

The World Evangelical Alliance's Journal
of Theology and Contemporary Application

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Editor's Introduction: Public Engagement

As I was preparing to write this introduction, I received an e-mail from a friend who is active in the U.S. Republican party. It ended with a link to 'Ten Reasons Christians Can Support the Trump Administration'.

Not everyone agrees with that perspective. One respondent described those who claim to support both Christ and Trump as 'Herodians'. But for the last three years, worldwide attention has focused on white US evangelicals' overwhelming support of Donald Trump's presidency, despite his crudeness, obvious policy ignorance, and a raft of controversial stances.

The strong evangelical support for Trump has left other Christians scratching their heads. Some have actively dissociated themselves from what they consider a grave mistake by the majority of politically active US evangelicals. Others have considered dropping the use of the word 'evangelical' to avoid being involuntarily linked to that mistake in public perception.

The stark conflict between pro-Trump and anti-Trump evangelicals underscores a key truth in Christian public involvement. Since the Bible emphasizes a great number of principles applicable to public life—more than we can defend all at the same time—and since it does not give a set of modern policy prescriptions, Christians who seek to engage in the political realm may find themselves on opposite sides of the fence.

This issue focus on 'Engagement in the Public Space' highlights that

reality by portraying various forms of evangelical public involvement on four continents. First, Brantley Gasaway examines a thoughtful group whose very existence is often overlooked: the US evangelical left, or 'progressive evangelicals'. In addition to describing their priorities and their struggle to gain traction, he also discusses the 'evangelical middle', or the many US Christian leaders reluctant to embrace Trump, and he explains how progressives have reached a point where coalition building even with centrists is now difficult for them. Gasaway shows that white US evangelicals are not politically monolithic and that their political decision making is not simplistic.

Note the reference to *white* US evangelicals. Black evangelicals, though still socially conservative in important ways, have a different set of priority concerns, which usually lead them to different political preferences. From a perspective similar to that of US blacks, Vhumani Magezi presents a public agenda for South Africa, where 'decolonization' is essential to affirming the dignity of all citizens in that post-apartheid culture. He then probes its implications for doing public theology, especially in the higher-education setting.

Whereas US Christians often endorse some form of nationalism, the small Christian minority in Japan is deeply concerned about incipient nationalism. Surya Harefa superbly explains the situation in Japan and describes how four respected evangelicals have sought to address it. Es-

pecially significantly, he shows how the last of these figures has articulated a public philosophy, akin to that of the great Dutch leader Abraham Kuyper, that has attracted support from non-Christian groups.

In India, Hindu nationalism currently poses a more overt challenge to Christianity, questioning whether Christians have ever made positive contributions to that country's development. Samuel Richmond Saxena pursues one line of response to that challenge, demonstrating in extensive detail how Christians in India, dating back to mission pioneer William Carey, have lived out love for neighbour by caring for God's creation.

Thomas Schirrmacher, the World Evangelical Alliance's Deputy Secretary General for Theological Concerns, is equally adept in politics as in theology—so much so that a committee of the German parliament invited him to be the main speaker last year at a hearing on displaced and threatened people groups. Here we present an English translation of portions of his testimony, which offers another pathway for Christians to serve effectively in political life: do better research than anyone else, undergirded by a deep concern for the basic rights of all human beings.

Finally, Schirrmacher's message to last year's meeting of the Global Christian Forum addresses another area that can too often become contentious and highly political: the mutual relations between various groups of Christians.

The wide array of evangelical approaches to the public space—some of which seem to contradict each other—could induce paralysis. If Christians are taking opposite sides in

important public debates or political campaigns, how can we know what to do? I have contemplated this issue for nearly thirty years as both an observer and practitioner of evangelical political engagement in the US.

First, just as ethical dilemmas entail a choice between two good things (do I obey the law or do I steal from the drug store to save my uncle's life?), so politics sometimes forces us to weigh legitimate biblical priorities against each other. In the US, conservative evangelicals prize the sanctity of human (especially unborn) life and traditional morality; progressives emphasize Amos' call for social justice, the common good and combating poverty.

Their differences are intensified by very different views of the role of government. Progressives see government as a friend and the most powerful tool to address poverty and injustice. Conservatives see greater risks in expanding government, such as higher taxes and constraints on individual liberty. Conservative evangelicals are not indifferent to the poor, but they consider private charity often a better response than a government program.

The US political system tends towards uncomfortable choices because for over 150 years it has had only two viable parties, unlike the many parties that flourish under other systems. But no political leader is perfect and very few are blatantly evil. So we should not hesitate to apply our beliefs to the public arena—always with honesty, integrity, selfless concern for others, and openness to learning from those (especially fellow Christians) who see things differently.

—Bruce Barron, Editor

Making Evangelicals Great Again? American Evangelicals in the Age of Trump

Brantley W. Gasaway

In contemporary American political culture, many people regard evangelicals as essential constituents of the Religious Right and assume that religious conservatism necessitates political conservatism. These stereotypes are understandable. In recent decades, a growing and now overwhelming majority of white evangelicals have aligned themselves with the Republican Party and conservative political ideology. According to exit polls, 70 to 81 percent of white evangelicals have voted for Republican candidates in presidential and mid-term elections since 2004.¹

As a result, conservative evangelicals and Religious Right leaders have dominated the attention of the media, politicians, and general public. In turn, 'there's a lot of perceptions that the term evangelicals means "Christians who vote Republican"', reported David Kinnaman, president of the evangelical polling firm Barna Group.²

Yet such impressions fail to capture the nuance and diversity of American evangelicals' political engagement. Not only do they virtually ignore non-white evangelicals, but they also overlook the small but vigorous faction of politically progressive evangelicals—an evangelical left, so to speak—who have both challenged the conservative majority of white evangelicals and tried to change the popular perception of evangelicals. When they have felt unable to ignore this progressive evangelical minority, Religious Right leaders have used various strategies to dismiss or dis-

1 Danielle Kurtzleben, 'Are You an Evangelical? Are You Sure?' *National Public Radio*, December 19, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/2015/12/19/458058251/are-you-an-evangelical-are-you-sure>; Jessica Martinez and Gregory A. Smith, 'How the Faith Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis', *Pew Research Center*, 9 November 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/>; Elizabeth Podrebarac Sciuipac and Gregory A. Smith, 'How Religious Groups Voted in the Midterm Elections', *Pew Research Center*, 7 November 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact->

[tank/2018/11/07/how-religious-groups-voted-in-the-midterm-elections/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/07/how-religious-groups-voted-in-the-midterm-elections/).

2 Kurtzleben, 'Are You an Evangelical? Are You Sure?'

Brantley W. Gasaway (PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) is Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Bucknell University. He is author of *Progressive Evangelicals and the Pursuit of Social Justice* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014), which examined the political theology and historical activism of the contemporary progressive evangelical movement.

credit their positions. But an incident in April 2018 was probably the first time that the threat of arrest became a tactic.

Shane Claiborne, a prominent progressive evangelical activist and co-founder of a group called Red Letter Christians, had sent a letter to Jerry Falwell Jr., the president of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Founded by the late Jerry Falwell Sr., a televangelist who galvanized the rise of the Religious Right in the 1970s, Liberty University has always presented itself as a bastion of religious and political conservatism. In recent years, Falwell Jr. has become one of President Trump's most ardent evangelical supporters. He was the first Religious Right leader to endorse Trump during the Republican primaries, and he regularly appears in the media to defend the president against critics.

Claiborne wrote to Falwell as he was planning to come to Lynchburg in early April 2018 for an event that organizers were calling 'A Revival of Jesus and Justice'. In his letter, Claiborne asked Falwell if they could meet to pray together. He also asked for permission to bring people from the revival onto Liberty's campus to join students in a prayer vigil.

Instead of a direct reply from Falwell, Claiborne received an official notice from the Liberty University Police Department, declaring that Claiborne was restricted from all Liberty University properties and events. If he violated this restriction, the notice warned, Claiborne would be arrested for trespassing and punished by up to 12 months in jail and a fine of up to

\$2,500.³

Although Claiborne insisted that his request was sincere, he should not have been surprised that Falwell treated it as disingenuous. Claiborne and his fellow progressive evangelicals had specifically chosen Lynchburg as their site to protest the support for Trump expressed by Falwell and other Religious Right leaders. Claiborne had labelled this type of Christianity as 'toxic evangelicalism', and the Red Letter Christians advertised their Lynchburg revival as an alternative to 'the distorted Christian nationalism that many white evangelical leaders have become known for'. Thus Falwell had good reason to regard the Lynchburg revival as a thinly veiled attack on the theology and politics of conservative evangelicals like him.⁴

The organizers of the two-day Revival of Jesus and Justice succeeded in capturing the media's attention, giving them an opportunity to highlight progressive evangelicals' distinctive political theology and agenda. Speakers and workshops addressed poverty, racial injustice, immigration reform, mass incarceration, American militarism and LGBTQ justice. Journalists from the *New York Times*,

3 Tara Isabella Burton, 'For Many, Christianity and Trumpism are Synonymous. These Evangelicals are Pushing Back', *Vox*, 12 April 2018, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/4/12/17216258/lynchburg-rally-red-letter-revival-shane-claiborne-jerry-falwell-jr-liberty-university>.

4 Jack Jenkins, 'Christian Group Plans "Revival" to Protest "Toxic Evangelicalism"', *Religion News Service*, 8 February 2018, <https://religionnews.com/2018/02/08/christian-group-plans-revival-to-protest-liberty-u-and-toxic-evangelicalism/>.

National Public Radio, *Vox* and other media outlets attended the Lynchburg revival and portrayed it as the 'site of a battleground over the future of American evangelicalism'. For progressive evangelicals, one reporter summarized, 'the evangelical establishment's embrace of Trumpism—unbridled capitalism, xenophobic nativism, and a willingness to engage with white supremacy—goes against everything Jesus stands for.' Thus the Lynchburg revival was part of progressive evangelical leaders' persistent efforts to counter the partisan politics of the Religious Right and, during the current presidential administration, to debunk popular perceptions of evangelicals as faithful followers of Donald Trump.⁵

This article describes the ways in which the politically progressive minority of US evangelicals have reacted both to President Trump's administration and to most white evangelicals' remarkable support of Trump himself. Not surprisingly, progressive evangelicals vociferously opposed Trump's candidacy and tried to dissuade other evangelicals from voting from him. In the wake of his election, leaders of the evangelical left mobilized to protect the people and policies that seemed most threatened by

the new administration. This article summarizes the proposals, protests, and petitions of progressive evangelicals with respect to four broad issues: racial justice, immigration, healthcare and economic policies. On the whole, the current political context has exacerbated a long-simmering identity crisis among progressive evangelicals, as they measure the costs of identifying with a religious tradition and label that has become popularly associated with white Christian supporters of Donald Trump.

Progressive evangelicals have not been the only ones troubled by Trump and the ways in which most white evangelicals have embraced him. This article highlights how a small but vocal number of more moderate and conservative evangelical leaders have taken various political positions that align with the goals of progressive evangelicals. Not least, a fair number of these other anti-Trump evangelicals have also questioned the value of continuing to identify as 'evangelical' in the current climate of American politics.

This mutual disillusionment and the presence of partially overlapping political concerns could serve as a common ground enabling progressive and other anti-Trump evangelicals to co-operate in countering pro-Trump evangelical conservatives. However, the persistence of conflicting approaches to abortion and same-sex marriage, as well as their participation in different religious networks, diminishes the likelihood of such a partnership. I conclude this article with reflections upon progressive evangelicals' perennial efforts to 'reclaim' the evangelical tradition in the US from its association with political conservatism.

5 Burton, 'For Many, Christianity and Trumpism are Synonymous'; Laurie Goodstein, 'Anti-Trump Evangelicals Confront Their Brethren', *New York Times*, 23 May 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/23/us/anti-trump-evangelicals-lynchburg.html>; Sarah McCammon, "Lynchburg Revival" Activists Warn of Rising "Christian Nationalism", *National Public Radio*, 7 April 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/04/07/600565196/lynchburg-revival-activists-warn-of-rising-christian-nationalism>.

I. The Contemporary Progressive Evangelical Movement

Contemporary progressive evangelicalism emerged as a reform movement within the larger network of modern evangelicalism in the United States. In the late 1960s, a small group of disgruntled leaders began calling on evangelicals to abandon narrow religious preoccupations and apolitical conservatism. Outside of strident anti-communism, most American evangelicals in the mid-twentieth century had come to regard social and political action as distractions from their primary task of evangelism. They associated progressive politics with theological liberalism and the Social Gospel, believing that only an aggregate of spiritual and moral reforms of individuals would alleviate social problems.

In addition, because many evangelicals had embraced dispensational premillennialism, they also believed that social and political activism could do little to stem the cultural decline that they expected to occur before Jesus' imminent second coming. In contrast, pioneering progressive evangelical leaders insisted that the Bible calls people to care not only for people's spiritual welfare but also for their physical and material needs. Inspired by the civil rights movement and opposition to the Vietnam War, they urged fellow evangelicals to take political and social action to redress injustices and inequalities.

In 1973, a group of these progressive evangelical leaders signed the 'Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern'. This manifesto marked the marked the public coalescence of the progressive evangelical

movement and established it as a recognizable minority within evangelical circles.⁶

At the end of the 1970s, however, the newly emergent Religious Right captured the public's attention and pushed most evangelicals to support conservative political causes and candidates. Leaders of the Religious Right built their movement around campaigns to oppose perceived assaults on America's Christian heritage and traditional standards of family and sexuality. Yet progressive evangelicals maintain that the Bible calls Christians to care as much about combatting poverty, ending racism, working for peace, defending human rights and protecting the environment as they do about abortion and same-sex marriage. As a result, progressive evangelicals have argued, Christians should prioritize reforming injustices and inequality in their public engagement.⁷

The evangelical left has remained a minority faction within evangelical circles over the past four decades. Yet its most visible and vocal representatives have served as gadflies, offering an alternative to the Religious Right and developing biblical arguments to persuade American evangelicals to

6 Brantley W. Gasaway, *Progressive Evangelicals and the Pursuit of Social Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); David R. Swartz, *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991).

7 Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Gasaway, *Progressive Evangelicals*.

support progressive public policies.⁸

This analysis of the progressive evangelical movement focuses on a network of prominent representatives such as Sojourners and its president Jim Wallis; Red Letter Christians, co-founded by Shane Claiborne and well-known progressive evangelical Tony Campolo; activists such as Lisa Sharon Harper; and the organization Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA), led for many decades by Ron Sider and currently by its executive director Nikki Toyama-Szeto. Collectively, the writings and activities of these representatives serve as a lens through which to view and to interpret the evangelical left's contemporary public engagement.

II. Evangelicals and the Election of Donald Trump

When Donald Trump won the US presidency in 2016, he received more than 80 percent of the votes cast by white evangelicals. A complex combination of factors motivated this overwhelming support for Trump. Dedication to the Republican party made it likely that most white evangelicals would vote for its nominee over any Democratic candidate. Hillary Clinton in particular seemed an especially untenable option. Due to the distaste for her politics and personality that began during her years as First Lady in the midst of the 1990s culture wars, three-quarters of evangelicals cited dislike of Clinton as a primary reason

why they supported Trump.⁹

Many prominent conservative evangelicals such as Franklin Graham, Focus on the Family founder James Dobson, author and radio host Eric Metaxas, Family Research Council president Tony Perkins, and theologian Wayne Grudem urged Christians to overlook Trump's history of personal immorality since he pledged to appoint pro-life Supreme Court justices who would also protect their religious liberty in an increasingly secularizing culture. For evangelical laity, polls indicated that improving the economy and national security were the most important issues determining their vote, and Trump's campaign promises of economic populism, combatting Islamic terrorism, immigration restrictions and border control targeted these concerns.¹⁰

Many white evangelicals' insensitivity to racial bigotry and expressed fears for growing racial diversity within the United States made them tolerant (and perhaps, in some cases, supportive) of Trump's appeals

⁹ Sarah Pulliam Bailey, 'The Deep Disgust for Hillary Clinton That Drives So Many Evangelicals to Support Trump', *Washington Post*, 9 October 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2016/10/09/the-deep-disgust-for-hillary-clinton-that-drives-so-many-evangelicals-to-support-trump/>.

¹⁰ Alan Noble, 'I'm an Evangelical. The Religious Right Leaders Who Support Trump Don't Speak for Me', *Vox*, 24 October 2016, <https://www.vox.com/first-person/2016/10/24/13361582/trump-religious-right>; Myriam Renaud, 'Myths Debunked: Why Did White Evangelical Christians Vote for Trump?' *Sightings*, 19 January 2017, <https://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/myths-debunked-why-did-white-evangelical-christians-vote-trump>.

⁸ Gasaway, *Progressive Evangelicals*; Joel A. Carpenter, 'Compassionate Evangelicalism', *Christianity Today* 47, no. 12 (December 2003): 40–42.

to white identity politics. Finally, Trump's slogan 'Make America Great Again' resonated deeply with white evangelicals' own nostalgic view of America as a Christian nation.¹¹

Progressive evangelicals worked in vain to prevent Donald Trump's election. In the early months of 2016, as it became apparent that he would win the Republican nomination for president, the evangelical left began to denounce Trump's candidacy. Sojourners' Jim Wallis and Lisa Sharon Harper, ESA's Ron Sider, ethicist David Gushee, Shane Claiborne, and many other progressive evangelicals joined ecumenical leaders in April 2016 to issue 'Called to Resist Bigotry—A Statement of Faithful Obedience'. While recognizing legitimate political disagreements among Christians, signers of this statement argued that Trump's campaign had created 'a moral and theological crisis' that faithful Christians from across the political spectrum should unanimously condemn. 'The ascendancy of a demagogic candidate and his message, with the angry constituency he is fueling, is a threat to both the values of our faith

and the health of our democracy', they declared. 'Donald Trump directly promotes racial and religious bigotry, disrespects the dignity of women, harms civil public discourse, offends moral decency, and seeks to manipulate religion.'¹²

In response to media reports showing high levels of evangelical support for Trump, a wide range of progressive and moderate evangelical leaders issued another statement and petition on Change.org a month before the election. In it, they argued that evangelicals could not vote for Trump in good conscience, and they decried 'the media's continued identification of "evangelical" with mostly white, politically conservative, older men'. The signers concluded, 'We must respond when evangelicalism becomes dangerously identified with one particular candidate whose statements, practice, personal morality, and ideology risk damaging our witness to the gospel before a watching world.'¹³

In a final effort to persuade other evangelicals, Ron Sider wrote an article in *Christianity Today*—the most prominent US evangelical magazine—in which he publicly endorsed Clinton. This is 'the most important presidential election in my lifetime', the 76-year-old Sider wrote, and he

11 Robert P. Jones, 'The Evangelicals and the Great Trump Hope', *New York Times*, 11 July 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/11/opinion/campaign-stops/the-evangelicals-and-the-great-trump-hope.html>; Nancy D. Wadsworth, 'The Racial Demons That Help Explain Evangelical Support for Trump', *Vox*, 20 April 2018, <https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2018/4/30/17301282/race-evangelicals-trump-support-geron-atlantic-sexism-segregation-south>; Andrew L. Whitehead, Samuel L. Perry, and Joseph O. Baker, 'Make America Christian Again: Christian Nationalism and Voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election', *Sociology of Religion* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 147–71.

12 Jack Jenkins, 'Major Faith Leaders Declare Trump "Racist, Bigoted, and Hateful"', *Think Progress*, 29 April 2016, <https://thinkprogress.org/major-faith-leaders-declare-trump-racist-bigoted-and-hateful-548e21a8173f/>.

13 'A Declaration by American Evangelicals Concerning Donald Trump', *Change.org*, 6 October 2016, <https://www.change.org/p/donald-trump-a-declaration-by-american-evangelicals-concerning-donald-trump>.

painted Trump as a uniquely unqualified, unjust and potentially destructive candidate. As election results revealed, however, nearly all white evangelicals disagreed with him.¹⁴

Since the 2016 election, Trump has maintained strong support from Christian conservatives. In poll after poll, white evangelicals have been the demographic group giving him the highest job approval ratings, with well over 70 percent still viewing his administration positively through summer 2019. Conservative evangelicals have described President Trump as their protector and advocate. They have felt vindicated as Trump has fulfilled campaign promises to appoint pro-life Supreme Court justices and lower-court judges, endorsed policies to safeguard their religious liberties, passed tax cuts and sustained a strong economy, and lowered immigration rates. Falwell called Trump evangelicals' 'dream president', while David Brody of the Christian Broadcasting Network labelled him the 'most evangelical-friendly United States president ever'. In recent months, Religious Right leaders and organizations have begun preparing to campaign vigorously for Trump's re-election in 2020.¹⁵

14 Ron Sider, 'Why I'm Voting for Hillary Clinton', *Christianity Today* 60, no. 8 (October 2016): 55–56.

15 Christina Zhao, 'Nearly Three-Quarters of White Evangelicals Approve of Donald Trump', *Newsweek*, 22 July 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/nearly-three-quarters-white-evangelicals-approve-donald-trump-1450610>; Sarah Pulliam Bailey, "'Their Dream President': Trump Just Gave White Evangelicals a Big Boost", *Washington Post*, 4 May 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/>

Immediately after the 2016 election, progressive evangelicals declared their intention to join the resistance against Trump's administration. In *Sojourners*, Jim Wallis called Trump 'the most dangerous man' elected 'to the White House that we have seen in our lifetimes'. He urged progressive evangelicals and other anti-Trump Christians to actively protect those likely to be targeted by the new administration: undocumented immigrants, people of colour, Muslims, women of all races, and LGBTQ folks. 'One of the saddest aspects of the election for me', Wallis reflected, 'is the fact that most white evangelicals voted for a man whose life has embodied the most sinful and shameful worship of money, sex, and power and who represents the very worst of what American culture has become'.¹⁶

Evangelicals for Social Action expressed similar concerns. While

[wp/2017/05/04/their-dream-president-trump-just-gave-white-evangelicals-a-big-boost/](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/24/opinion/sunday/donald-trump-evangelicals-president.html); David Brody, 'In Donald Trump, Evangelicals Have Found Their President', *New York Times*, 24 February 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/24/opinion/sunday/donald-trump-evangelicals-president.html>; Tom McCarthy, 'Faith and Freedoms: Why Evangelicals Profess Unwavering Love for Trump', *The Guardian*, 7 July 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/07/donald-trump-evangelical-supporters>; Julie Zauzmer, "'He Gets It': Evangelicals Aren't Turned Off by Trump's First Term", *Washington Post*, 13 August 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/evangelicals-arent-turned-off-by-trumps-first-term--theyre-delighted-by-it/2019/08/11/3911bc88-a990-11e9-a3a6-ab670962db05_story.html.

16 Jim Wallis, 'Resistance and Healing', *Sojourners* 46, no. 1 (January 2017): 14–17.

pledging to pray for Trump, Ron Sider wrote, ESA planned to challenge the unjust policies it anticipated from his administration. Not least, Sider worried that the election results would damage evangelicals' reputation and thus their public witness. Evangelicalism 'is now publicly and intimately identified with a political campaign that denied the science of global warming, tolerated and even appealed to racism, promoted lies (e.g. denying that President Obama is a US citizen), demonstrated despicable treatment of women and embraced economic policies that will overwhelmingly help the very rich', he lamented. 'Increasingly, that is what "evangelical" means to large numbers of Americans. That agenda contradicts biblical teaching and leads many millennials to turn away from the evangelical church and even to reject Jesus.'¹⁷

After Trump's inauguration, many prominent progressive evangelicals signed a public letter to the President issued by the group Faith in Public Life. Over 800 ecumenical Christian leaders promised to pray for Trump but also warned him that, if he continued to promote division, fear and policies damaging to the vulnerable and marginalized, they would not hesitate to oppose him.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ron Sider, 'President-Elect Trump: a Response from ESA', *Evangelicals for Social Action*, 9 November 2016, <https://www.evangelicalsforsocialaction.org/faith-and-public-life/president-elect-trump-a-response-from-esa/>.

¹⁸ Kimberly Winston, 'Christian Leaders to Trump: We're Praying for You, But ...', *Religion News Service*, 1 February 2017, [https://religionnews.com/2017/02/01/christian-leaders-to-trump-were-praying-for-you-](https://religionnews.com/2017/02/01/christian-leaders-to-trump-were-praying-for-you-but/)

In May 2017, Wallis responded directly to Falwell's statement that Trump represented evangelicals' dream president. 'Falwell means a president like Trump is a dream for white evangelicals like him, not evangelicals of all races, not the wonderfully multiracial global body of Christ' who feel astonished and betrayed 'that 81 percent of white American evangelicals voted for Donald Trump', Wallis declared. He challenged all other evangelicals to condemn 'the moral hypocrisy and racial idolatry of the white evangelicals of America's Religious Right who fail to see racism, poverty, hunger, health, the treatment of refugees and immigrants, and a biblical commitment to social justice as gospel issues.' While not comprehensive, this list of issues named by Wallis—racism, immigration, health care and economic justice—reflects the primary concerns of progressive evangelical leaders since Trump's inauguration.¹⁹

III. Opposition to the Trump Administration

As long-time advocates for racial justice, contemporary progressive evangelical leaders have consistently condemned the overt and covert forms of racism that they believe Trump's

but/; Jack Jenkins, 'Trump's National Prayer Breakfast Begins with Religious Protests', *Think Progress*, 2 February 2017, <https://thinkprogress.org/trumps-national-prayer-breakfast-begins-with-religious-protesters-58142ecfe6ea/>.

¹⁹ 'Jim Wallis Speaks Out on Jerry Falwell, Jr. and Donald Trump', *Sojourners*, accessed 15 August 2019, <https://sojo.net/about-us/news/jim-wallis-speaks-out-jerry-falwell-jr-and-donald-trump>.

administration has encouraged. Just after Trump's inauguration, Jim Wallis declared that Trump's election 'provides both a great danger and a real opportunity to finally deal with race in America', and that 'racial reconciliation will be an act of repentance and resistance in the Trump era'. The racialized protests and violence in Charlottesville in August 2017 became a flashpoint for such resistance. As white nationalists gathered for their 'Unite the Right' rally, several progressive evangelical leaders such as Lisa Sharon Harper joined ecumenical clergy in Charlottesville to conduct counter-protests. In the aftermath, President Trump equivocated in his response, claiming there were 'fine people on both sides' of the Charlottesville protests. In response, progressive evangelicals issued explicit condemnations. 'Because this is not the time for ambiguity, we reject the idol of white supremacy, of neo-nazism, and of a nationalism that places country before God', ESA proclaimed. Leaders from Sojourners and Red Letter Christians issued a similar 'Theological Declaration' that renounced 'white nationalism, white separatism, white supremacy ... and any and all movements that abide by the logics of domination and colonization'.²⁰

20 Jim Wallis, 'Studying Racism as an Act of Repentance and Resistance in the Trump Era', *Sojourners*, 16 February 2017, <https://sojo.net/articles/studying-racism-act-repentance-and-resistance-trump-era>; 'ESA Statement in Response to Charlottesville', 22 August 2017, <https://www.evangelicalsfor-socialaction.org/esa-statement/>; 'Theological Declaration on Christian Faith & White Supremacy', 6 September 2017, [https://www.redletterchristians.org/theological-](https://www.redletterchristians.org/theological-declaration-on-christian-faith-white-supremacy/)

In 2018, progressive evangelicals predictably denounced President Trump's racist remarks describing several African nations, Haiti, and El Salvador. But beyond Trump's rhetoric, leaders have also criticized the racialized inequalities exacerbated by the Trump administration's policies. 'The historical sin of racism lingers on in America today, continuing and evolving in our social systems of economics and education, policing and criminal justice, housing and gentrification, voting rights and suppression, in our racial geography and, painfully, in the continued segregation of our churches, which adds to our own complicity', declared a statement titled 'Unity Declaration on Racism and Poverty' that many progressive evangelicals endorsed.²¹

These responses by the evangelical left to rising racism and white nationalism have been connected to their opposition to the Trump administration's immigration and refugee policies. Much of their initial activism focused on defending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme, which protected from deportation hundreds of thousands of young adults, often called 'Dreamers', who were brought to the United States illegally as children. When President Trump pledged to end DACA, progressive evangelicals mobilized. 'Jesus says welcome the stranger. Donald Trump has just said "no" to this clear call from Christ in his decision to turn away 800,000

[declaration-on-christian-faith-white-supremacy/](https://www.evangelicalsfor-socialaction.org/esa-statement/).

