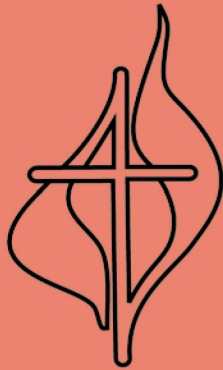


JOURNAL OF THE COLOMBO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Volume III

2005



Colombo Theological Seminary
189 Dutugemunu Street
Kohuwela
Sri Lanka

**JOURNAL OF THE COLOMBO
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Volume III

2005

Publications of the Colombo Theological Seminary

189 Dutugemunu Street

Kohuwela

Sri Lanka

COLOMBO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

VISION

Resources to the Church for the Transformation of nations

MISSION

Colombo Theological Seminary is called by God to serve the church:

by training men and women to be rooted in the scriptures,

filled with the Holy Spirit,

mature in Christian character,

competent in ministry,

according to the highest academic standards;

and

by producing quality Christian resources.

Council of CTS:

Dr. Ajith Fernando B.Sc., M.Div., D.D.(President),

Rev. Dr. Leslie Keegel, B.Th., D.D.(Vice President),

Prof. Kanthi Ratnayake Ph.D., B.Th.(Secretary)

Mr. Nimal Karunaratne B.Sc., M.I.Mech, C.Eng.,

M.Cons.E., (Treasurer),

Mr. Ivor Poobalan B.A. (Hons), Th.M.,

Mr. Eran Wickramaratne B.A., M.Sc.,

Rev. Adrian de Visser M.A.,

Mr Gary Dean B.A.,

Rev. K. Sriskandarajah B.Th.,

Rev. Roshan Mendis B.D., Dip. (Marriage & Family Ministry).

**JOURNAL OF THE COLOMBO
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Volume III

2005

Publications of the Colombo Theological Seminary

189 Dutugemunu Street

Kohuwela

Sri Lanka

© Colombo Theological Seminary

Editor

Prof. G.P.V. Somaratna, Director of Research, Colombo Theological Seminary

Contents

Prabo Mihindukulasuriya Another Ancient Christian presence in Sri Lanka: The Ethiopians of Aksum.....	1-22
Mano Emmanuel The Nature of Rewards in the New Testament.....	23-42
Ivor Poobalan The Period of Jeroboam II with Special Reference to Amos.....	43-74
G.P.V. Somaratna Sri Lanka, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam at the Dawn of the Sixteenth Century.....	75-95
Ravin D. Caldera Understanding “Paradise”: A Survey of Historical and Theological Reflections.....	97-120
Vindoh Gunasekera Christian Education for Secular Society.....	121-139
Napoleon Pathmanathan Some Thoughts on the Reception of Protestantism by the Tamil and Sinhalese Communities in Sri Lanka.....	141-151

Contributors

Ravin Caldera, Dip. Agri., B.Th., Lecturer in Training, Colombo Theological Seminary

Mano Emmanuel, B.Th., M.A., Lecturer, Colombo Theological Seminary

Vinodh Gunasekera, B.Sc., M.Sc.(Eng.), M.Div., D.Min. (Cand.), Visiting Lecturer, Colombo Theological Seminary

Prabo Mihindukulasuriya, Pg.Dip.M. (CIM), M.C.S., Lecturer, Colombo Theological Seminary

Napoleon Pathmanathan, B.Th., M.Th., Lecturer, Colombo Theological Seminary

Ivor Poobalan, B.A., Th.M., Principal, Colombo Theological Seminary

G.P.V. Somaratna, B.A., M.A., (Missiology), M.A., (Theology), Pg.Dip. Demography, Ph.D., Director of Research, Colombo Theological Seminary

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

Prabo Mihindukulasuriya

The view of globalization as the purview of a modern and Western hegemony is under challenge. Even among the most progressive of world historians, however, is to be found the oversight that precludes global agency by and interaction among certain peoples. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the treatments of Africa with the world and Africa within the world. In a move to decenter the dynamics of the dominant discourses, a consideration of agency and interaction among and between Africans and Asians is warranted. Here an interrogation of various primary sources and secondary works suggests new paths of inquiry that dispel Western and modern notions concerning the construction of the world and the roles of African and Asian interaction in that construction over the longue durèe.

Maghan Keita, *Africans and Asians: Historiography and the Long View of Global Interaction*¹

Introduction

The presence of Persian Christians (commonly called 'Nestorian') in the Anuradhapura Period has received some scholarly attention from church historians.² This ancient cross-cultural contact is significant not merely because it pre-dates the arrival of European Christianity by a millennium, but because the Persian church embodied the missionary impulse of an authentically Asian Christianity.³

What is almost completely overlooked is the remarkable fact that our island civilization was also blessed with the witness of early African Christianity. As one of our foremost church historians has noted, "In addition to the Persians, it seems clear that another Christian nation, namely Ethiopia, also was represented in Sri Lanka".⁴ This article seeks to make a preliminary exploration of the extent and significance of Sri Lanka's maritime connection with the Christian Ethiopians of Aksum between the 4th and 7th centuries AD.

¹ Abstract of article in *Journal of World History*. Vol. 16, No.1 (March 2005), pp. 1-30.

<[http://muse.jhu.edu/cgi-](http://muse.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/access.cgi?uri=/journals/journal_of_world_history/v016/16.1keita.html)

[bin/access.cgi?uri=/journals/journal_of_world_history/v016/16.1keita.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/cgi-bin/access.cgi?uri=/journals/journal_of_world_history/v016/16.1keita.html)

&session=73705514>(July 20, 2005)>

² J.Emerson Tennent, *Christianity in Ceylon*, (Lodon: John Murray, 1850; Facsimile reprint, New Delhi: Asian Education Service, 1998), pp.1-4; Celestine V.N. Fernando, 'Early Christianity in Ceylon in Pre-Portuguese Times', *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol.VI, No.3 (1948), pp. 1996-200; Martin Quère, 'Christianity in Sri Lanka before the Coming of the Portuguese', *Aquinas Journal*, Vol.4, No.2 (December 1987), pp.127-153; G.P.V.Somaratna, 'Pre-Portuguese Christianity in Sri Lanka', *Indian Chuech History Review*, Vol. XXVI, No.2 (December), p.145-155

³ For an assessment of the Persian church's continent wide mission movement see Samuel Hugh Moffet, *A History of Christianity in Asia. Volume I: Beginnings to 1500*, (NY: Harper Collins, 1992), chs.4-15

⁴ Somaratna, op.cit, p.153

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

We shall begin by examining the historical sources that provide us with evidence of a sustained Ethiopian trading presence in Sri Lanka. Once we have gained an understanding of the extent of this relationship, we shall proceed to explore the nature of Aksumite Christianity and its possible missiology.

I. The Historical Evidence

The Ships of Adulis

Drawing on his own experience and information gathered from a career of seafaring in the Mediterranean and Red Seas, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean (for which he received the surname *Indicopleustes*, the 'Indian navigator'), the Alexandrian monk Cosmas provides a mid-6th century AD report of maritime trade in the region. In Book XI of his *Christian Topography*⁵, following the notice about the island's Persian Christian merchant community complete with clergy and liturgy (ch.14), Cosmas describes the role and extent of Sri Lanka's international trade (ch.15-16).

From the whole of India, Persia and Ethiopia the island, acting as intermediary, welcomes many ships, and likewise dispatches them. From regions of the interior, i.e. Tzinista [China] and other markets, it imports silk, aloes, cloves, clove-wood, sandal wood, and all the native products. And it re-exports them to the people of the exterior, i.e. to Male, where the pepper grows, and to Calliena, where copper is produced, and sesame wood and cloths of various sorts – for this too is a big centre of trade - similarly to Sindou, where musk, costus root and spikenard come from, and to Persia, Himyarite country [Southern Arabia] and to Adulis. In return it gets the produce of each of the afore-mentioned markets, and passes them to the people of the interior, and at the same time exports its own native products to each of these markets... So, this Sielediba, situated as it were in the middle of India [i.e. the Indian region], and with the hyacinth producing country too, receiving wares from all the markets and exports to them all, and it is a great centre of trade.”⁶

Rise of Ethiopia as a Maritime Nation

Ethiopia is ranked among the three most important trading nations to maintain a steady traffic of commerce with Sri Lanka. Ethiopian trading ships were so famous that the Arab poet Tarafah (AD 543-569), a contemporary of Cosmas, compared the progress of a royal caravan to “a large ship... one of the ships of Adulis... which the mariner now turns aside and now directs straight ahead; its prow cuts through the foam of the water as a gambler divides the dust with his hand.”⁷

⁵ Manuscript and thematic evidence indicate that Bks. XI and XII did not originally belong to the *Christian Tomography*, scholars believe that they are extracts from a lost work of Cosmas on geography.

⁶ Here and else where (unless otherwise noted) I have used the translations in D.M.P. Weerakkody, *Taprobane: Ancient Sri Lanka as known to Greeks and Romans* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), p.245. Hereafter *Taprobane*.

⁷ Tarafah ibn al 'Abd, Mu'allaqat, II, 3-5. Cited in George F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring: In the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, rev. and exo. John Carswell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.3.

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

Adulis (more accurately, Gabaza-Adulis), the main port of Aksumite Ethiopia, is specifically mentioned as a destination of the island's exports and trading ships. As evident from the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, Adulis was already a port of some importance in the 1st cent. AD. In that era, when Greek and Roman merchants directly engaged in Indian Ocean trade, Adulis had begun to emerge not only as an excellent harbor en route to India, but as the convenient source of an impressive inventory of luxuries produced in East Africa, Southern Arabia, India and Sri Lanka.⁸

By the 6th cent. AD, the Christianized kingdom of Aksum had expanded territorially and economically, becoming a significant importer for foreign goods for its own market. The new era also saw the decline of direct Greco-Roman sea-borne trade in the Indian Ocean, although the demand for oriental luxuries never abated. The Aksumite Ethiopians seized the opportunity to emerge as a powerful maritime nation and acted as intermediaries for the Byzantine Empire.

Archeologist Stuart Munro-Hay assesses the extent of Aksumite international trade as follows:

“The important products of the Roman Empire and India were much desired and appreciated by the elite of Aksum, if we can interpret from the parallelism of the list of imports and finds in tombs and domestic buildings. Iron, in the form of tools and weapons, a varied selection of glass vessels, and some of the containers which would have held imported wines, oils and spices were found during the latest excavations (Munro-Hay 1989). The presence of such items is testimony to the success of the Aksumites in developing the potential of their trade from both the interior and overseas transshipments into a rich source of revenue...”⁹

Therefore, the share of Ethiopian trade with Sri Lanka must have been considerable indeed.

Silk Road of the Sea

By the 6th century AD, Adulis had evolved into a principal entrepot on the Mediterranean – Red Sea route linking Byzantine, Egyptian, Arab and East African commerce. On the opposite side of the Indian Ocean, the Sri Lankan port of Mantai-Mahatitta had grown in prominence as a major entrepot for the Indian Ocean – South China Sea route, which linked Indian, South East Asian and Chinese international trade.¹⁰ Historian Leslie Gunawardana states that “The sixth century probably represents the highest point of the development of Sri Lanka as a centre of navigational and commercial activity.”¹¹ He explains how long a respite from South Indian invasions and proactive measures to foster

⁸ Tr. G.B.W. Huntingford, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1980), p.20f

⁹ S. C. H. Munro-Hay, ‘Aksumite Overseas Interests’, *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*, ed. J. Reade, London, New York, 1996, pp.403-416; *Excavations at Aksum* (London: British Institute in East Africa, 1989).

¹⁰ See S.Kiribamune. ‘The Role of the Port-Cuty of Mahatitta (Mantota in the Trade Network of Indian Ocean’, *Sri Lankan Journal of Humanities*, 1991-1992, pp. 171-192. Also ‘Mantai-Mahatittha: The Great Port and Entrepot in the Indian Ocean Trade’, *SLSRS*. P.107-113; B.J. Perera, ‘The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon: I. The ‘Ports’ of Ceylon’, *Ceylon History Journal*, Vol.1, No.2(1952), pp.109-119.

¹¹ R.A.L.P.H. Gunawardana, ‘Seaways to Sielediba: Changing of Navigation in the Indian Ocean and their Impact on Precolonial Sri Lanka,’ *SLSRS*, pp.23.

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

international trade by a succession of Sinhala kings seem to have helped break the island's erstwhile dependence on Indian ports.¹²

Archaeologist Martha Prickett-Fernando concurs,

“Mantai was superbly positioned for control of resources and maritime trade routes. In serving as the principal port at Anuradhapura, Mantai was a pivotal centre in the long-distance trade between Middle East, South Asia and the Orient until the 11th century AD. The extent of this trade, which was largely in perishable goods, such as spices, textiles and precious woods, is demonstrated archaeologically by more prosaic items such as ceramic and stones – although these clearly support the historical reports of Mantai's far-flung trade networks.”¹³

In addition to these finds, Roland Silva and Jan Bouzek report surface finds of early and late Roman sigillate and glassware of quantity sufficient to recognize Mantai as “a trading post comparable to that of [the South Indian site of the 1st cent. Roman trading colony at] Ariamedu.”¹⁴

Therefore, the trans-Indian Oceanic nexus between the two main entrepôts of Adulis and Mantai-Mahititta must have been one of the busiest routes on, what historians have come to acknowledge as, the ‘Silk Road of the Sea’.

This reconstruction is strengthened by a critical analysis of ancient Greco-Roman geographic notices about the location of Taprobane. Observing how writer like Strabo and the author of the *Periplus* state that the island “extends in the direction of Ethiopia,” D.M.P. Weerakkody argues that “some geographers placed Taprobane too far to the east and south, even taking it beyond the limits of the inhabited world, others brought it too close to the shore of eastern Africa,” he infers that, “These latter writers, who include Strabo and the author of the *Periplus*, appear to be indebted to the actual experience of navigators, whereas the theoreticians locate the island far away beyond anything reached by Alexander the Great.” Therefore, Weerakkody concludes, “It should be realized that these navigators,

¹² Gunawardana writes, “The active encouragement given by [Sri Lankan rulers] was a certainly a major factor behind the rise of the commercial importance of the island. Their endeavor is evident in a succession of missions sent to the courts of Rome, Byzantium and China [between 1st-7th centuries AD]. Attempts were being made from about the fifth century to ensure the security of the sea. Moggallana I (495-512) instituted “a watch of the sea” [Pali *sagara-rakkham*, *Chulavansa* 39.57]. The practice was probably continued by his successors, for there is a reference in the chronicle to another king, Silakala (522-535), appointing one of his sons to protect the sea [*Chulavansa* 41.35]... It is quite possible that, in providing protection, these kings were also trying to direct traders to their own ports.” ‘Seaways to Sielediba: Changing of Navigation in the Indian Ocean and the Impact on Precolonial Sri Lanka’, *SLSRS*, PP.23-24.

¹³ From her address to the First National Archaeological Congress (Colombo, 1986), cited in *Taprobanè*, p.11. For details of archaeological evidence see ‘Durable Goods: the Archaeological Evidence of Sri Lanka's Role in the Indian Ocean Trade,’ *SLSRS*, PP.61-84.

¹⁴ ‘Mantai – A second Arikamedu: A Note on Roman Finds,’ *SLSRS*, p115.

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

who doubtless had firsthand experience of the region they were describing, have probably preserved an echo of the transoceanic trade route between East Africa and South-East Asia".¹⁵

Ethiopians in Sri Lanka

Cosmas and his colleagues Menas had visited Ethiopia as Alexandrian merchants, and had personal knowledge of both the port of Adulis and the royal capital of Aksum.¹⁶ For all the impressive detail he provides of the island, Cosmas may never have visited Sri Lanka himself, and nowhere claims to have done so.¹⁷ His information about Sri Lanka evidently came from several first-hand sources. One of these informants was a fellow Alexandrian merchant named Sopatros. In relating an incident involving Sopatros, which illustrates the competition between Byzantium and Persia in Indian Ocean commerce, Cosmas reports the presence of Ethiopian merchants in Sri Lanka.

It is clear from this account that Sopatros embarked from Adulis on board an Adulite vessel. For upon their arrival in Sri Lanka (which coincided with the arrival of a rival Persian ship) we are told that "the people from Adulis, Sopatros with them, disembarked." Again, at the end of the account, Cosmas names his sources as "Sopatros and his companions who went to that island from Adoulis." This indicates that the information was obtained at Adulis, upon the return of the informants.

It is highly probable, therefore, that Cosmas received much of his other information about Sri Lanka (recorded in Books II.45-6; III.65 and XI.22) also from the Ethiopians, including the description about the Persian Christian community in Sri Lanka. Knowledge of the distinction between the ecclesiastical offices of 'presbyter' and 'deacon'; the significance of the place of ordination as Persia (which locates its episcopal jurisdiction) and the importance of worshipping according to "all the liturgy of the church" indicate cognizant observation. Who better than Christians themselves could have obtained, understood and reported such nuanced information?¹⁸

Although the Ethiopians were present at the audience with the unnamed Sri Lankan king,¹⁹ his query regarding which of their rulers is greater and more powerful is directed at the Alexandrian and Persian envoys, not at the Ethiopians. He apparently identified Sopatros as the Roman representative and addressed him as such. Then, as proposed by Sopatros, by a comparison of the quality of their respective coinage, the Roman were adjudged the superior nation over the Persians, and Sopatros accorded state honours befitting a representative of that nation. In this encounter between trade

¹⁵ To this he adds, "We may also note that, as late as the sixth century AD, Cosmas also speaks of Taprobane as one of the "outer" countries, i.e. lying to the west of India and he too had been a practicing navigator". *Op.cit.*, p.47.

¹⁶ *Christian Topography*, II.55ff. Hereafter *CT*.

¹⁷ McCrindle insists otherwise. "No one who reads his eleventh book in which he describes the Island of Ceylon and the ports, commerce and animals of India can doubt that he writes about these places from personal knowledge of them." *CT*, p. vi

¹⁸ Weerakkody suggests likewise (*Taprobane*, p.4). Regarding the Christians or another Indian Ocean island, Dioscorides (i.e. Socatra), Cosmas says that although he had never visited it, he obtained the information from its Greek-speaking inhabitants whom he also met in Ethiopia. *CT* III.65

¹⁹ J.E. Tennent suggests Kumaradasa (515-542). F..F. Schwatrs and Weerakkody prefer Moggallana I (495-512). See *Taprobane*, p.141 for references.

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

representatives of the Roman and Persian empires, the Ethiopians stand in the background, as the Alexandrian-Roman's entourage.

This incident fits authentically into the known commercial rivalry between the two great imperial powers of Byzantium and Persia in Late Antiquity. The Ethiopians were a strong political ally of Byzantium, and they would place their strength as a maritime power in the Indian Ocean to act as intermediaries in international trade.

The report also seems to indicate that the journey was a one-time visit to Sopatros, whereas his Adulite companions were regular voyagers to the island. This would also indicate why "the local magistrates and the tax collectors" took the Alexandrian merchant, whom they probably reckoned to be a suitable Roman counterpart to the ostensibly high ranking "Persian envoy" who arrived at the same time, for an audience with the king. It is quite improbable that the king would have met every company of foreign merchants that put into one of the island's ports.²⁰ The relative inattention paid to Sopatros' Adulite companions may in fact indicate that Ethiopian merchant were a frequent and familiar presence among the maritime milieu of Mantai-Mahititta.

Archaeological Evidence

The use of the Byzantine nomisma by Sopatros suggest that this was the currency used for international transactions by his Ethiopian colleagues as well. Although the Aksumite kings had been minting their own impressive gold, silver and bronze coinage since about 70 AD, outside their immediate sphere of geopolitical influence they seem to have preferred using Roman coinage for overseas trade.²¹ As amply attested by archaeological finds throughout South Asia, Roman and Indo-Roman coins were used by intermediaries.²²

In the context it is very significant for the present study that archaeological excavations in Sri Lanka have only begun to produce unambiguous evidence of Ethiopian trading contact. The initial discovery was made during the 2001 Tissamaharama project of the Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka and the Commission for General and Comparative Archaeology (KAVA) of the German Institute of Archaeology at Bonn, under the direction of Dr. Hans-Joachim Weisshaar. Pending the publication of the official excavation report²³ a newspaper article announced that

Most of the coins unearthed, they believe, would have been brought here by merchants dealing with the Roman Empire. Once coin they have discovered

²⁰ Weerakkody's interpretation of events is similar. *Taprobane*, p.142

²¹ Stuart Munro-Hay, *Aksum: An African Civilization of Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), p.184.

²² Bopearachchi, O. 'Seafaring in the Indian Ocean: Archaeological Evidence from Sri Lanka', *Tradition and Archaeology, Early Maritime Contacts in the Indian Ocean* (Proceedings of the International Seminar Techno-Archaeological Perspectives of Seafaring in the Indian Ocean, 4th century B.C. – 15th century A.D., New Delhi, February 28 – March 4, 1994) ed. H.P. Ray and J.F. Salles, (New Delhi, Manohar, 1996), pp. 59-78.

²³ The anticipated *Ancient Ruhuns: Sri Lanka-Germany Archaeological Project in the Southern Province*, Volume 2.

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

is from former Aksum, today's Ethiopia, and was used between the 4th and 5th century AD.²⁴

As foreign traders of other nationalities would not have carried Aksumite coinage to Sri Lanka, the finding of an Aksumite coin among Roman coins rings true as evidence for the activity of Aksumites as intermediaries.

As yet only a fraction of the archaeological sites at Mantai and Anuradhapura²⁵ as well as at Adulis and Aksum have been excavated. Historians eagerly await further archaeological investigations on both sides of the Indian Ocean in order to acquire a better knowledge of Aksumite-Sri Lankan connections in antiquity.

Additional Evidence

More evidence for Ethiopian engagement in Indian Ocean seafaring is found in two 5th and 6th century sources. Interestingly, the first of these two documents refers to Sri Lanka.

The mid-5th century treatise *On the Nations of India and the Brahmins (De Gentibus Indiae et Bragmanibus)* is attributed to a certain Palladius.²⁶ The writer sets out to provide his unnamed patron with information about the Brahmins who live by the Ganges. Having stated that he had neither met these philosophers nor visited their country, he does claim to have travelled to the "capes of India" even though he could not proceed any further "in the company of the blessed Moses, bishop of Adulis"; a detail which we shall discuss later for its missiologically significant. For the moment it is important to note that this detail almost certainly indicates that Palladius' voyage across the Indian Ocean began at Adulis.

Despite the failure of his own voyage, Palladius had learned about the Brahmins from a certain 'skolastikos' (i.e. lawyer) from the Egyptian Thebes who had actually journeyed much further eastward. The skolastikos, it is reported, has developed a yearning to visit India. In order to make arrangement for the journey, he had first sailed down the Red Sea, "in the company of presbyter," to the port of Adulis and then inland to the capital Aksum. There he had discovered and befriended "the Indians in residence there" who were governed by a "minor kinglet", indicating that the merchant community from across the Indian Ocean were quite numerous. While at Aksum, and probably due to better regional information learnt from the Indian expatriates, the skolastikos had determined to extend

²⁴ Susanne Loos-Jawawickrema, 'Rising from the past', *The Sunday Times*, September 30, 2001.

²⁵ "The two most productive sites excavated thus far for foreign trade evidence are the Anuradhapura Citadel and Mantai. The earliest layers have been reached by excavation in only about 0.01% of the 100 ha Anuradhapura Citadel mound. For Mantai, only about 0.2% of the 50 ha site has been excavated, much less than that (0.04%) to the earliest layers." Martha Prickett-Fernando, 'Durable Goods: The Archaeological evidence of Sri Lanka's role in the Indian Ocean Trade', *SLSRS*, p.65, n.12

²⁶ The dating of this document is derived from the discussion in *Taprobane*, pp. 119-131, which precludes the traditional identification of the writer with the Palladius who is known to have been Bishop of Hellemopolis (d.341 AD). From the text itself we can deduce that the author was an Egyptian and, from allusions to the Bible, a Christian.

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

his visit to “the island of Taprobane... where the Macrobioi live”.²⁷ After a brief description of the island, which Weerakkody assesses to be “on the whole realistic” and of general historical reliability,²⁸ the skolastikoas narrates how he found “some Indians making the passage from Axum in their boats for the purposous of trade.” Again, the Aksumite coast is given as the point of departure for the eastward voyage. When the company had reached “the neighbourhood of the people called Bisadae” (probably, the Malabar Coast),²⁹ the skolastikos was captured by “the local ruler” and forced into slavery for six years. It was during this period that he had gathered information about the neighbouring peoples.

The Theban’s release came about, we are told, by a rival king who having warred against the skolastikos’ captor, reported to their overlord that he had been found holding a Roman in forced servitude. What comes as a surprise is that the overlord is identifies as “the great king who resides in the island of Taprobane” who promptly dispatched a judge to investigate and punish what was apparently a serious breach in relations with the highly regarded Roman Empire.

Duncan Derrett³⁰ and Jehan Desanges³¹ have attempted to interpret Palladius’ account in relation to other known historical conditions of the period. After a careful critique of the reconstructions offered by these two scholars, Weerakkody proposed the following scenario: In the mid-5th century, there are indications that South Indian merchants were hard pressed to meet the rising demand for such commodities as spices and gems in the Roman and Persian Empires. Driven by the opportunity to expand their commercial interests, South Indian rulers once again invaded the Sri Lanka. Beginning with Pandu, these Pandya or Chola kinds dominated Sri Lanka for 27 years (AD 433-460). Pandu himself is known to have rules from Anuradhapura while in AD 436 the Chola prince Kulakkottu of Kaveripattinam visited Trincomalee to oversee the restoration of the Konesar kovil and subsequently settled Vanniya from India to cultivate public lands. Considering the evidence for South Indian activity in Sri Lanka at this time, Weerakkody accepts the probability that at least one of these kings might have ruler his South Indian territories from Sri Lanka, at least temporarily.³²

Therefore, Palladius’ account may well reflect mid-5th century circumstances that prevailed a century before the era of Cosmas. Sri Lanka had not yet shaken off the yoke of South Indian domination over regional commerce and the island had not yet emerged as an independent entrepot. But, as the skolastikos’ Indian informants appear to have realized, the island of Taproban was a destination worth visiting because of its growing importance as a source of profitable merchandise.

Decline of Ethiopian Maritime Activity

²⁷ Gk. ‘long-lived ones’, reflecting the common Hellenistic impression that the natives of Taprobane enjoyed unusual longevity (eg. Pliny VII, 30.)

²⁸ *Taprobane*, pp. 130-131

²⁹ For a discussion on locating the province of the skilastikos’ captivity, see *Ibid*, pp.122-129.

³⁰ J.D.M.Derrett, ‘The History of Palladius on the Race of India and the Brahmins,’ *Classica et Mediaevalia*, XXI-XXII (1960-61), pp.64-135; ‘The Theban Scolasticus and Malabar in c. 355-60’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 82 (1962), pp.21-31.

³¹ J. Desanges, ‘D’Axoum a l’Assam, aux bords de la Chine: le voyage du “Scholasticus” de Thebes (entre 360 et 500 apres J.-C.)’, *Historia*, Vol. 18 (1969), pp. 627-639.

³² *Taprobane*, p.125-126

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

Our second supportive source on Ethiopian sea trade in the Indian Ocean comes from the Byzantine court historian Procopius of Caesarea (AD c.490/507 – c.560s). In *The Persian War (De Bello Persico)*, Procopius records an event in the reign of Emperor Justinian I (r. AD 527-65) when the Romans faced the costly and humiliating disadvantage of having to buy Chinese silk from the Persians with whom they were at war. Justinian's attempt to resolve this trade crisis was to enlist the help of his southern allies Ethiopia and Himyar. Of the Himyarites the Emperor requested military engagement against their common enemy Persia. Of the Ethiopians, and account of their maritime prowess, he proposed a mutually profitable trade offensive against the Persian monopoly in Chinese silk. Procopius recounts that Justinian "purposed that the Ethiopians, by purchasing silk from India and selling it among the Romans, might themselves gain much money, while causing the Romans to profit it only one way, namely, that they be no longer compelled to pay over their money to their enemy."³³

The Aksumite king Ela Atsbeha-Kaleb (known to Procopius as Ellestheaeus) readily mobilized his merchants to seize the opportunity. However, like the abortive Himyarite military expedition, the Ethiopian commercial ventures also failed. "For it was impossible" explained the Byzantine historian "for the Ethiopians to buy silk from the Indians, for the Persian merchants always locate themselves at the very harbours where the Indian ships first put in, since they inhabit the adjoining country,³⁴ and are accustomed to buy the whole cargoes."³⁵

Procopius' account may signal the beginning of Aksumite Ethiopia's decline as a maritime nation. The expansion of Persian dominance in the Indian Ocean effectively sidelined the more distinct Ethiopians. Then in AD Islamic forces attacked Adulis from across the Red Sea, and the port gradually fell to ruin. The following year Byzantium conceded Egypt to the Arabs. Christian Ethiopians became isolated and cut off from their former international connections.

The next we hear of Ethiopians in Sri Lanka is in the 14th cent., when Ibn Batuta reports a 500-strong *Habshi* (Arabic for Amharic *Habasha*) mercenary force in the service of Jalasti, the Muslim 'vizier of the sea' based at the port of Colombo.³⁶ Then in the 16th cent., the Sinhala poet Alagiyavanne Mukaveti lists the '[A] *bîsi* (Sinhala for Arabic *Habshi*) as one of the nationalities in the Portuguese expeditionary force of Constantino de Sa de Noroña.³⁷

II. Missiological Significance

From the sources we have examined it is clear that the Ethiopians of Aksum had regular commercial contact with Sri Lanka. We shall now inquire whether there is any possible missiological significance to that ancient encounter. To answer this question, it is necessary to explore two constituent inquiries. First, how conscious would Ethiopian merchants have been of their identity as

³³ Book 1. xx.9

³⁴ Contemporary geography identified the Indus River as the border between Persia and India. See Cosmas XI.16

³⁵ *Ibid.* I.xx.13

³⁶ Mahdi Hussain, *The Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. CXXII, Baroda, 1953, pp.223-224

³⁷ *Kushanthinu Hatana* stanza 96. See K. Karunadasa Silva Dunasighe, *Alagiyavanne Mukaveti Vicharaya saha Konsthanthinu*, Colombo: Godage Brothers, 1997), p.70.

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

Christians? Second, what level of missionary impulse might these Ethiopian traders have borne for the transmission of their faith to their trading partners in a non-Christian culture such as Sri Lanka?

Christian Identity and the Merchants of Adulis

If identity is shaped by history, then the founding narrative of Christianity in Aksumite Ethiopia must have had an indelible influence upon its sea-faring merchants. As preserved by Rufinus of Aquileia (c. AD 340-410) in his addendum to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, the beginnings of Ethiopian Christianity are strongly connected to Indian Ocean sea journey and foreign merchants.

“One Metrodorus, a philosopher [i.e. a teacher], is said to have penetrated to further India in order to view places and see the world. Inspired by his example, one Meropius, a philosopher of Tyre [in Syria], wished to visit India with a similar object, taking with him two small boys who were related to him and whom he was educating in humane studies. The younger of these was called Aedesius, the other Frumentius. When, having seen and taken note of what his soul fed upon, the philosopher had begun to return, the ship, on which he traveled put in for water or some other necessary at a certain port. It is the custom of the barbarians of these parts that, if ever the neighbouring tribes should report that their treaty with the Romans is broken, all Romans found among them should be massacred. The philosopher's ship was boarded; all with himself were put to the sword. The boys were found studying under a tree and preparing lessons, and, preserved by the mercy of the barbarians, were taken to the king. He made one of them, Aedesius, his cupbearer. Frumentius, whom he had perceived to be sagacious and prudent, he made his treasurer and secretary. Therefore they were held in great honour and affection by the king.”³⁸

When the king (Ella Amida, according to Ethiopian sources) died his heir was still an infant. Although the king had granted them their freedom before he died, the regent queen mother persuaded them, especially Frumentius, to help her govern the country until the prince was old enough to rule.

“While they lived there and Frumentius held the reins of government in his hands, God stirred up his heart and he began to search out with care those of the Roman merchants who were Christians and to give them great influence and to urge them to establish in various places conventicles to which they might resort for prayer in the Roman manner. He himself, moreover, did the same and so encouraged the others, attracting them with his favour and his benefits, providing them with whatever was needed, supplying sites for building and other necessities, and in every way promoting the seed of Christianity in the country.”³⁹

When the prince (Ezana, according to Ethiopian sources) eventually ascended the throne and their obligation was over, Aedesius returned to his native Tyre where he subsequently became a

³⁸ Rufinus, *Ecclesiastical History*, I. 9. 478-480

³⁹ *Ibid.*

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

priest.⁴⁰ But Frumentius used his freedom to travel to Alexandria to meet its new bishop Athanasius. “Saying that it was not right to hide the work of God” Frumentius urged Athanasius to find a suitable missionary bishop for “the many Christians already congregated and the churches built on barbarian soil”. The bishop of Alexandria assessed the report of this extraordinary layman and concluded, “What other man shall we find in whom the Spirit consecrated as bishop of Aksum, Frumentius returned to the land of his former captivity where “a countless number of barbarians were converted by him to the faith. From which time Christian peoples and churches have been created in the parts of India⁴¹ [i.e. Ethiopia], and the priesthood has begun.”

The historicity of Frumentius’ missionary activity and the subsequent conversion of Ezana and the Aksumite elite around AD 330 is confirmed by ample archaeological evidence both numismatic and epigraphic. Ezana’s titular inscriptions change from ‘son of the invincible Mahrem/Ares’ to ‘servant of Christ’; a title adopted by his successors as well.⁴²

Important for the present study is the attention given by Frumentius to the foreign Christian merchants, probably both at Aksum as well as at Adulis. He considered the fellowship and spiritual life of this community as the “seed of Christianity”. By building chapels and equipping them with the necessities of Christian public worship, he raised their visibility and prominence. Undoubtedly, Ethiopian merchants would have been among the first converts to Christianity, even before the conversion of the ruling elite.

Archeology has revealed that Adulis had many large churches dating from the Aksumite period.⁴³ It is not surprising then that Adulis had its own bishop, as we saw in Palladius’ account. These places of worship would undoubtedly have had both worshippers and patrons from the prosperous Adulite merchant class.

