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The Caribbean Journal of Evangelical Theology (CJET) is designed to promote scholarly study and research, to provide a forum for the expression of facts, ideas, and opinions from a Caribbean evangelical theological perspective, and to stimulate the application of this research to the Caribbean region.

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**A THEOLOGY OF JOY: AN EVANGELICAL
RESPONSE TO CARNIVAL IN TRINIDAD &
TOBAGO**

DR. DAVID CORBIN

President of CGST

INTRODUCTION

Carnival is deeply rooted in the culture and lifestyle of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The event, described by many as “the world’s most exciting festival,” is a mixture of culture, history, music and dance. For more than 200 years, revelers from the twin-island republic have used the annual event to epitomize national joy. Amidst the excitement, Christians find themselves divided regarding the appropriateness of the activities that are associated with the festival. Is carnival the most appropriate way to symbolize joy? Do Christians have a functional substitute? These and similar questions will be answered in this theological reflection on joy, as expressed in carnival.

There is no theatrical event that can mobilize mass-participation in any Caribbean island as Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago is able to do. It is believed that as many as 15% of the 1.5 million residents, actively participate in Carnival. Months of planning and competition culminate in two days of glitter and dance. The creativity reflected in costumes is unparalleled in the region. The rhythm of calypso music and the unique contribution of the steel band combine to present one of the greatest theatrical shows on earth.

Despite the indigenous elements, carnival did not originate in Trinidad. Actually, there is no evidence of the festival prior to 1783, when the French-speaking planter immigrants and their African slaves arrived.¹ The festival finds its roots in Roman Catholicism and can be traced to the twelfth century in France. Then, it was called “The Feast of Fools” and celebrated by

¹ Darryl Barrow, “Carnival in Trinidad and Religion: An Exploration of Trinidad’s Culture and Theology”. Cf. Gervase M. Bushe, *Growing up Wild in Trinidad* (Volume 1). (SC: CreateSpace, 2008), 194-201.

junior priests who used the occasion “to make fun of traditional symbols and invent their own ludicrous symbols.”² Today, centuries later, the occasion is still characterized by fun.

Etymologically, carnival is believed to have come from two Latin words, *carnus* and *vale*; meaning, “good-bye or farewell to flesh.”³ It does seem apparent that both history and etymology concur that the essence of the festival is a fling of the flesh. Another word often associated with carnival is *bacchanal*; from *Bacchus*, a Roman and Greek mythical deity representing life and revelry. The term introduces the idea of revelry and drunkenness.

Masquerading is another feature in contemporary carnival celebrations. A similar feature was evident in the twelfth century celebrations of the “Feast of Fools”. Ingvild Gilhus used the term “reversals” to describe the “contrary behavior”. “The reversals,” she contends, “represent transformations from human to animal, from male to female, and from spirit to body.”⁴

In his analysis of West Indian Literature on carnival themes, Lloyd Brown argues that “the element of play-acting finds its most natural symbol in the mask of the carnival’s road marcher, and in the masquerade of the carnival bands.”⁵ Citing Derek Walcott, Brown observes that masquerading confers “a fleeting mobility on its participants.”⁶

The parallels between the contemporary and twelfth century carnivals are amazing. For instance, “The Feast of Fools” focused on releasing tension to create arousal in the participants. It was as though the energy which kept the religious system together was let loose. In essence, there was movement from the orderly to the ludicrous, from form to lack of form. “This movement was the prime characteristic of the Feast of Fools.”⁷

Today it would appear as though carnival is primarily an opportunity to display creative ingenuity. In this study, I will argue that that display of creativity is as much a mask as the masks displayed. An insightful analysis of non-Christian literary critics will confirm that contemporary quest for joy is no different than the twelfth century quest for joy. How ironic that 800 years ago, in their quest for joy, the festivities were referred to as *asinaria festa*, the “Feast of Asses”.⁸

It will soon become very evident that my reflections are not intended to analyze the value of culture or the usefulness of indigenous art forms. Instead, I am arguing that the quest for joy in carnival is elusive. Financial institutions will confirm that participants do not usually have “the last laugh.”

CARNIVAL: A THEATRICAL SPECTACLE

Carnival celebrates a vitality and passionate sense of life itself. In addition, carnival is a folk-art form with distinctive metaphoric structures. In a sense, carnival has its own stylistic tradition. It is this dimension of carnival that prompted Errol Hill to conclude that Trinidad carnival is “the greatest annual theatrical spectacle of all of all time.”⁹ Apart from the

² Ingvild Salid Gilhus, “Carnival in Religion: The Feast of Fools in France. “ *Numen*, Volume 37, Fasc. 1.

³ Barrow, 5.

⁴ Gilhus, 7.

⁵ Lloyd Brown, “‘Making Style’: The West Indian Writer and the Carnival Tradition. “ *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 18, Nos. 3 and 4, 131.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁷ Gilhus, 46.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹ Errol Hill, *The Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1972), 3.

opportunities to be creative, some believe, carnival brings emotional relief to many persons. Barrow's analysis ably illustrates this point:

There are many people who do regard carnival as a good escape releaser. People have been experiencing stress, strain, and certain inhibitions, brought on by social conventions. Carnival allows people to release their pent-up energies and desires.¹⁰

Interestingly, what Barrow sees as an asset in carnival, Ismith Khan in *The Obeah Man*¹¹ sees as symbols of a deep-seated social malaise. Michael Anthony will very likely concur with Khan. On the one hand Anthony sees carnival as a celebration of life itself; however, on the other hand, there is uneasiness. There is some uneasiness with the manner in which the masks and play-acting of the masquerade demonstrate that carnival itself is an elaborate game of sorts.¹² As alluded to earlier in this paper, it is an exploitive game played for the benefit of commercial interests that profit from carnival.

I must agree with Brown that there is some underlying irony of the carnival spirit. "The libertinism and the masquerades are both a form of escape and even more problematically, a celebration of the life in defiance of all those ills which partly inspire the need for escape in the first place."¹³ Here again Walcott is on target in his poem 'Mass Man'. "Carnival is expected as a kind of sham behind which we may discover images of pain and despair."¹⁴

Much of this pain is reflected in the calypso. Whereas one can choose to focus on calypso as art, and glory in the calypsonian's ability, the reality of what is communicated cannot be ignored. Pain is too often trivialized in order to solicit laughter. To use frivolity as a coping device for pain can be compared with using a band-aid to relieve someone of cancer.

The increasing use of alcohol may also be another coping device as well as a vital part of merriment. This excessive use of alcohol is compounded by an upsurge of unwanted pregnancies and increasing incidents of sexually transmitted diseases. These social problems are attested to by national statistics and special governmental programs to curb this malaise.

Hence, it is not enough to rejoice in the creative opportunities carnival brings and ignore the price the nation pays. Entertainers should be discouraged from trivializing reality as a mere artistic expression. Participants must be challenged to provide answers and not merely analyze the condition of a nation. When asked about trivializing reality, one popular calypsonian told his interviewer that he was an entertainer and not a pastor. In essence, his role was to ensure laughter. One must again ask, who has the last laugh?

Ash Wednesday, the day following carnival, is no laughing matter. The abandoned costumes, piles of debris and inebriated bodies, paint a picture of gloom, so unlike the laughter that prevailed hours earlier. When added to the cases of marital unfaithfulness, unwanted pregnancies and sordid list of social evils, one is left to ask: Is this the price a nation should pay for joy?

Canon Knolly Clarke believes the Church should educate her members on the evil aspects of Carnival, so that the festival could be enjoyed without revelers abusing freedom.¹⁵ But isn't this a case of dealing with symptoms and not with causes? The debauchery at carnival is only

¹⁰ Barrow, 9.

¹¹ Ismith Khan, *The Obeah Man* (London: Hutchinson, 1964), 134.

¹² Michael Anthony, *The Games Were Coming* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963), 96-101.

¹³ Brown, 134.

¹⁴ Derek Walcott, *The Gulf and Other Persons* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), 19.

¹⁵ Barrow, 13; citing Canon Clarke in his unpublished paper, "Views on Carnival in Trinidad", November 1987, 2.

one of the ways people chose to cope with pain. In other words, carnival merely provides a context for social abuse. Social analysts will confirm, following carnival, many face additional pain.

In attempting to analyze carnival celebrations, many persons limit their analysis to the cultural and aesthetic aspects of the festival; and the reasons for involvement in such celebrations are often overlooked. Earlier, I argued that “release from tension” was a characteristic feature of the twelfth century “Feast of Fools”. In describing the timing of carnival in the early nineteenth century in Trinidad, one historian noted that carnival was conducted “in the driest and coolest time of the year, before the worst rush of the cutting of the canes begins...”¹⁶ In other words, the need to release tension characterized both periods in history.

Before the emancipation of slavery in 1846, slaves were excluded from carnival.¹⁷ At least two factors may have accounted for this. The first concerned the social mixing with the non-slave population. In addition, it seemed too risky to provide opportunities for slaves to release tension. Such a move could have created security risks and a diversion from the oppressive nature of slavery.

However, following emancipation, “the ancient lines of demarcation between the classes were obliterated and as a consequence carnival degenerated into a noisy and disorderly amusement for the lower classes.”¹⁸ Carnival provided such therapeutic relief for the masses “that the white elite of the society withdrew from participation...”¹⁹ One white commentator referred to carnival in 1847 as “squalid slender...cheapness being the grand requisite.” Despite the absence of the characteristic “white” elements of the nineteenth century, the guise of foolery and desire for pleasure were evident.

This pleasure principle has not been limited to carnival in Trinidad. Similar festivals in Latin American countries feature themes of pleasure.²⁰ Here are at least two additional features to carnival in Latin America; there is a strong Roman Catholic influence, and carnival is routinely celebrated on the eve of Lent. This period is characterized by prayers and much abstinence. It is evident that the timing of carnival was intended to serve as a last fling, before the holy season of reflection.

It would therefore seem safe to conclude, that the desire for pleasure in carnival has always been associated with the release of some kind of tension.²¹ In that sense, the annual affair would be expected to reflect the feelings of the populace at the time of celebration. The elitism that was evident in pre-emancipation celebrations and the uncontrollable exuberance that characterized the post-emancipation celebrations would confirm this opinion.

¹⁶ Andrew Pearse, “Carnival in Nineteenth Century Trinidad,” in *Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean*, ed. Michael M. Horowitz (New York: The Natural History Press, 1971), 530

¹⁷Ibid., 538.

¹⁸Ibid., 539.

¹⁹Ibid., 540.

²⁰ E.g., Janet L. DeCosmo, “Reggae and Rastafari in Salvador, Bahia,” (In *Religion, Culture and Tradition in the Caribbean*, edited by Hemchand Gossai and Nathaniel Samuel Murrell. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 39, 56-58.

²¹ Nandi Bynoe, ‘Brief History of Carnival’ (accessed 14/9/18): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvMaMbEN_RY.

This line of reasoning posits serious questions concerning contemporary celebrations. Critics would agree that amidst the pageantry to which I referred earlier, carnival today encompasses undesirable and lewd behavior. Are these a reflection of society? The fact that single-parent births in November (nine months after carnival) exceed any other month in the year might provide some clues to an answer. In addition, the issuance of free condoms by the government shortly before carnival celebrations, also speaks volumes concerning the expectations of the government as the annual event approaches. Here the government is attempting to reduce the negative social impact of carnival. Rather than offer a hurried critique, Christians need to examine their own response to this social malaise.

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Because of the multi-religious nature of the Caribbean islands, any loosely defined use of the word Christian can prove to be misleading.²² For the purposes of this paper, the term will be used in reference to any religious community that recognizes Jesus Christ as its founder. These communities reflect at least three basic positions on carnival celebrations.

Catholics and Anglicans display a sense of tolerance to carnival. Some priests from both traditions have participated as masqueraders. One prominent Catholic layman expressed the view that “carnival and creativity are synonymous”. In addition, Cecil Colthrus believes “a Christian’s involvement can bring about this creative idea in all its radiance so that all that is said and done give glory to God.”²³

Anglican Canon, Knolly Clarke, believes that “carnival is a National Festival and that people should celebrate carnival if they wish to do so.”²⁴ It forms part of the historical development of our country, and very much part of our culture.”²⁵ In response to the question of inappropriate behavior, Clarke believes it is up to the individual to decide how to conduct himself on carnival days.

Another basic position on carnival is held by a group of churches that see the Catholic-Anglican position as being too liberal and the evangelical position, too fundamentalist. Here are churches that want to be more open to culture. For instance, the general feeling among Methodists is that there is still too much good in carnival to allow the festival to be destroyed. Hence, the annual festival is endorsed, with expressions of concern about lewd behavior.

Evangelical churches tend to be much less tolerant in their response. Some believe the unconfirmed pagan origins make carnival unacceptable and even abominable. When added to the debauchery mentioned earlier, carnival in every form is anathematized. Interestingly, the Hindu and Muslim communities share similar ethical concerns.

In all the responses, very little analysis centers on the legitimate quest for joy. Although valuable, too much time is consumed in discussing culture, patriotism and inappropriate

²² Burton Sakeralli, “Christianity: Syncretism or Obeah?” *Groundings: Catholic Theological Reflections on Issues Facing Caribbean People in the 21st Century* 32 (2014): 59-68.

²³ Barrow, 11: Citing Cecil Colthrus in an unpublished paper, “Carnival and the Christian”, 1987, 1.

²⁴ “In Trinidad and Tobago to ‘Dingolay’ refers to any activity that is undertaken with spontaneous, joyful, and carefree abandon.” E. G. Flett, “Dingolayin’,” in *A Kairos Moment for Caribbean Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 49.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12; Citing Knolly Clarke in an unpublished paper, “Views on Carnival in Trinidad”, November 1987, 1.

behavior. In the process, the issue of lasting joy is being ignored. Furthermore, many contend that carnival breaks down ethnic and societal walls. For how long after the celebrations is this apparent utopia evident? Would a social audit confirm “a clean bill of health?”

Some evangelicals testify that after experiencing a personal faith in Christ, no longer was there an ongoing desire to participate in carnival. Some of this may be nothing but religious conditioning. However, other converts, without that conditioning, no longer sense the need to participate. How does one account for this change?

I will argue that at least two things may be able to account for that change. In the first place, there is a spiritual conviction that calls for a dissociation from activities that do not foster growth for the new faith in Christ. Despite the rhetoric to undermine these convictions, increasing incidents confirm the validity of the testimonies.

However, because cultural and artistic expressions are so much a part of carnival, any attempt to divorce oneself from carnival can be perceived as being anti-cultural and unpatriotic. The issue for evangelicals is not anti-culturalism and/or the lack of patriotism; it is the appropriateness of carnival celebrations. Are there more appropriate ways to celebrate joy? Can a Christian worldview accommodate a theology of joy?

A THEOLOGY OF JOY

Harvey Cox ably summarizes the gist of this chapter, in his contribution to *The Future of Hope: Theology as Eschatology*. In this volume he appeals for “a theology which is a rediscovery of the celebrative aspects of life, the goodness of the flesh, the wonderful gift of joy, and that which . . . affirms our hope for the future.”²⁶ Is such a theology possible?

The Bible breathes a spirit of joy and gives a strong base from which to begin this exploration. Many might even be surprised to discover that there are more New Testament references to joy than to all of sadness, weeping, mourning, anguish, anger and distress put together.

Jesus embodies joy.²⁷ His personal style makes it natural for him to express his understanding of the coming kingdom in terms of joyful celebration as in a marriage feast, a welcome home, the acquisition of a treasure, the finding of a lost coin, or a lost sheep. In attempting a psychological definition of joy, J.A. Hadfield believes that

*Joy is the affective tone which accompanies the expression of any one instinct in conformity with the sentiments of the self. Thus we speak of the joy, and not the pleasures of motherhood, for although the mother is for the time being entirely dominated by this emotion, its expression is in complete harmony with the feelings of the self.*²⁸

At least four truths emerge, as one attempts to unpack Hadfield’s definition.

Firstly, there is the consistency between the expression. This truth establishes the intrinsic relationship between the expression and the individual expressing same. Hence, one’s state of mind will affect one’s expression. Here is an appeal for authenticity. Unless one’s state of

²⁶ Harvey Cox, “The Problem of Continuity,” in Frederick Herzog, ed., *The Future Hope: Theology as Eschatology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 80.

²⁷ Editor’s note: The Lucan writings about Christ are replete with joyous moments, despite many episodes of trials and tribulation. In Luke’s second volume, for example, it can justifiably be said that “[t]here is more than enough divine joy to go around!” *The Book of Acts: A Concise Caribbean Commentary* (Kingston: DeoVolente, 2018), 104.

²⁸ J.A. Hadfield, *Psychology and Morals* (London: Methuen, Methuen, 1920), 151. Emphasis added.

mind and expression of joy are compatible, authentic joy cannot be experienced. The people of Israel experienced this in Babylon. Their “tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, ‘Sing us one of the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?’” The issue here is not geographical. Rather, the issue concerns the consistency between their state of mind and their singing songs of joy.

Earlier I cited Derek Walcott as one who contended that for many, carnival was a kind of sham, behind which one can discover images of pain and despair.²⁹ Could such persons experience authentic joy? Wouldn't carnival celebrations be sublimation, in that it merely compensates for something authentic? Or, to borrow the words of Lloyd Brown, wouldn't carnival be “a celebration of life in defiance of all those ills which partly inspire the need for escape?”³⁰ A biblical understanding of joy requires authenticity and as such does not parallel the joy of carnival which is inconsistent with the realities of the celebrants.

Hadfield's definition of joy further suggests that joy expresses itself in movement. Liturgical dancer, Celeste Schroeder, observes that “joy is marked by living movement.”³¹ She contends that God the author of movement has choreographed life with the distinctive of motion; the sea, wind, rivers and the earth.

Interestingly, even Jesus, in his admonitions to his generation, recorded in the gospel accounts of Matthew 11: 16-19 and Luke 7: 31-35, remarks on the people's lack of response, neither dancing or mourning, their physical response or lack thereof revealing an inner reality.

In Hebraic culture, both mourning and dancing took physical form from the sways and rolls of lament to the joyful bursts of dance. The Psalmist echoes the relationship between joy and dance in proclaiming, “You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever” (Psalm 30: 11-12).

It is in this area of movement, the church has much to learn from carnival celebrations and non-church related activities. Attend a football game and see the exhilaration and exuberance displayed by supporters. There is a consistency between the depth of emotions and the exuberance in movement. Christians claim that an encounter with God demands emotional involvement. Terms like ecstasy, rapture and wonder are often used to describe encounters with God. However, there is often the absence of exuberance in movement that parallels the alleged emotional encounter Christians claim to experience.

One is not arguing for an exuberance in movement that is similar to the carnival-type expressions. Instead, one is arguing for an exuberance that is compatible with the depth of, and sobriety of the emotions experienced in encounters with God. The absence of that exuberance leaves more doubt than conviction, that an encounter had really taken place.

Far too often Christians allow cultural norms, and often foreign cultural norms, to dictate the nature of their exuberance in movement. This results in an inconsistent lifestyle that baffles any coherent thinker. For instance, imagine a Christian known for vigorous outbursts at sporting activities; every area of her life is characterized by similar outbursts, except when she is in worship. How can this inconsistency be reconciled?

²⁹ Walcott, 19.

³⁰ Brown, 134.

³¹ Celeste Schroeder, “Dance as a Posture of Joy,” *Crux*, Vol. 30 March 1994, 1.

Carnival challenges the Christian to harmonize emotional encounters with exuberance that reflect the essence of the alleged emotions. The spirit of this exuberance was demonstrated after the Lord led Moses and the children of Israel through the Red Sea. It was during that outburst “Miriam...took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her with tambourines and dancing” Exodus 15:20).