21 'Unity Declaration on Racism and Poverty', October 2018, <http://circleofprotection.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/unity-statement-racism-and-poverty-2018.pdf>.

young Dreamers who were brought to this country by their parents when they were children—and who have no other home’, Jim Wallis declared. Sojourners partnered with the Interfaith Immigration Coalition to lobby Congress and to organize campaigns on behalf of immigrant rights. In December 2017, an array of progressive evangelical leaders from ESA, Red Letter Christians, Sojourners, and other socially concerned Christian organizations organized a public demonstration in Washington, D.C. in support of Dreamers and other immigrants.²²

The family separation policy enacted by the Trump administration in April 2018 especially outraged progressive evangelicals, particularly as Attorney General Jeff Sessions and White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders invoked biblical justifications in defending it. Joining with ecumenical partners, leaders such as Wallis, Tony Campolo, Ron Sider and long-time evangelical community activist John Perkins condemned the ‘misuse and violation of the Word of God to defend a morally indefensible policy’. They also called on churches ‘to teach and preach about this moral crisis, organize candlelight prayers at the offices of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and at local Congressional offices, and prayerfully consider

non-violent civil disobedience at appropriate places in the days ahead’. Wallis, Shane Claiborne, and others associated with Sojourners and Red Letter Christians were themselves arrested on June 26 for civil disobedience outside the White House as they protested the family separation policy. Evangelical progressives have tried to demonstrate that Trump’s immigration policies are, in Wallis’ words, ‘anti-family, anti-American, and anti-Christ’.²³

Universal access to affordable health care has long been a priority for progressive evangelicals, and leaders had championed passage in 2010 of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. During Trump’s campaign, he promised that he would ensure health coverage for everybody and not enact cuts to Medicaid and Medicare. But in early 2017, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office judged that the health care bill proposed by Republicans and supported by Trump would result in over 24 million people losing health coverage over the next decade. Denouncing Trump as a liar, progressive evangelicals called for petitions and protests against final passage of

22 ‘Statement by Jim Wallis on DACA Decision’, 5 September 2017, <https://sojo.net/about-us/news/statement-jim-wallis-daca-decision>; John Seel, ‘A Prayerful Embrace: ESA Joins in a National DACA Action’, 7 December 2017, <https://www.evangelicalsfor-socialaction.org/compassion-and-justice/prayerful-embrace-esa-joins-national-daca-action/>.

23 “‘Suffer the Little Children’: The Separation of Immigrant Children from Their Parents Is Not Biblical’, <https://sojo.net/about-us/news/separation-immigrant-children-their-parents-not-biblical-reclaiming-jesus-elders>; Adam Taylor, ‘At What Cost to Our Soul?’ *Sojourners*, 26 June 2018, <https://sojo.net/articles/what-cost-our-soul>; Jim Wallis, ‘Trump’s Immigration Policies Are Anti-Family, Anti-American, and Anti-Christ’, *Sojourners*, 15 February 2018, <https://sojo.net/articles/trump-s-immigration-policies-are-anti-family-anti-american-and-anti-christ>.

the bill. Sojourners urged Christians to contact their congressional representatives while praying 'that God would move the hearts of our elected officials so that they would be open to hearing the stories of those affected by their harmful policies'.²⁴

In a series of direct-action protests in July, Lisa Sharon Harper, Red Letter Christians executive director Don Golden, and other evangelical progressives were arrested as they disrupted Congress and blockaded the offices of Republicans. In September, Senators Lindsey Graham and Bill Cassidy proposed a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The bill never reached the floor for a vote, however, and Jim Wallis claimed that the opposition of faith leaders played a pivotal role in this process. 'Jesus tells us that how we treat the most vulnerable in society, including the poor and the sick, is how we treat Christ himself', Wallis wrote. 'The moral test and the biblical test of any system is how it treats the poorest and most vulnerable—how a health care system treats those who are sick.' Throughout 2018, progressive evangelicals continued to work against legislation and policies designed to undermine or to dismantle the Affordable Care Act.²⁵

24 'Here's What You Can Do Right Now About the Senate Health Care Bill', 23 June 2017, *Sojourners*, <https://sojo.net/articles/here-s-what-you-can-do-right-now-about-senate-health-care-bill>.

25 Don Golden, '#Faith4Healthcare: On Being One with the Vulnerable', *Red Letter Christians*, 26 July 2017, <https://www.red-letterchristians.org/faith4healthcare-on-being-one-with-the-vulnerable/>; Jim Wallis, 'Millions Could Still Lose Health Care. Here's How You Can Stop It', *Sojourners*, 25 September 2017, [https://sojo.net/articles/millions-](https://sojo.net/articles/millions-could-still-lose-health-care-here-s-how-you-can-stop-it)

Defending inexpensive access to health care has represented just one part of progressive evangelicals' broad commitment to economic justice for the poor. Throughout 2017, leaders opposed the budget priorities and tax cuts supported by President Trump and Republicans. Working alongside ecumenical allies as part of an anti-poverty coalition called Circle of Protection, representatives from Sojourners, ESA, and Red Letter Christians campaigned against the combination of increased military spending, reductions in social service programs and lower taxes on the wealthy. 'The poor and vulnerable ... are at great risk in President Donald Trump's proposed budget', proclaimed Jim Wallis at a March news conference and prayer vigil organized by Circle of Protection at the Capitol.²⁶

Though progressive evangelicals continued to lobby and to protest over the following months, Republicans passed Trump's budget in October and prepared to pass massive tax cuts. Outraged, evangelical progressives joined ecumenical and interfaith allies to oppose the tax reform bill. During a protest in the Capitol in late November, Wallis quoted prophetic biblical passages about the oppression of the poor before he was arrested. 'The treatment of the poor and vulnerable is lifted up in the Bible more than 2,000 times. And it is these people, the ones our Scriptures call us to protect and serve, who will be most

[could-still-lose-health-care-here-s-how-you-can-stop-it](https://sojo.net/articles/millions-could-still-lose-health-care-here-s-how-you-can-stop-it).

26 Jim Wallis, 'Truth That Bears Repeating: A Budget Is a Moral Document', *Sojourners*, 30 March 2017, <https://sojo.net/articles/truth-bears-repeating-budget-moral-document>.

hurt by the results of this disastrous tax bill', Wallis proclaimed. 'The bill suffers from deeply immoral logic: to blow a hole in the deficit by giving huge tax cuts to the rich and corporations, that will ultimately be paid for by the poor. ... This is a shameful hypocrisy, callous calculation, and immoral act.' For evangelical progressives, the enactment of this bill in late 2017 represented yet another moral failure of the current presidential administration.²⁷

IV. 'Reclaiming Jesus'—but Retaining 'Evangelical'?

In their efforts to persuade both other Christians and politicians, progressive evangelical leaders regularly issue statements that convey their vision of faithful political engagement. In May 2018, Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, Ron Sider, African-American community activist John Perkins and several other progressive evangelicals joined a small group of mainline Protestant leaders to release a statement entitled 'Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis'. The document communicated both their exasperation and their hopes in this age of Trump. 'We are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches', the statement began. The

authors recounted their condemnation of a wide range of injustices, including 'the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership'; 'the growing attacks on immigrants and refugees, who are being made into political targets'; unjust 'attempts to deny health care to those who most need it'; and 'the growing national sin of putting the rich over the poor'.

Although this statement served as a rebuke of President Trump, progressive evangelicals also hoped to challenge Christians who supported Trump to re-evaluate their 'theology of public discipleship and witness'. 'It is time to be followers of Jesus before anything else—nationality, political party, race, ethnicity, gender, [or] geography', they declared. While this statement did not say so explicitly, progressive evangelicals clearly believed that, because no one can serve two masters, Christians cannot follow both Jesus and Donald Trump.²⁸

Yet the majority of white evangelicals have disagreed—a fact that has not only galled progressive evangelicals but also caused some to considering no longer identifying as 'evangelical' Christians. The shocking percentage of white evangelicals who voted for Trump tempted Sojourners' Lisa Sharon Harper to take that step the day after the election; 'I felt betrayed. I felt like that's just not who I am anymore. This group who voted for Trump is just not who I am', she said. Shane Claiborne and Tony Campolo wrote an op-ed for the *New York*

²⁷ Jim Wallis, 'Great Injustice Calls for Great Action', *Sojourners*, 28 November 2017, <https://sojo.net/articles/great-injustice-calls-great-action>; 'Circle of Protection Leaders Speak Out Regarding Passage of Tax Bill', *Sojourners*, 20 December 2017, <https://sojo.net/about-us/news/circle-protection-leaders-speak-out-regarding-passage-tax-bill>.

²⁸ 'Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis', <http://www.reclaimingjesus.org/>.

Times in which they sought to disassociate themselves from the evangelical label. The reputation of evangelicalism has been ruined by its close association with Trump's successful campaign, they argued, and younger, non-white voices seem unwelcome or ignored within American evangelical circles.²⁹

Thus, in the words of Claiborne and Campolo, 'Jesus-centered faith needs a new name.' They proposed the label 'Red Letter Christians' to indicate their faithfulness to the teachings of Jesus (which many Bibles print in red). 'We are committed to living out the words of Jesus, even if that sets us at odds with those evangelicals who have tended toward a cultural religion that has embraced Donald Trump with little or "no" prophetic judgment', Campolo wrote several months later.³⁰

Numerous progressive evangelicals of colour, often active in progressive evangelical networks, have described not only discomfort but also a sense of betrayal within broader evangelical circles. 'If you voted for Trump, then his racism was just not a deal-breaker for you', ESA execu-

tive director Nikki Toyama-Szeto declared. 'A lot of folks are saying that "If this is what evangelical means, then I'm not that".' As scholar Melanie McAlister has summarized, 'For many evangelicals of color, the politics of white supremacy is now the dominant reality associated with a multiracial faith identity that they once comfortably (if not always enthusiastically) claimed.' Though progressive evangelicals have long occupied a marginal place within modern American evangelicalism, most white evangelicals' enthusiasm for Trump has caused some to explore or to create different religious and discursive communities.³¹

In opposing and criticizing Trump's candidacy and his administration, progressive evangelicals have been joined by some prominent conservative and moderate evangelicals. Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, fervently opposed Trump prior to the election. Moore called him 'an arrogant huckster' and compared Trump's campaign to 'reality television moral sewage'. He also described evangelical defences of Trump 'a scandal and disgrace' after the release of the Access Hollywood video that contained Trump's sexually predatory comments.³²

²⁹ Emily McFarlan Miller, 'Can Evangelicals Unite after the 2016 Election?' *Religion News Service*, 16 November 2019; Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne, 'The Evangelicalism of Old White Men Is Dead', *New York Times*, 29 November 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/29/opinion/the-evangelicalism-of-old-white-men-is-dead.html>.

³⁰ Campolo and Claiborne, 'The Evangelicalism of Old White Men Is Dead'; Tony Campolo, 'Why Evangelicals Voted for Donald Trump ... and Continue to Support Him', *Red Letter Christians*, 24 July 2017, <https://www.redletterchristians.org/why-evangelicals-voted-for-donald-trump-continue-to-support-him/>.

³¹ Melani McAlister, 'A Kind of Homelessness: Evangelicals of Color in the Trump Era', *Religion and Politics*, 7 August 2018, <https://religionandpolitics.org/2018/08/07/a-kind-of-homelessness-evangelicals-of-color-in-the-trump-era/>.

³² Mark Woods, 'Russell Moore: Trump, Clinton Both Represent "Reality TV Moral Sewage"', *Christian Today*, 9 May 2016, <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/>

African-American pastor Thabiti Anyabwile, a prominent member of the Gospel Coalition network popular with Reformed evangelicals, rebuked Trump as a racist and his potential presidency as 'intolerable'. Conservative media figures such as *Washington Post* columnist Michael Gerson and National Review writer David French denounced Trump despite viewing support for Hillary Clinton as untenable, while popular evangelical authors Philip Yancey and Max Lucado expressed incredulity and dismay that fellow Christians considered Trump fit for office. Even the conservative evangelical magazine *World*, under the editorship of Marvin Olasky, called Trump 'unfit for power' and argued that he should step aside for another candidate.³³

An even broader range of con-

servative and moderate evangelical leaders have joined evangelical progressives in vocally opposing specific aspects of Trump's administration. With respect to immigration, for example, World Relief—the humanitarian arm of the centrist National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)—issued an open letter in the *Washington Post* challenging Trump's immigration and refugee policies. The letter was endorsed by a wide coalition of evangelical leaders such as *Christianity Today* president Harold Smith, Bill and Lynne Hybels of the Willow Creek Association, Southern Baptist Bible teacher Beth Moore, Latino evangelical leader Samuel Rodriguez, author Ann Voskamp and Wheaton College president Philip Ryken. Evangelicals across the political spectrum also expressed horror at the Trump administration's family separation policy and lobbied for its reversal. Regarding healthcare, the NAE joined progressive evangelicals in opposing Republican efforts to repeal Obamacare. 'Despite its impressive achievements, our health care system often fails to deliver affordable, life-saving help to many of our citizens', president Leith Anderson said. 'Any policy and funding changes should be evaluated by how they treat the most vulnerable among us.'³⁴

russell-moore-trump-clinton-both-represent-reality-tv-moral-sewage/85670.htm; Russell Moore, 'If Donald Trump Has Done Anything, He Has Snuffed Out the Religious Right', *Washington Post*, 9 October 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2016/10/09/if-donald-trump-has-done-anything-he-has-snuffed-out-the-religious-right/>.

33 Thabiti Anyabwile, 'Can We Talk? Or, Why I Think a Trump Presidency Is Intolerable Even Though You Might Not Agree', *The Gospel Coalition*, 6 June 2016, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/thabiti-anyabwile/can-we-talk-or-why-i-think-a-trump-presidency-is-intolerable-even-though-you-might-not-agree/>; Harry Farley, 'Christian Author Philip Yancey: Trump "Stands against Everything Christianity Believes"', *Christianity Today*, 26 September 2016, <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian-author-philip-yancey-trump-stands-against-everything-christianity-believes/96353.htm>; Marvin Olasky, 'Unfit for Power', *World*, 11 October 2016, https://world.wng.org/2016/10/unfit_for_power.

34 Kate Shellnutt, 'Max Lucado, Beth Moore, and Hundreds of Evangelicals Call for Immigration Reform ... Again', *Christianity Today*, 7 February 2018, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2018/february/max-lucado-beth-moore-evangelicals-immigration-dreamers-ref.html>; Harry Bruinius, 'Family Separation: Evangelicals Add Their Voices to Opposition', *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 June 2018, <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Justice/2018/0618/Family-separa->

The widest consensus between more conservative and progressive evangelicals has been in their rebukes of Trump's apparent tolerance for and enabling of racism, especially after the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville. 'I condemn the forces of white nationalism, white supremacy and antisemitism that divide our country today, and I also condemn those who seek to politicize it all for their political gain', declared Samuel Rodriguez of the National Hispanic Leadership Conference, a member of Trump's Evangelical Advisory Board. Many others criticized Trump's unwillingness to explicitly denounce racism. 'The so-called Alt-Right white supremacist ideologies are anti-Christ and satanic to the core' and 'We should say so', Russell Moore wrote. In response to the visible rise of racism during Trump's presidency, the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and the Gospel Coalition held a joint conference in April 2018 focused on the urgent need for racial justice and unity.³⁵

Like some progressive evangelicals, several conservatives have also

questioned the value of continuing to identify as an evangelical in the current political climate. Early in 2016, Russell Moore wrote an opinion piece for the *Washington Post* titled 'Why This Election Makes Me Hate the Word "Evangelical"'. He lamented the popular conflation of 'evangelicals' with an election-year voting bloc readily lining up behind Trump. While not ready to fully abandon the term *evangelical* as a religious identity focused on the good news that Jesus saves, Moore concluded, 'At least until this crazy campaign is over, I choose to just say that I'm a gospel Christian.'³⁶

At the end of President Trump's first year in office, Peter Wehner, a senior fellow at the conservative Ethics and Public Policy Center, published a similar argument in the *New York Times*. Wehner described how white evangelicals' support not only for Trump but also for disgraced Republican senatorial candidate Roy Moore in Alabama had led him and others he knew to no longer identify as an evangelical.³⁷

In early 2018, InterVarsity Press published a book titled *Still Evangelical?* that contained essays by progressive, moderate, and conservative evangelicals questioning the value of the label in the aftermath of the 2016 election. Even international observers recognized how white evangelical support for Trump had produced an identity crisis for American evan-

tion-Evangelicals-add-their-voices-to-opposition; Jack Jenkins, 'National Association of Evangelicals Blasts GOP Effort to Repeal Obamacare', *Think Progress*, 25 September 2017, <https://thinkprogress.org/this-time-even-evangelicals-are-blasting-the-gop-health-care-bill-1b3336946c06/>.

35 "'This Is NOT the Way of the Cross": Christian Leaders Condemn White Supremacism', *Christian Broadcasting Network*, 13 August 2017, <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2017/august/this-is-not-the-way-of-the-cross-christian-leaders-condemn-white-supremacism>; 'MLK50: Gospel Reflections from the Mountaintop', *The Gospel Coalition*, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/conference/mlk50/>.

36 Russell Moore, 'Why This Election Makes Me Hate the Word "Evangelical"', *Washington Post*, 29 February 2016.

37 Peter Wehner, 'Why I Can No Longer Call Myself an Evangelical Republican', *New York Times*, 9 December 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/09/opinion/sunday/wehner-evangelical-republicans.html>.

gelicals. Filipino Bishop Efraim Tendaro, Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance, commented that the label 'evangelical' needed to be 'reclaimed' in the United States since it had become 'identified more for political advocacy' rather than 'the demonstration and proclamation of the Gospel'.³⁸

V. Persistent Evangelical Divisions

One may wonder whether these shared concerns between progressive evangelicals and anti-Trump moderates and conservatives could lead to new forms of collaboration between these different factions of American evangelicals. Might Donald Trump indirectly inspire progressive and more conservative evangelicals to create new alliances or even a common vision for political engagement? Three factors—one political, one theological, and one sociological—make such potential partnerships unlikely.

With respect to political priorities, progressive evangelicals place significantly less emphasis on abortion than more conservative evangelicals. The evangelical left has typically identified as pro-life but, unlike conservatives, has refused to treat opposition to abortion as the primary issue guiding their electoral decisions and political

engagement. Progressive evangelical leaders define 'pro-life' broadly as protecting the sanctity of human life against all forms of violence and injustice. They also argue that pro-life advocates should support practical policies and programs that reduce the need for abortion, such as better access to contraceptives, health care, and economic support for pregnant women.³⁹

Rarely do progressive evangelicals especially champion the protection of unborn life or endorse efforts to restrict abortion—a fact not lost on conservative evangelicals. In a 2018 article, for example, Billy Graham Center director Ed Stetzer criticized progressive evangelicals for their relative silence in debates about abortion. The differing approaches to abortion politics also put progressive and conservative evangelicals on opposite sides concerning the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. While conservative and moderate evangelical critics of Trump still celebrated the nomination of a pro-life judge, progressive evangelicals such as Lisa Sharon Harper and activist Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove argued, based on Kavanaugh's record, that his constitutional interpretations and rulings would be devastating for minorities and poor people. The politics of abortion continue to place progressive evangelicals at odds with the majority of evangelical Christians.⁴⁰

³⁸ Mark A. Labberton, ed., *Still Evangelical? Insiders Reconsider Political, Social and Theological Meaning* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018); Samuel Smith, "Evangelical" Has Become Too Political and Needs to be "Reclaimed", says WEA Head, *Christian Today*, 9 October 2018, <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/evangelical-has-become-too-political-and-needs-to-be-reclaimed-says-wea-head/130645.htm>.

³⁹ Gasaway, *Progressive Evangelicals*, 128–62.

⁴⁰ Ed Stetzer, "Dear 'Whole-Life' Progressive Evangelicals, Did You Forget 'Pro-Life' and the Unborn?" *Christianity Today*, 30 January 2018, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2018/january/all-life-progressive-evangelical-pro-life.html>; Lisa

Second, progressive evangelicals' increasing theological affirmation of LGBTQ Christians also alienates them from most other evangelicals. Although they had long criticized the anti-gay politics of the Religious Right, in recent years more and more evangelical progressives such as Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, David Gushee, and others have taken a much bigger step to the left, accepting theological arguments in support of same-sex marriage and for full LGBTQ inclusion and equality within churches. Even those who are not fully affirming, such as Shane Claiborne and the leaders of ESA, readily partner with LGBTQ and affirming Christians. In contrast, conservative evangelicals remain staunchly opposed to both theological and political recognition of gay rights and equality. Since the legalization of same-sex marriages in 2015, they have championed 'religious liberty' rights in an effort to exempt themselves from any perceived participation in or affirmation of gay marriages. Moreover, many conservative evangelicals regard LGBTQ-affirming Christians as heretics. This position severely dampens prospects for partnerships with progressive evangelicals who are committed to LGBTQ justice and equality.⁴¹

Finally, despite their ostensibly shared evangelical commitment, longstanding disagreements between progressive and more conservative evangelicals have led them to participate in different religious and social networks. As progressives became marginalized in the broader evangelical movement, they developed partnerships over the past three decades with politically liberal Protestants and Catholics. Conservative evangelicals, on the other hand, gravitated toward cooperation with conservative Catholics and Mormons. During Trump's presidency, the statements issued and endorsed by progressive evangelicals have usually been made in cooperation with mainline Protestants, and they have often protested alongside ecumenical allies in activities associated with the so-called Religious Left. Just after progressive evangelicals participated in the 2018 'Revival of Jesus and Justice' rally in Lynchburg, a separate gathering occurred at Wheaton College, involving moderate leaders concerned about 'the challenges of distortions to evangelicalism that have permeated both the media and culture since the 2016 election'. Most participants in this consultation shared progressive evangelicals' concerns about public perceptions of American evangelicals. Yet they could not reach enough of a consensus to issue a planned state-

Sharon Harper, 'Evangelical Women and Men Call for a Pause on Culture War', *Red Letter Christians*, 21 July 2018, <https://www.redletterchristians.org/evangelical-women-men-call-for-a-pause-on-culture-war/>; Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, 'The Evangelical Case Against Judge Kavanaugh', *New York Times*, 3 September 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/03/opinion/evangelical-brett-kavanaugh-civil-rights.html>.

⁴¹ Gasaway, *Progressive Evangelicals*, 163–99, 272–73; David French, 'Yes, Ameri-

can Religious Liberty Is in Peril', *Wall Street Journal*, 26 July 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/yes-american-religious-liberty-is-in-peril-11564152873>; 'Thousands of Christians Respond to Nashville Statement With Emphatic "No"', *Sojourners*, 31 August 2017, <https://sojo.net/articles/thousands-christians-respond-nashville-statement-emphatic-no>.

ment on evangelicalism in the age of Trump, nor would most join the meetings and declarations of the evangelical left. Shared disillusionment with most white evangelicals' support for President Trump could not easily unite distinct factions of the evangelical movement.⁴²

VI. Conclusion

In late 2018, the most prominent progressive evangelical leaders issued yet another statement. Called 'The Chicago Invitation: Diverse Evangelicals Continue the Journey', the document intentionally built upon the 1973 Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern that helped to launch the contemporary progressive evangelical movement. Older white male leaders such as Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo and Ron Sider were joined by younger and non-white ones, such as Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Lisa Sharon Harper, Nikki Tomaya-Szeto and Soong-Chan Rah of North Park University.

The Chicago Invitation argues that 'the story that became nationally and globally dominant after the 2016 election was that 81 percent of "evangelicals" voted for Donald Trump, when, in fact, this group only represented the votes of white evangelicals. When evangelicals of color and younger evangelicals are accurately accounted for, the picture changes significantly'.

Imitating the 1973 declaration, the new statement declared its signers' commitment to 'biblical justice' and active resistance to racism, patriarchal sexism, homophobia, economic injustice and all forms of dehumanizing oppression.⁴³

The Chicago Invitation illustrates how much the Trump administration and its white evangelical supporters have put progressive evangelicals on the defensive. In a political sense, they have been forced anew to defend those who seem most exploited and endangered by Trump's policies. But in a religious sense, they feel compelled to defend the integrity of the evangelical tradition. In an article accompanying the statement, Sojourners' Jim Wallis and Adam Taylor wrote:

We hope and pray that this invitation can foster desperately needed dialogue about the present-day diversity within the evangelical movement and can serve as a powerful antidote and corrective to a false narrative that has dominated our politics that defines evangelicals as white, Republican, and ardently pro-Trump. Evangelicalism is a much more diverse movement than the current media narrative represents. ... By correcting the public narrative to include diverse evangelicals, we can help rehabilitate the perception of evangelicals and enable our nation and the church to better cross the bridge into a more inclusive, multi-racial future that mirrors God's kingdom come.

⁴² Gasaway, *Progressive Evangelicals*, 18–20; Katelyn Beaty, 'At a Private Meeting in Illinois, a Group of Evangelicals Tried to Save Their Movement from Trumpism', *New Yorker*, 26 April 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/on-religion/at-a-private-meeting-in-illinois-a-group-of-evangelicals-tried-to-save-their-movement-from-trumpism>.

⁴³ 'The Chicago Invitation: Diverse Evangelicals Continue the Journey', https://sojo.net/sites/default/files/chicagoinvitationformatted_final.pdf.

Thus the Chicago Invitation was as much a public-relations effort as a religious and theological statement. Progressive evangelical leaders wanted to correct distorted perceptions and reclaim American evangelicalism as a more variegated and a more justice-oriented religious tradition. They were trying, from their perspective, to make the reputation of evangelicals great again.⁴⁴

For the past four decades, progressive evangelicals have consistently tried to reclaim the evangelical tradi-

tion and label from those who they believe have hijacked it for right-wing political agendas. They have tried to persuade conservative evangelicals—as well as the media and larger public—that authentic evangelical Christianity should bring good news to the poor and freedom to the oppressed. Like the prophets of old whom they love to quote, progressive evangelicals believe they are standing on the margins, calling the wayward back to faithfulness to God. The dominance of the Religious Right and evangelical conservatism has always made their appeals difficult to hear. Now, the unexpected appeal of Donald Trump to so many white evangelicals has made their task even more difficult.

⁴⁴ Jim Wallis and Adam R. Taylor, 'Toward a More Authentic Evangelicalism', *Sojourners*, October 3, 2018, <https://sojo.net/articles/toward-more-authentic-evangelicalism>.