A further clue to the connection between Christianity and the merchant community is attested in liturgical sources. The Ge’ez Preparatory Service which precedes the Eucharistic Anaphoras upholds specific categories of persons for the congregation’s intercession. Together with their church leaders (from the Abuna to the dabtara), their political rulers (“our king” and “the rulers and those in authority”) and the “the afflicted and distressed” (such as widows and virgins), the Ethiopian Christians prayed for “them that travel by sea and land”.⁴⁴ The priority of sea over land travel may reflect the antiquity of the liturgy’s Alexandrian roots, preserving in liturgical memory an era when Ethiopians were not a ‘land-locked’ nation. Rather it implies not only the recognition that merchants engaged in international commerce constituted a sizeable community of individuals who could be identified as a distinct group social group, but also the nation’s appreciation of the merchants who regularly undertook

⁴⁰ It is from Aedesius that Rufinus claims to have received this information.

⁴¹ Greco-Roman writers used the term India to refer to both Ethiopia and the South Asian subcontinent.

⁴² Munro-Hay, *Aksum*, pp.83-85

⁴³ *Ibid*, pp. 212-3

⁴⁴ Marcis Daoud, and Blatta Marsie Hazen, trans. *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church* (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing Press, 1954), pp. 7-55. Cited in Ernest Horton Jr., ‘Major Concepts of the Ethiopic Liturgy’ <<http://www.glendale.edu/philosophy/ethiopic.html>>(20 July 2005).

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

the considerable risk of maritime commerce to enrich their national economy and international prestige.

At the conversion, Ezana had replaced the pagan South Arabian crescent symbol with the Christian cross on his coinage. Thereby Aksum became the first nation to depict the cross of Christ on its coins, even preceding Constantine (who had embraced Christianity in AD 312) and his successors.⁴⁵ Later rulers of the 4th and 5th centuries inscribed their coinage with mottoes such as 'By grace of God', 'Christ is with us', 'Thanks be to God', and 'Mercy and peace'.⁴⁶ For Ethiopian merchants, therefore, their currency would not have been merely a medium of exchange. They were symbolic affirmations and reminders of their Christian faith and identity.

Moreover, the liturgy reminded them of God's presence everywhere in time and space. *The Anaphora of the Three Hundred (Bishops at Nicea)* professes that "There is no time in which he was not, and there is no place where he cannot be found".⁴⁷ Therefore, Ethiopian merchants would have carried with them the conviction of God's sovereign presence that transcended geographic boundaries wherever they ventured, even into distant Sri Lanka.

From what evidence is available, we may form the confident opinion that merchants of Adulis possessed a strong Christian self-identity. If so, what degree of missionary impulse would Christian Ethiopian merchants might have borne for the transmission of their faith to trading partners of non-Christian cultures?

Missionary Impulse

The early Greek Church Fathers inherited an ethnographic perception of Ethiopians that came down from Homer and Herodotus. This traditional view described Ethiopians as the race that inhabited the remotest parts of the earth, and explained their dark-skinned appearance as due to being "burnt by the sun".⁴⁸ The conversion of the Ethiopians therefore gave their northern brethren a vividly literal motif for the universality and transformational power of the Gospel.⁴⁹ Already in the 3rd century, Origen of Alexandria (c.185-254) anticipated the worldwide reach of the Gospel in the conversion of the "Ethiopian eunuch"⁵⁰ who represented "the most remote of people".⁵¹ Eusebius of Caesarea (c.AD 260-341) called him "the first-fruits of the faithful throughout the world".⁵² The conversion of the Ethiopians also provided an image of radical transformation in a culture that spoke of "washing and Ethiopian" or

⁴⁵ Richard Pankurst, *The Ethiopians* (Oxford:Blackwell, 1998), p.27.

⁴⁶ Munro-Hay, p. 192f

⁴⁷ Horton, op. cit.

⁴⁸ Frank M. Snowden, Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1970), p.1-14. For the information summarized in this section I gratefully acknowledge Prof. Paul F. Burke, Jr. 'Early Christianity in Ethiopia and Ethiopian Christianity in the Holy Land' published in the Clark University website <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/Leir/Linked Docs/Ethiopia.doc>. (July 20, 2005)

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Ch.9: 'Early Christian Attitude toward Ethiopians- Creed and Conversion', pp.196-215

⁵⁰ *Acts of the Apostle* 8.26-40

⁵¹ *Commentary on the Songs of Songs* 1.5-6

⁵² *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1.13.

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

“making an Ethiopian white” as metaphors for impossibility or futility.⁵³ The Gospel of Christ, however, had made ‘black’ Ethiopians ‘white’. Gregory of Nyssa (330-c.395) predicted that in the New Jerusalem “Gentiles become dweller of the City; Babylonians, Jerusalemites; the prostitute, a virgin; Ethiopians, radiantly bright; and Tyre, the heavenly city.”⁵⁴

Of great significance to these study is African-American classicist Frank Snowden’s assertion that Ethiopian Christians embraced these missiological images for themselves.⁵⁵ If they perceived themselves as being elevated into the mainstream of salvation history by the Gospel of Christ which extended to all the regions of human habitation, it is reasonable to assume that the Ethiopians in turn bore a sense of obligation to transmit that ethnically inclusive Gospel to other dark skinned nations who lived across the seas and with whom they came into regular contact.

Since the main ecclesiastical influence for Aksumite Christianity came from Alexandria, we may be certain that the Ethiopians inherited something of the missionary enterprise of the Copts. The Coptic monastic movement served as a springboard for far-reaching missionary activities.⁵⁶

Beginning with Frumentius initial work of evangelization, the spread of Christianity as a mass seems to have been catalyzed by Monophysite ecclesiastical immigrants coming out of Syria, following the Council of Chalcedon’s rejection of monophysitism (AD 451). As the hagiographies of the ‘Nine Saints’ reflect, the propagation of faith was accomplished through the planting of monasteries from where missionary monks either evangelized urban populations or traveled to preach to various tribal communities.⁵⁷

The Aksumite missionary movement was not confined to its national borders.⁵⁸ There is evidence that Ethiopian evangelists journeyed to surrounding territories as well. John of Ephesus (c. AD 505-585) reports the discovery by the visiting Byzantine bishop Longinus of Christian converts in the Nubian kingdom of Alodia in the 580s. They claimed to have received the faith from Aksumite missionaries.⁵⁹

Events in the 6th cent. also reveal Ethiopia’s connections and commitments to Christian communities overseas. When the Jewish Arab king dhu-Nawas of Zafar began persecuting Himyarite Christians around 522, they naturally turned to neighbouring Ethiopia for relief. In 523, King ‘Ella’

⁵³ Snowden, pp. 5-7, 197-8 citing examples from Aesop to Lucian.

⁵⁴ Gregory of Nyssa (above, note 42.)

⁵⁵ This is because, as Snowden convincingly argues, even from Classical times the terminology of ‘blackness’ did not carry connotations of racial inferiority. Being dark complexioned was simply regarded as a natural geographical phenomenon.

⁵⁶ Aziz S. Atiya, ‘The Copts and Christian Civilization’. <http://www.coptichymns.net> (4 November 2004).

⁵⁷ Sergrew Hable Sellassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270* (Addis Alaba: United Printers, 1972, p.115ff

⁵⁸ Paul Burke’s statement that “Historically, and subsequent to this short-lived attempt at foreign conquest, the Ethiopian Church has always seen its mission as local, expressing the spiritual life of the nation, rather than as a missionary church” is true of the revival of internal Christian mission in the ‘Solomonic’ Zagwe Period (1270-1530). *Op.cit.*(n.48 above).

⁵⁹ John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 51

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

Asbeha-Kaleb of Aksum responded with a massive invasion, driving out dhu-Nawas from his capital, and establishing an Ethiopian garrison there. But the Jewish and pagan Himyarites regrouped and recaptured Zafar and crushed the Ethiopians. Then in 524, Dhu-Nawas struck the main Arab Christian centre of Najran and massacred its population. The Ethiopians struck back with an army of 70,000 to put a decisive end to the hostile reign of dhu-Nawas. After an initial power struggle king 'Ella' Asbeha-Kaleb acknowledged the usurper Abraha, who had been sent as commander of the Ethiopian occupation force, as tributary ruler of Himyar. Abraha is reported to have built "one of the most magnificent cathedrals of the age" in his capital San'a'.⁶⁰ Christianity flourished in southern Arabia until the Persian overthrew the Ethiopians in 575.

The clear statement by Palladius that bishop Moses of Adulis traveled with him to the "capes of India" is very significant here. It was not at all unusual in the early church for a high ranking clergyman or theologian, inter-religious discussion and evangelistic mission. Among the numerous references to such journeys in the sources we have specific evidence of travel to India.

The precedents may well begin with the highly probably missionary journey of the apostle Thomas himself, who is believed to have reached the south Indian coast in early AD 50s.⁶¹ The next instance is the mission of Pantaenus, the principal of the catechetical school of Alexandria in 180/90. According to Jerome, a delegation of Indians visiting Alexandria requested bishop Demetrius to send his foremost Christian teacher to engage in debate with the masters of their own tradition.⁶² Then there are reports of the Persian church's missions to India beginning with the journey of bishop Dudi of Basra around AD 300.⁶³ Sometimes later that century, as we have already seen, was the voyage of Meropius of Tyre, the teacher of Frumentius and Aedesius.

Considering the pattern of these precedents, it is quite possible that bishop Moses of Adulis was either on a missionary or educational journey to India or a pastoral visit to the merchants of his port city diocese who resided temporarily in India while on business. The most available means of sea travel for these Christian teachers and missionaries were abroad the trading ships of merchants. However, merchants themselves have played a crucial role as initiators and agents of the cross-cultural transmission of faith in the history of all missionary religions, including Buddhism and Christianity. As historian Stanley Burstein has pointed out, much more research and attention needs to be focused on "the role of trade diasporas in the spread of Christianity" in the ancient Northeast African – Indian Ocean region.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present*. 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p.62.

⁶¹ For an evaluation of the Thomas tradition see Moffet, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, Vol. I, p. 25-36.

⁶² *Liber de viris illustribus*, 36. The account gains much credibility from the fact that the early Christian world acquired a noticeable increment in its knowledge of Indian philosophical systems immediately following a career of Pantaenus. For instance, it is from Clement, the disciple and successor of Pantaenus, that we have the very first mention of the Buddha in early Christian literature: "Some, too, of the Indians obey the precepts of Buddha whom, on account of his extraordinary sanctity, they have raised to divine honours" (*Stromateis* I.305)

⁶³ *Chronicle of Seert*, ed. And trans. Addai Scher, in *PO* (Turnhout: 1971), tomr 4, fasc.3, no.17, pp.236 (26), 292 (82). Cited in Moffet, p.100

⁶⁴ Satnley M. Burstein, 'State Formation in Ancient Northeast Africa and the Indian Ocean Trade'. Paper presented at Interactions: Regional Studios, Global Processes, and Historical Analysis, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.,

ANOTHER ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SRI LANKA: THE ETHIOPIANS OF AKSUM

Although it is unlikely that the Ethiopians had a sizeable resident community comparable to the Persians, the rigours of ancient sea-faring necessitated some sort of transitional presence. Shipping in antiquity required extended stays at ports of destination, especially if they were entrepôts like Mantai-Mahatitta where transactions with multiple trade delegations were necessary. Between disembarkation and re-embarkation, merchants would have had to spend considerable lengths of time attending to a variety of activities. Apart from matter of trade with local and foreign buyers and seller, and procedures of taxation with local officials; ancient maritime shipping unloading also involved repairs and rigging of vessels and replenishing stocks of food and fresh water. From the kind of information relayed to Cosmas, such as eyewitness details of the jewel-pinnacled temple of the capital city, we may assume that Cosmas' Ethiopian informants had the leisure to travel into the interior of the country.

These extended stays would have provided ample opportunity for the Christian Aksumites to interact with their Sri Lanka contacts. Unlike the Persians, Christianity was the national faith of the Aksumite Ethiopians. Therefore, if minority Christian Perians resident Sri Lanka manifested their faith in public worship, it is highly likely that the Ethiopians who visited regularly would also have witnessed to their religious faith.

Conclusion

In an insightful essay on the 'external factor' in the island's historical development, archaeologist Senake Bandaranayake⁶⁵ ponders why, despite such considerable contact with the outside world both west and east, ancient Sinhala chroniclers did not show more interest in the and record more information about them. Observing that some nationalities and countries receive far more mention than others, he concludes that all our extant texts are either connected to Buddhism or were preserved by Buddhist institutions that were interested only in affairs of that tradition; for even the *vansas* are essentially Buddhist historiography. Therefore, other works of secular literary, historical, medical or scientific value (which we know existed in abundance) have been lost to our heritage and posterity. Similarly, the nationalities and countries mentioned are those relevant to ancient Buddhist scholarship and pilgrimage. The rich legacy of cross-cultural contact with peoples outside the pale of Buddhism was thus consigned to oblivion.

This study has been an attempt to elucidate the evidence of Sri Lanka's ancient encounter with the Christian Ethiopians of Aksum. It is an important encounter on many levels. It is hoped that this preliminary exploration will in some way recover for us the almost forgotten fact that our island civilization was connected to the history of Christianity as a worldwide movement from antiquity.

February 38-March 3, 2001. <<http://historycooperative.press.uiuc.edu/proceedings/interactions/Burstein.html>> (22 Jul. 2005).

⁶⁵ 'The External Factor in Sri Lanka's Historical Formation', *Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol.25 (Oct 1978), pp.74-94

THE NATURE OF REWARDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mano Emmanuel

A university student who goes to the rescue of fellow students being unmercifully 'ragged'¹ is knifed to death; a custom official trying to stamp out corruption is assassinated, embezzlers and drug dealers get out of jail free because of friends in high places, a compassionate and dedicated doctor dies of an HIV related disease after receiving an infected blood transfusion. These are some of the recent events featured in our local newspapers. Sri Lankans imbibe injustice as the norm along with their mother's milk. Life is not fair but for some, it can be made sense of by the concept of karma. According to this law, those who suffer in this life are paying for the evil they committed in a previous life. In a recent horrific accident caused by a bus driver deliberately defying the railways signal, the owner of the minibus defensively claimed that it was the passengers' karma that had caused their death, rather than the recklessness of the driver.

Such a concept is alien to the Biblical writers. In fact, Christianity is based on the presupposition that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him and obey his commands. From God's assurance to Abraham that 'your reward will be very great' in the first book of the Bible (Gen 15:1), to Christ's declaration 'I am coming soon; my reward is with me' in the last chapter of the Bible, (Rev 22:12), the Bible assumes that God rewards the righteous. The idea of reward is constantly and richly evoked in scripture as the 'fruit, consequence and award for goodness or righteousness in living.'² It is the nature of these rewards that we will consider briefly here.

The Meaning of 'Reward'

Thirteen Hebrew words, the roots of which {} (*sakar*) and {} (*shachad*) are the chief, lie behind OT expressions of 'reward'.³ Often the word refers to 'wages' though occasionally to rewards. When it is God who rewards, the word signifies his gracious gifts (Gen 15:1, Num 18:31, Ps 127:3, 2 Chron 15:7). In the New Testament, eight Greek words are sometimes translated 'reward', producing forty three occurrences of the word. Twenty nine of these are translated from the noun {} (*misthos*). In Matthew, the word {} (*apodidomi*) occurs four times carrying a similar meaning (Mt 6:4, 6, 6:18, 16:24). The range of meanings encompass 'payment of wages', 'dues', 'restore', 'give back', 'requite' and 'gracious recompense for faithfulness'. The Hebrew and Greek words used also carry the connotation of completeness, that is, a task is made complete by the natural outcome of that task or fruit resulting from one's toil. Occasionally, there are overtones of judgment (Rom 1:27, 2 Pet 2:15).⁴

Old Testament Background

¹ Initiation for undergraduates on their first term, often brutal and humiliating

² 'Reward', *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Leland Ryken, James C Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III Ed. (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1998), 719.

³ TWBR A. Richardson (ed.), *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, 1950 et al, et alii (Lat.), and others.

⁴ Wood, D. R. W., D. R. W. Wood, and I. Howard Marshall. *New Bible Dictionary*. Includes Index, electronic ed. Of 3rd ed., (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996, c19822, c1962), 1019.

In the Old Testament, the system of rewards seems to be clearly spelt out. The biblical writers 'viewed human life as inherently ethical' and therefore possessing an intrinsic correspondence between action and consequence, be it good or evil.⁵ This belief in the order and meaning of life was fed by several streams of thought. One was Israel's creation narrative – faith in a righteous Creator God, purposively bringing order, beauty and goodness out of nothing, unhindered by rival powers.⁶ Another was her wisdom literature. The wisdom literature of Egypt is believed to have had a strong influence on the parallel genre in Israel. Egypt's teachers based wisdom on the concept of *Maat*, belief in 'the divine order created at the time of the creation.'⁷ Referring to *Maat* Wurthwein explains,

Whoever goes in opposition to her is like one who swims against the stream; he cuts himself off from the fountain of life. He will have no success in everyday life... on the other hand, the normal consequence of *Maat* is life, proseperity.⁸

Since *Maat* can be taught and learnt, humans have been given a tool by which they may fashion their lives to ensure their wellbeing.

Added to these two strands was the theology of the covenant. The covenant encouraged the people of God by declaring that faithfulness to the Suzerain's covenant would result in rewards to be experienced in their lifetime. This teaching, first applied to Israel as a nation, is then applied particularly in the wisdom literature, to the individual (Prov 13:21, 18:20, 22:4). Abundant harvests, fertility of womb and crop, victory in warfare, vindication in the face of enemies and freedom from fear of marauding beasts, were some of the rewards for covenant faithfulness (Dt 11:13-21, 28:1-14).⁹

Old Testament narrative rarely ends without a measure of poetic justice. The stories of Abraham, Joseph, David, and other heroes of faith demonstrate clearly that rewards accrues to them because of their obedience to God. In fact, there is a category of 'stories of reward'¹⁰ where the whole plot revolves around the good deed and the resultant reward. One example would be the story of Ruth. Boaz introduces this theme when he solicits God's reward for the young widow's loyalty to her husband's mother (Ruth 2:12). Other examples would be the story of Job, Esther and Moses. The 'this worldly' emphasis of the Old Testament writers is based on the assumption that death cuts off this dynamic ethical process. In the grave there is no experience of vindication or joy (Ecc 9:5f).

However, as Israel goes through experience of defeat, famine and other disasters, voices are raised in question. These dissonant voices are not silenced but allowed to speak out, questioning the established 'tit for tat' theology. Walter Brueggemann calls this questioning a 'counter testimony' to Israel's expectation and core expression of God as Sovereign, visibly and decisively intervening in Israel's history to provide a viable life order.¹¹ The most obvious of these voices is that of Job. His friends, replying on the dominant world view, decide

⁵ 'Reward' in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids, William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978)79.

⁶ As opposed to the creation stories of the ANE where weak, squabbling, capricious gods bring about a world in their image.

⁷ Ernst Wurthwein, "Egyptian Wisdom and the Old Testament" in James L. Crenshaw, *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, 113-133, cited in Ivor Poobalan 'A Biblical View of Results With Emphasis on 1&2 Peter', 2004. Unpublished article.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹ This teaching has sometimes been followed uncritically by those who espouse a type of prosperity gospel.

¹⁰ 'Reward', Ryken, Leland, Jim Wilhoit, Tremper Longman et al; *Imagery*, 720

¹¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 318.

that Job must be guilty of sins he cannot or will not admit. But Job will have none of it (Job 8:6, cf 9:15,20). The Psalmist too is bewildered. Psalms of laments record questions and complaints. Where is God in times of trouble when vindication is anticipated? 'How long must we wait?' he asks (Ps 6:3, 13:1-2, 74:10, 79:5, 89:46). "Why is this happening? (Ps 10:1,22:1:74:1) and 'where are you?' (Ps 42:3, 79:10). The author of Ecclesiastes, commonly called Qoheleth contemplates life and construes that although human activity is not hidden from God, *his* activities are shrouded from human eyes. There is no assurance that life always work according to a formula. In the end humans and animals share the same fate (Ecc 8:1699:6, 11:5)

These writers conclude that the world's ethical structure is complex- far more complex than the mechanical view that says that rewards follow righteousness and only the evil suffer. In reality, the rewards a person experience in life are not an adequate measure of the ethical quality of their life.

Yahweh takes a risk by behaving in this unexpected manner, because his sovereignty and power over othr gods is questioned. Brueggemann suggests three possible interpretations to which Israel could have subscribed to explain life at they experienced it. Firstly; that life in the world is uncontrolled and unpredictable, a view that we saw is voiced disconsolately by Ecclesiastes. Secondly, that human knowledge is limited and that greater knowledge would bring comprehension. Thirdly, that these events disclose a combination of human limitation and divine sovereignty.¹² It is this third view that prevails and ensures that the 'counter testimony' does not ultimately limit Yahweh's righteousness or sovereignty. Yahweh is 'completely unfettered, and without obligation', his governance 'cannot be harnessed for any human purpose by thought or action.'¹³ He is inscrutable but He is there. he acts but does not choose to explain. He must be trusted.

New Testament Rewards

Bribe or Motivation?

Before we begin to investigate New Testament rewards, we might pause to inquire if it is acceptable to base a lifestyle on the promise of rewards. It may seem mercenary, yet it is Jesus who talks most often about rewards. In Matthew 16:27, he promises, "The Son of Man is going out to come in the glory of His Father with His Angels; and will then recompense every person according to his deeds." The word {} (*misthos*) occurs ten times in Matthew (Mt. 5:12, 6:4, 6,18,16:27,etc), more than any other gospel, and {} (*apodidomi*) occurs four times (Mt 6:4,6, 6:18, 16:24). There are other passages where the words do not appear but the concept does (Mt :3-12, 19:25ff, 25:14-30, 31-46).

Jesus himself looked forward to a reward (Heb 12:103). Paul speaks often of the crown that awaits him after he has faithfully completed his race (1 Cor 9:25, 2 Tim 4:8). It is our premise that the promise of reward is meant to encourage us as we meditate on it. In a universe directed by a moral God, good action and character ought to result in some satisfaction.¹⁴

¹² Ibid, 350

¹³ Ibid, 350

¹⁴ A M Hunter, *Design for Life*. (London, SCM Press Ltd, 1956), 42.

We could argue that paradoxically for someone who teaches his disciples that rewards accompany behavior, Jesus encourages disinterested goodness.¹⁵ He tells his disciples to do good expecting nothing in return (Mt. 5:41, Lk 14:12f). In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats¹⁶, (Mt 25:31-46), the sheep are those who have lived a life of service and love. But their surprise at the Lord's acknowledgement of their service implies that they had no expectation of recognition for their service.¹⁷ However in other passages Jesus actively encourages his disciples to seek a reward (Mt 6:4,619:29). The point is that Jesus distinguishes between two types of reward – the rewards that is obtained through the recognition of our peers (Mt 6:2) and that which our Heavenly Father gives us because of what he alone sees (Mt 6:4). The practice of righteous deeds in order to attract the admiration of others cancels the possibility of reward from God. But although sometimes delayed, God's reward is of greater value because of its source.

So, the good deeds that give rise to God's reward are those that are the result of an inward disposition of unselfish obedience to God, and expectation of his favour. Work done in one's own strength or for the wrong motives becomes 'worthless' in terms of eternal reward. It is the good tree that bears good fruit. But rewards are more than merely the *result* of good works, they are the incentive too. Let us look again at the meaning of 'disinterested' goodness. Is there an element of self-interest in the pursuit of reward? Yes, but there is a difference between self-interest and selfishness or self-centeredness. Self-interest, God's way, is legitimate. It is the desire to continue to enjoy the fellowship and blessing of the Lord, through the strength that he gives us.¹⁸ Self-centeredness is the preoccupation with self at the expense of others and of God's will for us.

In fact, John Piper, well known proponent of what he calls 'Christian hedonism', strongly discourages the use of the term 'disinterested goodness'.

"... We repudiate both the possibility and desirability of disinterested moral behavior. It is impossible, because the will is not autonomous; it always inclines to what it perceives will bring the most happiness (John 8:34; Rom.6:16; 2 Peter 2:19)... ... not only is disinterested morality (doing good for its own sake) impossible; it is undesirable. That is, it is unbiblical; because it would mean that the better a man became the harder it would be for him to act morally. A good man in Scripture is not the man who dislikes doing good but toughs it out for the sake of duty. A good man *loves* kindness (Micah 6:8) and *delights* in the law of the Lord (Ps.1:2). But how shall such a man do an act of kindness disinterestedly? The better the man, the more joy in obedience... ... (God) wills that we *delight* in doing good and that we do it with the confidence that our obedience secures and increases our joy in God.' So, what sets off biblical morality from worldly hedonism is not that biblical morality is disinterested, but that it is interested in vastly great and purer things'.¹⁹

¹⁵ Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I Howard Marshall, 'The Ethnic of Jesus', in *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 214-216.

¹⁶ Not all scholars are agreed that this falls into the category of 'parable', the alternative being to see it as a picture of the last judgment. The distinction is immaterial for our purpose here.

¹⁷ The passage has sometimes been interpreted to mean that salvation might be available to those who have followed Christ unknowingly. However, the passage is not dealing with the means of salvation which Matthew has made clear in the rest of his gospel but rather, the evidence of salvation which is seen in the character of the saved.

¹⁸ 'Reward', in *The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, (Downers Grove, Ill,: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 819-820.

¹⁹ John Piper, 'Brothers Consider Christian Hedonism', <http://www.desiringGod.org> accessed 15th July 2005.

Merit or grace? The New Testament basis for rewards

Paul employs the promise of eternal reward as an incentive to his readers to keep laboring faithfully. In 1 Corinthians 3:8 he says, “He who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labour.” And in Ephesians 6:8, “Whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord.” According to 2 Corinthians 5:10, at the judgment seat of Christ ({}²⁰), believers will receive recompense for things done on earth, both good and bad. Paul probably borrows the term {} (*bema*) from its occurrence in the Greek Isthmian games. There, the winner, who had competed in accordance with the rules under the watchful eye of the judges, was escorted by them to the *bema* to be crowned. Although there is a lot of speculation centred around the location and time of the *bema* event, we will concentrate here on the basis of rewards and what they are. Judgment is for all believers. This tribunal of Christ for the Christian, is needed to complete God’s justice, both in terms of holiness and impartially. The term ‘bad’ ({} *phaulos*) is not used to denote something intrinsically evil, but rather something worthless, of no account, producing no gain. Inversely, ‘good’ ({} *agathos*) refers to things that are worthwhile, honourable, excellent or valuable. Believers are spurred on to strive for the good, by the fear of the Lord. (2 Cor 5:11).

In 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, Paul states that every believer needs to take care how he or she builds on the foundation (Christ), because in the future, each believer’s work will be revealed when it is tested by fire. If the work is good (gold, silver or precious stones), then it will endure and the person will receive a reward. If it is worthless (wood, hay or straw), it will be burned and the person will forfeit his or her reward. Paul makes it clear that the loss of reward is not a loss of salvation; rather, the person will be saved, ‘but as through fire’.²¹ What this means is that some believers will be found to have very little if anything, to show for their life on earth. The ‘loss’ (1 Cor 3:15) that they suffer might imply regret and shame at the shabbiness of their work. So according to Paul, rewards are the result of human effort. They are earned.²² Or are they?

The parable of the labourers in the Vineyard is the one occasion where Jesus seems to disregard the workers’ effort when it comes to payment. The Parable is a reminder that God acts not merely to properly recompense his disciples’ labour. Reward here is not earned payment (Lk 17:10) but rather a ‘freely given recompense, out of all proportion to the service (19:29, 25:21, 23).’²³ This parable and that of the Prodigal Son emphasize not what the early labourers and the elder son deserved but what the late labourers and younger son did not.²⁴ In both cases, the reaction of the listeners exposes the human tendency to accord value on the basis of comparison. The ‘punch line’ challenges his assumption. God does not work that way and Jesus’ listeners should rejoice at the magnanimity and mercy of God. Although rewards are based on works that are declared ‘good’ by the Judge, God is not constrained to reward us because we have earned it. Our work matters to God and has eternal consequences only because he has graciously decided to reward us. This is confirmed when

²⁰ A raised place mounted by steps; the official seat of a judge. Used of the raised platform where a Roman ruler sat to make a decision or pass judgment (Mt 27:19, Jn 19:3).

²¹ ‘Reward’ in Alexander, T. Desmon, and Brian S. Rosner. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed.(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

²² The early Church Fathers built on this principle to the point where rewards were benefits to be earned. For example, Ignatius writes to Polycarp “Let your works be your deposits that you may receive the back-pay due to you,’ (Ign Pol 6:2). Later teaching encouraged believers that extra benefits were available to those who went beyond what was commanded. See ‘Rewards’ in *The Dictionary of The Latter New Testament and its Developments*.

²³ R T France, *Matthew*, (Leicester, IVP, 1985), 112

²⁴ ‘Retribution’, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 157.

Jesus invited the blessed in Matthew 26 to 'inherit the kingdom'. Something that is inherited comes as a gift because of a relationship, rather than as a result of one's own labour.²⁵ If that was not enough to convince us, the New Testament also teaches that no one can obey God without the power God's Spirit enabling and empowering (Gal 2:20, 1 Cor 15:10). So no one can boast. The accomplishments that are rewarded on the last day 'do not reflect the glory of those to whom they are given but the glory of the giver... differing degrees of reward then reflect not the relative worth of the individual per se but the extent to which each one has found delight in fellowship with God and has thus been dedicated to doing his will.'²⁶

Encouraging a cult of failure

A weakness in the growing Sri Lankan Church is that the enthusiasm for evangelism is not matched with a commitment to disciple and be disciple. An over emphasis on the truth that Jesus accepts us as we are, sometimes leads to neglect of what is equally true, which is that we are not meant to stay as we are. There is often no visible sign that a Christian's work ethic, for instance is any higher than that of his or her non believing contemporaries. There is a little value accorded to striving for excellence in the use of God given talents. A corollary is that, as Richard Higginson says, 'success is becoming suspect'²⁷ among Christians. Christians often fail to appreciate and celebrate success. Why is this? Is the desire to succeed somehow sub-Christian? No, it is a God given, healthy desire and a basic aspect of our humanity. Higginson points to those who continually seek to show that Jesus was 'a failure' and suggests that emphasizing failure as an expected and welcome outcome of faithfulness in Christian service is destructive. 'To call failure success and success failure renders our longings, goals and aspirations meaningless.'²⁸ Although this desire, like any other, can be perverted by sin, there are legitimate areas in which we as Christians can seek success and reward it in ourselves and others. The creation narrative shows us a God who takes pleasure in a job well done (Gen 1:31-2:2). We too can appreciate and even reward the successful accomplishment of a task or the fulfillment of a person's potential. We ought to encourage believers to strive for excellence in all areas of service where they must be salt and light. 'We must beware of a kind of Christian masochism, of seeking comfort too easily in failure, which can serve as an excuse for all kinds of incompetence and mediocrity... (Jesus)... rejoiced in his strength and intelligence and used them to the full and so should we.'²⁹ The Biblical teaching on reward should motivate us to use the best material we have to invest in lasting treasure.

The Nature of New Testament Rewards

Power, possessions and pleasure – unexpected reward?

Power, possession and pleasure – three common temptations for the disciple of Christ. Jesus frequently warns against allowing these to become idols. But could it be that the reason they are so attractive to us is that God himself has put a desire for these deep into our hearts? Consider the kind of rewards God offers us. For faithful and obedient service now, He promises power, pleasures, and possessions in eternity!³⁰

²⁵ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, (Michigan, Wimmiam B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 636.

²⁶ 'Reward' in *The Dictionary of Paul*, 820.

²⁷ Richard Higginson, *Transforming Leadership*, (SPCK, London, 1996), 107.

²⁸ Ibid, 107

²⁹ Ibid, 112-113

³⁰ Michael, Gleghorn, 'The Law of Rewards', <http://www.probe.org/> accessed 7th July 2005.

Believers are given special responsibility to govern and have authority in the life to come (Mt 19:28, 24:45-47, 25:21, Lk 22:29-30, 1 Cor 6:2-3, Rev 2:26). In the parable of the talents, Jesus made it clear that those who are faithful with their responsibilities in this life, will be rewarded with differing degrees of power and authority in the next (Luke 19:15-19).³¹ But we need not assume that the only reward for fulfilled responsibility is increased responsibility. Those who have used their talents are welcomed to share their master's joy. The promise of 'eschatological joy that bursts the natural limits of the story' guarantees 'glorious new responsibilities and holy delight... to the limits of each servant's capacity.'³² The third servant is shown up as having no love for his master. This seems to be the key to his indolence although he blames the master's harshness for his inactivity and condemns himself out of his own mouth. He suffers loss. The passage goes further to teach that there is a loss not only of reward but of eternity for those who claim to be faithful but have nothing to show they prize God's favour. Therefore the third servant who did nothing with his gift did not just lose his reward, he lost his life. Jesus says in Matthew 25:30, "Cast out the slave into outer darkness; in the place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Jesus taught that those who invest their time, talents, and treasures in building God's kingdom here and now are laying up great treasures in heaven for themselves in the hereafter (Matt. 6:19-21: 19:21, 1 Tim 6:17-19). In fact the question is not whether to lay up treasure but where.

'Treasure implies a final reward. It is the end of one's production – in "end" in terms of one's goal and also in terms of one's chronology. It is a final consumer good: the cessation of production... .. Treasure is heaven implies an end to one's earthly striving, an end to one's earthly production. It implies the individual's completion of his term of service in history. To sacrifice in history for the sake of consumption in eternity is not the touch of death. It is the opposite.'³³

We cannot speculate too much as to the nature of the heavenly treasure but we can be sure that precious and costly deeds endure into eternity in some way. Rev 14:13 promises rest to the blessed whose deeds follow them. In Rev 19:8, the 'wedding trousseau'³⁴ of the Lamb's bride is made up of the righteous acts of the saints. In Rev 21:24 the kings of the earth bring their treasures into the Holy City. This act has been interpreted as the incorporation into eternity of all the rich culture and heritage of the nations stripped of all that is unclean and idolatrous. '... in the New Jerusalem fashioned by the Triune God are to be found all our human "doings" that have been (often unknown to us) aligned with his purposes for humanity and the world.'³⁵

And pleasures? The psalmist wrote of God, "In Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever" (16:11). Adam and Eve were placed in a garden and surrounded then with beauty and pleasure (Gen 2:9). In Christ God has given us all things richly to enjoy (1 Tim 6:17). Somehow, many

³¹ This distinction in reward had led to the question of dissatisfaction or envy in heaven. The Bible suggests that entry into heaven far outweighs these variations, Believers will be led to praise and wonder at God's handiwork. See 'Rewards' in Alexander T Desmond and Brian S Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed. Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press, 2001.

³² D A Carson, *Matthew*, (The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 8), Zondervan Corporation, Michigan, 1984, 517.

³³ Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion, An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, www.freebooks.com/docs/html/gnma/chapter13.htm - 18k accessed 18th July 2005

³⁴ Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission*, (Leicester, IVP, 2003), 269.