In the third place, Hadfield’s definition of joy suggests that joy is a response. In this regard, one cannot ignore the stimulant that triggers the response. In Hebraic culture, dance was associated with joy, but particularly to joy as a response to God’s grace. In various ways, God participated in the ‘dailyness’ of the lives of his people. Often, their response was a deep joy which affected the totality of who they were. As a dancer, Schroeder contends that “a physical gesture usually is a response to what is already occurring within our inner life.”³² She sees dance as merely one posture in the rainbow of movement. Is one therefore equating the carnival dance with dancing before the Lord? Certainly not!

In that dancing before the Lord should reflect the character of the Person for whom the dance is being offered should self evident. In addition, the dance is not intended to be a release of the dancer’s tensions. Instead, the dance should be a reverent response to an awareness of God’s personhood or His sovereign acts. As a result, dancing for the Christian should be characterized by reverence and grace—it is actually an act of worship, in that it is an offering to God.

Indeed, dancing at carnival is a response, However, it is evident that that response is not as a result of any divine stimuli. In some instances, the stimuli reflect a need to release tension. Unfortunately, there are cases of immoral intentions. These stimuli produce responses that are far removed from reverence and grace; hence, the incidents of debauchery and anti-social behaviour.

There is a fourth dimension of joy that is implied by Hadfield’s definition. This concerns the spontaneous abandonment that is inherent in joy. It is in this area that expressed joy contains risk. Risk is inevitable because spontaneity is involved. Spontaneity incorporates the idea of charting virgin territory. Like Siamese twins, spontaneity and abandonment go hand in hand. Children best illustrate this as they sometimes throw themselves into the arms of parents without notice. However, this apparent reckless behaviour is undergirded by a trust in the person to whom the child is abandoning self.

For the Christian, expressing joy is no different. It is spontaneous in that one does not program it. One cannot program a response; whenever that is attempted, the response is devoid of authenticity. However, the absence of programming should not suggest unrestrained behaviour. Spontaneity, as all of life, is under God’s control and as such should reflect propriety that befits worship.

In addition, the abandonment that is such an integral part of expressing joy, is not nebulous for the Christian. It is an intentional surrender of one’s body to holy ecstasy, to awe and wonder. Schroeder’s description of dance approximates the point being made. “The posture of dance,” she argues, “is full of risk. If I jump I must believe the ground will receive and cushion my body. I continue to push past my own boundaries, reaching and pulling into gravity, my body takes me beyond where I think I can go ... in a sense it is throwing ourselves into life completely.”³³

³² Ibid., 4.

³³ Ibid.

It is the kind of abandonment in which we experience states of elevated bliss. Isaiah may have experienced this when he was entrusted with a vision of the Lord (Isaiah 6). The psalmist may also have experienced this abandonment when writing Psalm 150. When touched by the wonder of God, the psalmist passionately called on the instruments of music to exult in praise to God; and, just in case he omitted any instruments from his list, he abandoned caution and proclaimed, “let everything that has breath, praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6).

One must admit carnival encourages abandonment. A cursory study of the calypsos and the revelry that accompany the celebrations are indicative of a freedom that celebrants do not enjoy at other times in the year. However, because this abandonment was never stimulated by noble impulses, the outcome cannot be compatible with the awe, rapture and sense of bliss that results from abandonment to God. Abandonment that results in dehumanizing behaviour, exploitation and abuse, cannot represent acts of God.

For instance, celebrations among the Jews in the Old Testament were a normal part of life. Such occasions were joyous and served to bind families and the nation. However, amidst the celebrations, the Jews were expected to consider those who were less favoured. The Sabbath and sabbatical-year ordinances were designed to foster social and economic equality and inculcate important covenant community principles. For instance, these ordinances encouraged forgiveness in the remission of debts, respect for persons created in the image of God in the manumission of slaves, and the practice of generosity and the idea of stewardship in the redistribution of the covenant land. In other words, biblical celebrations were intended to bring relief and delight to all and not to an elite group of investors.

Jesus was outraged at that kind of abuse in the courtyard of the temple. Paul reprimanded the Corinthians for their thoughtlessness when they met as church to participate in fellowship and communion. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul instructs them to discontinue the practice of getting drunk on wine that leads to debauchery. In each case cited, the biblical principle is clear: the ministry of the church is to enhance and not degrade.

Unfortunately, the evangelical community finds itself incapable of intelligently challenging the degrading elements of carnival. The silence, inconsistent responses, total withdrawal from the activities, and thoughtless criticism, are indicative of the confusion that exists among many churches.

Much of the anti-carnival rhetoric concerns non-issues. At times it becomes hilarious as one hears local preachers condemning the evils of carnival before their own congregations, who already share the ministers’ views. Interestingly, outside of those protective confines of the local church, nothing further is said. The church has not as yet earned the respect of the community to respond intelligently to the issues of carnival. To the best of my knowledge, no one has attempted to respond to carnival as a nation’s quest for joy.

One of the challenges facing the evangelical community is the apparent inability to have a united voice. Hence, no sense of consensus is evident. That alone weakens one’s position in addressing a national issue. Apart from the need to provide a united stance, the community needs to be able to speak with perspicuity.

Equivocal criticisms have created embarrassment and have marginalized evangelicals as anti-cultural and unpatriotic. Unfortunately, the charges are often true in that many worship experiences are so foreign in content that listening to a recording may leave doubts as to the location of the service. Many find it easier to duplicate foreign outreach programs, rather than utilize indigenous resources. In other words, evangelicals have earned for themselves titles

that are foreign, outmoded and insensitive. In light of these evaluations, one is prone to ask: **can** this image be reversed? Can carnival be redeemed?

CONCLUSION

Considering the national acceptance given to carnival, one can appreciate the sense of being overwhelmed--a feeling so often experienced by some concerned evangelicals. However, with the assurance that this battle is the Lord's, there is hope. After much introspection, the church needs to establish a clear sense of mission to do something definite about carnival. For instance, someone needs to determine what is the best course of action to be taken. Should the church withdraw or attack? Or, is infiltration a more desirable approach? Whatever the choice, there are consequences to be faced.

Attempts will also have to be made to affirm culture. There are various elements that are amoral and can be appreciated and affirmed. The same applies to creative artistic expressions. For instance, there is nothing wrong with calypso and the steel band. Because these art forms have been used almost exclusively for non-Christian causes does not negate the value of the forms.

Christians need to remember that only 300 years ago, the singing of hymns was not generally accepted in many churches. John Bunyan for instance, attempted to introduce hymns in his church and split the congregation as a result. After his death in 1691, the church reached a compromise. Those consciously opposed to the hymn could either sit through the hymn singing in silence or remain in the vestibule until that portion of the service was over.³⁴

In other words, the hymns which are commonly accepted in church today, were rejected yesterday. Hence, evangelicals need to be able to determine that which is constant from that which transitory. To be able to make that distinction can result in significant attitudinal changes and benefit to people of God.

There are certain situations where carnival can provide opportunities for ministry. Participation can provide opportunities for restoring dignity and respect to people. Celebration can acquire new meaning. Themes from real-life situations and biblical characters can educate, inform and entertain without resorting to debauchery. Family emphases and intentional attempts to instill values can be taught in some of the most artistic ways. Culture and creativity could be affirmed without sexual overtones. Lewdness and exploitation can be overcome with strong and intentional counter-strategies. One has every reason to believe that enthusiasm can be generated without drunkenness. Participation can provide opportunities to demonstrate authentic rhapsody and praise. In addition, here is an opportunity to reinforce the construct that there is a difference between hilarity and vulgarity.

It is not enough to be saying how it ought not to be done. The time has come for intelligent, intentional alternatives. Biblical joy is infectious and should be evident every moment of the day and not only at carnival. However, the demands for relevance are too great for the church to respond in silence. *Selah.*

³⁴ Steve Miller, *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate: Worldly Comprise or Agent of Renewal?* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 119.

Are All Religions Alike?

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Introduction

I am isolating one challenging, indeed, embarrassing thought from the prayer life of Jesus in John 17.21. With reference to His present and future followers he prayed “*that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you...*”¹ This is a prayer for unity, togetherness among Christians, a prayer that continues to be an embarrassment and a challenge for the multitude of denominations locally, regionally and globally.

In a deep spiritual sense, the Church of Jesus Christ *is in fact one*, in spite of us in our exclusive denominational camps and in spite of us in our rugged individualism within our local churches. This is what one can call *the essential reality* of Christian unity.

In another sense, at the level of functional reality the Church of Jesus Christ needs to be one, i.e. to behave as one and that depends on all of us within local churches and within denominations.

My suggestion is that God is asking all of us from our various denominations to rethink our doctrinal distinctives and rethink dialogue between and among us.

¹ All italics original.

RETHINKING DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES

I believe God is asking us to rethink our doctrinal distinctives. Historically; denominations have mushroomed here and elsewhere because individuals and groups wish to emphasize or specialize in certain things or ‘truths’ that we regard as our denominational distinctives. That’s not a problem, so long as we do not allow distinctives to lead to divisiveness, where we sit in our particular camps and look down on others or speak unkindly against each other without even an intention of talking to or with one another.

The approach to distinctives which I would ask us to reject lovingly or surrender willingly is that approach which views our denominational distinctives, objectively, as ‘what *ought to be prized* and thus what is *prescriptive for all Christians*’.

Even if this approach were correct and defensible there could still be far fewer denominations within Christendom and more Church mergers and there should be greater togetherness between and among churches because much or most of what many of us prize as distinctives is held in the same way by others.

The problem is that, denominationally, we do not talk to each other enough to know that we share common distinctives or we might not be as humble, honest and sensible as the Disciples of Christ and the United Church brethren in Jamaica who merged as one denomination several years ago.

The approach to distinctives which I recommend is that which views denominational distinctives, subjectively, as ‘what **we** prize and thus what is simply *descriptive of us*.’ The other approach I remind, views our denominational distinctives, objectively, as ‘what *ought to be prized and thus what is prescriptive for all Christians*’.

But you might say to me ‘come now Chisholm, surely you know that what we prize and thus what is descriptive of us could be what God commands or expects of all of us and therefore ought to be what all Christians prize and regard as prescriptive.’

My answer? You are dead right, it **could be**, operative word, *could*. But you must bear in mind that some things are possible, or probable or likely or certain if we have the evidence to move it along the spectrum.

My recommended approach does not deny the likelihood even of one’s denominational distinctives having the backing of Scripture but my approach leaves room for openness to being corrected by others.

Let me illustrate the need for humility and openness re denominational distinctives. I move from the humorous to the more serious.

I heard that there was, at one time, a denominational group in Kingston, Jamaica called ‘Straight Way Baptists’. Their major denominational distinctive which was consistent with their name could be detected in the way they baptized. They would lower you into the waters of baptism vertically (no bending) and take you up out of the water vertically, or straight way and they had scriptural justification for this odd practice in the baptism of our Lord.

Mark 1.10 says of Jesus, “And straightway coming up out of the **water...**” They did not know and could care less that Mark used a word in Greek that means ‘immediately, right away’; they thought it had to do with the position of the body in baptism.

There is a group, still around I am told, that takes pride in their distinctive approach to Holy Communion or ‘breaking of bread’. They never share at the Lord’s Table in a morning worship but always in the evening because it is the Lord’s Supper not the Lord’s breakfast.

There are two denominations that deserve commendation in this regard for their public willingness to rethink and change their doctrinal distinctives at least in part, significantly in the case of the other. I speak of the Church of God of Prophecy, which until about 1991/2 forbade its members to wear jewellery on the basis of their understanding of 1 Peter 3. The Church admitted that its traditional approach to the text was not as accurate as it might have been.

My recommended approach to dialogue is consistent with the approach of the Church of God of Prophecy; leave room for the possibility of error or imprecision in our denominational distinctives.

The Worldwide Church of God was until several years ago Sabbatarian, non-Trinitarian and held to several other distinctives which the Church has now renounced. Sincere dialogue between and among us can lead to correction of error and sharpening of imprecision in doctrine. Let's have genuine dialogue, non-confessional or confessional, and we just may discover that some of what we regard as unique to us is shared by others of us.

If the denominations within each of the umbrella groups like the JEA, or JCC were to examine the baseline reality beneath their being under such a general umbrella then they could all be one denomination, but for denominational pride perhaps.

Please do not let denominational arrogance or prized ignorance block you from the approach to distinctives and dialogue that I am recommending. The Church must not encourage the view that ignorance is a virtue.

That's my word to the denominations within Christianity. Now a word to Christians in a world of several religions just like the 1st century of this era was. The 21st century like the 1st century, has little use for religious distinctives and the call is for all religions to recognize that all

religions can and should engage in common worship based on two assumptions/propositions.

One such assumption/proposition is that *the fact of a plurality of religions means the essential sameness of all religions.*² Another related assumption or proposition is that *all religions lead to God or the same God.*

There are some basic problems for these two assumptions/propositions. If by ‘sameness’ we mean more than the superficial idea that they are all ‘religions’, then the assumption is not true since some of the truth-claims of the various major religions, as articulated by their most serious adherents, *are different and often contradictory of each other.*

Islam’s belief in one God is not the same as the Christian concept of one God, nor is either of these views of God compatible with that of a polytheistic religion (cf. ancient Egypt) or animistic religion (cf. ancient and modern sections of Africa apart from Egypt) or non-theistic religions (cf. forms of Buddhism).

It is therefore unfortunate that scholars like John Hick, R.C. Zaehner³ and others, try to homogenize all religions by suggesting that the same basic divine reality is behind all religions.⁴ As the Anglican scholar Alister McGrath advises, “The idea that all religions are the same, or that they all lead to the same God, is thus little more than an unsubstantiated assertion that requires a refusal to acknowledge that there are genuine and significant differences among the religions. . . . Only in Western liberal circles would such an idea be taken seriously.”⁵

It must be noted too that one cannot seriously argue for the equality or sameness of any two or more things without coming to grips with what

² The song ‘One God’ reflects this mindset.

³ See John Hick (ed.), *Truth and Dialogue in World Religions: Conflicting Truth-Claims* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), 1974, 1-19, 140-155.

⁴ Cited and critiqued in Alister McGrath, *Intellectuals Don’t Need God & Other Modern Myths* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House), 1993, 112ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

equality or sameness really means, philosophically. If two things are really equal or the same, then whatever is true of one *is of logical necessity* true of the other. If anything can be affirmed of one which is not true of the other then the two things are not equal, not the same.

By this token Christianity may share commonalities with, but could not be equal to Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism or Taoism or even Judaism or any other religion for that matter, because Christianity, *uniquely and perhaps arrogantly, affirms that Jesus Christ is God incarnate who died a sacrificial and substitutionary death and rose again three days later.*

The fundamental and distinctive Christian doctrines of the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ were as unique and radical in the religiously pluralist first-century world as they are in the 21st century.

Modern attempts to water down or explain away the meaning and cruciality of these two doctrines for the early Church, in the interest of multi-faith non- confessional dialogue, flounder on the texts of the New Testament documents, and those who urge the watering down of these two doctrines cannot surface a good reason why the early Church would have developed these ‘obnoxious doctrines’ in the first place.

There is no question about the fact that the intensely monotheistic New Testament writers put on the lips of Jesus claims to be God or equal to God. (‘The very boldness of Jesus’ claims concerning his deity and the centrality of his personhood to his claims render him unique among the greatest religious leaders of the world’s major religions.)

A. J. Hoover has a point when he contends,

Moses didn’t claim to be Yahweh; Socrates didn’t claim to be Zeus; Zoroaster didn’t claim to be Ahura Mazda; Mohammed didn’t claim to be Allah; Buddha didn’t claim to be Brahma. Only Christ claimed to be one with the God who sent him (John 10:30) Familiarity has dulled our ears to the wonder of his claims.⁶

⁶ *The Case for Christian Theism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 169.

Jesus was no mere guide to truth or to God. No, he claimed to be much more than that and ties himself to his teaching and claims.

Mahatma Gandhi once declared that whether or not there was a historical Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount would still be true for him.⁷ But note some crucial claims in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere in Jesus' teachings that raise hard questions for Gandhi's approach.

Jesus inextricably linked his claims to his person by saying 'Blessed are you if you are persecuted **on my account**' (Mt. 5.11); 'lose your life **for my sake...**' (Mk. 8.35); and the unique, if arrogant and exclusivist, 'I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me' (Jn. 14.6).⁸ Though we can't stress every 'the' (**the** way, **the** truth, **the** life), because this may just be a case of Hebrew parallelism in the New Testament, yet this is quite a claim on the lips of Jesus.

Even if these statements are not the *very words* of Jesus, it is difficult to see them as less than the *very voice* of Jesus, and either way these claims are bold and unique!

There is something uniquely shocking about the claims of Jesus at his trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin. Hear the critical question of identity, 'I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God?' (Mt. 26.63). The answer in the Synoptics is 'You have said so' (Mt. 26.64 and Lk. 22.69) or 'I am' (Mk.14.62). But there is a crucial additional element which all three synoptic evangelists mention, on the lips of Jesus, with reference to himself; the Old Testament reference to the son of man seated '**at the right hand of power**'.

The expression 'at the right hand of power' is a Hebraism suggesting the immediate presence of deity! Jesus was claiming to be equal to God and Caiaphas, recognizing this shocking 'blasphemy' recoiled by doing

⁷ Ibid, 170.

⁸ Compare the more liberal statement of the Bhagavad-Gita 'In any way that men love me in that same way they find my love: for many are the paths of men, but they all in the end come to me', 4.11. Note as well the elements of similarity between 9.18 and John 14.6!

something shocking as well; contrary to Levitical law (Lev. 21.10) he rent his priestly garments!

Even if the claims made for Jesus are not true, the fact that the New Testament documents purport them to be true means that Jesus Christ cannot be put on par with any other religious leader or god *as far as the New Testament writers are concerned*. For these writers Jesus is unique because he is God incarnate.

The doctrine of the bodily, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ *in historical time and in a specified geographical location* was/is quite unique despite the erroneous views of some scholars about the commonness of resurrection belief in the 1st century and the equally erroneous view that the Christians copied the resurrection idea from other cultures and religions.

The notion of the commonness of resurrection belief in the 1st century can be refuted by recollection of the fact that the Sadducees denied the idea of a resurrection (cf. Acts 23.6-8) and the Pharisees and people in general believed in a general resurrection *on the last day*, at the end of history (cf. Martha in Jn. 11.24).

The idea that the Christians borrowed the resurrection idea from other cultures or religions lacks supporting evidence. The death/resurrection of Jesus is said to be drawn from the accounts of one or other of several allegedly dying/resurrected gods.

The major resurrected god that critics claim provided the model from which Christianity borrowed, or by which it was influenced, is the Egyptian Osiris, husband of Isis.⁹ As the myth goes, Osiris was murdered by his brother Seth who sank the coffin with Osiris' body in the Nile. Isis discovered the body and returned it to Egypt whereupon

⁹ Diop says, without supporting documentation. "[Osiris] rises from the dead to save humanity (from famine!). Osiris is the god of redemption.. .Osiris is the god who, three thousand *years* before Christ, dies and rises from the dead to save men. He is humanity's god of redemption; he ascends to heaven to sit at the right hand of his father, the great god. Ra. He is the son of God", 1991, op. cit., 312.

Seth found the body and cut it into fourteen pieces and scattered these widely. Isis found every piece.

Versions of the story vary from this point on. Some versions of the myth simply have Osiris as king of the Underworld. Plutarch, writing in the second century AD has the most complete version of the myth of Osiris, including a two-fold resurrection by Isis.¹⁰

A major problem here concerning Osiris as a model for Jesus' death and resurrection, pointed out by one Christian scholar (Yamauchi),¹¹ is that *immortality for an Egyptian does not require resurrection of the body, only that aspects of his personality like his Ba and Ka¹² continue to hover about his body*. To accomplish this, the body had to be mummified (always the case with portrayals of Osiris), food put in the coffin or depiction of food on the tomb walls and magical spells buried with the body (hence the Pyramid texts, Coffin texts or *Book of the Dead* from the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms, respectively). Ronald Nash identifies several critical differences between Jesus' death/resurrection and the death of the gods in the so-called mystery religions. We isolate two of these for mention.

