax of that story, as revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The entire defining biblical story describes our being. It frames our identity. It determines our purpose. It gives us our mission. It reveals our hope. This story shapes my theology's vision—a vision of God (the *visio Dei*). This biblical narrative must frame, infuse, and shape all theology. This includes our Christology, pneumatology, eco-theology, missiology, ecclesiology, soteriology, and eschatology.

The gospel story extends from creation to the end of history and the consummation of God's kingdom. *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity* acknowledges the centrality of biblical witness and narrative. At the same time, it honors the climax of that story, in the person and work of Jesus Christ. So, the gospel calls us to attend to personal salvation and the restoration of all things in Christ. The gospel is an invitation to join the story of the triune God, of biblical Israel, of the Jewish Jesus, and of God's reign. A narrative defines *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity*, and the gospel is the climax of that story.

3. Mission is the "mother," wellspring, and driving force. Mission is the impetus, power, energy, motivation, fountain, and "mother" of my theological method. As Martin Kähler says, "Mission is the mother of theology."[11] For the early church, theology grew out of mission, and mission was enriched by theology. David Bosch says the church theologized out of (and as a result of) its missionary encounter with the world. So, we must theologize in mission. We need a missional theology and a theological mission.

Communio leads to the mission of God, the gospel story, and us joining in that mission and story. The missional God (*missio Dei*) has a missional church. The church does not have its own mission. God has a mission, and the church joins that mission.

Since *communio* includes restoring all things in fellowship with the triune God, our mission must be integral and holistic. We join the messianic mission of the Son, in the power of the Spirit, to the glory of the Father. Such an integral mission dismantles all polarities and oppositional binaries. We tear down false divides, such as evangelism–justice, sacred–secular, proclamation–action, practical–theological, Word–Spirit, and more. *Communio* leads to an integral mission incorporating proclamation, justice, healing, creation care, politics, signs and wonders, reconciliation, and human flourishing.

Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity privileges and accentuates mission. Missional theology permeates, penetrates, and shapes *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity.*

4. Transformation and renewal are the goals. The church needs transformed and renewed theology, practices, and spirituality. Transformation and renewal are the goals of *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity.* So, my theology seeks orthodoxy (renewed beliefs), orthopraxis (transformed practices), and orthokardia (renovated hearts). All three need to be dynamic, transforming, life-giving, and integrated. All three are about personal and corporate transformation.

Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity refuses imposed and abstract beliefs. It rejects practices that are pragmatic and culturally reduced. It denies spiritualities that are consumeristic and gnostic. Instead, it integrates orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthokardia in multiple ways and at many levels. This requires us to shatter false polarities and divisions, seeking integration. If transformation and renewal are the goals, theology must take on specific features for the discipline and methodology of world Christianity. It must strive to be integrated, integral, holistic, interdependent, missional, disciplined, renovating, revitalizing, prayerful, desirous, loving, gracious, hope-filled, and communal.

5. Attentiveness is the principle mode through which theology is constructed. Theology is continually unfolding in response to the ongoing revelation of divine truth. God continues to reveal himself and his ways to us by many means, persons, cultures, and traditions. (I am not discounting the unique place of Scripture in this revelation). So, theology is *in via*, *en route*, partial, unfolding, and "on the road."

Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity is a work of discernment and the Spirit. It involves hermeneutical awareness and cultural intelligence. It requires attentiveness to the interpretations, lives, cultures, traditions, and views of others. It is about discerning God's divine presence in community and conversation. It comprises prayer, contemplation, study, embodiment, and more.

Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity demands attentiveness to (and conversations with) the church and world. We listen to what God is saying through his church by listening to traditions, interpretations, cultures, ecumenical dialogue, World Christianity, global and local theologies, and "the least of these." We notice what God says by listening to philosophy, science, religions, cultures, worldviews, and more. God is not in all these things at all times. But he is often trying to speak to us in those places. Attentiveness is the principle mode through which we construct theology. Hence, my passion for building theology in conversation with Euro-American, Majority World, Indigenous, First Nations, and diaspora voices.

6. The church is the primary social location. God calls his church to be a distinct people with a distinct ethic, a distinct story, a distinct peace, a distinct community, a distinct diversity, and a distinct witness. The church is a distinct gathered and sent people. *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity* sees the church as the primary social location for theology. We theologize as we gather. We theologize as we disperse (in schools, institutions, workplaces, families, and more). We theologize as we join God in his mission in the world.

The *ekklesia* is a gathered and dispersed embodiment of social, missional, and kingdom ethics. We construct theology as a distinct and alternative *polis.* We need academic theology done in institutions. However, the church is the primary social location of *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity.*

Today, more than ever, we need ecclesial theology. This involves training pastor-theologians, but it is much more than that. We need whole faith communities doing theology together for the good of the church, its *communio*, its theology, and its mission. Ecclesial theology forms as the church gathers and disperses. Ecclesial theology is formed, embodied, and written in the church's service. We must train, support, and release the whole believing community to do ecclesial theology together. Ecclesial theology is undertaken and embodied for fellowship, maturity, discipleship, ministry, witness, ethics, and mission. The church is the primary social location for theology—especially the local church.

7. Culture is the conversation partner.[12] Culture is theology's counterpoint, mirror, conversation partner, protagonist, foil, enricher, and more. *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity* is socially and culturally engaged and located. But it is not socially and culturally reduced.[13] *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity* explores where society, culture, and theology have enriched, shaped, and shackled each other. Sometimes, all these things happen at once. This theology dialogues with a wide range of disciplines. This is a two-way conversation. These disciplines include ethics, politics, philosophy, cultural studies, sociology, social theories, postcolonialism, gender and racial studies, cultural intelligence, aesthetics, creative arts, ecology, health, education, business and leadership studies, history, and more. This theology is interdisciplinary.

8. Eschatology is the orientation. Christianity is an eschatological faith—it is a religion of hope. *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity* is eschatologically oriented. It is captivated by a vision of the rule and reign and kingdom and hope of God. This vision frames all our present efforts and theologizing.