³⁵ Ibid 270.

Christian's attitude to heaven does not include this anticipation of pleasure. Perhaps this is why our eyes are fixed firmly on earth.

Our problem is that we have satisfied those God given desires with shallow and transient things, which pass as treasure. Christians are not immune from the temptation to behave as if those world holds the ultimate in human satisfaction. We have a sneaking suspicion that a bird in the hand is worth a flock in eternity. So we cling to human accolades. We work to store up savings accounts and claim for ourselves the 'right' to be happy and fulfilled. For sinful humans, power corrupts, possessions possess us and pleasure becomes hedonism.

As C L Lewis says '... If we consider... the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our lord finds our desires, not too strong, but weak. We are half-hearted creatures... like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.'³⁶ Jesus made it clear that a man's heart is captured by his treasure. 'It is as if treasures had cords attached to them that stretch out and ensnare a man's heart. Men are either pinned to the earth or pulled into heaven by these cords. Their treasures define where their dreams are... .. as we build ever-larger treasures, these cords become more binding.'³⁷

Character – Goodness is its own reward

In Mt 5:3-12, the word 'reward' does not appear. However, the concept exists in the statements made by Jesus, in that the consequences of being a certain type of person are made clear. The beatitudes outline the attitudes of the true disciple. They are presented as bringing with them their own reward, spelled out in the second half of every verse. The future tense of all but the first and last tell us that the reward will not be made complete until the Kingdom is consummated. Yet they are not exclusively futuristic (Mt 5:3,10). 'The emphasis is not so much on time, present or future, as on the certainty that discipleship will not be in vain.'³⁸ Heaven is not so much 'after death' but 'with God'.³⁹ CS Lewis has distinguished between two types of reward. The reward that is arbitrary and has nothing to do with the activity itself (ice cream for doing your homework) and the reward which is intrinsic to the activity itself (exam success as a reward for doing your homework). "The proper rewards are not tacked onto the activity for which they are given, but are the activity itself in consummation."⁴⁰ This differentiation makes sense of the type of reward Jesus offers his disciples. 'If you do good out of the uncalculating goodness of your heart, in the resurrection, you will be confirmed as the kind of person who enjoys doing good out of the uncalculating goodness of your heart.'⁴¹ One of the rewards of true discipleship is that we become the sort of people who are filled with joy at what the Lord has prepared for those who love him (1 Cor 2:9). Godliness has great value both now and in the life to come (1 Tim 4:8).

God – our ultimate reward

³⁶ C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* in

³⁷ Gary North, 'Priorities', www.freebooks.com/docs/html/gnma/chapter13.htm - 18k accessed 18th July 2005.

³⁸ France, *Matthew*, 109

³⁹ *Ibid*, 112.

⁴⁰ C.S.Lewis <http://cslewis.drzeus.net/weightofglory.html>. Accessed 22 July 2005.

⁴¹ 'Ethics of Jesus', *Dictionary of Jesus* 215

In case we get the idea that reward is unspiritual, the Bible reminds us that God himself is our reward (Gen 15:1).⁴² The pure in heart will see God (Mt 5:8), the ultimate aspiration of those who love him. The face 'expresses who a person is: to see the Lord's face is to know him in his personal being.'⁴³ The Apostle Paul was in no doubt that fellowship with Christ was an incomparable blessing (Phil 3:8-11) which would be experienced in fullness by those who successfully complete their earthly race (1 Cor 9:24-27). Rev 21:3 promises that the dwelling of God will be with his people at the consummation of the age.

Aristotle was adamant that there could be 'no friendship between a god and a man, any more than a man could be a friend to his slave or his tools, because they were too dissimilar in nature'. Few things could be seen more unnatural and incomprehensible to the pagan imagination than that God who created the universe out of nothing would desire the friendship of mortals made of dust.⁴⁴ Yet this is what the Bible describes from beginning to end. From the time God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve, he has sought friends (Phil 2:5-8; Heb 2:17; 1 Jn 3:2)> Jesus' assured his disciples 'No longer do I call your servants... but I have called you friends' (Jn 15:15).

Eugene Peterson, Professor of Spirituality at Regent College warns that Christians have a warped idea of a personal relationship with God. 'This promise of intimacy is both right and wrong. There is an intimacy with God, but it's like any intimacy; it's part of the fabric of your life in marriage you don't feel intimate most of the time. Nor with a friend. Intimacy isn't primarily a mystical emotion. It's our way of life, a life of openness, honesty, a certain transparency.'⁴⁵ In other words, it has an ethical dimension, the presence of God in eternity will be a delight for those who have practiced his presence here on earth but not for those who had little time for him, or had reason to hide from him.

If our relationship with God is the reward for cooperating with him on earth, this extends to the relationships we form with other believers. There is co-relation between the two. The New Testament claims that we cannot profess to enjoy a loving relationship with God unless we are similarly bound by love to our fellow believers. Consider thus: 'No one has ever seen God. But *if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is truly in our hearts.*' (1 John 4:12).

Klaus Issler suggests that if we want to increase the depth of our relationship with God, we must grow in our relationships with others, because friendships increase our capacity to love.⁴⁶ Within any relationship, the level of intimacy is set by the person of lesser maturity and openness. The relationship is as close as the less intimate person is willing to be. In our relationship with God, it is we who need to learn to be intimate (Jn 17:1-23). God already has a rich capacity for relationship, experienced in the Trinity. The term *perichoresis* is used to describe the loving interdependence through mutual indwelling in the Godhead.⁴⁷ It is

⁴² In the Old Testament God and his salvation are already known as the supreme reward of humans (Is 62:10-12, Ps 63:3).

⁴³ Peskett and Ramachandra, *Message*, 274

⁴⁴ 'Friendship' in Ryken, Leland; Wilhoit, James C.; Longman III, Tremper, *Biblical Imagery*, 308

⁴⁵ Eugene Peterson, interviewed in 'Christianity Today' March 2005, Vol. 49, No.3, Page 42.

⁴⁶ Paul Wasell, cited by Klaus Issler, *Wasting Time With God*, (Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2001) 61.

⁴⁷ 'The term means mutual indwelling or, better, mutual interpenetration and refers to the understanding of both the Trinity and Christology. In the divine perichoresis, each person had "being in each other without coalescence" (John of Damascus ca. 650). It has been called the divine dance, the polyphony. It presents the three persons, in perfect harmony, giving without reservation to one another, interdependent, bound together in love, all involved in a celebration of life, love,

this love which is the benchmark of all loving relationships. In an age of virtual reality and cyber friends, increasing divorce rates and an array of casualties wounded by 'friendly fire' in the church, the Bible says, if we cannot love those we see, how can we love God? (1 Jn 1:7, 4:19-21). Our destiny is to live out this kind of interdependence in the eternal city prepared for us. Are we making ourselves ready for that?

Brian Hathaway has estimated that 44% of the letters of the New Testament are about how we should get along with one another. This contrasts with about 4% on spiritual gifts.⁴⁸ This emphasis is particularly clear when we look at the number of times the words "one another" occur, particularly in Paul's letters. The Greek word {} (*allos*) occurs 59 times as a specific command. Yet little of our preaching and teaching deals with relationships, and increasingly the twin daggers of individualism and frenetic activity have rent apart fellowship in the Sri Lankan church/ Lawrence Richards, in *A New Face for the Church* writes '... status in the church is ascribed on the basis of organizational performance. A "good Christian" is one who attends church regularly and is actively involved in the organisation. Christians see themselves in terms of their role in the organization. Their identity comes from their relationship to the organization, rather than from their relationship to Christ and his people.'⁴⁹ But Jesus said reconciliation to a brother must take precedence over worship (Mt 5:23-24). For Paul, his converts were a tangible sign of God's pleasure, the reward and 'crown' he would receive on the last day (Phil 4:1, 1 Thess 2:19, 2 Tim 4:8). Precious stones and gold are a symbol of immense worth (Ex 28:12-20, 29:10-13, Ezek 28:12-14) and in the book of Revelation, the inscription of the names of God's people on precious stones suggests that his people are precious.

Friendships also encourage us in our growth towards Christlikeness. 'Friendship is the crucible of the moral life, the relationship in which we come to embody the good by sharing it with friends who also delight in the good.'⁵⁰ 2 Tim 2:22 exhorts us to pursue godliness in the company of those who are like minded.

Surprising by suffering

The Sri Lankan church has undergone harassment in recent months. Burning churches and battered pastors, frightened congregations and restrictive legislation could well be a portent of things to come. It is worth noting that Jesus' first mention of 'reward' comes in connection with the foreseen persecution of disciples (Mt 5:21). Rewards in the New Testament are a motivation to endure, especially in times of trial and persecution. Christians are urged 'Do not therefore abandon that confidence; it brings great reward' (Heb 10:25). The disciple's reaction towards persecution should be one of rejoicing because the reward that is ours in heaven. Rejoicing leaves no room for resentment towards or persecutors and lifts depression and doubt. Persecution, for the sake of the gospel, confirms us as servants of God like the prophets before us and is a sign that the Kingdom of God is ours.⁵¹ John Piper argues that suffering for Christ increases our capacity for joy both on earth and in heaven. He alludes to Jonathan Edwards who exhorted his congregation 'Every vessel that is cast into this ocean of happiness is full, though there are some vessels far larger than others...' pointing to Mt 5:11-12, Piper suggests that Jesus' promise that those who are persecuted will be rewarded greatly is because '... when their

peace and joy'. Bert Waggoner, Leading Trinitarian Worship
http://www.insideworship.com/library/Articles/2214/Leading_Trinitarian_Worship.aspx Accessed 25th July 2005.

⁴⁸ <http://www.christianity.co.nz/church5.htm>, accessed 22nd July 2005

⁴⁹ Quoted <http://www.Christianity.co.nz/church5.htm>, accessed 22 July 2005.

⁵⁰ Paul Wadell, cited by Klaus Issler, *Wasting*, 61

⁵¹ Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, (IVP, London, 1972),

cup is picked up... and tossed into the ocean of heaven's happiness, it will hold more happiness for having been long weaned off the world and made to live on God alone.'⁵²

Conclusion

It seems that we can fall into two main errors concerning rewards. One is of expecting immediate and material recompense for our obedience to God; the other is to imagine that after an initial commitment to Christ and a place in heaven secured, the rest of our lives have little or no significance in terms of eventual reward⁵³. The result of both these errors is to make us orient our lives towards the things we can see and touch – this world. The teaching of Jesus clearly shows that for the believers whose salvation is secure, there is still reward to be gained or lost because of our actions while on earth. Our salvation is a gift of grace not deeds, but is demonstrated by deeds done out of an overwhelming desire to please God and enjoy him forever. The rewards on offer are appropriate for such a person. They are primarily rational not material, they offer service not status, they affect character not commodities. While on earth, we have opportunity to increase our capacity to enjoy these eternal rewards pledged to us. The choice is ours. If we opt to define our lives in terms of what is ephemeral we cannot expect to enjoy relationships with that which is eternal.⁵⁴

Does the idea of reward in any way mitigate against the gospel of grace? Does it imply we have earned our reward? The reward itself is of grace.⁵⁵ We are only doing what we are bound to do yet the father chooses to 'throw these things into the bargain', filling us with a sense of love and gratitude.⁵⁶ The doctrine of reward is no bribe or inducement to make us mercenary, but the fit consummation of God's holy design for life. Biblical rewards motivate disciples for whom goodness is appealing. It is not bribery to tell the pure in heart that they will see God. It is only the pure in heart who want to.⁵⁷

Bibliography

'Reward' in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Abingdon Press,

'Reward' and 'Retribution', in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978.

'Reward' in *The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Ed Martin, R P, and Hawthorn G.F. (

'Reward'; in Wood, D.R.W., D.R.W. Wood, and I. Howard Marshall.
New Bible Dictionary. Include Index. Electronic ed. Of 3rd ed.
Downers Grove: INTERVARSITY Press,, 1996, c1982, c1962.

⁵² John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1993) 90-91.

⁵³ It has sometimes been suggested that an overly emphasized eschatology undermines the need for a strong ethical code. This matter is tackled by Paul in the epistles to the Thessalonian church. In fact the 'day of the Lord' is an incentive for ethical behavior (Rom 12-13, 2 Cor 5:1-10 cf 1 Cor 5:9).

⁵⁴ Van Bogad Dunn, *Journey Through the Bible – Matthew*, (Nashville, Cokesbury, 1994), 31

⁵⁵ Lloyd Jones, *Studies*, 146

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 146.

⁵⁷ C.S Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*. <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/az/r/rewards.htm> accessed 10th July 2005

'Reward' in Martin, Ralph P., and Peter H Davids, *Dictionary of The Later New Testament and its Development*, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 1997.

'The Ethics of Jesus' in Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel

'Reward' in Alexander T Desmond and Brian S Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed. Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Brueggemann, Walter, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1997.

Carson, D A Matthew, (The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 8), Michigan, Zondervan Corporation, 1984.

Dunn, Van Bogard, *Journey Through the Bible – Matthew*, Nashville, Cokesbury, 1994.

France, R. T., *Matthew*, Leicester, IVP, 1985.

Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I Howard Marshall, 'The Ethics of Jesus', in *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Higginson, Richard, *Transforming Leadership*, London, SPCK, 1996.

Hunter, A M, *Design for Life*, London, SCM Press Ltd., 1956.

Issler, Klaus, *Wasting Time With God*, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Gleghorn, Michael, 'The Law of Rewards', <http://www.probe.org/> accessed 7th July 2005

Jackson, F C P, 'The Character of the Kingdom (4): Kingdom Rewards for Faithful Disciples' www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/matthew/mat%20vols%207%20-%209/matt44a.htm - 37k accessed 15th July 2005.

Keathley, J Hampton III, 'The Doctrine of Rewards' <http://www.bible.org> accessed 7th July 2005.

Lewis, C.S., *The Problem of Pain*. <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/az/r/rewards.htm> accessed 10th July 2005.

Lloyd Jones, D Martyn, *Studies in the Sermon On The Mount*, London, InterVarsity Press, 1972.

'Reward' in Ryken, Leland, Jim Wilhoit, Tremper Longman et al; *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*,. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 199.

North, Gary, *Priorities and Dominion, An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, www.freebooks.com/docs/html/gnma/chapter13.htm - 18k accessed 18th July 2005

Peskett, Howard and Ramachanda, Vinoth, *The Message of Mission*, Leicester, IVP, 2003.

Piper, John, *Let the Nations be Glad*, Grand Rapid, Baker Books, 1993.

Piper, John, 'What Happens When You Die', <http://www.desiringGod.or> accessed 17th July 2005

Poobalan, Ivor, 'A Biblical View of Results with Emphasis on 1 & 2 Peter', 2004 (Unpublished article).

Van Bogard Dunn, *Journey Through the Bible – Matthew*, Nashville, Cokesbury, 1994.

Waggoner, Bert 'Leading Trinitarian Worship' http://www.insideworship.com/library/Articles/2214/1/Leading_Trinitarian_Worship.aspx. Accessed 25th July 2005.

Wood, D.R.W., D.R.W. Wood, and I. Howard Marshall. *New Bible Dictionary*. Includes Index, electronic ed. Of 3rd ed., Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962.

THE PERIOD OF JEROBOAM II WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AMOS

Ivor Poobalan

INTRODUCTION

The past two centuries of archaeology in the Ancient Near East has been fortuitous for biblical studies because of the wealth of information that it has provided pertaining directly to events and personages of the Old Testament.¹ In view of the numerous artifacts and texts related to the neo-Assyrian period, *and* due to Assyria's involvement in the West from the ninth century B.C. onward, we are now privy to some remarkable extra-biblical references to Israel in the period of the later Divided Monarchy that have significantly illuminated the narrative of the OT.² The present study focuses on the period of the Israelites king Jeroboam II who ruled during the first half of the eighth century BC.

Biblical Historiography

The biblical record of the Divided Monarchy, when read in the light of the extra-biblical material that has transpired, provides a case in point of the shape of biblical historiography.

The authors of the OT texts were not mere journalists recording the succession of national events, but rather Yahwestic historians keen to discern and demonstrate Yahweh's sovereign control and perspective over the history of his covenant people.

Consequently this theological agenda, though not influencing the factuality of the record, did significantly control the selection and arrangement of the material, as well as the editorial evaluation of the individuals and events presented.³

In view of their understanding that it was the kingdom of Judah that was the rightful heir of Yahweh's covenant with David, the biblical narrators lean towards showing their northern neighbor as the rogue nation in which each king's reign is evaluated negatively using the formula, 'He did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh'. This *spiritual* assessment could mistakenly be taken to imply the *political* significance of every monarch of the Northern Kingdom. Nowhere is the error of such a conclusion more obvious than when one compares the biblical portrayal of the Omrides with that of other ANE material. In first Kings the entire reign of King Omri is

¹ W.W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger eds. *The Context of Scripture (COS)*, Vols. 1-3, (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Eric Meyers ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Ancient Near East*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ephraim Stern ed., *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

² For the archaeology of Samaria in the eighth century see, Ron Tappy, *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria: Vol. II: The Eighth Century BCS*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001); Philip King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah – An Archaeological Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988); William G. Dever, *What Did The Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2001).

³ For a definite discussion, see V.P. Long, *The Art of Biblical History*, ed. Moises Silva, Foundation of Contemporary Interpretation 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

described in 14 verses (1 Kgs 16:15-28), whereas internationally he was of such significance that other nations would routinely speak of the land of Israel as the 'land of Omri' or 'the house of Omri' even long after his death.⁴

Again, whereas the major emphasis in Scripture regarding Ahab is his *spiritual* failure – due to his marriage to Jezebel; the introduction of Baal worship in Israel; and rejection of the prophets of Yahweh – nothing prepares us for the way he is spoken of in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III. When the latter describes the famous Battle of Qarqar in his sixth year in 853 BC, Ahab is listed as a senior partner in an anti-Assyrian coalition of about 12 kings led by Hadadezer the king of Aram Damascus. Most noteworthy is the fact that Hadadezer's contribution of 1,200 chariots was surpassed by Ahab's 2,000. Even in his sixteenth and twentieth years, Shalmaneser III could only muster 2,002 and 2,001 chariots respectively!⁵

These illustrations have helped biblical scholars agree that there is no automatic correspondence between the biblical assessment of a monarch and his *political significance*.

The Significance of the Period of Jeroboam II and the Objectives of the Present Study

The above criterion of biblical historiography clearly applies to the later reign of Jeroboam II in the first half of the eighth century BC. The biblical writer's reluctance to devote more than seven verses to his entire period (2 Kgs 14:23-29) is both disproportionate to his historical significance, and limiting to our reconstruction of the history of the period. However in this brief text there is enough said to tantalize the historian, and fuel his curiosity. A summary of the historical information provided by 2 Kgs 14:23-29:

1. Jeroboam II (the son of Joash) reigns forty one years in Samaria. This is the longest reign of a monarch in the Northern Kingdom on record.
2. He is credited with the political expansion of Israel's borders that is second to none in Israel's history.
3. The ministry of the prophet Jonah Ben Amittai (the main character of the biblical book named after him) is *positively* associated with King Jeroboam II.
4. Jeroboam's success are attributed to divine intervention by Yahweh, who is said to have "saved" Israel "by the hand of Jeroboam".

Of the two prophetic books that are set during the reign of Jeroboam, Hosea and Amos, the latter more directly converses with the socio-cultural realities of the time. The oracles of Amos are pregnant with rich, historical allusions to the political, cultural and religious life setting of Israel, and provides a suitable foil for the text of 2 Kings.⁶

In the present study we intend to investigate the historical developments in Samaria in the period of Jeroboam II using both 2 Kgs 14:23-29, and Amos, as a point of departure. It is expected that the results of our

⁴ Shalmaneser III, *mar humri*; Adad-Nirari III, *mat humri*; Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon, *mat bit humri*, See, T.C Mitchell, "Israel and Judah Until the Revolt of Jehu (931-841 B.C.)" in *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 3/1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 189.

⁵ M.Elat, "The Campaigns of Shalmaneser III Against Aram and Israel" *Israel Exploration Journal* 25 (1975)35.

⁶ Michael D. Coogan ed., *The Oxford History of the Bible World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 301, "The literary portrayal of the [eighth century] period is enriched by three collections of material belonging to the genre of books named for prophets – Amos, Hosea and Isaiah of Jerusalem."

historical research will in turn shed more light on these very texts, and thus contribute to enhancing and, even at times correcting, our present interpretation of the biblical data.

Methodology

1. We shall essentially limit ourselves to questions in three basic areas:

- a. What were the *political developments* of Israel at that period of time, and how do these correspond to the political fortunes of Israel's immediate neighbours, and indeed the greater power of the time?
- b. What *economic conditions* prevailed in Israel during the period under review?
- c. What was the *religious moos*, and how does it affect our reading of the setting?

2. Our research will depend largely on an attempt to listen carefully to a conversation between three complementary sources: the Bible; archaeological data (both texts and artifacts); and, analysis and studies by critical scholars.

EXEGETICAL NOTES ON 2 KINGS 14:23-29

Jeroboam II, the fourth in the dynasty of Jehu, reigned in Samaria from 793 – 752 B.C. It is thought that in his first eleven years he was co-regent with his father Joash. There are two issues reflected in 2 Kgs 14 that are worth pursuing further:

1. The Extent of Jeroboam's Kingdom

*"He re-established⁷ the territory⁸ of Israel from Lebo Hamath⁹
as far as the Sea of Arabah" (2 Kgs 14:25a)*

The original readers, familiar with well-worn geographical idioms would not have failed to grasp the significance of this description. In Num 34:8 and Josh 13:2-5 "Lebo Hamath" and "Sea of the Arabah" mark the northern and southern limits respectively of the ideal Promised Land.¹⁰ 1 Chron 13:5 speaks of how David's suzerainty extended over such a territory, "from the River Shihor in Egypt to Lebo Hamath". In 1 Kgs 8:65 "all Israel" that celebrated the festival with Solomon gathered from "Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt". Jeroboam is said to have "re-established"({}) the territory. By implication then, his achievement is connected to the period of the United Monarchy, and hints that Jeroboam was politically as significant as David and Solomon, Jeroboam is the only other king to have exercised suzerainty over such a vast territory that one might call a mini empire.¹¹

⁷ {}, Hiphil pf. 3 m.s. {}, "caused to turn"; NIV/NRSV, "restored".

⁸ {}. The word could mean "boundary" or "territory". The latter may fit the context better.

⁹ If {}! Is treated as an adjectival phrase rather than a proper name, the whole will be rendered, "from the entrance of Hamath".

¹⁰ For a modern illustration, "From Point Pedro to Dondra Head" is an idiom for the entire country of Sri Lanka.

¹¹ That Jeroboam did in fact achieve this to confirmed by the only other occurrence of the identical phrase in Amos 6:14, Amos was probably mocking a prevalent boast in Israel. So, Samul Cohen, "The Political Background of the Words of Amos", HUCA, 36 (1965) 154. ON THE SUBJECT OF Israel as a 'mini-empire' during the period of the United Monarchy, see K. A.

The text does not inform us *when* he gained this position, nor does it clarify for *how long* these circumstances prevailed. It will be in the interest of our study to consider these questions below.

2. The Problem of Damascus and Hamath

The text claims that, “[Jeroboam] waged war and recovered Damascus and Hamath for Judah in Israel”. This (“for Judah”) is an unusual statement to be made of a king of the Northern Kingdom. In addition Damascus and Hamath were two of the greatest Armean kingdoms of the time.¹² For these reasons many biblical scholars have expressed skepticism. Wayne Pitard sums up this view: “It has been considered doubtful that Israel could have gained ascendancy over Hamath at this time, nor are all convinced that Damascus became part of Israelite territory again, as it had been in the time of David and Solomon”.¹³

Before we react to the mention of, “for Judah”, “Damascus” and “Hamath” in the text it is necessary to note several salient points provided by the context. The text reads, “the other acts of Jeroboam, and all which he did, he might, that he waged war, and that he restored Damascus and Hamath to Judah in Israel” (14:28). The verse could be analyzed as follows:

1. It is summary statement about Jeroboam’s *greatness*.
2. The emphasis in his career is on *his might* ({}) and its *militaristic nature* ({}).
3. The “restoration” ({}) of Damascus and Hamath to Judah is, from the writer’s point of view, the *best illustration* of Jeroboam’s *might*.¹⁴

Many modern scholars have been troubled by the phrase, “to Judah in Israel,” and have proposed, not emendations but entire rewritings of the text.¹⁵ We might ask if the expression doesn’t make good sense as it stands in the context. The writer has likened Jeroboam to David and Solomon. In the period of the latter kings, Damascus and Hamath had been subservient to the rule they had administered *from Judah* (see Sam 8:9-10; 2 Chr 8:3). Here Jeroboam is shown to be “restoring” (v.25) the kingdom of Israel to its former glory, and hence can be spoken of as having “restored Damascus and Hamath to Judah in Israel”. We also know that during this period there is no mention of hostilities between Israel and Judah, and it could imply that the two kingdoms cooperated in political and military activity in the region. Furthermore Judah was ruled, at the time, by another powerful monarch Uzziah, who, after the death of Jeroboam, took the mantle of leadership in the region.¹⁶

Kitchen, “The Controlling Role of External Evidence in Assessing the Historical Status of the Israelite United Monarchy,” in V.P.Long, G.J. Wenham and D.W. Baker (eds), *Windows into Old Testament History: Evidence, Argument, and the Crisis of “Biblical Israel”* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

¹² “Early in the 1st millennium however, Hamath is found as the main central Syrian state, attested in the O.T., and in Akkadian, Aramic and Hieroglyphic Hittite sources.”, J.D. Hawkins, “Hamath”, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, 4(Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 67.

¹³ *Ancient Damascus*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987) 176.

¹⁴ {} (MT)!, “to Judah in Israel” – The Syriac makes the only early suggestion for emendation; {} instead of {}.

¹⁵ See the succinct summary of various views in M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *2 Kings (Anchor Bible)*, (USA: Doubleday,) 161-2.

¹⁶ M.Haran, “The Rise and Decline of the Empire of Jeroboam Ben Joash”, *Vetus Testamentum*, 17 (1967) argues, “What seems conceivable is that in Jeroboam’s reign... a covenantal relationship was already in full force between Judah and Israel”, 296. However, for a contrary view – that Azariah (Uzziah) attained independently by defeating Jeroboam in battle – see Nadav Na’aman, “Azariah and Jeroboam II of Israel”, *Vetus Testamentum*, XLIII, 2 (1993), 227-34.

A BRIEF STRETCH OF THE DYNASTY OF JEHU AS BACKGROUND TO THE KINGDOM JEROBOAM INHERITED.

The Rise and Reign of Jehu

The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III is one of the most significant Assyrian artifacts yet discovered for biblical studies, because it portrays King Jehu of Israel kneeling in subservience to Shalmaneser in 841 B.C. The corresponding inscription states, "Tribute of Jehu, son of Omri; silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden beaker, pitchers of gold, lead, staves for the hand of the king, javelin". This incident could not have been longer than one year after Jehu's bloody uprising against the ruling families of Israel and Judah: "In quick order, Jehoram of Israel, Ahaziah of Judah, Queen Jezebel, and finally seventy sons of Ahab in Samaria were wiped out". In addition Jehu wiped out the entire establishment of Baal worship in Israel, turning the Baal temple in Israel into a latrine, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Elisha.¹⁷

Jehu reigned from 842-814 B.C. His accession to the throne may have protected Israel from facing the wrath of Shalmaneser III, but it certainly placed the kingdom at great variance with her immediate neighbors, and created considerable internal economic and political instability:¹⁸

1. Israel had evidently pulled out of the anti-Assyrian coalition that has been active from 853 B.C., after the accession of Hazael, who usurped the throne in Damascus.¹⁹ This fact alone would have irked Hazael, and one can only guess how much his antipathy must have been fuelled by Jehu's willing submission to the Assyrian monarch.
2. The killing of Jezebel (a Sidonian princess) and the prophets of Baal would have seriously affected Israel's relations with Phoenicia.²⁰
3. The slaying of the descendants of Ahab, and King Ahaziah, Ahab's son-in-law, would have brought the curtain down on what appears to have been a fairly strong cooperative relationship between Israel and Judah.
4. All the above would have had far-reaching economic consequences: "The economic impact of closing the flow of commerce over the Palestinian and bridge from Phoenicia to the Red Sea can only be guessed".²¹

¹⁷ Coogan ed., *Oxford History*, 301-2.

¹⁸ See Elat, *Campaigns*, 31-34; T.C.Mitchell, "Israel and Judah From Jehu Until the Period of Assyrian Domination (841-c. 750 B.C.)" IN *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 3/1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 493.

¹⁹ Assyrian sources: "Hadadezer (Adad Idri) passed away. Hazel, *son of a nobody*, took the throne." (Italics added). The expression, "Son of a nobody" was, according Lawson Younger, "Arameans and The Bible" (Unpublished Paper, 2003): "someone whose father was not a legal member of the major branch of the contemporary royal family, and expresses a value judgment with negative connotations i.e. "usurper" or "an upstart."" For more comprehensive comments on Hazael, see Nadav Naaman, "In Search of Reality Behind the Account of David's Wars with Israel's Neighbours," *Israel Exploration Journal* 52(2002): 200-224; Abraham Malamat, "Arameans" in D.J.Wiseman (ed.) *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973): 134-155.

²⁰ On this see, H. Jacob Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre – From the Beginning of the Second Millenium B.C.E. Until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 538 B.C.E.*

²¹ Coogan, *Oxford History*, 302.

5. Towards the end of Jehu's reign, Israel faced ignominious defeats at the hands of Hazael and lost all of the Trans-Jordan to Aram-Damascus (2 Kgs 10:32-33).

Jehoahaz – The Nadir of the Jehu Dynasty

When Jehoahaz succeeded Jehu in 814 B.C. he inherited both a truncated kingdom, and a militarily impoverished one. First Hazael, and then Ben Hadad III, Hazael's son, continued their policy of aggression against Israel: "For the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel so that he gave them repeatedly into the hand of king Hazael of Aram, and then into the hand of Ben Hadad son of Hazael" (2 Kgs 13:3). Again, "So Jehoahaz was left with an army of no more than fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand footmen, for the king of Aram had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing" (2 Kgs 13:7). How dismal the situation must have been becomes clearer when we recall the strength of Ahab's military only fifty years earlier when he contributed 10,000 foot soldiers and 2,000 chariots to the Battle of Qarqar.

The story however has an interesting ending. Jehoahaz "entreated" Yahweh and was "heeded, for Yahweh saw the oppression of Israel". Then, "Yahweh gave Israel a *savior* ({}), so that they escaped from the hand of the Arameans" (13:5). The identity of this 'saviour' has been the subject of much speculation. Cogan and Tadmir count five proposals: Joash, Jeroboam II, Elisha, Zakkur of Hamath, and Adad Nirari III.²² Another candidate that has been strongly proposed is Shamshi-ilu, the powerful Assyrian *turtanu* based in Bit Adini.²³ Our discussion below on the relative fortunes of Assyria and Aram may strengthen the case that the 'saviour' was either Shamshi-ilu or Adad-Nirari III, or *both!*

Joash – The Beginning of Israel's Imperial Rise

With the accession of Joash to the throne in 798 B.C. Samaria's fortunes began to climb. Adad-Nirari III campaigned against Ben Hadad III of Damascus in 798 B.C. This is recorded in three of Adad-Nirari III's inscriptions referring to Ben Hadad as *Mari*:

"I marched to the land of Damascus. I confined Mari, the king of Damascus in the city of Damascus, his royal city. The fearful splendor of Assur, my ("his") lord, overwhelmed him and he submitted to me. He became my vassal..."²⁴

The inscription of Zakkur of Hamath also mentions Ben Hadad, and how a powerful alliance led by him was defeated:

I am Zakkur, king of Hamath and Luash . . . Bar-Hadad, son of Hazael, king of Aram, united against me seventeen kings . . . all these kings laid siege to Hazrach . . . Baalshamayn said to me, "Do not be afraid! . . . I will save you from all [these kings who] have besieged you".²⁵

²² 2 Kings, 142-144.

²³ So Abraham Malamat, "Amos 1:5 in the Light of the Til Barsip Inscriptions", *BASOR*, 129 (1953), 25-6; Yutaka Ikeda, "Looking from Til Barsip on the Euphrates: Assyria and the West in Ninth and Eighth Centuries B.C." in Kazuo Watanabe ed., *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996) 284. *Officials in the Ancient Near East*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996) 284.

²⁴ "Calah Orthostat Slab", Hallo and Younger, *COS*, II, 276.

It is clear from the above that Ben Hadad was not able to maintain the grip his father had enjoyed over many of Aram's neighbours. This provides a plausible context for the three victories (prophesied by Elisha) of Joash against Ben Hadad III in Aphek (see 2 Kgs 13:14-25), which resulted in the recapture of the Cis-Jordan towns lost during the period of Jehoahaz, and began the political reversal of Samaria. King Amaziah of Judah had also provoked Joash into battle, and Joash's victory and subjugation of Judah (2 Kgs 14:1-16) paved the way for Samaria's expansion.

If, as has been proposed, Jeroboam had a period of eleven years co-regency with his father Joash, then he would have been involved in these military developments. Consequently it is logical to assume that his greatest achievements occurred at the beginning and up to the middle of his sole reign.²⁶

Summary

In summary a threefold pattern emerges within the Jehu dynasty up to the reign of Jeroboam:

1. Each king had an experience of divine intervention and help from Yahweh, often with the associated ministry of a prophet.
2. Although they failed to forsake 'the sin of Jeroboam, son of Nabat, which he caused Israel to commit', the dynasty appears to have maintained a strong tradition against Baalism. In fact the oracles of Amos never once mentions Baal; what had been a pervasive problem during the Omrides, and would later plague the kingdom of Judah.
3. All the kings up to Jeroboam appear to have conscientiously maintained the alliance Jehu had first entered into with Assyria in 841 B.C.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE ORACLES OF AMOS AGAINST THE NATIONS (AMOS 1:2—2:5)

At the beginning of the book of Amos the prophet inveighs against seven nations before he fixes his attention against Israel. These, except for Judah, are faulted for social injustices perpetrated against God's covenant people. They all shared the border with the inhabitants of the Promised Land of Canaan.

The judgments of Amos are pungent but terse, because the prophet shared much common knowledge with his audience in Israel. This means that the exegete is compelled to depend on inter-textual and extra-biblical information to help reconstruct the historical contexts assumed for these oracles.

It is generally agreed that Amos, a native of Tekoa (eleven miles from Jerusalem)²⁷ preached in the Northern Kingdom, in the locality of the cult-center of Bethel (and possibly in Samaria) in the period between 765-755 B.C. In Amos 1:2-2:3 he catalogs the atrocities of Israel's and Judah's immediate neighbours.