Doing Practical, Public Theology in the Context of South Africa's Decolonization Discourse

Vhumani Magezi

I. Background

The African continent faces challenges that range across social, political, economic and religious issues. They include corruption, conflicts, oppression, migration, social injustice, weak rule of law, HIV and AIDS, and many other challenges. On Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, which measures the perceived level of public-sector corruption from zero to 100, every African country scores below 50 except Botswana; the global average is 43, but for sub-Saharan Africa it is 33.¹

Churches are also experiencing specific challenges in this context. Using the Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa (DRCSA) as an example, Sekhalelo observed that they are confronting such issues as the rise of South Africa as a secular state, religious pluralism, marginalization of minorities, decline in membership commitment, a legitimacy crisis and

general moral decay.²

A concerted effort by various players is required to provide multifaceted responses. The players include politicians, community leaders, academic institutions, churches and other societal players. Our interest in this discussion is churches. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, rightly maintained that churches as Christian communities should participate in activities that assist humanity to flourish. He stated, 'Christian community has to learn civic virtues that will create civic flourishing and to learn how to exercise those tasks of decision-making within community and maintaining and sustaining a human environment.'³

2 M. Sekhalelo, 'The Challenges Facing the Dutch Reformed Churches in the South African Liberal Democracy', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72, no. 1 (2016), a3031, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i1.3031>.

3 Rowan Williams, 'Relations between the Church and State Today: What Is the Role of the Christian Citizen?' (2015), address given at Manchester University, <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles>.

1 Ernst & Young, *Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index* (2014), viewed 1 April 2015 at www.transparency.org, 9.

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Williams argues that Christian communities cannot opt out of public and social issues or existing challenges, but should live out a different identity and vision in the world. This means that churches should attend to issues that directly affect the life and progress of people, and participate in addressing public issues such as corruption, governance and oppression. The challenge for churches to respond to public issues is a concern for theological disciplines such as practical theology, public theology and pastoral care.

It is useful to describe and distinguish these three disciplines. Practical theology focuses on ensuring that theology is useful and relevant to everyday concerns. Public theology focuses on interaction with public issues in contemporary society. Pastoral care is concerned with providing support to people in pain and anxiety, including any situation.

Practical theology is interconnected with public theology, as it includes a public dimension in its work.⁴ However, as Dreyer indicates, 'Not all practical theology is public theology, in other words aimed at a non-ecclesial general audience. Practical theology is also theology for the church, that is for a Christian audience, and is theology for an academic audience.'⁵

The days are long gone when the practices of the church and clergy were the main or the only focus of practical theology. The vision has broadened to include the context of everyday life on a local, national and global level. Osmer and Schweitzer usefully explained that the task of public practical theology is discerned in three ways: first, ensuring that the public is one of the audiences of practical theology; second, ensuring that practical theology includes everyday concerns and issues in its reflection; and third, facilitating a dialogue between theology and contemporary culture.⁶ In linking public theology and pastoral care, Koppel maintained:

Practicing public theology asks that pastoral care practitioners and theologians take seriously and engage mindfully with issues that concern groups of people and whole populations, rather than individual persons in isolation. Framing pastoral care ministries, education, and institutions through this larger social lens helps theorists and practitioners to refine methods and purposes for our common work.⁷

Thus, public theology acts as a larger social lens that, in the process, should lead to framing pastoral care ministries. In practicing public pastoral care, the pastor should be 'involved with people in and for the

php/2009/relations-between-the-church-and-state-today-what-is-the-role-of-the-christian-citizen, 2.

4 R. Osmer and F. Schweitzer, *Religious Education between Modernization and Globalization: New Perspectives on the United States and Germany* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 215.

5 Y. Dreyer, 'A Public Practical Theological Theory for Religious Education of Secularised Youth', *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theologi-*

cal Studies 60, no. 3 (2014), 919.

6 Osmer and Schweitzer, *Religious Education*, 218.

7 M. S. Koppel, 'Practicing Public Pastoral Theologies in Contexts of Difference', *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 25, no. 3 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10649867.2015.1123923>, 151.

community'⁸

Gathogo's argument for African Reconstruction Theology provides a useful connection between practical theology and public theology as well as between public theology and pastoral care in Africa.⁹ Gathogo advised that a theology of reconstruction in Africa is a wakeup call to theological practitioners (theologians and church leaders) in Africa to pursue an agenda that is pastorally holistic in society.

The theme of shifting theology, and particularly pastoral care, from private spiritual nourishment to public space is gaining currency.¹⁰ Koppel reported that the 2015 Society for Pastoral Theology Annual Study Conference, titled 'Practicing Public Pastoral Theologies in Contexts of Difference', explored scholarly and practical dimensions for the exercise of public pastoral theology.¹¹ Lartey and Sharp added that this theme was intended to encourage multiple public conversation partners to whom pastoral theology is accountable and implicated to engage each other in thoughtful dialogues.¹² They added that respon-

sible public pastoral practice requires negotiating complex tensions in communities. Thus, strategic public pastoral theology aims to foster both deep self-reflection and expansive global or even cosmic citizenry.

The challenge posed by the shift to public pastoral care is, for theology, to effectively engage with social issues to participate in creating civic flourishing in addition to spiritual issues. Therefore, Vanhoozer and Strachan advised that the pastor should be a theologian by saying 'what God is saying in Christ'. At the same time, he or she should be a public figure, which means that he or she should 'publicly be involved in and for the community'.¹³

Miller-McLemore described developments regarding the movement of pastoral care to public theology as, first, a concern about the silence of mainstream Christianity on key social issues, and second, awareness of the limitations of pastoral focus on the individual alone. These factors force pastoral care to focus on the whole person and on public issues.

From the developments mentioned above, the call for theology, especially pastoral care, to engage in public issues is evident. The gap in pastoral care of silence on these issues and focusing on individuals in a context where challenges and needs exist within the public spaces is deplorable. As Juma states, public theology is about interpreting and living theological beliefs and values in the public realm and not only within the church. This includes making the role,

8 Kevin J. Vanhoozer and O. Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 17.

9 J. Gathogo, 'African Theology of Reconstruction as a Practical Theology for All', *Practical Theology in South Africa* 24, no. 2 (2007), 99–121.

10 See B. J. Miller-McLemore, 'Pastoral Theology and Public Theology', in E. Graham and A. Rowlands (eds.), *Pathways to the Public Square* (London: Transaction, 2005), 95–106.

11 Koppel, 'Practicing', 151.

12 E. Y. Lartey and M. A. M. Sharp, 'Practicing Public Pastoral Theologies in Contexts of Difference', *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 25, no. 3 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1064>

9867.2015.1123504, 134.

13 Vanhoozer and Strachan, *Pastor as Public Theologian*, 16–17.

function and contribution of churches visible in the public sphere.¹⁴ In this sense, public theology is not a private theological study, but a visible evidence of what God is doing in communities through human agents belonging to churches. Jesus highlighted the public visibility of Christian ministry by saying that no one lights a lamp and put it under a table (Mt 5:15).

Viewed through a public theology lens, pastoral care extends beyond spiritual nourishment and narrow *diakonia* care to engaging diverse issues affecting humanity: politics, leadership, corruption, injustice, etc. It should be highlighted, as Miller-McLemore noted, that pastoral care as usually understood, particularly in the USA, narrowly focuses on human 'angst and its appropriation of psychology, persons and pain'.¹⁵ This pastoral perspective is different from the meaning of pastoral care in African Reconstruction Theology, which refers to the theological exercise of holistically engaging life issues such as tribalism, oppression, HIV, gender and global warming. Louw advances the same notion of pastoral care as holistic life care.¹⁶ African Recon-

struction Theology 'is pastoral in that it seeks to restore and address the challenges experienced in many African communities'.¹⁷

Evident from the above discussion are the following challenges: first, the need for a theological approach that advances the good of life; second, the need to engage and reconstruct structures so that people may enjoy a better life; and third, the need for pastoral care as human care that should be performed in the public space as ideal practical theology.

In highlighting the contributions of practical theology, Miller-McLemore rightly stated that it has disrupted the space occupied by academic theology. It is about taking theology out to the streets and using what is learned from the streets to assess the adequacy of biblical, historical and doctrinal claims.¹⁸ Indeed, as Gathogo states, such an approach in Africa is about engaging holistically with issues to develop and reconstruct Africa and address its issues head-on. This effort calls for theology to be relevant to the African continent.

To ensure such relevance, practical theology should be disentangled from imported agendas and approaches that mimic Western theological projects. This calls for a decolonization of practical theology to ensure that it engages with pressing public challenges for both African Christianity and social development.

But what is decolonization and what are the discernible elements that require decolonization? What

¹⁴ F. Juma, 'Public Theology in the Face of Pain and Suffering: A Proletarian Perspective', *Consensus* 36, no. 2 (2015), <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol36/iss2/6>, 13.

¹⁵ B. J. Miller-McLemore, 'Five Misunderstandings about Practical Theology', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16, no. 1 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijpt-2012-0002>, 17.

¹⁶ D. J. Louw, *Cura Vitae: Illness and the Healing of Life in Pastoral Care and Counselling*, (Cape Town, Lux Verbi, 2008); D. J. Louw, *Wholeness in Hope Care: On Nurturing the Beauty of the Human Soul in Spiritual*

Healing (Vienna: LIT, 2014).

¹⁷ Gathogo, 'African Theology', 101.

¹⁸ Miller-McLemore, 'Five Misunderstandings', 26.

steps can be taken as an effort towards decolonizing theology, particularly practical theology?

The argument advanced here is that pastoral care, as a practical theology discipline, should shift from private care and narrow *diakonia* focus to the public domain as part of its public function. To that end, within higher education conversation on decolonization, practical theology should use the public pastoral care nexus as a contextual launch pad. Practical theology should be critical and self-reflective so as to contribute to addressing Africa's challenges. We will look at a concrete example of such efforts in South Africa.

II. Decolonization Discussion at South African Universities

The #RhodesMustFall movement, which started in early 2015 at the University of Cape Town, triggered a debate about decolonizing the academic space and curriculum. In response, the university created a task force to examine 'all the artwork and photographs in public spaces across the campus to consider and consult on what the university community as a whole would want to see celebrated, venerated and commemorated.'¹⁹

One month after the beginning of the movement, the statue of colonial figure Cecil Rhodes was removed. The movement also inspired similar efforts at the Stellenbosch, Rhodes and

Wits Universities, as the students called for a decolonization of universities and the curricula.

Decolonization is an effort to undo colonization. The proponents of decolonization in universities argue that universities are dominated by colonial Eurocentric ideas, theories and approaches to knowledge. Heleta argues that these Eurocentric colonial ideas and approaches do not reflect the lived experiences of black students, nor do they present African stories in the classrooms. Rather, they express colonial knowledge systems designed to denigrate and subjugate black people. This curriculum confronts black students with theories that negate their own lived experiences, dreams and aspirations.²⁰

In focusing on Eurocentric approaches, Nyathi maintained that education is used as an instrument and vehicle of perpetuating colonization and colonial hegemonies.²¹ Maldonado-Torres added that 'Education, including academic scholarship, national culture, and the media are three areas where this modern/colonial attitude tends to take hold and reproduce itself.'²² The persistence

²⁰ S. Heleta, 'Decolonisation: Academics Must Change What They Teach, and How' (2016), <https://theconversation.com/decolonisation-academics-must-change-what-they-teach-and-how-68080>, 1.

²¹ N. Nyathi, 'Decolonising the Curriculum: The Only Way through the Process Is Together' (2016), <https://theconversation.com/decolonising-the-curriculum-the-only-way-through-the-process-is-together-69995>.

²² N. Maldonado-Torres, 'Outline of Ten Theses of Coloniality and Decoloniality' (n.d., accessed 11 March 2017), http://frantzfanonfoundation-fondationfrantzfanon.com/IMG/pdf/maldonado-torres_outline_

¹⁹ M. Price and R. Ally, 'The Challenge of Decolonisation: UCT's Transformation Journey' (2016), <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/news-and-analysis/the-challenge-of-decolonisation-ucts-transformation>, 2.

and sustaining hegemonic forces of colonial tendencies and practices is termed *coloniality*.²³ Coloniality and decoloniality refer to the logic, metaphysics, ontology and matrix of power created by the massive processes of colonization and decolonization.²⁴ Hence, what is referred to as decolonization in this article is decoloniality.

In responses to the call for decolonization of universities, some of the questions posed reflected a genuine inquiry to explore ways of addressing colonial shackles in the curricula while others masked an attitude of resistance to change by academics. Heleta reported that some academics asked, 'What do they [black students] mean by decolonization? Going back to the Stone Age? Teaching only about South Africa and Africa? Isolation from the rest of the world?'²⁵ Modiri maintained that these cynical queries by mostly white academics, demanding that students explain to them what decolonization means, suggest their own illiteracy about the history and intellectual debates in their disciplines.²⁶

of_ten_theses-10.23.16_.pdf, 8.

23 Decolonial scholars refer to the enduring legacy of colonialism as 'coloniality' to distinguish it from the actual rule of colonial administrations (Grosfoguel 2007).

24 W. Mignolo, 'Modernity and Decoloniality', in *Oxford Bibliographies* (2011), <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0017.xml>.

25 Heleta, 'Decolonisation', 1.

26 J. Modiri, 'In the Fall: Decolonisation and the Rejuvenation of the Academic Project in South Africa', *Daily Maverick* (2016), <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2016-10-16-in-the-fall-decolonisation-and-the-rejuvenation-of-the>

The vividness of colonial entanglement of universities is outlined by Mbembe, who explained that the presence of colonial symbols that tell a history of black oppression suggests a celebration of that history.²⁷ The maintenance of Eurocentric theories and models that hardly relate to African students' experience is nothing other than perpetuating foreignness as well as perpetuating propagation of colonialism. Universities have become systems of authoritative control through programmes, grading systems, methods of credits, acceptable and unacceptable standards and the complicity of professional bodies that accentuate modes of colonial education. Mbembe therefore concluded that this Eurocentric tradition has become hegemonic. It also represses anything that is articulated, thought and envisioned outside those frames. Hence, higher education institutions must undergo a process of decolonization of knowledge and of the university institution itself.

However, the scepticism towards decolonization expressed by some academics, whether black or white, should be acknowledged. Fanon is critical of decolonization when taken as Africanization, because it will result in merely the transferring of resources from white people to black middle-class people who then maintain the unfair advantages of the colonial past. Mbembe used an example of

academic-project-in-south-africa/#.Wlcfjbfh28U.

27 A. Mbembe, 'Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive' (2015), <http://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf>.

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in South Africa and how it has been used as an instrument of looting by those in power. Therefore, using this example, it would be pointless if the decolonization of universities focused on increasing the number of black academics who serve to maintain the same colonial system. Prinsloo rightly warned that decolonizing universities is more than removing colonial and apartheid-era symbols, increasing the number of black academics and including African texts in the curriculum.²⁸

Fanon advised that true decolonization is about self-ownership, which is the creation of new forms of life. This entails reshaping people and turning human beings into craftsmen and craftswomen in reshaping matters and form. The reshaping is not about mimicking or imitating the Eurocentric models, but generating new ones that are relevant to people. It's about ending Eurocentric models and starting human history anew. For Fanon, decolonization is a violent phenomenon whose goal is replacing certain species of humans by another species of humans. Violence here does not refer to physical violence, but expending effort in pursuing the replacement process with vigour. 'New species' refers to a new category of men and women who create new forms of life that govern and determine new futures.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o views decolonization as a process of seeing ourselves clearly in relationship to

ourselves and to other people in the world. He adds that decolonization is not an event that happens once, but an ongoing process of seeing ourselves clearly. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o also adds that decolonization is about re-centring ourselves intellectually and culturally by redefining what the centre is which is Africa. He views decolonization as rejecting the West as a centre of consciousness and cultural heritage and replacing it with Africa. However, this does not imply closing the doors to Europe or other traditions, but rather redefining the centre.²⁹

In assessing the decolonization discourse, at least from the perspectives of Fanon and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, we seem to perceive a subtle contradiction. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o suggests not closing the doors to Europe and yet advocating for changing the centre. Surely there cannot be two centres. Africa, in this case, replaces the West. Fanon's notion of the creation of new life conjures up the notion of replacing another. In light of our discussion context, without experience and lacking certainty as to how a decolonized university curriculum looks like, scepticism and cynicism persist. They persist partly because of resistant white academics, but more so as a psychological response to cope with the fear and threat of the unknown.

For instance, when one considers Africa's history and developments in practical theology discussions, how could the notion of 'telling African stories that are not told' be a replacement of the historically established

28 E. H. Prinsloo, 'The Role of the Humanities in Decolonising the Academy', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 15, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022215613608>, 165.

29 Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1981).

theories in practical theology? Thus, confusion and darkness arise when one tries to imagine a decolonized practical theology in the South African academy. To complicate the issue further, how can physics and mathematics be decolonized? Is translating content into IsiXhosa or IsiZulu sufficient decolonization? It is because of the complexity of other disciplines that Prinsloo suggested that the humanities are better placed to lead the discussion. However, Kamanzi rejected the notion that some disciplines are more suited for decolonization than others. He provided an argument from the natural sciences, his own discipline, which is worth citing at length:

The discipline of Electrical Engineering itself comes into being through a professionalisation of branches of applied physics and mathematics as means to further develop technology harnessing the phenomena of energy, electricity and electromagnetic waves. In the early South African context, the major economic drivers in the early stages of these departments would have been the generation and distribution of electrical energy, mining technology and military applications. All of these elements that shaped this emerging discipline are evidently not apolitical and formed as a response, to some extent, to the social, political and economic projects of the time. The pursuit then of a decolonized curriculum in this context must respond to the constraints of the existing economy and state pressures and answer fundamental questions around the 'role of the engineer' in the existing and future society in relation to the project

of self-reliance in the pursuit of self-determination. For example, if the future society were to decide to weigh up whether to nationalise access and production of its resources, would engineering schools be prepared to foster graduates who could fulfil this task, or are our existing curricula and educational systems built on the assumption that reliance on external expertise will be provided, thus rendering, to some extent, self-determination a perpetually risky decision?³⁰

Kamanzi's argument dispels blockage of imagination, uncritical thinking and biased ways of exploring decolonization of the current universities' systems. It discourages lazy academics who do not want to renew, reform or engage with fresh contextual realities.

Modiri rightly argued that the cynicism towards decolonization of universities partly arises from 'self-induced blockage of mind' by some academics who have limited exposure to the history and intellectual debates in their discipline. And if an academic is characterized by such illiteracy and ignorance, we dare ask: Is that individual worth a university tenure or appointment? The answer is no insofar as universities are considered a place of critical discussion, reflection, development of new modes of thinking and knowledge.

The argument thus far has high-

30 B. Kamanzi, 'Decolonising the Curriculum: The Silent War for Tomorrow', *Daily Maverick* (2016), <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2016-04-28-decolonising-the-curriculum-the-silent-war-for-tomorrow/#.WHjKW0aKUK>.

lighted four issues: (1) the existence of colonial hegemonic shackles in South African universities, (2) the proposed ways of doing decolonization according to Fanon and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, (3) the cynicism encountered in pursuing decolonization, and (4) the possibility of decolonization in all disciplines. The vexing question in decolonization, however, is: How can it be done?

While this question cannot be simplistically answered, some suggestions can be made. Nyathi maintained that the decolonization project should not focus on what needs to be taken away. He added that decolonization should strive for the best of both worlds, not an either-or situation. He stated that 'if there is useful African knowledge then I want it, and if Western scientists have a cure for cancer I also want it'.³¹ This proposal by Nyathi seems simplistic and yet lays down an important principle, namely that decolonization should move to a common ground on which ideas and knowledge can be built.

Nyathi's proposal, however, presumes that academics are open, willing and comfortable about seamlessly embracing the two epistemological sources, whereas experience indicates the contrary. Heleta noted that university curricula are largely steeped in Eurocentric modes that are dominated by white people. Therefore, from a position of genuine innocence, how could such academics effectively and meaningfully participate in decolonization? With some white academics' limitations as to their understanding of black people

and Africa, there is a risk of academic reflection paralysis that could be counterproductive. For instance, how can a white academic teach the science of *tokoloshi* or witchcraft, which is a totally different worldview?

It is because of the reality of this threat to a productive university decolonization process that many scholars advise that decolonization of curricula is more than increasing black lecturers, assigning more black African authors or even having more dialogues about African stuff. It is also not about creating universities that are disengaged globally, but being global producers of knowledge. The knowledge should be relevant locally (in South Africa), continentally (Africa) and globally (the entire world).

Some lessons (both positive and negative) to avoid devastating failures can be learnt from Kenya and East Africa, where decolonization started in the 1960s. For instance, Tanzania has made considerable progress in using Swahili as the language of instruction at the university level. Thus, decolonization in an academic environment is in the first place a paradigmatic issue and a new mind-set.

As a way forward, in view of the staffing situation with many white academics, the following proposals have been suggested: (1) review and revamp content that is currently being taught by questioning its relevance to African contextual realities; (2) challenge academics' negative attitude towards Africa and encourage self-introspection (soul searching) regarding their allegiance, commitment and attitude to African knowledge; (3) include substantially useful and relevant readings about Africa; (4) encourage academics to be informed on African issues and challenge them

³¹ Nyathi, 'Decolonising the Curriculum', 1-2.

to develop relevant theories.³² These starting points for decolonizing universities are not a one-time event, but an ongoing process of engagement that challenges African academics and students to engage consciously with contextual realities. This should result in producing truly African academics and scholars in African 'pots'.

In view of the preceding discussion, how is decolonization relevant to practical theological reflection? Dreyer, citing other scholars such as Miller-McLemore, noted that, although practical theology has spread to many other parts of the world from its origins in Europe and USA, it is still very much tied to its European past. He added that a quick glance at the *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* or at the membership list of the International Academy of Practical Theology (IAPT) will confirm this domination.³³ The epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies of practical theologians in the Southern contexts are mostly absent from 'international' practical theological books such as *Wiley-Blackwell*.

In response to the question on practical theology and decolonization, Mbembe proposed two steps in what he called decolonization in the future tense. The first step is to approach the current situation with a critique of dominant Eurocentric academic models that do not fully acknowledge other thinking and knowledge-pro-

ducing subjects. This recognition of the present academic model and its shortcomings should lead to concrete steps that contribute to the desired improvements. These two steps will inform the next two sections, which focus on practical theology in light of the decolonization discussion and the proposed shifts towards the attainment of decolonized practical theology. Thus, the next two sections avoid what Tuck and Yang called treating decolonization as a metaphor when it is a practical reality. Hence, practical steps should be encouraged in practical theology for renewal and refocusing.³⁴

III. Reflections on Practical Theology within the Decolonization Discussion

What are some of the issues to consider in decolonization of practical theology? Miller-McLemore usefully describes practical theology as referring to four distinct enterprises with different audiences or objectives. She states that practical theology is

[a] discipline among scholars and an activity of faith among believers. And it has two other common uses: it is a method for studying theology in practice and it is a curricular area of subdisciplines in the seminary. Practical theology refers to an activity of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday life, a method or way of analyzing theology in practice used by religious leaders and by

32 Heleta, 'Decolonisation', 1; Mbembe, 'Decolonising Knowledge', 1–4.

33 J. S. Dreyer, 'Practical Theology and the Call for the Decolonisation of Higher Education in South Africa: Reflections and Proposals', *HTS Theologies Studies/Theological Studies* 73, no. 4 (2017), a4805, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4805>, 3.

34 E. Tuck and K. W. Yang, 'Decolonisation Is Not a Metaphor', *Decolonisation: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012), 1–40.

teachers and students across the theological curriculum, a curricular area in theological education focused on ministerial practice and subspecialties, and, finally, an academic discipline pursued by a smaller subset of scholars to support and sustain these first three enterprises.³⁵

Miller-McLemore notes that each of the aspects of practical theology points to different locations—that is, from daily life to the library, and from fieldwork to classroom, congregation and community, academic guild and global context. These aspects are connected and interdependent.

Although Miller-McLemore's overview as quoted above is insightful, her further comments about practical theology are central to our decolonization discussion. She adds that practical theology redefines what constitutes theological knowledge or wisdom and seeks theology for the masses. It explores the dissonance between professed beliefs and lived realities in a critical manner.

Congruence on the goal of practical theology and decolonization of universities' discourse can be clearly discerned. Decolonization of universities is about creating schools that are relevant to African people's needs and aspirations in order to respond to national and continental needs (within a global context). This is about producing academic products that serve the masses. Converging with this goal is practical theology seen as theological knowledge and wisdom for the masses also. It is reflecting about theology that engages and contributes to

addressing issues of 'the good of the human race'.³⁶

To that end, Berinyuu argued that the current theologies in Africa are inadequate to address African challenges such as dictators, political and ethnic conflicts and violence.³⁷ This gap in engaging contemporary challenges in African public theology has resulted in the birth of African Reconstruction Theology. Gathogo encapsulates the mission of pursuing what is good in Africa as developing a theology of reconstruction to rebuild (address) the various challenges. The agenda of reconstruction is a shift from the agenda of liberation theology, with Moses as its central figure, to Nehemiah with his agenda of rebuilding Jerusalem in ruins. In Nehemiah 2, Nehemiah assessed the situation of Jerusalem's ruins and developed a plan to address the situation. Gathogo and Mugambi therefore argued that the Nehemiah figure should inspire holistic engagement with various African issues such as bad governance, corruption and destructive spiritualities that are dubbed 'Sanballats' and 'Tobiahs' that hinder human flourishing.³⁸

However, African Reconstruction Theology as driven by Nehemiah's hermeneutic prism has its weaknesses. It tends to simplistically draw

36 Williams, 'Relations between the Church and State Today', 2–4.

37 A. A. Berinyuu, 'Doing Public Theology in Africa: Trends and Challenges', in E. Graham and A. Rowlands (eds.), *Pathways to the Public Square* (London: Transaction, 2005), 155–56.

38 Gathogo, 'African Theology of Reconstruction'; J. N. K. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War* (Nairobi: EAEP, 1995).

35 Miller-McLemore, 'Five Misunderstandings', 20.

on one paradigm, namely Nehemiah's leadership and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, as a paradigm for an overall solution to complex problems.³⁹ The strength of this theological approach is, nonetheless, its focus on not blaming colonialism for every African problem and focusing on solutions. It emphasises the task of 'constructing new ways of doing things' as a motif.

Reconstruction theology seems to provide a perspective for engaging in a decolonized practical theology. Therefore, practical theology, as a theology of action, should 'imagine and explore ways' of doing responsible reconstruction theology that addresses public issues in a relevant manner, which entails a decolonized practical theology.⁴⁰

How can practical theology in South African universities contribute to this decolonization mission? What are the colonial shackles that it

should address?

Practical theology in South Africa is evidently enmeshed in Eurocentric paradigms and transformation has been slow. It is unlikely that one will attempt to write a practical theology thesis or dissertation without being influenced by scholars such as Osmer, Ricoeur, Fowler, Gerkin, Heitink, Browning, Van der Ven, Schweiter, Kumlehn, Gadamer, Poling, Bass or Anderson. Transformation in practical theology has been led by students who have been questioning Eurocentric epistemological foundations.⁴¹ The irony is that theological students and academics are comfortable with writing dissertations in practical theology or a discipline such as pastoral care in Africa without engaging with African scholars such as Mugambi, Njiroge, Kinoti, Gathogo, Getui, Maluleke and Bediako.