The church is a prophetic voice and a sign of hope. God compels the church to work toward the final reconciliation and restoration of all things. The eschatological kingdom shapes our theology, social ethics,

mission, community, reconciliation, and justice. It forms our desire for the new humanity in Christ and our efforts toward peace and reconciliation. We need to root our theology in practices of compassion, forgiveness, grace, and love as a response to eschatological hope.[14] We need to relinquish self-centeredness and embrace generosity, compassion, and forgiveness. We do this to show the inaugurated, but not yet consummated, kingdom of God.

The kingdom and reign of God is not the church. But, the kingdom is not entirely distinct from the church. The kingdom needs a church, and the church needs the kingdom. The church is part of God's kingdom and essential to God's kingdom, but not the total of it. The kingdom is present wherever God rules. God rules in the church, the lives of individuals, nations, and cultures, and wherever God's word takes root and grows. It is a now-but-not-yet kingdom to use the terms of an *inaugurated eschatology*.

Hans Küng calls the church *the eschatological community of salvation*. The eschatological life, message, death, resurrection, and reign of Jesus Christ ushered in the kingdom.[15] As *the eschatological community of salvation*, the church is *an anticipatory sign* of God's final and already present reign. God's eschatological reign shapes all dimensions of the church's nature, structures, and mission. This, of course, includes its theology. As a servant of God and his eschatological reign, the church directs its whole being toward the kingdom and messianic mission of Jesus Christ.[16] Eschatology orients *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity*. It mediates faith and helps integrate our thoughts, hopes, compassion, justice, prophetic voices, reconciliation, peace, creation care, and so on.

9. Scripture is the "norming norm." As Stanley Grenz and John Franke say, Scripture is theology's "norming norm."[17] It plumbs, measures, illuminates, adjudicates, enlivens, inspires, norms, and more. The Scriptures are the authoritative word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. They have absolute and final authority in all aspects of corporate and individual faith, ethics, conduct, witness, and theology.

Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity embraces biblical authority and does not shy away from it. I'm struck by a trend as I serve among churches in Australia, North America, Europe, and the United Kingdom. Western Christians seem to have a declining passion for memorizing, contemplating, interpreting, and applying Scripture. I find this deeply concerning. When I serve in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, I see the opposite. People are passionate about Scripture. They devour, honor, and memorize it. They interpret it contextually while maintaining a conservative bias. They apply it creatively and bravely. This is instructive for those of us in the West. We need a revival in our enthusiasm for Scripture. This is not so that we "fall in love" with Scripture. Instead, we devour Scripture to know, adore, follow, and magnify our Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to combine faith in God, confidence in Scripture, and contextual forms of interpretation. *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity* makes some assertions about Scripture. The Bible must be devoured to know, love, serve, and glorify Christ. Scripture must be interpreted glocally (globally and locally). The Bible is to be believed and obeyed and identified with and applied. (Here, I tend toward critical realism). Scripture needs to be contextualized. It can be interpreted by ordinary believers in communities. It confronts and transforms cultures, principalities, and powers. The oppressed, marginalized, weak, and despised understand the Bible. It is critical in pluralist settings. Scripture must be interpreted in communities. It needs to

be read and applied with spiritual expectation. The Bible is a theological text and must be read and interpreted theologically. The Christian Scriptures are Christianity's and theology's "norming norm."

10. Love is the integrative power. God is love. But love is rarely at the center of theology. *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity* acknowledges that love is the integrative power that unites faith, hope, community, mission, and all the rest. Humans desire union with God and others—a loving, intimate, transforming *communio.* The nature of love is most clearly expressed on the Cross of Christ. So, *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity* is cruciform. Love is the integrative power in discipleship, fellowship, mission, and theology because *communio* is creation's foundation, means, and telos. Love is central to theology because God is love and showed us what love is—Christ died for us.

These are the methodological hallmarks of *Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity.* They are formative for my research and writing on world Christianity.

Table: Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity

1. *Communio* is the essential and unifying theological motif.
2. The gospel is the climax of the defining narrative.
3. Mission is the "mother," wellspring, and driving force.
4. Transformation and renewal are the goals.
5. Attentiveness is the principle mode through which theology is constructed.
6. The church is the primary social location.
7. Culture is the conversation partner.
8. Eschatology is the orientation.
9. Scripture is the "norming norm."
10. Love is the integrative power.

World Christianity Methodology: Concluding Reflections

World Christianity emerges not as a mere footnote in the theological narrative but as a vibrant, pulsating arena that insists we recalibrate our hermeneutical lenses. In doing so, it challenges us to reconsider not only the spatial geography of our faith but also its temporal horizons, allowing for a kind of historical depth that includes the vibrant traditions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and well beyond the familiar contours of Western Christendom. Far from being a discipline that accentuates diversity for its own sake, world Christianity demands that we see the Christian story as deeply implicated in the socio-political realities, past and present, of cultures around the globe.

Here's my proposal: "World Christianity as a discipline and methodology seeks to provide a holistic, nuanced, intercultural, polycentric, and globally aware understanding of Christianity." Allow this statement to echo in your ears momentarily, as it encapsulates the ethos that sustains this monumental shift in perspective. In that

ethos, one detects an outright rejection of monolithic narratives and a yearning to embrace the complexity of Christian faith as it interweaves through varying cultures and historical epochs.

At the heart of world Christianity lies an interpretive model that is inherently global. The days are long past when Christianity could be regarded as a predominantly Western phenomenon, for the truth is that most Christians today reside outside of the West. This is no minor detail; it forms a foundational pillar upon which the discipline rests, undergirding its commitment to a robust historical narrative that gives voice to traditions often marginalized in other frameworks.