²⁵ Ibid., 155

²⁶ So Cogan and Tadmor, *2 Kings*, 164; Cohen, *Political*, 153-60. But see Haran, "The Rise", 279 for a proposal that Jeroboam expanded the kingdom only after 755 A.D.

²⁷ For a thorough historical study of the site see, Martin Heckson, "Tekoa: Historical and Cultural Profile" *JETS* 13 (1970) 81-89.

When did these atrocities take place? Samuel Cohen argues that the specific language used by Amos may offer a clue to the temporal nuance intended.

The usual English translations of these reasons states them in the past tense. This is erroneous. The Hebrew language has quite another way of stating a reason when it is definitely of a past nature: the preposition *lu* and the perfect tense of the verb. But in these passages Amos, with a fine literary sense, has chosen a form that can be either past or present: the preposition *lu* and the infinitive, equivalent to our *gerund*. Hence the correct translation of each of the eight reasons is not “because they did” so-and-so but, “because of their doing” so-and-so.²⁸

Aram Damascus

“Threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron”

Gilead was one of the Trans-Jordan towns closest to Israel’s border with Aram. The dating of the incident that Amos has referred to has puzzled scholars. We know that Israel and Aram Damascus had a tumultuous relationship for most of their existence as independent nations. Certainly from the time of Hazael to the campaigns of Tiglath Pileser III the enmity was very intense. The oracle of Amos against Damascus could be understood in two ways:

1. *As referring to the oppression experienced under Hazael and Ben Hadad III* – This proposal has many attractions:
 - a) Amos refers to Damascus as the, “house of Hazael” and the, “strongholds of Ben Hadad”. However the practice of referring to a dynasty in terms of its eponymous ancestor was a common practice. Israel was called “Bit Hunir” up to one hundred and fifty years after the death of Omri. The Assyrians called Damascus “Bit Hazael” even during the time of Tiglath Pileser III.
 - b) The specific use of “threshed” ({}) connects most interestingly with 2 Kgs 13:7 which uses the same term about “king of Aram”, {}.
 - c) Extreme forms of cruelty (such as the recent holocaust) can remain fresh in the national consciousness for generations (see 2 Kgs 8:11-12).

The main weakness in the argument is that this interpretation sees Amos predicting judgment on a nation for a crime committed many decades earlier.

2. *As referring to oppression Israel was experiencing at the time of Amos’ oracles* – This interesting proposal has been forcefully advanced by Samuel Cohen based on the following reasons:
 - a) 2 Kgs 10:32-33 expressly states that Hazael overran much of the country. If so, why would Amos only mention Gilead?
 - b) Amos, “refers again and again to contemporary events” and “this threshing therefore would seem to refer to a new, recent assault of Syria upon the territories won back by Jeroboam II”.

²⁸ *Political*, 154-5; It must however be noted that such an explanation of Hebrew grammar is not shared by most commentators.

- c) Amos 4:10 suggests a situation of *contemporary warfare*. It is mentioned as the climax to a series of misfortunes that have befallen the people of Israel, "The plain inference from these words is that the country was at war".²⁹
- d) Cohen takes the boasts about Lo-Debar and Karnaim (Trans-Jordan towns, cf. Amos 6:13) to refer to victories Israel had enjoyed in the current war: "Thus although Jeroboam II had restored the boundary of Israel as it had been old, that line had been breached and the armies of Syria were pressing forward into the territory of Israel".³⁰
- e) A final argument in support of the suggestion that the oracle against Damascus refers to current concerns is the passage about those who passionately, "desire the Day of Yahweh" (Amos 5:18a). in the OT this eschatological expectation was commonly heightened when the nation experienced a period of foreign oppression; "the essential feature was that Yahweh in person would intervene to save his people from their enemies".³¹

Philistia

"Carried into exile entire communities to hand them over to Edom"

The Philistines were Israel's traditional enemies, and their condemnation here is not surprising. A few points may be noted from the text:

1. Of the Pentapolis each city-state is mentioned as liable for judgment except for Gath. This probably reflects the situation that prevailed from the period of Hazael, who is said to have captured the city (see 2 Kgs 12:17). Haran thinks that it thereafter became a province of Ashdod.³² Later, Uzziah, the king of Judah destroys Gath (2 Chr 26:6; also see Amos 6:2).
2. The crime Philistia is charged with (see above) is the exact crime attributed to Tyre (1:9). Since these two oracles are juxtaposed, some scholars assume some sort of scribal error. However Haran argues that the similarity arises not from a "textual error" or later addition", but because these two nations (being neighbors controlling the Mediterranean seaboard) in fact shared trading interests. "No territorial claims or conflicts of interest existed between the two . . . Rather, it is simply a formal expression of an actual partnership between the two powers, which also cooperated in a particular sinful act".³³
3. "Traffic in human chattel and slavery were integral feature of the life and culture of the ANE from Babylon to Thebes".³⁴ Slaves were obtained by two means: *ranks of the native population* as a "by-product of economic deprivation"; or, *foreign slaves*, "either captives of war or imported slaves from neighboring countries".³⁵ Gaza and Tyre were uilty pf the latter. We agree with Schoville that what Amos describes is "more than just an isolated border raid" since these incidents were "so dastardly that

²⁹ Cohen, *Political*, 156.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 156

³¹ *Ibid.*, 157

³² "The Rise", 269 n.1. Also see, King, *Amos*, 51-54; Amos 6:2.

³³ M. Haran, "Observations On the Historical Background of Amos 1:2-2:6", *Israel Exploration Journal*, 18/4, (1968), 202-3.

³⁴ K.N.Schoville, "A Note on the Orcale of Amos Against Gaza, Tyre and Edom", *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, XXVL, (1974), 57.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

they stand out in the mind of the prophet". However, Schoville's argument that these historical events antedate Amos by about a century, are not convincing.³⁶ Israel's remarkable recovery during the latter reign of Joash, and expansion to the level of a mini empire during the early to middle years of the reign of Jeroboam II, would have long taken away the sting of political misfortunes suffered in the ninth century. In addition it appears that the rhetorical thrust of Amos' oracles are intended to elicit Jubilant affirmations from his auditors in Israel, as promises of Yahweh's vengeance against Israel's enemies *who were currently hostile*. It is this rapport about *present* concerns from without Israel that acts as the foil for Amos' scathing attack on Samaria (2:6ff.) for *present* crimes from within Israel.

Tyre

"Delivered entire communities to Edom and did not remember the covenant of kinship"

In addition to forcing Israelites into slavery, Tyre is charged with not remembering the "covenant of kinship". What exactly does this refer to, and what does the phrase "did not remember" mean in the context?

The peculiar phrase {}, "covenant of brother" is a direct allusion to the covenant first established between David and King Hiram of Tyre (2 Sam 5:11; cf. 1 Kgs 5:1, 12). This remarkable relationship, mutually of great benefit to both countries, continued for a considerable length of time:

The ties between Israel and Tyre, which has already begun in the days of David, reached their peak during the reign of Solomon . . . were renewed by the dynasty of Omri, and endured so long that Amos was able to call this the covenant of brothers. This could mean that the relations between Tyre and Israel remained firm, in some way or the other, for more than 200 years, only to be "broken" when an opportunity presented itself for "big business".³⁷

But, the purge of Jehu, as we saw, was an indirect blow to Israel-Tyre relations. He had killed Jezebel the Sidonian princess, and massacred the prophets of the Tyrian Baal, "some of whom were surely Tyrian citizens".³⁸ This souring of relations would have incline Tyre to exploit Israel's moment of weakness for commercial gain. Amos' point then is that they chose, selfishly, only to *remember* the act of Jehu, and *not remember* the far more enduring {} the two countries had enjoyed.

Edom³⁹

"Pursued his brother with the sword, and cast off all pity; maintained his anger perpetually and kept his wrath forever"

³⁶ See Haran, "Observations", 210, "We doubt either one of these theories, that which postdates the section to Exilic times or that which antedates it to some hundred years before Amos, is based upon an accurate understanding of the historical circumstances at the beginning of Jeroboam's reign, or is entangled in unnecessary difficulties."

³⁷ Katzenstien, *History of Tyre*, 196.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 197.

³⁹ For a comprehensive survey integrating archaeological data (particularly Horvat Qitmit) with the Biblical record up to 1988 see, Itzhaq Beit Arie, "New Light on the Edomites", *BAR* (March/April 1988), 29-41.

Located south of Judah, Edom was not a border neighbor with Israel. As the descendants of Esau, the Edomites were viewed as “brothers” by the Israelites. They have been captured and subjugated by David (2 Sam 8:13-14) and this state of affairs continued for 150 years, although there might have been sporadic violations by Edom (especially by Hadad, during the time of Solomon, 1 Kgs 11: 14-22). Edom’s independence came during the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat (853-842). After this there is no evidence that Edom ever returned to be a vassal to Judah. In Adad Nirari III’s campaign of 802 B.C. Edom is said to have paid tribute.⁴⁰ Although early in the eighth century Amaziah defeated Judah and annexed Sela, and later his son Uzziah built Elath, this does not mean that all Edom was subjugated as a province of Judah. What was Edom’s crime? The text speaks of anger; unmitigated, and ferocious. Their crime was acts of vengeance and retaliation beyond the limits of acceptable behavior in war, and more seriously, done against their own kin.⁴¹

Excurses: Whom was Amos addressing?

By virtue of the fact that Amos preached against Philistia, Edom and Moab – border neighbors of Judah not Israel – there is support for the proposal that although Amos operated in the north, he was in fact addressing the covenant of people of God as a whole. We have already pointed out that Judah appears to be in a relationship of cooperation with Israel, with the latter as the obvious senior partner. Amos 6:1 provides the best illustration of Amos’ own perception of who his audience was. In the words of McCullough:

Over against the prevailing opinion, our contention is that, while Amos undoubtedly preached at Bethel (7:13) and possibly at Samaria (4:1), most of his words were in fact directed to the whole of Israel, North and South, and it is a fair presumption that part of his ministry was present in Judah.⁴²

Ammon

“They ripped open pregnant women in Gilead in order to enlarge their territory”

For most of its history, Ammon was probably little more than a city-state – that is, the capital rules a small territory on the central Trans-Jordan plateau with satellite and villages in a relatively small hinterland.⁴³

This description fits neatly with the crime attributed to Ammon (1L13). Their limited land area would have made the need for more territory quite acute. However, the fact that Ammon was no bigger than a city-state meant that she could not independently engage in a border war with the might of Israel. How then was Ammon able to carry out the aggression Amos mentions?

In Amos 1 we read of Gilead also in connection to Damascus. In our discussion we favoured the argument that the “threshing” of Gilead referred to a *recent* assault by the Arameans. Opportunism is not

⁴⁰ Haran, “Observations”, 207-8.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 211, “At the same time, hatred and retained vengeance on the part of Edom toward Judah could continue to seethe long after Jehoram, precisely once Edom had attained independence.”

⁴² W.S. McCullough, “Some Suggestions About Amos”, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 72 (1953), 249

⁴³ Larry Herr, “Ammon”, in Meyers ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 104

uncommon in the aftermath of any social catastrophe, and certainly during war. We can surmise therefore that although the Ammonites were not the primary aggressors against Gilead, they capitalized on a situation when their neighbor was most vulnerable. So, whereas Damascus may have decimated the male population in Gilead, the Ammonites acted to ensure that not future generation would exist to claim a right to the territory, by “ripping open the pregnant women”.⁴⁴

Moab

“He burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom”

Moab’s atrocity was not done directly against Israel or Judah but, because Edom shared a filial relationship with the Judahites and Israelites unlike any of the other neighbours, Amos cites the crime. In any case this reprehensible act seems to have been fresh in the minds of Amos’ listeners.

The memory of Moab’s hostility toward Israel is well preserved in the Bible, especially in the narrative of 2 Kgs 3:4-24 concerning Israel’s war with Mesha, king of Moab. In this context the discovery of the Mesha stele, dated to about 840 B.C., is of inestimable worth. The texts correspond at several points although they are not describing the same event. Equivalence may be seen in: the name of Mesha; that Moab is a vassal of Israel; that the historical context is the period of the Omrides, and that Moab rebelled against Israel. The following is an excerpt from Mesha’s stele:

“Omri was king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab for many days, because Kemos was angry with the land. And his son followed him, and he also said, “I will oppress Moab”. In my days he say [. . .] But I saw my desire over him and his house, and Israel has utterly perished forever”.⁴⁵

Amos’ charges become more plausible when we note that in 2 Kgs 3 Edom too is involved in war against Moab. The actions of Moab have to do with vengeance. Although there is too little data to suggest a more specific time frame, the atrocity mentioned in Amos 2:1 matches the desperate lengths to which king Mesha went in order to defeat Israel (see 2 Kgs 3:27)

THE SHADOW AND OVERSHADOWING OF ASSYRIA

Amos’s Threats of (Assyrian?) Invasion and Exile

“I am raising up against you a nation, O house of Israel, says Yahweh of hosts, and they shall oppress you from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi Arabah” (Amos 6:14)

⁴⁴ This practice finds mention also in 2 Kings 8:11-12, 15:16; Hosea 14:1. Despite the transparency of Assyrian rulers in parading their atrocities against their enemies, the “ripping open of pregnant women” is not mentioned in a single historical account. We only have this preserved in a heroic poem describing Tiglath Pileser I (1114-1076_ . See, M. Cogan, “‘Ripping Open Pregnant Women’ in the Light of an Assyrian Analogue”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 103.4 (1983), 755-57.

⁴⁵ Translation K. Lawson Younger, ‘History of Israel (Course Notes)’, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, January-May, 2004, 72.

“Therefore I will take you into exile beyond Damascus says Yahweh” (Amos 5:27)

These threats, when considered together suggest that Israel was to expect an invasion, not by Syria but by a kingdom further north. Later history would show that this unnamed aggressor would be none other than Assyria following its resurgence under Tiglath Pileser III (745-727 B.C.). However at the time Amos preached, such a prediction would have seemed no more than mere mischief (see Amos 7:10-13) for at least three reasons:

1. Between 782, the death of Adad-Nirari III, and 745, the accession of Tiglath Pileser III, Assyria reached one of its lowest points politically (see below). Ravaged by Urartu in the north⁴⁶ and Babylonia in the south, and torn by a series of internal dissensions, the once mighty empire reached its nadir for the neo-Assyrian period:

In sum, this was one of the dimmer periods in Assyria’s history. The empire’s frontier rapidly dwindled and its ruler was as concerned about boundary agreements and disputes as they were about military expeditions.⁴⁷

2. In any case, from the time of Jehu, Israel had conscientiously cultivated the favor of Assyria. Scholars suggest that Jehu had gone beyond most vassals of Assyria in willingly handing over the Kingdom of Israel for the protection of Shalmaneser III, as suggested by the Assyrian inscription listing his tribute, “the staff of the king’s hand”.⁴⁸ None of the scions of the dynasty were known to have rebelled against Assyria, and the general impression is that the Assyrians did look out for the wellbeing of Israel.
3. Notwithstanding the points above, Amos’ words would have appeared incongruous to a society that for nearly hundred years had enjoyed the ministry of significant prophets such as Elijah, Elisha and Jonah, who in turn had seemingly approved their monarch (see 1 Kings 19:16 ; 2 Kings 9:1-10, 13:14-19, 14:25); a society that had repeatedly experienced acts of divine intervention that *proved* Yahweh’s favorable disposition towards the nations (see 2 Kgs 13:5, 23, 14:26-27).

Cohen asserts that when Jehu in 842 [*sic*] put Israel under the protection of Assyria he “definitely linked the fortunes of Israel to those of Assyria”.⁴⁹ Philip King concurs with this basic premise, although his implied understanding of Assyrian-Israelite relations may not be sufficiently comprehensive:

The fortunes of Judah and Israel depended almost exclusively on their neighbours, especially Syria (Aram) and Assyria. When the neighbors were weak, Israel and Judah prospered. In the first half of

⁴⁶ A.K. Grayson, “Assyria: Ashur-Dan II to Ashur-Nirari V (934-745 B.C.)”, in *Cambridge University History, Vol.3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 276: “Assyria’s chief foe was Urartu, a relative new comer on the scene and a kingdom which was now entering its most successful and ambitious period.” On this also see, R.D. Barnett, “Urartu”, in *Cambridge Ancient History, 3/1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) esp. 314-371.

⁴⁷ Grayson, “Assyria”, 279.

⁴⁸ See Elat, “Campaigns”, 31-34.

⁴⁹ “Political”, 157.

the eighth century B.C.E. owing to Syria's decline of power and Assyria's turmoil at home, Judah and Israel prospered.⁵⁰

These years may be divided into three contrasting periods:

842-806 B.C.: Assyria Occupied in the East

The latter end of Shalmaneser III's illustrious reign (858-824 B.C.) was marked by weak governance, most clearly expressed by the outbreak of an insurrection in 827 B.C. that outlasted Shalmaneser and occupied his successor Shamsh Adad V for quite a number of years. This was on top of the fact that after 839 B.C. Assyria was engaged exclusively in the East and was in no position to put any pressure on Damascus. Consequently Israel endured some thirty years of humiliation under Hazael as discussed above.

806-782 B.C.: The Period of Adad-Nirari III

Adad-Nirari campaigned several times in the West. As a result Israel appears to have enjoyed Assyrian protection once again, while Damascus was severely affected.

From the period of Adad-Nirari III to at least 752 B.C. a powerful Assyrian official, Shamshi-ilu governed the western end of the empire where he has the virtual authority of a king.⁵¹ The Antakya Stela is interesting because it records, "The boundary which Adad-Nirari, king of Assyria, and Samsi-ilu, the commander-in-chief (*Turtanu*), established between Zakkur and Hamathite and Atarsumki . . ." ⁵² In this light, since scholars have debated whether it was Adad-Nirari or Shamshi-ilu that was the 'savior' of 2Kgs 13:5, *we wonder why it could not have been both since there is clear evidence that some actions were credited to them together.* In any case this period corresponds with Israel's reversals, and coincides with the early years of the reign of Jeroboam II.

782 – 745 B.C.: The 'Dark' Period.

These were by far the most disastrous thirty-seven years of the Neo-Assyrian Period.⁵³ We lack inscriptional evidence, but the Eponym Chronicle provides us information on what the Assyrian monarchs focused on annually. These entries show that for an empire that was sustained by annual campaigns for pillage and plunder, Assyria was doing increasingly poorly.

During the reign of Shalmaneser IV (782-773) the Eponym Chronicle records six campaigns against Urartu (781-778, 776, 774). These were led by Shamshi-ilu. Limited success was also had in the West. The last significant campaign against Damascus was in 773 B.C. when Shamshi-ilu received tribute from Hadianu. On this basis we could expect Damascus to be quiescent for a short period after 773.

⁵⁰ *Amos*, 30.

⁵¹ See Ikeda, "Looking on", 281.

⁵² Hallo and Younger, *COS*, Vol.2, 272.

⁵³ "It is a fact that the reign of Adad-Nirari III was followed by a period of drastic decline in Assyrian might, a decline which persisted for almost half a century", Grayson, "Assyria", 273.

However the periods of Ashur-Dan III (772-755) AND Ashur-Nirari V (754-745) are better described by the frequency of “in the land” entries in the Chronicle; *four* for the former, and *five* for the latter. This clearly indicates a defensive posture, and a preoccupation with domestic problems.⁵⁴

LIFE IN SAMARIA UNDER JEROBOAM II

It is the Book of Amos that provides us the best insight into the social conditions, cultural features, and religious life in Israel in the time of Jeroboam II. A closer reading of Amos evinces *two* antithetic characteristics of the time; on the one hand, economic prosperity and heightened religiosity, and on the other, social injustice and oppression.

Economic Prosperity and Heightened Religiosity

A number of indicators in the book show that the prophet is confronting a wealthy and powerful elite in Samaria. The most noteworthy indicators are luxurious dwellings (3:15, 5:11); extravagant lifestyles – “ivory”, “fine oils”, “wine”; the practice of the *jzrm*, *marzéah* (6:4-6); ease and complacency (6:1, 8:10).

Luxurious Dwellings (Amos 3:15, 5:11)

Architecture is a useful indicator of the economic conditions that prevailed in ancient times. In Samaria the period of the Omrides, and the later period of Jeroboam II show evidence of impressive architecture. The main constructions; the place, inner walls, gates and casemate wall were completed by Omri and Ahab.⁵⁵ In the eighth century the inflow of wealth and the long period of relative independence⁵⁶ enabled the nobility to continue the tradition of building:

1. Jeroboam II repaired the casemate wall, altered existing buildings in the Royal Quarter, and added new constructions like the royal storehouse.⁵⁷
2. Amos gives us no less than *five* descriptions of Israelite dwellings: the winter house, summer house, ivory houses, great houses (3:15); houses of hewn stone (5:11). As for “the winter house as well as the summer house” we have interesting parallels elsewhere. One comes from the inscription of king Barrakab of Samal: “My fathers the kings of Samal had no good house. They had the house of Kilamu [*sic*], which was their winter house and also their summer house.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 276-278

⁵⁵ “Together with Ahab, his son and successor, Omri subsequently transformed this one-time family estate of Shemer into a cosmopolitan royal city complete with impressive fortification walls, a palace, large courtyards with rectangular pools, public buildings and storerooms”, Ron Tappy, “Samaria”, in Meyers ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia*, Vol.4, 465.

⁵⁶ “Though occasional lenses of blackish or sooty soil appear, the relatively meager quantities of this type of matrix do not point to destruction levels associated with large scale military activity against the city”, Tappy, R. *The Archaeological Israelite Samaria: (Volume II: The Eighth Century BCE*, (Winnona Lake: Esienbrauns, 2001), 114.

⁵⁷ N.Avigad, “Samaria”, in Stern ed., *Encyclopedia*, 1041.

But I have built this house.”⁵⁸ Shalom Paul argues, “In sum, the wealthy residents of Samaria followed the example of royalty and built for themselves separate pleasure estates in accordance with the climatic conditions of the country”.⁵⁹

3. Archaeologists have been repeatedly impressed by the “outstanding quality”, “outstanding precision” and “outstanding masonry” of Israelite buildings.⁶⁰ Such constructions would have been primarily done in and around Samaria,⁶¹ and the various cult-centers patronized by the king and the nobility, i.e. Bethel, Beer Sheba, and Gilgal. The mention of ivory-inlaid houses (3:15) further confirms that the elite enjoyed a remarkable level of luxury.

Extravagant Lifestyles – “Ivory”, “Fine Oils” and “Wine”

These were the OT equivalent of expensive cars, exotic vacations and fine dining! Oil and wine are used elsewhere in the Bible to symbolize great prosperity, and they are here associated with the elite in Samaria.⁶²

Lawrence Stager discusses the production of “virgin oil” in ancient Samaria, and distinguishes it from the “inferior oil of the second separation”. Virgin oil was the finest that could be purchased, and commanded the highest price. In Amos 6:6 the *mymv tyvr* “the finest oils”, Stager thinks was, “used by the fine ladies of Samaria to anoint themselves while eating and drinking at Semitic symposia”.⁶³

We find the double mention of ivory in Amos (3:15, 6:4) most interesting because it hints at the abundance of wealth they enjoyed. Such times had been seen in Israel previously during the days of Solomon (see 1Kgs 10:18,22) and Ahab (1Kgs 22:39). Amos’ hints become clearer to the modern reader on account of the recent archaeology of Samaria.⁶⁴ Between 1931-35, the Harvard Expedition to Samaria found the first collection of Samaritan ivories. Today we have over 500 fragments of ivory inlays, many of which may be dated to the period of Jeroboam II. A number show exquisite Phoenician style carvings.

The Practice of the *jzrm*, *marzéah* (Amos 6:7)

⁵⁸ King, *Amos*, 61.

⁵⁹ Shalom Paul, “Amos III 15 Winter and Summer Mansions”, *VT* 28 (1978), 359.

⁶⁰ Avigad, “Samaria”, 1041.

⁶¹ “By the first half of the 8th century BCE Samaria lay in the center of a tight constellation of towns and family-owned estates . . . [which] served the capital city at Samaria, and participated in inter-regional trade . . . not all represented mere caravan stops; rather many of these villages bolstered their own local economies by producing and trading commodities such as wine and oil”, Tappy, *Archaeology*, 9.

⁶² “Apart from religious and moral considerations, the ivories imported from Phoenicia bearing Egyptianizing motifs, attest to the cosmopolitan culture of eighth century Israel. No longer were the people of Samaria living in isolation; they had become more open to the culture of their neighbors . . .”, King, *Amos*, 149

⁶³ Lawrence Stager, “The Finest Oil in Samaria”, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XXVIII/1 (1983), 241-45.

⁶⁴ For a most recent study providing detailed archaeological data see, Tappy, *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria*.

The term is used in Amos 6:7, and only once more in the OT; Jer 16:5, “For thus says Yahweh, “Do not enter {} and do not go to lament”. We are not fortunate to have far more information on the *marzéah* from Elephantine, Piraeus, Nabatea, Palmyra and Ugarit.⁶⁵ They show that this was a widespread practice. Amos 6:4-6 is now regarded as clearly alluding to the *marzéah* in ancient Israel. Some salient features are listed below:

1. It was a religious, social phenomenon that had considerable importance.
2. It involved the wealthier class of society: “Both [*sic*] the Old Testament, the Nabatean and the Ugaritic evidence demonstrates beyond doubt that the *marzéah* members belonged to the upper classes of society.”
3. The main feature of the *marzéah* was the banquet.
4. The feasting could last for several days, and was accompanied by excessive drinking.
5. The occasion could be joyful or sorrowful (cf. The context of Amos 6:4-7)

Easy and Complacency

In 6:1 Amos speaks of those who are “at ease in Zion” and those who “feel secure in Samaria”. This clear indication of the sense of security and complacency that marked the nobility. Since we have argued that at the time Israel was already experiencing many threats and even some losses in war, how can this apparent upbeat mood be explained?

1. The royal city of Samaria was built on a hill and was thought quite difficult to capture.
2. Samaria had extremely well built fortifications.
3. Samaria had not experienced any serious threats for nearly fifty years from the end of the reign of Jehoahaz.
4. The social distance of the city-elite from the rural-peasantry was so great that the experience of war, border violations, and economic deprivation of the latter did not evoke any alarm or empathy from the former (cf. 6:6, “they are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph”).
5. As we shall see below, to a large measure their false sense of security was bound up ironically in their Yahwistic ideology.

Heightened Religiosity

Although the dynasty of Jehu may be commended for maintaining a strong antipathy towards Baalism, they failed to abandon the “sin of Jeroboam son of Nebat”. What was this? It is now recognized that what Jeroboam I instituted in Israel was *deviant Yahwism*. The calves in Dan and Bethel

⁶⁵ For a useful discussion on this institution in the ancient world see, Hans M. Barstad, “The Religious Polemics of Amos”, *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, XXXIV (1984), 127-42; King, *Amos*, 139-51.

had no figure astride them. This is in contrast with other ANE religious iconography, where the bull figure, the vehicle, is shown mounted by the deity. The cult in Samaria was showing deference to the anticonic nature of Yahwism. However by establishing the golden calves in the cult centers, Jeroboam I moved the nation irrevocably away from orthodox Yahwism.

With increasing prosperity the cult in Israel flourished. Amaziah the priest called Bethel, “the king’s sanctuary . . . and the center of the land.” Since, unlike secularized modern cultures, ancient people directly linked prosperity, military success, and fertility of the nation to the favor of the resident deity, when economic conditions burgeoned, religious fervor soared. Jonah’s predictions had been fulfilled in the early reign of Jeroboam II. The continued wellbeing of the land had given weight to the false notion that Yahweh’s favor *unconditionally* rested on Samaria. Not unlike the pagan notion of deity, it was thought that Yahweh could be coerced into acting on behalf of individuals or the nation on the basis of effective rituals and elaborate worship (4:4-5, 5:21-24, 8:1-3). There was seen no direct correlation between moral and ethical behavior and divine favor.

With the recent aggressive behavior of Israel’s neighbors, the incipient religiosity of the Israelites became accentuated along the lines of Deut 32:36, which had worked for Israel before (cf. 2 Kgs 14:26-27). Thus the ruling establishment and the nobility began to *long* for the “Day of Yahweh” (5:18) whereby God would once more intervene to save the land from the hands of the enemy. That there was scriptural warrant to expect from the hands of the enemy. That there was scriptural warrant to expect God to act decisively to deliver and exalt his people was undoubtedly true. What sadly escaped the notice of the leaders of Samaria was, the fact that commitment and obedience to *Torah* was the only basis on which such covenant obligations could be *expected* from God.

Social Injustice and Oppression

Amos has become synonymous with social justice because that is one of his clearest themes. In fact arguably the best-known verse in Amos in 5:4, “Let *justice* roll down like waters, and *righteousness* like an ever flowing stream”. His condemnation of the establishment of Samaria is based on three grounds:

1. They oppressed the “poor” and “weak” (2:6-8,⁶⁶ 3:9-11, 4:1, 5:10-12, 8:4-6).
2. They corrupted all systems of justice (5:7, 10-12, 15, 24)>
3. They suppressed those individuals and institution of society (nazirites and prophets) that functioned to model and exhort righteous social behavior (2:12, 5:10-12, 7:10-13).

⁶⁶ A piece of archaeological correspondence to Amos’ “garments taken in pledge” has now surfaced from inside the guardroom of a small fortress at Mesad Hashavyahu. It is a fourteen line Hebrew ostrakon dating from about 625 B.C. The letter was from a reaper complaining that his garment had been impounded, and asking that the military governor intervene for the return of the garment. See, King, *Amos*, 24.

The fact that these charges ring throughout the book demonstrates that the problem was quite entrenched. Masses in Israel were “poor” and “needy”. In the book of Amos these terms are synonymous with the “righteous” (see 2:6 and 5:12) precisely because the causes of economic deprivation and disadvantage were *not* normal disasters or fluctuating fortunes in international trade, but the wanton exercise of greed and the abuse of power. Under the patronage of the king “the notables of the first of the nations” (6:1) became the *untouchables* of ancient Israel. The many that chose to remain faithful to Yahweh’s law, the *righteous*, became the poor, the needy, the powerless and the voiceless. Voiceless, that is, until Yahweh roared from Zion in the dramatic words of shepherd-farmer from the environs of Jerusalem.

CONCLUSION

The author, or the final editor, of Kings writes from a Judahite perspective with his interest focused on the Davidic dynasty. We suggest that the reason he then interweaves the history of the kings of the northern kingdom is because the latter acts as a foil to highlight comparisons and contrasts between the two nations following the fateful divide in the days of Rehoboam. As a result of this *theological agenda* certain events and persons in the north, though of great historical import, receive scant attention by the deuteronomist.

The advent of archaeological research in the region of the ANE provided an unexpected boon to the biblical student, in that it presented a whole new repository of artifactual information of a world, which, previously, could only be textually appropriate.

In this paper we have attempted to reconstruct a plausible historical scenario for the period of Jeroboam II, who, though very briefly mentioned in 2 Kgs 14, was the reigning monarch in the time of the prophet Amos. This exercise, it is hoped, would elucidate the text of Kings and, more significantly, that of Amos.

We have argued that the common assumption – that the reference to Jeroboam’s military exploits and political expansion 2 Kgs 14, together with the reference to Samaria’s wealth and opulence in Amos, *describes the status quo of the northern, kingdom for the entire period of his reign* (793-752 B.C.) – is too simplistic, and sits uneasily with the evidence both in the text, and now, in the archaeological data. Amos prophesied towards the end of the period of Jeroboam II. At this time it appears that the country was experiencing a resurgence of hostility from her traditional enemies on the border. As a result of this political climate, the rural peasantry was exposed to severe economic hardships and physical danger. The cosmopolitan elite however, living within the security of the capital Samaria, or other centralized towns, was not directly affected by the realities that impinged on the lives of the marginalized. Furthermore, any concerns for the future posed by these new developments were quickly laid to rest on account the prevalent worldview. The latter, constructed on the fact of the military successes of Jeroboam, the increase of wealth among the elite, and the intensification of religious fervor in Samaria and the other cultic centers, served to buttress the belief that Yahweh was

once again on the side of Israel, and with the expected in-breaking of the Day of Yahweh, will restore the nation to her Solomonic glory.

Amos saw a different vision. The collapse of biblical justice and righteousness in *contemporary Israel* became the acid test of the welfare of *future Israel*. The present experience of the 'ruin of Joseph,' if unheeded by the king, the priest and the powerful, could only be a solemn foreboding the future Day of Yahweh they so longed for: "Is it not the day of Yahweh darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?" (Amos 5:20).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, F. and Freedman Noel, 'Amos', *Anchor Bible*, New York: Doubleday, 1989.

Avigad, N, "Samaria" in Ephraim Stern ed., *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, 1032-1050.

Barnett, R.D, "Urartu", *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3/1 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 314-371.

- Barsatd, H. "The Religious Polemics of Amos", *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, XXXIV, 1984.
- Beit-Arieh, I. "New light on the Edomites", *BAR* 14/2 (1988), 28-41.
- Cogan, M. "Ripping Open Pregnant Women in Light of an Assyrian Analogue" *JAOS* 103 (1983), 755-7.
- Cohen, S. "The Political Background of the Words of Amos", *HUGA* 36 (1965), 153-60.
- Coogan, M. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Dever, G.W. *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Elat, M. "The Campaigns of Shalmaneser III Against Aram and Israel", *IEJ* 25 (1975), 25-35.
- Fensham, "The Treaty Between the Israelites and the Tyrians", *Supplement to Vetus Testamentum*, 17 (1969), 71-87.
- Galil, G. "The Boundaries of Aram-Damascus in the 9th – 8th Centuries BCE", *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, LXXXI (2000), 35-41.
- Grayson, "Assyrian: Ashur Dan II to Ashur Nirari V, 934-745 BC", *Cambridge Ancient History* 3/1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Hallo, W.W. "From Qarqar to Carchemish: Assyria and Israel in the Light of New Discoveries", *BA* 23 (1960), 34-61.
- Hallo, W.W. and Younger K. Lawsom eds., *The Context of Scripture (COS)*, Vols. 1-3, Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Haran, M. "The Rise and Decline of the Empire of Jeroboam Ben Joash", *VT* 17 (1967), 266-97.
- _____, "Observations on the Historical Background of Amos 1:2-2:6", *IEJ* 18 (1968), 201-7.
- Hawkins, J.D. "Hamath", *Reallexikon der Syriologie* 4, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975, 67-70.
- Hayes, J. *Amos: The Eighth-Century Prophet*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1988.
- Heickson, M.H. "Tekoa: Historical and Cultural Profile", *JETS* 13 (1970), 81-89.
- Herr, L. "Ammon", Meyers, Eric ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Ancient Near East*, vol 1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 103-105.