1. "Jesus' death was an actual event in history. The death of the god described in the pagan cults is a mythical drama with no historical ties; its continued rehearsal celebrates the recurring death and rebirth of nature. The incontestable fact that the early church believed that its proclamation of Jesus' death and resurrection was grounded upon what actually happened in history makes absurd any attempt to derive this belief from the mythical, non-historical stories of the pagan cults."¹³

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 137, also Yamauchi, *op. cit.*, 5 and Finegan, *op. cit.*, 48-49.

¹¹ Yamauchi, *op. cit.*, 5.

¹² According to Finegan, "The *kha* is the gross, mortal, perishable body. The *ba*, *ka*, and *akh* are subtle, immortal elements *op. cit.*, 45.

¹³ Nash, *op. cit.*, 17 1-172. See also A.D. Nock's similar statement, "In Christianity everything is made to turn on a dated experience of a historical Person; it can be seen from 1 Cor. XV. 3 that the statement of the story early assumed the form of a statement in a Creed. There is nothing in the parallel cases which points to any attempt to give such a basis of historical evidence to belief," cited in Yamauchi, *op. cit.*, 6.

2. Jesus' death is voluntary and for others, to deal with sin, whereas death overtakes the gods of the mysteries and none dies a substitutionary death.'¹⁴

Biblical Christianity then cannot be defensibly seen as the same as, identical with or equal to any other religion, because of the unique Christian doctrines of the deity, incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is not enough to say all religions are equal because they are all religions. That is as foolish as saying all scientific theories are equal because they are all scientific theories. The contradictory truth-claims of religions have to be reckoned with just like the contradictory aspects of scientific theories. The call for inter/multi-faith worship or even dialogue cannot be based on a presumed equality of all religions for the reasons we have explored earlier.

It is perhaps only with reference to things religious that so many people suddenly become confused, agnostic or skeptical about the possibility of knowing truth. In life in general we seem to be able to identify truth from falsehood. The courts of every country thrive on the ability to discover truth and differentiate truth from falsehood and so do all of us in evaluating statements, making important decisions on data purporting to be true, and much more, to get on with our lives.

If we had the time I would have loved to advance a defense of objective truth as *the correspondence of what one knows or says, to what is independent of the knower and his/her consciousness, language¹⁵ or 'community.'¹⁶ I am aware that there are several theories of truth that could be considered, like the coherence theory, or the rationalist theory or the empiricist, pragmatic or emotivist theories, but for me the correspondence theory has fewest weaknesses.*

¹⁴ Nash, op. cit., 17 1-172.

¹⁵ Cf. the essence of language for reality in Wittgenstein, Hauerwas and Kallenberg (see Scott Smith, *Virtue Ethics and Moral knowledge: Philosophy of language after MacIntyre and Hauerwas*, Ashgate, 2003.).

¹⁶ Reflective of postmodernism's rejection of meta-narrative and the limitation of reality or truth to one's 'community'.

Evaluation of the truth-claims of all religions is critical and for that job one needs a working theory of truth.¹⁷

Christians should realize that apart from Satanism, all or almost all of the world's major religions contain much truth, commendable ethical principles, and useful practices from which Christians can learn much. There ought to be a profound respect for adherents of these other religions and especially for their doctrines and practices *even though one may disagree with said doctrines or practices*.

Since there is usually much criticism of Christians for not being tolerant of other religions it is important to clarify what tolerance and intolerance really are.

The classical sense of the principle of tolerance, strictly speaking, is one's respectful attitude *to persons with whom one disagrees*, that is persons whom one regards as holding views (religious, scientific, philosophical or whatever) that are wrong or false. One does not tolerate people with whom one is in agreement.

The modern version of tolerance, according to Moreland and Craig, "goes beyond the classical version in claiming that one should not even judge that other people's viewpoints are wrong."¹⁸ This modern position cannot really be maintained with any degree of consistency unless one believes that all truth-claims, in any field of inquiry, are of equal value. If it is possible any at all, in any field of inquiry to adjudge error, then the modern version of tolerance is fatally flawed.

On this line of reasoning, one is intolerant if and only if one shows *disrespect for* (not simply disagreement with) another, with whom one disagrees, that is, one whose views are regarded as wrong or false.

¹⁷ See the recent excellent book by Christian US Attorney Craig Parton, *Religion on Trial: Cross-Examining Religious Truth-Claims*, Concordia Publishing House, 2018.

¹⁸ J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press), 2003, 416.

There is a clear response precedent to the challenge of interfaith and multi-faith worship in Paul's behaviour in Athens found in Acts 17.

For me worship is a serious act of recognition of and response to the 'otherness and worthiness of a deity who is at least described or defined as possessing distinguishing or differentiating characteristics.

If there is no philosophical equality in the description or definition of the deity of any two religions, then adherents of those two religions cannot **sensibly** engage in a planned joint worship experience *as of the same deity*.

There are passages in the Bible that speak, explicitly and implicitly, against the Jew or Christian being involved in what we now call inter or multi-faith worship.

Paul's experience at the Areopagus in Acts 17 is very suggestive. The idolatry in the context is clear: many gods are being worshipped, and the Athenians are so scrupulous in their religious devotion that they tried to show recognition of and respect for, even an unknown god to 'whom' they erected an altar.

Paul's response to the scene in Athens emerges in v. 16; he was provoked in his spirit. Paul's practical response was to engage in reasoning (confessional dialogue) with Jews and Gentiles in their meeting places and with anyone he found in the marketplace (v. 17).

In v. 18, Paul runs into two philosophical groups- Epicureans and Stoics- who seemingly concluded, from listening to Paul, that he was promoting two foreign or new gods – Jesus and *Anastasis* (Gk. for resurrection), v. 18. The philosophers invited Paul to address them (vv.19-20). Paul begins his address complimenting the philosophers on their religious devotion, evidenced in their "objects of worship" including an altar with the inscription "to the unknown God" (vv. 22-23). He indicates that he would declare to them the God whom they worshipped in ignorance (v. 23b).

Paul chides them, philosophically, for betraying a belief that a crafted object could be God (vv. 24-29). He informs them that God would overlook their past ignorance but “now commands all men to repent” (v. 30). His stated reason for the call to repentance is propositional and decidedly confessional, that is, designed to change the wrong views of his listeners.

Repentance, Paul urges, is necessary for those who hear the truth, because God would judge the world by the resurrected Jesus (v. 31).

In a sense then Athens provided a golden opportunity for multi-faith worship yet Paul, as a Jew and a Christian, did not glibly participate; instead he rebuked the falsity of a plurality of idols in Athens and proclaimed the cruciality of the resurrected Jesus for one’s eternal destiny.

It should be noted that Paul, implicitly, rejected the approach to God which says, ‘relate to God whomever/whatever you perceive God to be’. For Paul there were defining and differentiating characteristics about God that could not be glossed over. If God has no defining or differentiating features how do you distinguish that God from a slice of salami?

What Paul did at Athens was quite consistent with the Old Testament fussiness about the gods people worship (Ex. 20.3-4; Deut. 6.13-14). The strong ban on worshipping the celestial bodies indicates that the Bible is not ambivalent about the object of one’s worship (2 Kings 21.3, 5; 23.4-5).

It would be difficult to find any support for inter or multi-faith worship in the Bible. What is countenanced in the Bible is inter- or multi-faith dialogue of the confessional kind. This kind of dialogue, designed to share one’s beliefs or truth-claims *with a view to persuading others of their truth-value*, is and ought to continue to be normative in all disciplines and areas of human inquiry but should always be shrouded in an atmosphere of respect.

I ask you then, remember the words of our Lord, “Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be wise as serpents and [not harmless] but blameless as doves.” Watch your mind (how you think) and watch your life; ensure that it is white as lily.

Hold lightly your denominational distinctives, be open to being corrected but don't undervalue Christianity's distinctives and differentness; and prepare yourself to dialogue confessionally and respectfully with adherents of other religions. To accomplish this, our churches have to show greater respect for teaching and for apologetics (the discipline of defending the faith).

We show respect for apologists only when the church is under serious attack, and when the attack has been repelled we throw away the apologist like a dish towel.

©Rev. Clinton Chisholm, May 2018

The Future Is Now: Preserving Values for a Better Tomorrow

Brendan Bain, DM, FRCPE, MPH

INTRODUCTION

In July 1989, it was a privilege for me to come to Grand Cayman to lead the first educational workshops for health workers and prison officers in the Cayman Islands on prevention of HIV and treatment of persons living with HIV and AIDS.¹ At that time, I came at the invitation of the Ministry of Health and as a consultant for the Pan-American Health Organization. I am pleased to be here again, this time at the invitation of the churches.

I want to acknowledge my wife, Pauline, who is here with me today. We met at university in Jamaica and have now been married for 43 years. We have been blessed with three adult children and nine grandchildren from our three children's marriages.

In introducing the subject of values, I have adapted a quote from the Online Business Dictionary, which states that values are: Important and lasting beliefs or ideals - shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on (our) behaviors and attitude(s) and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. So today's subject is critically important.

Values cannot be seen or handled – they are ideas that we hold on the inside, in our hearts and minds. But values are powerful because they guide our **choices** and **the way we live**. Values that come from the teachings of the Bible include honesty, truth, diligence, humility, respect for self and others, love, trustworthiness, sexual purity outside and inside of marriage, compassion and caring for the poor. In a world that seems to be changing around us, these values are worth preserving NOW.

¹ This paper is a slightly revised version of a talk delivered on September 11, 2016. All emphases original.

I want to share with you **seven take home messages** related to the theme, *The Future is Now – Preserving values for a better tomorrow*.

My messages are:

1. Encouragement to parents and proxy parents in the Cayman Islands
2. In praise of traditional marriage
3. About sex and sexuality
4. About love
5. About safety in an age of HIV
6. About the blessings and dangers of privacy, and
7. About other pressures in today's world

MESSAGE 1.

To parents and other adults

Here's my encouragement to parents, grandparents, teachers, camp counsellors, neighbours, pastors, elders, deacons and persons who **lead youth clubs! Continue to *commit yourself to teaching young people wholesome values which they will practice today and tomorrow and commit yourself to praying for our children.*** Do not give in to the idea that older persons are a different generation and that we cannot connect with our children and grandchildren.

It is critical for us to stay in touch with them as the world continues to change. Staying in touch means ***staying connected***. We must not be ***disconnected*** from our young people.

The Future is NOW. YESTERDAY IS PAST. How much time will you spend with your child or grandchild NOW?; how well will you **listen** to that teenager in your house NOW?; will you begin to take an interest in their hobbies NOW? Do you know where they are THIS EVENING and who their friends are NOW?

*The Future **is** now* and we MUST stay in touch with them to teach them ***NOW*** by word and by example! Will you commit to praying for the youth NOW because the real battles of life are spiritual? I credit my survival into healthy adult life most of all to my mother's prayers and her faithfulness in teaching me from the Bible and from her experiences in life.

Another reason why I survived physically, emotionally and spiritually through my early years was because the adults in my

life were CONNECTED to me and guided me - my grandfather, my father and other relatives, neighbours and church leaders. I also had positive peer pressure – that is, for the most part. My teenage years included attending Youth for Christ and Inter-School Christian Fellowship Clubs in high school and enjoying recreation and teaching at Christian summer camps.

MESSAGE 2.

In praise of traditional marriage

By traditional marriage, I mean the union of one man and one woman as set out in the Bible. I am aware that this message is not popular in some parts of today's world. But, when it is studied (I mean, researched), the evidence shows that the benefits of wholesome, Bible-style marriage are clear for the couple; and, if they are blessed with children, for their children.

Here is some advice that I offer about marriage. Some of the ideas and imagery are my own, while I have learned other ideas as I have listened to other teachers.

- First, don't believe the fairy tales which end with the line, "And they both lived happily ever after" – and they never told you how! There are sunny days and rainy days in every marriage. A strong marriage includes love but requires "give and take" and adjustment.
- A healthy marriage is a relationship between two imperfect persons who are committed to learning and growing together and adjusting to change over time.
- The wedding is like the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. The real games are what follow. The marriage is the real thing. And it can be a long and lasting love, where the foundation of love is commitment and where friendship and passion are some other healthy ingredients.
- A solid marriage is like an amusement park in which you can enjoy the rides but you are also responsible for maintaining the park.
- Preparation for marriage is important. I highly recommend pre-marital counselling with a trained counsellor. Pre-marital counselling is not a cure-all, but it certainly helps persons to move realistically into the games of marriage.

- A marriage is complete without children. If you have children, accept, love and support them, but strive to maintain your marriage.
- Married people are not better people than persons who are not married, so as a married man I do not disrespect persons who are not married.

Marriage is not for everyone. In Matthew 19: verses 11, 12
“Not everyone is mature enough to live a married life. It requires a certain aptitude and grace. Marriage isn’t for everyone. Some, from birth seemingly, never give marriage a thought. Others never get asked—or accepted. And some decide not to get married for kingdom reasons. But if you’re capable of growing into the largeness of marriage, do it.”(The Message translation)

MESSAGE 3.

About sex and sexuality

According to the Bible sex and sexuality are good gifts from God to us, even though these gifts have sometimes been spoiled. When it is used appropriately and in the right context – right time, right place, right person, the gift of sex brings great blessing and satisfaction. In the right context, it is an expression of intimacy between two persons who God has brought together for mutual comfort, companionship and pleasure and for producing the next generation of children. If it were not for sex between a man and a woman, none of us would be here today and the future of humankind would not be preserved. The Future is NOW and we need to use the gift of sex well NOW.

In today’s world, there is a whole movement that promotes pleasure and fun of all kinds, without boundaries. The word is Hedonism. If we apply the values of hedonism to sexuality, we promote the fun part of sex above every other purpose – fun for **ME** – no boundaries.

Like other good gifts, the gift of sex can be used badly. To drive this message home, I tell the story of a little boy who got a gift in a barrel from overseas. It was a lovely pair of long pants. His father hoped that he would wear it to the prize giving at school.

But the boy nagged his Dad to let him wear it on the first available occasion, which was to play a football match. It rained that day... And you can finish the story. A good gift used badly. In another version of this imaginary story, it’s a girl who received the gift of a dress. She nags her mother, who agrees to allow her to wear the

dress to go to the market carrying a basket. The trip to the market was uneventful, but on the way back, the basket was heavier and kept rubbing on the dress, damaging it. A good gift used badly.

The application of this story to human sexuality is that there is a right time and a right place for sex. Young persons may not always appreciate that the “right time” often involves waiting. I have a mango tree in my yard and this year it bore its best crop. It was hard for me to wait until the fruits got ripe, but the right time to enjoy them was definitely not when they were young and immature. I waited. This waiting is called delayed gratification. Can young people be taught the value of delaying sexual gratification? Yes, they can!

Older persons, including persons my age and even persons older than I also need to wait for the right person, the right time and the right place. I once overheard a professional man whose job took him away from his home country say that he was so sorry that HIV had come to the Caribbean because he could no longer look for sexual relationships while on assignment abroad because of the risk. That man couldn't wait. Can we as grown-ups make the choice to delay sexual gratification? Yes, we can – and waiting is a clear way that we can remain safe from disease and from disappointment in marriage when we do so. Self-control is possible! The Future is NOW!

Do you realize that the availability of condoms and other contraceptives since the 1960s has allowed many persons to have sexual relations away from home without the usual outcome of pregnancy and birth of children? Some thoughtful observers have also noted that, in many countries, the availability of medically performed abortions has increased birth control and at the same time has caused some persons to feel freer about having sexual relations, not always in the context of marriage.

MESSAGE 4.

Let's change the subject and talk for a few moments about love

Love - one word in English; four words in Greek.

The Greek word, *phileo* is translated in English as brotherly love – think Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, from the same root word. *Storge* is the Greek word that is understood as “a wide-ranging force which can apply to affection between family members, friends, pets and owners, companions or colleagues.” In

common talk, we even use the word, love in reference to affection for favourite things, for example a pair of shoes or a favourite food.

Agape, which is often described as “unconditional love”, best captured by the love of God for us, undeserved and demonstrated in practical ways. It’s the form of love described in chapter 13 of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, a passage often used in weddings. **Eros** is the word that is used to mean romantic or sexual love. And there is a fifth Greek word, **epithumeo**, that is sometimes used in the context of love – it means to desire or to lust after someone or something.

So, understanding love can be confusing. And we often need to ask for clarification. I say to young people, if he or she says he or she loves you, ask the person, what kind of love they mean? A preference for ice-cream, which I call, “ice-cream love” is quite different from romantic love.

A working definition of love that I use is that love looks after the best interest of the person or the object that is loved. True love is different from self-gratification. **And true love does not always have to go to bed with you!**

Tina Turner’s song, “What’s love got to do with it?” comes to my mind over and over because of the experiences that I have had in meeting people in my medical practice and hearing their stories – stories that tell me that sex is sometimes experienced as taking advantage of another person. Many people testify that they have experienced sex either without commitment on the part of that other person. Some persons have told me that they don’t even know the names of some of the persons they have had sexual relations with!

MESSAGE 5.

About safety in an age of HIV

HIV has brought the matter of sexual safety to the forefront of our minds more so than any of the older sexually transmitted infections because in the early years of the HIV epidemic, AIDS was experienced as an immediate death threat to people’s lives.

And, in the age of AIDS, arguments have raged about people’s freedom to engage in sex in a variety of contexts, the risks associated with such freedoms and how the public, Governments and health care workers should accept and treat persons who practice alternative life styles are also discussed.

Let me share a part of my own professional story. After completing my first medical degree, I did further training in Internal Medicine and Clinical Infectious Diseases in Jamaica and England. I returned to Jamaica in 1980, one year before the first cases of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) were recognized in the USA and announced to the world. By 1983, the first cases of AIDS in Jamaica began to be discovered. Because of my training, I was placed on the front line in the response to the AIDS epidemic – in Jamaica and later on across the Caribbean.

In the early eighties, the modes of spread of AIDS had not yet been fully clarified. We were learning about the disease and the recommendations were that health care workers avoid all forms of contact with persons known or suspected of having AIDS. The advice was that when persons with AIDS died, their bodies should be handled very little and with much caution. It was scary.

The early impression also was that AIDS was a disease that affected mainly homosexual men. I soon had decisions to make in my medical practice. Could I examine my patients with bare hands as I always did? Would I be at risk? Would my family be at risk? Should I offer my service to patients with alternative life styles?

Some persons, including some Christians, were saying that this terrible illness was God's punishment on wicked and disobedient people. I prayed and turned to the Bible to help me to decide what I should do. I read Luke 13:1-5.

“Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, ‘Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.’ ”

I realized that in God's sight we are all in the same boat. So, I did not categorize any of my patients with AIDS as being worse than I. I made the decision to treat them all.

Soon I was tested when a young man came to my office. He said that he had come “on behalf of a friend.” His direct question: Would I be willing to look after someone who was homosexual?

I explained that I did not agree with the lifestyle, but that I was willing to look after the person.

A few days later the same young man returned to my office. He was “the friend.” I looked after him throughout the rest of his illness. Those were the days before anti-retroviral drugs were available. One day his mother called me to say that her son was very, very ill. Would I come to the family home to see him? On arrival, I found him to be near death. I summoned up my courage and asked, “Do you pray?” He replied, “Only in emergencies.” We said nothing else to each other. I ministered to him as best I could. Afterwards I learned that he called his priest later that day and he died shortly after his priest visited him.

I have practiced safely for well over 30 years, taking recommended precautions, but remaining available to persons who still choose to come to me in my practice. I also learned and taught that it is easier to catch HIV when I am off duty than when I am working as a health care worker.

HIV and other sexually transmitted infections are caught and spread mainly by intimate sexual contact.

The safety message for all of us is in two, or perhaps three, parts, namely:

1. Beware of situations in which you do not know the other person’s sexual history. Take time to know him or her.
2. Be aware and beware of sexual networks.