The insistence on contextual theologies is a critical counterpoint to any temptation toward doctrinal or interpretive uniformity. Theology here is not a static entity but a dynamic discourse that emerges from a multiplicity of socio-cultural frameworks. Central to this endeavor is a commitment to "intercultural dialogue," aimed not simply at informational exchange but at fostering a climate of mutual respect and deepened understanding among the global Christian community.

The methodological richness of World Christianity is staggering. Drawing from diverse academic disciplines like anthropology, history, and sociology, it weaves a holistic tapestry in its scope and interdisciplinary approach. Such a comprehensive vision allows it to present a more authentic portrayal of Christianity, which places everyday believers from many backgrounds at center stage.

One mustn't overlook the discipline's deliberate engagement with power dynamics, intricately examining the oft-complicated relationship between Christianity and various imperial, colonial, and state entities. Such scrutiny enriches our understanding and gives voice to the marginalized, thereby illuminating otherwise obscured theological insights and perspectives.

World Christianity offers a lens and a kaleidoscope, providing multifaceted insights into Christianity's global mosaic. The discipline doesn't shy away from the complexities introduced by contemporary phenomena like migration and diaspora. It discerns their influential role in shaping the global contours of Christian faith and practice. This is accompanied by a deeply ingrained sense of ecumenical sensitivity and an earnest exploration of religious pluralism, crafted into a narrative that, while cognizant of diversity, underscores our shared human experience.

Endnotes

1 Cameron et al., *Talking About God in Practice*, 20–21.

2 Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 6.

3 Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches*; Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*; Browning, *Practical Theology*; Browning, et al., *The Education of the Practical Theologian*; Graham, *Transforming Practice*; Groome, *Sharing Faith*; Heitink, *Practical Theology*; Osmer, *Practical Theology*.

4 Wrogemann, *Intercultural Theology – Volume One*, 154–55.

5 Hollenweger, "Intercultural Theology"; Hollenweger and Jongeneel, *Pentecost, Mission, and Ecumenism*; Aquini and Rosado-Nunes, *Feminist Intercultural Theology*; Bernhardt, "Interkulturelle Theologie"; Cartledge and Cheetham, *Intercultural Theology*; Flett, "Method in Mission Studies"; Gruber, *Intercultural Theology*; Küster, "Intercultural Theology is a Must"; Schreiter, "The Changing Contexts of Intercultural Theology"; Wrogemann, *Intercultural Theology* (three volumes).

6 Phan, "World Christianity," 175 (emphasis in original).

7 Hill and Sanneh, "A Conversation With Lamin Sanneh."

8 Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*; Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*; Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity?* Sanneh, *Translating the Message*; Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations*; Koschorke, *A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450-1990*; Stanley, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century*; Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face*; Phan, *In Our Own Tongues*; Phan, "Doing Theology in World Christianity"; Fredericks, "World Christianity"; Nagy, "Recalling the Term 'World Christianity'."

9 Flett, "Method in Mission Studies."

10 I've given these methodological hallmarks a different name in my series *Salt, Light, and a City*, but "Methodological Hallmarks of a Theology of World Christianity" is my preferred title.

11 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 15–16.

12 Here I mirror some of Sarah Coakley's language but provide my own emphases. Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self*, 88–92.

13 See point 5 of Coakley's théologie totale. Coakley, *Sexuality, and the Self*, 90.

14 Volf, "Against a Pretentious Church," 284.

15 Küng, *Church*, 81.

16 Küng, *Church*, 96–103.

17 Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 57.

REFLECTIONS AND REPORTS

A Tribute to Sister Robyn Reynolds

We were very saddened to hear about the sudden death of Sister Robyn Reynolds OLSH, a member of the Congregation of Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Sister Robyn was en route to Dublin, the final leg of her journey, to participate in a retreat that she had been eagerly anticipating. Sr Robyn died on the way to Dublin at 09:30 a.m. Ireland time. Paramedics were called to meet the plane in Dublin. Sr Robyn had a cardiac arrest while they were with her. Sr Robyn died at the Beaumont Hospital in Dublin.

Sister Robyn began her journey in Darwin in 1967 teaching grade 5 at St Mary's School. Over the years, Sr Robyn transitioned into a theology teacher at Nungalinya College, leaving behind a profound legacy. Her ministry extended to Santa Teresa Parish, where she devoted herself to learning the Arrernte language and developing deep connections with the local community.

Sr Robyn was with us once again during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Nungalinya College and I had the pleasure to meet her and found her to be full of life and energy.

We give thanks for what Sr Robyn has given to us and look forward to the help and support she will send us from the fullness of life.

RIP Sr Robyn.

+Charles Gauci

Bishop of Darwin and the NT

Catholic Diocese of Darwin

A Tribute to Professor Therese D'Orsa

Catholic missiologist and educational leader

Professor Therese D'Orsa was the President of the Australian Association for Mission Studies in 2020–2021 when the COVID-19 epidemic was at its peak. This Tribute to Therese has been written by her husband and writing companion in missiological studies, Dr Jim D'Orsa.

Professor Therese D'Orsa passed away suddenly on 7 May 2023. Surrounded by family and friends at Berwick Hospital in her natal region of Gippsland, Therese was welcomed to Paradise at the age of 78 after a life of witness to the Catholic Christian tradition. As the first Professor of Mission and Culture at the Australian Institute of Theological Education (BBI-TAITE), Therese was an instrumental figure in recognising and establishing missiology as a discipline in its own right. Her dedication to the church's evangelising mission was evident in word and action throughout her extensive career as a Catholic missiologist and educational leader. Therese leaves behind a rich legacy of scholarship in her extensive record of publications on mission education and, at the time of her death, was deeply engaged in writing around the evolution of, and possibilities for, the emergence of new forms of lay leadership in Catholic parishes throughout Australia.

Over more than six decades, Therese developed a progressive approach to thinking around the search for Jesus Christ and his calling. Responding to the pastoral recommendations of the Second Vatican Council, she sought to define mission within a holistic framework that considered faith in a whole-of-life perspective and saw attempts to live out that faith as operating through multiple dimensions and in conversation with the modern world. She recognised the centrality of God's redemptive mission in the life of individuals, but she saw evidence of that salvation as operating beyond ritual and at the nexus of life, faith, and culture. Therese believed that faith was processed in light of one's cultural and life experiences. She saw faith as more than an intellectual endeavour, as something that was embodied, felt, and acted upon in everyday life.