Ikeda, Y. "Looking from Til Barsip on the Euphrates: Assyria and the West in Ninth and Eighth Centuries BC", IN Kazuko Watanabe ed., *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East*, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996, 271-302.

Jacobs, P.F. "Cows of the Bashan- A Note on the Interpretation of Amos 4:1" *JBL* 104 (1985), 109-10.

Katzenstein, H. Jacob *The History of Tyre From The Beginning of the Second Millennium BCE to the Fall of the Neo Babylonian Empire in 538 BCE*, Jerusalem: Schocken Institute for Jewish Research of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1973, 224-48.

King, Philip. *Amos, Hosea, Micah – An Archaeological Commentary*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988.

Knauf, "Beth Aven", *Biblica* 65 (1984), 251-3

Malamat, A. "Amos 1:5 In the Light of the Til Barsip Inscriptions", *BASOR* 129 (1953), 25-26.

Mazar, B. "The Aramean Empire and Its Relations With Israel", *BA* 25 (1962), 98-120.

Mc Cullough, W.S. "Some Suggestions About Amos", *JBL* 72 (1953), 247-254.

Meyers Eric ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Ancient Near East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Mitchell, T.C. "Israel and Judah Until the Revolt of Jehu (931-841 B.C.)" in *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 3/1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 442-487.

_____. "Israel and Judah from Jehu until the Period of Assyrian Domination (841 –c, 750)", in *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 3/1* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 488-510.

Na'aman, N. "Historical and Chronological Notes on the Kingdom of Israel and Judah in the Eighth Century BC", *VT* 36 (1986), 71-92.

_____. "Beth Aven, Bethel and Early Israelite Sanctuaries", *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 103 (1987), 12-21.

_____. "Azaria of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel", *VT* XLIII, 2 (1993), 227-234.

Paul, S.M. "Amos III 15 Winter and Summer Mansions", *VT* 28 (1978), 358-60.

_____. *Amos*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991)

Peckham, B. "Israel and Phoenicia" in F.M.Cross, W.E. Lemke and P.D. Miller eds., *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God*, New York: Double Day, 1976, 224-48.

Pitard, W. *Ancient Damascus*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987.

Polley, M.E. *Amos and the Davidic Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Provan, I. Long, V. Phillips and Longman III, Tremper eds., *A Biblical History of Israel*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.

Schoville, "A Note on the Oracles Against Gaza, Tyre and Edom", *SVT 26* (1974), 55-63.

Stager, L.E. "The finest Olive Oil in Samaria", *JSS 28* (1983), 241-45.

Stephenson, F.R. "Astronomical Verification and Dating of Old Testament Passages Referring to Solar Eclipses", *Palestine Exploration Quarterly 107* (1975), 107-20.

Stern Ephraim ed., *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Tappy, R. *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria (Volume II: The Eighth Century BCE)*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001.

_____, "Samaria", in Meyers, Eric ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Ancient Near East, vol. 4*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 463-467.

Younger, K.L. "The Deportations of the Israelites", *JBL 117/2* (1998), 201-227.

_____, "The Fall of Samaria in Light of Recent Research", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly 61/3* (1999), 461-482.

SRI LANKA, CHRISTIANITY, BUDDHISM AND ISLAM AT THE DAWN OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

G.P.V. Somaratna

In the sixteenth century, three of the world's great Muslim empire surrounded the Indian Ocean. The Ottoman Empire, the Safavid Dynasty of Persia, and the Mughal Dynasty of India were wealthier and their governments more powerful than any of the European states in that period. Each inherited a rich cultural heritage that included Islamic, Hindu, Mongolian, Byzantine, Judaic, Persian, Turkish and Buddhist traditions. Each empire in turn produced an energetic and distinctive cultural tradition that drew upon this heritage. All three empires were ethnically and religiously diverse, even though their rulers were Muslim. Their economies were strong and dynamic. Many of their merchants, manufacturers, and farmers were highly integrated into the Asian economy.²³⁴

With the arrival of Vasco de Gama in the Port of Calicut in South India in 1498 the Portuguese began their penetration of the Indian Ocean. In 1505 a Portuguese fleet commanded by Lourenco de Almeida was blown into Colombo by adverse winds. Almeida received a friendly audience from the king of Kotte, Dharma Parakramabahu (1489-1513).²³⁵ The Portuguese were positively impressed with the commercial and strategic value of the island.

The Portuguese period (1505-1658) with its Roman Catholic missionary enterprise is a turning point in the history of Sri Lanka. In 1505, when the first Portuguese arrived in Colombo, the island came into contact with a totally new culture and religion, which was unfamiliar to it.²³⁶ As a result of this event Sri Lanka was taken out from the sphere of Indian culture and religions; and moved to the orbit of Greco-Roman Christian civilization. Politically too, Indian dominance was suppressed by the presence of European naval powers. The Introduction of the Roman Catholic religion to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese is as significant as the introduction of Buddhism in the third century BC.²³⁷ It had a pervasive influence on the Sinhalese people and their culture. Similarly the Tamil population in various parts of the Island experienced transformation of their culture as a result of the Portuguese administration and Roman Catholic influence.²³⁸

Although small pockets of Nestorian Christianity had existed in Sri Lanka in the period prior to the ninth-century of Our Era, the Portuguese were the first to propagate Christianity on a mass scale. One of the most durable legacies of the Portuguese administration in Sri Lanka has been the conversion of a large number of people of the Maritime Provinces to Roman Catholicism.²³⁹ All the Sinhalese who embraced the Roman Catholic faith were formally living within the Buddhist sphere of influence. The arrival of the

²³⁴ Danvers, F.C. *The Portuguese in India- 2 Vols Being a history of the rise and decline of their eastern empire* Vol.1: From 1481 to 1571 to 1894 HC., Vol.1, Vol.2, 1992.

²³⁵ The regnal years are taken from K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Vijata Yapa, 2002.

²³⁶ For a discussion on the disputed chronology on the first arrival of the Portuguese see the paper entitled "Portuguese-Sri Lanka: Some Comments on Recent Historiography" submitted by C.R. de Silva at the Workshop on Portugal-Sri Lanka Interactions, held in Colombo on June 18, 2005.

²³⁷ Gunapala Senadheera, "Cultural Contacts Between Indian and Sri Lanka Through Bhikkus, Scholars, and Pilgrims," Senake Bandaranayake, et al (eds), *Sri Lanka and the Silk Road of the Sea*, Colombo: Central Cultural Fund, 2003, p.127. (Hereafter referred to as *SLRS*)

²³⁸ Gnanamuthu Pilendran, *Tamil Catholic Literary Tradition of Sri Lanka, Vol.1, Jaffna: Catholic Students Union, 1998.*

²³⁹ M.Quere, "Christianity in Sri Lanka before the Coming of the Portuguese," *Aquinas Journal*, Vol4, No.2 (December 1987), pp.126-145.

Portuguese marked a new order of culture in Sri Lanka, and therefore it is the link between medieval and modern Sri Lanka.

The memories associated with Christianity have been marred by its association with the Portuguese administration of the country. As some scholars have pointed out religion has become the key ingredient in the analysis of the encounter between Sri Lanka and Portugal.²⁴⁰ The Portuguese were a colonial power, and their interests were not those of the Sri Lankans but their own. The Portuguese historians and recorders have clearly reported the events that took place in Sri Lanka under regime. Therefore one would find it easy to find out the atrocities committed by the Portuguese rulers. For example Fernao de Queros went to the extent of highlighting the blunders made by the Portuguese in Sri Lanka as a warning to the next generations of Portuguese. However, the same disposition is not present in the indigenous sources dealing with the kings of Sri Lanka.²⁴¹ The local reporters gave selective information that delighted the ego of their race and religion. Our knowledge of any atrocities committed by the Sri Lankan kings as well as the Portuguese during this period have to be gleaned from the accounts of the Portuguese writers. For example the massacre of the Christian in Mannar in 1544 by the king of Jaffna and the cruelties of the kings of Sitavaka (1521-1594) are known from the Sinhalese kings sometimes surpassed the acclaimed atrocities of the Portuguese. Popular belief in Sri Lanka, on the other hand, is that the Portuguese administration contributed to the destruction of the pristine Sinhalese Buddhist culture of the country.

A modern Sri Lankan writer states that “Learned historians and commentators now generally regard the arrival of the Portuguese in the year 1505 as the beginning of the Dark Age in the History of Sri Lanka.”²⁴² A critical observer can discern a renewal and enrichment of Sinhala Buddhist culture with many innovations introduced from outside during the Portuguese period. The words of Portuguese origin used by the Sinhalese to refer to areas of civil administration, Judicial administration, military structure, land administration, education, religion, personal names, dress, furniture, architecture, dance, music, preparation of food, fruits and vegetable etc. would shown that such statements regarding the Portuguese period is inaccurate.

Portuguese rule

It is said, “If trade followed the flag in the development of the British Empire, the missionary was close behind the merchant in the expansion of the Portuguese empire.”²⁴³ After Vesco de Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope all the way to India (1497-1499), it was clear between that European sailing technology was ready to go anywhere in the world. Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503), literally divided the world between Spain and Portugal in the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. This is essence bestowed the Western Hemisphere to the crown of Spain and the Eastern to that of Portugal. Thus Sri Lanka fell within the Portuguese orbit.

²⁴⁰ C.R. de Silva, Portugal and Sri Lanka: Recent Trends in Sri Lanka, Historiography, Paper submitted to the workshop of Portugal – Sri Lankan Interactions, 18, June 2005. p.10

²⁴¹ Tikiri Abeysinghe, Portuguese in Ceylon, 1594-1612, Colombo: Lakehouse, 1966, p.7.

²⁴² Senaka Weeraratna, repression of Buddhism in Sri Lanka by the Portuguese (1506-1658), <http://my.tbaytel.net/arfh/bhBlog/portugal.pdf>

The Report of the Buddhist Commission states “The Portuguese occupied the maritime provinces and remained there for 150 years, oppressing and harassing the people of this country in a manner hitherto unknown.” Quoted by Tambimuttu, *A Profile of Ceylon's Catholic Heritage*, p.29

²⁴³ C.R. de Silva, “The first visit of the Portuguese to Ceylon 1505 or 1506,” in Prematilleke, Indrapala and Lohuin (ed) *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume*, Leiden 1978. C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese Merchants and Missionaries in Feudal Japan, 1543-1640*, Aldershot Hampshire; 1997, p. vii.

One cannot study the Christian Buddhist encounter without referring to the Portuguese rule in the country. Although the first arrival of the Portuguese took place in 1505, their political involvement in the country began in the 1530s when the fraternal struggle for the throne by the two brothers at the Kingdom of Kotte²⁴⁴ eventually drew them into the political affairs of the country. Bhuvanekabahu VII (1521-1551) remained an ally of the Portuguese during his lifetime. It was in his grandson Dharmapala's reign (1551-1597) that the kingdom of Kotte became a protectorate of the crown of Portugal. However, the jurisdiction of the king of Kotte in this period was shrunk at times to the confines of the fortress of Colombo. It was after the death of Rajasinha of Sitavaka (1581-1594) in 1594 that the Portuguese were able to expand their authority by encompassing the areas, which were under the king of Sitavaka. Since the Portuguese rule came to an end in 1656 in Colombo the direct rule of the Portuguese in the kingdom of Kotte lasted only about sixty years. Their rule in Jaffna lasted less than forty years. The conquest of Jaffna took place in 1619 and the administration ended in 1658.

Church and state

It is true that church and state had close association in this period; but the two arms served always as separate components despite close association and mutual help. The missionary adventure in Sri Lanka was a *padroado* responsibility of the king of Portugal. The *podraodo*, where the Pope gave the monopoly of missionary activity in the lands discovered by the Portuguese to the crown of Portugal, played a decisive role in the introduction and maintenance of the Roman Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. The king of Portugal was responsible for establishing and maintaining all the religious affairs in Sri Lanka. Under his authority the church in Sri Lanka was provided with priests, parishes, churches, monasteries, schools and other religious institutions.²⁴⁵ The Portuguese treasury had to bear the burden of financing these religious ventures. The Portuguese kings considered this responsibility as a God given privilege. Therefore there was a close harmony and co-operation between spiritual and temporal powers in the Portuguese empire.²⁴⁶

The Roman Catholic friars of the Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian and Jesuit orders in large numbers were found in all parts of the Portuguese territory in Sri Lanka.²⁴⁷ It was they, not the Portuguese administrators, who were the agents of Judaeo Christian culture in Sri Lanka. Some of the coastal areas which were vacated by the Muslim traders were evangelized by them. There was a close and amicable connection between the fathers and the people. Their involvement with the people created what the missiologists call 'a redemption and lift.'²⁴⁸

Sri Lanka on the eve of the Arrival of the Portuguese

Sri Lanka was politically divided when the Portuguese arrived in 1505. There were three main kingdoms. They were the Sinhala Buddhist kingdoms of Kandy and Kotte and the Tamil Hindu kingdom of Jaffna. In addition, there were several semi-independent kings known as *Vanniyars*. In 1521 the powerful Kotte kingdom, which laid claim to the entire island, was divided among three brothers. Kotte was under the eldest, Bhuvanekabahu VII who retained the title *maharaja*. The king of Rayigma was Madduma Bandara. The king of Sitavaka was Mayadunne; he was the youngest of the family. When Madduma Bandara, the king

²⁴⁴ The struggle for the throne was between Bhuvanekabahu VII who was the king of Kotte and his younger brother Mayadunne, the king of Sitavaka; W.L.A. Don Peter, "History of the Church in Sri Lanka" in M.D. David (ed) *Asia and Christianity*, Bombay: Himalaya, 1985, pp.155-160.

²⁴⁵ M.Quere, *Christianity in Sri Lanka Under the Portuguese Padroado 1597-1658*, Colombo: Catholic Press, 1995, p.7

²⁴⁶ Paulo da Trindade, *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente*, Lisbon, 1976, p.127; W.L.A. Don Peter, *Education in Sri Lanka under the Portuguese*, Colombo: Catholic Press, 1978, pp.64-97.

²⁴⁷ Francis O. Tambimuttu, *A Profile of Ceylon's Catholic Heritage*, New York: Maryknoll, 1961, p.32. More than 120 Roman Catholic fathers left Sri Lanka in 1658 when Jaffna fell to the Dutch.

²⁴⁸ Donal Mc Gavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, pp 216-232.

of Rayigama, died in 1528 Mayadunne incorporated that kingdom also in to his territory. Since the 1530s the remaining two brothers were locked in a battle to win the sole ownership of the kingdom.²⁴⁹

Both Bhuvanekabahu and Mayadunne offered the Portuguese liberal privileges, including proselytizing within the country, in order to win their support in this fratricidal struggle. It was Bhuvanekabahu who first won the allegiance of the Portuguese. It was on his invitation that the Franciscan missionaries came to Sri Lanka in 1543.²⁵⁰ Mayadunne's overtures were not received with a positive attitude by the Portuguese. Having failed to obtain Portuguese help Mayadunne resorted to the Muslims of Calicut. There were other Sinhalese Buddhist kings who sought Portuguese assistance promising to be baptized. Jayavira of Kandy (1521-1552) and his son Karaliyadde (1552-1580) sought Portuguese help against the king of Sitavaka offering to become Catholics as a part of the bargain.

There were other contenders who sought baptism with a view to obtaining Portuguese military help to win the throne Jugo Bandara, a son of Bhuvanekabahu by a junior queen (*yakada dolia*) was making arrangements to go to Goa to seek baptism in order to gain Portuguese support to win the throne of Kotte.²⁵¹ It is believed that Bhuvanekabahu VII got his assassinated before he left for Goa. Jugo's brother went to Goa and became a Christian taking the name Dom Luis. About time a son of the king's sister was baptized in Kotte as Dom Joao.²⁵² He went later to Goa. These two princes who aspired to be placed on the throne of Kotte by the Portuguese died in 1546 in Goa.

The kings who embraced Christianity had their own agenda. They were guided by political expediency. They believed that conversion was an insurance, which provided them with Portuguese assistance. In the case of Sri Lanka such measure became counter-productive. In an era where there was a struggle for political supremacy such conversions gave their opponents a chance to win the support of the native population who were against the Portuguese and their Catholic allies. The converted kings lost their territory.²⁵³ Dharmapala (1551-1597), the king of Kotte, who became a Catholic, was confined to the fortress of Colombo during most of his reign. Karaliyadde (1552-1582) had to leave Kandy due to the uproar against him. Vimaladharmasuriya (1591-1604), who had become a Catholic under the name Don Joao, publicly disclaimed Catholicism in order to win the favour of the Kandyan nobility.

Examples of Indian Help sought in the Past

It was the tradition for brothers of the Sinhalese royal families who fought for the throne to seek foreign help to satisfy their personal ambitions. For example the sons of king Dhatu-sena (455-473) fought for the throne in the fifth century. One brother, Moggallana went to South India to seek help to oust his brother Kassapa (473-491) who built the famous fortress of Sigiriya. According to Senerath Paranavitana, Moggallana (491-508) came back with a team of mercenary soldiers who were Christians, and was able to

²⁴⁹ S.S. Perera, *A History of Ceylon: Portuguese Period, 1505-1658*, (Sinhala version), Colombo: Lakehouse, 1963, pp.30-42, C.W.Codrington *A Short History of Ceylon*, London: Macmillan, 1947, p.96.

²⁵⁰ Paul E. Pieris, *Ceylon: The Portuguese Era*, Vol.1, pp. 91-92; Tikiri Abeyasinghe, *Parangi Kotte*, (Sinhala) Colombo: Lakeside, 1966, p.176.; V. Perniola, *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka: The Portuguese Period*, Vol.1, 1505-1565, Dehiwala: Tisara, 1989, pp.37-47.

²⁵¹ These queens were not considered royal princesses. Therefore children from the junior queens were not considered suitable successors to the throne. But there were times when they took up arms in order to capture the throne. Sapumal Kumaraya was such a prince who defeated the legal successor and captured the throne. G.P.V. Somaratna, *Political History of the Kingdom of Kotte*, pp.140-157.

²⁵² *Rajavaliya*, p.211

²⁵³ K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka*, p.105; K.D.G. Wimalaratne, *Directory of Events: Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Trumphet Publishers, 1988, p.3

win the throne from his brother. As a *quid pro quo* he offered the Sigirya fortress to the Christian mercenaries to serve as a Christian monastery.²⁵⁴ On another occasion Manavamma (684-718) went to the Pallava court to seek help to win the throne. He came back with a group of Tamil soldiers.

The Sinhalese rulers continued to seek foreigners help in their bid to ascend the throne. The fact that there was no clear rule on succession regarding the Sinhalese throne caused confusion after the death of a king.

South India

The political scene in South India underwent drastic changes in the sixteenth century. Those who fought in this period had no Hindu kingdom in South India to help them in the period after the fall of Vijayanagar kingdom in 1565. Therefore the alternative was to obtain Muslim mercenary soldiers from South India. Judging from the historical parallels where the Muslims involvement in Sri Lanka would likely enhance Muslim interests in the Sinhalese kingdom.

Indian Digvijaya policy:

Ever since the emergence of empires in South India the policy of their kings had been to include Sinhaladvipa as a part of their *digvijaya*²⁵⁵ campaign. From the time of the Mouryans Sri Lanka together with Cola, Pandya and Cera kingdoms were reckoned by the North Indian rulers as the kingdoms of the far south. The ambitious Indian empire builders included Sri Lanka in their imperial aspirations. The inscription of Narasinha Varman (630-668) of the Pallava kingdom states that Sri Lanka was a tributary kingdom of his empire. The Pandya Empire, which emerged after the fall of the Pallavas, invaded Sri Lanka in the eighth century. The Colas who came next annexed Sri Lanka into the Cola Empire. They were the rulers of Sri Lanka from about A.D. 990 to 1070. The South Indian rulers continued to intervene in the affairs of the kingdom of Polonnaruwa in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The cause for the fall of the Rajarata hydraulic civilization is attributed to the South Indian invader, Kalinga Magha in 1235. The kings of the second Pandyan Empire also invaded Sri Lanka during the Yapahuwa period.²⁵⁶ The establishment of the kingdom of Jaffna was a result of the collapse of the Rajaratna civilization and the South Indian invasions and various waves of migrations of this period.

During the thirteenth century, the declining Sinhalese Buddhist kingdom faced threats of invasion from India and the expanding Tamil kingdom of northern Sri Lanka. Taking advantage of the weakness of the Sinhalese, the Tamil kingdom secured control of the valuable pearl fisheries around Jaffna Peninsula. During this time, the vast stretches of jungle that covered north-central Sri Lanka separated the Tamil enclave from the Sinhalese. The Tamils in the north developed a more distinct and southern India for inspiration. The Sinhalese, on the other hand, were increasingly restricted to the southern and central area of the island. They played a weak role in the political sphere due to divisions caused by geography and politics.

Foreign rulers took advantage of the disturbed political state of the Sinhalese kingdom, and in the thirteenth century Chandrabhanu, a Buddhist king from Malaya, invaded the island twice. He attempted to

²⁵⁴ S. Paranavitana, *Story of Sigiriya*, Colombo: Stamford Lake Publication, 2000, p.

²⁵⁵ *Digvijaya*, meaning conquest of the directions, is an Ancient Indian view of empire building.

²⁵⁶ Amaradasa Liyanagamage, *The Decline of Polonnaruwa and the Rise of Dambadeniya*, and Colombo: Department for Cultural Affairs, 1968, p.141.

seize the Tooth and the Alms Bowl Relics. In the early fifteenth century, the Chinese of the Ming dynasty took Parakramabahu Apa, the ruler of Southern Sri Lanka as a prisoner to China.²⁵⁷

Spread of Islam

Islam spread in Asia in two ways. One was invasion and the other was infiltration through traders. Muslim traders were in Sri Lanka from the early years of Islamic expansion. The presence of Arab traders in the Sri Lankan port cities are reported from the eighth century. These port cities were virtually in their hands by about the twelfth century. The Islamic population increased as a result of Muslim traders' marriage with local women. The fact that they were polygamous made it possible for them to increase the population at a comparatively faster rate. By the time of the arrival of the Portuguese the percentage of the Muslims to the total population of Sri Lanka can be estimated as less than 3 percent. Muslim traders from Arabia, Persia, western and south India continued to trade and settle in the ports of Sri Lanka. As a result of the dominant South Indian Muslim penetration into the Sri Lankan population the language of communication among the Muslims by the sixteenth century had become Tamil.

The neighbouring Maldives and the Lakadive islands, which were related to the Sinhalese in language and religion, came under Islamicization processes as a result of the missionary activities of the Muslim traders. In the same period Muslim traders also initiated the Islamicization of Southeast Asia. King Paramesvara of Malacca embraced Islam and became Iskander Shah and ushered an era of Islamic expansion.

Overland expansion of Islam also was taking place simultaneously in South Asia. In the 7th century Arab carried the new religion of Islam to Afghanistan and to the state of Sind. Islam was carried to the Gangetic valley from Afghanistan under the Ghaznavid king, Mahmud, who ruled from 998 to 1030. In 1175 one of the successors to Mahmud's dismembered empire, the Muslim conqueror Muhammad of Ghur, began his conquest of northern India. Within 20 years he had conquered all of north India, including the Bengal region. In 1206 Qutubuddin Aybak, one of Muhammad of Ghur's generals, founded the Delhi Sultanate with its capital at Delhi and began the so called Slave dynasty.

From 1311 to 1330, under orders from Ala-u-din, the Sultan of Delhi, Maliq Kaffoor, demolished and devastated Hindu temples in the South and carried away the loot to Delhi. Maliq Kaffoor's army raided the kingdoms up to Rameswaram the Indian port closest to Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, the far south of India remained under Hindu rule for some time. But rest of Deccan had come under Muslim rule from the fourteenth century. There were five Sultanates in the Deccan in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Muslim conquerors added a large part of South India to their domains. In 1324, a short lived Muslim Sultanate was established in Madurei.²⁵⁸

The great Hindu empire of Vijayanagar existed from 1336 to 1565 in the Southern part of the Indian subcontinent. After that even the far south was dominated by the Muslims. The next step obviously was Sri Lanka since the Muslim rulers of South India would inherit the traditional *digvijaya* and rule the kingdoms in South India only after the Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka. Therefore the Portuguese presence in Sri Lanka became a stumbling block to their aspirations of expansion.

²⁵⁷ G.P.V. Somaratna, *Political History of the Kingdom of Kotte*, Colombo, 1975, pp.65-76; K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 2004, p.87; K.M.M. Werake

²⁵⁸ R.C. Majumdar (ed) *The Struggle for Empire*, p.290; Dubreuil, G.J. *Ancient History of the Deccan. Translated from French By V.S. Swaminadha Dikshitar* HC 1991; Stephen Neil, *A History of Christianity in India : The Beginnings to AD 1707*, London: CSM 2004)

During the period prior to the arrival of the Portuguese the Zone from the western coast of India across the Bay of Bengal to the coast of Malacca was overwhelmingly dominated by Indian Muslim merchants.²⁵⁹ The Muslim traders took an active role in the international trade of the Coromandel Coast. Traders from South India visited Sri Lanka seasonally to obtain merchandise. During this period of domicile they lived with Sri Lankan women who were willing to set up house with foreign traders. Although many of these men went back and forth with their merchandise their children and wives were able to create Muslim settlements in the port cities and coastal towns.²⁶⁰

The Mappilas were on the group Muslims living in the Malabar area who had descended from the Muslim traders who had married local women. Yet they formed a distinct ethnic group, mainly because they were bound by Islamic law and custom. By the sixteenth century they formed about a fifth of the population in the Malabar coast area.²⁶¹ There was a steady influx of these Muslims from South India during the fifteenth century to the western coastal areas of Sri Lanka where trading commodities were produced. Some inhabitants of these trading cities were also very much involved in agriculture. Agriculture was closely followed by fishing. The fishing hamlets such as Beruwala could subsist even in the period when the agriculture failed.²⁶² All these towns relied on the hinterland both as regards trade and food supply. Their culture was more similar to their brethren in the Middle East and elsewhere than their fellow Sri Lankans who were Buddhist.

Invasion

There was a Muslim invasion of Sri Lanka on the eve of the arrival of the Portuguese on the port city of Chilaw (Salawata). Chilaw was an important landing place from the twelfth century onwards. The Cholas landed at Salavattota in the last quarter of the twelfth century. The Muslim invasion of this city took place during the reign of Dharma Parakramabahu IX (1489-1513). Lorna Dewaraja examining the report found in the *Rajavaliya* states that this "appeared to be a plundering raid by aggrandizement."²⁶³ However, the *Rajavaliya* reporting this event states that the invaders came from Kayalpattinam.²⁶⁴ The leader is reported to be a person named Kadirayan. They were equipped with horses, ships and an army of soldiers. They were not able to bring the invasion to a successful end as they were defeated by the Sinhalese king who was able to repel the invader. The fact that the invaders fished for pearls in the Chilaw Bay and captured elephants in the hinterland indicates that they wished to challenge the king's monopoly of the trade of these items.²⁶⁵ This could be regarded an indication of things to come as invaders usually came from South India to Sri Lanka.

Muslim traders were not united force like the Portuguese or the Dutch who dominated the Indian Ocean since the sixteenth century. Islamic trade was under individual Muslims or families. However, because of the common faith they were able to unite in a common cause.²⁶⁶ When the traditional land of

²⁵⁹ Om Prakash, "European and Asian Merchants in Asian Maritime Trade: 1500-1800: Some Issues of Methodology and Evidence". *Revista de Cultura*, 1991, pp.131-149

²⁶⁰ Lorna Dewaraja, Muslim Merchant and Pilgrims in Serandib C. 900-1500," *SLSRS*, pp.183-190

²⁶¹ Lorna Dewaraja, *The Muslims of Sri Lanka: One Thousand Years of Ethnic Harmony 900-1915*, Colombo, 1994, p.148

²⁶² R.J. B

²⁶³ Lorna Dewaraja, *The Muslim of Sri Lanka*, p.48

²⁶⁴ *Rajavaliya*, ed. By A.V. Suravira, Colombo, 1976, p.212

²⁶⁵ *Francois Valentijn's Description of Ceylon*, tr. and ed. By Sinnappa Arasaratnam, London, 1975, p.230

²⁶⁶ C.R. de Silva, "Muslim Traders in the India Ocean in the Sixteenth Century and the Portuguese Impact", in M.A.M. Shukri (ed) *Muslim of Sri Lanka*, 1986, pp. 147-166

Hindus was in the hands of the Muslims it was inevitable that the possible source of invasions of Sri Lanka would be by the Muslim rulers of South India. Further Sinhalese contenders for the throne also had to seek help from South India to satisfy their personal aspirations as it was the traditional source of help. It would inevitably enhance the Muslim interests in Sri Lanka.

Muslims in Sri Lanka Ports

The fourteenth century Italian traveler, Giovanni de Marignolli arrived by ship at the port of Perivils (Beruwala) in Sri Lanka on his way to China. Marignolli's account clearly shows that Beruwala was settled by Muslims. He states that the administrator at Beruwala was known as Coya Jhan.²⁶⁷ The name indicates that he was a Muslim chief. The account of Ibn Batuta shows that the Muslims were able to travel in any part of the country. In fact Ibn Batuta was entertained by a shipping magnate, named Ibrahim, whom he calls vizier, ruling the western seacoast from Galle to Colombo with 500 Abyssinian soldiers.²⁶⁸

The ports of the south and south-western coast of Sri Lanka became important in international commerce after the drift of the political centres to the south-western regions of the Island. Perhaps international trade could have been one of the important factors influencing the Sinhala rulers in the choice of capitals in the south-western regions. Ibn Batuta states that he journeyed from Dondra (dinavur) to Galle (quali) and that he was treated by the Muslim traders who resided in the towns between Colombo and Dondra. The fact that Galle had been a well established commercial centre by the fifteenth century is also attested by *Sandesa poems and Cheng-ho's trilingual inscription of Galle*.²⁶⁹ It was a town with wide streets beside which were located shops of all kinds. Dondra was another important commercial port in the south where Muslim traders flourished in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Dondra inscription of Parakramabahu II (1236-70) contains instructions to prevent avoidance of customs duties at the port by unscrupulous traders. Weligama was settled by another group of Muslims whose interests were exclusively commercial. All of them spoke Tamil. In this connection we may note the Portuguese writer Barbosa's statement that many a Malabar 'Moor' came to live in Sri Lanka as it was luxuriant and healthy. Several other ports such as Chilaw, Wattala, Beruwela, and Bentota too turned out to be Muslim settlements of significance in the island's foreign trade. According to the *Sandesa poems* of the fifteenth century, large groups of sailing ships could be observed frequently from several points of the western coast.

The *Sandesa poems* also indicate that Beruwala was a Muslim trading centre in the fifteenth century with many beautiful mansions and large shops.²⁷⁰ According to Duarte Barbosa "All the merchants

²⁶⁷ H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, p.357; Mahdi Hussain, *The Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Baroda: Gaekard's Oriental Series, No. CXXII, 1953, p.223

²⁶⁸ Albert Gray (tr.), "Ibn Batuta in the Maldives and Ceylon" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*, Extra Number 1882, pp 57-58; H.A.J. Hulugalle, *Ceylon of the Early Travellers*, Colombo: Wesley Press, 1969, p.41; Sirima Kiribamune, "Muslim and the Trade of the Arabian Sea with Special reference to Sri Lanka from the birth of Islam to the Fifteenth Century," *SLSRS*, p.179.

²⁶⁹ *Paravi Sandesaya*, Ed. by Alavisi Sabihela, Colombo, 1967, v.84; The Galle Trilingual Inscription, edited in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization of China*, Vol.IV, Pt. III, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, p.532.

This document is inscribed in Persian, Tamil, and Chinese. It also refers to offerings to deities of the Buddhist, Hindu and Muslims.

²⁷⁰ This information is taken from Ports in ancient Sri Lanka, W.I.Siriwira, "Pre-colonial Sri Lanka's Maritime Commerce with Special Reference to its Ports," Senke Bandaranayake Et. Al (eds), *Sri Lanka and the Silk Road of the Sea*, Colombo: Cultural Fund, 2003., pp.117-126

had given to good living. They go naked from the waist up and below they are clad in silk and cotton garments; they wear much gold.”²⁷¹ The foreign trade in the Kingdom of Kotte and other parts of the country at the dawn of the sixteenth century was largely the monopoly of the Mappila merchants of the Malabar Coast. The chief Mappila Merchant, Cherian Marakkar, and his brother controlled the trade of Sri Lanka cinnamon. The Muslim community in the western coastal area had become very prosperous at the beginning of the sixteenth century. according to the reports of the Portuguese writers of the sixteenth century ports of Sri Lanka, were crowded with Moors, who monopolized the trade.²⁷² Queyroz states ‘The priests found the presence of the Moors a hindrance to conversion, for the Sinhalese argued that it was better to become a Muslim than to become a Christian, because the Moors were treated with great respect, entertained in the houses of the Portuguese and even appointed as headmen of main villages.’²⁷³

This shows that Roman Catholic missionary activities and the Portuguese administration were the main factors which retarded the expansions of Islam. The Muslim community appeared so prosperous that Emerson Tennet²⁷⁴ suspected that “had it not been for the timely appearance of the Portuguese power in the island, Sri Lanka, might have been a Muhammadan kingdom under the rule of some Arab adventurer.”²⁷⁵ There was a tendency for the warlike and piratical Moors of mainland India to have harried the coasts of Sri Lanka from time to time. As we mentioned earlier a foretaste of that possibility was displayed by the invasion led by Kadirayan in Dharma Parakramabahu’s reign.²⁷⁶

On ewriter observes that “Muslim trade with Sri Lanka presents with an undulating pattern of growth culminating in an almost monopoly situation by the end of the fifteenth century.²⁷⁷ The Sinhalese literary sources clearly show that the Muslims were very much a part of the Sri Lankan landscape in the fifteenth century.²⁷⁸ This was the situation when the Portuguese arrived in the Island in 1506.