3. Don't bury your head in the sand!

a) If your main partner (at home) is part of a network outside of home, and b) although it may be scary, find out your status confidentially and get any necessary help.

I believe that all of us, including this speaker, can benefit from knowing these things and making any necessary adjustments in our lives. We can also help and encourage others to understand risk and to be safe.

There is clear evidence from research that the risk of catching and passing on HIV is due to a **combination** of factors. These factors also relate to the risk of catching and passing other sexually transmitted infections AND some forms of cancer.

The risks build up by:

- a) Starting to have sex at an early age (pre-teen and early teenage), either by choice or by force.
- b) Having a sexual encounter or encounters with someone whose sexual history you don't know.
- c) Being part of a sexual network, including having multiple partners.
- d) Changing partners frequently.
- e) Using alcohol and other mind-altering drugs
- f) Having unprotected sex, especially in the contexts already described
- g) Practising sexual behaviours that carry a significant risk either of cuts and bruises or of allowing contact with faecal material.

Of all the methods of close sexual contact that carry risk, the one that carries **the greatest relative risk if one person already has HIV** is **unprotected anal intercourse**; this can happen between men and men and between men and women. In fact, in my work in Public Health I have been told that some young women practice anal sex in order to preserve their physical virginity. This practice is very dangerous.

To emphasize the risk of infection associated with **sexual networks**, some public health teachers point out that an individual who is intimate with another person is actually being intimate with everyone else that that person has had sex with over time. The risk is increased for some infections which last for a long time because these infections can be carried over from one relationship to the next. Some examples are herpes, HIV infection, hepatitis B and human papilloma virus infection. We now know that human papilloma virus causes genital warts and in some cases can lead to cancer of the cervix in women and cancer of the penis in men.

It is not just persons who follow alternative lifestyles who are at risk of catching HIV and other diseases, although the truth is that in many countries, **networks** of men who have sex with other men create an exaggerated risk of catching and spreading these diseases. And networks become international because of travel. Infected men who have sexual relations with other men and with women can pass infections to both men and women. Infected women who have sexual relations with more than one male can pass on the infections to men.

The reality is that all sexually active persons regardless of our personal labels must pay attention to these risks and **take responsibility** for our behaviors.

The risks associated with sexually transmitted infections are not limited to the physical. This is because sex is not just a set of physical events. It is an emotional experience, or more accurately, a set of emotional experiences. Intimacy is emotional and triggers a variety of feelings and desires. The emotional dimension of sex has implications for health.

Wherever research has been done and published, it has shown that mental, emotional and relational problems occur at a higher rate among persons who pursue same sex or bisexual relationships. A thoughtful group of young persons in Jamaica has said that, “condoms do not protect hearts!”

MESSAGE 6

The blessings and risks of privacy

These days, privacy can be created in a moment. (Think of the regular telephone, the smart phone and the computer with access to the Internet.)

Privacy can be appropriate or inappropriate. Having your own room at home or your own personal space, telling a personal story, seeing a counselor or doctor are appropriate ways of using privacy.

As parents we teach our children to value and protect their “private parts” (front and back) and this is appropriate.

But when privacy becomes secrecy it often leads to danger. Inappropriate privacy can be created between two persons even in a public place – a wink, a whisper, a suggestive touch can all happen privately.

Pornographic images are often watched privately and because it is private, any of us can get caught in its web.

MESSAGE 7.

Pressures

Other pressures in today’s world that challenge Biblical values include:

The pressure to conform – to be like everyone else. The temptation to believe that “everyone is doing it”, that everyone is sexually active now.

The curiosity to try out sex

The pressure from the world around us, which is magnifying and glorifying sex more than ever today. Clothing designs, advertisements, books and magazines, television and movies, music and ordinary conversation frequently promote sex without clarifying the boundaries and risks. Today, some persons are defining themselves by their sexual preference. All these realities create pressure on us.

Add to this, that some national and international leaders appear to be promoting personal freedom without boundaries in the area of human sexuality. These are some of the pressures in the NOW.

CONCLUSION

I pointed out at the start of my talk that our values have a major influence on (our) behaviors and attitude(s) and serve as guidelines in all situations. Values cannot be touched or felt. They are intangible but powerful because they guide our choices and the way we live.

I have acknowledged the value of the Bible in guiding my life and I have shared with you **seven take home messages** based on current research and my personal and professional experience.

I commend the Cayman Ministers’ Association and the Seventh Day Adventist Conference for organizing today’s programme. However, **everyone present here must be part of the action team that preserves positive values**. Tonight there are speakers and listeners. Tomorrow, all of us individually and together are the action team – the team that promotes strong family life not only by talk but also by example. *The Future is Now!*

**Reflections on
Theological Education**

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Introduction

Every educational endeavour has some distinctive and undergirding philosophy upon which it is based. It is this distinctive that sets it apart from the others. Such is the case with theological education. We in theological education feel that there is something in our field that sets us apart from the rest. What are the distinctives? Or, to put it another way: What is it that makes "theological education," theological education? After pursuing theological education for over four years, I have given thought to this question as it relates to what theological education *must* do.

Proficiency

Firstly, theological education must make the student intellectually proficient. By this I mean that our minds and thinking capacities must be expanded and widened as we pursue theological education. As theological students we must be able to examine the issues critically and see what is really at stake; what is central and what is peripheral.

Intellectual proficiency means being able to present well thought-out and well reasoned positions on the pertinent issues. The Bible is clear that we are called to use our minds. In a culture that is high on subjectivism, in

general, and experience, in particular, those of us in theological education must be the ones who will step back from personal involvement and present truthful, objective, and well reasoned arguments on the issues involved.

At another level, intellectual proficiency is what is needed to respond to heresies within the Church and attacks from without. In many of our churches emotionalism has been equated with true spirituality and reasoning with spiritual coldness. Additionally, experience has become the measure of most, if not all, things. Against this, we who pursue theological education must be the ones to correct heresies and provide the Biblical position.

This can only be used correctly if we are intellectually proficient. From outside the church come the attacks from the self-appointed philosophers of the day. Materialism, relativism, individualism, scepticism, and secular humanism have all been presented as the best way to go in this time. Where are the Christian thinkers of our day who are going to respond and chart a new course? Where will they come from? They must come from among us, from we who are involved in theological education. However, we can only accomplish this task if we are intellectually proficient.

Competence

Secondly, theological education must make us ministerially competent. Ministerial competence speaks of effectively serving the needs of those in our churches and our communities. It means being able to listen to them and to answer their existential questions. Ministerial competence means more than just saying "Don't Worry" or "Jesus is the Answer." Ministerial competence means finding out what is the question. Yes, Jesus is the answer, but what is the question? *How* is Jesus the answer in their particular situation? Theological education must prepare us to answer that question. That which is gained in the classroom and in the library must be transferred to the churches, the classrooms and the counselling rooms in which we will serve.

When we leave seminary we must be able to help the mother who has just seen her son gunned down and does not understand why. We must be able to say something to the woman in the ghetto who has six children for six different men and none is providing support. These things are all involved in ministerial competence for they all have to do with serving others. Our

theological education must take us beyond the sheltered walls of the classroom and the library. If our theological education does not do that, then it needs to be re-thought. Our theological education must involve a theology of ministry.

Eminence

Finally, theological education must make us spiritually eminent. Whereas intellectual proficiency has to do with our heads and ministerial competence has to do with our hands, spiritual eminence has to do with our hearts. Or, to change the analogy, whereas intellect relates to what we know and think, and ministry to what we do, spirituality has to do with who we are. There are many instances of people who developed full heads and empty hearts, or, to put it another way, hot heads and cold hearts. However, we are called to have cool heads and warm hearts. Spiritual eminence means that our theological education must draw us closer to God. It means that our relationship with God must deepen as our knowledge about Him increases. Spiritual eminence means that our knowledge about God must be translated into knowledge of God.

It is spiritual eminence that provides the love and power that is so vital for an effective ministry. It is spiritual eminence that will protect us from pride and arrogance, two of the theological students' most present temptations. If our theological education does not result in spiritual eminence, "education" is may be, but "theological education" it most certainly is not.

**THE BUGGERY LAW IN JAMAICA:
SHOULD IT BE REMOVED OR
REPEALED?**

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Introduction

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considered the combined third and fourth periodic report of Jamaica on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and concluded that consensual same-sex relations continue to be criminalized under the Offences Against the Person Act, thus perpetrating discrimination against homosexual, bisexual and transsexual persons in all spheres of life, including their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights (art.2).

Also While noting the amendment to Chapter III of the Constitution on fundamental rights and freedoms with the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms in April 2011, the Committee is concerned at the narrow scope of prohibited grounds for discrimination, which is limited to “being male or female, race, place of origin, social class, colour, religion or political opinions”, thus failing to prohibit discrimination on the basis of other grounds, such as sexual orientation, disability, and health.

Sodomy laws, which authorize the government to dictate what behavior is appropriate in the bedroom, have historically been extremely controversial. These laws criminalize either same-sex acts or certain gender-neutral, non-procreative sexual conduct. For the past third of a century, however, sodomy laws have rarely been enforced. Instead, they were used mainly as legal justification to discriminate against homosexuality.

It is in this context that the buggery law in Jamaica has to be viewed and whether it should be removed or repealed from the law books in Jamaica. The removal or repeal of the buggery law some would argue is only a peg of the larger

worldview of the post-modern movement and has greater implications that would affect not only the social fabric of the Jamaican society but also has serious health implications. It is against this background that the removal or repealing of the buggery or sodomy laws will be examined in this paper.

In English law "buggery" was first used in the Buggery Act 1533, while Section 61 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861, entitled "Sodomy and Bestiality", defined punishments for "the abominable Crime of Buggery, committed either with Mankind or with any Animal". The definition of "buggery" was not specified in these or any statute, but rather established by judicial precedent.¹ Over the years the courts have defined buggery as including either

1. anal intercourse or oral intercourse by a man with a man or woman² or
2. vaginal intercourse by either a man or a woman with an animal,³

However, any other form of "unnatural intercourse",⁴ the implication being that of anal sex with an animal, would not constitute buggery.

The aforementioned position is still the position in Jamaica, as our law is derived from the laws of England, and our legislation is modelled off their Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Jamaica's 'buggery law' still reads like the original 1861 British law. Article 76 of the Offences Against the Person Act, entitled the 'Unnatural Crime,' says, 'Whosoever shall be convicted of the abominable crime of buggery [anal intercourse] committed either with mankind or with any animal, shall be liable to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for a term not exceeding ten years'. Article 77 goes further, making the attempt to engage in 'buggery' or 'indecent assault' on a male punishable by seven years with or without hard labour. Article 78, in keeping with the 1828 amendment to the British Offences Against the Person Act, requires only penetration – not emission – as proof of the crime. Finally, the law also makes it illegal for 'male persons' to engage in or attempt to engage in 'acts of gross indecency,' in public or private, a misdemeanour offence punishable by two years in prison with or without hard labour.

The Fundamental Rights Argument

First, among the fundamental rights that are implicit in the concept of order of liberty, must be the right of all adult couples, whether same-sex or not, to be free from unwarranted State intrusion into their personal decisions about their preferred forms of sexual expression.

Fundamental liberty and privacy interests in adults' private, consensual sexual choices are essential to the ordered liberty that the Jamaican Constitution protects. The State may not, without overriding need, regiment and limit this personal and important part of its citizens' lives.

Liberty protects the person from unwarranted government intrusions into a dwelling or other private places. Liberty presumes an autonomy of self that includes freedom of thought,

¹ *Quintin Hogg, Baron Hailsham of St Marylebone* (ed.). *Halsbury's Laws of England*. 11(4th ed.). p. 505.

² *R v Wiseman* (1718) Fortes Rep 91.

³ *R v Bourne* (1952) 36 Cr App R 135; Sir Edward Coke also reports "... a great lady had committed buggery with a baboon and conceived by it..." at 3 Inst 59.

⁴ *Crown cases reserved for consideration: and decided by the Twelve judges of England, from the year 1799 to the year 1824*. 1825. pp. 331–332.

belief, expression, and certain intimate conduct. The instant case involves liberty of the person both in its spatial and in its more transcendent dimensions.

All adults have the same fundamental liberty interests in their private consensual sexual choices. This fundamental protection is rooted in three well-recognized aspects of personal liberty – in intimate relationships, in bodily integrity, and in the privacy of the home. These aspects of liberty should not be viewed as “a series of isolated points, but are part of a rational continuum” that constitutes the full scope of liberty of a free people.

Control over one’s own body is fundamentally at stake in sexual relations, involving as they do the most intimate physical interactions conceivable. Like the decision whether to continue or terminate a pregnancy, or the decision whether to permit or decline medical procedures, the physical, bodily dimensions of how two persons express their sexuality in intimate relations are profoundly personal. Indeed, consent is a critically important dividing line in legal and societal views about sexuality for the very reason that individual control over sexual activity is of fundamental importance to every person’s autonomy. Jamaica buggery/sodomy laws invade the liberty interest in bodily integrity by dictating that citizens may not share sexual intimacy unless they perform acts approved by the legislature, and by attempting to coerce them to select a sexual partner of the other sex.

In colonial times there were prohibitions of sodomy derived from the English criminal laws passed in the first instance by the Reformation Parliament of 1533. The English prohibition was understood to include relations between men and women as well as relations between men and men. The absence of legal prohibitions focusing on homosexual conduct may be explained in part by noting that according to some scholars the concept of the homosexual as a distinct category of person did not emerge until the late 19th century.

Hence early Jamaican buggery/sodomy laws were not directed at homosexuals as such but instead sought to prohibit non-procreative sexual activity more generally. This does not suggest approval of homosexual conduct. It does tend to show that this particular form of conduct was not thought of as a separate category from like conduct between heterosexual persons.

Being forced into a life without sexual intimacy would represent an intolerable and fundamental deprivation for the overwhelming majority of individuals. Equally repugnant is any form of external compulsion to engage in sexual relations. There should be no doubt, then, that the Constitution imposes substantive limits on the power of government to compel, forbid, or regulate the intimate details of private sexual relations between two consenting adults.

Laws prohibiting buggery/sodomy do not seem to have been enforced against consenting adults acting in private. A substantial number of sodomy prosecutions and convictions for which there are surviving records were for predatory acts against those who could not or did not consent, as in the case of a minor or the victim of an assault. As to these, one purpose for the prohibitions was to ensure there would be no lack of coverage if a predator committed a sexual assault that did not constitute rape as defined by the criminal law.

Thus the model sodomy indictments presented in a 19th-century treatise, addressed the predatory acts of an adult man against a minor girl or minor boy. Instead of targeting relations between consenting adults in private, 19th-century sodomy prosecutions typically involved

relations between men and minor girls or minor boys, relations between adults involving force, relations between adults implicating disparity in status, or relations between men and animals.

The condemnation of homosexual conduct as immoral has been shaped by religious beliefs, conceptions of right and acceptable behaviour, and respect for the traditional family. For many persons these are not trivial concerns but profound and deep convictions accepted as ethical and moral principles to which they aspire and which thus determine the course of their lives. These considerations do not address the topic before us, however. The issue is whether the majority may use the power of the State to enforce these views on the whole society through operation of the criminal law. “Our obligation is to define the liberty of all, not to mandate our own moral code.”

A committee advising the British Parliament recommended in 1957 repeal of laws punishing homosexual conduct. The Wolfenden Report: Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution (1963). Parliament enacted the substance of those recommendations 10 years later (Sexual Offences Act 1967, section 1).

The Equality Argument

Equality of treatment and the due process right to demand respect for conduct protected by the substantive guarantee of liberty are linked in important respects, and a decision on the latter point advances both interests. If protected conduct is made criminal and the law which does so remains unexamined for its substantive validity, its stigma might remain even if it were not enforceable as drawn for equal protection reasons. When homosexual conduct is made criminal by the law of the State, that declaration in and of itself is an invitation to subject homosexual persons to discrimination both in the public and in the private spheres.

The stigma this criminal law imposes, moreover, is not trivial. The offense, to be sure, is a misdemeanor, a major offense in the Jamaican legal system. Still, it remains a criminal offense with all that imports for the dignity of the persons charged. The convicted persons will bear on their record the history of their criminal convictions.

The Jamaican statute makes homosexuals unequal in the eyes of the law by making particular conduct—and only that conduct—subject to criminal sanction. It appears that prosecutions under Jamaica’s buggery/sodomy law are rare. The effect of Jamaica’s buggery/sodomy law is not just limited to the threat of prosecution or consequence of conviction. Jamaica’s buggery/sodomy law brands all homosexuals as criminals, thereby making it more difficult for homosexuals to be treated in the same manner as everyone else.

Moral disapproval of a group cannot be a legitimate governmental interest under the equal protection clauses because legal classifications must not be designed for the purpose of disadvantaging the group burdened by the laws of the society. Jamaica’s invocation of moral disapproval as a legitimate state interest proves nothing more than Jamaica’s desire to criminalize homosexual sodomy. However, because Jamaica so rarely enforces its buggery/sodomy law as applied to private, consensual acts, the law serves more as a statement of dislike and disapproval against homosexuals than as a tool to stop criminal behaviour. The Jamaica buggery/sodomy laws raise the inevitable inference that the disadvantage imposed is born of animosity toward the group of persons affected.

Therefore, when a State makes homosexual conduct criminal and not deviate sexual intercourse committed by persons of different sexes, that declaratory statement in and of itself is

an invitation to subject homosexual persons to discrimination both in the public and in the private spheres.

A State can of course assign certain consequences to a violation of its criminal law. But the State cannot single out one identifiable group of citizens for punishment that does not apply to everyone else, with moral disapproval as the only asserted state interest for the law. The Jamaican buggery/sodomy laws subject homosexuals to a perennial penalty and stigma. A legislative classification that threatens the creation of an underclass cannot be compatible with modern day human rights and equal protection.

Therefore, a law branding one group of persons as criminal based solely on the State's moral disapproval of that group and the conduct associated with that class runs contrary to the values of the Constitution and the principle of equal protection.

Buggery or Homosexuality as a Fundamental Right

It is entirely irrelevant whether the laws in our national tradition criminalizing homosexual buggery/sodomy were targeted at homosexual conduct as a distinct matter. Whether homosexual buggery/sodomy was prohibited by a law targeted at same-sex sexual relations or by a more general law prohibiting both homosexual and heterosexual sodomy, the only relevant point is that it was criminalized, which suffices to establish that homosexual sodomy is not a right deeply entrenched in our Nation's history and tradition.

An emerging post-modern awakening is by definition not deeply entrenched in this Nation's history and tradition as "fundamental right" status requires. Constitutional entitlements do not spring into existence because some countries choose to lessen or eliminate criminal sanctions on certain behaviour. Much less do they spring into existence, because foreign nations decriminalize the aforesaid conduct. Post-modernity's rational-basis holding is likewise devoid of any reliance on the views of other civilizations. The discussion of these foreign views, ignoring, of course, the many countries that have retained criminal prohibitions on buggery/sodomy) is therefore meaningless conjecture.

The Jamaican buggery/sodomy laws undeniably seek to further the belief of its citizens that certain forms of sexual behaviour are immoral and unacceptable, the same interest furthered by criminal laws against fornication, bigamy, adultery, adult incest, bestiality, and obscenity. The Jamaican laws should not further any legitimate state interest which can justify its intrusion into the personal and private life of the individual. That there are those who embrace, the fact that the governing majority in a country has traditionally viewed a particular practice as immoral is not a sufficient reason for upholding a law prohibiting the practice. This effectively decrees the end of all morals legislation. If, as some people assert, the promotion of majoritarian sexual morality is not even a legitimate state interest, none of the above-mentioned laws can survive rational-basis review.

Equal Protection Fallacy

Men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, are all subject to the prohibition of deviant sexual intercourse with someone of the same sex. The buggery laws do distinguish between the sexes insofar as concerns the partner with whom the sexual acts are performed: men can violate the law only with other men, and women only with other women. However, this cannot itself be a denial of equal protection, since it is precisely the same distinction regarding

partner that is drawn in the country's laws prohibiting marriage with someone of the same sex while permitting marriage with someone of the opposite sex.