Therese's own faith and her commitment to proclaiming it throughout her life were nurtured early through her own childhood experiences of family, community, and education, which provided the grounding for her religious formation. Therese was the eldest of four children. She was born in Trafalgar, Victoria, on 10 June 1944, just as World War II was approaching its climax. Her mother, Amy, was a nurse, and her father, Patrick, was a building foreman whose occupation necessitated frequent movement from project to project, as required by his company. As a result, Therese spent her formative years in Tasmania and Queensland, and most of her education took place in the city of Mt Isa in the Gulf Country region of North-Western Queensland. The family returned to Victoria and settled in Wood Court, Traralgon, where Amy and her sister, Kate, also a nurse, established one of the district's first homes for the elderly.

The immediate post-World War II period was a moment when parish, school, and church were still broadly congruent. The generous service of the women religious who established, staffed, and administered schools at this time profoundly influenced Therese. In the same vein as many other young Catholics of her generation, Therese's identity and faith relationship were strengthened by the presence and teachings of the Sisters whose ministry was dominant in her school community at the time. In Year 9, she decided to 'enter' the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart juniorate and, at the age of fifteen, she left home and family in Mount Isa to travel to the 'Convent School' in the small rural town of Allora in the Southern Downs region of Queensland. The boarding school was relatively small, such that Therese was the only student in her class by the time she reached her 'Matriculation' year, the equivalent of the modern-day Higher School Certificate (HSC).

Therese was a lifelong learner, and the independence that marked her decision to leave home early in her education and embark on a consecrated life was a hallmark of her life and career. Nevertheless, she credited several figures with influencing the direction of her professional life and thinking. She often spoke of her HSC teacher in Allora, Sr. Margaret Smith RSJ, who inspired in her a love of learning and a sense of perseverance that carried her through later studies. After she returned to the Victorian Province of her congregation in 1972, Therese enrolled at the University of Melbourne as a political science and humanities student, where she came under the influence of Professor Phillip Darby. Under Professor Darby's mentorship, Therese developed an interest in post-colonial studies and an understanding of the impacts of colonisation on the peoples of Africa and Asia. Darby, like Sr. Margaret, became a lifelong friend.

In 1976, Therese felt called to live a different life outside the Josephite Order. Dissatisfied with the changing nature of teaching service and the oppressive direction of religious life, Therese sought release from her vows alongside thousands of other religious who were reconsidering their vocations in the wake of Vatican II. At the time, Catholic schooling across Australia flourished due to the restoration of Government funding. With the increased salaries enabled by state aid, lay staff gradually assumed a greater number of teaching and administrative roles in the Catholic sector and teaching nuns were effectively sidelined. Integral to the Catholic school system over the century prior, women religious and their labour from the 1970s were often used as a means of plugging staffing gaps as they appeared in schools irrespective of their experience, ability, or talent. Caught in this dynamic, Therese made the difficult decision to leave her order and teaching mission.

After she departed from the convent, Therese encountered the third seminal influence in her life. Employed as a tutor in political science at the University of Melbourne, she was introduced to Australian missiologist Fr. Cyril Hally whose mentorship in mission and culture and cross-cultural, multi-cultural, and interfaith issues had a profound effect on Therese's understanding of her vocation and its importance in educating and engaging people in matters of social justice. Inspired in part by Fr. Hally and her interest in post-colonial issues, Therese joined Sr. Libby Rogerson IBVM of the Sisters of Loreto, on an extensive tour of India. As two intrepid travellers in the 1970s, the women crossed India – south to north and west to east – moving from one mission station to another with the support of the Jesuits in some locations but mostly alone and unassisted. The experience was Therese's second encounter with cross-cultural mission, the first being as a young teacher to indigenous students at the Catholic primary school in Mt Isa during her novitiate.

On her return to Australia and with a deeper understanding of global mission and the complexities of cross-cultural engagement, Fr. Hally convinced Therese to relocate to Sydney. Here, she assumed the role of education officer for the National Missionary Council (NMC), an arm of the Australian Bishops Council, to which he had recently been appointed secretary. In this position, Therese's understanding of mission met with organisational

politics and she gathered practical insight into the internal operations of peak Catholic bodies. The NMC was tasked with promulgating the mission and justice agenda developed at Vatican Council II (1962-65) within the Australian Catholic community. The bishops attending the Council reframed Catholic Social Teaching (CST), particularly as it applied to marginalised communities. Mission, in this context, was perceived as integral to the quest for justice. Until the NMC was dissolved in the 1970s, Therese travelled throughout the country speaking on the connections between the two themes in parishes, schools, Catholic Education Offices, women's groups, and other associated organisations.

The seeds for Therese's doctoral research were sown during her tenure with the NMC, where she observed firsthand the dynamics around the demise of the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice (CCPJ). At the University of Sydney, under the supervision of Dr Michael Hogan and Associate Professor Michael Leigh, she demonstrated her intellectual prowess and resilience as she explored the ideological conflict leading to the Commission's closure in the mid-1980s. The CCPJ encountered serious problems translating its recommendations for social change into action as a result of the dissension between its corporate self-understandings of mission, justice, and education and the positions held by other groups in society, including particularly the National Civic Council on critical issues arising in the Australian context. Her research produced the thesis: 'Witness and Teacher – The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace 1968-1987: A Study of the Ideology of a Catholic church Agency'.