How many practical theology academics at our South African universities strive to forge partnerships with colleagues in the USA, Canada, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands, just to mention a few countries? And when academics succeed in finding a colleague from the West to collaborate with, they treasure it greatly. My point is that, if practical theology reflection is not self-reflective and reflexive, operating within a colonial hegemonic framework tends to be the natural norm. Dreyer maintained that it is critical for academics to be reflexive in their research. This reflexivity entails being conscious about ourselves (who we are) and our positionalities within the process of conducting research, academic and knowledge production.

³⁹ This point warrants a separate detailed discussion which is not the focus of this article. Here, I will simply note that many other perspectives in biblical literature could be employed to address different situations, as an alternative to presenting Nehemiah as a 'silver bullet paradigm'.

⁴⁰ K. A. Cahalan and G. S. Mikoski (eds.), *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 3; Louw, *Cura Vitae*, 17; V. Magezi, 'Reflection on Pastoral Care in Africa: Towards Discerning Emerging Pragmatic Pastoral Ministerial Responses', *In die Skriflig* 50, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v50i1.2130>, 6; P. Bowers, 'Christian Intellectual Responsibilities in Modern Africa', *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 28 (2009): 96–100; C. L. Bruyns, 'The Rebirth of Kairos Theology and Its Implications for Public Theology and Citizenship in South Africa', *Missionalia* 43, no. 3 (2015): 460, <https://doi.org/10.7832/43-3-131>.

⁴¹ Dreyer, 'Practical Theology', 4–6.

The above point can be extrapolated to probe the extent to which South African academics are disposed to develop links and networks as a proxy for fostering a strong and deep African appreciation through collaborating with other African universities, e.g. in the humanities disciplines. How many practical theologians in South African universities have seriously explored partnerships with theological scholars in neighbouring African countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Kenya or Nigeria? The response is likely to be 'not many', although some initiatives have been forged. These include collaborative initiatives such as the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT) at Stellenbosch University, Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, Pan African Network HIV and AIDS (PACANET), African Network for Higher Education and Research HIV and AIDS (ANHERTHA) and many others being forged by South African academics with institutions such as Tumaini University Makumira (in Tanzania), Uganda Christian University, and the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology.

Another notable collaboration is the establishment of a pastoral care journal, *The Pastoral Journal for Life Care and Spiritual Healing*, to publish research from Africa and South America.⁴² These initiatives indicate efforts to forge collaborations, but they still need to develop and be more popularized, which will happen with time. While these efforts are commendable, they are in early stages.

⁴² The indicated collaborative initiatives are not meant to be exhaustive but illustrative.

The low collaboration of South African practical theologians in research or publications with other African countries is not unique to the theology discipline. The Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) observed that 'while university networks have emerged in most continents around the world, until now no special network of research (intensive) universities has been established in Africa.'⁴³ The main reason cited for non-participation is the highly uneven development of scientific research conducted throughout Africa, with a strong concentration of academic output in three countries: South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt. Evidently, there seems to be little effort in enforcing African epistemological foundations that are pertinent in developing a decolonized African knowledge.

This state of poor engagement with other African scholars, while focusing on partnering with Western colleagues, suggests an unconsciousness by academics regarding their deeply rooted Western inclination. This indicates a self-sustaining system of colonial hegemonic knowledge systems, including practical theology, by academics. This hegemonic situation is self-perpetuating unless there is reflexivity and academics are conscious of their positionality of power.⁴⁴ Not-

⁴³ Centre for Higher Education Transformation, 'African League of Research Universities', 2013, <https://www.chet.org.za/.../Cloete%20and%20Maassen%202013%20League%20of%20>

⁴⁴ M. Muhammad et al., 'Reflections on Researcher Identity and Power: The Impact of Positionality on Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Processes and Outcomes', *Critical Soci-*

ing the general superiority of South African universities because they produce the bulk of African research, one can extrapolate that South African academic colonial hegemonies tend to be also sustained by universities through viewing people with research partners in Western countries as having important collaborations while being lukewarm to collaborations with African partnerships.

In a previous article, after surveying the terrain of pastoral care in Africa, I stated that African pastoral care is fragmented and by implication lacks a clear organizing centre. Although this argument makes sense, there is indeed arguably an organizing centre on pastoral care in Africa, focusing on reconstruction in addition to what Masamba ma Mpolo called *homo africanus* principles—that is, the sanctity of life, the relation between illness, misfortune and sin, spirits and ancestors in the life of the community, and life experienced as a whole.⁴⁵

Holistic pastoral care was inaugurated in 1990 when Bishop Desmond Tutu was the president of the All African Conference of Churches (AACC). This holistic, reconstruction-oriented

pastoral care agenda was followed by publications dealing with broad African issues by scholars such as Mugambi, Gathogo, Nwachuku⁴⁶ and others. This reconstruction agenda persists to this day among members from that era such as Mugambi, Tutu, Kinoti and Gathogo.

While the elements that require decolonization of practical theology such as celebrating Western collaboration, prescribed books, analytical frameworks and staffing are clear, the challenge lies in outlining how a decolonized practical theology looks like. This takes us to our next section.

IV. Pointers for Decolonizing Practical Theology

The question of a decolonized practical theology is a vexing one. It is difficult to describe and outline its tenets. What does a decolonized South African practical theology look like? Goto highlighted the difficulty in articulating theologies that bear geographical connotations such as African practical theology, Asian practical theology and others. He argues that such theologies are difficult to articulate, because the

ology 41, no. 7–8 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920513516025>, 1045–63.

⁴⁵ Magezi, 'Reflection on Pastoral Care', 3–4; see Masamba ma Mpolo, 'Spirituality and Counselling for Liberation: The Context and Praxis of African Pastoral Activities and Psychology', in K. Federsmidt, K. Temme & H. Weiss (eds.), *Voices from Africa on Pastoral Care: Contributions in International Seminars 1988–2008* (Dusseldorf, Germany: Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, 2008), 7–18, www.1.ekir.de/sipcc/downloads/IPCC-020-txt.pdf.

⁴⁶ Daisy Nwachuku's contributions (originally authored in 1991 and 2000) can be found as Daisy N. Nwachuku, 'The Situation of Women in Africa in the Process of Adjustment and Change', in K. Federsmidt, K. Temme and H. Weiss (eds.), *Voices from Africa on Pastoral Care: Contributions in International Seminars 1988–2008* (Dusseldorf, Germany: Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, 2008), 35–52, www.1.ekir.de/sipcc/downloads/IPCC-020-txt.pdf, and 'Creating Communities through Pastoral Care and Counselling in the Fragmentations of Urban African Life', 97–106 in the same volume.

geographical people are not homogenous. For instance, one cannot speak of homogenous Africa. Despite this difficulty, Goto offered three useful points worth adapting in guiding our discussion of a decolonized practical theology.⁴⁷

First, practical theology should engage in theological reflection in a manner that results in transformation. For instance, in our South African context, an engaged practical theology should result in engaging the colonial structures and its remnants as well as oppressive systems. Second, practical theology should make use of scholars in their context. This means practical theology in South Africa should use South African and other African scholars' theories. The scholars do not need to be black students, but should reflect a paradigmatic approach and mind-set that promote epistemologies and reflection approaches that engage with contemporary issues. For instance, an academic could juxtapose the approaches of Paul Ricoeur or Jurgen Habermas with African thoughts and draw conclusions as to how one could do practical theology that integrate their thoughts with African frameworks. Third, practical theology knowledge and wisdom should be derived from the people's wisdom and experiences.

In view of the fluidity involved in articulating a decolonized practical theology, the following pointers that build on Goto can be suggested as a starting point. A decolonized practi-

cal theology should include the following features:

1. It should seriously engage its context, resulting in transformation. The opposite of transformation is maintenance of the colonial hegemonic status quo. A decolonized practical theology should embrace a mission of ongoing reflection and transformation of the various aspects of humanity and the discipline itself (self-reflective).
2. Practical theology should engage with scholarship in South Africa and the African context. This includes critical engagement with both assigned reading materials and people's experiences.
3. Practical theology should draw its paradigms and models from people's wisdom and paradigms. This entails pursuing a theological approach that draws from African experiences. This can be explored as a way of bringing together three epistemological spheres: theological traditions, historical Western approaches, and African wisdom and experiences.
4. Practical theology should be self-critical of its centre and epistemological sources. It should ask questions about its motivations, agenda and contributions (re-centring, new life). This entails reflexivity and academics' consciousness of their positionality of power, resulting in intentional pursuit of agendas based on pressing challenges.
5. Practical theology should view itself as in continuous

⁴⁷ C. Goto, 'Asian American Practical Theologies', in K. A. Cahalan & G. S. Mikoski (eds.), *Opening Up the Field of Practical Theology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 34–37.

reformation and transformation. It is a process, not an event, which should enable it to engage with issues on an ongoing basis.

To provide a complete picture of the possibilities and constraints of decolonization of practical theology, the above proposed elements should be viewed in light of the persisting challenges. These challenges are stumps in the pathway.

V. Stumps in the Path to the Decolonization of Practical Theology

I take the metaphor of a stump to refer to an obstruction on the path to reaching your destination. These stumps destruct and divert. They are countering threats. The proposals for a decolonized practical theology would be incomplete without highlighting these countering forces or threats. Unfortunately, these countering forces are the 'elephant in the room' for practical theology in the South African academy—that is, the problem or risk that no one wants to discuss. I suggest the following three forces for consideration.

The first is the tension between a focus on black African issues and the threat of compromised academic rigour. Whether perceived or real, there are observable elements of tension that exist between African scholars and the fluid unwritten standards in scholarship as evidenced by publications. Gifford observed that, in an effort to achieve quick publications, some unpolished papers get published by the mushrooming number of publishers. This has resulted in critical issues that require in-depth

and theoretical reflection but which remain neither explored nor academically considered in a systematic manner. Therefore, he hesitatingly stated that this situation has caused a deficiency in African theological reflection.⁴⁸

Gifford's concern was echoed by one black African academic in a casual conversation at a conference. He quipped:

If you try to publish on a subject or anything with foundations in Western thinking your work will hardly get published. The critique will be harsh. Therefore, to overcome this hurdle I publish on African issues only. For instance, white people don't have experience in witchcraft so they can't reject my work.

This statement implies that publishing is controlled and guarded by white people who could use their positions to exclude black people, and hence one should bust the system. The above statement resonates with what Senokoane referred to as 'institutional racism, otherwise known as white ethics',⁴⁹ which positions itself as a standard or norm in the institution and at the same time places itself as the only good while other experiences and knowledge are bad and do not meet the standard. The destructive effect of this situation, perceived or real, is, if not managed, that unpolished research gets published by a weakened review system.

It should be noted that some black academics tackle African contextual

48 P. Gifford, 'Africa's Inculturation Theology: Observations of an Outsider', *Hekima Review* 38 (2008), 31–33.

49 T. Senokoane, 'A White Mist in the Black UNISA', *Scriptura* 114, no. 1 (2015), 1.

issues that have limited prior published research for benchmarking.⁵⁰ This challenge tends to be compounded by weak academic language proficiency. In view of this situation, I suggest strong mentoring and coaching of young developing African scholars by senior black academics and white academics. Surely universities should live up to their status of generating knowledge, new theories and robust scholarship. The practical theologians, regardless of their race, who evade the quality control and research output gatekeepers (publishers, reviewers and editors) seen as stifling certain types of knowledge and who thus become gateways for the production poor practical theology research are deplorable and should be condemned.⁵¹ This stands against the spirit of genuine decolonization and generation of knowledge that can be exported globally.

Second, there is pressure from South Africa's National Research Foundation rating system to focus one's research and yet African challenges are broad and holistic. Is NRF

a colonial hegemonic structure that requires decolonization or is it leading to quality, focused scholarship? The answer seems to lie somewhere in the middle.⁵² Dreyer and Pandey and Pattnaik contended that the entire research ecosystem should be scrutinized, because it consists of human capital (e.g. the researchers), governance capital (e.g. the research policies), physical capital (e.g. the research equipment or facilities), intellectual capital (such as knowledge, information and ideas) and lastly financial capital (e.g. research grants and funding). All these systems could easily reflect colonial residual practices (coloniality) and structures that should be changed.⁵³

Third, there is a trend of targeting international knowledge consumers and downplaying African people's issues. Academics are pressured to publish internationally, which means focusing on global issues, and yet the issues relate to a particular context. The idea that scholars are assessed by the impact of their work suggests that they should situate themselves globally, and yet people based in, say, New York or Berlin will hardly be interested in studies of an African rural community. This means by targeting international audience you may have to ignore local relevance to ensure global relevance. Thus local targeting and international targeting remains a

50 Dreyer, 'Practical Theology', 5 proposes tapping on this practical knowledge of people on the ground that usually does not get published.

51 For examples of fake peer review and poor research being published, see J. Kastrenakes, 'Sham Science: Fake Research Paper Accepted by Over 100 Journals' (2013), <https://www.theverge.com/2013/10/3/4798840/fake-research-paper-exposes-poor-standards-open-access-journals>; C. Seife, 'Science's Big Scandal: Even Legitimate Publishers Are Faking Peer Review', *Slate*, 1 April 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2015/04/fake_peer_review_scientific_journals_publish_fraudulent_plagiarized_or_nonsense.html.

52 See National Research Foundation, 'NRF Rating', <http://www.nrf.ac.za/rating>, for a discussion of its purposes and process.

53 Dreyer, 'Practical Theology', 5; S. C. Pandey and P. N. Pattnaik, 'University Research Ecosystem: A Conceptual Understanding', *Review of Economic and Business Studies* 8, no. 1 (2015): 172, <https://doi.org/10.1515/rebs-2016-0021>.

tension for decolonization of scholarship.

VI. Conclusion

This article has discussed practical theology within South Africa's discussion of the decolonization of university curricula. It highlighted the need for practical theology and pastoral care to increasingly assume a public role. In South Africa, this public role entails developing a theology that genuinely engages with contemporary issues. To that end, reconstruction theology provides a useful nexus. However, for practical theology to effectively perform a reconstructive role, it should be practical and relevant to its context. Relevance, among other things, entails shaking off colonial shackles; that is, it requires decolonization.

As discussions of decolonizing universities brew in South Africa,

practical theology is equally faced with the same challenge. Far from being a simplistic project, decolonization requires serious discipline, introspection, academic reflection that is reflexive, and academics who are conscious of their positionality within the remnants of the colonial power matrix. This process is a journey, an ongoing experimentation with new ways of generating knowledge. Importantly, however, decolonization entails an intentional process of doing theology on a plane with three interlocking interfaces: theology and its traditions, Western historical paradigms through which theology has been done thus far, and African wisdom and knowledge. From this perspective, practical theology becomes an open process of learning, unlearning and re-learning in the space of practical life where people yearn for disentanglement from colonial hangover.

Resistance to Japanese Nationalism: Christian Responses to Proposed Constitutional Amendments in Japan

Surya Harefa

Although constitutional amendments are not uncommon in democratic countries, the present Constitution of Japan (*Nihonkoku Kenpō*) has never been amended since it took effect in 1947.¹ Amendments have been proposed, but they have never gained the consensus required for passage.

Since its establishment in 1955, the current ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), has propounded the view that the present constitution does not reflect Japanese values, because it was drafted by Americans and imposed on Japan by the Allied occupation government of 1945–1952. They also insist that revisions are necessary to address new challenges facing Japan, especially with regard to the right of having a self-defence force.

However, several other parties

and societal groups see a threat of fascist nationalism behind some of the amendment efforts and have thus strongly opposed them. Notable evangelical Christians have been among these opponents, even though Japanese Christians are frequently described as tending to withdraw from political engagement.²

In this paper, after explaining the LDP's efforts to amend the present constitution, I describe and evaluate the responses of evangelical Christians. I focus specifically on responses to draft amendments that the LDP

¹ For example, since the end of the Second World War, the United States has ratified amendments in 1951, 1961, 1964, 1967, 1971 and 1992; France has amended its constitution twenty-four times.

² M. William Steele, 'Christianity and Politics in Japan', in *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, ed. Mark R. Mullins (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 360–61, 364; Shinohara Motoaki, 'The Church as God's Missionary Community: Towards an Evangelical Missional Ecclesiology with Implications for the Japanese Church' (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2012), 176–77, 249–51; Furuya Yasuo, 'Naze Nihon ni Kirisutokyo Wa Hiromaranainoka' (Why Does Christianity Not Prosper in Japan?), *Nihon No Shingaku* (Japan's Theology) 53 (2014): 167–71.

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released in 2012. My analysis encompasses several prominent figures who have disseminated their work through the major evangelical publisher Inochi no Kotobasha.³ I conclude by arguing that the ecclesiology of Abraham Kuyper provides useful direction for Christians in Japan as they pursue continue their engagement with this and other issues related to nationalism.

I. Movements to Amend the Japanese Constitution

In December 2018, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō⁴ declared his determination to see the Japanese constitution amended by 2020. He argued that revising the present constitution would restore Japan to its glory days. This declaration by Abe was not new, as he had made similar statements on several previous occasions. During his 2012 campaign, for example, Abe used the slogan ‘Taking Back Japan’ (Nippon wo Torimodosu) and promoted constitutional revision as an important plank in the LDP platform.

To the LDP, the present constitution is a foreign imposition. After its surrender in 1945, Japan was occupied by the Allied occupation government until 1952. After rejecting a draft constitution written by a Japanese committee of constitutional scholars led

by Matsumoto Jōji in February 1946, General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan, presented an alternative draft within less than a week. This draft, prepared by two Americans, was implemented with only minor revisions.

Matsumoto’s draft sought to maintain the prescriptions of the 1889 Constitution of the Empire of Great Japan (*Dai-Nippon Teikoku Kenpō*),⁵ which identified the emperor as sovereign and the Japanese people as his subjects. In contrast, MacArthur’s draft established the Japanese people as the sovereign and the emperor only as a symbol of the nation. Thus, from the perspective of supporters of the 1889 Constitution, the American draft and the new constitution were ‘new and bad’ and not based on the ‘old and good’ Japanese values. Moreover, the SCAP’s Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD), which exerted pre-publication censorship over about seventy daily newspapers, all books and magazines, and many other publications, reinforced the sense of coercion.

When Japan regained its sovereignty in 1952, this narrative of coercion soon surfaced. Ever since its formation in 1955, the LDP has always included revising the constitution on its political agenda. For the LDP, amending the present constitution ‘will unshackle the country from the system established during the oc-

3 Since there are numerous evangelical denominations in Japan, selecting thinkers published by Inochi no Kotobasha ensures that the people examined have attained fairly broad recognition in Japanese evangelical circles.

4 I use the Japanese style of writing one’s first name following the family name. However, for English literature written by Japanese, I use the Western style.

5 This document was also known as the Meiji Constitution (*Meiji Kenpō*) or the Old Constitution (*Kyū Kenpō*). Its contents are available at www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/etc/j02.html (Japanese version) or www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c02.html (English version).

cupation and make a truly sovereign state'.⁶

In recent years, the LDP has taken several significant steps towards realizing its amendment agenda. Following the release, in 2005, of a first draft of proposed amendments, in 2007, the party succeeded in gaining approval of an act stipulating procedures to amend the constitution (*Nihonkoku Kenpō no Kaisei Tetsuzuki ni kansuru Hōritsu*) from both houses of the Japanese Diet. The act was legally necessary because hitherto there had been no practical law that indicated how the constitution should be amended. Although the LDP lost to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in the 2009 general election, it did not give up this effort; on the contrary, it released a Draft for the Amendment of the Constitution of Japan (*Nihonkoku Kenpō Kaisei Sōan*) on 27 April 2012.

Boasting that its amendment committee had reviewed and revised all articles of the present constitution, this conservative political party claimed that it was presenting 'a draft of a revised constitution appropriate to the times and circumstances of Japan'.⁷ The proposed revisions were substantial. Along with suggested changes in the preamble, the LDP offered eleven new chapters and 110 articles to replace the ten chapters and 103 articles of the present constitution. It prescribed new provisions governing such matters as the national flag and anthem, the right of self-defence, emergency declarations and

making it easier to amend the constitution. The draft also inserted clauses regarding the emperor as the head of state and the familial responsibility for ensuring a healthy economic situation.⁸

These proposed amendments were released a little more than a year after the great triple disaster (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear reactor accident) that Japan sustained in March 2011. During the intervening year, all of Japan had been preoccupied with relief and recovery activities. In view of this fact, the LDP's ongoing work on amendments shows its firm resolve to change the constitution.

In December 2012, the LDP regained a majority in the House of Representatives and became the ruling party again. Following this success, the party also won a majority of seats in the House of Councillors in July 2013. These electoral results have given the LDP a greater probability of winning approval from the Diet for its proposals, thus increasing the likelihood of constitutional amendments.

II. Responses by Japanese Christians

There was no significant response from Christians when the LDP published its 2012 draft amendments. Not only was the country heavily focused on recovering from the great disaster, but also, the LDP was not the ruling party at that time.

In contrast, a sense of crisis emerged as the 2012 general election approached. On one hand, many Japanese realized that the DPJ could not manage the government better than

6 'LDP Announces a New Draft Constitution for Japan', Jimintō (Liberal Democratic Party), 7 May 2012, www.jimin.jp/english/news/117099.html.

7 'LDP Announces a New Draft.'

8 'LDP Announces a New Draft.'

the LDP. On the other hand, they saw that Abe, who had suddenly resigned as Prime Minister in September 2007, seemed to have been reborn as a promising leader since winning the post of LDP president in September 2012.

In this context, some Christians started to raise concerns about the presence of nationalist tendencies in the LDP under Abe's leadership.⁹ For example, the chairperson of the Japan Baptist Convention (Nihon Baputesu-to Renmei) sent a special message reminding Christians to exercise their voting rights and to pray earnestly, as called for in 1 Timothy 2:1, because a movement to change Japan fundamentally was afoot. Three days before the election, the JBC held a voluntary 'Emergency Prayer Meeting Due to Concerns about the Circumstances of Constitutional Amendments' (Kai-ken Jōsei wo Ureu Kinkyū Kitōkai) in Tokyo. After the New Year, the federation held a similar event in the Kyūshū region.

Several events held by Christians or Christian organizations during 2013 further raised the awareness of an impending crisis. The *Christian Yearbook* (*Kirisuto-kyō Nenkan*) reported four events related to this issue.¹⁰

⁹ Neda Shōichi, 'Maegaki' (Foreword), in Asaoka Masaru et al., *Kurisuchan Toshite "Kenpō" wo Kangaeru* (Thinking about the Constitution as Christian), *Kurisuchan Shinbun* (Christian Newspaper) (Tokyo: Inochi no Kotobasha, 2013), 3.

¹⁰ On 27 May 2013, a seminar called 'What Should Christians Do Regarding the Amendments?' at Keisen Baptist Church in Tokyo, held by the JBC, was attended by 60 persons. On 29 May 2013, 50 religious figures from Christian, Buddhist, and Shinto backgrounds released a joint statement on opposing the

The *Christian Newspaper* (*Kurisuchan Shinbun*) also began to highlight the constitutional amendment issue with a series of twenty-five articles, from 14 April to 13 October 2013.¹¹ The Social Committee of the Japan Evangelical Alliance (Nihon Fukuin Dōmei) hosted an emergency prayer meeting. The Christian Student Fellowship (Kirisuto-sha Gakusei-kai) held a prayer meeting titled 'Confessing Hope'. And in August 2013, the Church and State Committee of Japan Alliance Christ Church held a special prayer meeting at Nakano Church, Tokyo with fifty people participating.

Japanese Christians' main concerns were to preserve Article 9, known as Japan's pacifist article, and provisions related to the freedom of religion. Article 9 describes Japan as a peaceful country without any right to wage war, as follows (emphasis added to show differences):

amendment of Articles 96 (on the rules for amending the constitution) and 9. On 23 June 2013, the Wind of Fraternity Peace (Yūai heiwa no kaze) and Aoyama Gakuin University Research Institute co-hosted a dialogue meeting on the form of the nation, attended by 90 persons including both of revisionists and advocates of the present constitution. Finally, the *Christian Newspaper* and the *Christ Newspaper* (*Kirisuto Shinbun*) held an emergency symposium titled 'Where Will This Country Go?' at Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo. About 150 participants attended this symposium. Since the number in attendance was greater than the meeting room's capacity, it appears that the response to the symposium exceeded the host's expectations. See *Kirisutokyō Nenkan Hensyūbu*, ed., *Kirisutokyō Nenkan 2014* (Christian Yearbook 2014) (Tokyo: Kirisuto Shinbun-sha, 2014), 10–16.

¹¹ Neda, 'Maegaki', 4–5.

Current constitution:

1. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people *forever* renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.
2. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, *will never be* maintained. The right of belligerency of the state *will not be* recognized.

Draft amendment:

1. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and will not employ the threat and use of force as a means of settling international disputes.
2. The provisions of the preceding paragraph *shall not prevent* the exercise of the right to self-defence.

Under the present constitution, if a dispute occurs, Japan must seek to resolve it by means other than military action. The second clause reinforces this pacifist commitment by rejecting the nation's right to maintain military forces. However, the draft amendment omits 'forever' in the first clause and weakens that clause's meaning by introducing a new sentence concerning the right of self-defence. It also removes the statement abolishing all national forces.

Christians have also paid close at-

tention to the effort to revise Article 20, although the mass media pay less attention to this issue than to Article 9. Following are the current text and the proposed revision (emphasis added to show differences):

Current constitution:

1. Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, *nor exercise any political authority.*
2. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice.
3. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.

Draft amendment:

1. Freedom of religion is guaranteed. The State shall not grant privileges to any religious organization.
2. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice.
3. The State, local governments and other public entities shall refrain from particular religious education and other religious activities. *However, this provision shall not apply to activities that do not exceed the scope of social rituals or customary practices.*

The draft amendment omits the words 'to all' in the first clause. It also weakens the prohibition regarding religious organization by omitting 'nor exercise any political authority' in the first clause, and it weakens the

third clause by excluding religious activities that can be classified as 'social rituals or customary practices'. Based on this wording, it is plausible that the government could treat worship at shrines as merely social rituals instead of religious acts.

Long before the release of the 2012 draft amendments, several Japanese Christians had been involved in initiating movements to preserve Article 9 and protest against alleged violations of this article, as well as to protect freedom of religion and separation between religion and state.¹² For example, they participated in filing a lawsuit when the government used public funds to pay a contribution for rituals at a Shinto shrine and when the prime minister worshipped at a shrine, not as a private individual but in his function as prime minister.

We will now consider how several evangelical figures have engaged with the issue of constitutional amendments and how they have attempted to encourage other Christians to overcome their tendency to withdraw from political involvement.

1. Watanabe Nobuo

Watanabe Nobuo (b. 1923) is a pastor at the Tokyo Confession Church of the Japan Christ Church denomination, which is Presbyterian in orientation. He holds a doctorate in the ecclesiology of John Calvin from Kyoto University. Watanabe has been involved in the movement to defend Article 9 since the 1950s. In his seminars, he

has called on Christians to fight to preserve Article 9.

Watanabe articulates an essential principle for Japanese Christians engaging in the public square. He believes that Article 9 is consistent with biblical principles. However, he emphasizes that his public advocacy is not based on the idea that this article was in accordance with the teachings of the Bible.¹³ Rather, the struggle is justified because this article is true, not only for Christians who believe in the Bible but also for non-Christians. He suggests focusing on the fact that if countries do not give up their right to establish military forces and to wage war, humanity will eventually destroy itself.¹⁴

Watanabe has criticized political leaders as lacking ideologies and beliefs that would equip them to resist war. In Watanabe's view, those leaders also failed to understand the principle of the separation of religion and state. He points out that religion is often used to justify war. For him, behind the attempt to revise Article 20 lies a desire among members of the present government to utilize religion

¹² See Tanaka Nobumasa, *Kenpō kyūjō no sengoshi* (Postwar History of Article 9) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 118–19, 149. Examples of Christians involved in this way include Ishitani Susumu and Ono Michio.