Buddhism and Islam

For Muslims, there exist two kinds of non-Muslims: kafir (non-believers in Islam) and ahl al-kitab (people of the book). Kafir, such as Buddhists and Hindus, were expected to embrace to Islam as Islam is Allah’s religion for all humanity beings. It should be proclaimed. The Muslims should invite people to join it wisely and through appropriate preaching and friendly discussions. It is a duty of all mainstream Muslims. Conversion to Islam is comparatively easier as one has only to accept that Allah is the only God and Muhammad is the only prophet than conversation to Christianity, which is a long, drawn process. Once converted to Islam it was hard to renounce the faith. People of the book include Jews, Christians, and followers of Zeroastrianism. These people need only to submit to Muslim political authority to keep their

The *Island*; Web site <http://64.233.161.104/search?q=cache:0eEFVzEEHw8J:members.tripod.com/~hettiarachchi/prt.html+uslim+traders-ocean+ixteenth+century&hl=en&start=7>

²⁷¹ Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa. An Account of the Countries bordering on the India Ocean and their Inhabitants* written by Duarte Barbosa and completed about the Year 1518 A.D., Translated and edited by M.L. Dames, London, Hakluyt Society, Vol.II, 1921 p.110

²⁷² Emmerson Tennent, *Ceylon*, Vol1, London, 1859 p.541.

²⁷³ Dewaraja, *The muslim of Sri Lanka* p.61; Queyroz, *Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, tr. by S.G. Perera, Colombo: 1930, p. 742

²⁷⁴ Ibid

²⁷⁵ Lorna Dewaraja, *The Muslims of Sri Lanka* p.49

²⁷⁶ P.E.Pieris, *Ceylon: The Portuguese Era*, Vol. 1, Dehiwala, 1992, pp.42-43.

²⁷⁷ Sirima Kiribamune, op. cit.; C.R. de Silva, “Muslim Traders in the Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth Century and the Portuguese. Impact,” in M.A.M. Shurkri (ed) *Muslims of Sri Lanka: Avenues to Antiquity*, Beruwala, 1986, pp.113-127.

²⁷⁸ *Kokila Sandesaya*, v.59; *Gira Sandesaya*, v. 104.

original faith, and become '*dhimni*' (a "protected" non-Muslim). However, most Islamic rulers in Central Asia and India allowed *dhimni* status to Buddhists in Central Asia and Hindus in India.

One who examines the expansion of Islam in Asia would note that Islam found it comparatively easy to convert buddhist nations compared to Hindus or Christian nations. The former Buddhist nations in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia are among those that embraced Islam with much ease.²⁷⁹ The Islamic rule in many parts of Hindu India is more than twelve centuries old. But it is the Buddhist areas in India, such as Sind, Punjab and Bengal that embraced Islam most easily. Scholars emphasize the ultimate reality of God and the illusoriness of the perceived world—was more appealing to the Buddhists in Bangladesh and Indonesia than the earlier, more austere, and law-bound versions of Islam.²⁸⁰

Conversion to Islam in Sri Lanka.

The Muslim traders, who were predominantly male, married Sinhalese and Tamil women in Sri Lanka. They were expected to be converted to the Islamic faith as a condition of their marriage to Muslim men. According to Queyroz the Muslim Qazis were called to propagate Islam among the Sinhalese but failed in their endeavour as a result of the Portuguese presence in the country.²⁸¹ Islam being a missionary and exclusivist religion spread fast in Asia were converted to Islam. Sri Lanka which was under the Portuguese were kept out of such an experience.

The tendency of the Muslim was when the trading communities grew rich and influential to acquire lands to build mosques, warehouses and residences."then they sent for mullahs or religious teachers first from West Asia and later from South India and thus preserved their cohesion and integrity as a separate group"²⁸² The conversion of Indonesia was initiated by the Indian Muslim traders who went for trade in the first instance. From that point onward the converted Muslim took the responsibility of evangelism in to their hands. The influx of Muslim trading communities from the Coromandel and Malabar coasts during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries also strengthened the Muslim presence in the port of Sri Lanka. The increase of the Islamic community in Sri Lanka in this period was slow and was caused by migration and conversion.

Conclusion

The first Portuguese who arrived in the neighbouring Malabar Coast found the trade in the Indian Ocean dominated by Muslims. Sri Lanka's foreign trade and the international sea borne commerce underwent many changes with the advent of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean in the 16th century. It was the commercial or economic interests together with the religion of the Portuguese, which paved the way for the transformation of the island's political and social structure.

The succession to the throne has always been a matter of dispute in the kingdom of Kotte. It never had an accepted rule of succession.²⁸³ This was the most vulnerable time in the history of the Sinhalese kingdom. There were disputes over the succession between Brothers, fathers and sons. As we noticed earlier some of them were willing to go to the extent of renouncing their ancestral religion merely for the sake of receiving aid from the Portuguese. Therefore it is logical that the contenders to the throne of Sri Lanka would consider to give in even to the Islamic rulers in South India in order to secure the kingdom .

²⁷⁹ B.N.Puri, Buddhism in Central Asia, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited . 1987.

²⁸⁰ Phil Parshall, Bridges to Islam, Grand Rapids, MI 1983

²⁸¹ Lorna Dewaraja , the Muslims of Sri Lanka. P.57.

²⁸² Lorna Dewaraja. The Muslim of Sri Lanka , p.57

²⁸³ G.P.V. Somaratna "rules of Succession to the Throne of Kotte", Aquinas Journal, 8, 1991, pp. 17-32.

The Portuguese regulated the commerce of the Indian Ocean after they arrived in the east. From the early times the Muslim ships tried to challenge this Portuguese domination. The Samorin of Calicut who was aided by the Muslims found it difficult to confront the Portuguese in the open seas. In the 1590s the Portuguese king ordered that all temples and mosques in the Portuguese domains be destroyed. The Muslim traders also avoided the areas under Portuguese control thus restricting their influx from South India to Sri Lanka. The Portuguese continued to seize ships of the Muslims sailing in the Indian Ocean.²⁸⁴ The Portuguese presence in the Island therefore retarded the growth of the Muslim population in Sri Lanka in the sixteenth century.

At the same one has to emphasize the fact that the majority of the Portuguese writers when referring to the Muslims in Sri Lanka and in the India Ocean region mention them that they were unarmed traders. It was the Portuguese who entered the field armed and disturbed this atmosphere. One should not think that the Portuguese deliberately attempted to thwart Islam in Sri Lanka in order to help Buddhism. On the contrary the Portuguese considered Buddhism a heathen religion. But the eventual result of their action in the Indian Ocean spared Buddhism in Sri Lanka. It was during the Dutch and the British periods that the Buddhists were able to reap the benefits of the Portuguese involvement.

Short Bibliography

Abeyasinghe, Tikiri, *Jaffna Under the Portuguese*, Colombo: Lakehouse, 1986.

Abeyasinghe, Tikiri, *Portuguese Regimentos on Sri Lanka*, Colombo: National Archives, ND.

Abeyasinghe, Tikiri, *Portuguese Rules in Ceylon*, Colombo: Lakehouse, 1966.

Bandaranayake Senake et al. (eds) *Sri Lanka and the Silk Road of the sea*, Colombo: Central Cultural Fund, 2003.

Barendse, R.J. "Traders and Port cities in the western Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth and seventeenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Revista de Cultura*, Jan-July 1991, pp.105-130

Boxer, C.R., *The Portuguese Seabone Empire, 1425-1825*, New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1969.

Candappa, E.C.T. and M.S.S. Fernandopulle, *Don Peter Felicitation Volumes*, Colombo: Don Peter Felicitation Committee, 1983.

De Silva, C.R. *Portuguese in Ceylon: 1617-1638*, Colombo : Apothecaries, 1972.

De Silva, C.R., "Algumas Reflexões sobre o Impacto Português na Relação entre os Singaleses Durante os Seculos XVI e XVII,"

²⁸⁴ C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825*, p.48

Oceanos, 34, April-June 1998, pp. 104-116.

De Silva C.R., Portugal – Sri Lanka: Some Comments on Recent Historiography, Paper submitted to the Workshop on Portugal – Sri Lanka Interactions, held in Colombo, on June 18, 2005.

De Silva, C.R., *Sri Lanka: A History*, Delhi: Vikas, 1987

De Silva, K.M.(ed) *University of Peradeniya: History of Sri Lanka*, Vol.II. 1995.

Dewaraj, Lorna, the Muslims of Sri Lanka: *One Hundred Years of Ethnic Harmony*, 900-1915, Colombo: Sri Lanka Islamic Foundation, 1994

Don Peter, W.L.A. *Education In Ceylon under the Portuguese*, Colombo: Catholic Press, 1978

Jayasuriya, Shihan de Silva, *Tagus to Taprobane*, Dehiwela:Tisara, 2001

Mc Gavran, Donald *Understanding Church Growth*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970

Pieris, Edmund, *Studies: Historical and Cultural*, Colomb: Catholic Press, 1978

Perera, S.G., *The Jesuits in Ceylon in the XVI and XVII centuries*, Maduraa: De Nobili Press, 1941.

Perera, S.G. *Historical Sketches*, Colombo: Catholic Press 1962.

Perniola, V. *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka: The Portuguese Period*, Dehiwela: Tisara, Vol, I, 1989.II,1991, III, 1991.

Pieris, Paul E. *Ceylon: Portuguese Era*, Second edition, vol. I, 1992. Vol. II, 1983

Quere, M., *Christianity in Sri Lanka under the Portuguese Padroado 1597-1658*, Colombo: Catholic Press, 1995.

Raghavan, M.D., *The Karava of Ceylon: Society and Culture*, Colombo: k.V.G.de Silva, 1961

Schwartz, Stuart B. (ed.) *Implicit Understanding : Observing, reporting and Reflecting on the encounter between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, Cambridge : University Press, 1994.

Shukri, M.A.M. (ed) *Muslims of Sri Lanka : Avenues to Antiquity*, Beruwla: Jamiah Naleemia Inst., 1986.

Somaratna, G.P.V. *Political History of the Kingdom of Kotte*, Nugegoda Depanee., 1975.

Strathern, Alan, "Theoretical Approaches to Sri Lanka and Early Portuguese Period" , *Modern Asian Studies* 38(10). pp 190-226.

Thambimuttu, Francis O. *A Profile of Ceylon Catholic Heritage*, New York:Maryknoll, 1961

Tennent, Sir James Emerson, *Ceylon*, two volumes, Sixth Edition Dehiwela: Tisara, 1977

Yule, Henry. *Cathay and the Way Thither*. 4 vols, London, 1913-16.

UNDERSTANDING "PARADISE": A SURVEY OF HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS.

Ravin D. Calder

Paradise is ambiguous in meaning. Non biblical speculations and confused understanding have caused the Sri Lankan church to wrongly apprehend it. This brief paper attempts to provide a biblical reflection toward regaining the meaning of paradise.

'Paradise' is a word that has been taken from the ancient Iranian language.³¹⁵ It may have originated from the eastern variety named Avestan,³¹⁶ in which are written, in a script ultimately derived from Aramaic or from the later southwestern variety of Old Persian.³¹⁷ Most scholars agree that the Old Persian word *pairi-daeza* means "enclosure," "park" or "garden with a old wall."³¹⁸ Its Hebrew equivalent פַּרְדֵּי (parades) is used to illustrate an orchard, enclosed garden, royal domain or estate.³¹⁹ Xenophon³²⁰ uses the Old Persian etymon, which is the source of the Greek word ΠΑΡΑΔΕΙΣΟΣ (paradeisos) to depict forest enclosure gardens or royal parks of the Persian kings.³²¹ The Later LXX translates 'garden of God' in Gen 2:8-10, 16, thus shifting the meaning from secular to religious. The word may have been assimilated into Jewish theology and tradition after the Babylonian exile. Both the Old and New Testament carry various variations of meanings to the word Paradise.

Paradise as a garden of Eden

³¹⁵ D.R.W. Wood, and I. Howard Marshall, *The New Bible Dictionary, 3ed.*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1962), 869

³¹⁶ Probably it means פַּרְדֵּי, "received knowledge" in Greek "the Zend Avesta, a holy book of Zoroaster, is indeed from 600 B.C. (or later), but its language is a branch of old Indo-Iranian and the word may easily have been borrowed by Solomon's wide ranging traders just as the few Greek words in Dan may have been borrowed before the Greek age of Alexander so this word may have been borrowed before the Persian age of Cyrus." R. Laird Harris Gleason L. Archer Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1980), 733-734.

³¹⁷ "Old Persian, a SW variety of Iranian appearing from the reign of Darius (522-486 B.C.E.) to that of Artaxerxes III (359-338), was one of the official languages the Achaemenid rulers of the Persian empire used for royal inscription". Freedman, David Noel, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 155.

³¹⁸ David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, (New York: Doubleday 1997), 155.

³¹⁹ פַּרְדֵּי king's forest (Neh: 2:8 RSV); פַּרְדֵּי garden (Ecc.2:5 RSV); פַּרְדֵּי an orchard (Song 4:13 RSV).

³²⁰ Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1,2,7; 1,3,14; 2,4. Other fourth-century historical works such as Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 4,467; 6.6; *Antiquities of the Jews* 7.347; 8.186; 9.225; 10,46, 226; 12.233; *Against Apion* 1.141 &c.

³²¹ Wenham, Gordon J., *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 1: Genesis 1-15*. Dallas, Texas; Word Books, Publishers, 1998), 61.

Paradise is used only three times in the Old Testament depicting garden,³²² but is found forty-seven times in the LXX, notably a term for the Garden of Eden.³²³ Eden is considered as a place of labour, harmony and a contented way of life. The garden was well-watered, green and fruitful in comparison to the arid and desolate landscape lived in by agrarian society.³²⁴ With its flourishing vegetation and tranquility, Eden was planted by God himself (Gen.2:8). Eden was regarded as an ideal for abundance, natural growth, human prosperity and God's favor (Gen 13:10; Is 51:3; Ezek 31:9; 36:35). Hence, it has always depicted perfection: "At a literal, physical level the garden is a place of life richly nourished, well attended to and appointed for the enjoyment of its human owners or residents. As such, it is a touchstone of such motifs as provision, beauty, abundance and the satisfaction of human need. Next to heaven, it is the preeminent image of human longing." Longing."³²⁵ The beauty of the Paradisiacal garden is an aesthetic ideal- "pleasant to the sight" (Gen 2:9).

The establishment of Eden for man is God's way of providing sustenance for him. The lushness of the Garden of Eden and its provisions for man's subsistence shows that poverty is not what God intended as a way of life for humans. Created humanity is required to cultivate and constantly maintain the garden (Gen 2:15). Hence, Eden is an image of human industry, vocation and striving.

Paradise is a place of harmony. In Eden the first humans were living in harmony with each other and with nature, including both plants and animals. When they were expelled from the garden due to disobedience, it not only caused them to lose unhindered communion with God, but also the harmony with the natural world. Adam and Eve lose more than a place—they also lose a spiritual and state of harmony.

Genesis 2 is a portrait of a radical choice and its consequence of eternal exile from the paradisiacal garden. "Two further motifs can be noted in connection with the Garden of Eden. In contrast to the earthly paradises of the classical tradition, this garden is not a place of inviolable retirement, but a place of continuous moral testing, as indicated by the presence of a forbidden tree in the middle of the garden. Related to this is the motif of the garden as a place of radical choice in the history of the world. Dominating our impression as we read Genesis 2 is our awareness that Paradise has been lost."³²⁶ This prototype of disobedience, losing of their intended place of living and exile can be seen in succeeding events of Israel's history:

"The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden is the archetype of all subsequent exile (Gen. 3:24). Paradise has been lost because of their sin, and now they must live as

³²² Songs 4:13; Neh 2:8 and Eccles 2:5

³²³ Green, Joel G; McKnight, Scot; Marshall, I. Howard; editors, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*. (Downer's Grove Illinois: Inter Varsity Press 1992), 381.

³²⁴ Aridity is described as "dry and thirsty land" (Ezek 19:13; Ps63:1).

³²⁵ Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 315.

³²⁶ Leland, *Biblical Imagery*, 316.

strangers in a land from which they have become alienated (Gen.3:17-19). Throughout the rest of the Bible, the state of God's people is one of profound exile, of living in a world to which they do not belong and looking for a world that is yet to come."³²⁷

"A leading branch of the literature of paradise is the garden of love, and the Bible does not disappoint us in the matter. The Garden of Eden already hints at the motif, inasmuch as Adam and Eve are the prototypical husband and wife, with God instituting marriage and sexual union as part of their garden existence (Gen 2:24-25)."³²⁸ Here paradisiacal motifs shift to romantic resemblance.

"The notion of a divine garden, paradigm of fertility, is mentioned elsewhere in the Bible (Gen. 13:10; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 36:35; Joel 2:3); a fragmentary passage in the Gilgamesh Epic (Pritchard, Texts, p. 89c) and a fuller passage in Ezekiel 28:11-19 speak of it jewel-breaking trees; the Ezekiel passage in a narrative and reflects a different version of the Eden story (cf., also Ezek. 31:5-9, 16-18)"³²⁹ This idea of paradise as a special enclosed fertile garden is not new among ancient near east traditions:

"It is interesting that there are these points of comparison between Mesopotamian tradition and Genesis, but the stories in which they occur are very different. However, many of the other motifs within Gen 2-3 do have oriental parallels. Sumerian tradition told of a paradise island on Dilmun at the head of the Persian Gulf (C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, *JNES* 41 [1982] 45-50), with an abundance of life-giving water springing out of the earth (Enki and Ninhursag, 55-59; (*ANET*), 38; p. Attinger, *ZA* 74 [1984] 1-52). Similarly, Ugaritic mythology also affirmed that El lived "at the sources of the two rivers, in the midst of the two oceans" (Aqht A.6.48, *ANET*, 152; cf. Wallace, *Eden Narrative*, 76). This shows that the idea of a well-watered paradise where the gods dwelt was a common motif in the ancient Orient.³³⁰ The divine garden is often the source of life-giving waters that refresh the earth. The land of Dilmun, the most celebrated example of the garden of the gods in Mesopotamian literature, is described in the Sumerian myth called *Enki and Ninhursag*.³³¹

The land is watered by the "waters of abundance" from the earth which gush forth to fertilize the land (lines 55-64; *ANET*, 38). IN Ugaritic myth, the high god El dwells "at the sources of the (two) rivers, in the midst of the (double) deep" (*CTA* 3.5.14-15, etc).³³²

³²⁷ See. Exile, T. Desmond Alexander, and Brian S. Rosner, editors, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press) 2000.

³²⁸ Leland, *Biblical Imagery*, 317.

³²⁹ Barnard J. Bamberger, "Paradise" *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Judaica Multimedia (Israel) Ltd, 1997.

³³⁰ Wenham, *WBC Vol. 1*, 66-67

³³¹ "Yet another paradise narrative is the Sumerian tale of "Enki and Ninhursag" (Pritchard, Texts, 37-41), which describes the land (or island) of Dilmun, east of Sumer, as a pure, clean, and bright land, where there is neither sickness nor death, and where the animals live in harmony. One episode in the narrative involves the sun-god's watering Dilmun with fresh water brought up from the earth, thus making it fertile. The earth-goddess Ninhursag gives birth to eight plants, which the water-god Enki proceeds to devour. This leads Ninhursag to curse Enki; this nearly causes the latter's death, but ultimately Ninhursag is made to heal him." Bernard, "Paradise" *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

³³² Freedman, *Anchor Bible*, 907

Tree of Life: A Symbolic Image of Paradise

The Tree of Life is used as a reflection of paradise: “Alternatively, or as a complementary interpretation, being barred from the tree of life pictures the perfection and bliss that the human race lost through its sinfulness. By definition, the death that God prophesied as the penalty for eating from the forbidden tree. The tree of life is a supreme image at once of edenic splendor and of paradise lost—an image of nostalgia and longing for a lost perfection.”³³³

The Tree of Life was situated in the center of the garden with the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This explicit location tells us its importance in the garden. In *Die Genesis*,³³⁴ A. Dillmann, points out that the tree of life is an essential mark of a perfect garden where God dwells, so that it is unlikely to be secondary either. Furthermore, in terms of the symbolism of this story, both trees correspond to items found in or near the center of Israelite worship.³³⁵ Non-biblical literature such as the Gilgamesh epic also mentions, that its hero found a plant in deep waters, which would confer “youth in old age” and finally lose it to a serpent.³³⁶

Trees, which are green and filled with fruits through summer drought, symbolized the life of God (Ps 1:3; Jer 17:8). The Candlestick in the tabernacle is formed in the shape represent of the tree of life. It was to symbolize the falling God’s life sustaining the twelve tribes of Israel (Exod 25:31-35; Lev 24:1-9).³³⁷ Such Biblical developments indicate the tree of life as an eschatological hope of everlasting life:

“But is the tree of life is an image of loss and nostalgia to which we look back, it is also an image of hope to which the Bible looks forward. It reappears at the end of the Bible in the visions of Revelation. In one of the letter to the seven churches, the Spirit promises, “To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Rev 2:7 RSV). It is an image of immortality and eternal life in heaven, a reward for those who have their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 22:14; see also Rev 7:14) and something denied to any who take away from “this prophecy” (Rev 22:19).”³³⁸

In Revelation, the tree of life is seen as the regaining of the lost paradise, which was originally intended for man. And in Ezekiel’s vision of the river of paradise we observe a parallelism. In Revelation the tree of life is the supreme image of future splendor and paradise regained. In final appearance in the Bible occurs in the last chapter, as part of the combined city and garden that climaxed the heavenly vision: “Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing... through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its

³³³ Leland, *Biblical Imagery*, 889

³³⁴ A. Dillmann, *Die Genesis*. Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch. 6th ed. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1892, 54-55pp.

³³⁵ Wenham, *WBC, Vol. 1*, 62

³³⁶ The Epic of Gilgamesh, 11: 268-89

³³⁷ See C.L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah*, ASOR DS2 (Missoula: Scholars Press 1976) 174-81.

³³⁸ Leland, *Biblical Imagery*, 890

twelve kinds of fruit, ... and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev 22:1-2 RSV; cf. Ezek 47:12). With the death of death, access to the tree of life is restored.³³⁹ "The description of the "tree of life" is from Ezekiel 47:12, which speaks of many trees bearing fruit each month (as opposed to one season a year) and leaves for healing. John modifies Ezekiel's "trees" to incorporate an illusion to paradise: although treated elsewhere in Jewish literature (e.g., 4 Ezra), the "tree of life" is from Genesis 2:9. Later Jewish traditions further expounded the figure. (Some Jewish texts spoke of twelve trees, one for each month, in a four-river paradise, weaving together features of Ezekiel and Genesis in a manner similar to Revelation. Jewish texts frequently connected the twelve months with the twelve tribes and constellations, but John avoids astrological associations here, as elsewhere."³⁴⁰

The Paradise is regained by overcoming hardship and conflicts in day-to-day Christian life. "Overcoming" (especially a military or athletic image of conquest or victory) here involves persevering in the face of conflict and hardship; this is all that the Lord requires to secure ultimate victory. Although the "tree of life" was used to symbolize the law in later Jewish teaching, this vision alludes to Genesis 2:9 and a restoration of paradise (on which cf. 2 Cor 12:2-4). Each of the promises in these oracles points out, "According to Revelation 21-22."³⁴¹ TO THIS Luke Keefer points out, "According to Revelation 2:7, the overcoming church will eat from the tree of life in the eschatological garden. Sin and death through redemption are now cast out of human experience. The way is open for the faithful to return to the garden of God. Paradise is the Christian's final home."³⁴²

Paradise in terms of the Promised Land

The Land is considered as one of the major themes in Old Testament. Covenant loyalty and commitment to the law are the means of keeping land in Israel's possession. The book of Deuteronomy claims Land was given to Israel because of pure grace of God and for Israel's common good.³⁴³ "Eden, Canaan, Heaven: the sequence lists the gifts of a loving providence, contingent, as the Deuteronomic tradition puts it so well, on acceptance and obedience."³⁴⁴ The nature of the land and its abundance reminded them of Eden, God's 'first' garden supplied by grace to Adam and Eve. "The often repeated description of the land as 'flowing with milk and honey' reveals that the land which the Israelites are about to enter is a new paradise (see 6:3; 11:9-12; 26:9, 15; 27:3; 31:20; cf. Exod. 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev. 20:24; Num. 13:27; 14:8; 16:13-14; for parallels in Ugaritic, see *ANET*, p. 140; P.D. Miller, *Int* 23, p. 457). This is a theological rather than an agricultural point; Israel's land is so good because it is long-awaited gift of God in fulfillment of his promise. The promise of land guarantees the restoration of intimacy with God in terms, which recall the description of Eden. The theology of land in the early part

³³⁹ Leland, *Biblical Imagery*, 890

³⁴⁰ Craig S. Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 819.

³⁴¹ Keener, *BCNT*, 769

³⁴² Luke L. Keefer, "Paradise." Walter A. Elwell ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 2000), 590.

³⁴³ Deu. 1:20-21, 25, 35; 3:18, 20; 4:1, 40; 6:1, 10, 18; 9:5; 10:11; 11:9, 21; 12:1; 19:8; 26:3, 15; 27:3; 30:20; 31:7, 21, 23; 34:4

³⁴⁴ Leland, *Biblical Imagery*, 316

of the OT anticipates the final chapters of the Bible, where the apostle John describes the new heaven and earth in language taken from Genesis 1-3.”³⁴⁵

The emphasis on the land with definite boundaries and sacredness remind us of the Old Persian word *pari-daéza*, a King’s estate. As paradise land was a designated place, where God’s presence continually dwelt. Thus, it was called land of the Lord³⁴⁶ and should be kept without defilement of collective sin (Jos 22:19; Is. 14:2). Unclean people such as gentiles have no inheritance (Hos 9:3). “The Promised Land of OT Israelite history is sacred space for the OT Jews. In fact, the Mishnah makes explicit what is probably implied the OT- that the degrees of sacred space in the temple, with lesser sanctity encircling the holy of holies, is a microcosm of how the Israelites regarded their own land encircled by neighboring countries (*Mishnah Kelim* 1:6-9). The Promised Land is a sacred space that one enters and leaves; there is even a hint that it is watched by angelic guardians (Josh 5:13-15). To the Hebrew imagination the land is a place of blessing that is sanctified by divine election and presence. The sanctity of the temple radiates throughout the land, which in some sense partakes of the quality of paradise.”³⁴⁷

The new river of paradise in Ezek. 47 seems to flow towards the Dead Sea transforming barren and dead landscape completely: the waters of the dead sea become fresh with swarms of living creatures, trees flourish bearing fruits on its banks. “Renewal often starts on a very small scale, but owing to the Spirit it has its own inherent, multiplying power. It produces new fruit in a landscape that so far was dead. And this fruit is not only for food, but also for healing.”³⁴⁸ The immediate context suggested the return from exile: the land was considered as new paradise with abundance and returning from captivity to freedom, exiles saw the land as God’s renewed promise. “Undoubtedly this picture is of an eschatological nature. It points, far beyond the return of Israel from the exile, to the total renewal of the earth. The river of paradise and the marvelous effects brought by it signify the transformation of this world into the garden of paradise.”³⁴⁹

Paradise as a Sacred Place

Paradise is a sacred place. “Beyond these individual and localized sacred places, though, an incremental sequence of sacred places hold special meaning not simply for individuals but for the believing community through the ages. Paradise is the first sacred space that God creates for the human race... It is a place planted by God himself for the first human couple, a place in which God walks and converses with Adam and Eve.”³⁵⁰ It was a place of prelapsarian quality, pertaining to the condition of innocence before the Fall of Man. “Throughout the Bible, Paradise (the garden *in* Eden) retains its identity of being sacred: even though the place and the spiritual state associated with it have been lost,

³⁴⁵ Alexander, “Abraham” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.

³⁴⁶ {}

³⁴⁷ Leland, *Biblical Imagery*, 749

³⁴⁸ Klaas Runia “The Renewal of the Church.” Nicholls, Bruce J., editor, *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol.13 (Carlisle, California: Paternoster Periodicals, 1998), 86.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Leland, *Biblical Imagery*, 748

these remain a spiritual point of reference by which to define moral and spiritual perfection for people.”³⁵¹

The Tabernacle in the Pentateuch was regarded as sacred space. The holy of holies is the meeting and dwelling place of God. The presence of God made the tabernacle a representation of paradise. At the latter stages Solomon’s Temple and, after the exile, Ezekiel’s Temple became the focal point of paradise: “ While specific references to hope are found most frequently in Psalms and in the wisdom books , the prophetic corpus is also full of hope, although possibly as a tonic in the midst of doom-laden prophecies. Isaiah 40-66 has passages of sheer hopefulness which presuppose a change in the whole political structure of the world; Ezekiel’s temple-centered vision points to a paradise and so interprets the present experience of a desolate Jerusalem as a foretaste of something wonderful. Joel and Jeremiah 31-33 speak of a new age of the Spirit.”³⁵²

Those concepts and images became the foundations of Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism:

“Echoing the story of the tabernacle, 2 Baruch 4:1-7 promises the eschatological revelation of the heavenly temple and paradise that God created but took away when Adam sinned. On Mt. Sinai God showed Moses the heavenly temple that was to serve as pattern. The Angelic Liturgy (4Q400-407) portrays the heavenly worship of angels as exemplary to the community and assumes a celestial sanctuary as well as the throne-chariot of God’s glory. *I Enoch* 46-48 describes a heavenly Messiah called the Righteous One , the Chosen One and the Son of Man. He is preexistent, heavenly being described in majestic symbol of power. He appears at the end of the age to reward the righteous and punish the evil. In the same way 4 Ezra 7:26-30 portrays the end of the age and declares that God’s eschatological promises, including the city, the land and his Son, the Messiah, will be revealed.”³⁵³

Abraham’s bosom

Theologically Abraham’s Bosom is identified with paradise. Since Israel had no immediate access to the garden at history’s origin or conclusion, paradise is some-times called ‘Abraham’s Bosom’.³⁵⁴ The Jewish understanding of the term “Abraham’s bosom” is very similar to the Christian view. “Adda bar Ahaba ‘sitting in the third century, is said to be ‘sitting in the bosom of Abraham,’ which means that he had entered paradise .”³⁵⁵ Dr. Guy P. Duffield says, “When Lazarus died he went immediately to “Abraham’s Bosom,” which was the name the Jews gave to the abode of the departed faithful.”³⁵⁶ This term derives from Hebrew and Greek and carries the meanings of a warm, secure place in which one lies

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Alexander, “Death,” New dictionary of Biblical Theology.

³⁵³ Martin, “Angels” Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments, (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter Varsity Press 2000,c 1998).

³⁵⁴ Keefer, Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, 590.

³⁵⁵ Kaufmann Kohler, “Abraham Apocalypse of” The Jewish Encyclopedia.

³⁵⁶ Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, Foundations of Pentecostal Theology.(Los Angeles, California. L.I.E.F. Bible College, 1983), 513

or is carried (e.g., Num 11:12; Ruth 4:16; Is 40:11; 49:22; Mic 7:5; Jn 1:8; 13:23).³⁵⁷ The Jewish Sheol of grave is the Hebrew abode of the dead of departed spirits, conceived as a subterranean region. However, classical Pentecostalism separates Abraham's Bosom from heaven, hell and Sheol. Further, Guy Duffield says, "Jesus did not go into the abode of the wicked in Sheol or Hades, but the part known as 'Abraham's Bosom'"³⁵⁸

In the Bible, the phrase of 'Abraham's Bosom' is mentioned twice in Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31). Here the image is a secure place of high honor and is a vast contrast to Hades (Lk 16:23). Both places are distinguished from each other, and separated by a great gulf that cannot be crossed between the two (Lk 16:23,26). In Jewish understanding, "A place is reserved for every Israelite in both *Gan Eden and Gehinnom*. Before being assigned to their proper abode, the wicked are shown the place they might have occupied in Heaven, and the righteous, the place they might have occupied in Hell (Mid. Ps. 6:6: 31:6)."³⁵⁹ In 4 Ezra 7:36-38 the author presents "paradise" as a place of "delight and rest" opposite the pit of "hell". This may provide evidence of a tradition similar to which Jesus draws upon in Luke 16:19-31.³⁶⁰

"In Matt 8:11 and the parable of the rich fool, heaven is termed "Abraham's bosom" and is probably to be understood as a place of abundant eating and drinking (Luke 16:22-26). Other rabbinic stories portray Abraham as the founder of inns for travelers (Gen. Rab. 39:14), the inventor and teacher of grace after meals (Sota 10a-b), and the missionary host who insists that his guests praise the God of Israel for their meal or pay cash for it (Gen. Rab. 49:4)."³⁶¹

Early church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen thought Christ descended to Hades in 1 Peter 3:19 for the conversion of the Old Testament saints and righteous pagans.³⁶² It was

³⁵⁷ The origin of the imagery is much discussed, but it probably combines the idea of John 13:23 of a guest's place of honor at a banquet, when the guest would recline next to the table with his head near or touching the host (cf. Jn 21:20) with the idea of child lying in a parent's bosom of lap (see Jn 1:18, where Jesus is in his Father's bosom)." Leland, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 5. "NT references to "lying close to the breast of Jesus" or in the "bosom" of Abraham (John 13:23; Luke 16:22) are best understood as references to the position of a diner reclining in a normal position to the right of the person named and probably sharing the same couch; such a position to the right of the host is a position of honor." David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 653. "(Luke 16:22,23) refers to the custom of reclining on couches at table, which was prevalent among the Jews, an arrangement which brought the head of one person almost into the bosom of the one who sat or reclined above him. "To be in Abraham's bosom" thus meant to enjoy happiness and rest (Matt.8:11; Luke 16:23) at the banquet in Paradise. M.G. Easton, "Abraham's bosom" *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Third Edition*. Harper & Brothers, 1903.

³⁵⁸ Duffield, *Foundations*, 516.

³⁵⁹ Bernard, "Paradise" *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

³⁶⁰ Green, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 307

³⁶¹ Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 301

³⁶² "The scope of the preaching was extended beyond the OT saints by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, who were also the first to refer to 1 Pet 3:19 in connection with the descent to Hades (see Dalton 1965:16-20). Clement included righteous pagans alongside the OT saints (Str. 6.6.37-53), while Origen thought also of the conversion of sinners in Hades (Princ. 2.5), as 1 Pet 3:19 must imply, if taken seriously as reference to the descent. Some other Greek Fathers followed Origen (Dalton 1965: 18-19), but the prevalent view in the Latin church

widely believed that Christ brought the OT saints out of Hades and led them up to paradise or heaven though this was denied by Tertullian in the interests of his view that before the last judgment only the Christian martyrs go to heaven, while the rest of the righteous dead remain in Abraham's bosom in Hades (*Deanim.58*)."³⁶³ The primitive view was that the dead left Hades along with Christ and ascended to heaven with him in his ascension. Multitudes of dead were bodily resurrected and Mathew 27:52 was sometimes connected with this resurrection of the saints. " Since Christ's death and resurrection were the eschatological saving event, entailing the resurrection of all who believe in him, the Jewish hope of the resurrection of the righteous was thought to be fulfilled when Christ brought them out of Hades. After all, to be brought out of Hades was to be raised from the dead , as it was for Christ himself."³⁶⁴ The modern theologians tend to understand paradise and heaven to be synon. "Because of the distinction in Jesus 'parable between Abraham's bosom and Hades (or hell), the term has been used as such in Western literature (Jeffrey, 11). The image also found its way into a well-known spiritual, "Rock a My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham," with essentially the same meaning."³⁶⁵

Paradise was believed to be a place for the departed souls, where they will exist in cons ious intermediate state between their physical deathe and bodily resurrection, John Wesly sees Paradise as place of preparation of the Saints: "But as happy as the souls in paradise are,they are preparing for far greater happiness.For paradise is d it is there the spirits of just men are made perfect. It is in heaven only that there is the fullness of joy ; the pleasures that are ar God's right hand for evermore."³⁶⁶

Today is Paradise?