Following the closure of the NMC, Fr. Hally again played a crucial role in Therese assuming the position of academic dean to the Pacific Mission Institute (PMI) at the Columban Father's Training College in Turramurra. The appointment brought Therese into contact with missionaries and missiologists during an important period in which Catholic mission theology underwent a paradigm shift, and those who responded to its calling faced an identity crisis. Mission came to be understood as more than preaching, converting, and teaching. In the post-colonial era, it gradually assumed a broader focus as everything God has done throughout human history, everything the church has been sent out in the world to do. On that basis, Catholic mission in the modern world evolved to model an incarnational model of Jesus Christ in which missionaries were asked to identify with others as He had identified with us and to serve as He had given Himself in service to others.

During this time of change, the role of the academic dean at the Institute provided Therese with a unique opportunity to understand 'mission' in practice. An essential aspect of her work revolved around the coordination of students who were categorised into three streams: (1) those preparing to engage in cross-cultural mission work, (2) those returning from cross-cultural mission postings and re-acclimatising to the cultural situation in Australia, and (3) those religious based in Australia seeking a renewal program. Meeting the needs of these three constituencies was not an easy task. The challenge offered Therese insight into cross-cultural missions' intellectual, spiritual, and emotional impacts on those undertaking them. She was deeply shocked to discover, for instance, that religious women returning from cross-cultural mission settings had, almost without exception, experienced some form of sexual violence.

Throughout her tenure with the PMI, Therese believed that people need to be empowered to develop their mission theology. She argued that mission theology traditionally functioned from the perspective of the ground up and that theology, conversely, operated from the point of principles down. Therese considered good mission theology as centring the missionary between these two dilemmas in a way that allowed the individual to navigate and make sense of their own field experiences with a view to their personal understandings of faith and in the context of another culture. Her perspective on mission theology was radical for its time. During

Therese's period with the Institute, it was unusual for missionaries to engage in re-entry programs despite the enormity of the physical, emotional, and moral adjustments required both in the field and at home. The difficulties in processing those experiences and coming to terms with their associated emotions were often overlooked.

Therese evolved into a new stage in her career in Catholic leadership in the mid-1990s, when the numbers of new vocations began to fall sharply, impacting enrolments at colleges like the Pacific Mission Institute. Applying for the position of region director in the Catholic Education Office (CEO) in Sydney, she was surprised by the success of her application despite having built a solid reputation with the organisation during her time as education officer for the NMC. The appointment ushered in a new and demanding chapter in Therese's professional life that was, nonetheless, rewarding at the same time. The role offered her greater scope to pursue her commitment to 'mission in practice' and to focus – not on talking about 'mission' – but on engaging with others to make it happen. Her particular interest at this time was the intersection of faith and culture in education.

As Director of Religious Education and Curriculum in Sydney, Therese initiated a benchmark program, *'Sense of the Sacred, ' bringing* faith and culture together within the seven essential learning areas in the New South Wales secondary school curriculum. Leading a team of experienced teachers, Therese worked to develop resources that other educators could draw on in the classroom in their efforts to bring faith and culture into dialogue with the pedagogy of values infusion. Sense of the Sacred took several years to complete and was regarded as the world's best practice for its time, a distinction that was confirmed when Therese visited the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome in 2006.

During the same period, Therese developed one of the first school policies in Australia to encourage environmental education in Catholic Schools, entitled, *'Earth Community Education Policy'*. The policy was later affirmed when Pope Francis published *Laudato Si,* his encyclical on care for our common home.

Faith always existed in relationship to life for Therese, and her capacity to bring faith and life together innovatively was the hallmark of her time as a Director of Catholic Education in Sydney and Sale. She felt that teachers in the Australian Catholic school system had a narrow concept of the 'Catholic story', which impacted their own understandings of faith and their teachings around it. She felt the teachers' perspectives on faith were too often derailed by the pettiness of individual church officials. In response, Therese instituted a pilgrimage program during her time as Director of Sale that enabled local teachers to participate in courses in Jerusalem and to visit key pilgrimage sites in Europe, including those associated with the first Australian saint, Mary MacKillop. Her first priority was always the welfare and development of her team, and she believed that connecting more deeply with the Catholic past was an essential step in order to prepare for a Catholic future.

Therese was always concerned with passing on what she had learned as a mission educator and mission leader, and this commitment lay behind her decision to resign as Director of Sale in 2007 and volunteer as a staff member at the Broken Bay Institute (BBI), a theologate based in Sydney that mainly dealt in teacher formation. While Director in Sydney, and later Sale, Therese and I collaborated in presenting Master's level units on *Leadership for Mission,* which was offered to teachers under the auspices of the Australian Catholic University and the Yarra Theological Union. At BBI, our partnership was formalised when we joined the Institute's academic staff in 2008 and 'Team D'Orsa' was formed. Between 2016 and 2022, Team D'Orsa

authored and taught the BBI Masters' program, *Leadership and Theology.* Therese retired from teaching the course in 2022 to focus more fully on her academic writing.

While at BBI, Therese and I endeavoured to situate 'mission and education' with a strong academic footing by publishing books that gave voice to Australian Catholic educators and ensuring that these publications had a solid missiological orientation. Over the past decade, the venture known as the *Mission and Education Series* produced 13 books (with Therese as the indefatigable commissioning editor). Addressing topics where mission intersects with education, the series encompassed themes as expansive as leadership, curriculum, pedagogy, the role charism plays in Catholic school leadership, teacher formation, and re-contextualising faith. At the time of her unexpected death, a further three books were at various stages of thought and development.

Therese was always at pains to highlight that the *Mission and Education* Series concerned more than religious education! Her faith was biblically oriented, and the books in the series were inevitably grounded in a strong scriptural basis. Over the course of our collective writings, however, our two key objectives centred around 'modelling the message' and bringing various fields of learning into dialogue with 'faith' and 'mission', as we have both come to understand these categories over the length of our personal and professional careers. The series encompassed two main streams: an *academic stream* that aimed to put teachers into contact with best practice in the fields of education, biblical studies, anthropology, and hermeneutics and a *practical stream* that was oriented towards the mission potential of current school practices. The latter series was produced as *Educators' Guides* and included topics such as curriculum and the environment, exposure learning, service learning, and school retreats for students and staff.