¹³ Watanabe Nobuo, 'Kenpō Kyū-jō no Seishin-teki Shichū' (Mental Support of Article 9), 31 October 2005, <http://tokyokoku-hakuchurch.world.coocan.jp/kouen/ken-npoukyuuounoseishinntekisityuu.html>.

¹⁴ It is interesting that although most Calvinists support just wars, Watanabe supports pacifism. Drawing on his deeply impactful war experience as an officer in the Japanese imperial navy, he states that Christians should resist war absolutely. Christians must be willing to endure injustice rather than fight with violence. For him, this does not mean a passive attitude because Christians must also work actively to create peace. Overall, it seems that pacifism has unusually strong support among Japanese Christians.

to make mobilization for war easier.

A firm believer in the separation of church and state, Watanabe affirms that the church must not intervene in matters under the jurisdiction of the state. However, the church may ask the state to repent, especially in an emergency situation like this one, where the state is violating the religious sphere for the sake of a political agenda. He also contends that the failure of Japanese churches to resist the government during the imperialist and fascist periods was closely related to their vague understanding of faith.¹⁵ Therefore, he suggests that Christians clarify their understanding so as to have the confidence to stand up for what they believe in their heart.¹⁶

Watanabe states that Christians must understand and identify the real beneficiaries of war. Any war is always detrimental to both the attacker and the attacked, but the arms industry profits. Behind the LDP effort to revise Article 9, he sees people who are trying to take advantage of the opportunity to manufacture and sell high-technology military weapons. Although many believe that those seeking to remove Article 9 are right-wing politicians, Watanabe believes that representatives of the weapons industry (*heiki sangyō*) are using the power of the political right for their

own purposes.¹⁷ Building nuclear and other high-tech weapons, Watanabe argues, endangers not only Japan's enemies but also Japan as the maker and the user of the weapons themselves. Article 9 shows the path towards growth for a country that has begun to be destroyed by this military modernization. For these reasons, he calls on Christians to defend Article 9.

The strong point in Watanabe's argument is his personal experience of war, which caused him to study the ecclesiology of John Calvin. Since most of today's Japanese Christians have no war experience, Watanabe can influence them with his real-life stories about the horror of war. This feature makes his arguments persuasive as well as solidly grounded in Christian thought.

Through his explanations of the right of resistance, Watanabe has contributed significantly to evangelical Christian engagement with the threat of Japanese nationalism. He has also been a source of inspiration for Asaoka Masaru (b. 1968), another Japanese Christian who has engaged actively with this issue.¹⁸ However,

¹⁵ Watanabe Nobuo, 'Daiichi no Haisen to Daini no Haisen: 3.11 kara Miete kita Mono' (The First War-Defeat and the Second War-Defeat: Things That Are Seen from 3/11), in *Higashinohon Daishinsai kara Towareru Nihon no Kyōkai* (Questioning the Japanese Church after the Great East Japan Disaster), ed. Shinshū Kaki Senkyō Kōza (Tokyo: Inochi no Kotobasha, 2013), 30, 33.

¹⁶ Watanabe, 'Daiichi no Haisen', 17.

¹⁷ Watanabe Nobuo, 'Sensō Seikan-sha no Heiwa Kenpō Yōgo-ron' (Advocacy of Peace Constitution by a War Survivor), 12 August 2004, <http://tokyokokuhakuchurch.world.coocan.jp/kouen/kouen29.html>.

¹⁸ Asaoka is a pastor of Japan Alliance Christ Church (Nihon Dōmei Kirisuto Kyōdan) in Tokumaru district, Tokyo. He responded to the situation in a unique way. He considers this political development as a 'situation of confessing faith' similar to what German Christians experienced in 1933. On 18 December 2012, he launched a Facebook group called 'We Believe and Confess' as a forum to share information and arguments among Christians who have a similar view of the crisis.

with regard to the proposed amendments, Watanabe's focus has been limited to Articles 9 and 20. The next figure we will examine has attempted to address other articles as well.

2. Nishikawa Shigenori

Nishikawa (b. 1927) is a Christian journalist active in both church ministry and political issues, such as Abe's controversial visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. He served for a long time as an elder at Tokyo Church, in the Reformed Church in Japan, and received the title of 'Honorary Elder'.

Nishikawa adopted a unique approach to the constitutional situation, attending and listening to all the meetings of the National Diet's Constitution Investigation Committee (*Kenpō chōsa-kai*), which lasted for five years from January 2000 to April 2005.¹⁹

Although he is not a law expert, he has held a series of lectures on the constitution and has published a book that explains the meaning of each of its articles.²⁰ He indicates several problems in contemporary Japanese politicians' approach to the amendment issue. Although his engagement is broader, like Watanabe he emphasizes the importance of Articles 9 and 20.

Nishikawa refutes the LDP's narrative regarding the importance of revising the current constitution. For

him, the current constitution is not an imposed constitution. Before its promulgation and coming into effect, the constitution went through several democratic processes such as the elections of House of Representatives and House of Councilors members, which enabled the Japanese people to express their will.²¹ Nishikawa also shows that the content of the current constitution was not necessarily unknown to the Japanese people. In 1880, long before the Allied Occupation period, a group of Japanese civil-rights activists led by Chiba Takusaburō in Itsukaichi, Tokyo had proposed a draft constitution similar in some ways to the constitution proposed by the occupation government.²² Considering these historical facts, Nishikawa urges Christians to study history and recognize how the Japanese government during its Great Japan Imperial period (1864–1945) denied freedom of religion by supporting the emperor system and state Shintoism. The government oppressed Christianity and Buddhism and compelled worship at Shinto shrines, particularly the Yasukuni Shrine.²³ It also infringed on the freedoms of assembly and association, as well as freedom of the press, by glorifying war.

As Nishikawa explains, although

¹⁹ Nishikawa Shigenori, *Watashitachi no Kenpō: Zenbun kara Dai 103-jō made* (Our Constitution: Preamble to Article 103) (Tokyo: Inochi no Kotobasha, 2005), 3.

²⁰ This work was published in 2005 and deals with the draft amendments of 2005, but the arguments are valid for evaluating the draft of 2012 as well.

²¹ Nishikawa, *Watashitachi no Kenpō*, 112–13. General elections for the House of Representatives were held on 10 April 1946 (seven months before the promulgation of the constitution) and 25 April 1947 (one month before the constitution coming into effect); the election for the House of Councillors was held on 20 April 1947.

²² Nishikawa, *Watashitachi no Kenpō*, 50–51.

²³ Nishikawa, *Watashitachi no Kenpō*, 29.

the Meiji Constitution of 1868 guaranteed freedom of religion and expression, the Japanese violated this principle 'for the sake of the emperor and the country'.²⁴ In his view, studying history, and in particular what the Japanese imperial army did to Asian countries, will help Japanese Christians to understand the dangers posed by and the false claims of the Japanese government. This awareness of history will also increase Japanese Christians' involvement in political issues.²⁵

Nishikawa's dedication in attending all the meetings of the National Diet's Constitution Investigation Committee is unique. On one hand, it enables him to offer a lively report on attempts to amend the constitution in the National Diet. It also strengthens his arguments. On the other hand, it is difficult for other Christians to continue his approach.

3. Sasakawa Norikatsu

Sasakawa Norikatsu (b. 1940) is a former law professor at Meiji University. In 2015, Sasakawa published an academic article based on a seminar he delivered on 15 October 2013 for the Nationwide Pastors' Meeting of Japan Christ Church in the Ōmori Church (the same Presbyterian denomination as that of Watanabe Nobuo). Like Watanabe and Nishikawa, Sasakawa also opposes the revision of Article 9.²⁶

As a law professor, however, he goes further, criticizing the 2012 draft amendments as a destruction of the constitutional system. As the ruling party, he observes, the LDP is part of the government. Therefore, the LDP politicians bear a duty to respect and defend the existing constitution, which guarantees individual rights and limits the power of the government. However, the LDP is trying to revise precisely the constitutional sections that limit the government.

Sasakawa also highlights a problem in how the LDP draft addresses the emperor system. The draft amendments do not return to the imperial system as in the Meiji era, which made the emperor the ruler in all fields. Unlike the Meiji Constitution of 1868, the LDP draft restricts the emperor from having a role in the political arena. However, this restriction is not consistently observed. The draft gives the emperor the status of head of state and affirms his involvement in government organizations (*tōchi soshiki*). Here also, there is no specific limitation on the expansion of the emperor's role.²⁷ Rather, these provisions give an opening for the government to exert its power more freely.²⁸

The LDP differs from the 1947 constitution with regard to its understanding of the terms of popular sovereignty. The first sentence of the current preamble clearly denies any power and authority outside the constitutional system:

We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected repre-

24 Nishikawa, *Watashitachi no Kenpō*, 30.

25 Nishikawa, *Watashitachi no Kenpō*, 29.

26 Sasakawa Norikatsu, 'Jimintō "Kenpō Kaisei Sōan" no Bunseki: Omoni Ten'nōsei ni Sokushite' (Analysis of LDP's Amendment Draft: Focusing Mainly on the Emperor System), *Hōritsu Ronsō* (Law Journal) 87, no. 6

(March 2015): 57.

27 Sasakawa, 'Jimintō Kenpō Kaisei', 88.

28 Sasakawa, 'Jimintō Kenpō Kaisei', 58, 88.

sentatives in the National Diet, determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government, do proclaim that sovereign power resides with the people and do firmly establish this Constitution.

The proposed new preamble replaces those sentiments with the following:

Japan is a nation with a long history and unique culture, receiving the Emperor as the symbol of the unity of the people, governed based on the separation of the legislative, administrative and judicial powers subject to the sovereignty of the people.

The amendment text, rather than recognizing the Japanese people as sovereign, declares that the nation 'receiv[es] the Emperor' (*Ten'nō wo itadaku*) *regardless of any consent by the people*.²⁹ In this way, the LDP draft undermines the conception that the state belongs to the people.³⁰

Sasakawa also criticizes the tendency of the draft amendments to limit freedom of thought and conscience in its statements on the national flag and anthem, its establishment of an imperial calendar system based on the year of the emperor's reign, and its positing of concerns for 'public benefits and public order' as limits on freedom. He adds that the draft undermines the principle of separation

of state and religion, thus paving the way for the prime minister, cabinet members, and parliament members to perform public worship at Yasukuni temples and Gokoku shrines.³¹

Sasakawa warns that the 2012 draft amendments, if enacted, may severely affect Christians in Japan. Although no articles limit the church's functioning directly, history suggests that the emperor system, with its public worship rituals at the Yasukuni and Gokoku shrines, would have negative consequences. It would reinforce a tendency to consider faith as an internal matter only.³² It would also result in many collisions between government policy and the beliefs of Christians, who regard worshipping at shrines as idolatry.³³

As a law professor, Sasakawa has dedicated his expertise to the issues raised by proposed constitutional revisions. He has dealt bravely and candidly with the sensitive problems of the emperor system and clearly revealed the undertone of nationalism that pervades the amendments. However, like Watanabe and Nishikawa, he has not offered a solution to this deadlock. The fourth and final figure whom we will examine has tried to suggest some solutions.

4. Inagaki Hisakazu

Inagaki Hisakazu (b. 1947) is a member of Japan's Christian Reformed Church and a professor of Christian philosophy at Tokyo Christian University, the country's most prominent evangelical institute of theological

29 Sasakawa, 'Jimintō Kenpō Kaisei', 76.

30 Sasakawa, 'Jimintō Kenpō Kaisei', 95.

31 Sasakawa, 'Jimintō Kenpō Kaisei', 89.

32 Sasakawa, 'Jimintō Kenpō Kaisei', 90.

33 Sasakawa, 'Jimintō Kenpō Kaisei', 91.

education. Similar to Nishikawa and Sasakawa, he views the amendment movement as an attempt to make public worship at the Yasukuni shrine constitutional and to allow the government to oppress those who have different opinions or positions by using the justification of 'public interest and public order'. By reviving the emperor system, he believes, the government is trying to foster nationalism and thus make it easier to mobilize the Japanese people.³⁴

Inagaki goes further than the figures discussed above in his approach. He addresses the indifference of evangelical Christians toward the amendment issue as well as other interconnected matters of nationalism. For him, the reason for this indifference is the lack of a properly conceived, robust Christian worldview, without which Christians do not have a proper interest in social engagement and are not equipped to fight on a complicated terrain such as the question of constitutional amendments. This theme requires an understanding of history, ideology, politics, economy, society and religion.³⁵ Since a particular worldview undergirds any constitution as well as the amendment thereof, with a concept of a Christian worldview one can not only fight at the superficial level but can also go deeper to investigate implicit com-

peting worldviews and evaluate the appropriateness of proposed amendments based on that investigation.

Inagaki seeks not only to preserve the existing constitution but also to apply its provisions thoughtfully.³⁶ He does not settle for indicating the danger of the term 'public interest and public order' in the 2012 LDP draft but also contrasts it with the concept of 'public welfare' in the current Articles 12 and 13 (which prescribe responsibility in using guaranteed freedom) and Article 29 (which authorizes property rights). Here are the relevant passages (emphasis added):

Article 12. The freedoms and rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be maintained by the constant endeavor of the people, who shall refrain from any abuse of these freedoms and rights and shall always be responsible for utilizing them for the *public welfare*.

Draft amendment:

The freedoms and rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be maintained by the constant endeavor of the people. The people shall refrain from any abuse of these freedoms and rights, shall be aware of the fact that there are responsibilities and duties that accompany these freedoms and rights, and shall not infringe the *public interest and public order*.

Article 13. All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with

³⁴ Inagaki Hisakazu, *Kaiken Mondai to Kirisutokyō* (The Problem of Constitutional Amendment and Christianity) (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 2014), 51.

³⁵ Inagaki, *Kaiken Mondai*, 8. See also Inagaki Hisakazu, 'Kirisutokyō Sekaikan kara no Nihon Shingaku no Saihensei' (Reorganization of Theology from a Christian Worldview), *Kirisuto to Sekai* (Christ and the World) 24 (March 2014): 140–44.

³⁶ Inagaki, *Kaiken Mondai*, 9, 29–30, 32.

the *public welfare*, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.

Draft amendment:

All of the people shall be respected as persons. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the *public interest and public order*, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.

Article 29. (2) Property rights shall be defined by law, in conformity with the *public welfare*.

Draft amendment:

Property rights shall be defined by law, in conformity with the *public interest and public order*. In this case, with regard to intellectual property rights, consideration shall be given for contributing to the improvement of the intellectual creativity of the people.

The draft proposes to change the terms 'public welfare' (*kōkyō no fukushi*) in the above three articles to 'public interest and public order' (*kōeki oyobi kō no chitsujo*). Inagaki warns that the term 'public' (*kō*) in the draft amendment appears to denote the government, whereas the meaning of 'public' (*kōkyō*) in the current constitution is broader, including the whole society.³⁷ Hence, under the proposed amendment, it is the government, not the society, that has the right to define public interest and public order. This understanding of 'public' could lead to an authoritarian government, as happened in the Great Japan Imperial period. Rather than going back to that

situation, Inagaki proposes to make positive use of the concept of public welfare, which is repeated several times in the current constitution. He calls this direction the new publicness (*kōkyōsei*) or citizen's publicness (*shimin no kōkyō*).

After criticizing the weakness of Japanese churches in engaging with this concept of public welfare, Inagaki encourages them to draw on their considerable capacity to lead and to become role models for the wider Japanese society in carrying out public welfare.³⁸ He encourages Christians to cooperate with non-Christians towards this end, drawing on the doctrines of common grace, sphere sovereignty, and the church as an organism as articulated by the Dutch theologian and political leader Abraham Kuyper.

Inagaki believes that creating a civil society in this way can help Japanese people to solve many socio-political problems, including the problem of nationalism.³⁹ His suggestion has attracted support from several scholars in the social welfare arena and several labour unions. This is a very interesting movement because most of the people showing interest in Inagaki's thinking are not Christians.

With this Kuyperian approach, Inagaki attempts to broaden the political engagement of Japanese evangelical Christians. He encourages them not just to protest against threatening

37 Inagaki, *Kaiken Mondai*, 30.

38 Inagaki, *Kaiken Mondai*, 45–47. Inagaki elaborates that the insertion of 'family responsibility' in the 2012 draft was intended to shift the responsibility for welfare from the state to the family. He also emphasizes the importance of freedom of association for creating citizen awareness (pp. 30, 32, 44).

39 Inagaki, *Kaiken Mondai*, 33–34.

actions by the government, but also to be a showcase for the government with regard to creating a better society based on the public welfare concept. Although he calls his own approach public philosophy, Christians in Western contexts may classify it within the realm of public theology or political theology.

III. Evaluation of Japanese Responses

As we have seen, behind the amendment movement there is a nationalistic agenda. The proposed draft amendments of 2012 display similarities to the condition of Japan during its Great Imperial era, when the nation made rapid progress in the technological and military realms. In that time period, Japan could motivate citizens to die for their country and was thus able to achieve major victories in conflicts with other Asian countries and Russia.

However, the current constitution prohibits Japan from having a military force. It also prescribes the principle of freedom of religion as well as separation between religion and the state. These principles make it more difficult for the government to mobilize people by using religious narratives, as it did during its imperialistic period. Therefore, the politically conservative camp is attempting to revise the constitution partly to return Japan to its glory days.

The responses of Japanese evangelical Christians to this return to militaristic nationalism are admirable. Despite their small numbers⁴⁰ and

their usual inclination to withdraw from political engagement, Christians have generated various movements and arguments in response to the amendment issue. The four figures discussed in this paper have applied their differing talents—as pastor, journalist, law professor and philosophy professor—to engage actively with this issue and raise the awareness of many evangelical Christians regarding the potential danger of the nationalism present in the efforts to amend the constitution.

Since the question of what to do with the proposed amendments has remained deadlocked, Inagaki's approach deserves special attention. As we have seen, the LDP has envisioned amending the constitution since 1955. On one hand, the right-wing conservatives firmly hold to their position as revisionists (*kaiken-ha*); on the other hand, their opponents remain guardians (*goken-ha*) of the existing constitution. As Japanese evangelical Christians continue their protests against the amendment movement, they undoubtedly strengthen the guardian camp. However, it is also clear that mere opposition would not produce a way out of the deadlock.

From this point of view, Inagaki's desire to utilize the current constitution (*katsuken*) in a positive way, to help in building Japanese civil society, hints at a third-way solution. At least for the guardian camp, this idea provides another way of engagement besides merely protesting against the revisionist camp. If one considers

⁴⁰ Kirisutokyō Nenkan Hensyūbu, ed., *Kirisutokyō Nenkan 2016* (Christian Year-

book 2016) (Tokyo: Kirisuto Shinbun-sha, 2015), 7. Whereas the whole population in Japan is 126,163,576, the number of Protestants in Japan is given as 416,672, or about 0.33 percent of the total.

protest as a negative action, then developing a civil society based on the concept of public welfare can be seen as a positive action. In fact, as noted above, Inagaki's ideas have won support from the social-welfare and labour communities. If this movement could actually yield visible positive results in Japanese society, it is not inconceivable that the revisionist camp would reconsider its currently articulated intention to change the term 'public welfare' to 'public interest and public order'.

If we compare the attendance at events related to the constitutional amendments with other Christian events, one can see that the passion for this issue among Japanese evangelical Christians remains quite modest.⁴¹ Clearly, a large portion of the evangelical community has not yet become interested in the topic. As Nishikawa has pointed out, this lack of interest may relate to the limited history education that Japanese students receive. The Japanese government does not provide history textbooks that explain honestly what the imperial army did to other Asian countries during the era of the Great Japan Empire. This lack of proper historical

understanding is exacerbated by the lack of Christian worldview thinking as noted by Inagaki. Hence, equipping Japanese evangelical Christians to develop effective forms of Christian engagement is necessary.

For that purpose, implementing the ecclesiological suggestions of Kuyper may contribute significantly. As we have seen, Inagaki proposes the concepts of the Christian worldview, common grace, sphere sovereignty and the church as an organism. All these Kuyperian concepts are interrelated and rooted in his ecclesiology.⁴² Kuyper distinguishes the church into two interrelated aspects, organism and institution.⁴³ Whereas the former refers to the mystical body of Christ that unites all believers from all over the world and all periods of time, the latter denotes a human organization for implementing the preaching of God's Word and administering the sacraments. The institution nurtures believers so that they can bring light out to those outside the institution. These gathering and sending functions should exist together and continuously.⁴⁴ Kuyper's ecclesiological

⁴¹ Cf. Kirisutokyō Nenkan Hensyūbu, *Kirisutokyō Nenkan 2014*, 14–15. For example, there were 280 participants at the commemoration seminar of 450 years of the Heidelberg Catechism on 30 September 2013 and 150 persons at the church hall dedication ceremony of Fujimi Church in Tokyo on 27 October 2013. The contrast is even greater if we compare to the Christmas dinner held by the International VIP Club at Hotel New Otani Tokyo on 26 November 2013, with 300 participants, or the ceremony for the hundredth anniversary of Sophia University on 1 November 2013, which had 4,200 people in attendance.

⁴² John H. Wood, Jr., *Going Dutch in the Modern Age: Abraham Kuyper's Struggle for a Free Church in the Netherlands* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 174; James D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 172.

⁴³ Abraham Kuyper, 'Rooted and Grounded' (1870), in *On the Church*, ed. John H. Wood, Jr. and Andrew M. McGinnis, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman et al. (Bellingham: Lexham, 2016), 54–57; Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (1931; rpt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 59–62.

⁴⁴ Ad de Bruijne, "'Colony of Heaven': Abraham Kuyper's Ecclesiology in the Twenty-First Century", *Journal for Markets and Moral-*

understanding could guide evangelical Christians to overcome their tendency to withdraw from political engagement without becoming like the liberal camp, which, from an evangelical perspective, has actively engaged with socio-political issues but at the cost of neglecting matters of faith.

Kuyper also emphasizes the im-

ity 17, no. 2 (2014): 464–65; Ad de Bruijne, 'Not without the Church as Institute: The Relevance of Abraham Kuyper's Ecclesiology for Christian Public and Theological Responsibilities in the Twenty-First Century', in *The Kuyper Center Review*, vol. 5: *Church and Academy*, ed. Gordon Graham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 77–78; Michael R. Wagenman, 'Abraham Kuyper and the Church: From Calvin to the Neo-Calvinists', in *On Kuyper: A Collection of Readings on the Life, Work and Legacy of Abraham Kuyper*, ed. Steve Bishop and John H. Kok (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt College Press, 2013), 137.

portance of the church remaining free from the state. With the slogan of 'a free church in a free state', he suggests that the institutional church must avoid both intervening in and being influenced by the state. Kuyper believes that the best way for both the church and the state to prosper is to let both detach from and respect each other. This principle might help evangelical churches to keep themselves from the pitfall they experienced during the imperialist period, when they let themselves be unduly influenced by the Japanese state. Moreover, it might be a guide to help other religious organizations in Japan, including Shinto shrines, to pursue their existence as distinct from the state. Hopefully, Kuyper's understanding could even encourage the Japanese state not to abuse any religion but to remain separate from and respect every religion, including Shintoism.

Influence of the Bible on Care for Creation: Insight from the Indian Context

Samuel Richmond Saxena

The Bible's incredible impact in the fields of health, education, politics, art, science, technology and other areas of human endeavour is well known globally. Christian institutions in India are the result of the same source of inspiration, and their graduates have contributed immensely to the making of modern India. Caring for creation, as an important part of social responsibility, is one of those contributions.

Environmental concern in India had its nineteenth-century roots in the Commons Preservation Society, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Garden City Movement, and Forestry Commission, among other groups that sought to resist industrialization, deforestation, and urbanization. Even though some accuse the Judeo-Christian tradition of encouraging neglect of the environment, in actuality Scripture has strongly influenced authors, writers, scientists and theologians to speak and act on behalf of care for creation.

This paper will highlight (1) the accusation that Christianity promotes ecological crises; (2) the role of Indian Christians who took nation-

alism seriously and the missionaries who helped in nation building; (3) the contribution of missionaries and other Christians in sowing the seeds of ecological consciousness; (4) how the 'new humanity' in Christ teaches us to use, maintain and preserve the environment collectively.

I. Religious Indictments of Both West and East

Many intellectuals, including some Christians, have a gross misconception that the present environmental crisis is supported by biblical texts. Scholars such as Roderick Nash, Rudolf C. Heredia, Lynn White and Max Nicholson are in this group.¹

¹ Roderick Nash, author of *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), has stated that 'Christianity has done too little to discourage and too much to encourage the exploitation of nature.' Rudolf C. Heredia, in 'Ethics and Ecology: Towards an Ecological Ethic—Religious and Secular Perspectives', *New Frontiers in Education* 18, no. 3 (1988): 1, emphasized that Christianity has 'paved the way for the tremendous scientific

White, a medieval historian, in a paper delivered to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1966, contended that the roots of the ecological crisis lie in religious cosmology, and specifically in Western Christianity's anthropocentrism and instrumentalist view of nature. 'Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen,' White stated. According to White, Christianity insists that 'it is God's will that man exploits nature for his proper ends.' The Genesis story, in which God created Adam in His image, paved the way for humans to destroy nature by giving them the dominance over God's creation, which has resulted in environmental destruction and crisis.²

Furthermore, White argued, linear thought within Christianity teaches that humankind was the final and glorious purpose of God's creation, and that therefore non-human nature was created for the sole purpose of humanity's use and development.³ White maintained that our environmental problems would persist and even worsen until we reject the Christian axiom that nature exists to serve

man. He concluded that as long as our science and technology are tintured with orthodox Christian arrogance, there would be no solution.⁴

White became an icon in the world of environmental protection. In the fifty years since the initial publication of White's essay, Christian eco-theologies have robustly responded to it. Nearly every book on the relation of Christianity to its environment refers to White's thesis, and most introduce their argument as an explicit response to it.⁵ Francis Schaeffer in *Pollution and the Death of Man* (1970) was probably the earliest to defend Christianity against White. In the following year, Richard Wright published a response to Lynn White's article in *Bioscience*, titled 'Responsibility for the Ecological Crisis'.

India is among the twelve megabiodiversity countries of the world and is home to numerous species of plants and animals which collectively form 8 percent of the world's diversity of life.⁶ Its total land area of 329 million hectares is a gorgeous landscape.⁷ In the last few decades, however, India has suffered from serious environmental problems.⁸ Indian

and technological advancement' rather than promoting care for creation. Lynn White, a historian from the University of California, published 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', *Science* 155, no. 3767 (10 March 1967). See also Max Nicholson, *The Environmental Revolution* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970), 265, and in general, O. P. Dwivedi, *World Religions and the Environment* (New Delhi: Gitanjali, 1989), 38–39.

2 White, 'Historical Roots', 1205.

3 See Annette Mosher, 'Christianity, Covenant, and Nature', *Baptistic Theologies* 8, no. 1 (2016), 63–67.

4 Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Christianity and Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 497.

5 Willis Jenkins, 'After Lynn White: Religious Ethics and Environmental Problems', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 37, no. 2 (2009): 285.