A racially discriminatory purpose is always sufficient to subject a law to strict scrutiny, even a facially neutral law that makes no mention of race. No fundamental basis to discriminate against men or women as a class can be gleaned from the Jamaican law. That review is readily satisfied here by the same rational basis that satisfied it in the society's belief that certain forms of sexual behaviour are immoral and unacceptable. This is the same justification that supports many other laws regulating sexual behaviour that make a distinction based upon the identity of the partner—for example, laws against adultery, fornication, and adult incest, and laws refusing to recognize homosexual marriage.

The discrimination in this law which must be justified is not its discrimination with regard to the sex of the partner but its discrimination with regard to the sexual proclivity of the principal actor.

While it is true that the law applies only to conduct, the conduct targeted by the buggery/sodomy law is conduct that is closely correlated with being homosexual. Under such circumstances, Jamaica's buggery/sodomy law is targeted at more than conduct. It is instead directed toward homosexual persons as a group.

However, the same could be said of any law. A law against public nudity targets the conduct that is closely correlated with being a nudist or an exhibitionist and hence is directed at more than conduct; it is targeted toward nudists and exhibitionists as a group. But be that as it may. Even if the Jamaican buggery/sodomy laws do deny equal protection to homosexuals as a group, that denial still does not need to be justified by anything more than a rational basis, which our context shows is satisfied by the enforcement of traditional notions of sexual morality.

Today's shifting and diverse opinions on the issues of the buggery/sodomy laws are the products of a post-modern culture, which is the product of a law-profession culture, that has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda, by which is meant the agenda promoted by some homosexual activists directed at eliminating the moral opprobrium that has traditionally attached to homosexual conduct.

Social perceptions of sexual and other morality change over time, and every group has the right to persuade its fellow citizens that its view of such matters is the best. That homosexuals have achieved some success in that enterprise is attested to by the fact that Jamaica is one of the few remaining countries that criminalize private, consensual homosexual acts. But persuading one's fellow citizens is one thing, and imposing one's views in absence of democratic majority will is something else.

It is the premise of our system that those judgments are to be made by the people, and not imposed by a governing caste that knows best. One of the benefits of leaving regulation of this matter to the people rather than to the courts is that the people, unlike judges, need not carry things to their logical conclusion. The people may feel that their disapprobation of homosexual conduct is strong enough to disallow homosexual marriage, but not strong enough to criminalize private homosexual acts—and may legislate accordingly.

The matters appropriate for resolution are only three: Jamaica's prohibition of buggery/sodomy laws neither infringe a "fundamental right", nor are unsupported by a rational

relation to what the Constitution considers a legitimate state interest, nor denies the equal protection of the laws.

Current Context

It was only through pressure from the courts that the law for one part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, was changed. The case of *Dudgeon v the United Kingdom*⁵ was one of four cases decided within a 30-year time frame in international jurisdictions that had significant influence on the repeal of homophobic legislation. It is interesting to examine the reasons why each of these cases was decided in a positive light towards homosexuality.

The European Court of Human Rights decided the case of *Dudgeon* in 1981, at a time when Northern Ireland still had “sodomy” laws that had not been altered since the 19th Century; nor had Northern Ireland legislated to accept the recommendations from the Wolfenden Report, possibly due to the greater influence of the Catholic and Protestant churches in that country compared to the rest of the UK. *Dudgeon* argued that Article 8 of the ECHR, which protects the right to a private and family life, and Article 14, which prohibits status discrimination, should apply to same sex conduct. The Court held in favour of *Dudgeon* and stated that there had been a breach of his rights under Article 8.

The right to a private family life included private sexual relations and therefore not extending this right to homosexuals resulted in a breach of this article. As this was definitive, the Court saw no purpose in examining Article 14. It can therefore be said that Article 8 was interpreted to imply full equality in terms of sexual orientation. This case represented a leap forward for the gay rights movement across Europe, since the ruling applied to all countries that had ratified the ECHR.

The next case that could be argued to have had an even wider impact is *Toonen v Australia*.⁶ This case was heard by the United Nations Human Rights Committee, as there had allegedly been certain breaches of articles of the ICCPR. The complainant communicated to the Committee that sections 122(a) and (c) and 123 of the Tasmanian Criminal Code did not comply with articles 2(1) and 26 of the ICCPR which deal with discrimination and article 17 which deals with the right to privacy. The Tasmanian Criminal Code outlawed various forms of sexual contact between men, including between consenting males. The complainant therefore argued that certain sections breached his right to privacy as well as being discriminatory.

The Committee noted that apart from Tasmania, every other state in Australia had already repealed laws concerning “sodomy”. The Committee decided the case solely on the basis of the right to privacy and, like the European Court of Human Rights, did not feel the need to decide the case on grounds of an infringement of the right to equality. Article 17 of the ICCPR was now affirmed to extend to sexuality as an aspect of private life. Recently, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, stated that this case was ground-breaking and it has prompted several other countries to follow suit.

⁵ *Dudgeon v United Kingdom*, Appl. No. 7525/76, Council of Europe: European Court of Human Rights, 22 October 1981.

⁶ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was affirmed to include sexual orientation as a characteristic protected from discrimination in the case of *Toonen v Australia*, Communication No. 488/1992, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/50/D/488/1992 (1994).

In 2006, laws were passed in Zimbabwe providing that any actions such as holding hands or kissing someone of the same sex were a criminal offence. Canaan Banana, former President of Zimbabwe, was convicted of homosexual assault and sentenced to ten years' (nine suspended) imprisonment. Banana argued that "sodomy" laws were contrary to constitutional principles, and that no individual should be criminalized because of their sexual orientation. When highly regarded political figures are sentenced on the basis of "sodomy", it brings such laws into the public sphere and initiates much controversial debate around the subject. This can be seen in the recent prosecution of Anwar Ibrahim, leader of the opposition in Malaysia, on the charge of "sodomy". Recently, Anwar was acquitted of such allegations. This has led to Malaysia contemplating the repeal of the "sodomy" section of the Criminal Code which Anwar had been accused of breaching.⁷

Post-Note

The argument that you "should not legislate morality" has long been used by those who advocate using certain recreational drugs. Those who advocated unrestricted abortions argued that any restrictions on abortion were the legislation of morality. Those in favor of gay marriage argue that restrictions on homosexual marriage are religious in nature and thus, the legislation of morality. But, those who say that one cannot, or should not, legislate morality are almost always in favor of legislating morality that they agree with. If the term "morality" or "morals" is taken in a broader sense, outside of a strictly religious context, and interpreted to mean what is right or wrong, or what is best, or a concept of personal values or societal values, then it is hard to find a law which does not touch on morality.

Both an advocate of natural law and an advocate of positivist law would hold that murder is wrong or against the law; or that stealing is against the law. One would argue that it is morally wrong to unjustly take another's life or to take another's property. The positivist would argue that it is a violation of one's civil rights or societal order. But, it is only a violation of civil rights because a society places a value on those civil rights. Almost all societies recognize that a society cannot function if there is not a consequence for killing someone you are mad at. People cannot indiscriminately take another person's property. That is a moral value of almost every society. As a matter of fact, almost every person who claims that one cannot legislate morality or that we are a product of unguided evolution, still claims to have some moral values and some concept of right and wrong. It is probably safe to say that nearly all atheists, positivists, and libertarians would agree that it is wrong for a person to get drunk and then drive an automobile so that an innocent person is killed. Statutes that outlaw driving under the influence are based on a moral value that human life is important and to unnecessarily place that human life at risk is unlawful. For the same reason, there are laws against speeding on the highways.

We have sanitation laws that prohibit us from throwing our garbage and refuse in the street or on our neighbor's property. There are sanitation laws that apply to food handling in restaurants. These laws reflect a moral or a value from society that we have a duty to the public at large not to promote the spread of disease or filth. There are those who maintain that morality should not be imposed upon them, or someone else's laws should not be imposed upon their bodies, who still maintain that what we are doing to the planet is "immoral". They have taken the

⁷ See article by the Deputy Asia-Pacific director at Amnesty International: Guest, D., "Malaysia: Anwar case shows why sodomy law must be scrapped", 9 January 2012, available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/malaysia-anwar-case-shows-why-sodomy-law-must-be-scrapped-2012-01-09>.

position that pollution is immoral. There are people who favour no restrictions on abortion and proclaim that any abortion restrictions are imposing morality on themselves or others, and yet take the position that the death penalty is immoral. They may maintain that there is no sufficient due process of law that would cause a murderer to forfeit his or her life, and yet still argue that due process of law would not apply to an unborn child. Such an argument is based on values or morals. They may maintain that abortion is a civil rights issue and if so, it should be a balancing of the rights of the mother, the father, and the unborn child. But how one values the rights or the life of the unborn child, and the rights of the mother and the father is a moral issue.

There are those who maintain that regulating sexuality is an attempt to legislate morality. A person should have the right to choose his or her sexual partner or as many sexual partners as they want without interference from other people or the law. Yet, many of those people would still agree that there is a need for laws concerning the statutory rape of a minor. They might argue that it is just a civil rights issue and that a minor cannot give legal consent. Yet, again, the idea that a minor cannot give legal consent is based on a value or a moral to protect the rights of minors.

Homosexuals, who lobby for the right to marry, objected to laws which prevented them from marrying each other. Yet there are other laws regulating marriage that say that a person cannot marry several people; cannot marry a five year old child; cannot marry their pet; or cannot marry their sister. All of these laws are based on the value which society gives to marriage, procreation, the home, and basic decency. Whether one is for or against gay marriage, it is a moral value, and whichever side prevails is imposing its morals or values on the other side. Many people who advocate the legalization of marijuana for recreational use are against smoking in public restaurants. In their mind, the legalization of recreational marijuana is a private matter, but smoking in public imposes a public health hazard. How far privacy goes and what restrictions may be placed on people for public health reasons are based on moral perceptions of both the rights and the value of health.

Conclusion

It is clear that all laws enact some sort of individual or societal value which is a form of morality. It is easy to understand how people who disagree with such laws might feel like their personal preferences are being violated and that someone else's morality is being imposed upon them. It could be argued that under the positivist view of law that some laws are passed not for moral issues, but rather for policy issues. For example, a law banning smoking in public might be enacted, not because people believe that it is morally wrong to harm the health of others, but rather that if more people have lung disease it will cost the state more. There are people who believe that to illegally enter Jamaica and to disobey some of the laws of Jamaica while taking advantage of other laws is morally wrong. Other people believe that to deny a person the opportunity to come from poverty and have a better life is morally wrong. There are others who don't have a position based on principal, rather just follow the most current trend or what is most beneficial to them. There are politicians or government officials that may not care one way or the other regarding gay marriage, but vote in favour of gay marriage because it is politically expedient. Thus, the morality of certain laws, or the right and wrong of such laws, may not matter to some. Yet their refusal to care is in itself a moral issue. Thus, a person who doesn't

care one way or the other on gay marriage but takes a position because it is politically expedient, is showing that person's values. It shows their own political ambition is more important to them than whether gay marriage is right or wrong. Thus, the law itself reflects moral values and how people react to the law also reflects their moral values.

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Galatians 5 in Context: A Brief Biography and Deliberative Rhetoric

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INTRODUCTION

The basic framework of Paul's letter to the Galatians may be set out as follows:

- A Prologue (1:1-5)
- B Gospel Distortion and Denunciation (1:6-10)
- C Gospel Derivation and Direction (1:11-2:21)
- D Gospel Delineation and Distinction (3:1-4:31)
- E Gospel Declaration and Definition (5:1-6:10)
- F Epilogue (6:11-18)

We will share the proposals of others later, after providing a biographical co-text for the passage (E) chosen for exposition. At a time when many believe that the authors of ancient documents have very little to do with our understanding of their works, we have overcompensated in the other direction by providing a fairly fulsome sketch of a favourite writer, notwithstanding Cephas's 'complaint' (2 Peter 3:16). Even those who deny authorial intent write books, append their names, and expect to be understood in a traditional manner;¹ well not quite every one it would appear!

At the 1993 Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature, one scholar read a paper offering a postmodern interpretation of I Corinthians 8: 1-6. He argued that in this passage Paul is a polytheist correcting the error of monotheism in the Corinthian church. One of my colleagues rose to his feet during the question period and asked the speaker if this was supposed to be a serious exegesis of I Corinthians 8. The speaker replied affirmatively. My colleague replied with words to this effect: "Then isn't it

¹E.g., Dale Martin, *Biblical Truths: The Meaning of Scripture in the 21st Century* (New Haven/London: YUP, 2017), 72 *et passim*.

incumbent on you to justify your interpretation, which you confess to be idiosyncratic, by arguments that refute other readings and show yours to be right?" The speaker promptly responded that he was not claiming his interpretation was right or correct; how could he, if he was offering a postmodern reading? So my colleague continued, "I thought you might answer that way. Then what would you say if I read your paper and interpreted it as a defense of Pauline monotheism and an implicit rejection of postmodern thought?" The speaker responded, "You can interpret my paper any way you want to. What do you expect me to do? Have a foundation for my belief?" I suppose he was consistent.²

The Writer of Galatians

Although Paul (in and around 49 AD) founded the set of churches in South Galatia,³ he is definitely not the founder of Christianity, as Richard Dawkins claims.⁴ Matthew 16 and Acts⁵ chapters 1-2 are far better witnesses where the origin of the Messianic community is concerned.⁶ It was the late professor of counseling psychology at the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology who once said that all our theology is biography. Although the case may have been overstated, Dr. Dave Carlson was indeed correct, because theology is a human enterprise. It is one of the things humans do: they theologize. One of the best ways to study theology is to do so within the context of biographical genre (cf. Matthew-Acts⁷); this section does not examine the life and thought of modern theologians but one from whom most if not all of them have learnt. We briefly then take a look at the thought of the apostle Paul as it is mirrored in the legacy of his language and literature.

In the minds of many the Apostle Paul is the greatest missionary theologian the world has ever seen.⁸ Even if we disagree with this judgment, there can be no doubt regarding the tremendous impact he has made in advancing the cause of Christ in our world. Yet, in the words of Tucker,⁹ "Paul is a less awesome figure than some adulatory devotees would have him to be. In many ways, he was a very ordinary man facing ordinary problems that have confronted missionaries ever since." This observation, paradoxically, serves to highlight the Apostle's greatness even more, for if he was so ordinary whence his greatness as a missionary? An examination of the Apostle Paul's role as an evangelist, teacher and writer may furnish the answer to the above query.

² D A Carson, *The Gagging of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 191; the authorial integrity of Galatians, seen especially in chapters 1-2, is crucial for this paper.

³Schweiser, Eduard, *A Theological Introduction to the New Testament*. Translated by O. R. Dean, Jr. (London: SPCK 1992), 73.

⁴*The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 58.

⁵See, "Chiastic Contours and the Book of Acts: The Messianic Community and Christian Mission," Paper for the 71st General Meeting of SNTS, Montreal, Canada, Seminar 6: "The Mission and Expansion of Earliest Christianity," August, 2016, and *Acts: A Concise Caribbean Commentary* (Kingston: DeoVolente, 2018).

⁶On matters of date, provenance, and the like, see, e.g., D. Guthrie, *Introduction to the NT* (Leicester: IVP, 1970) and the relevant articles in *ABD* and *NBD*.

⁷ See especially, *Acts: A Concise Caribbean Commentary*. Kingston: DeoVolente, 2018.

⁸ "The view that Paul was the greatest missionary among Gentiles in the first century is a notion based on the fact that writings of Paul survive that allow us to describe his theological convictions . . ." (Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* [Leicester: IVP, 2004], 923). We will explore some of these convictions below.

⁹Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 27.

Paul was indeed an evangelist. But he was not always so, because he once sought to impede the progress of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He relentlessly persecuted the people of God until he himself submitted to the Lord of Glory one bright and sunny day on the way to the city of Damascus. It was the Lord who announced to Ananias that this once proud Pharisee would be an evangelist. “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my Name before the Gentiles and their kings before the people of Israel,” was the heavenly injunction (Acts 9). It was not very long before the now converted Saul began preaching the good news of Christ in Damascus, showing convincingly that Jesus who was crucified was indeed the awaited Messiah (Acts 9:19-22). He began, quite naturally, with his own people. However, his efforts were greeted with almost immediate opposition.

Sometime after this bitter experience the Apostle Paul began to have a more or less settled ministry in the thriving assembly at Antioch. It was from this church that he received further direction through the Spirit to be involved in a wider ministry. He was to embark on a missionary career that would take him as far as Rome, the capital of the then known world, and he was to henceforth serve not as a loner but as a laborer among many. His evangelistic partner from the home base was Barnabas, the man who was instrumental in gaining an entry for him among the believers at Jerusalem. Having left the church at Antioch to fulfill their missionary vocation, Barnabas and Saul stopped in Salamis after passing through Seleucia on the mainland. Salamis was a city on the isle of Cyprus which boasted an apparently large community of Jews, so “they preached the Word of God in the synagogues . . .” (Acts 13:6). If evangelism is witnessing that confronts the uncommitted with the claims of Jesus Christ, then Paul was an evangelist *par excellence*. As a fisher of men he went where the fish were, and as a result he was constantly found in the synagogues where there was always a gathering of Jews with their proselytes, “For Moses of old times hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day” (Acts 15:21; see Appendix E on the Sabbath question).

But Paul in particular was not just acting out a principle. He was expressing a heartfelt concern for first century Jewry. He confessed: “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could, that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh who are Israelites” (Rom 9:1-4a). However, while the apostle Paul had the privilege of seeing a number of Jews coming to the Lord, his greater success was with the Gentiles. And as he moved along he evangelized, preached, argued, testified, and persuaded his non-Jewish audience (e.g., Acts 17:26).

The missionary activities of the Apostle Paul were not confined to evangelism alone but included a calculated effort to foster the spiritual development of new believers. Even before Paul went on his first missionary journey, the importance of nourishing babes of the faith was impressed on him when he first visited the church of Antioch. A revival had broken out in that city after certain itinerant evangelists powerfully proclaimed the gospel to both the Jewish and Gentile inhabitants. News of this activity reached Jerusalem, and the church there sent Barnabas to conduct follow-up work.

After being involved in some intensive counseling sessions with the new believers and seeing further numerical growth, Barnabas decided to instruct them more accurately in the things of the Lord. To help him accomplish this task he enlisted the help of Saul of Tarsus, a man in whom he had discerned the gift of teaching. “And when he had found him he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26).

This must have been a memorable experience for Paul, because as a result of this concentrated teaching the disciples were dubbed “Christians.” Their fellowmen had seen a difference in their lifestyle. There was no doubt in the young teacher’s mind that there was a close connection between the nickname *Christian* and the creed he and Barnabas had so faithfully expounded. Later on in his writing to the church at Ephesus he had clearly a thought out philosophy of edification. The flow of Paul’s thought expressed in chapter 4:11-15 is as follows: The risen and glorified Christ has given certain gifted persons to His church (v. 11). The task of these persons is to equip the saints for service (v.12a). The involvement of the saints in the ministry is with a view “to the edifying of the body of Christ . . . till we all come . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (vv. 12b, 13).

Paul’s plan to see the maturity of God’s people was squarely based on the Word of God. Writing to Timothy just before his martyrdom, he reminds the young pastor of the authenticity and potency of Scripture (2 Tim 3:15-17) and proceeded thereafter to urge its proclamation. With a note of sadness the aged Apostle anticipated a time when even saints will resist any effort made to ensure genuine spiritual maturity (2 Tim 4:1-4). Prior to writing this epistle to his young companion, he had met briefly with the Ephesian elders en route to Rome. In this solemn meeting the tent-making missionary who was instrumental in founding the church at Ephesus unburdened his heart to the elders of that church. His heart was for their survival. Committed as he was to spiritual development his concern went beyond this; he wanted to leave behind a vibrant, God-glorifying church that would make him proud at the judgment (cf. 1 Thess 2:19).