Within Catholic literature, 'mission' has often represented a confusing concept. Historically, the term has been poorly delimited, such that 'everything is mission', leading to the concern that if everything is mission, nothing is mission. In confronting this problematic in our own work, Therese and I have attempted to clarify the concept to place more distinct boundaries around the term in an effort to distinguish between the essential modes of mission and the various forms that it might take. The former we saw as encompassing elements of mission that are authentic and unchanging, and the latter we understood as contingent upon circumstances that are often local or global responses to 'reading the signs of the times'. In our writings, three essential *modes of mission* exist: (1) a message to *proclaim*, (2) a *witness* to be offered, and (3) a *dialogue* to be entered into. In our analyses, we argue that the missing element in Christian mission (and also in church life) was too often found in the realm of dialogue. Pope Francis, likewise, was concerned to address this in his emphasis on dialogue and synodality, which has come to represent a source of tension among some Catholic Church leaders, particularly in the USA.

The forms of mission are many and ever-changing, just as the context in which people live continues to shift. Here, our thinking was influenced by the Belgian theologian Edward Schillebeeckx. Schillebeeckx holds that we can never fully describe 'being human'. In our modern world, many readers might find it difficult to imagine how 'being human' was construed in the pre-internet/social media age. Despite this, we can certainly still sense and identify what oppresses, dehumanises, and marginalises people and what makes them less than they can be. We have all experienced the impact of such 'contrast experiences'.

Jesus' understanding of 'God's reign' is modelled in his ministry to those on the margins of his society. He created 'Kingdom spaces' in their lives that were recognised as such, and this served to antagonise his religious adversaries to the point that they planned to kill him. Mission mirrored in Jesus' example is a fraught endeavour!

In mission work, it is presumptive to ascribe particular projects as aligning with the 'Kingdom of God', even though we can recognise its absence! Minimising the impact of contrasting experiences and creating 'Kingdom spaces' in students' lives is integral to the collective mission of educators in all Christian schools.

Context and the different needs it generates generally determine the particular *form* of mission. Since context is always tied to culture and history, so too is mission. All mission theology is a reflection on mission and its various forms, so it is contextual by its very nature. This is the sad lesson that can be drawn from the Christian churches' colonial experience of 'missions'. Nevertheless, whatever form mission takes, wherever it is authentic in nature, there is always and everywhere: *a witness to be offered, a gospel to be proclaimed, and a search for dialogue partners* to engage with such that the goals of a shared mission might be achieved collaboratively. *Mission is not what I do; it is what we do together*.

Mission, at its best, is the project of a faith community!

For Therese, faith was not about *what* you believe but about *who* you believe in—the *who* represents a person, God. Therese's approach to the person of Jesus was strongly influenced by the Carmelite spiritual tradition as elaborated through the writings of Ruth Burrows ODC, her favourite author. One of Burrows' themes is that prayer is not what we do for God but rather *something God does with us.* Remaining open to this form of dialogue is a condition of prayer. Openness to God seemed characteristic of Therese's life in all the many different forms that it took. May she continue to enjoy this dialogue forever!

Nungalinya College 50th Jubilee

By Sister Robyn Reynolds

On 19th August 2023, Nungalinya College held its 50th Jubilee Open Day, Dinner, and Celebration Evening.

Lynette Fejo, daughter of the college's first Indigenous principal, Rev. Wali Fejo, gave the welcome address and formally opened the event. As well as the many actively involved current staff and students, others present had travelled from far and wide. Indigenous staff came from Arnhem Land and elsewhere, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island past students came from the desert, Wadeye, Millingimbi, Tiwi Islands and further afield. As well as members of the college board, church leaders were present from the three churches – Anglican, Catholic, and Uniting. Many local supporters of the college also participated in the day's celebrations.

The well-organized program included such highlights as visits to the language and arts centre, library tours, the conference room (with excellent history displays), and lecture rooms (with unit course displays). There were walks in the Bible gardens and the bush tucker trail. The day's activities included cultural activities such as weaving and spear-making. It was in the beautiful chapel that Nungalinya's story through the documentary 'Freedom' was viewed.

Nungalinya is a training college for Indigenous Christians. In recent years, students from other than the three major churches, including those from Lutheran, Baptist, and Pentecostal churches, have lived and studied at Nungalinya.

Through their teaching, Indigenous teachers and leaders in past years, e.g. Rev Djiniiyini Gondarra, Betty Pike, Rev Saibio Mabo, Marika-Mununginitj, Agnes Palmer, Pastor George Ronsendale, as well as many others, have brought deep learning and shared faith to the Nungalinya experience. The non-indigenous staff over the years, including those in the role of principal, have also enriched the students' lives and helped to live and grow the Christian faith in fresh, more profound, and often radical ways. The 50th Jubilee was a time of remembering, including tears, laughter, stories, and beautiful reunions. As the day moved on and into the wonderful, shared evening meal and the night's final gathering of song, dance, and ceremony, all were united in a deeply trusting place with present staff and students, a place of deep gratitude and joy.

Nungalinya's excellent website provides information about the various courses conducted at the college (theology and ministry, first languages, biblical studies, family well-being, art, and more). See the Nungalinya website: www.nungalinya.edu.au

BOOK REVIEWS

Subversive Mission: Serving God as Outsiders in a World of Need

By Craig Greenfield

Published by: IVP, Downers Grove, IL, 2023, 224 pages.

ISBN-10: 1514004380

ISBN-13: 978-1514004388

Reviewed by Alice Kinyua, *a Kenyan missionary to New Zealand, where the missionaries to her people originally came from. Alice and her husband moved to Whanganui, New Zealand, in 2016, where they served as pastors at an Open Brethren church for five years. Alice now lectures in Christian Leadership and Mission at Bishopdale College, Nelson. She is passionate about seeing the gospel spread and is the Intercultural Ministries Enabler for the New Zealand Church Missionary Society (NZCMS).*

Why read another book by a white missionary from an affluent Western nation serving in a poor Asian country? Hasn't the "white saviour" already been hailed, and that tale has gone stale? This is precisely why *Subversive Mission: Serving God as Outsiders in a World of Need* by Craig Greenfield is imperative. Greenfield daringly describes this problem and offers an equally bold solution. Backed with scripture references, this book makes for a convicting read. He tells the compelling story of the "Alongsiders" in Cambodia and how they achieve their dream of starting a camp house. Within this metanarrative, he weaves in his arguments.