6 Brij Kishor Gupta, 'Wildlife in the Cross-hairs', *Science Reporter* (November 2006): 11.

7 K. R. Gupta (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Environment: Environment Problems and Policies* (New Delhi: Atlantic Distribution, 2005), 39.

8 Sumit Guha, 'A Historical Study of the Control of Grass and Fodder Resources in

culture is dominated by Hinduism. Modern industrialization, with its attitude that nature is a vast store of resources to be exploited for economic profit, has overtaken the more environmentally sound cultures that existed in pre-modern India. In spite of the prevalence of strong pantheism, animals are being mistreated,⁹ rivers worshipped as goddesses are being polluted, and trees thought to be the abode of deities are being destroyed. According to Vishal Mangalwadi, "The environmental mess in India, which is far worse than in the industrialized West, is a clear indication that the worship of nature damages creation more than do our attempts to manage it."¹⁰

It is believed that the ancient Hindu myth is founded on a profoundly ecological vision, as mentioned in the Rig Vedas. But David Gosling paints another picture, giving the example of two prominent Hindu deities from Mahabharata and their strange behaviour towards the environment. In this story, Krishna and Arjuna are in the forest when a poor Brahmin asks for alms. The request is granted and he is transformed into Agni, the god

of fire, who satisfies his hunger by consuming the forest. As the forest begins to burn, the forest creatures, including *naga* (snakes, usually cobras), flee the flames.¹¹

The Ganges River, considered the holiest river by ancient Hindu texts, is facing severe crises. In spite of several warnings from various government authorities, this goddess has become a dumping site for industrial wastes, idols made of clay and heavy metals, and dead bodies. The rivers that are supposed to purify human beings physically, morally, and ritually are said to be on the receiving end of *adharma*, unrighteous behaviour.

Among animals, the cow especially serves for Hindus as a sacred symbol of God's preserving and sustaining power; without cows, families could not survive. But sadly, cows are being mistreated publicly once they stop milking. In addition, uncontrolled use of fireworks during festivals continues to pollute the air and deafen the urban population. 'Hindus have become champions at raping their mother', laments Swami Srivatsa Goswami, a Vrindavan-based scholar.¹² The worship of nature elements according to Hindu philosophy is need-based and situational; the creatures being worshipped either supply food or pose a threat to the worshippers.

In contrast to Western traditions in which humans are described as separate from nature over which

Eighteenth-Century Maharashtra', in Mahesh Rangarajan, *Environmental Issues in India: A Reader* (Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2007), 97–98.

9 Recently a newspaper reported that a surgeon removed 70 kg of plastics from a cow's stomach. Vishant Vaze, '70 Kg Plastic Waste Taken Out from Cow', *Navhind Times*, 4 January 2016, <http://epaper.navhindtimes.in/pageimages/pdf/2016/01/04/04012016-md-ga-03.pdf>.

10 Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey: A Model for Transformation of a Culture* (New Delhi: Good Books, 1993), 108.

11 The episode occurs in the Mahabharata. David L. Gosling, *Religion and Ecology: In India and South Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 16.

12 David Haberman, *River of Love in an Age of Pollution: The Yamuna River of Northern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 84.

they have dominion, Indian thought has seen humans (in their embodied lives) as an intimately interconnected part of nature. In the Vedic worldview, gods, humans and nature formed one organic whole. None was superior and none was inferior. All three were equally eternal and mutually dependent.¹³ Therefore, according to Hinduism, to harm any aspect of nature, be it air, water, plants or animals, is tantamount to harming oneself. Thus, there is a clear and unambiguous environmental ethic within Indian thought. Nevertheless, this ethic has not protected South Asia from environmental problems. The rise in ecological crises in India signals our loss of control over the natural world.¹⁴

There are several reasons for today's environmental crisis in India. First, we have failed to understand our responsibility to care for creation. Second, we have forgotten the dedication of visionaries who laboured to preserve our natural ecosystem. Third, we have been guilty of anthropocentrism in our view of nature. Fourth, we in India have blamed the West and Christianity for the problem rather than examining where we have failed to protect the environment. Fifth, under the umbrella of Indian traditions are many beliefs and philosophies (such as polytheistic, monotheistic, monist, dualistic and even atheistic views) which contradict each other, and the difference of

opinion has created confusion in the minds of their followers. There is no concrete eco-theology within Hinduism that can protect the environment.

II. The Natural World in the Early Church Fathers and the Scientific Revolution

The patristic traditions contained many beliefs about nature: about the origins and structure of the cosmos, the motions of celestial bodies, the elements, sickness and health, explanations of dramatic natural phenomena (thunder, lightning, eclipses and the like), and the relationship between the cosmos and the gods. These considerations were studied as part of 'natural philosophy'.¹⁵ The early Christian church was confronted by the dualist cosmology of Gnosticism, which held that Christ and his Father were not responsible for the created world and that salvation consisted in transcending material creation. In response to this teaching, Irenaeus (ca. 120–202) set out the basis for Christian cosmology.¹⁶

Irenaeus became a resolute defender of the strict divinity of the Logos (Christ), through whom God the Father created all things.¹⁷ Ire-

¹³ Augustine Thottakara, *Eco-dynamics of Religion: Thoughts for the Third Millennium* (Bangalore, India: Dharma Publications, 2000), 106.

¹⁴ Lance E. Nelson, *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 39.

¹⁵ David C. Lindberg, 'Early Christian Attitudes toward Nature', in Gary B. Ferngren (ed.), *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia* (London: Garland, 2000), 278.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Theokritoff, 'Creator and Creation', in M. B. Cunningham & Elizabeth Theokritoff (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 63.

¹⁷ Stanley L. Jaki, 'God, Nature, and Science', in Gary Ferngren (ed.), *The History of Science*

naeus stated that 'the initial step for the soul to come to the knowledge of God is contemplation of nature.'¹⁸ His Cappadocian naturalism was not opposed to the pervasive presence of God in creation and treated nature as a dynamic and interactive event within which both divine and cosmic energies converged and synergized.¹⁹ According to Theokritoff, Cappadocians believed that 'it is for the sake of the whole creation that man the microcosm receives the divine in-breathing, so that nothing in creation should be deprived of a share in communion with God.' This sense of 'solidarity in createdness', she added, 'has remained a leitmotif in Eastern Christian theology.'²⁰

Basil of Caesarea sharply attacked Greek philosophers and astronomers who 'have willfully and voluntarily blinded themselves to the knowledge of the truth'. These men, he continued, have 'discovered everything, except one thing: they have not discovered the fact that God is the creator of the universe.'²¹ Basil asserted, 'I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that wherever you go, the

least plant may bring you the clear remembrance of your Creator. ... One blade of grass or one speck of dust is enough to occupy your entire mind in beholding the art with which it has been made.'²²

In his *Apology for Allegory*, Gregory of Nyssa displayed the relationship between 'God and the cosmos', or 'the structure of matter and the creation' as both one event and many events.²³ Gregory was more interested in bridging the scriptural worldview and the scientific cosmologies of the time, rather than in the interpretation of Genesis.²⁴ He displayed an ability to integrate large amounts of scientific data and naturalistic explanations within his theological narrative. The accuracy of Gregory's explanations when compared with the modern sciences is not significant here; what is relevant is that he was aware of the knowledge of the sages who studied nature before and in his own time.²⁵

Rene Dubos proposed that Christian stewardship should have a basis in the teachings of St. Benedict. The Benedictine order 'actively intervened in nature' as farmers and builders. According to Dubos, 'Benedict of Nursia ... can be regarded as the patron saint of those who believe that true conservation means not only protecting nature against human misbehaviour but also developing human activities that favour a creative, harmonious relationship between

and Religion in the Western Tradition: *An Encyclopedia* (London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 54.

18 J. Matthew Sleeth, 'Teachings on Creation through the Ages', in *The Green Bible NRSV* (New York: Harper Collins, 1989), 1-98.

19 Doru Costache, 'Making Sense of the World: Theology and Science in St Gregory of Nyssa's *An Apology for the Hexaemeron*', *Phronema* 28, no. 1 (2013): 6.

20 Theokritoff, 'Creator and Creation', 65.

21 David C. Lindberg, 'Early Christian Attitudes toward Nature', in Gary B. Ferngren (ed.) *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia* (London: Garland, 2000), 278.

22 Basil the Great (329-379), *Hexaemeron*, Homily 5, 'Germination of the Earth', cited in Sleeth, 'Teachings on Creation through the Ages', 1-99.

23 Costache, 'Making Sense of the World', 1.

24 Costache, 'Making Sense of the World', 6.

25 Costache, 'Making Sense of the World', 8.

man and nature.²⁶ The first chapter of Genesis speaks of man's dominion over nature. The Benedictine rule, in contrast, seems inspired rather by the second chapter, in which the Lord placed man in the Garden of Eden not as a master but rather in the spirit of stewardship. Throughout the history of the Benedictine order, its monks have brought about profound transformations of soil, water, fauna and flora.²⁷ Saint Bernard believed that it was the monks' duty to work as partners with God in improving His creation, or at least in giving it a more human expression. Implicit in his writings is the thought that labour is like a prayer which helps in recreating paradise out of chaotic wilderness.²⁸

The Bible inspired many scientific pioneers to go in search of the laws of nature—a long, tedious, demanding, and multigenerational journey. The Bible taught that God 'gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep His command'.²⁹ Many believe that the birth of modern science took place at the establishment of the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge in 1660. Others place it in 1620, when Francis Bacon's book, *Novum Organum Scientiarum* (New Instrument of Science) was published. Still others may prefer 1543, the year of publication of *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On

the Revolution of Celestial Spheres) by Nicholas Copernicus.³⁰ Whatever the case, the Bible was directly responsible for producing modern science.

Francis Bacon is considered the founder of scientific methods.³¹ He was the Lord Chancellor of England and a founder of the Royal Society. Bacon held to the truth of both of God's two books—the book of nature and the book of God's word, the Bible:

There are two books laid before us to study, to prevent our falling into error; first, the volume of the Scriptures, which reveal the will of God; then the volume of the *Creatures*, which express his power.³²

Johannes Kepler asserted that the universe was a 'bright Temple of God and we astronomers are priests of the highest God in regard to the book of nature'.³³ He elaborated the idea of nature as a living organism in the late sixteenth century.³⁴

30 Sarojini Henry, *Science Meets Faith: An Interdisciplinary Conversation* (Mumbai: St. Paul's Press, 2009), 59.

31 James MacLachlan, *Galileo Galilei, First Physicist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

32 Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (London: Henrie Tomes, 1605). The 1893 edition by David Price (Cassell and Company) is available online at www.fullbooks.com. Cited in Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization* (Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 240.

33 Avihu Zakai, 'The Rise of Modern Science and the Decline of Theology', *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 9, no. 2 (August 2007): 135.

34 J. Kozhamthadam, 'Science and Ecology', *Jnanadeepa* (Ecological Concerns) 9, no. 1 (January 2006): 23.

26 Rene Dubos, *A God Within* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 168.

27 Dubos, *A God Within*, 169.

28 Dubos, *A God Within*, 171.

29 Proverbs 8:29. Verses like this one shaped the original idea of 'natural laws'. Francis Oakley, 'Christian Theology and the Newtonian Science: The Rise of the Concept of the Laws of Nature', *Church History* 30 (1961) 436.

Isaac Newton regarded his scientific work as praise for God and as the study of God's works. In all his discoveries, Newton seems to have silently acknowledged a divine presence.³⁵ When Newton discovered his law of gravitation he did not say, 'Now I have gravity, I don't need God.' Instead he wrote *Principia Mathematica*, the most famous book in the history of science, expressing the hope that it would 'persuade the thinking man' to believe in God.³⁶ He declared that 'the most elegant system of the sun, planets, and comets could not have arisen without the design and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being.'³⁷ Then he went on to speak about the majestic God of the Bible, on whose power and dominion the universe's very existence is constantly dependent.³⁸

Newton's religious faith was more important to him than his science. He was concerned with theology, prophecy and church history right from an early age. He was a fervent reader as well as a student of the Bible. William Stukeley, who was acquainted with Newton near the end of the latter's life, wrote, 'No man in England

read the Bible more carefully than he did.'³⁹ At a fundamental level, Newton believed that science leads to God. The early evangelicals also welcomed scientific discoveries, seeing them as evidence of the scope of God's work in nature.⁴⁰

III. The Foundation of Ecological Consciousness in India

Long before world organizations formally addressed ecological crises, concern for the natural environment was prominent among many Christian missionaries and scientists. The British societies were founded with meeting civic needs among their objectives⁴¹ and most environmental movements and related government policies were the outcomes of the scientific revolution. Such societies had a great impact in promoting environmental care in India.

The Royal Geographical Society initiated awareness regarding deforestation, desiccation, and climate change and proposed large-scale forest conservation.⁴² Subsequently adopted in India, this aggressive for-

35 Kozhamthadam, 'Science and Ecology', 23.

36 John Lennox, 'Stephen Hawking and God', September 2010, reprinted at <https://www.rzim.org/read/just-thinking-magazine/stephen-hawking-and-god>.

37 Isaac Newton, *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. I. Bernard Cohen and Anne Whitman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 940, cited in Denis Alexander (ed.), *The Isaac Newton Guide Book* (Cambridge: Faraday Institute, 2012), 42.

38 Alexander, *The Isaac Newton Guide Book*, 42.

39 Alexander, *The Isaac Newton Guide Book*, 36.

40 Dave Bookless, *Creation Care in Christian Mission* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2016), 108.

41 John M. MacKenzie, 'The Provincial Geographical Societies in Britain, 1884-1914', in Morg Bell and Robin Butlin (eds.), *Geography and Imperialism 1820-1940* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1995), 95.

42 Richard H. Grove, 'Imperialism and the Discourse of Desiccation: The Institutionalisation of Global Environmental Concerns and the Role of the Royal Geographical Society, 1860-1880', in Bell and Butlin, *Geography and Imperialism*, 36.

est protection effort led to the emergence of a school of environmentalists in the country.⁴³ The influence of the Society of Arts led William Roxburgh, the second superintendent of Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta (now Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden), to promote extensive tree planting policies in Bengal. After 1842, forest conservation practice and environmentalism in India drew from the climatic theories of renowned naturalist and geographer Alexander von Humboldt (who had a Lutheran background) and Joseph Boussingault.⁴⁴

Great Christian missionaries, intellectuals and environmentalists who admired God's creation did their best to create environmental awareness among Indians.

1. William Carey

William Carey was born in England in 1761 and arrived in India in 1793 as a Baptist missionary. He is considered a founder of the modern Protestant missionary movement. Known for his famous admonition to 'expect great things from God and to attempt great things for God',⁴⁵ with much effort he established the Agricultural Horticultural Society on 14 September 1820. His vision of forming this society was guided by his practical interest in improving India's agricultural economy and supplying food to the hungry mil-

lions of India.⁴⁶ Carey was the botanist after whom *Careya Herbacea*, one of the three varieties of eucalyptus found only in India, is named.⁴⁷ His interest in botany gave birth to horticulture in India.⁴⁸

Carey placed great emphasis on introducing modern science to India and taught botany, zoology and astronomy in addition to theology at Serampore.⁴⁹ Dave Bookless regards him as one of the early examples of 'evangelical ecological consciousness', saying that his motivation for environmental protection 'came from his belief that God has made man responsible for the earth.'⁵⁰ Carey became acquainted with William Roxburgh, whose wife was the daughter of a missionary.⁵¹ Roxburgh gave the name *Careya* to an interesting genus of *Myrtaceae*.⁵²

Carey brought the English daisy to India and introduced the Linnaean species classification system to gardening. He was the first to publish books on science and natural history in India and edited *Flora Indica*, written by Roxburgh. He believed that 'all thy works praise Thee, O Lord.'⁵³

43 Grove, 'Imperialism and the Discourse', 40.

44 Richard H. Grove, 'Imperialism and the Discourse', 41.

45 Marina Ngursangzeli Behera, 'William Carey and the British East India Company', *American Baptist Quarterly* (January 1, 2010): 246.

46 Behera, 'William Carey', 252.

47 Mangalwadi and Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey*, 17.

48 Joseph C. Robbins, 'The Social Application of the Missionary Motive Abroad', in *The Triumph of the Missionary Motive* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1920), 69.

49 Mangalwadi and Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey*, 81.

50 Bookless, *Creation Care*, 106.

51 George Smith, *The Life of William Carey: A Shoemaker and Missionary* (London: J. M. Dent & Co.), 220-221.

52 Smith, *The Life of William Carey*, 304.

53 Mangalwadi and Mangalwadi, *The Lega-*

He was prompted to become heavily involved in ecological endeavours because he was horrified to see the Indian ecosystem, which had 'become an uncultivated jungle abandoned to wild beasts and serpents.'⁵⁴ He was the first person in India to write essays on forestry, almost fifty years before the government made its very first attempt at forest conversation in Malabar.⁵⁵

Bookless asserts that Carey would have drawn inspiration from the hymnody of Isaac Watts (1674–1748), whose work focussed on 'the Psalmist's celebration of God's glory in nature in the light of Christocentric New Testament theology.'⁵⁶ It was William Carey, a Christian missionary, and not the Hindu mystics who initiated the struggle for regenerating eco-balance in India.⁵⁷

Chittabrata Patil claims that missionaries (especially the Baptist missionaries of Serampore, who included William Carey, Felix Carey and John Max) served the Indian people, left a valuable legacy of science and culture,⁵⁸ and played a path-breaking role in spreading science and technology in India. But according to him, this was all a tool for them to convert people with the help of British colonialism.⁵⁹ On the other hand, Jawaharlal

Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, acknowledged the contributions of the early missionaries, especially the Baptists of Serampore:

The desire of the Christian missionaries to translate the Bible into every possible language thus resulted in the development of many Indian languages. Christian mission work in India has not always been admirable or praiseworthy ... but in this respect, as well as in the collection of folklore, it has undoubtedly been of great service to India.⁶⁰

2. Vedanavakam Sastri

Scholar Indra Vishwanathan Peterson describes two Indian intellectuals in the early nineteenth century: King Serfoji II (1777–1832), a Hindu and prince of the Maratha dynasty that ruled Tanjore, and the Tamil poet Vedanayakam Sastri (1774–1864), the first Protestant Christian poet to write in the Tamil language. Both were quite influenced by Western education and their interest in European arts and sciences. Before the British could establish education in South India, these two became key instruments in providing Western education by establishing schools.⁶¹ They embraced the vision of Profes-

cy of William Carey, 17.

⁵⁴ Mangalwadi and Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey*, 20.

⁵⁵ Mangalwadi and Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey*, 22.

⁵⁶ Bookless, *Creation Care*, 106.

⁵⁷ Mangalwadi and Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey*, 108.

⁵⁸ Chittabrata Patil, *Scientific Bengal: Science, Technology and Environment under the Raj* (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2006), 42.

⁵⁹ Patil, *Scientific Bengal*, 51.

⁶⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1946), 317–18.

⁶¹ Indra Vishwanathan Peterson, 'Tanjore, Tranquebar, and Halle: European Science and German Missionary Education in the Lives of Two Intellectuals in the Early 19th Century', in Robert Eric Frykenberg (ed.), *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500* (London: Routledge, 2003), 94.

sor August Hermann Francke in Halle, which was introduced by Ziengenbalg under the Tranquebar Mission.⁶² Francke's philosophy maintained an integral relationship between science and theology. Missionaries and others in India received their theological and pedagogical training in this format.⁶³

One can find a blend of mixed Tamil-English curriculum with biblical ideals and the principles of science and technology from the West in the education program that King Serfoji and Sastri provided.⁶⁴ They introduced the study of the natural environment into the educational system in South India; the study and growing of various species of plants in a botanical garden became part of the curriculum. New approaches to natural history and new cosmology in a pietist Christian theological context were mentioned in Vedanayakam Sastri's Tamil poems.⁶⁵ Serfoji became a member and fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. The work of these two men in a variety of fields including science, environment, botany and cosmology helped to lay the founda-

tion for modern Tamil literature.⁶⁶

3. Sam Higginbottom

Sam Higginbottom was another outstanding missionary who responded to the cry of the poor and hungry world, dedicating his life to the cause of agriculture in India. In 1910 he established the Allahabad Agriculture Institute (now Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences). He was confident that agriculture, along with the Gospel, provided the solution to the poverty of India.⁶⁷

The Institute sat on a large parcel of poor land, as if meant for the outcaste farmers to cultivate. Yet Higginbottom showed the people what could be done with dry, hard, thin, cactus-infested land. He taught farmers to burn off the cactus spines and then to use the cactus to feed their cattle in times of drought when all other fodder failed.⁶⁸

Motivated by Matthew 14:13–16, Higginbottom drew on the power of the Gospel to reach the rural masses of India and make an impact in agricultural sciences. The Allahabad Agriculture Institute (AAI) became

62 The Danish Tranquebar Mission was staffed by German missionaries and by the seminary founded by Francke at the end of the seventeenth century in the German city of Halle-on-the-sale. Francke was a German Lutheran clergyman, philanthropist, and biblical scholar. Under his influence, Christian missionary efforts were greatly enhanced, zeal was aroused and recruits for Christian missions were gained, and Halle also became a centre for Danish mission activity in India.

63 Peterson, 'Tanjore, Tranquebar, and Halle', 97.

64 Peterson, 'Tanjore, Tranquebar, and Halle', 98.

65 Peterson, 'Tanjore, Tranquebar, and Halle', 100.

66 Robert Frykenberg, 'The Halle Legacy in Modern India: Information and the Spread of Education, Enlightenment and Evangelization', in *Missionsberichte aus Indien im 18. Jahrhundert* (Halle, Germany: Franckesche Stiftungen, 2004), 19.

67 Joseph C. Robbins, 'The Social Application of the Missionary Motive Abroad', in William H. Hill (ed.), *The Triumph of the Missionary Motive* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1920), 69.

68 Helen Barrett Montgomery, *The King's Highway* (West Medford, MA: Central Committee on the United Study of Foreign Mission, 1915), 107.

a centre for teaching, research and extension services. Higginbottom wrote India's first textbooks on dairy farming, horticulture and extension and designed programmes to train officials for the civil services. He introduced silo pits for storing green and dry fodder for animals. In 1935, Gandhi asked him to inspect and report on the earthquake-stricken area of Bihar, where he was received by Dr. Rajendra Prasad (the first president of independent India).⁶⁹ His vision for India is expressed in his writings: 'I am anxious to see the day when India shall take her proper place as one of the great self-governing peoples of the world.'⁷⁰

Higginbottom played an important role in creating ecological consciousness among his students and recognized the work of those who were involved in this task.⁷¹ Even after 109

years, his mission and vision continue to be implemented at this institute, which is now a university (under the state government of India) where I teach. Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS) in Allahabad promotes agricultural research with the goal of providing food security and improved quality of life to the people of India. The university has worked to develop temperature-tolerant wheat and rice varieties for Indian farmers in order to mitigate climate change due to global warming.

4. J. C. Kumarappa

Joseph Chelladurai Cornelius (Kumarappa) was a Tamil Christian from Tanjore who had been trained in accountancy in London and New York. After returning to India in 1929, he came into contact with Gandhi.⁷² Kumarappa's mother, Esther Rajanayakam, was a devout Christian who inculcated the moral and spiritual values in his life that played an important role in shaping his economic philosophy.⁷³

Kumarappa was in charge of two Gandhian *swadeshi* (indigenous goods) institutions: All India Spinners Association and All India Village Industries Association. His writings had profound ecological implica-

69 S. B. Lal, 'A Brief Sketch of Dr. Sam Higginbottom's Vision on Gospel and Plough: Then and Now', in Jagdhari Masih and Samuel Richmond (eds.), *NACSAR-09 Technological Advancement in Science and its Socio-Religious Impact* (Allahabad, India: AAI, 2009), 61.

70 Sam Higginbottom, *The Gospel and the Plow: The Old Gospel and Modern Farming in Ancient India* (Mussoorie, India: Nivedit Good Books, 2014), 16.

71 See Helen M. Rockey and Harold B. Hunting, *The Wonderland of India* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the US-Canada, 1992), 117. Among those whose works Higginbottom recognized in *The Gospel and the Plow* were Colonel E. Hudson, superintendent of Naini Jail, who planted a large number of trees and changed the whole landscape (pp. 7–8); Mr. and Mrs. Howard, imperial economic botanists, who bred the 'Pusa Series' of wheat; Dr. Barber, an imperial botanist who worked on sugarcane (p. 41); Mr. Leake, Director of the United Province of

Cawnpore, who sowed different varieties of cotton (p. 34); and Dr. Carleton of the American Presbyterian Mission, who introduced varieties of fruits in India (p. 33).

72 Guha, *A Historical Study*, 118.

73 Kumarappa is described as 'a Gandhian economist ahead of his time' in a *Down-to-Earth* article at <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/indepth/a-gandhian-economist-ahead-of-his-time-30798> (n.d.).

tions. He said, 'If we produce everything we want from within a limited area, we are in a position to supervise the methods of production; while if we draw our requirements from the ends of the earth it becomes impossible for us to guarantee the conditions of production in such places.' While denouncing industrialization in tune with Gandhi, he observed that agriculture is and ought to be 'the greatest among occupations' in which 'man attempts to control nature and his environment in such a way as to produce the best results.'⁷⁴ For him, industrial development was contrary to the Mahatma's dream of a 'village-centered economic order.'⁷⁵

Sumit Guha stated that 'J.C. Kumarappa, even more than Mahatma Gandhi, was a prophet and a pioneer of the contemporary environmental movement.'⁷⁶ His work combined biblical principles and Gandhian non-violence, with a focus on human dignity. Both he and Gandhi worked on creating an economy that would focus on meeting human needs and resolving unemployment, poverty and environmental crises. M. M. Thomas described him as one of the 'Christians of the inner Gandhi circle.'⁷⁷

IV. Christian Influence on the Indian Ecosystem

Earth Day, which is celebrated on 22

April globally (and in India as well), reminds us about our responsibility towards planet Earth. On this occasion, we Indians plant trees, clean the surroundings, organize seminars and conferences and hold painting competitions, among other creative activities. Surprisingly, the founder of this day was John McConnell, a Christian believer and the son of a Pentecostal evangelist.⁷⁸ As a visionary, he always gave priority to the care for creation and devoted his life to 'peace, justice and care of Earth'.⁷⁹

Those are international examples; there are plenty in India as well. In 1988, under the directorship of Fr. Jose Chirackal, a movement against deforestation, called Friends of Trees, was started in Patna, Bihar.⁸⁰ Similarly, in the early 1990s when deforestation was rampant, Bishop William Moses of the Anglican Church's Coimbatore Diocese started a 'Tree Evangelization Mission' with the slogan 'Greening the mind of the people'.⁸¹

Temsutula Imsong undertook a bold initiative to clean the Varanasi Ghats in conjunction with *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* (Clean India Movement), a government-sponsored clean-up programme launched in

⁷⁸ Darrin J. Rodgers and Nicole Sparks, 'Pentecostal Pioneer of the Earth Day: John McConnell Jr.' in A. J. Swoboda (ed.), *Blood Cries Out: Pentecostals, Ecology, and the Groans of Creation* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 3.

⁷⁹ Robert M. Weir, *Peace, Justice, Care of Earth: The Vision of John McConnell, Founder of Earth Day* (Kalamazoo, MI: Press On Publishing, 2007).