It is in this light that we must understand Paul’s discourse at Miletus. “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house...Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:17-20, 26-27). Two verses are worthy of comment: verses 20 and 27. The latter is an expansion of the former. As an instructor in righteous living Paul did not fail to teach such truths as election, predestination, and the perseverance of the saints, as well as the fact that God is to his people a consuming fire to those who shun their responsibility to live holy.

Yet another aspect of Paul’s concern for the people of God is seen in his prayer life. If, as the epigram goes, “intercession is love on its knees,” then there is no doubt that the Apostle

to the Gentiles really loved his converts. It is worthy of note that in most of his epistles written from prison, prayers are mentioned at the beginning and end. (Eph 1:15-22; 6:18; Phil 1:3; 4:6; Col 1:9; 4:1). Paul's prayer for the Colossians is quite significant in the light of the fact that he did not start that assembly. He was so committed to helping people attain Christ likeness that he constantly cried out to God who alone can effect any lasting change in human nature.

Did the Apostle Paul have any plan to ensure that the church throughout her history would have a true "apostolic" succession, that is, an unbroken line of leaders who would genuinely care for God's heritage? And if so, what is it? I believe that the answer to the first question is in the affirmative. The balance of this chapter attempts to address the second.

Already in Paul's day there was a shortage of Christian leaders. He could say to Timothy his trusted co-laborer, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this world, and is departed unto Thessalonica" (2 Tim 4:9-10). It must have been with tears in his eyes that he penned these words to the Philippians Christians, "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also maybe of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

But if this was indeed the case in the first-century church it was not Paul's fault, for it is evident from a study of his ministry that one of his priorities was the training of Christian leaders. This he sought to do by way of positive example. Once again we turn to Acts 20:17-35. What Paul did among the early converts at Ephesus was not accidental. He consciously stressed certain traits and habits, because he wanted his spiritual children to follow suit. If the Ephesian elders had missed this point the apostle is at pains here to put the issue beyond doubt. He wanted to underscore such virtues as humility, patience (v. 14), longsuffering, boldness (vv. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24), faithfulness (26, 27), and watchfulness (v. 28-31). He was particularly desirous of imparting to his converts in general and leaders in particular a meaningful work ethic: "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me.

I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:33-35). This is confirmed by his reference to this same kind of ethic in Ephesians 4:28 and his use of the word "labor" on both occasions. If one does not understand the apostle, his anxiety to have people follow his pattern of life seems to border on egotism. Indeed, an enumeration of the number of personal references in Acts 20 would definitely convince some of his conceit. But statistics in this case does not give a true picture of the man. Living an exemplary life was at the root of his strategy to train leaders. Twice Paul urged the Philippians to take his life-style seriously (Phil 3:17-18; 4:9).

Evidently, from 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul had a class of specially handpicked men whom he trained to carry the burden of the ministry in the succeeding generation. Every believer should be concerned about telling the gospel to others. However, this passage is particularly

applicable to leaders. Every such servant of God, while not neglecting the whole congregation, should endeavor to develop other leaders who will be qualified and competent to carry the gospel effectively to others. This is how the gospel reached the twenty-first century. It is our responsibility to prepare others to reach the next generation.

What was Paul's curriculum for potential Church leaders like? This we are not explicitly told, but from his various emphases here and there it may be possible to put together a fairly accurate picture of at least his "core disciplines." We can be fairly certain that such a curriculum was squarely based on the sacred writings. It is highly improbable that the young pastor at Ephesus was hearing the words of 2 Timothy 2:2 for the first time. The apostle must have imparted to his students sound Bible study principles, drawing both from his rabbinic and Christian traditions. In some places we find this missionary theologian stressing (rather than straining) certain points of grammar (e.g., the singular number in Gal 3:16). He wanted Timothy to give heed to "sound words" (2 Tim 1:13). Imprisonment and impending execution did not stop the apostle Paul from serious study of God's Word (2 Tim 4). This must have had a tremendous effect on his protégé Timothy.

As a missionary theologian the Apostle Paul was faithful both to his evangelistic call and his follow-up efforts. He also sought to reproduce himself in men and women ("men," generic in 2 Tim 2:2) who would carry the torch of leadership to yet another generation of believers. It is the apostle's work in these three areas that made him great in my judgment. It seems evident, then, that Paul was consciously carrying out in his ministry what is commonly known as the great commission (Matt 28:18-20; cf. John 14:15; 2 Cor 5:14). What the apostle Paul and others did for the first century is left for us to do in the twenty-first, provided our definition and declaration of the Gospel carry conviction.

Gospel Declaration and Definition (5:1-6:10)

In spiritual and theological terms, the Galatians are children of the free woman (4:31). As such they are children of divine promise (4:28) and power (4:29). The stark implication of this reality is that their new found freedom in Christ must be celebrated—and guarded with the utmost seriousness! (5:1).¹⁰ What this means as well is that the outward sign of the particular yoke is not circumcision, the distinguishing mark of the old covenant. On account of the ground-breaking and earth-shaking work of the Messiah¹¹ on the cross, circumcision and all that it entails have lost their value. In fact, all those who insist on circumcision as a badge of honour are obliged to keep the other 612 stipulations that make up the Mosaic covenant (v.3).

What is worse, anyone who would strive to be right with God by obeying the Mosaic law severs all ties with the Messiah and rejects the grace of God mediated through his son (cf. John 1:16-17). "A man who says 'I was saved by grace, but now my continuance depends on my own effort,' has fallen from grace. That is what it means 'to fall from grace.'"¹² This is not to deny

¹⁰The clause in 5:1, "The Messiah has liberated you with freedom" (τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν) appears to be emphatic; Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 44 n2.

¹¹ Recalling the tremendous account of Matt 27:51-54.

¹² H. Ironside, *Expository Messages on the Epistle to the Galatians* (Neptune, NJ: 1941), 179.

that effort must be made in living the Christian life; that would be patently false, as Philippians 2:12-13 demonstrates. The kind of effort inveighed against is the type that refuses the input of the Spirit (see v. 16 below); it is the kind of living that can boast on one's own effort akin to what we see in Luke 18. From the divine side, justification comes through the grace of God (5:4b). From the human side (5:5),¹³ whoever expresses genuine interest in being right with God must come to realise that “without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb 11:6).

In the letter to the Romans (8:30c), written after Galatians, justification is treated as a done deal. Here in Galatians 5:5b it is something the people of God anticipate. Did the apostle change his mind by the time he penned his *magnum opus*? Perhaps the best way to explain this seeming contradiction is to recognize the New Testament teaching of the already-not-yet (*A-N-Y*) construct. *A-N-Y* reveals that the Messianic righteous and rule have arrived and also await consummation, like the zygote/embryo/foetus (already a human being but not yet); the wedding (already married but not yet); union with Christ (already ‘married’ but not yet); glorification (Rom 8:30c); being seated in heaven (Eph 2:6); and salvation in general (“*A Gad imself staat op da gud wok ya iina unu [already], an im naa go tap nou. Im a go gwaan du we im a du iina unu laif, til Jiizas Kraias kom bak a ort [not yet]*”—Philippians 1:6).¹⁴

Verse 7 sees the apostle Paul introducing an imagery of athletics that he does not develop (cf. 1 Cor 9; 2 Tim 2; Heb 12:1-2). It is used to commend the Galatians for their previous effort in adhering to the gospel of Christ as well as to challenge them to conduct serious introspection as to their recent massive and miserable failure in regard to said gospel. Who is responsible for this? Who is the cause of their stumbling? It is certainly not the One who enlisted them in the race in the first place (v.8). In verse 9 the imagery is switched from the realm of athletics to the domestic domain. Back in 3:1 the writer expressed shock at how soon the purity of the gospel was abandoned. Now in verse 10 he expresses Spirit-inspired confidence in their mental and spiritual resolve to stay the course, while at the same time assuring them that the real troublemaker (the ring-leader?), whether within or without, will have his day in court (*krima*).

With his endearing phrase “sisters and brothers” (ἀδελφοί/ *adelphoi*) and characteristic emphatic ‘I’ (ἐγὼ; v.11; cf. v.10), as well a powerful rhetorical question, Paul continues to argue for the obsolescence of the rite of circumcision as a mark of covenant relationship. Only a fool, the apostle implies, would allow himself to be persecuted for something he knows to be invalid and untrue.¹⁵ The writer, if he continued to proclaim the validity of circumcision, would be rendering ineffective the most significant event in history—the cross work of Christ. Such disaster (i.e., rendering ineffective the most significant event in history) would be tantamount to reversing or overturning the perfect and permanent basis on which human liberation was achieved at the

¹³ In vv. 5 and 6 the writer brings together his famous triad of Christian virtues: faith and hope (v. 5); love (6). In v. 5 hope is tied to eschatological righteousness, and in v. 6 faith and love are brought together as eternal values in contradistinction to the obsolete circumcision. Here faith is expressed in genuine love; in verse 22 love generates faith(-fullness).

¹⁴We make good use of the Jamaica New Testament (JNT) throughout; feel free to read the exposition against the backdrop of your favourite version. Observe the ‘already/not’ title of Kortright Davis: *Emancipation Still Comin’: Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990), and Jamaica independence.

¹⁵The same kind of logic applies to the crucifixion and resurrection.

cross, the proclamation of which is utter foolish to Gentiles and a serious stumbling block to anyone Jewish outside of Christ.

Verse 13 returns to the theme of liberation introduced above, forming an *inclusio* with verse 1. The freedom Paul has in mind is never a license to enjoy the pleasure of sin once again. On the contrary, it is a divine accreditation to serve. Here the apostle may be alluding to the early days of liberation from African slavery where the man of God directed the monarch at the time to let the people go that they might serve¹⁶ Yahweh (Ex 7-12). So verse 13

demands that service be motivated by love and demonstrate love. God's expression of love towards humanity was motivated by love (John 3:16) and demonstrated love (Romans 5:8). By the action of dying on the cross and taking upon himself all our sins Jesus, in a clear way, showed love for humanity. This verse calls Christians to commit to a lifestyle of service to humanity. It is this commitment to serve, embedded in the Jamaican National Pledge, that makes it one of [our] favourite poems . . . [It ends thus] "advancing the welfare of the whole human race."¹⁷

At this point (v. 14), and in support of verse 13, the writer horizontally summarizes the core of the Mosaic law with a citation from Leviticus 19:18.¹⁸ In a sense the choice of this text is somewhat surprising since earlier (according to the Jesus tradition) the Messiah cited Deuteronomy 6:4 (plus Lev 19:18) as his summary text. But the contexts are different. Paul's choice suits him well, because he will in short order demonstrate what lack of love for neighbour can do to a congregation or any other social unit for that matter (v. 15). The following list of vices (vv 19-21) also justifies his wisdom, and, for the apostle, failure to love the other is a symptom of a greater failure—failure to love the God who is love (1 John 4:7-8).

Having mentioned the serious danger that is posed by the flesh (v.15), the apostle hastens to mention the antidote: "*Mi a tel unu liv unu laif laik ou Gad Spirit se unu fi liv. Da wie de unu naa go gi iin tu sin an du di rang sitn dem we unu eva waahn fi du*" (Λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε / Walk¹⁹ in dependence on the Spirit, and you will in no way²⁰ fulfil the desire of the flesh; v.16). Walking (the metaphor used in Greek) is a series of dependent steps that is more dependent on the head than the feet. If the assemblies of the body of Christ located in Galatia (and elsewhere) will simultaneously express total dependence on their Messianic Leader in their midst, while at the same time making every effort to live right, victory over the works of the flesh is guaranteed. But such route to the ongoing liberation from the power of sin, said to be practical sanctification by theologians, is no easy matter (v.17; see Appendix 2). There is battle between the fleshly internal and the indwelling Spirit; but if the Spirit is greater than the infernal foe (1 John 4:4), the flesh is no match for Him, provided the Messianic community submit (James 4:7; Rom 8:12-14).

¹⁶ This verb can also be translated 'worship'.

¹⁷ C.A. Dennis, *Galatians* (Maitland: Xulon, 2016), 89; for a capable exposition of the pledge, see John C. Keane, *Inspiration from Jamaica's National Pledge* (Kingston: PearTree, 2012).

¹⁸ The vertical summary is found in Deut 6:4-5; v. 4 of this text is alluded to in 3:20.

¹⁹ περιπατεῖτε –2ND person plural imperative (JNT- *unu liv*).

²⁰ The phrase "you will in no way" contains a double negative (οὐ μὴ/ou mē) that underscores the emphatic character of the conditional promise.

The Galatians fully well knew the ugliness of their past, especially from the perspective of Christian hindsight. Verses 18-26, then, constitute a kind of challenge reminiscent of Joshua 24:15, or that of Elisha (1 Kings 18:21). The question is: Which sphere of influence will they allow to control their lives going forward?

<u>Flesh</u>	<u>Spirit</u>
Works of the law	faith, promise
Curse	blessing, inheritance
Slavery	friendship, sonship
Sin and death	justification and life
Hagar the slave woman	[Sarah] the free woman
Sinai and present Jerusalem	Jerusalem from above
Ishmael	Isaac
Persecutor	persecuted
Cast away	heir
Being under law	being led by the Spirit
Works of the flesh	fruit of the Spirit ²¹

So, as verse 18 affirms, the leading of the Spirit is the way to deliverance from all the debilitating effects of the left column, especially from the strong insistence of the trouble-makers. What the left column throws up, like a badly managed cesspool, is described in verses 19-21. Every vice²² mentioned in these verses is destructive of community:

- Sexual immorality (πορνεία): the kind of conduct that is proscribed in Leviticus 18.²³
- Impurity (ἀκαθαρσία): perhaps the best definition of the term is summarized in Matt 5:19-20.
- Debauchery (ἀσέλγεια): “denotes open shamelessness, insolent disregard of decency.”²⁴
- Idolatry (εἰδωλολατρία): the worship of anything or anyone apart from the living and true God, *El Elyon*.

²¹ M. Silva, “Galatians, Theology of,” in W. Elwell, ed., *EDT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 282. “In the course of his argument, Paul sets up a sharp distinction between two modes of existence, represented by various concepts. Reflecting on these contrasts provides significant insights into Paul’s theology.”

²²The list is from the NIV.

²³ In 1 Cor 6 the term could be translated ‘prostitution’. See also, Julie-Ann Dowding, “1 Corinthians 6: 9-11 As A Caribbean Response to The Homosexual Agenda,” *Caribbean Journal of Evangelical Theology* 16 (2016): 1-26.

²⁴ H. Vos, *Galatians* (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 103.

- Witchcraft (φαρμακεία): the inordinate dependence on/or illicit use of drugs in witchcraft and the like.²⁵
- Hatred (ἔχθραι): enmity of all sort (including, *mi spirit no tek im/ar?*).
- Discord (ἔρις): “the natural outcome of hatred both in the world and the truth.”²⁶
- Jealousy (ζήλος): uneasy feeling of insecurity at the blessings of others.
- Fits of rage (θυμοί): lack of anger management.
- Selfish ambition (ἐπιθειᾶι): or rivalry.
- Dissensions (διχοστασίαι): This and the following “denote a state of affairs in which men are divided and feuds flourish.”²⁷
- Factions (αἰρέσεις): Division,²⁸ cliquishness.
- Envy (φθόνοι): strong desire to have other people’s blessings; grudgeful.
- Drunkenness (μέθαι): excessive indulgence in strong drink.
- Orgies (κῶμοι): “excessive feasting.”²⁹

Before passing on to the recommended list, a warning is issued, “[A]s I said before, those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”³⁰

5:22 But the Spirit’s fruit is love.³¹ How is this love defined? Contextually, it is that outgoing concern which seeks the highest good (the *will of God*) for others. If it be assumed that there are fundamentally three types of love—loving others for self-sake, for their sake, and *for God’s sake*—the fruit of the Spirit belongs to the last mentioned. On the vertical level it is obedience to the word of God (John 14:15). This exotic expression of the heart of God requires of the people of God to care for even enemies. If we imagine this kind of love (*agapē*)³² to be a pizza, the slices are *philia* (fraternal regard), *storgē* (family love), and *erōs* (the driving force behind sexual intimacy). It has its source in the nature of God (1 John 4:16) as well as it is the best description of the Son of God (cf. 1 Cor 13: 4-7). So then the Spirit’s fruit³³ is love (ἀγάπη), manifesting itself in:

²⁵ At the time of writing, Giovanni Dennis is doing a week-long series on RJR (Sept 10-14, 2018) on many of the Jamaican youth (from primary school-university) who are engaged in drug abuse (from marijuana to coke).

²⁶ Boice, “Galatians,” 496.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ B. Newman, *Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Stuttgart: UBS, 1971), 5.

^{29,29} Moo, *Galatians*, 361. The phrase “and the like” shows that the list is merely partial.

³⁰ On this and other similar warnings relative to the issue of salvation, see C. Adrian Thomas, *A Case for Mixed-Audience with Reference to the Warning Passages in the Book of Hebrews*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

³¹ Here we follow M. de Boer, *Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 362; the translation is ours. The list itself is from the NIV.

³² 100% commitment to God and the godless, and all in between. The word is used 75t in the Pauline literature, according to Moo, *Galatians*, 264. Of course, the 100% commitment of this kind of love is dependent on the context, e.g., in Luke 6 *agapē* is used for the truncated commitment of unbelievers.

³³ According to D. Wallace (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 106), the genitive construction highlights the productive source of this qualitative fruit. We have added some adjectives to bring this point out.

- Joy: χαρά (*aalwiew api no mata wa*) a sense of unspeakable delight.
- Peace: ειρήνη (*liv gud wid piipl*) a sense of indescribable well-being.
- Forbearance: μακροθυμία (*aalwiew tek taim wid ada piipl*) a sense of unimaginable patience.
- Kindness: χρηστότης (*kain*) undeniable expressions of mercy.
- Goodness: ἀγαθωσύνη (*eva a du gud fi piipl*) irrepressible sense of generosity.
- Faithfulness: πίστις (*fi bi sumadi we piipl kyan chos*) a sense of incomparable loyalty.
- Gentleness: πραΰτης (*jengkl*) a sense of ineffable meekness.
- Self-control: ἐγκράτεια (*ou fi kanchuol self*) a sense of inimitable personal mastery (cf. Matt 11:28-29; 1 Cor 9:24-27).

23b-26 “Against such things there is no law.” Neither the Mosaic Law nor the Messianic Code of ethics (v.2) would legislate against these virtues the way they must against the vices of verses 15, 18-21. The vices are the sure sign that another power is in control, since lack of self-control is *self* (i.e., the flesh) in control. But one of the unmistakable indicatives of the Christian life is that the power of the flesh was dealt a death blow on the cross (v. 24). This makes victory for the child of God possible; what makes the victory practicable (or experiential) is obedience to the corresponding imperatives (5:16, 25-26; cf. Rom 6:1-6, 12-14; Eph 5:18-21.).³⁴ Therefore, those “who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” (vv. 24-26 NIV).

In continuing his strong reaffirmation of the liberty found only in the gospel, Paul once again exposes the futility of obtaining a right standing before God by keeping the law (5:2-12). Accordingly, circumcision is authoritatively (v. 2) and summarily dismissed, and Spirit-related matters like grace, faith, love, and hope, are all promoted in its stead. He evidently speaks in this manner because “others had . . . undertaken to say what Paul believed or practiced in the matter of circumcision (cf. v.11); here is Paul’s own account”³⁵ that begins with the solemn statement of verse 2. Equally emphatic is the expression of confidence on the part of Paul that his Galatian converts will adopt the proper posture on the matter, that the offenders in question will be brought to book (v.10), and that his cruciform focus of ministry is not misplaced (v.11).

As the apostle draws the letter to a close he strongly expresses the hope that his converts “will avow with him a belief in Christocentric and cross-centered theology that eliminates the necessity

³⁴ May be we could associate Paul’s indicatives (e.g., 2 Cor 5:17; Rom 8:30; 5:10; Col 2:15) and corresponding imperatives (Rom 12:2; Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 4:8 [?]; Rom 16:20) with the ANY (already/not yet) construct.