Western missionaries entering the new culture of their calling often have blind spots, to which Greenfield sheds some light. He names these: power, complicity, secularism, money, and individualism. He poignantly asks, what if the temptation faced by "people with power and privilege" is not to cause harm by violent acts of dominance like murder or rape, but instead if the temptation "is to pursue good in the wrong way?"[1] This, he claims, is equally harmful.

He then proposes a subversive approach that is more Christ-mirroring. Greenfield posits that the humility to be faithful in cross-cultural missions can only be achieved when missionaries recognize their position as "outsiders" and carry out their role as "alongsiders." This is the thesis of his book. I find this language of insider, outsider, and alongsider quite helpful.

As outsiders, he submits that missionaries equipped with the gifts of the fivefold ministry (Ephesians 4:11) must operate them differently. They must allow the insider "Apostle" to serve their community that way while they come alongside as "Catalysts." Instead of trying to be "Prophets," missionaries should contend to serve as "Allies." Instead of "Evangelists," missionaries should be "Seekers," recognizing their need to listen and learn. Instead of being "Pastors," they should serve as "Midwives," seeking only to nurture and birth that which the locals have conceived as ministry solutions and vision. Finally, outsiders should contentedly serve

as "Guides," leaving the role of "Teacher" to the "insider." This calls the missionary to be "more humble, more vulnerable and much better."[2]

I applaud Greenfield for holding the balance between truth and grace. He pulls no punches in calling out clueless missionaries riding on the atrocities of the past. He quips, "Ethnically, white is not so much a race as a club designed to keep other people out."[3] He argues that although the current missionaries did not participate in past atrocities, they must humbly accept that they profited from those actions, putting them in a place of privilege. In today's political climate, this is a bold thing to say.

In doing this, Greenfield redeems the narrative of missions in two ways. First, he vindicates people who have felt over-dominated by the missionaries who served from a place of power and privilege. [4]

Secondly, he seeks to rebalance the scales by restoring power where it should be, in the gospel and the locals. He rightly points out that when missionaries come into a community, they do not bring Jesus. He is already there, working richly and deeply among the people.

His writing style is straightforward, witty, and yet respectful. He shares gory details of poverty without taking away the dignity of those he speaks of. Every story serves a purpose beyond sensationalising poverty, an art that eludes many authors.

There are some weaknesses, however. Greenfield still approaches missions as something done by "us" to "them." Since this book looks at missions from the West to the rest, it inevitably lacks expressions of mutuality between the sending and receiving countries. Reading this book as an African, I hear the silence of my missional participation in the Western countries.

Secondly, in trying to balance the scales, he seems to suggest that the West should withhold the resources that God has provided. If the body of Christ were to function in its fullness, we must ask the more complex question of how the gifts of each nation (developing or developed) can be redeemed so that they are used to bless rather than harm.

Thirdly, and more pointedly, could his pushback regarding evangelists gag the outsider from actively sharing the gospel? Admittedly, no one wants a celebrity preacher with their one-hit wonders. However, in some instances, outsiders have been able to break ground with the gospel in areas that insiders have found challenging. It is the case of a prophet not being accepted in his hometown. But more importantly, one of the plagues of Western Christianity is the lack of proclamation of the gospel. Evangelism has been placed in the comfortable basket of works without words. A reader must be cautious not to sway this way.

I recommend this book. Long before a missionary packs their travel bag, they should read this book and decide if they are ready to serve at levels of humility that will test not only the motives of their hearts but also their claim of love for God's people and their willingness to carry their cross and follow Jesus.

Endnotes

1 Greenfield, *Subversive Mission*, 5.
2 Greenfield, *Subversive Mission*, 6.
3 Greenfield, *Subversive Mission*, 86.
4 Greenfield, *Subversive Mission*, 87.

Keeping Faith: How Christian Organisations Can Stay True to the Way of Jesus

By Stephen Judd, John Swinton, and Kara Martin

Published by: Acorn, Sydney, 2023, 158 pages.

ISBN-10: 0647531933

ISBN-13: 978-0647531938

***Reviewed by Rev Dr Steve Taylor**, who is a public scholar, working for AngelWings Ltd in research consultancy. He maintains academic accountability as Senior Lecturer, Flinders University and Honorary Lecturer, Aberdeen University. Steve is author of three books, fifty published academic outputs, and over 250 public writing pieces.*

Keeping Faith offers a contemporary practical missiology. The book wrestles with a familiar trajectory by which organisations established by Christians become increasingly secularised. Social service agencies are a notable example, as they seek to serve the lost and least in increasingly secular and competitive funding environments.

Keeping Faith challenges organisations to develop theologically formed and uniquely contextual organisational theologies. Located in Australia, the book offers multiple case studies of how attention to practices can cultivate a "practical wisdom . . . organisationally applied" . . . to an "organisation's lived experience of faith" (133).

The book is highly accessible. Each of the fifteen chapters is short and filled with practical examples. The review questions that end each chapter could resource leadership teams and governance groups.

The book is divided into four sections that move from why to how. "Section 1: The Concept of Organisational Faithfulness" describes how organisations have historically sought to be Christian by naming values or providing statements of faith. These are shown to be theologically problematic, given that God in Christ is revealed in active and participatory relationships with creation. "What makes an organisation Christian is not simply the values that it claims to hold (important as such values may well be), but the way in which it lives out the vision it has been given" (13).