⁸⁰ Andreas Nehring, *Ecology: A Theological Response* (Madras: Gurukul Summer Institute, 1994), 268.

⁸¹ Nehring, *Ecology*, 260.

⁷⁴ Guha, *A Historical Study*, 118.

⁷⁵ Ramachandra Guha, *An Anthropologist Among the Marxists and Other Essays* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 82.

⁷⁶ Guha, *An Anthropologist*, 86.

⁷⁷ M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (Madras: CLS, 1970), 242.

2014. In an interview, she mentioned that when she was an eight-year-old she cleaned the road in her village as part of a local church program in Nagaland.⁸² Her initiative got a boost after Prime Minister Modi praised her on 31 March 2015 on Twitter: 'This effort by @temsutulaimsong & the entire team to clean the Ghats in Varanasi is phenomenal! I salute them.'⁸³

A Rocha, an international evangelical Christian conservation organization, is actively involved in India, focusing on biodiversity conservation and emphasizing scientific research, environmental education, church and theological engagement, and community-based conservation projects.⁸⁴ The ACTS (Agriculture, Crafts, Trades and Studies) Group (www.actsgroup.org) and its initiative called PEAS (Programme for Environmental Action in Schools) are running nationwide projects related to environmental awareness, fostering eco-culture, and health issues under the leadership of renowned Indian environmentalist Dr. Ken Gnanakan. The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) with its Commission on Justice, Peace, Creation is keenly involved in addressing threats to creation along with combatting poverty

and economic injustice in India.⁸⁵

The Department of Ecological Concerns within the Church of South India⁸⁶ is continuously making efforts to generate ecological consciousness among the people of India. Its director, Dr. Mathew Koshy, organizes national and international conferences and awareness programs, which have been well attended by religious leaders, politicians and scientists over the last few decades.⁸⁷ EFICOR (Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief) is a national Christian organization engaged in development, advocacy, disaster response and training; it serves the poor, socially excluded and marginalized irrespective of caste, creed or ethnicity. It also addresses the negative impact of climate change and networks with other like-minded civil organizations, NGOs and concerned government ministries.

The Roman Catholic Church, through the Caritas wing of the Catholic Bishops Conference in India, is imparting ecological awareness by involving itself in tree planting; participating in *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*; sharing the ecological values of Francis of Assisi, Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis and others; and giving humanitarian assistance in the context

82 Kavitha Rao, 'Temsutula Imsong Picked Up a Broom and Bucket and Cleaned Up a Riverbank', *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 October 2015, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Making-a-difference/2015/1008/Temsutula-Imsong-picked-up-a-broom-and-bucket-and-cleaned-up-a-riverbank>.

83 NDTV, 'Duo Praised by PM Modi Bats For Sanitation at Varanasi Ghats', 4 April 2015, <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/duo-praised-by-pm-modi-bats-for-sanitation-at-varanasi-ghats-752219>.

84 Bookless, *Creation Care*, 116.

85 See National Council of Churches in India, 'Commissions', nccindia.in/commission/.

86 The Church of South India is the result of the union of churches of varying traditions: Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Reformed. It was inaugurated in September 1947, after protracted negotiation among the churches concerned.

87 Report by Dr. Koshy, Church of South India, Department of Ecological Concerns, <http://www.csisynod.com/erec.php>.

of natural and human-made calamities.⁸⁸

V. Conclusion

Christians (both from the West and from India) have made enormous contributions towards addressing a wide range of environmental concerns, both globally and locally. Lynn White's critical paper drove Christian theologians to interpret the doctrine of creation more intently in the light of caring for creation.

According to the Word of God, Christian believers are considered part of the 'new humanity' (Eph 2:15) created in Christ Jesus to do good works (2:10), and hence they know their responsibility towards God's creation. Through the power of the Gospel and the compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ, missionaries were able to influence many aspects of life in India. They worked genuinely and effectively among the helpless and

unfortunate members of Indian communities.

Today major Christian agencies understand their role and commitment towards addressing climate change, environmental crises, global warming, poverty and natural disasters. God has given us a mandate to care for creation as stewards, caretakers, children of God, and servant leaders—loving and nurturing our fellow beings. As Christians, we are called to make a difference in society, as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The Bible encourages us to work for the glory of God with integrity: 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men' (Col 3:23; Eph 6:7–8).

We admire all those who have worked diligently and tirelessly in protecting and preserving the biodiversity of India as God's gift to us. We retain the eschatological hope that one day God will restore this fallen creation but until then, as good stewards, we must keep on working meticulously to preserve it.

88 See the Caritas India website, <http://cbci.in/Caritas-India.aspx>.

How to Deal with Displaced and Threatened People Groups

Thomas Schirrmacher

This text contains translated excerpts from his invited testimony at a public hearing of the German Bundestag's Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid on 28 November 2018. Dr Schirrmacher's comments provide an insightful example of how an informed Christian can function effectively and even be in demand in the realm of secular public-policy discourse. The questions that appear as headings were developed by committee members and presented to Dr Schirrmacher in advance.

Question 1: Freedom of Religion

Displacement, discrimination, and threats against religious minorities constitute violations of the fundamental human right to religious freedom. Where around the world do you currently see this human right most threatened and what are the reasons and causes for this?

I will begin with a natural but necessary preliminary remark. What we briefly state to be freedom of religion is actually *freedom of religion and belief* and includes the freedom of non-religious worldviews. This applies at the level of the UN, the Council of Europe, and the EU as well as to Germany's Basic Law. The fact that leaving the church today has no social consequences is a consequence of the fact that the right to freedom of

religion includes the right to change one's religion, which means that I can leave any religion in the direction of another religion or non-religious worldview without being punished by the state, an employer, or others. ...

In answering the question, I would like to highlight three areas which seem to me to be the most serious and appear to cause the most serious violations of the right to freedom of religion and belief: (1) genocide of religiously determined ethnic groups, (2) fundamentalism or religious extremism, and (3) religious nationalism. The three are not delimited or unrelated but rather partly overlap.

A. Genocide against Religiously Determined Ethnic Groups

In international law, genocide is the most abhorrent human rights crime and can often lead to international prosecution even if the main perpetrators cannot be legally prosecuted in their own country or are in fact not prosecuted. Accordingly, the worst violations of freedom of belief and conscience are genocides directed against religiously or ideologically defined minorities and resulting in a high number of victims in the form of displaced and dispossessed persons in addition to those murdered. ...

The European Parliament, the Par-

liamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), about a dozen national parliaments, and Pope Francis saw and see in the war of the so-called Islamic State (IS or Daesh) a genocide against Christians and against Yazidis.

...

Of course, the victims of extremist movements in Islam are often Muslims themselves, and not only in the Near and Middle East. In Afghanistan, the ethnic group of five to seven million Hazaras is regarded as marginalized because they are Shiite Muslims and they speak a mother language related to Persian. They are poor and are fair game for the Taliban and IS. Hundreds have been killed by direct acts of terror, and tens of thousands have been driven out. They all live in great fear. It would be worth its own investigation to see where the mutual oppression by Sunnis and Shiites—depending on who has the power in the state—assumes the character of genocide.

Let us stick with genocides committed against Muslim peoples, this time by non-Muslims. They are motivated in very different ways. In Myanmar, which is actually a multi-ethnic state, the Rohingya were finally driven out by a mixture of Buddhist fundamentalism, racism, economic interests, and military control mania after decades of apartheid. The result is that today one million out of 1.3 million Rohingyas live in refugee dwellings in poor neighbouring Bangladesh. Shockingly, machete-armed thugs from Buddhist monasteries were organized against the Rohingya. Monks called for Myanmar's Buddhist culture to be protected from the growing Muslim minority. There were hundreds of deaths and several hundred thousand Muslims were dis-

placed.

Ninety percent of the approximately eleven million Muslim Uighurs live in the autonomous region of China named after them, and one million Muslim Kazakhs also live there. Human Rights Watch estimates that there are 800,000 inmates in re-education camps, while other experts estimate that there are one million inmates. However, research on the ground is impossible. That would be 7 to 10 percent of the Muslim population in the region. The main motive is quashing unrest and exercising of state control. The rejection of any religion that used to play a major role is less and less in the foreground. However, there is arguably a fundamental suspicion against Muslims as a fifth column of Islamic power. China thus also proves that people without religion are still capable of genocide, just as history has demonstrated in the cases of Mao or Stalin.

In Sri Lanka, Buddhists are the main threat to Hinduism, whereby the religious diversity is superimposed upon by the ethnic diversity of the Sinhalese and Tamils. The long civil war has had many victims, especially among the Tamils. Christians and Muslims have also been fought against. The President of the country has just dismissed the legitimately elected Prime Minister in favour of his predecessor, partly because he sees the Buddhist character of the country as endangered.

The various forms of genocide with a religious influence are still awaiting investigation. It should be noted that almost all genocides in recent history have included a religious line of conflict.

The genocide of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including the mas-

sacre of Srebrenica, took place with the blessing of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (1993–2017) in the Hague and the International Court of Justice regarded the massacre of Srebrenica as genocide. It was not coincidental that a corresponding resolution of the UN Security Council was prevented by Russia in 2015, a decision seconded by the Russian Orthodox Church leadership.

Despite all the necessary discussion and differentiation in detail, this set also includes the wars in Kosovo and Chechnya. Ulrich Delius rightly includes the resettlement of more than 100,000 Muslims from the Central African Republic, supposedly to prevent genocide against them.¹

Let us return from Muslims as victims to Muslim states as perpetrators. The genocide of indigenous peoples in Indonesian Irian Jaya (West Papua) who are Christians or practice ethnic religions is discussed in detail below. (Editor's note: That section is not included here.) The ever-changing genocide in Darfur and South Sudan, which finally led to the independence of South Sudan—without really solving the problems—is not limited to religious characteristics but does indeed include them.²

The genocide of the Kurds in Iraq

under Saddam Hussein always had a religious-worldview component and was also directed against the comparatively loose toleration of ethnic religions and of Christians and Jews from among their midst. However, the current attitude of the Iraqi government towards the autonomous region of Kurdistan and the Kurds in general is not only racist but also religious. The 2005 constitution, for example, prescribes Arabic/Kurdish bilingualism. Thirteen years later, however, the central government has not yet published a line in Kurdish. It has also not implemented many other central requirements of the Constitution. Thus, a supreme court and a second chamber where regions have a say in central laws are missing. ... It is a particular thorn in Iraq's side that the Kurdish government recognizes many newer religious communities, for instance some Protestant and Evangelical churches, that are not recognized and are combatted in Iraq.

I remember that in the mid-1980s I sat in Bonn with Tilman Zülch, the long-time Secretary General of the Society for Threatened Peoples, as the only two Germans in a large assembly of Kurds of all languages, religions and countries who had travelled from all over Germany. I had just published a Kurdish grammar and the Turkish President had asked the federal President to close our publishing house. We were accused of working for the US Central Intelligence Agency and were banned from entering the country. Since then, I have experienced very closely for thirty years how all countries possessing parts of the Kurdish settlement areas try to control the Kurds, push them back into the mountains, extinguish their languages and religions, or

1 Ulrich Delius. 'Genocide Averted by Ethnic Cleansing—No Effective Protection of the Civilian Population: Central African Republic: Exodus of More Than 100,000 Muslims', 5 March 2014, <https://www.gfbv.de/de/news/mit-ethnischen-saeuberungen-genozid-abgewendet-kein-wirksamer-schutz-der-zivilbevölkerung-6298/>.

2 Gérard Prunier. *Darfur. Der 'uneindeutige' Genozid* (Hamburg, 2007).

eliminate them completely. What an unnecessary tragedy! At times there were quite obvious genocides among them, but for me the overall strategy has genocidal traits, the attempt by several states to rob the Kurds of their basic needs and prevent them from participating in society.

It is also important to identify and address potential genocides at an early stage. If in India the governing party of several federal states and the Prime Minister, due to Hindu fundamentalism (Hindutva) behind it, set the goal of making the country free of non-Indians by 2025, one wonders what should then happen to the approximate 200 million Muslims and around 32 million Christians. Fore-runners have been violent forced reconversions of helpless villagers and the elimination of their livelihood, for example by banning cattle breeding, from which many Muslims live. ...

It is gratifying that the EU, under the umbrella of Eurojust, maintains the European Network of contact points with respect to persons responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. It coordinates EU states' legal processing and prosecution of the above-mentioned serious crimes.³

B. Fundamentalism or Religious Extremism

Fundamentalism and religious extremism ... cause the most deaths among all religions. Religious extrem-

ism can connect itself directly with a state, but it can also form a movement directed against the state that follows the same religion. ...

However, the percentage of those who justify violence in the name of God has varied greatly in the history of each religion. In Christianity, the percentage has dropped sharply over the last 100 years and continues to decrease, even if we include special Christian groups in the statistics. This also applies to atheistic worldviews, which have largely abandoned violent models since the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, countries such as Vietnam or to some extent China show that a variant advocating violence is still possible. In Hinduism, the percentage of those factions legitimating violence against others has unfortunately increased sharply in recent times, as we have seen. But Islam is going through the most problematic development, so that Islamism, which is prepared to use violence and began only one hundred years ago (apart from the older Saudi Wahhabism), has in the meanwhile gained tremendous worldwide popularity and continues to grow, even if it is still in the minority within Islam. Whereas under Mao and Stalin communist rulers killed the most Christians, the large mass of Christian martyrs worldwide can currently be traced back to attacks by Islamists.

I prefer to use the term 'fundamentalism' instead of religious extremism since otherwise non-religious or quasi-religious worldviews are automatically excluded. Viewed historically, however, the largest numbers of victims are due to extremist, fundamentalist variants of communist and nationalist worldviews such as those embodied by Franco, Hitler,

³ Thomas Schirrmacher and Jonathan Chaplin, 'European Religious Freedom and the EU', in Jonathan Chaplin and Gary Wilton (eds.), *God and the EU: Faith in the European Project*, 2nd ed. (London and New York, 2017), 151–74.

Mussolini, Lenin, Stalin, Ceausescu or Pol Pot. In Vietnam, Christians are still threatened by representatives of an atheistic ideology up to the present day. The right to control all other worldviews and religions is derived from the view of the correctness of non-religious ideologies. This view also provides the right to employ state power to force people to think and live in a certain permissible corridor as desired; otherwise, people face the threat of punishment in prison camps or even death.⁴

Fundamentalism does not simply mean having a claim to truth. In such a case, the largest part of mankind would probably be considered fundamentalists. Rather, fundamentalism means that one is prepared to assert one's claim to truth against others by force. The term *fundamentalism*, which became famous in 1979, was applied to Ayatollah Khomeini, who imposed the claim to truth of a certain Islamic view on all people in Iran, which is still imposed today. A person who thinks that something is absolutely right or wrong is not thereby dangerous. He only becomes a problem for society if he deduces from this that one can force others to believe the same thing, to do the same thing, and that the whole society has to function in the way he thinks is right.⁵

Therefore, one must indeed differentiate between majority Islam and Islamism, between majority Hindu-

ism and fundamentalist Hinduism (Hindutva), and between majority Buddhism and fundamentalist Buddhism as in Myanmar and Sri Lanka. They all represent a new form of their respective religions that did not exist before the twentieth century.

Islamism says that an Islamic country can only be ruled by Sharia law and inhabited by Muslims. All others have no place there. By the way, the first to be affected in Pakistan were the Ahmadiyyas, who from our and their own point of view are Muslims. However, they are infidels from the point of view of the Sunni because they claim a new prophet after Mohammad.

Needless to say, Islamism developed historically from Islam just as the Crusades developed from Christianity. At the same time, it is wrong to say that Islam and Islamism are simply identical. The truth lies somewhere in between. Islamism is a strongly politicized form of Islam, which developed about a hundred years ago in the final phase of the European colonial period and makes some central demands that were not characteristic of what has historically represented the majority of Islam.

Islamism predominantly turns against the governments of Islamic countries and only secondarily against the West, which these countries supposedly follow too closely. Islamism brings about forms of violence that historical Islam has predominantly rejected or would have rejected. Today, for example, mothers have appeared as suicide bombers who only a few years ago thoroughly mourned their sons who blew themselves up. Thus today, we find the death of thousands of Muslims to be collateral damage as well as the de-

4 Stéphane Courtois, *Das Schwarzbuch des Kommunismus: Unterdrückung, Verbrechen und Terror* (Munich: Piper, 1998); Thomas Schirrmacher, *Hitlers Kriegerreligion*, 2 vols. (Bonn: VKW, 2005).

5 Thomas Schirrmacher, *Fundamentalism: When Religion Becomes Dangerous* (Bonn: VKW, 2011).

struction of graves and historical Islamic sites.⁶

If there were more comprehensive democracies in the Islamic world, there would also be more religious freedom and parliaments would push more and more for women's rights, as has happened wherever democracy has taken hold in the Islamic world. The main problem here is classical theology and, along with it, the theologians. Among Muslim politicians, lawyers, economists and others, democracy has many supporters. In Pakistan, the supreme judges, all of them Muslims, repeal blasphemy verdicts under mortal danger and would immediately abolish relevant laws. It is the 'little' imams, especially in the countryside, who prevent this.⁷

The tragedy is that countries with Islamic majorities repeatedly decide to leave the modern, 'Western' path and choose an Islamist path. Examples are Iran in 1979, Pakistan which has been creeping in this direction since 1984, and Turkey presently creeping in the same direction.

Admittedly, this dangerous development has the most serious consequences in the Islamic realm. However, it is by no means a unique feature of Islam; we see the same development in all world religions with different characteristics. In India, the influence of the political-funda-

mentalist Hinduism (Hindutva) has increased, which the Prime Minister is also promoting and practicing. In Myanmar and Sri Lanka, the undesirable development has been promoted and demanded by Buddhist fundamentalists, and in Russia Putin can rely on the country's ancestral Christian church. Also, even within the EU, governments are beginning to elevate religious nationalism—here of course of a Christian nature—to the status of state doctrine.

In my view, it is particularly frightening that such developments have not been halted even by reasonably free elections. In Turkey, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Russia and India there would have been the possibility of ending the nightmare with certain elections if not with all elections. Instead, one has seen that those primarily responsible have been able even to mobilize enormous masses.

Excursus: No One Would Have Expected Peaceful Christianity One Hundred Years Ago

In the First World War, the large Christian nations waged war against each other in the name of the Christian God, and their respective state churches demonized the peoples of their opponents. Even in the 1920s, it could not have simply been said that Christianity was broadly peaceful, that it refused to force people to believe, and that it was committed to freedom of religion.

On the contrary, fundamentalism in all denominations was on the advance, scheming with allegedly Christian dictators like Franco or even offering open support. Colonialism dressed up in Christian garb did not

6 Gilles Kepel, *Das Schwarzbuch des Dschihad*. (Munich: Piper, 2002); Christine Schirrmacher, *Islamismus: Wenn Religion zur Politik wird*, 2nd ed. (Holzgerlingen: SCM Hänssler, 2011).

7 Christine Schirrmacher, *Islam und Demokratie: Ein Gegensatz?* (Holzgerlingen: SCM Hänssler, 2013); Christine Schirrmacher, *Politischer Islam und Demokratie: Konfliktfelder* (Holzgerlingen: SCM Hänssler, 2015).

want to free the colonies, and the dream of a denominational, Christian state or at least the involvement of the state in the spreading of one's own denomination was still the order of the day.

Only after the Second World War did Christianity broadly begin to recognize democracy and above all the inclusion of human rights, including freedom of religion, in the basic teachings of the churches. This prevailed in theory (doctrines) in the mid-1960s and determined real life more and more in the following decades.

Christianity had come to the end of a long road. With the elaboration and signing of the document 'Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World' (2005–2011) by almost all churches, it became clear that the Constantinian age was finally over and that it is against Christian doctrine and against the spirit of Jesus Christ to force other people to believe or to misuse the state for such purposes. At the same time, any kind of mission that does not respect the human rights of others is rejected.

With a time lag, atheism and non-religious worldviews have also undergone a similar development. Violent regimes, which wanted to exterminate all religions or used the state to force a non-religious worldview upon everyone, at times dominated large parts of the world. They largely disappeared with the end of the Soviet Union and gave way to a more peaceful intellectual discourse. Countries such as China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea, which still originate from this tradition, are only conditionally determined by atheism and are difficult to classify.

In contrast to the fact that the percentage of the supporters of Christi-

anity and secular worldviews who advocate violence is strongly declining, there is a painful development within the two other big world religions, Islam and Hinduism. In Islam this has been the case since the First World War; in Hinduism it is the case only in more recent times. The increase and geographical expansion of Islamist violence is taking place right before our eyes.

I am not concerned here with denigrating Muslims or Hindus or with sweeping statements about religions that have enormously many varieties. After all, peaceful Muslims and Hindus are also in large numbers victims of the violent wings of their religions. Rather, I am noting a worldwide trend and observing that the minority within a given world religion who are advocating violence sometimes grows larger and sometimes smaller. However, if it becomes too large, it takes the whole religion into its scourge.

Violent wings of Christianity and non-religious worldviews are on the retreat, while violent wings within Islam and Hinduism are growing and gaining more and more supporters worldwide. The vast majority of people belong to these four worldview groupings.

At the same time, this survey also shows that no world religion is per se automatically averse to the idea of spreading its faith by force. And every world religion has a large wing that gets along without convictions favouring violence. The situation has to do with concrete historical developments that work causally upon individuals, and not inevitabilities or biologically fixed factors.

C. Religious Nationalism

Where a country is no longer ethnically and culturally homogeneous, parties, governments, the majority religion or the media increasingly play the religious card to unite the population. This corresponds with the desire of many in the majority population to protect their own cultural identity against growing minorities of other faiths. This religious nationalism is marching ahead around the world, and it is globally becoming socially acceptable. A Turk has to be a Muslim, an Indian a Hindu, a Russian an Orthodox Christian, a Burmese a Buddhist, etc. More and more often, religion takes on the role which in former times the common language or culture often had.

This trend is also evident in the Christian and Jewish world. For the first time, a prime minister in Israel has demanded and has been able to pass in the Knesset a law that only a Jew can be a full citizen, even if human rights are guaranteed to all others. In Hungary and Poland, ruling parties have declared the country to be Christian, in a way we otherwise know from Orthodox countries. In Russia the old connection between state and church has been invoked anew, and Russia has been appointed as the Christian protective power. Religious writings must be approved by the state before they can go into print. Non-Orthodox communities are usually denied this permission. It is also very difficult for a Catholic or Muslim community to obtain permission to build a place of worship. This approval practice is handled more rigorously from year to year. At the same time, thousands of Orthodox churches are being built at state expense throughout the country.

The reasons for the persecution of religious groups, and for the persecution of Christians, are almost always multi-layered and mostly not only religiously determined. Thus political, cultural, racist, nationalist, economic and personal motives can play an important role. Long ago the Holy Scriptures of Christianity made this clear. In the Old Testament, for example, the infamous Queen Jezebel mixed her hatred of Yahweh and his prophets with her desire for power, but also with very personal attempts at enrichment because she wanted to seize the property of her Jewish neighbor (1 Kings 16–19). In the last book of the New Testament, the Revelation of John, political and economic reasons are added to the hatred of the church. The craftsmen and goldsmiths and silversmiths in Ephesus (Acts 19:23–29) are a good example. They saw in Paul's proclamation and its success a 'danger' to their 'good income' and therefore instigated a revolt against the Christians with the battle cry 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians'. According to this Christian report, the furor was ended by the Roman army, which ensured law and order. Also, the imprisonment of Paul and Silas after expelling a spirit of divination from a slave was caused by the owners' anger with regard to their potential profit (Acts 16:16–24).

If the Bible itself makes it clear that persecution of Christians can be closely intertwined with political and economic interests, it is precisely Christians today who should soberly recognize and make this a subject of discussion. There is no unsullied restriction of religious freedom but always a mostly confusing entanglement of the problematic nature of religion with problems and human

rights violations within the respective cultures and societies involved.

The opposite can also be true: If a follower of a hated religion and at the same time the bearer of a hated skin colour is tortured, one may neither trivialize the racism by saying that in reality a religious component is at issue, nor vice versa. Racism and religious hatred are both despicable, and if they occur at the same time, they must be fought along both lines. It is not a question of playing off the violation of religious freedom against the oppression of women, against genocide, or against the lack of freedom of the press. In reality, human rights and their violation are always closely linked, such that states that violate religious freedom usually also violate many other human rights and vice versa.

Question 7: Racism and Displacement

How often are racism and ethnically related ideas the cause of displacement and discrimination such as, for example, Islamophobia worldwide?

Always. I would say that displacement of and discrimination against ethnic groups are always connected with some form of racist thinking. It doesn't matter what comes first. Sooner or later, racist ideas lead to their implementation in practice. The opposite is true as well: the repression of and discrimination against groups and ethnic groups sooner or later create a supposedly rational justification through racist explanations.

Man has a tendency to provide his negative feelings such as envy, jealousy, inferiority or hatred with an apparently rational and intelligent-sounding substructure and thus sud-

denly transform his immoral feelings into honourable decisions. An individual does not become master of this if one fights only against certain forms of racism, but rather if (1) one deals with this problem in principle, (2) one can convey a system of values in which respect for others and advocacy for others are the focus (e.g. brotherly love or Kant's categorical imperative) and (3) no one acts as if they are completely free of this problem and are therefore morally superior in such a way that others only have to learn from them.

In Belgium, a historical conglomeration of language problems, envy, election campaign issues, political party orientation and, since the 1960s, differences in economic development have made the country ungovernable. Meanwhile, the majority on both sides believe that these are ancient communities of descent that have always tried to live at the expense of each other. All this, however, was missing when Belgium was founded in 1830, when the educated Flemish still spoke French and almost all the inhabitants were Catholics. Step by step, a negative description of the character of each other's people was given as to why one had to fight the others. (Please forgive the necessarily shortened version of a complex historical process.) This shows how racism can emerge out of nowhere.

Racism can be found in everyday life as well as in politics and science. It ranges from prejudice and discrimination to slavery and racial segregation to pogroms, displacement, ethnic cleansing and genocide. The most extreme form to date was the industrial extermination of Jews in the Third Reich. ...

Racist movements always have a

national or cultural character and differ greatly, depending on which group uses racism to fight which other one. 'Wherever we find racism, we discover that it is historically specific, depending on the particular epoch, the particular culture, and the particular form of society in which it occurs. These specific differences must be analyzed. So when we talk about concrete social reality, we should not talk about racism, but about various forms of racism.'⁸

In my book on racism, I have argued that there are three groups of victims of racism that are the most widespread internationally, each of which can be traced over many centuries:

1. Blacks (or people who have a darker skin colour than yourself)—they are supposedly stupid, crude and uncivilized;
2. Jews—they are supposedly devious, greedy and domineering;
3. Gypsies—they are allegedly antisocial and thieving.

A study of the history of these three forms of racism is very instructive for less common forms of racism. For example, the prohibition or avoidance of derogatory designations of these groups—as meaningful as it may be—has not reduced racism anywhere. Also, the intensity of the dislike of these groups has little to do with how many of the vilified actually live within the reach of the racists but rather with who is creating a mood against them.

Question 8: Cohesion and Religious Communities

Increasing migration to Europe also poses new challenges for the cohesion of society. How can religious communities contribute to this cohesion?

Let us start with the negative side: religious communities or, more concretely, the official representatives of organized religious communities can—depending on their degree of influence on the population—cause massive damage to the cohesion of a society. The influence on the population is not measured above all by which part of the religious community actively practices the faith and which does not, but to what extent the religious community is accepted as an authority on relevant topics, especially for those for whom belonging to a religion is rather a cultural factor.