The Lord Jesus told the thief on the cross that he would be in paradise with him that very dau (Luke 23:43) . Jesus made this promise to the thief not simply to comfort a dying man, but to show he rewards faith and that even at the cross he is able save a perishing soul. " The substitution of Jesus for Barabbas portrays the fact that Jesus took the place of the sinner, an exchange made all the more poignant when Luke notes that the people "with one voice" shared in this unrighteous choice (23:18-25). Jesus' offer of paradise to the thief as they die together (23:43) shows that Jesus, despite his death, can offer life."³⁶⁷

" It is difficult to know precisely the referent in Jesus' use of the term paradise in Luke 23:43. Given its use in the LXX and especially in related Jewish literature, it is likely that it refers generically to heaven (e.g., *T Levi* 18:10-11; 2 Apoc. Bar. 4:3-7;cf.Gen 2:8-9; 13:10; Is 51:3), Fitzmyer has argued rather convincingly, however, that paradise in Luke 23:43 should be understood as a way of describing Jesus' "entrance into his glory" after death, implying a

continued to limit the soteriological benefit of the descent to those who were already believers before Christ".
Freedman , *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 159.

³⁶³ Freedman , *Anchor Bible Dictionary*,159.

³⁶⁴ Ibid

³⁶⁵ Leland , *Biblical Imagery*.5.

³⁶⁶ John Wesley 3ed. Vol.6. (Grand Rapids , Michigan:Baker Books, 1999,c1876),384.

³⁶⁷ Green *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 505.

heavenly existence (Lk24:26; cf. Acts 2:33; 5:31). In either case, the adverb today suggests that Jesus's and the thief's enjoyment of heaven would begin immediately subsequent to death."³⁶⁸

Some Christian traditions believe that Christ's spirit has descended to Hades³⁶⁹(1 Pet. 3:19 ; cf :6; Eph.4:9).

"The Peter passage says: 'He went and preach to the spirits in prison' (1 Peter3.19). In the early Church it came to be held that it was for this preaching that the descent was made. In the first elaboration of this line of this line of this line of thought the preaching was not to everyone in Hades. It was to the patriarchs, the saints, the prophets and the martyrs of the Old Testament. Jesus preached the gospel to them, and then led them with him out of Hades into heaven"³⁷⁰

The spirits mentioned in 1 Peter 3:19 are not dead and not the people who have died in the floods of Noah as commonly speculated. In the New Testament, the term "spirit" is never used to denote the dead. Most probably this may have referred to angels, who 'abandoned their own home' (Jude 6 cf. 2 Pet . 2:4).Some Jewish writings state that, these angels were kept in prison 1 Enoch 10-16;21).Christ wentto Hades (in this case) nottopreach the gospel to those to the spirit world (2 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 6:11-12; Col.2:15; Rev. 12: 7-11).³⁷¹ " The preaching of the gospel to those now dead (1 Pet. 4:6), probably does not indicate an action of Jesus, but the preaching of the gospel to people who believed and then died, but who still have the same hope as the living Christians Peter is writing to." ³⁷² The original intention of Ephesians 4:9 is to state the earthly incarnation of Christ as a lowly servant and the humiliation of the cross (Phil 2:7) or to emphases that Jesus was really and truly dead.³⁷³

The second assumption is that Jesus was not in heaven until his ascension. Jesus' prevention of Mary touching him, in John 20:17 drawn as a confirmation to this argument. Moreover, it is a contradiction to also Thomas to touch him (John 20:24). Here the issue is not touching but holding on to Jesus physically to keep him from leaving.³⁷⁴ 'Father into your hands I commit my spirit,' (Like 23:46)have a vivid meaning.

Caught up into Paradise!

³⁶⁸ Green Joel G.; McKnight, Scot; Marshall , I. Howard ; editors , Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, Downer's Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press,1998,c1992

³⁶⁹or Hell. Gk {} meaning prison, jail, place of imprisonment, watch or guard.

³⁷⁰ William Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed. (London : Fontana, 1967), 127.

³⁷¹ This may have been during his ascension, for while this text does not tell us where this prison was, some Jews located it in the "second heaven" and thus on the way between earth and the heaven where God dwells. Whatever the case, in the end of this section in 1 Peter Christ is in heaven with all spiritual beings subject to him . "Walter C. Kaiser, Hard Saying of the Bible . (Downers Grove, IL. Inter Varsity, 1997), 715.

³⁷² *Ibid* 488.

³⁷³ Keener, *BC N T*, 547.

³⁷⁴ GK {} Lit. ' Jesus said to her, Do not hold on to me, for I am not ascended to the Father.'

In 2 Cor. 12:2-4 Paul wrote of his experience ³⁷⁵ of being caught up into paradise. Moreover, describes Paradise as the third heaven. "What becomes a difficult question for scholars is one that centers on Paul's intended meaning behind his use of {}, "to the third heaven." A survey of extant literature does not really answer the question. The New Testament is relatively silent concerning the number of heavens in Jewish cosmology." ³⁷⁶ In the New Testament two Greek plurals "{}" ³⁷⁷{}³⁷⁸ have been used to the Hebrew usage of {}, samayim, "heavens" and the similar usage in LXX. ³⁷⁹ It is interesting to note another term {}, "heaven of heavens" in Old Testament. ³⁸⁰

' In Ps.63:33 the psalmist describes God as riding upon the "heaven of heavens" This verse has led Hughes (see 432-34), who builds upon Bengel to hold that Paul's reference to the third heaven is in line with the threefold division in the Old Testament (cf. Neh 9:6; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chron 2:6; 6:18; Ps 148:4; also see C.R. Schoonhoven, *The Wrath of Heaven* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966] 64). In this threefold division there is the atmospheric heaven, a stellar heaven (or firmament) and the limitless, or spiritual, heaven, where God is located (Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, 77-78; Hughes, *ibid.*). If this evaluation is correct, then we could say that Paul ascended to the highest heaven." ³⁸¹

But this conclusion is not certain, for there were other suggestions of the number of heavens. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* suggested that the number is seven. "They generally picture Heaven and Hell each divided into seven sections; souls are assigned to the several sections in accordance with the level of their merits or the heinousness of their sins." ³⁸² However, the number of heavens in Apocalyptic and rabbinic Jewish literature varies from five, seven or even ten.

"At the time of Paul and in Jewish antiquity, the idea of a sevenfold division of heaven was becoming popular. This concept can be found in T. Levi (3:1), 2 Enoch (8-22) and Asc. Isa. (9). We also can locate the idea of seven heavens in rabbinic literature, such as the Hag. 11b (see Pesiq. R. 5; Midr. Ps. 92; 'About R. Nat 37; Pirke R. El. [154b]; see H. Traub TDNT 5:5, 11-12). But three and seven are not the only numbers considered. The numbers five (see 3 Apoc. Bar. 11:1, "And

³⁷⁵ {}, "that was caught up to paradise." In this verse Paul has changed the aorist participle {} (12:2) to the aorist passive indicative of {}, namely, {}. But we must make note of how both uses of the verb, as well as {}, "give" (Found in 12:7 as {}, "was given to me"), reflect passivity on Paul's part (the passive is also seen in 12:12{})." Ralph P. Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary, volume 40:2 Corinthians*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1998), 403.

³⁷⁶ Ralph P. Martin, *World Biblical Commentary, Volume 40: 2 Corinthians*, (Dallas Texas Word Books Publisher, 1998), 403.

³⁷⁷ Thirty six times, Matt. 5:12, 16, 45; 6:1, 9, 7:11, 21; 10:32f; 12:50; 16:17, 19; 18:10, 14, 19; 19:21; Mk. 11:25; 12:25; 13:25; Lk 10:20; 12:33; 18:22, 2 Co. 5:1 Eph. 1:10; 3:15, 6-9; Phil 3:20; Col 1:5, 16, 20; Heb 8:1; 9:23; 12:23; 1 Pet. 1:4.

³⁷⁸ Seven times, Matt. 3:16; Heb. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3: 5, 7, 10, 12; Rev. 12:12

³⁷⁹ In LXX, "{}" six times, Ps. 2:4; 88:3; 113:11; Job 16:19; Wis. 9:16; Dn. 3:17 and "{}" nineteen times, Deut. 32:43; Tob. 8:5; Ps. 8:5; Ps. 18:2; 32:6; 49:6; 67:9; 68:35; 88:6, 12; 95:11; 96:6; 101:26; 148:4; Odes 2:43; 8:59; Isa 44:23; 49:13; Ezek 1:1; Dan 3:59

³⁸⁰ Deut. 10:14; 1 Ki. *:27; 2 Chr. 2:6; 6:18; Neh. 9-6

³⁸² Bernard, "Paradise" *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

taking me from this, the angel led me to the fifth heaven”) and ten (2 Enoc20:3b, “and on the tenth heaven”) are also suggested as identifying the levels of heavenly existence.”³⁸³

These different accounts complicate the identification of the number of heaven in Paul’s mind at the time of writing. Three heavens seem to be good possibility, but it is beyond our grasp. Paul’s literary style gives us another possibility that the number could be three:

‘The closing point of the preceding paragraph can be seen by Paul’s use of {}, “up to.” At first Plummer thinks that this “improper preposition” is not enough to prove that the third heaven is, in Paul’s mind, the highest (343, 344). But Tasker is correct to conclude (and Plummer later comes to a similar conclusion) that it would seem illogical for Paul to write of such blessedness if he if he were not in the ultimate heaven (171). That is, Paul would be open to the criticism that his vision and revelation were inadequate if the Corinthians believed there to be seven heavens and Paul only “Journeyed” to number three. This argument was observed long ago by Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. 2,30,7). Thus, logic dictates that {}, in all probability, was used by Paul to show that he-whether in the body or out of it-was raptured up to the highest heaven, namely, the third heaven. This conclusion is also supported in light of the use of {}, as found elsewhere in the New testament. When used with the genitive, the preposition denotes “as far as” (Moule, *Idiom Book*, 85; BGD, 355). While one could argue that “as far as” does not say with certainty that Paul had reached the limit, our assumption appears to be the position with the least questions left unanswered. The use of {} in the New Testament (Acts1:8; cf. *Ps.Sol* 17:14) suggests that a limit had been reached. Also, in light of our preceding discussion, it seems that Paul needed to reach the zenith if he was to retain his credibility. Moreover as we shall see in 12:4, the idea of “paradise” which is to be equated with the “third heaven” (Zmijewski, *ibid*, 339, but denied by prumn, *Diakonia* 1: 650) suggests even more that Paul had reached the upper level. From our viewpoint, we see Paul as probably thinking of a threefold division of heaven.”³⁸⁴

Luke L. Keefer sees Paul’s paradisiacal experience as related to the intermediate state of dead. “Paul’s glimpse of paradise (2 Cor.12:4) likely refers to the intermediate state. If so, it is one source of Paul’s confident that Christ was present among the righteous dead, even though he does not relish the unnatural state of death (2 Cor. 5:1-10). Yet it is quite possible that the dead in Christ more clearly see the paradise at history’s conclusion than do earth-bound believers.”³⁸⁵

Eschatological Implications

Paradise is seen as the eschatological Garden of Eden. The old borrowed Persian word emphasizes an enclosed space designated for growing. “The word also came over into Hebrew. In both Greek and Hebrew the emphasis seems to be upon what grows in a designated space; whether this be fruit trees, timber for the king, or the decorative plantings of a park. In the Septuagint, {} was used for the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8; 13:10; Ezek 31:8). In Isa 51:3 , the promised future restoration involves

³⁸³ Martin, WBC, Vol.40: 2,402.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 402-403.

³⁸⁵ Keefer, {} *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 590.

the wilderness becoming like Eden, the “garden [LLX:{}] of the Lord.” In time this becomes, through reflection on the Genesis account, a hope for an eschatological reversal of the expulsion from the garden (T. *Levi* 18:110-11; Rev 2:7; 22).³⁸⁶ Development of the Jewish concept of Paradise can be identified with the Garden of Eden.

“The biblical Garden of Eden attracted non-Jewish conceptions of a paradisiac garden. The development of “Paradise” within Judaism was aided by the image of a special garden, Eden, free of any trouble or inconvenience, in which the human and divine were close and collegial, in which every tree was “pleasant to the sight and good for food” (Gen. 2:8), and from which flowed four rivers (Gen. 2:10-14). Mixed with these images were the following concepts: the Isaianic words that Zion will become like Eden and the garden of the Lord (Isa 51: 3), that God’s people will be as a watered garden (Isa 58:11), and his planting (of special trees in the desert [Isa 58:11], and his planting (of special trees in the desert [Isa 41:18-19]) for his glory (Isa. 60:13); Jeremiah’s vision that the righteous are those whom God will plant in the promised land in faithfulness (Jer. 32:41). Related images are Ezekiel’s images of the garden of God, the trees of Eden, and the trees by the waters (Ezek 31:8-9; cf. 36:35).”³⁸⁷

The idea of inclusion in God’s garden and universal peace between man and animals has been seeded in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. Gordon Wenham shows the similarity between the eschatological paradise garden and Eden in Gen. 1: 29-30: “Westermann (1:163-64) cites other texts to show that there was a widespread belief in antiquity that man and the animals were once vegetarian. The prophets’ expectation that one day “the lion shall eat straw like the ox” (Isa 11:1; 65:25; cf. Hos 2:20 [2:18]) is often thought to reflect this idea; the new age will be a return to paradise.”³⁸⁸ Philip Almond sees human-animal coexistence and an Eden-like paradise as a New Age environmental utopia.³⁸⁹ Later development in Jewish concepts brought new understandings to the word {}. Jewish apocalyptic literature renders the novel meaning of a dwelling for the departed righteous. “A further development involved emphasizing the present (hidden) existence of this paradise and, eventually, a peopling of it already with the saints of the past (1 *Enoch* 60:8; 61:12; this last development is encouraged by developments in connection with the understanding of Hades noted at 16:23).”³⁹⁰ Finally this idea of a resting place for the departed righteous has been culminated in the ultimate resting place, that is, heaven. “This paradisaic bliss became a model for a hidden paradise, the immediate resting place of the righteous dead (1 *Enoch* 60:8; 61:12), but also of an ultimate resting place (2 *Enoch* 8-9; 2 *Bar.*

³⁸⁶ Nolland, John, *Word Biblical Commentary, volume 35c*. Luke 18:35-24:53. (Dallas Texas : Word Books, Publisher, 1998), 1152.

³⁸⁷ Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 155

³⁸⁸ Wenham, *WBC, Vol 1:33*.

³⁸⁹ “Be that as it may, remnants of apocalypticism remain in the ideal of the Utopia that would arise, of the Paradise that would return, were the beliefs and practices of the New Age to become dominant. Here, of course is the link between the New Age vision of Paradise regained on earth, a classic image of Western Utopian and Millenarian thought, and New Age concerns for the Environment. Underlying environmental concerns for both animate and inanimate nature is the vision of a world in which the earth, animals, and humankind coexist in fruitful and mutually beneficent harmony. Nature restored is Civilization rejected or at least radically reformed. “Philip C. Almond “Understanding the New Age” Nicholls, Bruce J., editor, *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Volume 16, Carlisle, CA: Paternoster Periodicals, 2000, c 1998.

³⁹⁰ Nolland, *WBC, Vol. 35c*, 1152

51:3).”³⁹¹ Likewise, “the intertestamental literature completes the transition of the word to a religious term. Human history culminate in a divine paradise.”³⁹² Christian apocalyptic literature contains the same understanding of Paradise. The Apocalypse of Peter, which is widely read and is even treated the same as scripture in the second to fourth century, talks about the same concept of a place for the late faithful. “Its popularity was no doubt due to the detailed information it gives as to the postmortem fate of human beings in paradise or hell. It comprises revelations made to the disciples by the risen Christ about the persecutions and downfall of antichrist, the Parousia, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment, the punishments of the wicked hell, and the rewards of the righteous in paradise. Peter receives a revelation of his own future life up to his martyrdom, and the work ends with an account of description of hell, in which twenty-one different types of sinners are seen each undergoing a punishment appropriate to their sin, is in the tradition of Jewish apocalyptic “tours of hell.”³⁹³ On Christian apocalyptic author goes far as identifying paradise experience with the day-to-day living as process of discipleship. “For the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, however, the life of heaven is not merely a future possession of the believer; it is experienced as one begins in discipleship, for the believers themselves become “a paradise of delight” through the knowledge of God and the experience of God’s favour (*Diogn.12.1*).”³⁹⁴

In New Testament times, the Jewish concept of paradise for the righteous has not been changed. In connection with a developing understanding of Hades (Luke 16:19-31), paradise came to be understood as the pleasant resting place of some of the privileged dead prior to the great day of resurrection. “Within the framework of such an understanding of paradise, clearly Jesus will be expected to go immediately after death to paradise (but probably not as an eschatological reopening of paradise, as maintained by Neyrey, *Passion*, 180-84). What is striking is that the criminal who sues for mercy will be there with him!”³⁹⁵ “In Jewish thought of Jesus’ day, the imagery of “paradise” was developed, using an Old Persian term, out of reflection about the Garden of Eden.

The Criminal in Golgotha was to spend eternity with Christ in Paradise. ‘The dwelling place of God exists on infinity—yet the dying thief on the cross next to Jesus heard him say, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).’³⁹⁶ These words give us a different understanding of the mercy of Christ. They show that even a criminal facing capital punished has the ability to partake of the blessing of paradise. In the midst of great torment Christ did not ignore the prayer for forgiveness. “The most obvious thing is the steadfastness of Jesus’ commitment to God in the midst of his sufferings. To that we may want to add the darkness, which pointed to the evil of what was transpiring, and possibly even go back to the promise of paradise and the prayer for the forgiveness of those responsible for Jesus being on the cross.”³⁹⁷ Luke 23:43 indicates another important paradigm shift of the Jewish concept of a temporary Intermediate state. The New Testament understanding of paradise is loaned from her Jewish heritage. Christ emphasizes that it is a lasting state. “The intermediate state was

³⁹¹ Hawthorne, *Dictionary of Paul and His letters*, 381.

³⁹² Keefer, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 590

³⁹³ Martin, “Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Writings” *Later New Testament & Its Developments*,

³⁹⁴ *Ibid*, “Heaven, New Heavens.”

³⁹⁵ Nolland, *WBC, Vol. 35c*, 1153.

³⁹⁶ Akers, John N., Armstrong, John H., and Woodbridge, John D., editor, *This We Believe*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing house) 2000, c2000

³⁹⁷ Nolland, *WBC, Vol.35c*, 1159

transformed by Jesus' emphases on being with him "today". No longer is paradise just an anticipatory condition awaiting the messianic presence at the end of the age. Those who die in faith will "be with Christ" (Phil.1:23). The dead in Christ will not experience life diminished, but life enhanced, as Jesus' words to Martha in John 11:23-26 imply."³⁹⁸

Finally paradise is seen as the ultimate culmination of the kingdom of God. The New Jerusalem, new earth and heaven will altogether constitute a paradise where resides the immediate presence of God. Luther links paradise to the ultimate establishment of the kingdom of God:

"How this will take place we do not know, except that it is promised that there will be the kind of heaven and earth in which there will be no sins, but that only righteousness and God's Children will dwell there . . . Here one may be concerned about whether the blessed will live in heaven or on earth. Here the text gives the impression that they will dwell or on earth, so that all heaven and earth will be a new Paradise, in which God resides. For God dwells not only in heaven but everywhere. Therefore elect will be where He is."³⁹⁹

Conclusion

This survey has sought to deepen awareness of the different etymological nuances attach to the word 'Paradise'. In the Scriptures, Paradise has been used as an iconographic affirmation of the accessibility of heaven. Debates over its location and state miss the intended point. The Persian etymology of 'Paradise,' denotes the royal gardens where only the privileged few are allowed to enter. The concluding verses of the Book of Revelation bring the same idea of a place or state of complete happiness, which will be given to the chosen.

³⁹⁸ Keefer, paradise, 590.

³⁹⁹ Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther's World of Thought*. Eng. Tr. By Martin H. Bertram (Saint Louis, Missouri, 1965) 30, 197-8.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akers, John N., Armstrong, John H., and Woodbridge, John D., Ed. *This We Believe*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000.

Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, ed. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press 2000.

Bornkamm, Heinrich, *Luther's World of Thought*. Eng. Tr. By Marin H. Bertram, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1965.

Barclay, William, *The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed*. London: Fontana, 1967.

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. Los Angeles, California: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983.

Easton M, G., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Third Edition*, Harper & Brothers, 1903.

Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 2001.

Freedman, David Noel, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, New York: Doubleday, 1997, 1992.

Green, Joel G.; McKnight, Scot; Marshall, I. Howard; editors, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 1998, c1992

Grudem, Wally, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Melody Press, 1980.

Kaiser, Walter C. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.

Keefer, Luke L., Walter A. Elwell ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 2000.

Marin, Ralph P., *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 40: 2 Corinthians*, Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1998.

Martin, Ralph P., Davids, Peter H., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000, c1998.

Nolland, John, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 35c: Luke 18:35-24:53*. Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1998.

Wenham, Gordon J., *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume I: Genesis 1-15*. Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1998.

ARTICLES

Bernard J. Bamberger, "Paradise" *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Judaica Multimedia (Israel) Lts, 1997.

Kaufmann Kohler, "Abraham, Apocalypse of" *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. Accessed by <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com>

Klaas Runia "The Renewal of the Church." Nicholls, Bruce J., editor, *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol. 13. Carlisle, California: Paternoster Periodicals, 2000, c1998.

Philip C. Almond "Understanding the New Age." Nicholls, Bruce J., editor, *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Volume 16, Carlisle, CA: Paternoster Periodicals, 2000, c1998.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR SECULAR SOCIETY

Vinodh Gunasekera

Introduction

If the mind has not beheld the fingerprints of its Maker through words crafted by created human reason, if the heart has not melted at His touch, and if the soul has not been stirred by the beauty of spiritual things on earth, then I think it is questionable as to whether an individual has truly been educated at all.

A significant difference between secular education and what is regarded as Christian education is that while Christian education believes that knowing about God is important, secular education is generally ambivalent or agnostic about God. Furthermore, while Christian education is interested in the spiritual formation of the individual, secular education usually encompasses the non-spiritual aspects of the individual. But education should not be separated along secular and spiritual lines, since human beings though complex are integrated, bearing in themselves the image of the living God. This paper is an effort to describe the essential facets of Christian education, taking into account the spiritual aspect of the individual, which is usually neglected in secular education.

At its core, education is the development, primarily through instruction, of a better understanding of the world that we live in (the formulation of a world-view) and the shaping of a reflective life practice (praxis) based on that understanding. The formulation of a world-view, in order to be a Christian one, must be founded on the teachings of Christ and, consequently, based on the corpus of what Christians accept as divine revelation – the Bible. Therefore Christian Education can be defined as the formulation of a world-view and praxis shaped by the revelation of God through Jesus Christ.

In order to discuss Christian Education in any context, one must first begin by asking the question: What is Christian Education? In answer to this question, this article will examine the role, responsibility, and goal of Christian Education. It is hoped that as these aspects of Christian education are visited, a robust picture of Christian Education would emerge.

THE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Bible provides very specific characteristics of education that is Christian³²⁵. These characteristics are usually not found in non-Christian educational systems, and provide a basis for *Christian* education. These and other biblical characteristics ought to permeate any program of instruction that is Christian.

In Matt. 28:19-20 we find a *mandate* for Christian Education: Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you³²⁶. The church has historically called this statement of Jesus the “Great Commission.” For the Christian, the Great Commission is not a mere suggestion – these are orders of the King. The mandate is to *teach* all that Christ commanded. Every Christian must stand before his King one day and answer to Him about compliance with His command to teach all that He commanded.

Mat. 28:10 tells us that we are to “Teach them to observe *all* that I commanded you [italics added].”³²⁷ The *content* of our instruction is *everything Jesus commanded* us. The greatest teacher among us has only begun to

³²⁵ Several such biblical characteristics of Christian education were insightfully summarized by Dr. Mike Lawson in a class on Christian Education in Cross Cultural Settings. The Biblical characteristics given in this paper have been adapted from the class notes of a presentation of Dr. Michael Lawson in a class on Christian Education at Dallas Theological Seminary, in the spring of 2004.

³²⁶ The New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.

³²⁷ Ibid

scratch the surface because everything Jesus commanded us includes the entire corpus of scripture which was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, who proceeds from Jesus Christ.

We also find a *wrinkle* in the way that we are to teach, in Matt. 28:20. The Christian is told to teach others to *obey* all that Christ has commanded. Often, time is not spent in attempting to apply our instruction. Christian brothers and sisters are not usually taken to account. In contrast to secular education, the focus of the content of Christian education is not recollection, but obedience.

Col. 1:28 tells us that, “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may be present every man complete in Christ.”³²⁸ The *student* for our instruction according to Col. 1:28 is *every man*. The challenge of Christian Education is that we take all-comers and not just the movers and the shakers or a chosen few. If one can pre-select who comes in to a system of education, one can, generally determine what kind of individual goes out. Christian educators take the poor, the weak, the un-motivated, and the arrogant as well as the inspired and the intelligent into their educational concern. The mandate of the church is to teach every man.

Acts 1:8 gives us a clue about the *location* where we provide Christian instruction. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth”³²⁹. The *location* for our instruction is to *include even the remotest part of the earth*. When Jesus said this to His disciples, He must have sounded very strange. The disciples were to go, not remain in temples! They were not to go just across culture, but also across generation; because where there was a generation that was not reached, then there was a culture that was not reached. Cross-generational witness includes children. Jesus still loves children – when one spends time teaching children, one has not wasted their time.

“To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may be all means save some.”³³⁰ 1 Cor. 9:22. The *methods* of Christian teaching are *all means*. The New Testament is full of methods that involve all of the faculties, not just reason. As a parent, I am increasingly aware that my children learn in different ways. Research on the subject of learning reveals that some learn best visually, others respond best to auditory cues and stimuli while still others learn best by tactile educational methods. Being created in the image of the Most Creative of all, why should we be afraid to be creative? If we teach in a boring way, are we not saying something about God that is blasphemous? We must have a tool chest that is varied to represent the incredible variety of our inimitable Lord. It is challenging and time consuming but ultimately richly rewarding to both instructor and student.

“And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind’”³³¹ says Matt. 22:37. Loving God and fostering love for the Living God is the great *goal* of Christian instruction. – the fostering of love for the living God. But love that is not experienced cannot be imparted – to be a Christian educator, one must be attuned to the Lord God. In Christian education, the spiritual formation of the instructor is vital.

The *focus* of Christian education is *Jesus Christ*. As Col. 1:15-19 indicates, “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation ... that He Himself might come to have first place in everything”³³². To state the obvious, Christian education is Christian because of Christ. It is always about exalting Christ and never about exalting human beings. So when we take people through our curriculum of Christian education, we must ask whether we are helping people know Christ better. Christians must take the people to Christ, or a Jewish rabbi could be considered a Christian educator.

³²⁸ The New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.

³²⁹ Ibid

³³⁰ Ibid

³³¹ The New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.

³³² Ibid.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you”³³³ John 14:26. The *Divine Teacher is the Holy Spirit* of God. The Holy Spirit works through the Holy Scriptures. He is the teacher, we are only the helpers. We should be in tune with where the Spirit is working in the student. We are not working alone, God is doing the work.

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian Education ought to encourage applied scholarship as a stand against heresy and secularism, and as an answer to current issues which the Church faces in a changing world. The Christian community must continue to develop high standards of education where Christians can intelligently articulate their beliefs and defend them to the world, Christian scholarship ought also to encourage the demonstration of Christ-like compassion in every setting in which the Church finds herself in.

Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind by country or language or customs ... their doctrine has not been discovered through any inventive faculty or the careful thought of pretentious men ... While they live in cities both Greek and oriental, as falls the lot of each, and follow the customs of their country in dress, food and general manner of life, they display the remarkable status of their citizenship. They live in countries of their own, but as sojourners. They share all things as citizens; they suffer all things foreigners. Every foreign land is their native place, every native place is foreign.³³⁴

A missional model of Christian Education ought to foster such a role in society. Those who are theological trained ought to be citizens of a country of this world without losing the Christian distinctive of being citizens of a country that is yet to come. Leslie Newbigin in his work “Gospel as Public Truth” observes that middle class parents

Want values to be taught to children in schools because life will be more pleasant if these values are adhered to. But they do not ask whether these values have any relation to the ‘facts’ as taught in school. They do not ask whether it is possible to believe that concern for minorities, for the poor, for the disabled is important if the fact is that human life is a result of the success of the strong in eliminating the weak. If it is a ‘fact’ that human life is the accidental result of the ruthless suppression of the weak by the strong, and it is not a fact that ‘Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever’ [as stated in the Westminster Confession], then ‘values’ have no factual basis. They can only be the expression of what some people choose, and – inevitably – it will be the strong who will prevail. The language of ‘values’ is simply the will to power wrapped up in cotton wool. And we cannot use the language of right and wrong because it has no basis in the ‘facts’ as we understand them.³³⁵

The role of Christian Education in society should indeed be to present “Public Truth” since the alternatives to Christian world-view in society are honestly frightening, as Newbigin has aptly described. To become “Public Truth” to society, Christian Education must address the current needs of society and culture. So Christian Education should deal with issues that victimize women and children such as child abuse and pornography, grasp the ethical implications of issues such as cloning, enable students to be in the forefront of the fight against race and gender discrimination in society, and produce authorities on such issues as terrorism, social oppression, justice, and reconciliation.

Within the Church, Christian Education ought to act as a catalyst of applied scholarship enabling her to stand against heresy and secularism. Farley describes the need for Christian Education to be Church Education as follows:

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Vinoth Ramachandra, *Gods that Fail*, (Cumbria: Paternoster Publishing, 1996), p 212 quoting *Epistle to Diognetus*, in H. Bettertonson, ed, *The Early Christian Fathers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

³³⁵ Lesslie Newbigin, *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991),29.

Protestant churches have not yet seriously considered the viability of Christian Education as church education. Hence, the minister as a theological educator is not an idea which disposes and guides present day church education. If a church did embrace the ideal of Christian Education for its constituency, it would have to incorporate into its educational program something of the structure of theology itself... The laity cannot be theologically educated because theology means a cluster of studies pertinent to the church's leadership. As long as this mind-set prevails, Christian Education must remain an enterprise of seminaries, not churches.³³⁶

As Farley correctly asserts, the role of Christian Education is not to be an addendum to Church life for specialized training of leadership but to be an integral part of Church life itself. Christian Education must belong to the "Gospel Praxis"³³⁷ of the church. Kelsey describes this ought in the statement that the theological school should be "a community of persons trying to understand God more truly by focusing its study of various subject matters within the horizon of questions about Christian congregations."³³⁸ Thus Christian Education must foster the role of providing Bible based education to the leadership, as well as to the laity of the Church, in the praxis of worship, leadership, evangelism, and fellowship, while keeping tradition and history in proper balance with the context in which the Church currently lives. In this way, Christian Education would act as a catalyst of applied scholarship in the Church, enabling her to stand against heresy and secularism by clear knowledge and embodiment of truth.

The Responsibility of Christian Education³³⁹

To whom is Christian education responsible? When the Christian Education program fulfills its role well, who benefits? If it does its job poorly, who suffers? Is the program autonomous, or is it responsible to the church or organization that receives the men and women trained at the educational institution? Does society at large have any input or impact in or upon the seminary? It is the opinion of the author that Christian Education ought to be responsible to the local church, so that the program remains faithful to the historic affirmations of the church, and, is able to provide workers who fit within an ecclesiastical setting.

The Church exists within two time-bound paradigms. The first paradigm encompasses all the ecclesiastical and social history from its formation in the first century. This includes the time-honoured affirmations of the ancient creeds that express what the Church broadly believes, and the practices that have been handed down to our own day.³⁴⁰ The Christian Education program is responsible to keep the lessons the Church has learned in the past on the mind of the Church in the present.

Any Christian Education program is thus responsible to the Church to be informed and guided by the historic affirmations made throughout Church history (i.e. those which have received broad acceptance within the Church). For example, this would include the judgments against Christological heresies in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. and the soteriological and ecclesiological reforms of the sixteenth century.³⁴¹ Christian Education must remain informed of these and other milestones in Church history and stand ready to distinguish and defend the Church when battles arise on ground when the Church has established views.³⁴² Historically, this responsibility

³³⁶ Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983), 130.

³³⁷ This phrase was coined by Vinoth Ramachandra in his book, *The Recovery of Mission – Beyond the Pluralistic Paradigm*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 265.

³³⁸ David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly – What's Theological About A Theological School*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 158.

³³⁹ This section, *The Responsibility of Christian Education*, was largely designed by Clint Steward Dallas Theological Seminary as part of a group project for Manifesto for Theological Education in the Spring of 2004.

³⁴⁰ These practices include expressly biblical things such as communion and baptism, as well as weekly meetings, liturgy, discipleship, and social ministries.

³⁴¹ Obviously these judgments reflect our evangelical and Protestant orientation.

³⁴² Making judgments about what are the "established views of the church" is indeed a difficult task. This is all the more reason why a robust understanding of Church history is so important for the health of the Church and the success of Theological

has fallen on those with seminary training. The laity often looks to these leaders to provide a historical perspective on the issues of the present.

The second paradigm encompasses the time period contemporary with the present day Church. This paradigm includes the events and influences of the present and recent past, and the variety of ecclesiastical and cultural issues that impact the Church. Finally, it encompasses the near future as to the direction that the Church will go in light of all these influences. Christian Education, when considered from this paradigm, is responsible to the Church to prepare leaders who are equipped to understand the times and to apply biblical insight to today's unique circumstances.

It is within the second paradigm that the work of Christian Education takes on the bulk of its contemporary challenges. This does not lessen the importance of remaining faithful to the lesson of the past, but it is in the present and the future that Christian leaders must guide the Church. This must be done in ways that exhibit faithfulness to Scriptures and impact the culture for Christ and godliness. As culture changes, Christian Education is obligated to evaluate the status of the world in which the Church ministers, anticipate an appropriate theological course, and develop relevant place to engage the culture. This should be done in a way that informs society and promotes the Church as the instrument of the Lord to effectively address the issues of the day.