³⁵ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 229.

for circumcision,”³⁶ so that they may reaffirm their new creation status in Christ (v.15; cf. 5:2 2:6). In the apostle’s own closing words: “But far be it from me to boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world . . . For the rest let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of the Lord Jesus” (DV). The passage in which these words are found is not an ordinary first-century epilogue. In it Paul fitly summarizes the crucial elements he has already discussed in the body of the letter,³⁷ and that by way of “self-exemplification and self-portrayal . . . [he] drive[s] a wedge between the Galatians and the Judaizers by convincing them to side with Paul against his opponents.”³⁸ Siding with the apostle also means a preferential option for the weak (6:1-5):

Even if a man should be detected in some sin, my brothers, the spiritual ones among you should quietly set him back on the right path, not with any feeling of superiority but being yourselves on guard against temptation. ²Carry each other’s burdens and so live out the law of Christ.³⁴ If a man thinks he is “somebody”, he is deceiving himself, for that very thought proves that he is nobody. Let every man learn to assess properly the value of his own work and he can then be glad when he has done something worth doing without dependence on the approval of others. ⁵For every man must “shoulder his own pack.” **JBP**

*Tek kier so unu no faal iina sin tu. 2Wen sumadi av prablem, unu fi elp dem. Unu fi elp unu wan aneda. Kaaz wen unu du dat unu a du we Kraiz Jiizas se unu mos du. 3Kaaz ef sumadi tingk se dem big an impuotant bot dem a nobadi, dem ongl a fuul demself. 4Evribadi mos luk iina demself an si ef wa dem a du rait. Unu no fi luk pan nobadi fi si ef unu rait, unu mos ongl luk pan unusef. An den ef wa unu a du rait, unu kyan api wid unusef 5Kaaz evribadi mos kyari dem uona luod. **JNT***

6:1 When the “flesh” is at work in any church setting, there is bound to be casualties (cf. 5:15). So those who are consistently resisting the fleshly life-style (Rom 8:13-14) by walking in the Spirit are called upon to rescue the perishing from within. The story is told of a man who was about to jump from a high-rising building in New Kingston, JA. The JCF sent for their most tactful police officer, who on arrival, appeared to have been making steady progress in his effort to dissuade the unfortunate man from taking his own life. The conversation was recorded, the last part of which (i.e., the officer’s closing remarks) went like this: “I’m glad you’ve finally decided not to take the plunge . . . but tell me something, why you wanted to kill yourself in the first place—give me ten good reasons!” On hearing the ten most persuasive lines why death is preferable to life they both jumped. The moral of the story lies in the plural personal pronoun (*unu*; **JNT**). In restoring the erring believer, it is best not to go alone. Spirituality must be wedded with sagacity—and even in that case, meekness must be matched with sober introspection (1c).³⁹

6:2-5 The type of behaviour enjoined in the previous verse is part of what it means to bear another’s burden. It is a concrete expression of the law of Christ (v. 2; see Appendix). Verses 3-4 appear to pick on the warning of verse 1 concerning the kind of self-examination that should

³⁶ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 234.

³⁷ Bruce, *Galatians*, 268.

³⁸ Dodd, *Paul's Paradigmatic 'I'*, 169.

³⁹ NIV and most English versions fail to bring out the change from plural to singular in the imperative construction; JNT added one plural ‘you’ too many.

characterize those who are engaged in spiritual restoration. Certainly, the verses have a wider application, and, as verse 5 makes plain, the individual dimension is important as well.

6:6-10 *Unu we a lorn Gad wod mos shier aal a di gud sitn dem we unu av wid unu tiicha. 7No fuul unusef: Unu kyaahn tek Gad mek preke. Eniting we unu plaant a dat unu ago riip. 8So ef yu plaant di sitn dem we yu badi waahn, a ded unu ago ded — a dat unu ago riip. Bot ef yu plaant di sitn dem we Gad Spirit waahn, yu wi riip laif, wan laif we naa go don. 9So mek wi no get taiyad fi du gud, kaaz ef wi no gi op, wen Gad redi, im wi mek wi riip nof gud sitn. 10So weneva wi av di chaans fi du gud, mek wi du it. Mek wi du gud fi evribadi, wos ef dem a paat a Gad fambili an biliiv iina Jiizas laik wi. JNT*

Verse 6 is an example of how burden bearing is firmly grounded in the Messianic code of ethics and can find meaningful expression among the various congregations of Galatia: those taught must welcome the privilege of reciprocating the blessings received, whether spiritually or materially (Luke 10:7; cf. 1 Cor 9:14).⁴⁰ The next couple of verses (7-8) may then have their closest application in the principle enunciated in verse 6, that is, failure to share is a way of sowing to the flesh. On the other hand, giving is a way of sowing to the Spirit and at the same time laying up treasures in heaven. Although these verses must not be limited to giving, contextually they do seem to make good sense when understood in that way. The agricultural language is continued in verse 9 with the strong encouragement to persevere in the good deeds outlined in the chapter thus far; in fact, the incentive of reaping at a divinely appointed season in the future, whether near or far, is enticing.

Conclusion

One of the things the true gospel does for the people of God is to enable them to be meaningfully engaged in good works (cf. Eph 2:8-10). So if anyone would get the impression that the writer is against good works, verse 10 should disabuse their mind. The works of the law, then, that are not recommended are those associated with the Mosaic economy in terms of how one enters into covenant relationship with God and how this relationship is maintained to the end; the works that are encouraged in verses 9-10 are those that are connected to the law of Christ, based on the example the Master himself has set and what his Spirit brings to fruition (5:22-23). The priority of this welfare engagement must be carefully noted (v. 10). Such engagement is sometimes hard but never burdensome. The gravity of this point (and all that preceded it) is underscored by the capital letters of the writer (6:11).

⁴⁰ Moo, *Galatians*, 383.

APPENDIX 1

Theology of Galatians

Eleutheria (liberation), according to Betz, “is the central theological concept which sums up the Christian situation before God . . . in this world. It is the basic concept underlying Paul’s argument throughout the letter.”⁴¹ This is borne out by the chiasmic structure of the correspondence:

- A Prologue (1:1-12)
- B Way of the Flesh and Spirit: A Personal pre-post-Conversion Testimony (1:11-2:10)
- C Justification by Faith (2:11-3:4)
- D Arguments from Scripture (3:5-29)
- E Messianic Liberation (4:1-10)
- D’ Arguments from Scripture (4:11-31)
- C’ Justification by Faith (5:1-13)
- B’ Ways of the Flesh and Spirit: Potential post-Conversion Testimony? (5:11-6:16)
- A’ Epilogue (6:17-18)⁴²

Paul’s perspective of holistic salvation, a major theme of Caribbean Theology, is highlighted in the central section of the above chiasmus, as well gleaned from a twofold structure of Galatians: *Liberation in terms of Justification*⁴³ and *Union*: (1:6–4:31); and *Liberation in terms of Sanctification*⁴⁴ and *Glorification*⁴⁵ (5:1–6:18).

⁴¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 255.

⁴² Adapted from M. Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Method: Galatians as a Test Case* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 91.

⁴³ On this see D. Pearson, “Justification by Click,” in *Romans in Context: A Theological Appreciation of Paul’s Magnum Opus* (Eugene, Oregon: RP, 2011), 55–57.

⁴⁴ See also the Appendix below. We also need to bear in mind that the sanctified “live a life of victory, but it is qualified victory. We are not yet what we shall be. We are not yet totally like the Messiah (1 John 3:2). We live in the tension between the “already” and the “not yet.” We are genuinely new persons but not totally new.” (A. A. Hoekema, “Reformed View,” in *Five Views on Sanctification*, edited by Stanley Gundry [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 190).

⁴⁴ Even those who believe that the God of Abraham and David is “jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully” (Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006], 31).

⁴⁵ Cf. the structure of Romans as well as A. J. Hultgren (*Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011], 294–309) labels 8:1–11 “Liberation from Sin and Life in the Spirit;” verses 12–13 should probably have

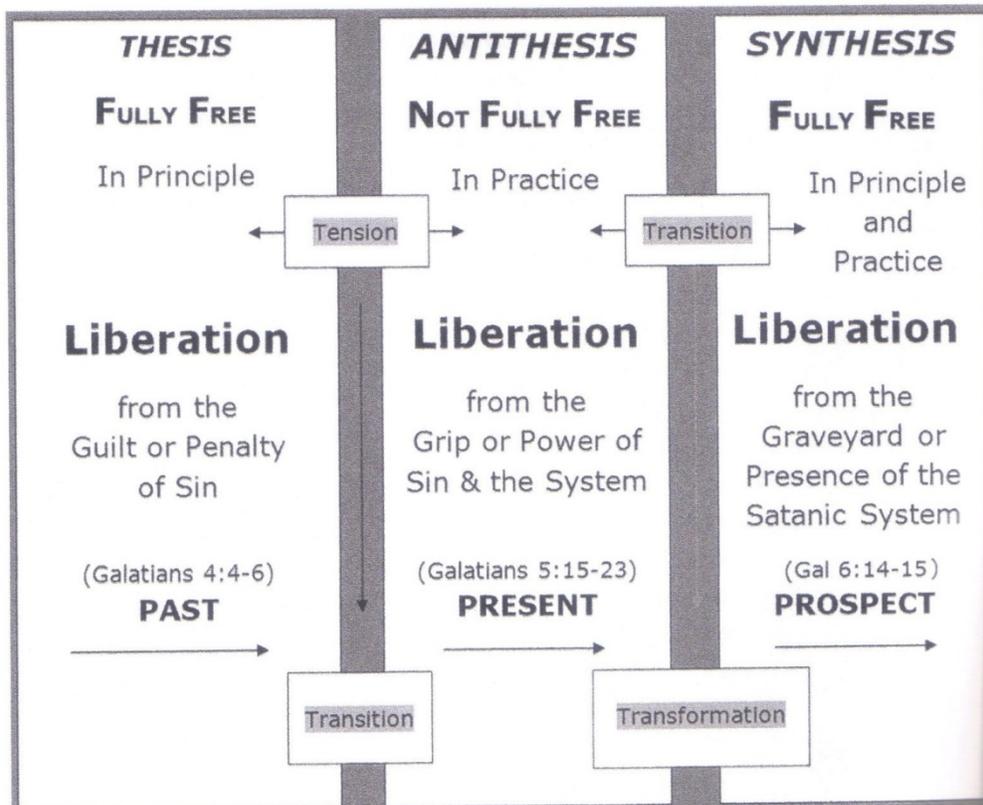
It is the B'-section that takes up the various strands of liberation and weaves them into the beautiful tapestry of tension (5:17) and new creation (6:15; see Appendix below). It is this segment as well that emphasizes the already/not character of divine liberation, which, if not understood, has the potential for so much confusion and misapplication in the lived-experience of people of faith everywhere.⁴⁶

been included here, especially v. 13. R. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 347, proposes that chapters 5–8 set “out the essence of what [Paul] proclaims in his Gentile mission” This can hardly be doubted, but we do not have any letter from him to a purely Jewish church to fully support this contention.

⁴⁶Caribbean theologians, though quite attuned to the need for fulsome liberation, seldom mention this already/not perspective of divine deliverance that is perhaps best summarized in the words of Philippians 1:6 (See the Appendix 2 for further clarification). Having said all this, we still have to reckon with the fact that “we know in part.” The already/not perspective (or realized eschatology) may be further illustrated (by way of analogy) from the OT in the death of Adam and Eve in Gen 3. The moment they ate the forbidden breadfruit (On this, see Bruce Metzger's *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997, p. 200]), they died spiritually, long before their physical demise; when Sarah died, her widower bought a plot to bury her, though the land was theirs. In the NT, the Messiah announced the kingdom, yet taught his community to pray, “Let your kingdom come!” And when he died his unique death he cried, “finished,” because he (during the three hour of darkness?) had already borne our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24; cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Isa 53:5-6, 10), before uttering “into your hands I commit my spirit,” signalling his physical death. Also, in the first century the two stages of marriage (betrothal before the wedding) correspond to the church being the Messianic ‘bride.’ Today in the western world the *decree nisi* preceding the *decree absolute* may serve the same illustrative purpose. With this legal analogue, I rest my case.

APPENDIX

The Dialectic Of Messianic Liberation in Galatians



BOOK REVIEW

*Living Wisely:
Reflections on the
Wisdom Books*

AUTHOR

Dr Burchell Taylor

REVIEWER

Marlene Roper
CGST Student

The Reverend Dr. Burchell Taylor was until recently the Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Half Way Tree in Kingston, Jamaica. He has served in various capacities of leadership for regional and worldwide church bodies, while lecturing part-time and leading Studies in Bible and related subjects, both locally and internationally.

He authored the book under review entitled, "Living Wisely – Reflections on the Wisdom Books." This was first published in 2014 by Caribbean Christian Publication.

As its name implies, the book deals with lessons to be learnt from the wisdom books i.e., Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes with special focus on the Caribbean context. For Taylor, the wisdom tradition focuses on the day-to-day struggles, which assist in making sense of life.

He opined that wisdom may not necessarily result in dynamism and creativity, which are practical and relevant to life changes and their own issues. Taylor has cautioned that although information will be considered from the three named books, (Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes) there will be no attempt to offer any detailed discussion of the individual books

as the emphasis will remain on the value of tradition which embraces the use of God-given capacities to engage existential realities.

The content in my estimation seems esoteric at times, particularly for readers who are not familiar with the relevance of the Bible. It requires readers to be acquainted with the Bible and would prove to be a good piece of literature for Bible scholars and students pursuing theological studies. This will by no means change the fact that the wisdom tradition will be relevant in comprehending the work which puts focus on God's activity throughout history.

In this literary type from a Caribbean point of view Dr Taylor has noted that the generic trajectory is the biblical source from which one draws to offer theological guidance. He has sought to make a case for attention to be given to the biblical wisdom tradition in particular reference to local and regional theological thinking. The book is a welcome contribution to the ongoing project of Caribbean Theology, and joins that of Dr Carlton Dennis' (*Proverbs and the People: Africa and Jamaica*) in its quest to mine this neglected part of the canon.

**CONTENTS AND CONTOURS OF AN AFRO-CARIBBEAN EMANCIPATORY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY:
A PROPOSAL FROM A PAN-CARIBBEAN, LINGUISTIC AND POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Introduction

Historically, the Caribbean region owes its identity formation principally to Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Nestled within this rectangular network of relationships, the Caribbean is home to four major linguistic groups, a plurality of Afro-Caribbean religio-cultural and Christian traditions (Henry 2003; Nettleford in Hall 2006: 6-7; Murrell 2009) including, in some cases, some Indo-Caribbean ones, and an almost “happy-go-lucky” people--a “carefree native” as perceived by some rather condescending westerners (Roberts 1997: 4). The region also represents a kaleidoscope of cultures and complexions (Sunshine 1985: 7; Lai 1998; Arbell 2000). In verity, the word, Caribbean, covers “a multitude of skins” (Yorke 2013b).

To complicate matters further, we should not overlook the well-organized way of life of our Amerindian ancestors in the region as well---long before Christopher Columbus, the Italian who got himself lost at sea while navigating in the name of the Spanish Crown in search of gold and other “goodies” in India in the East, accidentally landed on Caribbean shores. Nor should we

become oblivious to the “studied assault on the Amerindians and their way of life which Columbus’s arrival triggered, amounting virtually to genocide “(Thompson, 1994:111; LaFleur *et al.* 1996). It is against this backdrop which makes writing anything about this vibrant rainbow-like region, called the Caribbean, an exceptionally difficult task—a region named after the indigenous, war-like, pre-Columbian people group called the Caribs (or Kalinago) (Shepherd 2006: 131).

Currently, the Caribbean encompasses Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone and Netherlanderphone (Dutch-speaking) islands. In the case of Anglophone Belize and Guyana, and Nederlanderphone Suriname, the Caribbean also incorporates portions of the Central and South American mainland as well (Nettleford in Cobley 1995:1-2; Lampe, ed. 2001; Aub-Buscher and Noakes, eds. 2003).

Another popular nomenclature by which the region is known, especially its Anglophone sector, is that of the West Indies (Roberts 1997: vi). Supposedly, this is a throw-back to the cartographical error which “discoverer” Columbus made in mistakenly thinking that he had arrived in India (out East among the East Indians) when in fact he was lost at sea way out West. And so the peoples of the region are considered Indians in the West or, simply, West Indians.

The region has a population of some sixteen (16) million. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as a pan-Caribbean organization, is one in which Heads of State and Government meet from time to time as they seek, through various CARICOM-sponsored Organs and Structures, to help advance the cause of regional integration. This is especially crucial in light of the unrelenting hurricane-like forces of globalization which tend to be inimical to the sustainable economic and other development of relatively small island states such as most of the Caribbean islands are (Lewis [Patsy]2002).

CARICOM traces its official genesis to 1973 with the Treaty of Chagaramas which was signed in the Anglophone Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Other smaller sub-regional groupings include the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) with its official origin dating back to 1981 and based on the Treaty of Basseterre, the capital of St. Christopher (or St. Kitts) in the Federation of St. Christopher (or St. Kitts)-Nevis in the Eastern Caribbean (Harris [Timothy] 2008).

Statistics suggest that approximately 70 % of the contemporary Caribbean are comprised of people of African descent. (Harris [Timothy--in personal correspondence], 2008). Such people are part and parcel of what is now a large and vibrant African diaspora induced, for the most part, by the European-driven West, Central and even Southern African Trans-Atlantic slave trade in which Africa, the Motherland, was robbed and raped of its many sons and daughters who were then taken, “kicking and screaming”, to the various sugar, cotton, rice, tobacco and other plantations throughout the Americas—including the Caribbean. That is, most of those

who are of African descent in the Caribbean point to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade as opposed to the mainly Arabic-and Islam-driven East African slave trade which has spawned an African diaspora as well but moreso in the “Asia’s” of the world—in places like China, India, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan (Harris [Joseph] 1971).

In terms of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, for example, Yasus Afari, the Jamaican dub poet, has this to say:

The diabolic trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the slave plantation systems institutionalized in the African diaspora and in Africa, constituted the African holocaust which is undoubtedly an unprecedented crime against humanity. In fact, over one hundred million (100,000,000) Africans died during, or as a direct result of the hellish torment and misery of the journey/middle passage across the Atlantic, in addition to those who died, and continue to die, as a result of European colonialism and neo-colonialism (Yasus Afari 2007:8).

In light of that horrible history, it becomes even more meaningful as to why Harris, the British-based but St. Kitts-born sociologist, is asking that we refer to this whole trans-Atlantic trauma we call the slave trade not only as a crime against humanity but the African Holocaust or, in Kiswahili, the African Maafa as well (Harris [Clive] 2008).

In addition, the vast majority of Caribbean people fall within the Judeo-Christian tradition although there are some religio-cultural traditions which have been heavily influenced either by African traditions such as Rastafarianism in Jamaica, Santeria in Cuba, Voodooism in Haiti, Winti in Suriname or by some more religious traditions of Asian origin such as in the case of Hinduism and Buddhism. Not to be overlooked are also a smattering of Jews and Moslems and, on a larger scale, a number of ardent adherents of Garifuna, a more indigenous phenomenon found mostly in Dominica and Belize (Bisnauth 1989; Miguel 1995; Chevannes 1995; Murrell 2009).

Because of the dominance of the Judeo-Christian tradition and that of our Afro-ancestry, emphasis will be placed in this discussion on what may be regarded as the contents and contours of an Afro-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology—and from a pan-Caribbean, linguistic and postcolonial perspective. In addition, emphasis will be placed on the Anglophone slice and sector of the Afro-Caribbean and within that slice, Jamaica, with roughly half the size of the Anglophone population, will be foregrounded. This is not dissimilar to what we find in the volume edited by Levy in which we find a discussion of what is referred to as the African-Caribbean worldview (see Levy 2009). But before we embark on such a discussion, perhaps a word or two about the term, perspective, is entirely in order so as to place our discussion within its proper contextual and conceptual framework.