For example, in Russia only a very small percentage of the Christian population attends church services, even on the highest holidays, and the feeling that one has to adhere to the moral guidelines of the church in one's private life is hardly still present. But if the official Russian Orthodox Church describes a group as a 'sect' and as 'dangerous', this is unquestioningly taken at face value by almost all people who understand themselves as Russian Orthodox, and it is a standpoint even adopted to a large extent by many completely secularized people who do not perceive themselves to be Christians at all.

Extreme examples can be found in Pakistan, where the state still partly resists Iranian conditions, but where the local imam usually has more influence on the people than authorities or security bodies. Here the country can hardly rule against public statements

⁸ Stuart Hall, 'Racism as Ideological Discourse', in Nora Räthzel (ed.), *Theories on Racism* (Hamburg: Argument-Verlag, 2000), 11.

by religious leaders. That leads then still another step further towards Iran, the only example in the world of direct political rule by religious leaders and which is also historically an extremely rarely found hierocracy (meaning rule by priests). The religious leaders of the state religion have direct political control and thus also directly determine who is regarded as an outcast and who is not.

In Germany, if the official representatives of the two major institutions of the majority religion were to campaign massively against other religions, against certain ethnic groups such as the Roma and Sinti, or against 'social parasites' and accuse the state of pampering these groups too much, the damage would be devastating. ... One can be all the more grateful that all hereditary religious communities in Germany—even if only after long learning processes—have clearly supported democracy itself from the 1960s at the latest as well as in particular the secular character of the state, the freedom of religion and conscience of the followers of other religions, and the special importance of the protection of minorities.

The positive influence is felt through many channels. It begins where churches are still involved in the socialization of children and young people, be it through church programmes, through day-care centres and schools, or through hospitals or counselling centres. It also encompasses the entire media presence and finally leads to concrete implementation through visible, often symbolic appearances of religious dignitaries within the framework of dialogue and international understanding.

The fact that all churches in Germany basically welcome migrants

is certainly not welcomed by all political forces. However, I am of the opinion that it is devastating when people who in the end remain are immediately received with rejection instead of welcome. This happens, for example, in Australia, where potential immigrants are initially held for longer periods of time on foreign islands and get stirred up there against their future homeland or make their first criminal contacts. Even people who have to leave Germany in the end should get a positive impression that they have been treated with respect.

Question 11: International Understanding

What importance do you attach to means of international understanding as a preventive measure to reduce the threat level to threatened peoples?

International understanding, often also called cultural exchange or cultural diplomacy, is a deliberately induced direct acquaintance of two parties who otherwise have little or no opportunity to do so. The planned communication between different groups of a society, different cultures, religions, or social groups or even whole states has the goal of breaking down prejudices that were taken for granted against them by getting to know actual counterparts and by establishing relationships where they were not previously present or not considered possible.

International understanding can be carried out by citizens, by NGOs, by educational institutions, by states, or by international institutions such as UNESCO or the Alliance of Civilizations—or by a combination of these.

...

The importance of everyday, sta-

ble international understanding at all levels cannot be overestimated, nor can the importance of organized forms such as art, sport, science, the media, or dialogue between official representatives of religions. Where this is not enough, the state must organize additional possibilities, because this is one of the most effective peace-building measures.

The 1963 Franco-German Treaty of Friendship ('Élysée Treaty') can serve as a model. A comprehensive package of measures was put in place to ensure that 'enemies become friends'—that as many French people as possible could get to know Germany and Germans through their own experience and that as many Germans as possible could get to know France and the French. The extensive student exchanges organized by the Franco-German Youth Office, which in principle still exist (unfortunately on a smaller scale), are not only the best known but have probably also had the most far-reaching consequences. Young people got a positive picture of the other side at a very early stage before prejudices and dislikes could establish themselves at all. Even if up to the present day Germany remains active in international understanding on many levels, it is time to analyse the implementation of the Élysée Treaty in such a way that it can be transferred to other areas, especially those where the feeling of enmity hovers in the air or threatens to hover in the future. ...

With the financial support of the Federal Foreign Office, the International Society for Human Rights has, for example, run programmes in which young bloggers from the field of human rights in Eastern Europe (in a broad sense) are networked with

one another. In addition to seminars, which take place in the participating countries, and official virtual meetings, reports are jointly written and experiences exchanged. When I have gotten to know these young people at the end of the programmes, I have been delighted not only at how much momentum they have gotten for their commitment, but also that they have all reported how intensively these encounters have promoted their view of other countries, as well as how their general feeling for the diversity of people on this earth has been promoted. In this way, furthermore, many from non-democratic countries are given the benefits of democracy by their peers from other countries.

I am deeply convinced that there is no substitute for really and truly getting to know other people. And unfortunately, these people, whom I do not know but should get to know personally, may be living in the same high-rise as me! Our assessment of other people is formed by what we hear about them or what we concretely experience in our dealings with them.

As a teenager I got lost during my holidays in the Glasgow harbour area when our excursion ship left with my parents but without me. Left in a rundown area, an even younger black boy scooped me up. Thanks to great hospitality and care, I spent the night in the cramped space where his poor family, with their many children, lived and slept. Their willingness to help was greater than that of many of my acquaintances who have a guest room. ... At that time, I decided to treat people who looked and lived differently with the same normality and friendliness with which this family had welcomed me, although I was white and 'rich'.

As my parents had close contacts with churches all over the world, we received church leaders from Indonesia, Paraguay, Gambia and many other countries. As a small child I touched

the unusual hair of Africans who afterwards held lectures. I grew up with the fact that people are very different but that they equally deserve respect.

Peter's Second Pentecost

Thomas Schirrmacher

We have heard from Ruth Padilla De-Borst [the previous speaker] how the relationships between Paul, Philemon and Onesimus shaped a new category of personal relations. I want to extend this idea a step further and suggest that this story shows that encounters and relationships also improve our theology and our worldview.

The five years during which I was involved with the development of the document 'Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World', released in 2011 by the Vatican, the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance, powerfully changed my life. This was not because I read a lot of books and papers around the topic, which I did, but because of long-term personal encounters with the other people involved in the project.

When I was introduced as a new member of the committee of the Global Christian Forum, the newsletter of the Forum wrote:

In terms of his personal journey Dr Schirrmacher says that, coming from a very conservative evangelical background, 'I would not even enter Catholic or Pentecostal churches. ... I never expected that I one day would attend two Vatican synods, help to work on close contacts between the World Council of Churches and the WEA, and speak at the General Assembly of the

WCC. ... My change of heart came for several reasons, including my activities on behalf of persecuted churches. In 2005 we started the International Institute for Religious Freedom and I found myself defending people of ... all churches and confessions. Here I was sitting and praying for the protection for Christians, whom I still thought to be unbelievers. I was also changed though the joining of 'spiritual experience and friendship'. Theology followed later and had the final decision: strange for a professor of Systematic Theology. But still it's the truth. The years of diligent work around the globe changed my perception of the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches and made me a champion of the goals that are now central to the GCF.

Some Evangelicals have taken issue with my statement that experience came first and theology followed. If I held such a position, they said, I no longer could be the head of the theological concerns department of the WEA. They also said the statement proves that the Global Christian Forum waters down biblical convictions and the strong endorsement of the Global Christian Forum by the WEA is wrong.

But in response I would ask: Is

Thomas Schirrmacher is Associate Secretary General of World Evangelical Alliance. This message was initially presented at the Third Global Gathering of the Global Christian Forum in Bogotá, Colombia in April 2018.

evangelical or even Pentecostal theology with no experience possible, just as a pure academic exercise in comparing and judging theologies? Can we have a correct understanding of the Trinity without the life-changing experience of being loved by, and loving, the triune God? Is not our evangelical and Pentecostal theology always a narrative theology?

The global gathering of the Global Christian Forum and the theme of the day give me the chance to prove from Scripture that experience of how God acts in this world in the lives of other people and churches, and of growing mutual relations with other Christians, is a good road to a sound theology.

By all means, Holy Scripture is God's revelation and our highest authority. This is true for the Orthodox Church as much as for the Catholic Church. What we discuss is only who may be the authoritative interpreter of Scripture, but not the nature of Scripture as such.

But the God who gave Scripture to us used experience to shape the theology of the authors of Scripture. This is why large parts of Scripture are in narrative form. And he shapes our theology to the good by experiences and encounters. In other words, if you are firmly committed to the authority of Scripture, experience of how God acts through other people and churches is indeed a good road to a sound theology.

Job's theology did not become upgraded through the endless theoretical discussions with his friends. Only through his life's experience—ugly and painful as it was—did he reach this conclusion about God: 'So far my ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you' (Job 42:5).

Many prophets and leaders in the Old Testament testify to the fact that only real-life experience of and encounters with God—directly and through other people—enabled them to understand God and his will.

This is still true today. I know more people who started to think more favourably about Pentecostals because they experienced healing or other wonders for themselves or others than I know people who were swayed by heated discussions of Pentecostal systematic theology.

We know that pure, uninterpreted experience does not teach us anything by itself, and we surely do not accept experience as such as the highest authority in the church. By experience I also do not mean that we constantly adapt to cultural circumstances or to the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age. If you marry the *Zeitgeist*, you will be a widow or a widower soon anyway.

But often, personal experience and relationships with others can remove the haze in front of our eyes. Experience opens our minds to things that we perhaps could have known through intellectual research and discussion but do not realize because we have biases that cause us not to see what we do not want to see.

Often in the gospels, Jesus said something and it obviously was true, yet his disciples listening to him understood only much later what he meant, and always after some major event had happened or some experience occurred. The most famous example is that Jesus promised to rebuild the Temple in three days. Only after his resurrection did his followers understand that he was not referring to the Temple made of stone, but to himself (Jn 2:21–22).

The Apostolic Council of Acts 15:1–

33 was about a very serious theological matter. The whole church met—the apostles, elders, delegates from the churches and apostolic teams. The end result was summarized by the person presiding, James, who claimed that their conclusion must be true because it was in line with Scripture. But even though the interpretation and declaration of Scripture by the authorities was the council's final step, the theological discussion actually centred on reports of experiences. Peter, Paul and Barnabas won the day, so to speak, because of the many moving stories they told, arguing that God had decided the matter already by sending his Holy Spirit to the Gentiles, as they had witnessed it.

Acts tells us that Peter addressed those gathered as follows: 'Brothers and sisters, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us' (Acts 15:7–8). And Acts adds, 'The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them' (15:12).

Telling those stories was Christian and biblical theology at its best, not some inferior method of theological argument!

In Galatians 2:11, Paul wrote, 'When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.' Paul added a lengthy explanation of why Peter was wrong, indicating that God accepts people from all nations simply by faith (Gal 2:11–19).

Was this the same Peter who heard the original oral version of the Great Commission out of Jesus' mouth? Was this the Peter who preached in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost? Was this the Peter in whom Jesus invested so much time in personal encounters and extra lessons, last but not least calling him to shepherd his sheep (Jn 21:15–21)?

Like all the disciples, Peter learned from the living Word of God himself that the Great Commission is to all nations (Mt 28:18–20) and that the power of the Holy Spirit would come upon them so that they would be witnesses 'to the end of the earth' (Acts 1:9). God used the emerging leader of the church, Peter, more than anybody else when Pentecost occurred, as he had the privilege of preaching that day and being the first herald of the new age that had come.

Yet despite all his learning and all his correct words, Peter did not believe this deep in his heart. He still believed in the separation of Jews and Gentiles.

How did God convince Peter? By presenting him with a new volume of systematic theology written by Paul? By compiling all statements from Jesus as well as from the Old Testament prophets that are relevant to the topic so as to prove overwhelmingly that people from all nations and languages will enter the kingdom of God? Or even better, did God give him a well-prepared, systematic lecture with nine convincing arguments directly from heaven?

Well, as you all know, God did reveal himself directly to Peter, but not in the way we theologians would have chosen. He used a dream that contained a shocking example and applied it to the upcoming encounter

with Cornelius. He had Cornelius wait for Peter so that Peter could see with his own eyes and have a firsthand experience of true theology.

Read carefully the whole story of Cornelius in Acts 10 tonight. How much effort God put into shaping Peter's theology through this experience! He corrected Peter's wrong views, but in a way that changed his life forever and to which he would witness for the rest of his life.

Only after what I like to call 'Peter's second Pentecost' did Peter grasp the theology of the first Pentecost. After the conversion of Cornelius, he declared, 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right' (Acts 10:34–35) and 'Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have' (Acts 10:47).

Of course, those examples relate directly to what we are doing here in Bogotá. Listening to the faith stories of other Christian leaders, young and old, male and female, is one of the marks of the Global Christian Forum. These sharing times are not just to give more people a chance to say something. They are as much and deep a theological encounter as the superb messages delivered by people like Ruth Padilla DeBorst, who spoke before me.

I hope that those from older churches seize the opportunity here to listen to people from newer churches. I hope those coming from newer churches open their ears wide for the faith stories of people from older churches, as their churches may be long established but their stories are not old! Take as an example my

friend His Holiness Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, who represents a church that originated where Christianity originated and goes back to the first century. Yet his message and words are up to date and speak spiritually to our churches today.

Let me address my evangelical and Pentecostal friends more directly. In Scripture, Jesus speaks two judgements that I pray will not be spoken over us. While on earth, he described a Pharisee (the closest thing to an evangelical in the Jewish world—ask me about it if you question this!) who came to the Temple and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like the others' (Lk 18:11). This statement was opposed to the 'evangel' (after which 'evangelical' is named), the gospel, which was captured in the other man's prayer: 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner' (Lk 18:13).

The second judgement comes from the risen Lord in his letter to the church at Laodicea: 'You say, "I am rich ... and do not need anything." But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked' (Rev 3:17).

Our high view of Scripture should not keep us from being always willing to learn more (Rom 12:1–2). The Holy Spirit has many ways to teach us sound theology, not just the classroom. If we listen, we will often hear profound truths spoken and lived in places where we did not expect it.

If Scripture is God's Word, then we should follow Scripture when it teaches us that we often understand God's deepest thoughts not just by quoting them, but through life-changing encounters and experiences.

Thanks be to the triune God that he did not just leave us a holy book

inspired by the Holy Spirit and revealing Jesus as Saviour to us, but that he sent the Holy Spirit himself into us, to understand this book and its divine author. Thank God that he uses multiple means to help us more deeply

understand his revelation, put it into practice in our lives, and grow all the more in love for our Father in Heaven, our Saviour Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Books Reviewed

Rodney L. Reed (ed.)
African Contextual Realities
Reviewed by Jem Hovil

Jared Compton
Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews
Reviewed by Abeneazer G. Urga

Michael F. Bird and Scott Harrower
(eds.)
*Trinity without Hierarchy: Reclaiming
Nicene Orthodoxy in Evangelical
Theology*
Reviewed by Don McLellan

Book Reviews

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African Contextual Realities

Rodney L. Reed (ed.)

Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2018

Pb., 290 pp.

***Reviewed by Jem Hovil, director, BUILD
Partners; visiting lecturer at East Africa
institutions; associate mission partner
with BCMS/Crosslinks***

African Contextual Realities is an edited volume of fifteen papers selected from those given at the sixth annual conference of the African Society of Evangelical Theology (ASET), held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2016. The society and publisher have also released *Christianity and Suffering: African Perspectives* (2017) and *Governance and Christian Higher Education in the African Context* (2019). A fourth volume, *God and Creation*, is due to appear, as will papers from their March 2019 conference, 'Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Peacemaking'. This is a formidable work rate.

The volume reviewed here showcases ASET's approach: it engages with the partial disconnect between the faith received through mission endeavours and the context, and it provides a platform

for scholarship on the African continent.

Kenyan nationals authored the lion's share of the articles, with Southern Africans and long-term non-African mission partners also contributing. Although the title suggests a work on African realities more broadly, the Kenyan focus lends welcome cohesion to a work that covers a wide range of issues; I found that the papers provide useful interpretative background for one another. One repeated theme related to this continental-regional tension is the question whether 'African Christian theology' and 'the African worldview' (singular) are valid categories given the heterogeneity of the continent. Various sections of the book address that issue in informative ways.

African Contextual Realities is arranged in three parts. The first part groups together four papers under the title 'Contextualising Theory and Theology for Africa'. This is foundational content, with contributions on setting and method. They include Gift Mtukwa's introductory reflection on the conjoined twins of holiness and mission, followed by Johana Gitau's outstanding paper on a theology of spiritual power. Ndung'u Ikenye's elaborate treatment of the contextualization of pastoral theology

comes next, and the section concludes with David Ngaruiya's assessment of the significance of Johann Ludwig Krapf's nineteenth-century mission work.

That paper may at first appear to be an unusual choice; however, it not only provides background on the genesis of the faith in East Africa (a faith that needs continual contextualization) but also offers an outstanding introductory thumbnail sketch of Krapf and his work.

This background dovetails nicely with part two, an issue-based approach to 'Addressing African Realities'. Joseph Galgalo opens with perhaps the stand-out paper of the collection: 'Syncretism in African Christianity: A Boon or Bane?' Galgalo offers a breathtaking depth of analysis of this cross-cutting issue, and he presents precise challenges in his model example of evangelical practical theology.

The next article, on dependency, ties in well with Galgalo's, and these two papers lay the foundation for studies on peace building, widow cleansing, religiosity and interfaith relations. All the authors provide well-penned introductions to their topics and make significant contributions; the papers on peacemaking and interfaith dialogue whet one's appetite for the papers from the most recent ASET conference.

Hermann Mvula's contribution on religiosity is well-constructed and hard-hitting, as he deploys a single Old Testament event, the story of the golden calf, to challenge the ubiquitous tendency for religion to become a path to disobedience. His analysis has implications well beyond African soil.

The final part stays within the domain of Christian education, exploring praxis in various ways. Daryll Stanton and Rickson Nkhata's paper is a biblical and theological study of the Old Testament concept of the *lev* (Hebrew for 'the inner

man, mind, will, heart') and how that concept can guide Christian universities. The other chapters in this part are case studies and evaluations of different types of education. They include a philosophy of multi-disciplinary Christian universities; the challenges posed by an example of church-based theological education; an evaluation of six seminaries and their degree of contextualization; the establishment of Christian schools; and a critical and timely analysis of staffing challenges in the increasingly popular area of distance learning. Part three skilfully brings themes and insights from the first two parts to bear on one specific area.

The quality of papers and their bibliographies vary somewhat, but ASET and the publisher, Langham Global, are to be congratulated for the vital contribution they are making to evangelical study in Africa. So is general editor Rodney Reed, who has done a careful and thorough job in developing the papers, even managing a double-blind peer-review process.

ERT (2019) 43:4, 378-380

***Trinity without Hierarchy:
Reclaiming Nicene Orthodoxy in
Evangelical Theology***

**Michael F. Bird and Scott Harrower
(eds.)**

Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2019

**Pb, 344 pp, indices of biblical
references and names, bibliographies
with each chapter**

***Reviewed by Don McLellan, academic
tutor at Malyon College, Brisbane,
Australia***

We need books like this one, because the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the *sine qua non* of Christianity but is forever at risk of overt or inadvertent modification.

Michael Bird and Scott Harrower have been concerned at the apparent slippage of evangelical thought into semi-Arianism, particularly in the arguments some evangelicals have mounted in support of complementarianism. According to complementarianism, women are created to 'complete' men in the creation order; a frequent corollary of this view is that women should take secondary roles to men in the home and in the church. Thus complementarianism is often linked to patriarchy, typically a pejorative term these days.

Bird and Harrower commissioned a wide-ranging group of fifteen evangelical scholars to address various aspects of trinitarian dogma, the main one being the question of *taxis* (order) versus *arche* (authority). If Jesus subjects himself to the Father, does this indicate his eternal subordination, and if so, does this suggest that the Son is not co-equal with the Father?

Space does not permit a summary of each chapter. But one of the book's overall themes is to reaffirm the orthodox consensus that 'the Trinity consists of one God who is three distinct and equal persons, and the distinctions do not entail subordination or hierarchy.' The book overall 'constitutes a robust re-statement of Trinitarian orthodoxy with special attention paid to a non-subordinationist and non-hierarchical account of the relationships within the Godhead', and it 'attempts to wrestle the doctrine of the Trinity away from the trenches of American evangelical debates about gender and authority' (p. 11).

One clear undercurrent, then, is to emphasize that an orthodox doctrine of the Trinity does not endorse any complementarianism that results in the subordination of women. Whether the book achieves this goal is for the reader to judge. In my opinion, the argument

that *taxis* overrides *arche* is upheld, but not always convincingly.

Perhaps by deliberate policy, Bird and Harrower called on women to write the first three chapters, as well as chapter 6. Patriarchal complementarians may find reading these essays uncomfortable, but if the book achieves anything, it demonstrates that women have important things to say in theology that we men need to read. Women were created as our equals and reaffirmed as such through our redemption in Christ Jesus, and we males can only benefit by seeking deliberately to see things from their viewpoint.

A second strong undercurrent is that trinitarian theology is the key to sound biblical interpretation. In other words, if we don't believe in the Trinity, or if our trinitarian theology is unsound, we may misinterpret the Bible. But this claim needs to be nuanced. When we read the works of the Trinitarian Fathers, we find them constantly citing Scripture as their ultimate authority. It may be asserted that they came to trinitarian convictions because they believed that this was what the Scriptures teach. Specifically, the Bible proclaims only one God, but then gives the statuses of both distinct personality and absolute divinity to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit alike.

This pathway to declaring the trinity of three co-equal persons in the Godhead remains to this day the only reliable method of arriving at trinitarian orthodoxy. The Nicene and Constantinopolitan formulations are distillations of biblical teaching and must be seen as subject to the authority of Scripture, not the reverse.

Granted, once the doctrine of the Trinity is established, it makes sense to interpret the whole Bible with the Trinity as a backdrop. This means there is a certain circularity in evangelical theol-

ogy: we read the Bible for theology, and then we read that theology back into the Bible. To imply, however, that the trinitarian theology of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is the chief tool of interpretation seems to suggest that the creeds are our final authority. That is something we must avoid even so much as hinting at.

The arguments here against subordinationism and homoianism (that is, the view of Christ as of *similar* but not the same essence to God) rest on the observation, based on careful biblical studies, that the persons of the Trinity are co-equal and eternal. It is intriguing, then, that the writers find it necessary to find theological explanations for every 'subordinationist' text in the NT. Have they not heard of Occam's razor?

Theology is at its most profound when it is uncomplicated. Liberalism does not like paradoxes and believes that where they appear, they must be solved. But evangelicalism accepts that the Bible is full of them. One of these is that Jesus, demonstrably co-equal with the Father in the Bible, demonstrably also submitted to the Father's will. Attempts to prove or disprove subordination from these simple facts will never convince anyone who is determined to hold the opposite opinion. For this reason, some will find *Trinity without Hierarchy* convincing and others will not.

In any case, this book is worth reading. Its quality is mostly good though sometimes patchy, and its arguments do not always convince, but its *raison d'être* is sound.

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Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews

Jared Compton

London/New York: T&T Clark, 2015

Pb., xiv + 226 pp., appendix, bibliography, index

Reviewed by Abeneazer G. Urga, Ph.D. candidate, Columbia International University, Columbia, SC, USA

Jared Compton, a pastor at CrossWay Community Church in Bristol, Wisconsin, USA, observes that the use of the Old Testament, and specifically the deployment of Psalm 110, in the structure of Hebrews is a neglected area. He points out that he is extending three pieces of previous research, relying on Gert J. C. Jordaan and Pieter Nel's ideas, which in turn build on George Wesley Buchanan's proposal that Hebrews depends on Psalm 110 for its exposition.

Chapter 2 delineates Jesus' Messianic enthronement and his salvific death as described in Hebrews 1–2. Hebrews 1:5–14 expresses that Jesus' resurrection from the dead qualifies him to be the successor of the Davidic throne. Hence, Jesus becomes the fulfiller of the OT promises, and Psalm 110 highlights this fact. In Hebrews 2:5–9, the author of Hebrews uses Psalm 8 to solve 'the Adam-problem' by explaining that Jesus reclaimed the place of Adam via death.

Psalm 110 is also employed to indicate that the crowned Jesus has solved the problem of sin. Hebrews 2:10–18 explicates the necessity of Jesus' death to tackle the Adam-problem. Jesus' suffering also made possible spiritual solidarity between Jesus and God's sons. The only link Compton locates to argue for the influence of Psalm 110:4 here is the term *argiereus*.

Chapter 3 discusses the significance of Psalm 110 in Hebrews 5–7. In Hebrews 5:1–10, Jesus meets the qualifications for the office of priesthood: he was appointed, and he was expected to bring sacrifices for sins (Pss 2:7; 110:4). Here Psalm 110:4 presents the fact that Jesus must be human to fulfil the role of a priest. Hebrews 7:1–10 elucidates the superiority of Jesus' priesthood compared to that of the Levites, for he is of the order of Melchizedek. Here the author of Hebrews gleans from Genesis 14:17–20 and does not explicitly reference Psalm 110:4. Hebrews 7:11–28 expounds that the Melchizedekian priest replaced the Levitical one since the old order had not provided perfection. Psalm 110:4 attests to Jesus' superiority because only Jesus delivers perfection.

In Chapter 4, Compton argues that the author also employs Psalm 110 to guide the structure of his argument in Hebrews 8–10. Hebrews 8:1–13 presents Jesus as a priest in the heavenly sanctuary and as the mediator of a better covenant. Hebrews 9:1–10 reveals that the Old Covenant cult is deficient. Although no explicit quotation of or allusion to Psalm 110 is present, Compton argues that the exposition of the inadequacy of the first covenant in this unit betrays the need for a priest with a better covenant. Hebrews 9:11–28 expounds that Jesus' superior sacrifice of himself made better access to God possible, for he delivered forgiveness. Compton states that though Psalm 110 is absent here, it has more footing than Jeremiah 31. Finally, Hebrews 10:1–18 relates that the law was insufficient to bring about perfection.

In Chapter 5, Compton summarizes his findings and posits the possible explanation that the readers of the epistle were struggling with either the idea of

a suffering Messiah or the absence of Jesus' intervention while believers were enduring severe suffering.

Compton ably demonstrates that Psalm 110 plays a significant role in the epistle's expositional arguments. In many instances, he is on point in detecting the influence of Psalm 110:1 and 4 in the author's presentation of Jesus' superior priesthood and his better sacrifice. There are some matters of contention, however.

First, Compton understands the quotations from Deuteronomy 32:43 and Psalm 102:25–27 to be mainly messianic, rather than referring to the superiority of Christ over the angels because of his divinity. But his assertion is not convincing, because the author has already established the fact that Jesus is divine in v. 3. Contra Compton, the author argues for the superiority of Jesus not merely based on his messianic enthronement but also based on his divinity. This is even supported by Psalm 110:1, where the Masoretic Text indicates that the conversation is between divine beings (using *Yahweh* and *Adonai*), making Psalm 110:1 about both messianic enthronement and Jesus' divinity simultaneously.

Second, Compton's argument that Psalm 110 is the central OT passage throughout the expositional arguments of Hebrews underplays the very vital citation of Jeremiah 31 in Hebrews 8–10. At times, Compton seems to push other OT quotations unnaturally to the periphery in order to place Psalm 110 at centre stage.

Despite these concerns, I commend the book to students and professors alike if they wish to delve into studying the priesthood of Christ, the use of the OT in Hebrews, or the structure of the epistle.

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