Leaders graduating from Christian Education programs must fit the Church's need for relevant ministry in the society and within the church. A significant component of this "fit" is along ecclesiastical lines. It is necessary that the Christian Education program form leaders within the parameters of a well defined educational philosophical statement.³⁴³ Thus statement will, broad terms, allow the program and given ecclesiastical communities to communicate regarding mutual; or exclusive beliefs held by both the church and the seminary. The admission of students to the program ought to be conditional upon acceptance and agreement with this statement.

The leaders who emerge from the Christian Education program must also have skills that are useful to the church. The educational organization such as a seminary must communicate with the Church so that capabilities at the seminary might be consistent with the needs of the contemporary Church. Since culture is fluid and changing, this dialogue will naturally result in adjustments in the areas of curriculum, skills development, and mid and long-range planning in the educational organization. Kelsey and Wheeler recognize this responsibility by noting, "As professional education, Christian Education's aim is to prepare people to fill competently the function for Christian ministry."³⁴⁴ If leaders complete training without developing competencies that will work in and be necessary to the church, then the Christian Education program has not fulfilled its responsibility to the church.

The church bears a measure of responsibility to provide to the Christian Education program, people who have aptitude toward ministry. Banks recognizes this and suggests that it ought to be congregational and/or denominational groups who evaluate people's capacity for ministry, not seminaries.³⁴⁵ Although hardly a foolproof system, if congregations affirm and approve applicants, then the seminary has a better likelihood of developing men and women for relevant ministry within the Church.

Within the second paradigm mentioned above, Christian Education has a responsibility to be sensitive to the educational norms of the society in which it operates. The seminary must prepare leaders to assist the

Education. For a helpful discussion on the distinction between dogma and doctrine as it relates to this issue, see Robert W. Jenson, *The Triune God*, vol. 1, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12-22

³⁴³ David W. Bebbington, "Spurgeon and British Evangelical Theological Education," in *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 221. See also the article by R. Albert Mohler, "Thinking of the Future: Evangelical Theological Education in a New Era," in *ibid*, 279.

³⁴⁴ David H. Kelsey and Barbara G. Wheeler, "New Ground: The Foundations and Future of the Theological Education Debate," in *Theology and the Interhuman: Essay in Honor of Edward Farley*, ed. Robert R. Williams (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 194.

³⁴⁵ Robert J. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans., 1999), 136.

church with a meaningful interface between the Church and the society. Credibility within that larger society offers opportunities to affect society in ways that would be forfeited if Christian Education were to remain wholly detached from the society. A beneficial way of connecting positively with society would include bringing its educational processes into some measure of consistency with those of secular educational institutions.³⁴⁶ This association should not impede the Christian Educational organization from accomplishing its main purposes, but must express a genuine connectedness that society recognizes as meaningful. Credibility in the society is the goal sought in this process.³⁴⁷

The Goal of Christian Education³⁴⁸

The goal of Christian Education is to train godly, servant leaders who love God with their mind and serve and lead the Church in her accomplishment of the *Missio Dei*³⁴⁹ in the world. In order to understand this goal, we first need to discuss what “godly servant leaders” means. Then we will consider what God’s mission is in the world, and how Christian Education contributes to it.

Servant Leaders

Christian Education must train men and women to serve the Church in the various components of church leadership and growth as they relate to God’s purpose for the Church.³⁵⁰ These components include worship, instruction, fellowship and discipleship, outreach and service. The Church’s purpose cannot be fulfilled apart from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers who are willing to suffer in their stand against sin. Christian Education must, therefore, be characterized by a focus on building both a dependence on the Holy Spirit’s empowerment and a theology of suffering. Coherence between the purpose of the Church and the goal of Christian Education should take precedence in the selection of students, faculty, and curriculum design.

The curriculum design of the program must involve not only training of the mind, but also the shaping of the heart. All of these aspects of Christian Education must value the role of the Holy Spirit in individuals and the Church, and prepare leaders theologically and practically to lead in schools, society, and the Church. These leaders ought to view themselves as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and be submissive to the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit, and be willing to endure suffering for the sake of the cross. They are a model to the church at large. When Christian Education achieves this goal of training such well-formed leaders, men and women who rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church itself will be properly shaped and equipped to accomplish the *Missio Dei*.

It is the task of the Holy Spirit to direct the Church in the *Missio Dei*. For this reason, the work of the Church ought to be done by those who evidence a Spirit-empowered life. The power and presence of the Risen Christ must, after all, be evident in all aspects of the servant leader’s life. This kind of life is in direct opposition to the ways of this fallen world. Therefore, the Church must embrace a theology of suffering in order to stand strong in the face of persecution and the destructive effects of sin, and yet go about her purpose in the accomplishment of the *Missio Dei*.

A theology of suffering begins with understanding Christ’s own voluntary choice to suffer for the salvation of humans. It is this example of love and suffering for the sake of others which believers must be willing to emulate. This suffering goes beyond events of natural evil (disease, natural disasters, etc.), provides a corrective for

³⁴⁶ Accreditation by the society’s guardians of educational integrity is the way to gain the most respectability in a given society. But, in situations where the accreditation process might force a seminary to jeopardize its theological integrity it is still possible to gain social respectability by educating according to the educational norms present in the given society.

³⁴⁷ Credibility in the society will also include appropriate internal self-governance by the theological institution. This will include sound procedures and standards of conduct.

³⁴⁸ This section, *The Goal of Christian Education*, was largely designed by Julie Woodson of Dallas Theological Seminary as part of a group project for a Manifesto for Theological Education in the Spring of 2004.

³⁴⁹ “Mission of God”, referring to God’s ultimate goal for His creation. We will explore this more below, and consider the relationship between God’s mission and the reason the Church (and by extension, Theological Education) exists.

³⁵⁰ See following section for discussion on the goal of the Church.

culturally insensitive methods of evangelization, and an apologetic against religious prejudice. This suffering which the believer must embrace is freely chose. Scholar Dr. Vinoth Ramachandra summarized this kind of suffering thus:

*The way of Jesus , then is the way he calls his church to go. It is neither a withdrawal from the world into a religious sanctuary , nor an engagement with the world on the world's own terms. It is nothing less than an unflinching yet vulnerable challenge to the powers that control the present world order, but in the name of the reign of God present in the crucified and risen Jesus. To the extent that the church participates in the suffering of Jesus it becomes the bearer of the risen life of Jesus for the sake of the world.*³⁵¹

Both a Spirit-filled life and a theology of suffering are essential for leaders of the Church. Christian Education must train leaders for the church who can embody these qualities and who in turn can lead the church in her participation in the Mission Dei.

Missio Dei

Christian Education is concerned with training Christian leaders as teachers in formal and non-formal settings, both in Christian contexts as well as secular environments. In order to know what type of teacher the Church needs in its schools and its surrounding society, it is necessary to know what the goal of the Church is. And when we discuss the goal of the Church, we must specify that we are talking about God's goal for the Church , and not our own.

In thinking about God's goal for the Church it is important to ask the question: what is the reason that the Church exists? Our answer is that the church exists as a witness³⁵² to the redeeming work of Jesus Christ accomplished

³⁵¹ Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandrs, *The messenge of Mission* (Leicester, UK:Inter Varsity, 2003), 196.

³⁵² According to Karl Barth, witness is " the sum of what the Christian community has to render. " Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation* , vol. 4/3 *Church Dogmatics* , Trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1962), 843 Barth spends over a hundred pages fleshing out the meaning of this concept.

through the power of the Spirit to the glory of the Father.³⁵³ The Church is a community of people who rehearse, retell, and reflect on God's own story as communicated through scripture. The Church tells this story to herself (as a reminder), to God (as praise), and to the world (as witness).³⁵⁴ What then is this story that the Church tells? It is the entire narrative of the Bible, that could be succinctly summarized in this one sentence. "God makes and chooses a people for himself, so that he may be glorified throughout the world."³⁵⁵ The Church exists as the community by which God accomplishes His Goal of glorifying Himself throughout the world, and He is doing this by reconciling all things to Himself so that "Jesus Christ will come to have first place in everything."³⁵⁶ And so, if the Church is the place where Jesus Christ already has pre-eminence, then, we may say, that the reason the Church exists is for the sake of the world.³⁵⁷ Until the day when God receives worship from men and women of every "tribe, tongue, and nation"³⁵⁸ the Church must orient herself to the accomplishment of that task. And so we come to this point: if Christian Education is to be what God wants it to be, then it must be informed and motivated by God's ultimate goal of the reconciliation of all things to Himself.³⁵⁹

While we believe therefore that the goal of Christian Education is to train teachers, we must always remember that the goal of the Church is to fulfill the great commission and so accomplish the *Missio Dei*. When Christian Education is informed by how the father sent the Son through the power of the Spirit to redeem humanity, it will reflect a similar orientation of preparing teachers to be witnesses of Christ in the world.

Conclusion

The Christian Education must be wholly Biblical in character and should take the role of "public truth" to the world and "gospel praxis" to the church. Christian Education needs to be responsible to the historic affirmations as well as the contemporary climate of the church and have as its goal, the development of spirit-filled servant leaders for the accomplishing of the *Missio Dei*.

As long as we live, we cannot but learn, absorbing and processing information as surely as we breathe—so our Creator has fashioned us. The question is, what will we learn and what will be the consequence of our education? It is widely accepted that education broadens man's horizons, imparting him with wisdom—that quality which is an amalgam of reasoning and experience. Secular scholars spend years learning within their chosen fields gaining maturity and high levels of competence in their disciplines. Those years leave their mark, molding the man, his mind as well as, to some extent, his personality. What might the impact be when Christian Education molds the spirit of the man? Would not the results be far greater, even divine.

³⁵³ This Trinitarian understanding is crucial to the identity of the Church. The very nature of God as Trinity must be the basis for the Church's understanding of her goal in the world. As God the Father sent the Son, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, so the Church is sent into the world to proclaim the Son, that by the power of the Holy Spirit men and women may be drawn into fellowship with the father.

³⁵⁴ The insight of telling the Gospel to God as praise is from Robert W. Jenson, and is worth reading in his own words, "theology is the thinking internal to the task of speaking the gospel, whether to humankind as message or to God in praise and petition—for of course the church speaks the gospel also to God, pleading it before him and praising him for it." See Robert W. Jenson. *The Triune God*, vol. I. Systematic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5. and also his fine article "How the World Lost Its Story," *First Things* 36 (October 1993):19-24. Jenson only speaks of "humankind" and "God" as audience to the Gospel story, but it seems that an appropriate distinction can also be made between "Church" and "World" in the proclamation to humankind.

³⁵⁵ This sentence from Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Message of Mission* (Leicester, UK: Inter Varsity, 2003), 11. The rest of the book is an excellent development of this theme from fifteen passages of Scripture.

³⁵⁶ Specifically, Colossians 1:18, but the whole first chapter complements the thought.

³⁵⁷ That the Church exists for the world is a point made emphatically by Karl Barth. To this see George Hunsinger, "Karl Barth: The as Witness," on the *Center for Barth Studies* website. [http://www.petsem.edu/grow/barth/church as witness.htm](http://www.petsem.edu/grow/barth/church%20as%20witness.htm) (21 March 2004), and also Karl Barth, *The Director of Reconciliation*, vol. 4/3, *Church Dogmatics*, Trans G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1962), 762ff.

³⁵⁸ Revelation 5:9. And of course that is just a metaphor to say "people from every conceivable category."

³⁵⁹ Or to say it in Trinitarian fashion: the *Missio Dei* is to reconcile to Himself all of creation through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of the Father. We use such universalistic language because that is the language of Scripture, but we recognize that we must hold the implications in tension with the biblical message of judgment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Augsburger David W, *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures*, Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.
- Banks, Robert. *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.
- Barth, Karl. The Doctrine of Reconciliation. Vol. 4/3, *Church Dogmatics*, Trans. G.W. Brommiley. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1962.
- Bebbington, David W. "Spurgeon and British Evangelical Theological Education." *In Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler, 217-134. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996.
- Epistle to Diongnetus. In *The Early Christian Fathers*, ed. H. Bettertonson, New York: Oxford University Press 1956.
- Farley, Edward, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.
- Ferris Robert W. "The Role of Theology in Theological Education". In *with an Eye on the Future*, eds. Duane H. Elmer and Lios Mckinney, 101-11, Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1976.
- Ferris, Robert W. *Renewal in Theological Education*. Wheaton, IL: The Billy Graham Center, 1990.
- Hunsinger, George, "Karl Barth: The Church as Witness", on the Center for Barth Studies website. http://www.ptsem.edu/grow/barth/church_as_witness.htm (21 March 2004).
- Indicopleustes Cosmas. *Christian topography of Cosmas*, Translated from the Greek, an Edited, with Notes and Introduction by J. W. McCrindle, 1897
- Jenson, Robert W. "How the World Lost Its Story." *First Things* 36 (1993): 19-24.
- Jenson, Robert W. *The Triune God. Vol. 1, Systematic Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Kelsey, David H. *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School?* Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.
- Kelsey, David H, and Wheeler, Barbara. "New Ground: The Foundations and Future of the Theological Education Debate." In *Theology and the Interhuman: Essays in Honor of Edward Farley*, ed. Robert R. Williams, 181-201. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995.
- Lingenfelter, Sherwood G., Mayers, Marvin K. *Ministering Cross Culturally—An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986.
- Mohler, R. Albert. "Thinking of the Future : Evangelical Theological Education in a New Era." In *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler, 278-83. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991.
- Peskett, Howard and Ramachandra, Vinoth. *The Message of Mission*. Leicester, UK: Intervarsity Press, 2003.
- Ramachandra, Vinoth. *The Recovery of Mission – Beyond the Pluralistic Paradigm*. Grand Rapid, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997.
- Swindoll, Charles R. and Matlack, Gary. *Excellence in Ministry: A Study in 1 Timothy*, Insight for Living, 1996.

Teresa kure, Jon Sobrino and Felix Wilfred, eds. *Rethinking Martydom*, London, UK: SCM Press, 2003.

Wilson, Neil S., ed. *The Handbook of Bible Application*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndal House Publisher, 1992.

Young , Mark, "Theological Approaches to Some Perpetual Problems in Theological Education." *Christian Education Journal* 2NS (1998):75-87.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE RECEPTION OF PROTESTANTISM BY THE TAMIL AND SINHALESE COMMUNITIES IN SRI LANKA

Napoleon Pathmanathan

In the island of Sri Lanka, the ratio of the population consists of 74% Sinhales, 18 Tamil, 7% Moor, and 1% Burgher, Malay, and Vedda. The religious ratio is 69% Buddhist, 15% Hindu, 8% Muslim, 8% Christian.¹ Out of this 8% approximately one tenth consists of Protestants and the majority of them are Tamils, residing in the North, East, West and the hill country. From these statistics we would expect that comparatively the percentage of Sinhalese Christians ought to be high. However, this is not the case and Sinhalese Christianity declined more than the Tamil Christianity. This article seeks to analyze the events that contributed to the decline to come to a conclusion as to why the Tamil Community was more receptive to the gospel than the Sinhalese community.

Nationalism, Language, Ethnic Identity and the Culture.

The Sinhalese people in general were hostile to Christianity since it was a religion of the invaders, identified with the Portuguese, Dutch and British. Nationalistic feeling hindered the Sinhalese from becoming Christian. The Sinhalese identified religion with the state because the religion of Buddhism was brought during the reign of "King Devanampiya Tissa (250-210 B.C.) who employed Asoka's strategy of merging the political state with Buddhism, supporting Buddhist institutions from the state's coffers, and locating temples close to the royal palace for greater control"². Nearly 600 Christians in Mannar were martyred by Sankili (1519-1561) the King of Jaffna for the same reason, namely the close State – Religion identity in 1543. "The connection between religion, culture, language, and education and their combined influence on national identity has been an age-old pervasive force for the Sinhalese Buddhists"³. A British missionary, William Oakley also mentions this in his letter to the secretary of CMS mission. He stated that the rebellion against British rule also reduced the growth of their mission, because people identified religion with the state⁴.

In the country's history, King Dutegemunu (BC. 167-137) had a fifteen year dispute against Elahara and finally deposed him. This was sometimes interpreted as a major racial confrontation between the Tamils and Sinhalese. This conflict, recorded in the *Mahavamsa*, marked the beginning of Sinhalese nationalism and Dutegemunu's victory is commonly interpreted as a confirmation that the island was a preserve for the Sinhalese and Buddhism. Some historians maintain that the story is still capable of stirring the religio-communal passions of the Sinhalese⁵ this move towards nationalism may be regarded as one of the reasons for the Sinhalese community, being less receptive to the gospel. This trend still prevails even in today's society.

¹ Census of Population and Housing 2001, <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/census2001/population/district/t001c.htm>

² <http://countrystudies.us/sri-lanka/4.htm>, also see Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Dehiwala: The Buddhist Cultural Centre, 1993, p.52.

³ <http://countrystudies.us/sri-lanka/4.htm> - for information read Kenneth D. Bush, *The Intra-Group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Learning to Read between the Lines*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004

⁴ William Oakley, *Letter to the Secretary, Kandy, 12.09.1848*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original papers, C CE O 92/56, also see 11.08.1848, C CE O 92/55 and 13.11.1848, C CE O 92/58

⁵ <http://countrystudies.us/sri-lanka/6.htm> For information read: Kenneth D. Bush, *The Intra-Group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Learning to Read between the Lines*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

The other reason was that people struggled to understand the preaching and teaching of the missionaries during the Dutch period and they nominally embraced Protestantism, due to a fear of the Dutch rulers, who declared the non-inherency of lands and properties for non-Christians⁶. People lost their ancestral property unless their parents were legally married. The only marriage registrar was the minister in the church and to get married in the church both bride and bridegroom had to be baptized. So many couples with children married again in the church to save their property. They became Christians by baptism and they still worshipped their gods⁷. This was one of the causes for people going back to their original religion with an antichristian feeling after the British declared religious liberalism. Even today, if we visit the grave yards of the southern part of the country the surnames inscribed on the tombs are Christian names. Many Buddhists still carry their Western names today such as, David, William, Cornelius, Adam, Silva, Alexander, Richard, Julius, etc. Also many people became Christians and followed the new religion only to gain material benefits⁸, such as education, medicine, employment, and social status⁹ because priority was given to the people who had good English education in the English schools for government jobs. A Higgs said that “the Sinhalese were naturally about the most apathetic and thoroughly irreligious people in the world”.¹⁰ But it is said that the Tamils were very receptive to the gospel, when it is preached¹¹.

Thirdly, in the island society was divided into many castes, each performing a certain occupation¹². The cultivators – ‘Govi’ or ‘Vellala’ were considered to be the highest caste, though many other castes were also engaged in farming. Non-agricultural people were divided into occupational “low caste groups”, such as barbers, washer-men, and fishermen¹³. The Sinhalese had a social structure and they were ruled by their Modaliyars¹⁴ or village headman, so people were prepared to attend or not attend public worship on their instruction¹⁵ whatever caste they may be. However, Tamils had no social system or structure and they had the independence to decide their own will and this paved the path for their numerous conversions.

Only after Aarumuga Navalar, (1822-1879) the reformer of Tamil Hinduism¹⁶, Hindus began to contemplate defending themselves. He was a student of the Central College of Jaffna and studied under Christian missionaries. He adopted Christian methods to reform Hinduism, such as preaching, teaching and singing devotional songs. This did not bear much fruit and the people belonging to several denominations for their social upliftment¹⁷, because the ‘low caste’ Tamils were kept away from the Kovils from worshipping their gods. Also Navalar’s attempt was only limited to

⁶ Rober Mayor, *Letter to Joseph Knight, 20.12.1819*, University of Birmingham, ‘Special Collection’ Mission Book, C CE – MI, p.23 – Rev. Joseph Knight was ordained by the Bishop Ryder of Gloucester. He arrived in Ceylon on 28.10.1818

⁷ His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, *Minutes of the Government Relations to the Churches 16.12.1819*, University of Birmingham, ‘Special Collection’ Mission Book, C CE M-I, p.84 &85

⁸ *Benjamin Ward’s Journal, 1819, (27.03.1819 – 16.07.1819)* University of Birmingham,, ‘Special Collection’ Mission Book, C CE M,p4.

⁹ Latourette-6, *Op Cit.*, p221

¹⁰ E.T.Higgs, *Report of the Itinerating Branch of Kandy Station, 01.10.1855-30.09.1856*, University of Birmingham, ‘Special Collection’ Original Papers, C CE O 69/69

¹¹ R.P.Butterfield, *Padre Rowlands of Ceylon*, Marshall, Morgan, and Scott Ltd., London and Edinburgh, p.35

¹² *Missionary proceedings, 1818, Op Cit. p.530*

¹³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (London, Helen Hemingway, 1973) p.3

¹⁴ The tax collector appointed by the British government, considered as a chief man in a district or province.

¹⁵ *Missionary Proceedings. 1819, Op cit. p. 193*

¹⁶ [Http://members.tripod.com/kanaga_sritharan/eelaventhana.htm](http://members.tripod.com/kanaga_sritharan/eelaventhana.htm)

¹⁷ Tamils had the disproportionate percentage of educational and other institutions maintained by missionaries.

the northern part of the country and it didn't make any impact on the East, Colombo and hill country mission, which bore much fruit.

The religion of Buddhism, its revival and counter conversion

Against Christian Missionary activities the Buddhist clergy reformed the sangha¹⁸, to adopt counter conversion methods to stop the missionary work. In the 1875, an American, Colonel Henry Steele Olcott an ardent abolitionist in the years leading up to the American Civil War, founded and later became president of the Theosophical Movement¹⁹. Shortly after his arrival in Sri Lanka in 1880, he organized a Buddhist campaign against British missionaries. He founded the following rival education institutes against the missionaries namely, Ananda College, Mahinda College, and Dharmaraja College to impart Buddhist education with a strong nationalist bias²⁰. In this way Buddhism in Ceylon was organized to eradicate Christian missionary work. In other places too Buddhist priests put their whole effort in to bringing children to their schools, under their instruction.²¹ They started rival school and taught Pali and native medicine. There are reports of children abandoning the missionaries due to fear and joining these rival schools and the work of the missionaries declined²². Although some parents were stubborn in sending their children to the mission schools their motive was twofold, (1) to obtain good respected positions in the civil service and (2) to make them more respected in society²³.

Buddhist priests organized gatherings and assembled together and accused missionaries of forcing their religion on natives, although they are notable to present any proof of it²⁴, and in some places organized mobs assaulted catechists and believers to make them abandon their work²⁵. They formed 'Gam Sabbas' (village societies) to settle the problems of the people in the villages, since many people found their day to day problems were not solved and their needs were not met in their philosophical religion. Buddhist priests were openly and sometimes secretly behind these societies to stop conversion and to promote their ideology. People who refuse to join them were harassed and persecuted in their villages. Their prime target was the Christians living in the villages, some of whom joined these societies and renounced their faith, while others stood steadfastly against persecution²⁶. As a result work among the Sinhalese community declined.

Christian Literature, Liturgy, Bible and hymn books

¹⁸ The religious community

¹⁹ This was organized on a worldwide basis to promote goodwill and to champion the rights of the underprivileged.

²⁰ <http://countrystudies.us/sri-lanka/16.htm>

²¹ C.M. gleaner, 1849, Vol-IX, C CE O 59/40, p63-65

²² Gleaner, April/1898, p.292

²³ George Parsons, *Report of Baddegama Station*, 1853, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Paper, C CE O 95/42

²⁴ George Parsons, *Report of Baddegama District for the year ending 30th September 1865*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Papers C CE O 95/50

²⁵ George Parsons, *Report of Baddegama District for the year ending 30th September 1865*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' C CE O 95/50

²⁶ Alexander d. Gordon, *Report of Cotta Station, June 1850*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, CCE O 59/40

Christian literature such as Bibles, Tracts, Liturgy, Hymns Books and Devotional books and hand-written literature²⁷ were distributed²⁸ and explained by the missionaries to the people, many of whom were illiterate²⁹, although there was opposition³⁰.

In spite of all these happenings the Tamil Christians in India and Sri Lanka received abundant blessing through the Indian SPCK. The Indian SPCK was successful indigenous publisher. SPCK has been active in India since the early 18th century. A distinct SPCK in India was established in 1935, and became a fully autonomous organization in 1958. They established libraries for the use of clergy and their parishioners, giving them access to a range of theological and other books to support their ministry. Frequently, shipments of books were sent across the ocean to Sri Lanka establishing and maintaining a substantial network of libraries. They published the first Tamil translated by Danish Lutheran missionaries. The SPCK has continued to work closely with churches of many different denominations, whilst retaining a special relationship with the Anglican Communion. The SPCK also developed an important role in supporting the planting of new churches and funds were provided for church buildings, for schools, for theological training colleges.

The Impact of the south Indian Mission in Ceylon

In the hill country of the Island there were coffee and latter tea estates, each with European superintendents and plantation workers. The door was wide open for missionary work and the European planters desired to bring the gospel to these people, and requested the missionary societies to send catechists to minister to them. The Tamil Speaking Catechists were brought from south India and there was a spirit of awakening amongst the 'coolies' and many requested baptism. Some of the planters were Christians and prayerful, godly men³¹. The Catechists were involved in³², (1) Itineration, (2) Street preaching, (3) Ministering in the School, and (4) Sale of Scriptures and educational books. This hill country³³. Also the work was self

²⁷ Joseph Knight, Letter to the Secretary, 22.02.1822, p.360. see also Knight's Journal, 08.11.1820 – 12.02.1822 (18.10.1821) Ceylon Mission Book, C CE M-1, p.385; Joseph Knight's Journal, 03.03.1822- 30.06.1822 (28.005.1822) University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O77/51

²⁸ Joseph Knight's Journal, 03.03.1822 – 30.06.1822, (24.05.1822) University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O77/51

²⁹ Joseph Knight's Journal, 03.03.1822 – 30.06.1822, (18.04.1822 and 27.05.1822 (08.06.1823)) University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O77/51; Joseph Knight's Journal, 01.07.1822 – 19.06.1823 University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 77/52

³⁰ Joseph Knight's Journal, 03.03.1822 – 30.06.1822, (28.05.1822) University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 77/51

³¹ John Pickford, *The Annual Report of the Ceylon Tamil Cooly Mission for 1865*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 102/19

³² John Pickford, *The Annual Report of the Ceylon Tamil Cooly Mission for 1866*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 102/20

³³ John Pickford, *The Annual Report of the Ceylon Tamil Cooly Mission for 1866*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 102/20

supported, since the plantation workers and planters supported it financially³⁴. The mission schools in the hill country too were supported by the superintendents and the estate workers themselves³⁵

The Tamil ministry in Ceylon was successful also because missionaries were sent from Tinnavelly, who served many years there and had a good experience in this ministry and a good knowledge of the Tamil language³⁶. However before missionaries came, scattered Tamil congregations met in Colombo³⁷ and it made the missionary work easy, in places such as Maradana, Kollupitiya, Mattakkuliya etc. These members were Indian traders skilled workers shop keepers and some of them were labourers in the harbour.

The ministry of Padre Rowlands of Ceylon

Rev. Rowlands was born in Worcester in October 1837, and he was 24 years of age when he arrived at Galle on 07.12.1861. He reached Colombo on 09.12.1861 and was transferred to the 'Tamil Cooly Mission'. It is worth mentioning him in this article, as one who was called "The father of Tamil Christianity in Ceylon". He says, when he preached on the streets, the Tamils were very receptive to the gospel³⁸. There was another reason for the success of the Tamil ministry in Colombo. This was that the Tamils were probably more numerous, numbering 60,000³⁹. The majority of them from South India - Tinnavelly and Palayamcottai⁴⁰. private Mudalalis and families. The Tamil churches grew without any hindrances, because there was no organized social system among Tamils. The Kovils were owned by private Mudalalis and families. There was no denominational system among Tamil Hindus, such as Buddhist 'Sangha' or 'Nikkaya'. The missionaries preached in as Colpetty, the Slave Island lanes, Police court at Wolvendhal, and Kayman's Gate at Petah, Borells, Grandpass Mattakkuliya, Maradana, and Mutwal⁴¹. This was the beginning of the successful Tamil Ministry in Colombo. Rev. Rowlands was transferred to the 'Cooly Mission' and he had a successful ministry in the estates as mentioned before with the help of the catechists. The Eastern coastal area was reached by the Wesleyan missionaries from Valaichenai to Pottuvil and many churches were planted in many places in the Eastern part of the country.

Finally, the success of the Tamil mission in Sri Lanka was also due to the fact that there were many Tamil Christians lived in Colombo who came from South India, as traders and there were ministers and catechists freely available to the Ceylon mission from South India. The Christians who came from south India were lonely because the majority of them left their family behind, and sought peace in their family behind, and sought peace in their hearts in the churches. South Indian Christianity was strong, and is still strong making an immeasurable impact on the island's Christianity even today by sending preachers, teachers, The Tamil Bible, Christian literature, devotional books, music, Hymn Books, tracts and Evangelists. So the Ceylon mission flourished. Also

³⁴ John Pickford, *The Annual Report of the Ceylon Tamil Cooly Mission for 1866*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 102/20

³⁵ R. Abby, *Tamil Cooly Education in the Planting Districts of Ceylon*, 27.11.1873,

³⁶ R.P. Butterfield, *Padre Rowlands of Ceylon*, Marshall, Morgan and Scott Ltd., London and Edinburgh, p.35

³⁷ A History of Diocese of Colombo 1946, p.154

³⁸ R.P. Butterfield, *Padre Rowlands of Ceylon*, Marshall, Morgan, and Scott Ltd., London and Edinburgh, p.35

³⁹ *The Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society*, 1872, p.168

⁴⁰ *The Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society*, 1858, p.167

⁴¹ Rev.S.M.J.Jebamony, '*The History of St. James Church, Kotahena*', Republished article on the 125th Anniversary Souvenir, 2002, also see Napoleon Pathmanathan, '*The History of Christ Church Galle Face*, 150th Anniversary Souvenir, 2003, p.52

Christians, who left their villages in South India, used the church to build up their community life and fellowship. The Tamil missionaries had only mild opposition to the gospel because the Tamil Hindu community in Colombo, North and east was not systematically organized to oppose it, since their social system, such as their religion and caste divided them. And also they were divided, since they were shrewd, witty, selfish, and in their circumstances very independent, according to Joseph Knight in Jaffna. These were the reasons for Tamil to be more receptive to the gospel.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abby, R., *Tamil Cooly Education in the Planting Districts of Ceylon*, 27.11.1873, University of Birmingham, 'special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 6/32

Butterfield, R.P., *Padre Rowlands of Ceylon*, London and Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott Ltd.,

Gordon, Alexander D., *Report of Cotta Station, June, 1850*, University of Birmingham, 'special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 59/40

Higgins, E.T., *Report of the Itinerating Branch of Kandy station*, 01.10.1855-30.09.1856, University of Birmingham, 'special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 69/69

Jebamony, S.M.J., *'The History of St. James Church, Kotahena'*, Republished article on the 125th Anniversary souvenir, 2002.

Knight, Joseph *Letter to the Secretary*, 22.02.1822, p.360. see also Knight's Journal, 08.11.1820 – 12.02.1822 (18.10.1821) Ceylon Mission Book, C.CE M- 1

Latourette K.S., *A History of the Expansion of Christianity-2, Two Thousand Years of Uncertainty: 500-1500 AD* Devon :Paternoster, 1971.

Mayor, Robert, *Letter to Joseph Knight*, 20.12.1819, University of Birmingham, 'special Collection' Mission Book, C CE – MI

Oakley, William, *Letter to the Secretary, Kandy*, 12.09.1848, University of Birmingham, 'special Collection' Original papers, C CE O 92/56, 11.08.1848, C CE O 92/55 13.11.1848, C CE O 922/58

Parsons, George, *Report of Baddegana Station, 1853*, University of Birmingham, 'special Collection' Original papers C CE O 95/42

Parsons, George, *Report of Baddegana District for the year ending 30th September 1865*, University of Birmingham, 'special Collection' Original papers C CE O 95/50

Parsons, George, *Report of Baddegana District for the year ending 30th September 1865*, University of Birmingham, 'special Collection' C CE O 95/50

Pathmanathan, Napoleon, *'The History of Christ Church Galle Face 150th Anniversary souvenir, 2003*

Pickford, John, *The Annual Report of the Ceylon Tamil Cooly Mission for 1865*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 102/19

Pickford, John, *The Annual Report of the Ceylon Tamil Cooly Mission for 1866*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Original Papers, C CE O 102/20

Rahula, Walpola., *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Dehiwala: The Buddhist Cultural Centre, 1993

His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, *Minutes of the Government Relations to the Churches 16.12.1819*, University of Birmingham, 'Special Collection' Mission Book, C CE M-1

A History of Dioceses of Colombo. 1946

Encyclopaedia Britannica, London: Helen Hemingway, 1973,

Missionary Proceedings, 1818

Missionary Proceedings, 1819

C.M. Gleaner, 1849, Vol-IX, C CE O 59/40

The Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society, 1872
, April/18

Benjamin Ward's Journal, 1819, (27.03.1819 – 16.07.1819) University of Birmingham, 'Special collection'
Mission Book C CE MI

Joseph Knight's Journal 03.03.1822 – 30.06.1822, (28.05.1822) University of Birmingham, 'Special collection'
Original Papers C CE O 77/51

Joseph Knight's Journal 03.03.1822 – 30.06.1822, (24.05.1822) University of Birmingham, 'Special collection'
Original Papers C CE O 77/51

Joseph Knight's Journal 01.07.1822 – 19.06.1823, (08.06.1823) University of Birmingham, 'Special collection'
Original Papers C CE O 77/52

Joseph Knight's Journal 03.03.1822 – 30.06.1822, (28.05.1822) University of Birmingham, 'Special collection'
Original' Original Papers C CE O 77/51

The Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society, 1872

The Annual Report of the Church Missionary Society, 1858

Colombo Theological Seminary was founded in 1994 because of the growing conviction of the need for an inter-denominational and biblical theological centre in Sri Lanka's commercial capital. The acute spiritual and social needs of south Asia presents God's challenge to the Church in the region. Through the prayerful cooperation of leading men and women across the spectrum of the Sri Lankan church, CTS was born in order to respond to this challenge. The Seminary, as a centre for spirituality, research, and Missions serves by: providing Resources for the Church for the transformation of Nations.

In addition to sending out trained men and women – to give solid, evangelical leadership in Ministry, Missions and the Marketplace – CTS is committed to furthering the cause of the Gospel through relevant publications. The Object is to make available the finest Christian scholarship in the body of Christ worldwide, to both the seminary student as well as the keen Christian in the local church.