Perspective

In some Christian theological circles, it is now a truism (an axiom, as it were) that God may have made us in God's own image (Gen1:26) but that in our theologizing about who God is, we inevitably end up, to varying degrees, making God in our image as well--be it consciously or subconsciously.

The very nature of language; the limitation of the human imagination; the “imprisonments” imposed on us by culture, personality, gender, and upbringing; the particularities of our own socioeconomic and other contexts; and the presence of sin in the life of the believer, one who, according to the dictum of Martin Luther, the German Reformer (1483-1546), is *simul iustus et peccator* (saint and sinner at the same time) are all factors and forces that make what we see and say inevitably perspectival in nature (Yorke 1995).

In terms of the Christian community, for example, the present profusion of doctrinal formulations and the proliferation of distinct and discrete Christian churches or denominations worldwide—be it in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, Latin America, in the Caribbean or wherever, all of which derive their *raison d'être*, identity and impulse to engage in Christian mission and education, supposedly from the Bible--is clear empirical testimony, it seems to us, to the validity of this bold claim. As human beings, we seem able, ultimately, to see only “through a glass darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12--*KJV*).

Echoing Rudolf Bultmann, the German New Testament scholar, and others, our presuppositions, pre-understandings and biases of whatever kind impose limits on us which no amount of life experience or even formal education seems able to eradicate entirely. It is this “fact of life”, for example, which John Elliott captures in his own creative way. He writes: “All perception is selective and constrained psychologically and socially; for no mortal enjoys *the gift of ‘immaculate perception’*” (Elliott 1986:5).

Granted, we must also concede that those who now occupy “the Global South” such as in the Caribbean or those situated at the margins *vis-à-vis* the centre, the “Two-thirds world” *vis-à-vis* the so-called “First world”, have also been heavily influenced by those Christian theologians and others who are committedly engaged in seeing and saying things from the perspective of the oppressed, the poor, the powerless, women and the weak. We have in mind those Christian theologies often referred to as liberation theologies stemming principally from Latin America or those which we choose to refer to as Two-thirds World Christian theologies, pointing to the experiences and expectations of those who now constitute the vast majority of the world’s population but who find themselves, for the most part, at its periphery or as pushed-aside people; or, like Jesus Himself, among the “despised and rejected” (Isa. 53: 1-3 [*KJV*]; also see Ching 1991; Yorke 1995: 4-6).

Felder, the African-American New Testament scholar, for example, makes the following pertinent observation:

European/Euro-American biblical scholars have asked questions that shaped answers within the framework of the racial, cultural, gender presuppositions they held in common. This quiet consensus has undermined the self-understanding and place in history of other racial and ethnic groups (Felder 1994: xi).

Essentially, the point is this: because of our particularities, presuppositions, pre-understandings, and, therefore, our limited perspective on things, in other words, our “maculate perceptions”, we are being admonished as Christian theologians and others to avoid, as much as possible, making the pretentious claim that any one person or a homogeneous group of persons is capable of engaging in a reading of the Bible such as would make such a reading timelessly applicable in its appeal, all-inclusively embracing in its scope, univocal in its sound and universal in its reach.

In other words, our Christian theological reflections are not entirely neutral or innocent in nature but, instead, are informed and influenced by notions of both place and space (Blount 2007: 1-7)—be it captured in a geographically-sounding term like African, Asian, Canadian, Euramerican, European, Latin American, Caribbean or wherever; or a more people-focused fixation on black, white, feminist, womanist or any other (Grant and Patel, eds. 1990; Cone 2004; Punt 2007; Fiorenza 2008).

It is this basic conviction or presupposition which helps to create room and provides the rationale for the articulation of what is being termed here an Afro-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology—one which is grounded in Afro-Caribbean experiences and expectations and one to which we now turn.

An Afro-Caribbean Emancipatory Christian Theology: A Proposal from a Pan-Caribbean, Linguistic and Postcolonial Perspective

In terms of the Afro-Caribbean, it is important to reiterate that the region is a rich multilingual region reflecting Dutch, English, French and Spanish influence and, at one time, Danish as well (Hall [Neville] 1992). It is a region in which the European High or H languages are the official languages along with their creolized counterparts such as Papiamentu, Jamiekian and Patwa in which Dutch, English and French serve as lexifier languages respectively. In fact, Haiti not only has French as an official language but Haitian creole as well—as does Curaçao in terms of having both Dutch and Papiamentu as official languages. Not to be overlooked are the strong lexical, syntactic, semantic and other influences which African languages have on such Afro-Caribbean languages or creoles as well (Roberts 1997; Warner-Lewis 2003; Devonish 2007).

This observation about the multilingualism of the Caribbean is of utmost importance, it seems to us, since a number of Caribbean scholars write about “the Caribbean” and/or Caribbean Christian theology when what they really have in view is the *Anglo-Caribbean* (e.g., see Davis [Kortright] 1990; Williams 1991; Reid-Salmon 2008; cf. Dick 2010a). Such scholars seem insufficiently respectful of, and sensitive to, the rich multilingual tapestry characterizing the region as a whole.

Granted, the Caribbean region is one which is relatively much easier to discuss than to define. At an event to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of Jamaica Theological Seminary, for example, Devon Dick, a Baptist minister and scholar, gave a lecture in which he made the following pertinent observation:

What is Caribbean? It is difficult to define Caribbean. There are many definitions for the Caribbean as there are Caribbean territories. Is the Bahamas and Bermuda part of the Caribbean? Is Puerto Rico part of the Caribbean? Should it be territories touched by the Caribbean Sea? One definition is ‘Pertaining to the sea and region of the western Atlantic bounded by South America, Central America, and the islands of the West Indies (such as Cuba and Hispaniola)... The countries that occupy the region of the western Atlantic bounded by South America, Central America, and the ...’. Then there is English, Spanish, Dutch and French Caribbean. How can we have a Caribbean Theology when we cannot even identify the Caribbean (Dick 2010a: 4-5)?

Not only is Dick’s opening question relevant, given the geographical imprecision of the term, Caribbean, but so is his last question as well especially in relation to the multilingual make-up of the region as a whole and our attempt to articulate what the contents and contours of an Afro-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology should look like. Unlike what is generally done, such a theology ought to be, at least, pan-Caribbean, trans-linguistic and multilingual in its reach and relevance.

Granted, this tendency towards “monolingual myopia” is not restricted to English-speaking Afro-Caribbean Christian theologians. The same phenomenon manifests itself, more or less, in other linguistic domains within the Caribbean as well—be it within the Francophone, Hispanophone or the Netherlanderphone domains. In terms of the Anglophone sector, for example, it was rather instructive to hear the various calls for recognition and greater inclusion emanating from the non-Anglophone sector of the region at the 35th annual meetings of the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) held in Kingston, Jamaica in June 2009. Having its 35th annual meeting in 2009 meant that CSA dates back to the 1960’s and yet such strident calls for recognition and greater inclusion were being made. Such calls came principally from scholars hailing from the Dutch-, the French- and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

And to make the point, perhaps somewhat politically, some of the non-Anglophone scholars opted to speak in their official language rather than try to accommodate those who might have been monolingual English-speakers. Rather ironically, the theme for the CSA meeting was

“Centering the Caribbean in Caribbean Studies.” Of course, much credit ought to be given to the organizers of the conference itself in that, at least, scholars from the non-Anglophone sectors were present—suggesting, perhaps, that there was a shared recognition of this “shortsightedness” or “oversight” or, perhaps in the rasta talk of Jamaica, known for its creative wordplay, “undersight” (Cassidy 2007; Palmer 2010: 22ff.).

It was clear that some attempt was made to be much more inclusive. In addition, and given the existential congruence between Afro-Caribbean peoples and their Afro-Brazilian counterparts, it was also gratifying to see some Afro-Brazilian scholars present and participating as well—as was the fact that the CSA had held one of its earlier annual meetings in Salvador, Bahia, the center of gravity of the Afro-Brazilian community itself (Davis [Darien] 1999; Munanga and Gomes 2006; Filho 2008).

In terms of an Afro-Caribbean Christian theology which must be Christian and, therefore, having the Bible, the Book of the Church, at its very foundation, it should also be emancipatory in its tone, tenor and thrust (Davis [Kortright]). In spite of the multicultural and multilingual complexity of the region, it is fairly defensible to say, we think, that its shared socio-historical experiences of slavery induced by colonialism and, subsequent to that, oppressive forms of neo-colonialism, the devastating hurricane-like forces of globalization, the exclusionary pressures of marginalization and related feelings of powerlessness, all conspire against the peoples of the region to make them desire and deserve more meaningful forms of emancipation—be it psychological, economic, academic, environmental or any other in nature (Brereton and Yelvington, eds. 1999; Dayfoot 1999; Jennings 2007) .

Lest we forget:

Christianity came to the Caribbean as part and parcel of Spanish, French, British, Dutch, and finally, North American colonialism. The church went on to assist these powers in building colonial societies: it endorsed slavery, and helped to entrench racial and class divisions after emancipation (Sunshine 1992: 16; also see Turner 1998; Dayfoot 1999; Bolland 2003; and Hewitt 2012).

Historically, emancipation, made possible by both women and men alike, came for the slaves here in “the West” at different times. In Haiti, it was in 1804; in the Anglophone Caribbean, it was in 1838; in the Francophone Caribbean, it was in 1848; in the Dutch colonies, it was in 1863; in the US to the north, it was in 1865; and in Puerto Rico, it was in 1886. Afro-Brazilian emancipation came in May 1888.

Incidentally, this last-mentioned emancipation date (1888) came just after the Berlin Conference which ran from November 1884-February 1885. This was a conference at which, ironically, and in spite of the granting of so-called “emancipation” in the West (including the Caribbean) before that, we witness the arbitrary and rapacious carving up of Africa among

various European powers such as Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Portugal and Spain. Such balkanization of the continent further facilitated Europe in its underdevelopment of Africa or, like a cricket ball, putting my own spin on that history, it gave rise to Africa and the Caribbean (at least) contributing to the overdevelopment of Europe (Rodney 1972; Mair 2007; Jagessar 2007; Yorke 2009; Yorke *et al.* 2010; Dick 2010a; 2010b).

Be that as it may, one can no longer describe the region as anything other than one in which there is an ongoing postcolonial drive to assert itself on the world stage and a concerted effort to march towards greater self-determination. It is little wonder, then, that the term, postcolonialism, has come to characterize the writings of not a few Afro-Caribbean scholars (Shepherd 2006; Lalla 2008) and even some non-Caribbean-born but Caribbeanist ones as well (e.g., Lee 2008).

Williams, one of the more well-known Jamaican Afro-Christian theologians throughout the Anglophone region, seemed a bit uneasy with the Marxist associations which the liberation theology emanating from Latin America usually conjures up in the minds of some and the less-than-tolerant attitude which such associations tend to trigger in the “powerful North” (i.e., the US). For that reason, he would wish to see the term downplayed a bit in such a theology (Williams 1991: 31-32).

To the contrary, however, there are those like Booth, Burchell, Davis, Dick, Gordon and others who would insist that liberation or emancipation ought to remain a fundamental motif within Afro-Caribbean Christian theology as a whole. Dick, for example (quoting Beckford along the way), has this to say:

...liberation has to be centrally [sic] to Caribbean theology. As Robert Beckford, British theologian, stated in *Jesus Dread*, ‘Liberation is concerned with representing the interests of oppressed people in theological language and action. When applied to theology, it expresses a desire to know what God is doing about oppression, and what is the role of the Christian in God’s liberative work in the world. Liberation is both internal, concerned with mental emancipation, as well as external, concerned with social justice...’. The omission of liberation from Caribbean Liberation theology demeans the task and undermines the effort (Dick 2010: 4).

In terms of liberation, it is usually quite fashionable among Afro-Christian liberation theologians of whatever stripe (be they Caribbean, Latin American, African-American, African, Afro-British or AfriCanadian) to invoke the story of the exodus of the Old Testament and God’s liberating hand at work in the lives of ancient Israel as justification for grounding their theologies of liberation in that momentous event (see Exodus 15). However, from an Afrocentric or Africa-friendlier perspective, we find that hermeneutical strategy rather problematic and even ironic in that Egypt (Africa) is being imaged in that whole exodus event as the land of oppression rather than as one of liberation (see Deuteronomy 5: 12-15).

In stead, and in keeping with the Rastafarian tendency in Jamaica to use Babylon as a trope to signify the arch-oppressor (or in creative rasta talk, the arch-*down*pressor), perhaps it would be defensible to consider the experience of the Babylonian exile as being a far more appropriate one with which to justify the ongoing contemporary Afro-drive to experience emancipation, liberation or freedom from those factors and forces which seek to hold them captive.

As “Africans-in-exile”, in the language of Ngugi wa-Thiong’o, the outstanding Kenyan writer in exile himself, and referring to those in diaspora who are of African descent, the exilic experience of the people of Israel in Babylon seems to be a much better existential “fit” (wa Thiong’o 1993). For one thing, the motif of exile makes allowance for those who would wish to *remain* in diaspora or exile as some of the Israelites did and some African-descendent people would wish to do. The theme of exile also allows those who would wish to *return* to the Motherland as some of the Israelites did in the case of Babylon—or people like Edward Blyden, the eighteenth century Presbyterian Minister and Diplomat, Frantz Fanon, the Martiniquan-born, French-trained Psychiatrist and the first Algerian Ambassador to an independent Ghana in 1957, did as African-descendent persons.

In addition, this more robust interaction between Africa and its diaspora resonates with the amendment to the *Constitutive Act* of the African Union (2003—see article 3[q]) in which the African diaspora is now being considered the Sixth Region of Africa, the Motherland (Yorke 2012). It is also in step with the United Nations declaration of the current decade as the International Decade for People of African Descent, extending from January 1st, 2015 to December 31st, 2024, as well as with the language of “Global Africa” which all of us as contributors to the on-going UNESCO-sponsored Volume IX General History of Africa Project are being encouraged to employ (Yorke, Forthcoming).

Unlike the oft-cited exodus event which really moves us in only one legitimate direction, i.e., *return* to the Motherland and not *remain* in diaspora, the exile allows both. The mere existence of both the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud of the Jews points to the themes of both *return* and *remain* in that some of the Jews opted to remain in Babylon while others chose to return to Jerusalem (see the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah). This *return-remain* scenario is not unlike what has tended to characterize the discourses of, and even debates among, Afro-Caribbean scholars and others in exile or diaspora like Marcus Mosiah Garvey, the Jamaican National Hero, or W.E.B. Dubois (now lying buried in Ghana) and Booker T. Washington, African-Americans.

Furthermore, Ham is correct, we think, in insisting that a contemporary emancipatory Christian theology should address issues of, “decolonization, identity, integration, development and education” (Gregory, ed., 1995: 3-4). In our view, a more wholistic understanding of liberation ought also to include *linguistic liberation* as well (Devonish 1986; Radis 2009:60).

Granted, we must concede that, historically, and perhaps rightly so, it was assumed that the region did not yet boast sufficiently developed Caribbean languages or creoles in terms of both prestige and number of speakers so as to warrant, for example, the translation of the Bible (or a portion of it) into those languages or creoles. However, times have changed and continue to do so in this regard.

In the Caribbean, the colonially imposed European powerful High (or H) languages, be it English, French, Spanish or Dutch, have already undergone the not-yet-fully-understood processes of pidginization and creolization. In fact, according to some sociolinguists, the Caribbean region is one of the best “laboratories” in the world in which to study the creolization of European languages (Wardhaugh 1992). According to statistics compiled by Wycliffe Caribbean, for example, out of a total of some 80 creoles spoken worldwide, approximately 30 of them are spoken throughout the Caribbean region as a whole.

Once considered cultural badges and baggage engendering feelings of profound shame rather than honor, Caribbean creoles are now emerging, more and more, as the mother-tongues of many and, therefore, the identity markers and tools with which many now choose to communicate in the region—including as far afield as those in the Afro-Caribbean diaspora found in Britain, North America (Canada and the US) and Europe. This identity-impacting linguistic phenomenon manifests itself not only among the uneducated and the unsophisticated but also among the elites in the domains of politics, the church, academia and the media (see Cooper 2017; Allsopp and Rickford 2012; and Campbell 2018).

One of the more recent domains in which linguistic liberation is being expressed is that of Bible translation such that the Bible, once *transported* into the region enrobed exclusively in one of the colonial languages of Europe and North America, is now being *translated* in the region as well. The United Bible Societies (UBS) and, at times, in partnership with organizations like Wycliffe Caribbean, is now contributing to this ongoing postcolonial effort through the medium of various organizations like the Bible Society of the West Indies (Jamaica), the Bible Society of Haiti, and the Bible Society of the (Dutch) Netherlands Antilles (Yorke 2013a).

In this endoglossic exercise, Caribbean creoles are being valorized in that greater prestige is now being conferred on them. In short, UBS, in particular, through its subsidiaries in the region, is not only contributing substantially to the ongoing march towards language retention and revitalization in the Caribbean as a whole but also to the linguistic liberation of Caribbean peoples as well. This Bible translation-driven endoglossic exercise is also entirely consistent with recent attempts to further valorize Caribbean creoles as expressed in the *Charter for Language Rights and Policy for the Creole-speaking Caribbean (CLRPCC)*. The CLRPCC was officially released in 2011 during an International Conference on Language Rights and Policy which was held at the University of the West Indies. The hope is that, in time, the CLRPCC will be ratified by the various parliaments throughout the Caribbean. Among other things, it calls for

the establishment of a Regional Council on Languages within the creole-speaking Caribbean (Yorke 2019 [Forthcoming]).

Only time will tell, however, whether or not Afro-Caribbean Christian theologians, in their determination to indigenize, contextualize or ground the emancipatory or liberating gospel in the Caribbean soul and soil, will make creative and constructive use of indigenous translations of the Bible currently available to them. So far, we have, for example, the complete Bible in Haitian Creole, the New Testament and some of the Psalms in Dominican/St. Lucian Patwa, the complete Bible in Papiamentu spoken in the (Dutch) Netherlands Antilles, and the New Testament in Sranan Tonga spoken in Suriname. Further, the Jamaica-based Bible Society of the West Indies published *Di Jamiekan Nyuu Testament*, the New Testament, in 2012 so as to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of independence of Jamaica from British rule.

We suspect that, for the foreseeable future, however, Afro-Caribbean Christian theologians, if their African counterparts are to serve as a guide, will continue to give mere lip service to their indigenous translations. Instead, we suspect that most, if not all, will continue to opt for the Bible, the basis of any meaningful Afro- and pan-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology, exclusively in its Euramerican linguistic manifestation. And unfortunately, that might well be true, for the most part, of those Afro-Caribbean Christian theologians who are working in all the linguistic sectors and sections of the Caribbean—be it Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone or Netherlanderphone.

Conclusion

Here, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter: the contents and contours of a pan-Caribbean Afro-Caribbean emancipatory Christian theology must be characterized by the following (inexhaustive) features: 1) it must be Bible-centered; 2) it must take cognizance of the harsh socio-historical and the rich Afro-religio-cultural experiences of Afro-Caribbean peoples; 3) it must be mindful of the contemporary economic, academic, gender justice-driven and other life-affirming expectations of a proud Afro-Caribbean people; 4) it must be a theology which eschews the pathology of parochialism and, instead, embraces a robust pan-Caribbeanism; 5) it must be a theology which is sensitive to the multicultural and the multilingual make-up of the region; 6) it must be a theology which seeks to foster linguistic liberation; and 7) it must be a theology which resonates with the existential realities of a African-descendent people in exile in that, unlike the exodus of the Old Testament, it makes allowance for the themes of both *return* (periodic or permanent) to the Motherland and *remain* in Diaspora.

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