The argument is that organisational faithfulness should focus on "the ways in which its Christian-ness creates and inhabits its structures of organisation, management, business practices and relationships" (14). The links to a theology of *missio Dei* are not stated. However, they are implicit in the attention given to how organisations can participate faithfully in what God is doing in the world.

"Section 2: Towards a Theology for Organisations" is the longest section. Theology is hardly an "ivory tower," as Christian doctrines of sin, judgement, grace, faith, hope, trust, forgiveness and redemption are developed in dialogue with practical examples. This section is where the book shines, offering theological approaches that might shape how organisations respond to complaints of sexual harassment, workplace bullying and bad behaviour. Theology becomes practical, applied to human resources and policies for social media usage, all outworked in dialogue with the organisation's ethos, identity and impact. Leaders of organisations are named as theologians, working from a "knowledge base that allows [them] to operate in the 'real world' maturely" (24).

"Section 3: Theological Foundations for Practice" demonstrates what it means for organisations to develop contextual practical wisdom, particularly related to risk, stewardship and hospitality. The authors argue that Christian organisations should be exemplars in taking risk management seriously and provide fascinating examples of Australian organisations that have articulated risk management theologies. These approaches to risk management are shown to be shaped by the Christology of Philippians 2 and stand as counter-cultural approaches to the risk management registers increasingly common in organisations today.

In "Section 4: Keeping It Grounded," a process is outlined by which organisations might develop an "articulated Organisational Theology, which takes the knowledge of God and details how it applies in every activity of an organisation" (102). The book's central argument is rehearsed: an organisational theology, rather than values statements or signed statements of faith, is needed to respond faithfully to contemporary secularising pressures.

Each organisation is recognised as unique and invited to consider how its uniqueness is outworked in managing people and responding to risk. *Keeping Faith* argues that developing an organisational theology is not a workshopped task of identifying shared values. Instead it is the work of a small group of theologically literate Christians. Just as organisations draw on consultants to formulate policy in human resources or social media, Christian organisations should draw on theologians as consultants. In an era of secularised hyper-individualism, this valuing of theological expertise and attention to organisational missiology is a much-needed breath of fresh air.

The theological work being done in *Keeping Faith* is most helpfully understood as an invitational starting point rather than the final word. The doctrines follow a distinctly Reformed theological trajectory, and the theological resources are primarily Western and male. There is no engagement with the recent work of female theologians of practice, for example, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (*Christian Theology in Practice*) and Dorothy C. Bass (*Practicing Our Faith*). However, the value of *Keeping Faith* is the way it invites other Christian traditions to consider how their organisational theologies might be outworked as Christian practices in the 'real world.'

Keeping Faith by Stephen Judd, John Swinton, and Kara Martin is a courageous and timely resource. The book is of immediate use to any reader working in an organisation. It is of particular value to those seeking to bear witness in contemporary Western contexts, as it provides a missiology of practice for the whole of life.

Salvific Intentionality in 1 Corinthians: How Paul Cultivates the Missional Imagination of the Corinthian Community

By Scott Goode

Published by: Wipf and Stock, Eugene, OR, 2023, 148 pages.

ISBN-10: 1666771767

ISBN-13: 978-1666771763

***Reviewed by Rev Dr Graham Joseph Hill**, Baptist Mission Australia State Leader (WA), Editor of the Australian Journal of Mission Studies, and author of thirteen books (see his author website at www.GrahamJosephHill.com). Hill is a Research Associate at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. ORCID: 0000-0002-6532-8248*

In Scott Goode's fascinating study, the reader embarks upon a journey into the heart of 1 Corinthians, probing the layers of Paul's intentions and the lived reality of the Corinthian community. This is a work that, at its core, endeavours to explore the enigmatic "great omission" in the Pauline letters: the seeming lack of a direct missionary mandate. Goode masterfully employs a blend of literary and socio-historical methodologies, astutely using social identity theory to unveil the hidden nuances of the text.

There's a sense in which this is more than mere exegesis; it's an excavation, unearthing the complex socio-religious terrain of ancient Corinth, enabling us to hear the missional heartbeat alongside the first-century recipients of Paul's letter. By navigating the epistle, Goode introduces us to the horizontal salvific language, teasing out the missionary undertones that are intricately woven into the fabric of the text. His study isn't insular or confined; it is a dialogue with an external context, a recognition that the Scriptures were not born in a vacuum but in an ancient metropolis's bustling streets, homes, and synagogues.

The chapters devoted to specific key texts in 1 Corinthians (5:1–13; 7:10–16; 8:1–11:1; and 14:20–25, to name a few) display an admirable depth of scholarship. Pastors will undoubtedly benefit from Goode's detailed expositions, which skillfully bridge the divide between the 1st-century world and contemporary pastoral challenges. There's an underlying current throughout the work that resonates with the practicalities of ministry, from church discipline to the contours of Christian ethical formation.

One of the most potent aspects of Goode's work is his emphasis on the porous boundaries of the early Pauline communities. His vision of a church where boundaries are fluid, and gatherings are as much about the outsider as the insider, holds a mirror up to our modern ecclesial practices. The concluding chapter, in particular, offers

a vision for the contemporary church in a post-Christendom era. The ancient streets of Corinth, with its myriad cultures and religious expressions, look startlingly familiar to our modern urban contexts. By placing Paul's writings within this milieu, Goode invites us to re-imagine the church's mission in today's pluralistic society.

Indeed, Goode's dialogue with the seminal works of Leslie Newbigin adds a further layer of depth to his thesis, connecting the early church's socio-ethical expressions to our modern ecclesial mission commitments. His vision for a church in constant engagement with its surrounding culture, which doesn't retreat but instead engages, is a timely reminder in our age of increasing secularization.

In sum, *Salvific Intentionality in 1 Corinthians* is an invaluable contribution to the realm of Pauline and missional studies. It is a text rich in scholarship and practical insights, with a narrative pulse that is deeply engaging. Scott Goode's exploration is a must-read for anyone looking to delve into the world of 1 Corinthians and draw out its implications for the church today.

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